



December 2008

Welcome to the thirty-fifth edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to over 1700 of our users and partner agencies to keep them informed of data updates, GIS events, and on-going technology developments. This newsletter will not replace more focused e-mails that many of you currently receive. A page on our website has been created for the [GISette](#). There you will find back issues of the GISette and an [online subscription form](#).

While our primary intent in publishing the GISette is to disseminate information related to MassGIS initiatives and data development in particular, we also see the GISette as a means of communicating public agency GIS news. So we encourage readers to send in updates or announcements concerning public agencies that they would like included in the GISette. We particularly want to encourage submission of announcements concerning data development projects. Announcements should be sent to Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

Distribution of USGS 2008 Orthoimages

We had hoped to have the [2008 USGS Orthophotos](#) ready for distribution this month, but several unforeseen problems have caused us to adjust our release date until January. The image tiles were delivered in UTM and needed to be reprojected to MA State Plane and this process has resulted in some flaws, which need to be ironed out. Also, we need to deresolve (or over pixelize) sites that have been deemed sensitive for reasons of security. Extracting and manipulating just those sites, combined with the projection issue has caused further problems. We regret the delay and appreciate the patience of our users and customers. As soon as the entire suite of products is complete, we'll post its availability on our [homepage](#).

Open Source at MassGIS

Recently in the blogosphere there have been comments about MassGIS being a recent convert to open source software. This is incorrect - we have been using open source products in our web mapping services software stack for many years. In the past couple of years we have added Geoserver to that stack and, recently, we added support services from open source web service provider OpenGeo (see below). Our use of Geoserver has allowed us to expand capacity without additional costs. However, MassGIS also uses and will continue to use proprietary software in delivering web mapping services. Our choice of software takes into account a variety of factors. The first and most important factor is what best meets our needs while also, of course, factoring in cost. Second is the disruption and cost involved in shifting away from an existing software platform. The seemingly obvious choice of a lower-cost functional alternative can look less attractive after you factor in the "cost" of disruptions and added stress on limited staff resources.

Database Updates

- **Updates to DEP Public Water Supply Layers - 12/10/2008**
The MassDEP GIS Group has updated the following layers:
 - [Public Water Supplies](#)
 - [Zone IIs, IWPA](#)
 - [Surface Water Supply Protection Areas \(Zone A, B, C\)](#)
 - [Surface Water Supply Watersheds](#)
- **[OpenSpace Updated](#) - 12/3/2008**
The MassGIS Protected and Recreational OpenSpace Datalayer has been updated with various edits in 76 municipalities within the Commonwealth, affecting nearly 1,500 acres in total. Numerous conservation restrictions were edited in Norton, Westwood, Swansea, and others. Spatial adjustments were made to many agricultural preservation restrictions in several towns, including Williamsburg, Dudley, and Great Barrington. Many dozens of polygons were enhanced in municipalities such as Pelham, Orleans, and Framingham. A new shapefile and personal geodatabase have been placed on our ftp site.
- **[Shellfish Suitability Areas Layer Updated](#) - 11/7/2008**
Updates include recoding misidentified habitat data, modifying polygon shapes, and adding additional polygons based on new information.

What's New on the MassGIS Web Site

[Watershed-based Hydro Network Centerlines](#) - 10/31/2008

Data for the Buzzards Bay Watershed are now available for download. Note that data for this watershed have not been processed to be used with the ArcView 3.x Data Viewer Watershed Analyst tools.

Online Mapping

Performance Enhancements

MassGIS has contracted with OpenGeo, the geospatial division of The Open Planning Project (TOPP), the group that started the GeoServer project in 2001, for improvements to our GeoServer web mapping services. The first task, already started, is to complete the coding begun by Saul Farber to allow GeoServer to read all rasters types from SDE. Upon completion of this work USGS topos, impervious surface and wind speed grids, ocean radar maps and other rasters will be available through the MassGIS web services. MassGIS has an improved version of the OLIVER online mapping client which will be released once all rasters are available. In addition, TOPP will help MassGIS improve the system's speed and reliability. For announcements on progress, feel free to join the public MassGIS web mapping services Google Group at http://groups.google.com/group/massgis_webservices/ MassGIS will strive to upgrade the system while keeping downtime to a minimum. Feel free to send other questions or comments to Aleda.Freeman@state.ma.us.

Staff Announcements

Goodbye

We wish a farewell to data technician Laura Roy. We appreciate her contribution to the NAVTEQ Geocoding Project over the past year and a half. We wish her well in her future endeavors and with the impending birth of her first child.

Any comments or suggestions about the GISette are welcome – send to paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS-The Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information is located within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and is charged with the collection, enhancement, storage and dissemination of the Commonwealth's geographic data.

Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)

251 Causeway St. Suite 500

Boston, MA 02114

Phone: (617) 626-1238

Fax: (617) 626-1249

