

**Southeastern Minnesota GIS Users Group**  
**Steele County Administration Building: 630 Florence Ave, Owatonna, MN**  
**Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 9:30 am - 12:00 pm**  
*Meeting Minutes*

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**Attendees:**

Dave Wavrin – Steele County

Alan Laumeyer – Goodhue County

Sarah Schrader – Goodhue County

John Orris – Olmsted County

Tom Hoffmann – Winona County

Nick Meyers – Winona County

Shawn Gertken – Wabasha County

Peter White – Pictometry

Michelle Trager – Rice County

Joel Thoreson – Olmsted County

Mark Engel – Yaggy Colby Associates

Kevin Alishouse - GIS Consultant

Todd Zielsdorf – Winona County

Leanne Knott – City of Red Wing

Ryan Moore – Rochester Public Utilities

Mike Johnson – Steele County

**Introductions - Projects Update**

The following are updates from each participant regarding recent projects at their agency.

- Goodhue County – GIS staff is currently working with the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) with the county's Public Health department. There are both regional (including our 11-county users group area) and county initiatives going on. Staff also continues to work with E911 Dispatch to update the county road/address database for use with the dispatch mapping software. The county will soon unveil an ArcGIS Server-based GIS mapping application locating sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with locations with local historic significance and cemeteries.
- Steele County – GIS staff has been working with Pictometry and their new product "Pictometry Online". Staff has also created maps and worked with other county staff on the Emergency Management Agricultural Response Plan. Staff has been working with the Highway and Recorder Departments to map the public ditch and tile by ¼ section for the whole county and then recording the information in the tract index. The county also recently contracted with AeroMetrics to collect 6" resolution imagery for the whole county.
- Rice County – An intern has been working on mapping parcels in the county with a Torrens abstract. Also a layer for foreclosed properties has been created as well as a Right-of-Way (ROW) layer which is linked to ROW documentation. Staff has been working with a trial version of Pictometry Online. Staff has also been working on first responder maps using the US National Grid.
- City of Red Wing – Staff is currently working with the Engineering and Public Works department to map easements and vacations throughout the city. This information will later be linked to Laserfiche. Staff is working on a public version of the city's existing internal-only crime mapping online GIS application. This public version will be using a mashup between the city's data and another service such as Google maps. Staff from the Public Works department has been working on a project mapping all of the plots in the city's cemeteries. Once the mapping is complete, a public application will be created so citizens can access the information at kiosks at the cemeteries. The Planning department is also working on a Bike and Pedestrian plan.
- Yaggy Colby – Staff has been working with transportation and planning projects including a trails project for Houston and Fillmore counties. Staff also recently finished the Wabasha County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Kevin Alishouse – Has a background in GIS for utilities and engineering and has started a GIS business "PlaceIT".

- Olmsted County – The survey department is working towards storing their data in a GIS environment and learning more about what GIS can do. Staff is working towards getting county plats and certificates of survey available online to make it easier for citizens to access this information and to reduce the number of phone calls staff receives.
- Winona County – Staff is working more with Emergency Management department and has created maps using the US National Grid information. Staff is working to create more ArcGIS Server-based mapping applications for the public and internal use. The county also currently has a web application using ArcIMS but staff will be transitioning that site into ArcGIS Server in the next year. Staff is also starting to work more with collecting and maintaining information that could be helpful for businesses looking to move to Winona County.
- Wabasha County – Staff has been working on computing parcel lines based on legal descriptions for parcels around Lake Zumbro. Because the county does not have a full-time county surveyor, this parcel mapping is being done by the GIS staff. Staff also works on parcel splits and other updates. Staff has worked on calculating areas of parcels and soil coverage to come up with a Crop Equivalency Rating (CER) for parcels. The county currently has an internal mapping site that was set up by MPower and runs off of ArcIMS. The county did have an ArcGIS Server-based mapping site but due to lack of use, it was taken down. County plans to change to using AutoDesk Map Guide because it is cheaper and works better for what they need.
- Rochester Public Utilities – Staff is still working on upgrading the agency to ESRI 9.3 software version. RPU is changing from using physical servers to virtual servers. Staff will use the virtual servers as a test environment for software updates and more. Staff is working on implementing an ArcGIS Server project to show work orders in the vicinity of work trucks when they're out in the field.

## **10:25 am Peter White, Pictometry International**

Demonstration and overview of Steele County's recent installation of Pictometry's web interface – Pictometry Online.

- Steele County currently hosts Pictometry Online (POL) themselves. Each user needs an account in order to log in and view the imagery and other information. This POL is a cached service to improve performance and is Javascript-based. Staff is able to set it up so GIS data is available to view along with the imagery such as parcel lines and address points. Users can then change the symbology for these items on-the-fly within the POL. The application is built on a Windows 2008 server and the application also has its own Application Programming Interface (API) so it can be linked to from within other application environments such as FLEX or ArcGIS Server.
  - County dispatch has a button within their own mapping program that links directly into the POL.
  - Staff has used POL during drills such as a recent school shooter event drill.
- Carver and Scott counties also host their own POL.
- The option to have Pictometry host an agency's POL would work well if the agency would have 10 or less users. If an agency has more users than that, it would make more financial sense to self-host the application and just pay the annual fee to Pictometry.

## **10:50 am Mike Johnson, Steele County Emergency Management Director**

Overview of Steele County's creation of response plans for agricultural disaster, both natural and man-made, and how GIS would be involved.

*The full version of this presentation is available for viewing on the SEMN Yahoo Groups website.*

## 11:20 am Discussion: SEMNGIS Yahoo Groups Site - Secure Accessibility

Discussion regarding whether or not to change the Yahoo Groups site from member-only access to a more open setting.

- Currently the SEMNGIS users group has a webpage, link to the webpage and a Yahoo Groups website:
  - The webpage is hosted by Goodhue County with basic information such as the group's general mission, upcoming meeting dates/locations, and Steering Committee member names and contact information.  
(<http://www.co.goodhue.mn.us/departments/landuse/gis/SoutheasternGISUsergroup.aspx>)
  - On the MN GIS/LIS Consortium website,  
(<http://www.mngisliis.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=17>) there is a page listing GIS users groups within Minnesota and the SEMNGIS group is listed there with a link posted to direct people to the webpage (listed above)
  - A Yahoo Groups site was created in the summer of 2007 and it includes meeting agendas, minutes, as well as member contact information, an events calendar, dates and locations of upcoming meetings, and also a communication forum for members to ask technical questions to other members. The site currently has high security settings which means users can only access the site after receiving an invite email from one of the site's moderators. In addition, the SEMNGIS group is 'hidden' and so cannot be found when someone searches for it within the main Yahoo Groups website. This 'high security' option can eliminate the amount of spam the users group site receives. In the past, there have been members who have tried to search for the group's site on the Yahoo Groups website. Being able to search and find this site online is something that could be beneficial to attract new members.
- A suggestion was made to create a separate website for the users group.
- A question was raised regarding the purpose of the Yahoo Groups site and what the users group wants to get out of it → More promotion to add members? Communication option for members?
  - One member commented that the current communication option between members through the Groups site is great and very helpful.
- A comment was made that the toughest part of having a separate website would be the creation and then administration of the site. Currently, there is no cost for having a Yahoo Groups site and there is no administration of the site beyond members posting helpful documents or uploading meeting agendas/minutes as necessary.
  - A question was raised regarding whether anyone would want to take on the creation or administration of a new website. There were no volunteers.
- A suggestion was made to try to get grant money or funding from an outside source to pay for the website creation.
  - A comment was made that this type of initiative would still need a volunteer to manage all of this and to perform the web administration. No member volunteered.
- A comment was made to keep things simple for the users group and another comment was made that the existing Yahoo Groups site offers everything that the group wants/needs right now so there is no need to create a separate website.
- After much discussion, the general consensus is to keep the Yahoo Groups site and just change the security settings to allow the site to be searchable from the Yahoo Groups website.

Ryan Moore – Change the security settings for the Yahoo Groups site so that it can be searchable from the Yahoo Groups website and so that people can sign up to be members of the site without being 'invited' by the site moderators first.

## **11:50 am Discussion: Steering Committee Nominations and Voting**

In 2007, users group members voted to create a Steering Committee of 6 members to assist with setting meeting dates and compiling meeting agendas and other duties as needed. Discussion regarding nomination and voting procedures.

- In the spring of 2007, users group members voted to create a Steering Committee made up of 6 members who would work on setting meeting dates/agendas and other duties as needed. It has been three years since the Steering Committee was created and it could be good timing to re-vote for the members of the Steering Committee.
- A suggestion was made to keep the Steering Committee members the same and have no nomination or voting process.
- A comment was made that it would be good to have elections again in case other members would like to get more involved by participating on the Steering Committee.
- After discussion, the general consensus is to have a nomination and voting process for Steering Committee members. It was also decided by general consensus that the terms of Steering Committee members will be three years.

**Ryan Moore – Set up a survey using Survey Monkey and send out to all members to nominate up to six people for the Steering Committee.**

- After the nomination process is complete, a poll will be created in the Yahoo Groups site for members to vote on the nominated members.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20pm

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, Red Wing – hosted by Goodhue County

## **Announcements/Updates**

- Update – GIS/LIS Spring Workshops to be held on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Arden Hills. More information about the workshops is now available on the MN GIS/LIS Consortium website:

<http://www.mngislis.org>

**\*\*Members are encouraged to present at a future meeting and to offer suggestions of vendors or other agencies to present. Please contact a Steering Committee member or the next meeting's host if you are interested in presenting:**

### **Steering Committee:**

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