

## PAIGH U.S. National Section Monthly Meeting – March Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Meeting attendees: Jorge Bajo, Deirdre Bishop, Emily Bowe, Dana Caccamise, Emily Carlson, Len Kne, Erick Langer, Lidia Lopez, Miriam Olivares, Roger Payne, Paul Riley, Sergio Rodriguez, David Salisbury, Diana Sinton, Betty Smith, Charlotte Smith, Patricia Solís, Ian Spangler, Eric van Praag, Shellie Zahniser.

### Welcome

- Deirdre welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for their continued involvement in the USNS.

### 1) PAIGH Update, 26th General Assembly Meeting, and USNS Annual Meeting

- The Department of State requested input for a report to Congress that identified the U.S. national interests associated with participation in multilateral institutions. PAIGH President Patrica Solis, Secretary General Antonio Campuzano, Deirdre, and Paul worked together to provide a response. Julianna Aynes-Neville was pleased with the submission.
- The U.S. National Section has a new Department of State International Organizations liaison supporting Julianna, Ryan Fennell. Deirdre, Julianna, and Paul met with Ryan to provide a briefing on the U.S. National Section. We received encouraging feedback and can count on continued support from the U.S. Mission to the OAS.
- Secretary General Campuzano is in Washington, DC for the OAS elections. Traditionally, Deirdre meets with the Secretary General, but due to Census Bureau priorities this was not feasible this trip.
- The meeting of the Authorities and the 26<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will be held the week of October 13, 2025, in Honduras.
  - Meeting of Authorities: October 13, 2025.
  - Technical Commissions: October 14, 2025.
  - 26<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: October 15 – 17, 2025.
  - We encourage those interested to participate in the technical sessions and the General Assembly.
- Planning for the U.S. National Section Annual Meeting is in the early stages.
  - Last year's hybrid meeting at the Department of Commerce was successful.
  - Tentatively we have set aside the dates of April 8-9<sup>th</sup> for this year's hybrid meeting. Please let us know if there are any conflicts with these tentative dates.
  - We are awaiting the outcome of federal budget discussions (expected March 15) before finalizing dates.
  - We are working with Evan Ward to explore the possibility of hosting our annual meeting at the Brigham Young facilities in Washington, DC.

### 2) PAIGH Anniversary Ceremony and Brazil Update

- Patricia Solis attended the PAIGH anniversary celebrations in February, representing the Pan American community.
  - There was strong attendance with approximately 70 diplomats, mainly from the Pan American community in Mexico.
  - This was noted as one of the largest anniversaries in recent years.

- Patricia continued her tradition of donating a portrait of a woman to the Gallery of Geographers and Historians.
  - The event concluded with a reception featuring an all-female mariachi band.
  - The Technical Assistance Program was officially launched, coinciding with the anniversary.
  - The Pan American Agenda, previously approved at the General Assembly, was published on the PAIGH website.
  - Public acknowledgment of recent initiatives took place during the event.
  - Secretary General Campuzano received a delegation of the reconstituted National Section of Brazil at PAIGH headquarters in Mexico City.
    - This visit aligns with their stated intent to return to PAIGH, as mentioned during the 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.
    - While confirmation of an official quota payment is pending, the delegation's visit was a significant step toward reintegration.
    - Andre Figueredo has been instrumental in ensuring Brazil's participation and financial commitment.
    - A video was shared on Facebook highlighting Brazil's engagement in PAIGH activities.
- Action Item:** Patricia will look into David Salisbury's request for information on when Brazil had stopped being a member of PAIGH.

### 3) Geographic Names Update

- Sergio Rodriguez provided background on the Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and its role in maintaining uniform geographic names across the U.S. federal government.
  - The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) is maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and updated as name changes are made official.
  - PAIGH's role in geographic names focuses on supporting standardization efforts within the Americas and collaborating with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names (UNGEGN).
  - BGN helps coordinate U.S. interests within UNGEGN, ensuring alignment with international standards.
- Shellie Zahniser provided an update on recent Executive Orders and name changes.
  - Executive Order 14172: [Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness – The White House](#) was issued on 1/20. In this Executive Order Sections 3 and 4 talk about renaming Denali back to McKinley and changing the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.
  - The Department of Interior Secretary then issued Secretarial Orders on 2/7 and 2/14: [Secretary's Orders | U.S. Department of the Interior](#) to implement Executive Order 14172.
  - Following issuance of these Secretarial Orders, the GNIS was updated, and federal agencies are updating their systems and products to reflect the name changes.
- Shellie also provided an update on UNGEGN and geographic names modernization.
  - Shelley submitted the U.S. Country Report to the U.S.-Canada Division of UNGEGN and plans to present it at the upcoming April UNGEGN Session at United Nations Headquarters in New York.
  - Efforts are underway to modernizing the GNIS to improve data sharing with federal agencies, state naming authorities, and the public.

- A 10-year roadmap is being developed to enhance transparency and efficiency in the geographic naming proposal process.
- Shellie and Sergio entertained several questions on military base renaming, the publishing of the geographic names training online, and PAIGH's role in name changes.
  - Deirdre asked if Shellie had any guidance on the Department of Defense issued secretarial orders for name changes. Is this guidance enough to initiate a name change within federal geospatial systems and products or should federal agencies wait for issuance of an order from the Secretary of the Army? as agencies await further  
**Action Item:** Shelley to follow up with additional information.
  - Roger Payne raised the question about the progress in making the PAIGH Geographic Names Course available online. Sergio mentioned a new committee has been formed to address geographic naming issues, but it remains unclear if they plan to pursue an online course format.  
**Action Item:** Sergio to follow-up with additional information.
  - Miriam asked about the role of PAIGH in recent name changes. There has been no communication from the PAIGH Secretariat and/or PAIGH community on the matter.  
**Action Item:** Sergio and Patricia will look into understanding the role of PAIGH in names changes related to the Americas.

#### 4) Processing Place: How Computers and Cartographers Read the World presentation.

- Emily Bowe and Ian Spangler provided a [presentation](#) on the Processing Place: How Computers and Cartographers Read the World exhibit. This exhibition is currently on display at the [Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center](#) at the Boston Public Library until March 23rd of this year.
  - Emily Bowe is currently the Assistant Director, responsible for the center's administration, operations, outreach, public gallery management, and exhibitions. She is also an avid swimmer and woodworking enthusiast. Emily is a designer, cartographer, and researcher focusing on maps, urban infrastructure, and community data practices. She holds a master's degree in design and urban ecologies from Parsons School of Design and a bachelor's in environmental science and geography from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, as a Morehead-Cain Scholar.
  - Ian Spangler is currently the Assistant Curator of Digital and Participatory Geography. He manages the center's digital mapping projects and geospatial data reference and collecting initiatives. Ian holds a bachelor's in English and geography from the University of Mary Washington and a master's and Ph.D. in geography from the University of Kentucky. His research examines geographical standards for real estate information exchange and how they shape contemporary digital real estate technologies.
- Emily and Ian shared that exhibition explores the human role in computer mapping, showcasing connections between historical physical maps created with computers and their influence on contemporary digital mapping tools. As an independent nonprofit working with the Boston Public Library, the Leventhal Center stewards a collection of approximately 250,000 cartographic objects, including maps, road maps, globes, charts, atlases, and geospatial datasets. A few notable contributions and artifacts they shared include:
  - Rich Grady & David Weaver: These Massachusetts-based cartographers contributed to the exhibition, providing historical insights into the evolution of GIS in the region.
  - AppGeo Collection: The exhibition was partly inspired by materials from Applied Geographics (AppGeo), a company that played a pivotal role in mass GIS development.

David Weaver, its founder, initiated discussions about archiving these materials before the company was acquired by Sanborn.

- Historic GIS Maps and Tools: The exhibition includes hybrid maps demonstrating land-use changes in Massachusetts over time (e.g., Mashpee land change maps from 1971, 1984, and 1990), as well as early digitization tools such as digitizing pucks and scribe sheets.
- Policy & Collaboration Documents: The exhibition highlights historical documents detailing interagency and private-sector collaboration in GIS implementation. Notably, a transition binder from MassGIS includes policy texts and visual datasets demonstrating how maps facilitate environmental decision-making.
- Emily and Ian encourage us to visit in-person, but have provided a [fully digital version online](#).
- Emily and Ian also shared some of the digital tools for map engagement that the Leventhal Center regularly develops to make historic map collections more accessible. Two key tools include:
  - [Atlascope](#): Built entirely in-house, this platform digitizes and georeferences historic atlases, allowing users to explore changes in the Greater Boston region. Currently, 137 atlas layers have been georeferenced.
  - [Allmaps](#): A web-based georeferencing tool that facilitates the transition from scanned maps to digital overlays. This tool played a key role in the creation of Atlascope.

#### 5) Commission Updates

- Commission updates will be provided during our next scheduled meeting.

#### 6) Next USNS Meeting

- April 8, 2025