



October 2009

Welcome to the 40th edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to more than 1,700 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.

24th Annual Northeast Arc Users Group Conference

Hundreds of GIS users from across the northeast met at the Radisson Hotel in Nashua, New Hampshire at the beginning of the month for the [24th Annual Northeast Arc Users Group Conference](#).

Staff members from MassGIS delivered presentations that are now posted on our website. Aleda Freeman's presentation is [Using a Mix of Technologies to Collect and Present Geographic Information on the Web \(or desktop\)](#).

Dan Marrier presented [Wind Development Sites in Cape Cod, MA - A Modeled Scenario Approach](#).

Preparing for 2010 Census

In continuing support of Census 2010, MassGIS has recently updated and certified the list of all cities and towns in the Commonwealth, and submitted them to the Census Bureau's Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) State Certification program. While the number of communities has not changed since 2000, a few have been reclassified with regards to Census nomenclature.

First, we verified that the community names match the official names that we have on record here. This means Manchester-by-the-Sea is recorded as such, and not simply "Manchester". Also, Attleboro remains the only community with a "-boro" suffix (whereas all the other similar suffixes are spelled "-borough"). There were no naming errors found in the Census lists.

The primary purpose of this update, however, was to identify which communities are cities, which communities are towns, and which communities are towns that utilize a city form of government. According to the Census Bureau, an [Incorporated Place](#) is "established to provide governmental functions for a concentration of people, as opposed to a [Minor Civil Division](#) (MCD), which generally is created to provide services or administer an area without regard, necessarily, to population." However, towns in the New England states, New York, and Wisconsin are considered MCDs, and retain the functional equivalence of an incorporated place. So for our purposes in Massachusetts, an incorporated place is any community that has adopted a city form of government and every other town is considered an MCD. For a more thorough explanation of how the two types of entities differ, please consult the Census Bureau's [Geographic Terms and Concepts document](#).

With the assistance of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office, as well as the invaluable resources

found on the [Forms of Municipal Government/Charters](#) page maintained by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, MassGIS verified the status of each community through 2007 as either an incorporated place or a minor civil division. The communities of Amesbury, Greenfield, Palmer, Braintree, Weymouth, Winthrop, and Southbridge were added to Franklin, Watertown, East Hampton, West Springfield, Agawam, and Methuen as the list of towns that have adopted a city type of government. These 14 towns are considered to be incorporated places, not minor civil divisions. Our various town boundary GIS data layers have had their TYPE attribute edited to account for this update as well.

If you have any questions about this topic, or other census-related activities at MassGIS, please contact Dan Marrier at daniel.marrier@state.ma.us.

Database Updates

- **[OpenSpace Updated](#) - 10/22/2009**

The open space staff continues to append and enhance the Protected and Recreational OpenSpace database with the large amount of data that have been received in the past year from municipalities, regional planning agencies, land trusts, and other state agencies. Since the last publication, work has been performed in more than 125 municipalities affecting more than 5,300 acres. Municipalities realizing the largest changes include Westborough, Granby, Northampton, Norton, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Douglas, Winchendon, and Mattapoisett. A new shapefile and personal geodatabase have been placed on our ftp site, representing data updated as of 10/20/09.

- **[Ice Rinks Layer Updated](#) - 10/22/2009**

A few points had their positions and/or attributes modified and the Butler rink in Hyannis was added. In addition, the LEGIS, FACIL_STAT, and LABEL fields were added.

- **[EOT-OTP Roads Updated](#) - 10/16/2009**

The Yearend 2008 release is now available for the EOT-OTP Roads datalayer. Also updated is the Major Roads layer.

- **[Designated Shellfish Growing Areas Layer updated](#) - 10/15/2009**

The Mass. Department of Fish and Game has updated the DSGA layer, recoding several polygons and modifying the attribute table. Also, the line layer (DSAG_ARC) has been dropped.

- **[Town boundary layers updated](#) - 9/23/2009**

The [Towns](#), [Towns from Survey Points](#) and [Boundaries](#) polygon layers had their TYPE values changed to 'TC' (town with city form of government) for Braintree, Palmer, Randolph and Winthrop, based on information from the Massachusetts' Secretary of State's office.

- **[NHESP Certified Vernal Pools Layer Updated](#) - 8/31/2009**

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has updated the Certified Vernal Pools layer. The update is effective beginning August 27, 2009.

- **[Surficial Geology \(1:24,000\) Layer Updated](#) - 8/28/2009**

Data for "Area D" are now available. This area comprises nine quads and includes parts of Worcester, and extends south to Douglas and Uxbridge, and east to Wrentham and part of Attleboro. This data layer is part of a comprehensive study by the U.S. Geological Survey to produce a statewide digital map of the surficial geology at a 1:24,000-scale. This compilation of surficial geologic materials defines the areas of exposed bedrock, and the boundaries between glacial till, glacial stratified deposits, and overlying early-postglacial and postglacial deposits. All layers but the early-postglacial were updated in Area D.

Online Mapping

OLIVER Has Changed

We continue to get inquiries about layers missing from OLIVER so we want to remind folks that indeed while some enhancements have been made, nothing has been eliminated (other than the Login step!). Once launched, the "Viewer" menu allows the user to change the layer tree from the default, which has fewer choices and thus should be simpler to use for novices, to the complete version, which most experts have come to use. A list of all of the changes can be found on the [launch page](#).

MassGIS Web Mapping Services (WMS) for Windows Vista or Windows 7 Users

Users of Windows Vista or Windows 7 can use a new desktop gadget called the GOS (GeoSpatial One Stop) Dashboard to browse for geographic data and launch GIS applications. This product was developed by [The Carbon Project](#) (with partners the US Army Corp of Engineers and the NSDI community) under a [The Federal Geographic Data Committee \(FGDC\) Cooperative Agreements Program \(CAP\) grant](#) and uses <http://www.geodata.gov>. Since MassGIS' WMS and WFS are connected to the GeoData.Gov site, all of the 850 datalayers available through the MassGIS Web Mapping Services are available through the new GOS Dashboard. The product connects to GeoData.Gov via a GeoRSS feed. More info about the tool, including a slideshow, demo movie, forum and download link are available at the Carbon Portal's [Gadget for GeoData.Gov](#) Web page.

MassGIS WMS for the iPhone

The Town of Amherst's GIS Administrator, Mike Olkin, told us that he discovered a free iPhone application that allows for display of WMS layers. It's called [WhateverMap](#) and MassGIS' WMS work fine.

Events

The [New England Chapter of URISA \(NEURISA\)](#) is pleased to announce a one-day conference on November 16th, from 8:30 - 4:00. The conference theme is "Trends in Making Integrated Information More Accessible". The event is being held at the Sturbridge Host Hotel in Sturbridge, MA. The preliminary program and a link to on-line registration (\$35, including lunch) can be found on the [NEURISA web site](#).

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

