

Notes from Geospatial/GIS Meetup December 10, 2024

Zoom

Attendees: Janet Reyes, facilitator

In Person: Adelaide Pangemanan, Alesha Jaennette, Daisy Herrera, Ray Uzwyshyn

Via Zoom: Adelí Durón, Adriana Murguia, Alvaro Alvarez, Alysia Cruz, Amanda Grey, Cathy Gudis, Christella Maldonado, Jose Mendez, Julia Torres, Karina Cardenas, Lesley Cortez, Megan Asaka, Mike Cohen, Pedro Enrique Puentes, Rocio Gomez, Ryan Bruellman, Valentina Toledano, Victoria Rocha

Announcements

Sadly, due to technological glitches during the meeting, only the recording of the last 24 minutes of the meetup was retained in the Zoom cloud. That video is available [here](#). The passcode to view is +Hv76d?9

[UC GIS Week session recordings](#) are now available. The overall event was a success. More than 50 UCR affiliates registered to attend. One of the sessions focused on [opportunities](#) for students to get GIS experience while still enrolled.

December 31 is the closing date for applying for an [Esri student assistantship](#).

“Integrating Mobile GIS into your Curriculum” is the topic for the [Esri GIS in Higher Education Chat](#) on January 7.

The [Los Angeles Geospatial Summit](#) will be held at USC on February 28, 2025. This is a networking opportunity for students and recent graduates.

Janet shared selected **results of the recent survey** regarding the format of the Geospatial/GIS meetups.

- The second Thursday of the month is the most preferred timing.
- There's interest in having faculty/researcher discussions a few times a year.
 - Preference is to hold them on Zoom, or possibly hybrid.
 - Mixed results on recording these and/or maintaining a notes document
- There's support for a career panel, and for an orientation to geospatial resources in September.
- The interest in holding an in-person GIS-Day-like event was mixed.

The first two **meetups in Winter quarter** will be held on January 14 and February 11 (both Tuesdays). Both will feature presenters but will be on Zoom only. The first faculty/researcher discussion will likely be held on Thursday, March 13, format TBD.

Shared links

Spatial Songs playlist: <https://music.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3hQmPr68fR1PWfbtnRjvzkWn24DVRZSc>

Maps playlist (first shared in 2022): <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/ObxmwAcfbNFkObagu8zJ5y>

Presentation

History PhD students Daisy Herrera, Pedro Enrique Puentes, and Christella Maldonado presented on **Refusing to be Refugees: Mapping Sites of Chicanx Defiance and Resistance in California.**

Daisy began by explaining that their research was a project of the University of California Humanities Research Institute, which encourages collaborations across UC campuses. Under the theme of “Work and Refuge,” the team has explored localities where Chicanx/Latinx communities fought against displacement, and/or reclaimed a space. UCR History Professor Jorge Leal served as the project’s faculty principal investigator. The team decided to use digital humanities methods, particularly ArcGIS StoryMaps, to explore various types of resistance in specific regions throughout the state.

Next, Pedro shared that he was born and raised in South-Central Los Angeles. He is creating a StoryMap titled “Bienvenidos a la Angelina” to highlight “how Chicanx/Latinx communities came together to contest forms of discrimination” in South Central LA. He’s writing about “The Long, Beautiful Struggle: Forming Chicana Resistance,” and “The First Mexican-American Elected to the LA School Board of Education.” Pedro emphasized the importance of bringing such often-overlooked stories to light, and that digital humanities tools provide a way to share insights and the beautiful history of these communities. The team often noted the interconnection among the various stories they were exploring.

Daisy is creating a StoryMap titled “San Fernando Valley’s Forgotten Graves, Bulldozed Enclaves” that explores the history of Pioneer Memorial Cemetery and Pico Court; the latter was a citrus labor camp. Both were in existence in the San Fernando Valley in the early decades of the twentieth century. Examining these two sites helps understand the Valley’s ethnic Mexican history. Daisy pulled data from over 500 death certificates for those buried in the non-secular Pioneer Cemetery; many were children whose families lived in Pico Court. The ages and causes of death point to public health disparities for the community at the time. The size of the cemetery was reduced and the site of Pico Court vanished during construction of the 210 and 118 freeways respectively.

Christella’s StoryMap, titled “[Chicanx Heritage in the Capital City](#),” was created to demonstrate the history of the Chicanx and Latinx community in Sacramento and to call attention to tangible and intangible spaces of importance to the community. Such sites underscore that the community, counter to the image of being always on the move, created roots and community in different parts of Califas. The StoryMap can also serve as an advocacy platform to raise funds to protect Latinx heritage sites in Sacramento. Christella discussed how the working-class, multiracial West End neighborhood was “redlined” on Home Owner Loan Corporation maps of the 1930s, leading to minimal investment in the area. Southside Park, and public art created by members of the [Royal Chicano Air Force](#), were also discussed. Christella hopes to conduct more oral history interviews and encourage the creation of a [historic context statement](#).

Daisy sees the team’s work to date as stepping stones towards a larger project to map other sites throughout the state, with involvement of faculty and other students.

Discussion

Ray asked whether their research starts with the locations themselves, or with data or objects that lead them to the locations of interest. He also asked about what they see as the trajectory of their work: do they envision books and/or websites resulting from their research, or is it more to achieve political purposes?

Pedro said, while his research focus has now changed to the intersection of immigration and education, this research led all of them to recognize the importance and value of their communities from the stories that members of the older generation tell.

Daisy saw the physical space for Pico Court before she ever dived into the archive; it was one block from the San Fernando Valley Historical Society that she is involved with. The historical society doesn't have any existing documentation about the work camp other than what Daisy is now collecting. For the cemetery, it was research in the archive that led her to tour the physical space. She wants the results of her research to be public-facing, and also to encourage the historical society to adopt digital humanities tools such as story maps to better tell their story.

Christella had curiosity about the spaces around where she had grown up. Her work has a political purpose, but she's also interested in learning more about digital humanities.

Cathy asked whether the maps that they incorporated in their story maps helped them see things that will assist them in their ongoing research, and whether the maps themselves influence the points they want to make.

Daisy found the mapping capabilities in ArcGIS StoryMaps were limited compared to what she would like to accomplish. Similarly, she could only have 10 rows in her table. She recognizes that using different tools in combination may allow the result she desires.

Christella said that while mapping, she noticed that her sites of interest (other than those on the CSU campus) were within the areas that had been redlined. She also hopes to interview community members to find out about more places, including those that have been demolished or gentrified. Learning more tools will help her tell a bigger story.

Pedro mentioned the overlaps and interconnections of the community stories they were researching. He sees the value of digital humanities tools for public sharing but also in the educational space.

Adriana commented that she could relate to many of the spaces Christella mentioned, having lived in Sacramento for four years, and asked who else Christella might want to interview. Christella mentioned a few people she had already met, and is always looking for finding out about more people through connections.

Karina said she's inspired to talk to the GIS person at her library to learn more about it. She suggested that having the ability to create dynamic maps, such as a timeline of heat maps showing the growth of a community, would be beneficial. Christella said she would like to learn more data visualization techniques. She also recommended the book "[Flying Under the Radar with the Royal Chicano Air Force](#)."