

2016 Jun 14

Open Source GIS User Group Meetup - Notes & Summary

The following is a summary of the Open Source GIS User Group Meetup events that took place on June 10th and June 13th, 2016. I thought the meetups went well. There were lots of discussion on some interesting OS GIS topics. As this user group is just starting up, I feel that a monthly meeting with revolving topics will allow for more people in the community to join and participant, especially if they didn't get to attend these first 2 events. So, for now I'm thinking maybe every 3rd Friday of the month, which means the **next meetup is to be held on July 15th, 2016**. Time and location is to be announced on the site (1-2 weeks prior). Save the date!

A big thank you to those who participated and volunteered to help out.

Read on for the summary or download pdf version: [OSGISUG_Meeting_Summary_610132016.pdf](#)

Open Source GIS User Group Meeting Summary

I. Introduction/Purpose of Meetups

Two meetups were held: one at Local Joe downtown Honolulu on June 10th, 2016, and another one at UH Manoa campus on June 13th, 2016, each with 10 attendees. The purpose of these 2 first meetups were getting a sense of people's interests in open source GIS and what those interests are. It was also to find out if there is enough people to even start a user group. General feedbacks and comments seem to suggest that people are interested in learning more about open source GIS, and having such a user group to share and learn from each other.

Stephanie, host of the meetups talked about why she's organizing this user group and what the purpose of this group is.

Here's my explanation: I just feel that open source GIS (OS GIS) has come a long way and has really matured within the last 5 years that now feels like a good time to start a user group in Hawaii. I first started looking into

OS GIS as a way to create a fuller set of tools to make my job more efficient, but it was really frustrating not being able to talk to anyone locally about OS GIS. The online forums, blogs, etc. that I'm looked into weren't much help. I know there are others who also use OS GIS, but I didn't know who they were or how they use OS GIS. This user group is a chance to connect and share with others.

II. Purpose of OS GIS User Group

The purpose of this user group is to make learning GIS accessible to everyone via an open source platform, and to foster the sharing of knowledge within the local GIS community.

Following up on the purpose of the user group was a discussion on existing OS GIS activities, some which included the following:

- UHM SOEST Environmental Science Program has taught courses using Matlab, GMT, QGIS,
- Matt Barbee (SOEST) currently teaching Summer introductory GIS course (although primary using ArcGIS).
- Some attendees talked about their own experience with OS GIS. Experiences ran the gamut with some having used OS GIS such as GRASS, QGIS, GDAL quite a bit, others have tinkered a little bit with OS GIS here and there and some have no GIS experience at all but would like to learn.

III. Goals of OS GIS User Group

Group discussed some goals that are related to the purpose of the user group:

- Create a consortium/network to connect people, labs, organizations/agencies for the purpose of sharing data and knowledge.
 - Labs, agencies, organizations with Points of Contact (POC)
 - UH Manoa Labs: SOEST (JP, MB) MAGIS/Hamilton Map Library (TK)
 - Agencies: DLNR/CRWM (JK), NOAA (RW, GC), USGS (LM)
 - Private organizations: Group 70 (SS), HHF(JH), HCRI/RMH (MC)
 - Other possible labs, agencies, organizations to reach out to: UHM DURP, UHM Geography Dept, UHM Botany/EECB, NREM, TPSS, PDC, CCH, State GIS Program, Invasive Species Committees (OICS, BISC, MISC, etc), other companies from private sector.
- Develop curriculum for learning OS GIS

- Attendees discuss importance of having curriculum that uses case studies/research/projects and data to showcase how GIS is used to help solve issues relevant to Hawaii.
- Draft outline OS GIS curriculum. Input from attendees include:
 - Intro to GIS/QGIS
 - Spatial Analyses: tutorials using case studies/research and data that pertain to Hawaii. Also mention of 3D analyse
 - Cartography/Data Visualization
 - Open Data and Standards
 - Web Application Development
 - Remote Sensing/Lidar
- Provide online tutorials for learning on your own
 - This is related to the curriculum development. Tutorials shouldn't just be about how to use the software, but also focus on how GIS principals are applied to a real world issues or context that people can understand.
- Offer instructor led hands-on training/workshops: In lab setting? BYOL (Bring Your Own Laptop) setting?
 - Potential collaboration with DURP lab, UH MAGIS/Hamilton Library, and SOEST lab for hands-on trainings.
 - BYOL setting more preferable (?) as it allows for participants to do training/tutorials on their own machine, and at their convenience after the trainings/workshops. Can use OSGeo-Live, which provides a bootable ISO image on USB stick or DVD that allows users to try a variety of OS GIS software without directly needing to do installation on the hardrive – this will for easier for training/workshops as everyone will be using the same setup regardless of machine and OS. Possible venue for BYOL setting: Kakaako Agora, ProtoHUB, other space? More preferable to find place that doesn't charge a fee.

IV. GIS Community Interests

Some community interests that were discussed:

- Introduction to OS GIS such as QGIS
- Linking students with organizations/companies who are looking for GIS interns

- Crowd sourcing of projects of local interests benefitting the community
- Possible GIS “Firm” Crawl where a lab, organization or agency host an onsite show and tell of their GIS projects.
- Open data, standards, and accessibility
- Mention of existing open courseware at Penn State (<https://www.e-education.psu.edu/geog585/>). Perhaps the user group could use their curriculum as a start.

Out of curiosity, Steph asked attendees, “What does open source GIS mean to you?” Answers included:

- Software: QGIS, OGC, Free
- Not Arc (meaning not ArcGIS)
- Open Data and Standards
- To grow base users
- Share and support partners who don’t have access to ArcGIS
- Accessibility and Affordability
- Cross platform

V. Next Steps

Attendees/Group came up with 3 tasks to help move the user group initiatives forward. All of these tasks need volunteers/contributors.

1. GIS Software (Introduction to GIS software – QGIS, GRASS, GDAL)

- Stephanie is working on a quick intro to QGIS tutorial. To be posted soon to opengislab.com
- Need volunteers who have experience with GRASS, GDAL, PostGIS, etc.

2. Open Data, Standards, and Accessibility

- Matt Barbee/Jim Potemra (SOEST) volunteered to take the lead on this topic

3. Applied GIS (applications/tutorials): Remote sensing, Lidar, others.

- Lidar/DEM Applications: Ross Winans (NOAA) volunteered to take the lead
- Remote Sensing/Imagery/Classification: Miguel Castrence (HCGI/RMP) volunteered to take the lead

- Other areas of GIS Applications needed: any suggestions appreciated

Future Tasks on more advanced topics such as Coding & Web Applications.

VI. Future Meetings

- Venue for future meetings
 - Group 70 or other downtown location?
 - UH Manoa location?
 - Other locations? Possible State sponsored space if non-profit use (e.g. DLNR)
 - Suggestion of doing webcasts on HIGICC site.
- Frequency and meeting times
 - Don't want to have too many meetings that people will get tired attending, also don't want to be infrequent that people lose interests or forget what was said or done.
 - Monthly meeting with revolving focus, such as Open Data/Standards/Accessibility, RS, QGIS, etc. Key contributors/volunteers could meet as needed to work on specific tasks.
 - Meeting times could be mornings before work, evenings after work, or possible weekend so as not to cut into people's work schedule.
- Next Meeting
 - If holding monthly meetings – every 3rd Friday of the month?
 - Tentative date of Friday, July 15th, 2016. Time and location TBA. See website opengislab.com for update, one week prior to date of meeting.
 - Tentative topic: Quick look/Intro to QGIS; plan hands-on workshop for Fall (Sept?)

VII. Website

I (Stephanie) started the website solely as a personal site, but depending on how the user group develops, Stephanie is looking at changing the website opengislab.com to opengislab.org or create a subdomain just for the user group. Either way, searching for typing opengislab.com, *.org or *.net domain names will still go to the same site. More information to come.

< Open Source GIS User Group -
Intro to QGIS

USGS TNM Style Map
Template - ArcGIS >

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