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# Features: Spring 2026

Features Editor: Emma Slayton

## Features Outline

Welcome to 2026 WAML! This time of year is especially busy for Map Librarians, with the calendar full of renewed interest from patrons and students with jump start into the new year.

Please email me at [eslayton@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:eslayton@andrew.cmu.edu) if you have an idea for a feature topic, highlight an exhibit, be interviewed for the Features, or have any news that would be relevant to the WAML community!

## Features Topic

With two government shutdowns in the past six months alone, it begs the question of how map professionals working for the federal government might continue to be affected by government instability and new restrictions on funding to support mapping projects [1; 2]. Many people have explored what happens when we no longer have traditional access to data resources, and how to overcome challenges as researchers and local governments [3 ; 4]. While things are changing daily in 2026, it might be nice to reflect on some of the changes we adapted to in the last year.

Map Librarians and the researchers we support are on the front line of identifying the issues and challenges of dealing with a shifting data landscape [5], and how we can overcome these issues. One of the changes we have explored as a field is accessing data through alternative means. Many institutions have taken on storing local and governmental spatial data in separate repositories or on campus hard drives, acting in the traditional role of information protectors. Librarians have also stepped into our natural role as information providers by connecting users to alternate resources where to access census data [6,7] – such as tools like PolicyMap, Socialexplorer, and ESRI resources for census data or large onsite repositories of big map data.



Looking ahead, it is clear that flexibility and innovation will remain essential for map professionals. Developing skills in data curation, open-source platforms, and cross-institutional collaboration allows librarians and researchers to mitigate disruptions and continue supporting evidence-based decision-making. By documenting workflows, creating mirrored datasets, and fostering strong partnerships with local and federal agencies, the mapping community can ensure continuity even in times of funding uncertainty or government instability. Building knowledge of data resources, access, and storage within our own community of map librarians is also essential for preparing ourselves to support our constituents in the coming years.

Approaches to strategic planning include:

1. Disseminating knowledge about available map resources.
2. Exploring cost-effective or institutionally supported data sources and providing relevant training.
3. Aggregating government data in accessible community repositories to distribute storage responsibilities.
4. Collaborating with researchers who have independent spatial data needs to stay aligned with evolving developments.

[1] van Deelen, Grace, and Kimberly M. S. Cartier. 2025. "Science Agencies Shuttered in Government Shutdown." *Eos*, October 1, 2025.

<https://eos.org/research-and-developments/science-agencies-shuttered-in-government-shutdown>

[2] Nolan, Delaney. 2025. "Elimination of Federal Climate Tools, Some Used to Inquire Into Musk's Firms, Sparks Alarm." *The Guardian*, February 24, 2025.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/24/federal-climate-tools-pollution-musk-xai-spacex>

[3] Smith, Carl. 2025. "Local Governments Could Be Flying Blind as Federal Data Disappears." *Governing*, August 21, 2025.

<https://www.governing.com/management-and-administration/local-governments-could-be-flying-blind-as-federal-data-disappears>

[4] National Security Archive. 2025. "Disappearing Data: Trump Administration Removing Climate Information from Government Websites." *Climate Change Transparency Project*, February 6, 2025.

<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/climate-change-transparency-project-foia/2>



[025-02-06/disappearing-data-trump](#)

[5] Harvey, Chelsea. 2025. "Scientists Report Growing Problems with Pentagon Weather Data." *E&E News*, October 15, 2025.

<https://www.eenews.net/articles/scientists-report-growing-problems-with-pentagon-weather-data/>

[6] Tennessee Spatial Data Center. "Navigating the Federal Shutdown: Tips for Data Users." Last modified September 30, 2025.

<https://tnsdc.utk.edu/2025/09/30/navigating-the-federal-shutdown-tips-for-data-users/>

[7] Goldberg, Daniel, Miriam Olivares, Zhongxia Li, and Andrew G. Klein. "Maps & GIS data libraries in the era of big data and cloud computing." *Journal of Map & Geography Libraries* 10, no. 1 (2014): 100-122.

## Open Opportunities

The **Western Association of Map Libraries Information Bulletin** (WAML IB) is looking for submissions for the 57 volume, issue 3 to be published Summer 2026. They are looking for submit a blog, story, little piece, article, paper, or other content relevant to the publication. The WAML IB is an open-access bulletin 'encouraging high standards in every phase of organization and administration of map and geospatial data libraries.' The submission deadline is **June 30, 2026**. Please send all submissions to Sarah Zhang ([s\\_zhang@sfu.ca](mailto:s_zhang@sfu.ca)).

There is an opening at the **University of Wisconsin Milwaukee** for the **[Head of the American Geographical Society Library](#)**. The Golda Meir Library seeks an experienced and creative leader to serve as the head of the American Geographical Society Library (AGSL), one of the oldest, largest, and most distinguished geographical research libraries in North America. Reporting to the Director of Libraries, the head is responsible for developing the extraordinary collections of the AGSL, promoting their use by the UWM community and researchers worldwide, and leveraging digital technologies to develop new services and uses of the collections. The head will also expand awareness of the AGSL through instruction, presentations, and participating in national and international associations and conferences.

Apply electronically by the application deadline date of **March 1, 2026**. Questions



about this position should be directed to Amy Rehfeldt ([rehfelda@uwm.edu](mailto:rehfelda@uwm.edu)).

**MAGIRT** is looking for people to self nominate for the position of **Chair-Elect** and **Treasurer-Elect**. The Chair-Elect serves in the Chair-Elect position for one year, then serves as Chair for one year, and as Past-Chair for one year. Primary duties of all three positions can be found in the [by-laws](#). The Treasurer-Elect has a three-year term, serving as the Assistant Treasurer for a year, working with the existing Treasurer and getting trained, a second year as the solo Treasurer, and the third year as the Treasurer and training the new Assistant Treasurer. *Memberships in the American Library Association and the Map and Geospatial Information Roundtable are required.* If you have questions or want to nominate a candidate contact Susan Moore ([susan.moore@uni.edu](mailto:susan.moore@uni.edu)).

## Webinars & Meetings

The **Geography and Map Division at the Library of Congress** is hosting a virtual orientation to their [Nautical Charts](#) on **February 10, 2026** at 3-4pm EST. Reference librarian Julie Stoner and geospatial data visualization librarian Abraham Parrish will present an introduction to nautical charts, their history, and their uses as well as highlight the various nautical chart holdings found within the division. You can [register for the event here](#).

The next meeting of the **Texas Digital Library GIS Interest Group** will happen on **February 27th, 2026** at 2-3pm CT. You can Attend meetings using the [recurring Zoom link](#). You can contact the chair of the GIS Interest Group, Kristina Claunch, at [kclaunch@shsu.edu](mailto:kclaunch@shsu.edu) for any questions you may have.

The **Depository Library Council (DLC)** and the staff at the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) will be hosting their spring **DLC Virtual Meeting** on **March 4th and March 5th, 2026** at 12 - 5 EST. At the meeting you can participate in informative and interactive meetings of the DLC and contribute to important discussions about free public access to the U.S. Government information. You can access the [schedule of the meeting here](#) and [register to attend here](#).

The **MARC Advisory Committee** will be meeting on **February 18th and 19th, 2026**. Please contact Susan Moore ([susan.moore@uni.edu](mailto:susan.moore@uni.edu)) for any details about the event.



## Upcoming Events and Conferences

The [New York Map Society](#) is hosting a presentation by Secretary Andrew Kapochunas on *How to find any village in Central and Eastern Europe on an antique topographical map* on **February 17th, 2026** at 7pm EST. He will explain the step-by-step process he himself follows as he searches for images of three towns with which he has deep personal connections. RSVP to [kapochunas@gmail.com](mailto:kapochunas@gmail.com) to receive a Zoom link nearer the day.

The [Washington Map Society](#) is hosting a virtual meeting in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Map Society on **February 19th, 2026** at 4 PST. Sam Cartwright will present *Astrotopophilia: A Love of Place with Maps of Space*. The talk will trace the history of planetary cartography from the earliest telescope sketches to today's high-resolution imagery and explore the indelible link between maps and humanity's fascination with space. Anyone interested in participating in the meeting must RSVP to John Docktor at [washmap@gmail.com](mailto:washmap@gmail.com) in order to receive the meeting ID and passcode.

The [Cambridge Seminars in the History of Cartography](#) will host an online presentation by Adrian Webb on **February 24th, 2026** at 5.30pm UTC +1. He will discuss Churchill's secret chart-makers. For any enquiries, please contact Sarah Bendall at [sarah.bendall@emma.cam.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.bendall@emma.cam.ac.uk).

March 12, 2026 – Oxford (Online) The [33rd Annual Series Oxford Seminars In Cartography](#) will be having meetings on [March 12th](#) and [June 4th](#), 2026 from 4:30 – 6 UTC +1. Topics include *The unique large-format print of the General Map of the Qing Empire by Li Mingche* (1751–1832) in Göttingen and *Geography and Catholic censorship in Europe at the end of the sixteenth century*. Those interested should [book their place here](#).

The [Washington Map Society](#) is hosting a virtual meeting in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Map Society on **March 19th, 2026** at 4 PST. Louis Miller (Assistant Director for Research and Fellowship Programs and Cartographic Reference and Teaching Librarian, Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine) will speak about *Resurrecting 'Rhat Soupe': Alcohol and Allegorical Maps in Mid-19th Century America*. Anyone interested in participating in the meeting must RSVP to John Docktor at [washmap@gmail.com](mailto:washmap@gmail.com) in order to receive the meeting ID and passcode.



If you are in the area of New York before **March 29, 2026** the [Museum of Chinese in America](#) is hosting the exhibit [Heaven & Earth: The Blue Maps of China](#). This exhibition considers these two blue maps in the context of their production, consumption, and functionality, revealing them as unique objects in the global history of mapmaking.

If you are in the area of Cambridge, Massachusetts before **June 26, 2026** the [Harvard Museum of Natural History](#) is hosting the exhibit [Sea Monsters: Wonders of Nature and Imagination](#). The exhibition features historical illustrations of these fabled monsters and detailed ancient mariners' maps. Ancient maps held important cultural knowledge, often revealed through depictions of mythological creatures that served as warnings of dangerous and uncharted waters.

Special thanks to John W. Docktor ([phillymaps@gmail.com](mailto:phillymaps@gmail.com)) for providing information for several of these events through the [Cartography - Calendar of Meetings and Events](#).

## Publications Of Interest

**The Library of Lost Maps: An Archive of a World in Progress**, by James Cheshire, was released last November, 2025. The book includes thoughts of the renowned geographer James Cheshire on a tour through a forgotten collection of maps that shaped over 200 years of Western history. *The Library of Lost Maps*, Cheshire transports us to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the library's maps were wielded for war and negotiated during peace; when its charts traced, for the first time, the icy peaks of the Himalayas. Maps have played a vital role in shaping our scientific knowledge of the world, inspiring the theory of plate tectonics and showing the impact of climate change. They have also guided politicians, encouraging both beneficial reforms and horrific conquests, the consequences of which we live with today.

**Mapping the North: Myth, Exploration, Encounter**, by Charlotta Forss, Bodleian was released last November, 2025. Maps have played a central role in our understanding of what and where defines the North. At the same time, the northernmost reaches of our world have, for much of history, been difficult to navigate and verify, from the mythical islands on medieval maps to the itineraries of Arctic explorers in the nineteenth century. This has inspired inventive mapping strategies, as well as ongoing struggles to define what constitutes believable



cartographic information. This beautifully illustrated book takes the reader on a journey to examine the rich, and sometimes contentious, history of how mapmakers have understood and processed knowledge about a region they described as the North. In the process of mapping, the North as a place changed from an inaccessible and vividly imagined unknown to a region claimed and exploited by southern nations. What emerges is a riveting story of exploration, survival, and cartographic skill bound up with conceptions of nature, religion and politics extending far beyond the Arctic.

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