Welcome!

The Montana Association of Geographic Information Professionals (MAGIP) is a non-profit, professional GIS association that works to identify and support the strengths of individual members, find solutions to individual and collective problems, and address the needs of the Montana GIS community as a whole.

As another benefit of your MAGIP membership, the MAGIP GIS Mentoring program was developed to help meet the mission of the organization.

During this session we’ll explore the MAGIP GIS Mentoring program and its resources.
The MAGIP GIS Mentoring program is a concrete example of MAGIP fulfilling one of its stated purposes: Education. The MAGIP conferences and its online seminars also serve this education purpose. Before we continue, it’s important to differentiate the MAGIP GIS Mentoring program from other programs involving GIS and mentoring.

ESRI has a mentoring program with the purpose of educating primary and secondary school teachers.

The GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) also has a mentoring program. It offers those already certified as a GISP an opportunity to earn points toward their re-certification if s/he mentors GIS students or those just entering the field of GIS.

The MAGIP GIS Mentoring program was created to assist anyone who uses GIS in any field or endeavor, whether s/he is new to GIS or a long-time user. The program was created to support peer-to-peer problem solving as well as more traditional career mentoring. The only requirement to participate in the program is MAGIP membership.
The MAGIP GIS Mentoring program provides online resources serving as a kind of “virtual mentor” as well as a seamless way for any member, across the state, to seek assistance or guidance from another member when it's needed.

The program resources developed include:

* Online, self-service, “virtual mentor” content covering topics specific to practicing GIS in Montana as well as regional and/or online training opportunities.

* Our MAGIP members who have offered their time as mentors, some with over 20 years of experience with GIS

* The MAGIP member directory, which permits searching for mentors (as peers or as classic mentors) who can help troubleshoot a task, an entire project, or offer guidance with career development.
Once on the MAGIP home page, you gain access to the Mentoring program by expanding the Resources menu and choosing Mentoring.

When you first visit any Mentoring page, you’ll be presented with a Disclaimer. Please read this information. You must accept this disclaimer to gain access to the resources of the MAGIP GIS Mentoring program. You’ll only see this disclaimer once, unless you empty your browser history or if you restrict browser cookies.

Once on the Mentoring home page you can learn more about the program, including using the six links in the left menu under Mentoring.
Take a moment and explore one or both of the pages dedicated to guiding MAGIP members interested in mentoring. If you want to make yourself available to consult on topics you’ve mastered, explore the “For Mentors” page. If you are looking for guidance, whether peer-to-peer or more traditional career mentoring, launch the “For Mentees” page.

Again, these resources were developed just as much for peers seeking assistance as they were for those new to GIS or members looking for long-term career guidance.

We’ll cover the majority of the “virtual mentor” content next; however, please notice that there is additional information provided via links from the bottom of both the “For Mentors” and the “For Mentees” pages (“Mentoring Resources”). Particularly helpful may be the two links discussing the skills that managers would like entry-level job candidates to have.
If you are new to our state or new to the field of GIS, spend time exploring the Mentoring Topics page. It has foundational information about practicing GIS in Montana—it’s one of the two primary “virtual mentor” pages (along with the Training Resources page which is covered next). If you are offering your time as a mentor, please be very familiar with this information and pass it along as needed.
The second of the two “virtual mentor” pages developed as part of the MAGIP GIS Mentoring program is the Training Resources page. The links on this page are grouped depending upon the situation you’re in. Sometimes, finding Help On Your Own solves the problem at hand. Other times, a complex task or problem may benefit from a discussion with another GIS practitioner—or a mentor. You’ll find those resources under Personal Assistance. In addition, there are Instructor Led Training entries and other ways to keep up with the field of GIS via Ongoing Learning.
If you’re seeking personal assistance (for something brief or via a more long-term mentor), log in to the MAGIP website and search for a member who can help. Once MAGIP members log in, an exclusive section of the MAGIP website becomes available via a MEMBER-ONLY menu. Once logged in, choose Member Directory and either browse the list of members displayed or search for a member by last name with the Search text box (if you know the member’s name and just need contact information). If you need to search for a member you have yet to meet based on the work they do or where they live, you can use the Advance Search, which we’ll cover next.
When you use the Advanced Search, you are presented with an extensive list of search-narrowing options, all of which are shown here. Begin by setting the “Yes” checkbox next to “Am I willing to be identified as a mentor.” This setting will narrow the search results to just those members who have volunteered to be available as mentors. If you execute the search now, you’ll see a list of all members who are mentors.

However, you can further limit the search results by setting other checkboxes. For example, if you are looking for someone who can answer a question related to GIS use with local government, also set an “Employer Type” checkbox that most closely matches your needs (city government, tribal government, etc.). If you are looking for a mentor with Python programming skills there is a checkbox for that as well as many other skills populating this list.

Just a reminder: MAGIP membership is required to gain access to this part of the MAGIP website and learn about other members through their MAGIP member profiles.
The example shown here is the search result for a member who is either the Secretary of MAGIP or its Professional Development Committee chair, each of whom have identified themselves as being available to mentor (and each gave permission to be used in this presentation). If you want to see the profile of a member in a search result list, click on the member’s name. Their profile displays.
There are portions of four MAGIP member profiles shown here. Though the search-narrowing options you just saw include an extensive list of checkboxes, the member profiles show only those characteristics that members set to describe the kind of work they do and the tools with which they are proficient.

All mentor profiles include the member’s preferred method of communication (as shown) and their contact information (not shown).
So, you've found a MAGIP member who is identified as a mentor and can probably help you. Now what?

Contact that member (or even more than one!). Introduce yourself and the issue you’re trying to resolve. If you seek more long-term career guidance, you may find the information on the Getting Started page helpful.

Best of luck!

MAGIP GIS Mentoring Subcommittee
If you would like to reach the MAGIP Mentoring subcommittee directly with questions or feedback, please email the address shown on the screen.