

PAIGH U.S. National Section Monthly Meeting – April Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Meeting attendees:

Emily Carlson, Claudia Ulloa, Emily Day, Max Lobo, Julia Lopez, Lidia Lopez, Gustavo Maldonado Davila, Ivan Ramirez, Paul Riley, Sergio Rodriguez, Tom Sandoval, Roger Payne, Patrick Wilkerson, Chris Hanson, Dana Caccamise, Patrick Ellis, Aaron Malone

1) Welcome

- Julia noted that Deirdre had a conflict for today's USNS meeting but said hello and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Discuss the Republic of Korea Geographical Names training, held in November 2022

- The official title for the program was 2022 Capacity Building on Geographical Names and Geospatial Information for Experts of PAIGH Member States. It was conducted November 14-18, 2022. Max Lobo, President of the Cartography Commission for PAIGH, presented a PowerPoint, detailing the trip and the training.
- The presentation displayed a list of 18 participants from 18 different countries within the Americas.
- The 18 participants flew on the 14th to the airport in Incheon, and then drove together to the conference location, about an hour and a half away in Suwon. They stayed at the Marriot hotel next to the Suwon Convention Center, where the training was held.
- The workshop took place over three days. The daily schedule was from 9am-6pm. On the first day, Tuesday November 15, there was a welcome session and two lectures. The first lecture was on Korean geography and their geographic naming system. The second lecture was on the Trends of Toponymic Research and Implications for the Geographical Names Standardization of PAIGH member states, led by Professor Sungjae Choo of Kyung Hee University, a specialist on geographic names.
- On the second day, Wednesday November 16, there were two lectures, a trip to the National Institute of Geography of Korea, and a field trip to the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, a historical fort. These lectures were based on having a better understanding of the geographic information systems of Korea and the utilization of new technology from the National Land Satellite Center.
- On the third day, Thursday November 17, the group went to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). It was led by Professor Chang Hwan Kim from Kangwon National University, who is an expert on the DMZ. On the way to the DMZ, the group stopped at a center that provides information to the public regarding their use of geographic information, which was helpful to understand the nation's approach to disseminate geographic information.
- Each lecture for the workshop was about an hour long with time for discussion. Even though the workshop was to focus on geographic names, they also highlighted Korea's use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and how they use them.
- The participants considered the conference to be impeccable. The schedule was met and events were held without delay. The conference host was ready to assist the participants with anything they needed. There was a mixed use of Korean and English, but they had professional translations from Korean to Spanish.
- The information was invaluable and confirmed by the rest of the participants when they had time to exchange impressions of the workshop.

- Mr. Lobo stated that he felt the way Korea approached geographic names is well thought out where they include historians, linguistics, and geographers in their approach and decisions at the local level are elevated to a national committee where the final decision is made.
- The National Geographic Information Institute applies geographic concepts regarding geographic names as well as common best practices. For example, they use their GIS to prevent natural disasters and provide the population with information based on geospatial information.
- Something of great interest of the workshop participants was the Korean satellite imagery system, which ideally the nation states can enter collaboration agreements with the Korean imagery services.
- A main takeaway from participants was that the geographic names system was going from local to national review and that many of the participants saw that they could implement that in their own countries.
- The existence of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) wasn't well known to the participants of the workshop.
- The national state members of PAIGH gained a greater knowledge of the overall geographic names framework.
- One of the benefits of the workshop was that not only did the group learn about the Korean Geographic names system, but also that member states will benefit from future collaboration with Latin America Division of the UNGEGN. As a result of the collaboration after the workshop, they've had two meetings with the Group of Experts, one on January 24 and the other on March 17. The next meeting will be on April 13. These meetings have provided a better understanding of Geographic Names in Latin America. Colombia and Costa Rica have provided reports on their geographic names, and Brazil is in progress.
- The group hopes that there will be more participation of member states at the next meeting, which is on May 31.
- Max had a few recommendations on the capacity building workshops with the Korean Institute of Geography. First recommendation would be to expand the number of days for the workshop, so that there's more time to exchange ideas. Second recommendation is for event organizers to provide more technical documentation for participants to take back to their countries for further advancement of these topics and to give feedback to the organizers.
- One main takeaway from the conference was the great synergy between the PAIGH member states.
- Max will share a written summary of the conferences that was provided at the workshop so USNS members can have a better understanding of the topics that were discussed.
- Roger Payne, chairman of the Geographical Names Working Group of the Cartography Commission, noted while the workshop in Korea is outstanding, it did not seem focused on the needs of PAIGH member states, by providing principals and policies relevant to the member states. He is concerned that they have not been involved, except for two years ago when they were asked to report on current standardization in the member states. Also, he stated that UNGEGN is an item presented in the PAIGH Geographical Names course that has been presented 24 times in the past, but not recently. Members of the working group had successfully rejuvenated the Latin America Division of the UNGEGN and had several meetings at their various courses; they are perplexed why they are not involved in the current work that is happening. He suggested having a meeting to discuss further.

- Max addressed Roger's concern regarding the Korean workshop, promulgated by the PAIGH presidency, both in 2021 and 2022. From the Cartography Commission, it is their goal to add knowledge, but they are not in the position to solve the issue brought up by Mr. Payne. Max's focus is to continue the synergy between the Cartography Commission and the Latin America Division of the UNGEGN. Without question the working group is indispensable in this work. Max explained that some of the attendees at the Korean workshop were young professionals that didn't know the extent of work that the working group facilitates.
- Julia paused Max at that point because there was no remaining time in the meeting but suggested that this discussion could continue further in a separate meeting outside of the monthly meeting. Roger thanked Max for the explanation and agreed that we should continue the conversation in a later meeting.

3) Discuss the 2023/2024 Technical Assistance Program

- Julia reminded participants that the deadline for submitting a project proposal for the 2023/2024 Technical Assistance Program is May 17, 2023. Information on the PAIGH's website:
- Go to ipgh.org, select "Programmes", then "Projects", and then "Technical Assistance Program (PAT)". From there, select this year's program which is "2023-2034". It provides a list of informational components of the program.

4) There were no walk-on items.

5) Next meeting is on Tuesday, May 9, 2023.