

DPRK Volunteer Profiles

DPRK Volunteer Profile Page

This profile page belongs to GISCorps' mission with the World Food Program (WFP) which is in collaboration with iMMAP. This ongoing project started in 2009 and to date, over 50 volunteers have worked on it. Due to the magnitude of the project more volunteers may be deployed in the near future. The project is managed by an amazing team of volunteers and this page will start with their profiles. They are: Carol Kraemer, Chris Zumwalt, Karen Payne, Patrick Young and Scott Oatley. Read more here.

Name: Carol Kraemer

Organization: Gainesville State College (GSC)/Institute for Environmental and Spatial Analysis (IESA), Oakwood, GA

GISCorps mission/Year served: (DPRK) Mission with iMMAP/WFP – North Korea/2010-present

Share your experience about the mission: I was brought into the mission while still in the pilot phase and have been watching it evolve ever since. I feel fortunate to be a part of such an important mission. The contribution of our volunteers has been awe inspiring especially given the many challenges we have faced being a large, remote team that currently stretches across the globe.

Anything else to share: Though I have been working in GIS since 2001, I am a recent graduate of GSC/IESA where I also work as GIS support staff, a rewarding experience in its own right. My personal ambition seems to revolve around creating a sense of community while providing education and support.

Carol Kraemer

Name: Chris Zumwalt

Organization: WRA, Inc.

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, 2010-2012

Share your experience about the project: I've been involved with the DPRK project since the pilot phase and it has been a fantastic experience watching it grow from inception to the current state. I've really enjoyed working with the wonderful volunteers past and present. Seeing the dedication and time given by these people, is simply amazing and makes me extremely proud to be a part of this effort.

Anything else to share: Volunteering with the GISCorps has been the most rewarding work I have done. It's a great feeling to use the unique skills we all have in GIS to make a real difference.

Chris Zumwalt

Name: Dr. Karen Payne

Organization: University of Georgia/Information Technology Outreach Services

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, 2009-2012
Share your experience about the mission: It is my privilege to be part of the GISCorps, iMMAP, ITOS and WFP team developing much needed data for the wider humanitarian community. My role has been to develop the data processing protocol, trouble shoot questions from volunteers, manage data flow and documentation, and at the end of the project make the data available to the public through our portal (<https://gistdata.itos.uga.edu>). It has been a truly great experience and I am grateful for the generosity of the group of professionals who have provided their time and expertise.

Anything else to share: I can't say enough good things about the management of the GISCorps as an organization. I think Shoreh does an exceptional (unpaid!) job managing both people and projects. It is a pleasure to watch her and learn.

Karen Payne

Name: Patrick Young

Organization: HDR Engineering, Inc.

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, since 2010

Share your experience about the mission: I love any opportunity I get to work with other GIS professionals and learn new skills. Working as a digitizer and now as a team leader on the DPRK project has definitely given me that opportunity. Throughout this project, I've noticed that the leadership team works hard to try to promote individual progress and creativity while also maintaining the integrity of the product the team is working hard to create. I am very excited to see the project through to the end and be able to see the good that will come from it.

Anything else to share: I think it's great that, like in other professional fields, GISCorps offers GIS professionals the opportunity to volunteer and utilize their technical skills to support humanitarian relief.

Partick Young

Name: Scott Oatley

Organization: Historical Information Gatherers, Inc.

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Mapping / 2 years 3 months

Share your experience about the mission: I'm enjoying working on the project. It's introduced me to some great people and provided the opportunity to gain some new skills and rekindle a few old ones.

Anything else to share: in 2005, I decided to make a career out of electronics and software engineering; after 20 years, it was time for a change. I looked for something that offered a more tangible connection between my work and society and found it in GIS. My favorite use of GIS is in planning, smart growth, and sustainability.

Scott Oatley on the summit of Hagues Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park

Name: David Litke

Organization: USGS - Retired

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, 2011/2012

Share your experiences about the mission: I've enjoyed working with a team of persons who are interested in making the

world a better place. GISCorps is great because there is the opportunity of working in the field as well as working right from the comfort of your home!

Anything else to share: While with the USGS, I discovered how fulfilling it is to work with colleagues in far-flung places such as Ethiopia and Afghanistan. Now that I am retired, I am happy that organizations like GISCorps make it possible to keep my skills sharp, as well as continuing to be a participating member of the world community.

David Litke

Name: (Mary) German Whitley

Organization: Seasonal/On-call employee of Watershed Sciences, Inc.- Corvallis , OR Seasonal/On-call employee of Deer Creek GIS-Chico, CA

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, since 2010

Share your experience about the mission: I've really enjoyed my time working on the project. Since I work seasonally, it is nice to have some GIS work in the off-season to keep me on my toes and make contacts I might not make otherwise. And every project I work on, volunteer or otherwise, leads me to new discoveries within ArcMap that make my job easier and more efficient. It would be nice to have a video conference at some point during the project just to meet some of the other team members "face-to-face".

Anything else to share: I fell into GIS while working for the US Forest Service as a Hydrologist almost 15 years ago when most tasks were done via command line. I had an aptitude for it that has helped form my career ever since. GIS even led me to meeting my husband at a conference (double nerd alert!). Now that he is retired from the Forest Service, and I work part-time, we have more time to volunteer and travel.

German Whitley

Name: Jasmine Ward

Organization: Ward Computer Services Inc.

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, 2010

Share your experience about the mission: The digitization project was both challenging and interesting. I was able to grow professionally by utilizing new skills in completing the scope of the project. I also felt fulfilled knowing that the work was being used for a humanitarian purpose. The coordinators and team leaders of the project were very knowledgeable of GIS and demonstrated professionalism and organization in the execution of the project. I was impressed with the collaboration tools that were used to coordinate the project effort.

Jasmine Ward

Name: Jennifer Horsman

Organization: jencarta, LLC.

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP 2011-2012

Share your experiences about the mission: I just began work on this mission and so do not have much experience as of yet! I have completed digitizing my first map sheet and am anxiously awaiting the results of the QA/QC process so that I can get started on another sheet. It is a great opportunity and I am honored to have been selected to work on this project.

Jennifer Horsman

Name: William Craft

Organization: PenBay Solutions

GIS Mission/Years Served: DPRK (less than 1 year) - since 2011

Share your experiences about the mission: The volunteer work with GISCorps for DPRK is very fun and fulfilling. Knowing that I'm helping a good cause while putting my professional skillset to use is a wonderful feeling!

Anything else to share: I am a new URISA member, having just received my GISP in May 2011. I've also just been selected to server a 2-year term on URISA's Vanguard Cabinet, which is a very exciting opportunity to help the GIS field's young professionals.

Bill Craft

Name: Nicholas Hayden

Organization: NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas Center

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK mission since Oct '11

Share your experience about the mission: Just getting started!

Nicholas Hayden

Name: Francesco Petrosino, Professional Consultant Engineering Geologist

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK iMMAP/WFP project, 2011/2014

Share your experience about the mission: I am an engineering geologist and a GIS expert of landslide susceptibility mapping and seismic hazard. I found GISCorps 3 years ago and was recruited for the DPRK iMMAP/WFP project in 2011. I'm proud to be a member of the QC/QA team, after having digitized a number of tiles. I'm sharing my GISCorps experience in several Italian technical meetings and classes, one of the more recent classes is a Geological Hazard Defense class for the Regional Civil Defense Network that I belong to. I appreciate the hard work of all other team members especially Carol, Karen, Patrick and Scott.

Francesco Petrosino

October 2012 Profiles (Star Volunteers): The following volunteers have digitized the largest number of map sheets in the past few months. We are grateful for their dedication and support.

Name: Svetla Borovska

Organization: Tompkins County, New York

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK project, 2012

Share your experience about the mission: I am very excited to be engaged in the DPRK project as my first assignment to help the GISCorps. While the one sentence goal of the DPRK project is easy to read and sounds simple, the actual work is challenging and engaging. We are bringing into being a national map schema for an "uncharted" country from literally nothing but scanned topographic sheets. This important work is all being done by volunteers. As professionals in the field I am sure we all appreciate the scope and ambition of this project, and the great value and public benefit that will flow from our efforts for years to come. It is a privilege to be among the group with the training and skill needed to make this simple goal become a complex and valuable reality.

Anything else to share: As a GIS professional for the County government I can see how my work helps government entities and officials, and the people of the general public, better understand and appreciate our piece of the world and what is happening within it. It is very gratifying and exciting to have the opportunity to work on the DPRK project and create this same value on an even larger scale. I am looking forward to working on more projects and taking on more challenges with the GISCorps.

Svetla Borovska

Name: Naiara Fernández

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK project, since May 2012 and the Sandy MapMill Project in December 2012

Share your experience about the mission: I had been willing to be involved in a GISCorps mission since I knew about its existence. Last year, I was given the opportunity to work on two different projects: the veteran DPRK project and the Sandy MapMill project. The DPRK project is a well-established one and as such, there is a huge amount of documentation, information and tools that help us, digitizers, contributing in the most effective way. The digitizing protocol is a very detailed and valuable document that I always keep in hand while working on the project. The website and the forums are highly useful also! In the future, I would like to be involved in the quality assessment team so that I can get to know a different aspect of this project. Definitely, I am enjoying being part of this huge project that involves so many people and I hope it will be helpful for the WFP and iMMAP in their future humanitarian actions. The Sandy MapMill Project, was a short duration one, in which GISCorps volunteers were asked to assess damage caused by super storm Sandy using the same remote imagery server and images that were already assessed by other volunteers via a crowd sourced project. The idea was to help the project, giving them feedback on how to improve the platform. Lots of info has since then been provided to us about the crowd sourced project itself. This mission was really exciting for me, as it was my first experience in a crowd sourced project related to disaster assessment.

Anything else to share: I love GIS and spatial related technologies, fields in which I have several years of experience. GISCorps, thanks to their amazing work, gives us, volunteers from different fields, the chance to contribute our time and expertise to the community. And so far, I can say that I am learning an awful lot on the way...Hopefully these assignments won't be my last!

Naiara Fernández

Name: Helen Hands

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP, 2012

Share your experience about the mission: The work has involved digitizing the road network and water features from topo maps. It has given me a real appreciation for the work involved to produce the spatial datasets we routinely download and use. I have also benefited from seeing how this team effort is organized so that each member is interpreting and digitizing the top maps the same way.

Anything else to share: I started using GIS 15 years ago to map wetland habitat. At the time, I only thought of GIS as being useful for environmental projects. Now I have first-hand experience using GIS for visualizing and querying U.S. Census and school district data needed to write grant proposals for a local public television station. It's amazing how ubiquitous GIS has become.

Helen Hands

Name: Nathan Bruce

Organization: County of Hastings - Planning & Development Department

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK, 1st Mission/1.5 years

Share your experience about the mission: After seeing the accomplishments made by a colleague and his own professional GIS volunteering, I joined the GISCorps with the hope of helping others with my unique skillset. The DPRK Project has been my first mission with the GISCorps, and it's been an amazing introduction to this organization and its members. This project allowed me to apply skills and knowledge, and in turn, it has taught me about teamwork, innovative work methods and the world beyond the office. Working with the DRPK team has been a great experience; I quickly learned that communications are the key to success with this project, given the number of team members, their geographical dispersal and the complex GIS work taking place. A lot of time was spent to make the real work of digitizing North Korea's country side extremely efficient; blogs, emails and reference manuals, help layout work processes and offer common ground for project discussion and transfer of ideas. With a country as reclusive as North Korea, its basic geography is absent from most maps, a fact that is unimaginable to us in this internet age, who can Street View anything in the neighborhood. So personally, working on this mission has made me to appreciate mapping at its most base level again, and I can take a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that this mission's success will have filled a void, directing help to where it is needed.

Nathan Bruce

Name: Judy Colby-George

Organization: Spatial Alternatives

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK, since 2009

Share your experience about the mission: This project has been great to work on. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to participate, even though my time has been limited over the past year. I look forward to continuing with this project and participating in more in the future.

Judy Colby-George

Name: Paul J. Giers

Organization: Americorps Intern, West Virginia Dept. of Environmental Protection

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK project 2011/2012

Share your experience about the mission: The DPRK project may not be the sexiest, most glamorous of missions undertaken by GISCorps, but it's been a terrific learning experience. Besides being an excellent opportunity to hone data creation and QA/QC skills, the mission is unique in that it requires complex coordination and management of a large team of volunteers over an extended period of time. Our team leads have deployed an impressive array of online tools and protocols that make the otherwise routine task of digitizing hundreds of 1:50k map sheets of North Korea an engaging and instructive undertaking. For a relative novice at GIS, like me, the chance to work with more experienced professionals on a big project like this has been a wonderful exposure to GIS project management.

Anything else to share: I've recently been granted an Americorps internship with the West Virginia Dept. of Environmental Protection, working on mine reclamation and enforcement, and I have to believe that having GISCorps experience on my resume had much to do with my being selected.

Paul Giers

Name: Kelli Brock

Organization: Southern Nevada Environmental Inc.

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK, 2012

Share your experience about the mission: I find DPRK to be a rewarding experience in that we are creating good, usable data where there was none before. This kind of work is similar to what I did when I started my GIS career many years ago. It's nice to be able to get back to doing the digitizing work that I don't get to do as much of anymore.

Kelli Brock

Profiles - August 2013

Name: Damien Butler

Organization: National Centre for Geocomputation, Maynooth, Ireland.

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK - May 2013
Share your experience about the mission: Only after recently coming on board to assist on the DPRK project (Literally 1 month). I am already pleasantly surprised with the experience of the core staff on this project. Having worked on a number of GIS volunteer projects my experience has always varied. This project is managed and structured very well. The lines of communication are constant and clear and the work flow and ethic are very refreshing. I am excited to be a part of the team and looking forward to working and learning from experts

in their relevant fields over the coming year.

Anything else to share: My background is in Computer Science but I have been working in the GIS field since 2008. The GIS field is somewhat Unique in a sense, it gives you the opportunity to use your GIS skills to help on projects from a broad range of areas from risk assessment, decision making to supporting the humanitarian community on the ground (my passion). Work like this is very rewarding.

Damien Butler

Name: Shannon Gonzales

Organization: Critigen (GIS Analyst)

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK (1 month) Share your experience about the mission: This is my first volunteer opportunity with GISCorps and I love the experience so far. The work is very interesting and it's exciting to be part of a team working on an impactful project, especially one with such a great history.

Anything else to share: I hope to work on more GISCorps projects in the future!

Shannon Gonzales Name: Jason Reyes

Organization: United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF), Next Tier Concepts

GISCorps mission/Year served: (DPRK) Mission with iMMAP/WFP – North Korea/2013-present

Share your experience about the mission: I was brought onto the DRPK mission in 2013 to digitize different parts of North Korea. I feel very honored and fortunate to help out with this mission. I look forward to helping out any way I can in the future.

Anything else to share: I started my career in 2011 when I graduated from University of Denver. I work for Next Tier Concepts as a Geospatial Engineer working with Google Fusion, Google Maps API, and Google Map Engine. My personal ambition is to use GIS to help solve the problems that face us around the world.

Jason Reyes

Name: Brian McLeer

Organization: Portland State University, Oregon and City of Clovis, New Mexico

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK Starting May 2013

Share your experience about the mission: I began digitizing in May 2013, and have increased my skills in digitizing, editing, and topology verification.

Anything else to share: I am a recent graduate of Portland State University and recently started a new position as GIS Technician for the City of Clovis, New Mexico.

Brian McLeer

Name: Name - Alex Woldemichael
Organization: Lockheed Martin

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK Project with iMMAP/WFP in 2013 & USAID crowdsourcing project in 2012

Share your experience about the mission: Share your experience about the mission - I am very grateful for the opportunity I got to participate in this noble idea with the profession I love. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate and applaud the dedication and the professionalism of the coordinators and project leaders. In summery I have a great opportunity to learn and teach the new techniques and skills I gained to fellow GIS professionals in this unbelievable ride. Thanks URISA.

Anything else to share: I feel like I'm participating in Medicine san frontier of GIS for such a good cause. I am so happy to share my time and knowledge for such a remarkable idea.

Alex Woldemichael

Name: Kerry Shakarjian

Organization: Continental Divide Trail Coalition

GISCorps mission/Year served: DPRK/1 yearShare your experience about the mission: DPRK is a well organized, large international collaborative effort. It has been a great experience to be a part of such an important project.

Anything else to share: Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills and meet new people, GISCorps is highly recommended as a way to expand your boundaries.

Kerry Shakarjian

Name: Beryl Nyamgeroh
Organization: Kenya Forest Service

GISCorps mission/Year served: DRRK Project with iMMAP and WFP, 2013

Share your experience about the mission: My first opportunity to take part in the GISCorps mission was very humbling for me especially the importance it has towards assisting the North Korean people and through iMMAP and WFP in their humanitarian endeavor. It is a rewarding experience to be able to make a difference in others' lives with the smallest of contributions. Volunteering using my skills in GIS to create a base map is a great honor and I am looking forward to more opportunities.

Anything else to share: GIS and Remote Sensing are my passion and as someone said, GIS is the last thing you think of but the first thing you need; gathering people from different geographical locations, backgrounds and with various experiences to volunteer to achieve one goal for bettering the lives of others? Only with GIS is that possible. Very proud!

Beryl Nyamgeroh
Name: Amy Sorensen, GIS Analyst, HDR

GISCorps mission / Year served: DPRK iMMAP/WFP Project 2012/2014

Experience about the mission: It is good to know that you can do something to effect change in other countries and to assist even though you cannot be there in person. I've been doing GIS for over ten years and this was the first time I've done any volunteer work that was centered on using GIS to accomplish its task. I am hopeful to hear about the results from this work and how they are used to assist the people of North Korea.

Anything else to share: I enjoy working with GIS because it has a way of leveling playing fields by disseminating information in easy to understand ways. In the future, I hope to do more volunteer work where I'm able to actually travel to the site and work with others.

Amy Sorensen