

Check out GeoMentor Events at the AAG Annual Meeting in Boston!

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While 2017 has started off with a lot of change, one thing remains constant: the need for more spatial and geographic thinking in US K-12 schools. GeoMentors are as important as ever in their ability to help introduce and expand GIS and geography education for America's youth. How will you get involved this year? If you need ideas or have questions, contact us at [geomentors@aag.org](mailto:geomentors@aag.org).

Current GeoMentor Count: 1,421



Current School Count: 4,376



Click on images to view the online maps. Choose map tab 1 to see ConnectED schools; choose map tab 4 to view the GeoMentors network.

## Monthly Mentor Challenge

We know that our GeoMentors may face unique situations and challenges in their local communities when seeking out or setting up volunteer collaborations. Our goal is to motivate and assist you in your desire to help K-12 teachers and students engage with GIS and geography. In order to further improve the program and help you in your efforts, this month we challenge you to:

**Contact GeoMentors program staff with 1 program suggestion, question, or comment**

We want to continue making this program better and YOU are the best informants to help us do so! Email us at [geomentors@aag.org](mailto:geomentors@aag.org), contact us via Twitter [@AAGGeoMentors](https://twitter.com/AAGGeoMentors) or [Facebook](#), or use our [online feedback form](#).

# GeoMentor Spotlight

## Ryan Mello

Each newsletter we feature a GeoMentor volunteer to showcase the wonderful talent available in our community to assist K-12 schools.

**Name:** Ryan Mello

**Position and Affiliation:** GIS Project Manager for the Maryland Critical Area Remapping Project

**What was your favorite class in K-12?**

Middle school science. We were finally able to do real experiments and were able to learn about how the earth works.

**How did you first learn about and/or use GIS?** During my fourth year of undergrad, I had just changed my major from Education to Geography and I took a required course. I have been using GIS ever since.



**Name one thing you love about GIS**

**and/or geography:** GIS and Geography both allow us to better understand pretty much everything around us. Whether it is why the clouds look like that or where should we put a new grocery store. Understanding how the world works and to know that we can analyze data to better solve problems is incredible. Oh, and I love maps.

**Why did you want to volunteer as a GeoMentor?** I initially went to college for Education to teach Middle School Science; however, in my last year I was loving my geography courses and dreading the education ones. So I changed majors and although I do not regret it, I still like the idea of teaching and being a GeoMentor seems like a good way to do both.

**What kind of GeoMentor volunteer opportunity and experience are you looking for?** I have many friends who are teachers and they are either not aware of the resources out there for them to use GIS in the classroom, or they are already constrained to their curriculum. If I am not able to actually teach, I would like to be able to reach out to teachers so they know about these resources.

**If someone asked you why they should learn about GIS and/or geography, how would you respond in one sentence?** You live in this world, and you should know as much as you can about it.

**Email:** [Rgmello@salisbury.edu](mailto:Rgmello@salisbury.edu)

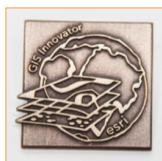
**Website:** [LinkedIn](#)

**Twitter:** [@RyanM\\_GISP](#)

Read our full collection of GeoMentor spotlights [online](#). Want to be featured? Information is available on our [program website](#).

## Earn a Free Pin

Share your GeoMentor experience as a [case study](#) and receive the Esri GIS Innovator pin!



## Get Your Certificate

[Tell us](#) about your activities and receive an official [certificate of participation!](#)



## Esri Extends ConnectED Commitment to 2019

### Support for GeoMentors Program Continues

Esri's ConnectED donation of free ArcGIS Online software to US K-12 schools, first announced in 2014, will now extend through 2019! In addition to their continued software donation, Esri has pledged to produce more [GeoInquiries](#) for curriculum use and to continue support of the GeoMentors program managed by the American Association of Geographers (that's us!). [Read more](#) about Esri's announcement including expansion of software donations to schools outside of the US.



## GeoMentor Events at the 2017 AAG Annual Meeting in Boston

### Check out our Panel Session, Poster, Workshop, and Display Area!

Are you attending the upcoming AAG Annual Meeting in Boston, April 5th-9th? If so, the GeoMentors program will have a very active presence with a variety of ways you can learn more about our efforts, get ideas on how to get involved, meet other GeoMentors, and engage with program staff. Please consider attending or visiting one of the following (we would love to meet you!):

1. **Display Area:** Check out the GM display, located on the same floor as registration, for program information and to ask questions to program staff. We'll give you a ribbon to sport on your name badge for the week! Tell your non-GeoMentor friends to come by too!




2. **Panel Session: Wednesday, April 5th; 4:40-6:20 pm;** ["GeoMentors: Assisting in the Advancement of Geographic Education."](#) Current GeoMentors will speak about their experiences and answer questions from the audience. Come to discuss our mutual interest in finding ways to enhance GIS & geography education outreach to K-12 students.
3. **Workshop: Thursday, April 6th; 3:20 – 5:00 pm;** ["GeoMentors: A Program Primer and Strategies for Success."](#) Current and aspiring GeoMentor volunteers are encouraged to attend this workshop led by program staff. It will provide a program overview, covering aspects from the registration process and finding collaborators to available resources and example activities. Participants are encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and discuss strategies, challenges, and success stories of the GeoMentors program and general K-12 outreach efforts.
4. **Poster: GIS&T Poster Session: Friday, April 7th; 8:00 – 11:40 am;** ["GeoMentors: A Nationwide Volunteer Network Supporting GIS and Geography in K-12 Education."](#) Short on time, but want to get a quick rundown of the program and our progress? Stop by the GIS&T poster session to check out our overview poster and chat with program staff.






## GeoMentor Program in the Twitterverse

Do you follow us on Twitter, [@AAGGeoMentors](#)? Stay in touch with us and keep up with program news, 140 characters at a time.


**NatGeo Education**  
@NatGeoEducation

Following

It's [#NationalMentoringMonth](#). What a great chance to get a Geo-Mentor—or become one! [@AAGGeoMentors](#) on.natgeo.com/2iCuoOV



**Nettie Ginocchetti**  
@nettiegino

Following


**Bama Geography**  
@BamaGeography

Following

## Featured Resource

### New Ecological Marine Units Map

Esri has partnered with the USGS, NOAA, academics, and non-profits to provide a new map of one of the last frontiers of our world to be mapped thoroughly: the ocean and its depths. The global ecological marine units (EMUs) map provides “a three-dimensional perspective of the ocean's staggering dimensions and complexity” including information on salinity, temperature, oxygen levels, and nutrients. You can access this resource via the [EMU Explorer Web app](#) and explore [Esri's Ecological Marine Units ArcGIS Online Group](#) for additional resources.



If you have resources you would like to suggest for this feature or to share with fellow GeoMentors in general, please share them with us at [geomentors@aag.org](mailto:geomentors@aag.org).

## Help Reach our Community Goal of 1,000 GeoMentor Engagements

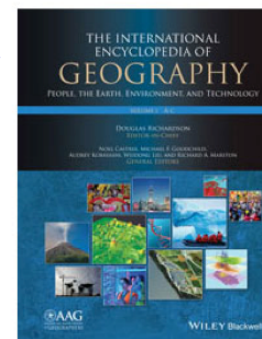
Report your activities, big or small!

Documenting your GeoMentor activities is important to help us: 1) know the impact our program is making, 2) learn how we can better support you in your efforts, and, 3) acknowledge your service with our program certificate. To make this as easy as possible we have a [streamlined online reporting form](#). If you have any past activities to report, use it to let us know. If you are planning activities for the future, make a note to fill it out after your events. Simply provide the who/what/where/when from your activities and hit submit! From helping a school register for their ArcGIS Online account and having conversations with educators to discuss opportunities, to teaching in the classroom or helping design custom exercises, every type of activity and outreach effort counts. Each and every one can be the spark that leads to more interest in and engagement with spatial thinking for K-12 students.

## Announcing the new International Encyclopedia of Geography

The AAG has partnered with Wiley and an international team of distinguished editors and authors to produce a monumental new reference work, [The International Encyclopedia of Geography: People, the Earth, Environment, and Technology](#). The Encyclopedia includes more than 1,000 entries from more than 900 scholars in over 40 countries, providing a truly comprehensive overview of the discipline. You can read sample articles of the 15 volume work on [Wiley's website](#).

The AAG's next Twitter Chat will focus on the encyclopedia and have many contributing editors and authors participating. The chat will occur on Thursday, March 16, 2017, from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST. To participate in the chat, please use the hashtag, [#AAGChat](#) (and follow [@TheAAG](#) on Twitter!).





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ACTIVITIES



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