

TNMCorps News



VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4

THE NATIONAL MAP CORPS

JULY 2020

City/Town Hall Collection Milestone



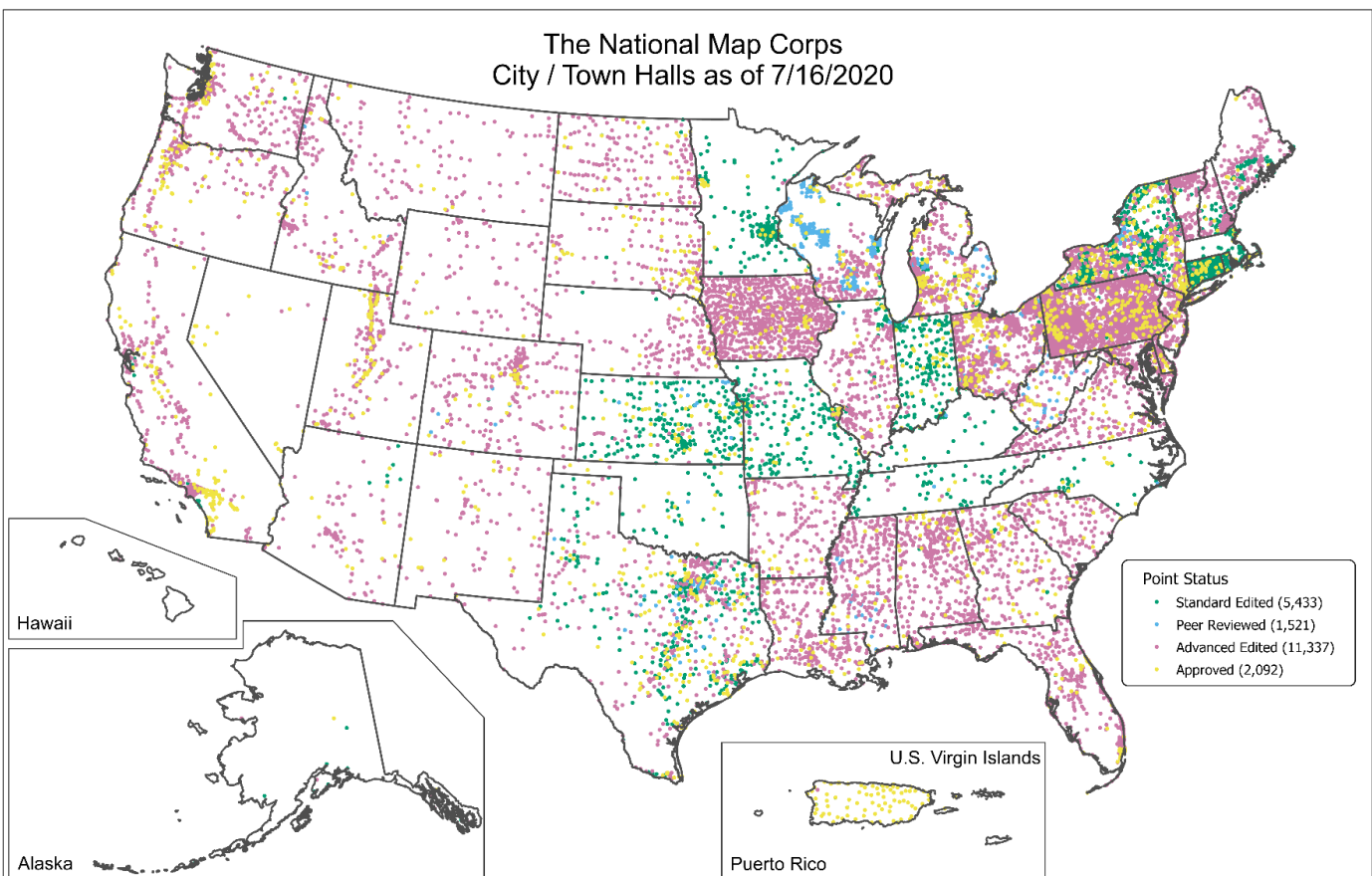
Back in [March](#) we announced that TNMCorps volunteers had collected just over 50% of the estimated total city/town hall features in the U.S.

As of early July, volunteers have collected and updated 71% of the estimated total city/town hall features in the U.S. Well done everyone! And thanks for all your hard work!

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The National Map Corps
City / Town Halls as of 7/16/2020



Mapping Challenges Updates

TNMCorps Mapping Challenges continue to move along steadily!

We've spent the last two months preparing states along the Gulf of Mexico for production, but as these states near completion, TNMCorps has started the mapping migration north to New England. The table below highlights recent challenges completed along with current challenges.

All mapping challenge updates are posted on our [website](#) under Resources > Mapping Challenges.



The result is a significant number of points updated in just four months!

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	LENGTH (DAYS)	# OF UNIQUE POINTS	# OF VOLUNTEERS
Schools	LA	6/26/20 - present	See our original post from 6/26/20 for tips and tricks on this challenge		
City / Town Halls	ME / NH / VT	6/19/20 - present	See our original post from 6/19/20 for tips and tricks on this challenge		
Fire Stations	AL	6/4/20 - present	See our original post from 6/4/20 for tips and tricks on this challenge		
City / Town Halls	FL	5/14/20 - 6/18/20	35	381	7
Schools	MS / AL	4/21/20 - 6/11/20	51	2,230	23
City / Town Halls	LA / MS / AL	4/14/20 - 5/28/20	44	769	9
(May 2020 Newsletter)					
Schools	GA, SC	3/12/20 - 4/23/20	42	2,762	17
City / Town Halls	GA, SC	3/12/20 - 4/23/20	42	329	8

For those who are new to TNMCorps, mapping challenges are small, strategic mapathon-like projects that TNMCorps uses to guide volunteers to areas needing attention while also preparing data for [US Topo](#) production.

Overview of the Comment Field

Since we have lots of new volunteers, we wanted to address some frequently asked questions regarding the “Comment” field. The [“Comment” field](#) is located at the bottom of the editing window for each point. It is a text box where you can enter optional additional information about a feature.

What can/should I put in the “Comment” field?

The “Comment” field can be used to document anything you think would be useful supplementary information, i.e., information that isn’t already documented in one of the other fields.

This can include:

- The URL of an authoritative source from which you verified a feature.
- An explanation of how you verified a feature, especially if you couldn’t locate an authoritative online source (e.g., a description of any field work you engaged in, a list of non-internet resources you consulted, etc.)
- Any directional information (e.g., “This cemetery was located in a densely vegetated forest .5 miles south of Cherry Road on the Smith Family Farm property.”)

NOTE: Since all of the map/imagery layers in the TNMCorps editor are georectified, you don’t need to note the coordinates of a point.



The screenshot shows the TNMCorps editor interface. The 'Comment' field is highlighted with a red box. A large orange arrow points to the 'Comment' field. The interface includes a sidebar with icons for Home, Profile, Search, Edit, and History. The main form contains fields for Active Role (USGS Administrator), Name (North Fork Volunteer Fire Department Station 1), GNIS ID (2368631), Address 1 (19384 County Road 126), Address 2, City (Buffalo Creek), State (CO), Zip-code (80433), Source FeatureId (10191915), Administration Type (Municipal), Feature Type *required (740), and a Comment field. At the bottom are buttons for Cancel, Save, Delete, and View History.

Where do my comments go after I hit the save button?

After editing a point and clicking the save button, your comments will disappear from the editing window. The “Comment” field is vacated after a point is saved to make space for the next editor’s notes, but rest assured that this does not mean your comments were not saved. Every comment you make will be retained in the edit history of that point.

Overview of the Comment Field (Continued)

To view the edit history of any point:

1. Click on the Edit History tab.

2. Enter the feature name in the "Filter" field.

3. Set the drop-down option to "All Users".

4. View comments in the "Comment" column.

Changes	Date	Owner	Errors	Status	Comment
Update	07/08/2020 08:13 PM	[User Icon]	Show possible errors	Approved	https://5280fire.com/home/colorado-fire-apparatus-stations/jefferson-county/north-fork-volunteer-fire-department/north-fork-station-1/
Update	06/27/2019 05:30 PM	[User Icon]	Show possible errors	Approved	https://5280fire.com/home/colorado-fire-apparatus-stations/jefferson-county/north-fork-volunteer-fire-department/north-fork-station-1/
Update	12/22/2018 08:41 PM	[User Icon]	Show possible errors	Approved	

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 459,177 total entries)

Previous Next

Comments are **SUPER** helpful to us when we're reviewing points, so keep them coming!

After entering a comment for a point I intend to delete, do I need to save and then delete the point?

After leaving a comment for a point you intend to delete, you **DO NOT** need to hit the save button prior to hitting the delete button. You can enter a comment and then immediately hit delete. *We especially appreciate comments left for deleted points.* When we review deletions, it's super helpful to have an explanation of why a point was deleted, or a link to a source that was used to justify the deletion.

After typing a comment, you can either hit save (if you are NOT deleting the point), or, you can hit delete. You do not need to save the point before you delete the point.

Comment

<https://5280fire.com/home/colorado-fire-apparatus-stations/jefferson-county/north-fork-volunteer->

Cancel [Save](#) [Delete](#) [View History](#)

Overview of the Comment Field (Continued)

This point was deleted, but we can still see the comment the volunteer left by checking the edit history of this feature.

Peace Valley - White Church Volunteer Station 2

07/08/2020 07:37 PM

Changes	Date	Owner	Errors	Status	Comment
Delete	07/08/2020 07:37 PM		Show possible errors	Open	https://apps1.mo.gov/dfsreg/dl.ashx?f=report&k=fdal&o=pdf

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries (filtered from 459,179 total entries)

Previous Next

Even for deleted points, any comments added will be saved in the edit history of those points.



Social Media as an Authoritative Source

Many of our longtime editors have seen us reference a [specific infographic](#) from one of our [past newsletters](#). And many editors also know how hard it can be to find an [authoritative source](#) for a point. This is especially true for structures in smaller communities. Sometimes, in situations like these, we have to rely on unconventional sources such as social media for information. Many businesses use social media for marketing, and some even use it as their primary presence on the world wide web.

The large number of social media platforms combined with increased usage leads volunteers to ask when it's acceptable to use social media to update points. Of the [structures that TNMCorps collects](#), those that are most likely to rely upon social media for distributing information include (but are not limited to) fire stations, city/town halls, ambulance services, and schools (mostly private and/or parochial). Since [Facebook](#) is one of the most frequently used social media platforms, we will be focusing this article primarily on that platform. Other social media platforms are still acceptable if the following criteria are met.

When is social media an authoritative source?

When considering whether to use information from a social media website to update points, **a key aspect to evaluate is who authored the page**. The answer to this question determines whether the source is considered a primary, secondary, or aggregate/third party source. Remember that according to our [Authoritative Sources List](#), a **primary source** is one whose information is directly provided by the entity being mapped; a **secondary source** is authored by service recipients or service regulators; and an **aggregate / third party source** is created by entities who comb the web for information and assemble it into their own lists or databases. Therefore, if the entity being mapped regularly maintains a social media page, then that page would be considered a primary source and can be used to update points.

Continued on [next page](#)

Social Media as an Authoritative Source (Continued)

How do I know when a social media page is maintained by the entity?

Telltale signs that a Facebook page is actively maintained by the entity being mapped include a custom cover photo, a custom profile photo, and recent posts.

The image shows a screenshot of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Facebook page. Callouts point to specific features:

- Custom profile photo:** Points to the USGS logo profile picture.
- Custom profile cover photo:** Points to the large satellite image of a hurricane.
- Recent posts:** Points to a post from July 9 at 10:39 AM about the Mapping Challenge update.

Below the main page, a red arrow points to a text box that says:

**USGS is no stranger to social media!
Check out [USGS on Facebook](#) and [The National Map on Twitter](#)!**

On the right side, a blue circular callout with a dashed yellow border contains the text:

When deciding whether or not a social media page is authoritative, a key aspect to evaluate is who authored the page.

(scroll down...)

Social Media as an Authoritative Source (Continued)

Roscommon Township Fire Department is an example of a structure relying upon social media for their presence on the web. They do not have their own dedicated page on the [town's website](#), but they do have a [Facebook page](#) that they regularly update.



Custom profile photo

Custom profile cover photo

Since the fire department created and maintains the page, it is considered a **primary source** and therefore can be used to update the [fire department's point on the map](#).



[Vinland Volunteer Fire Department](#) is another example of a fire station which regularly updates their [Facebook page](#) in addition to their official [page on the township's website](#). In this scenario both sites can be considered primary sources, but don't forget to make sure the source you use is current.

Did you know?

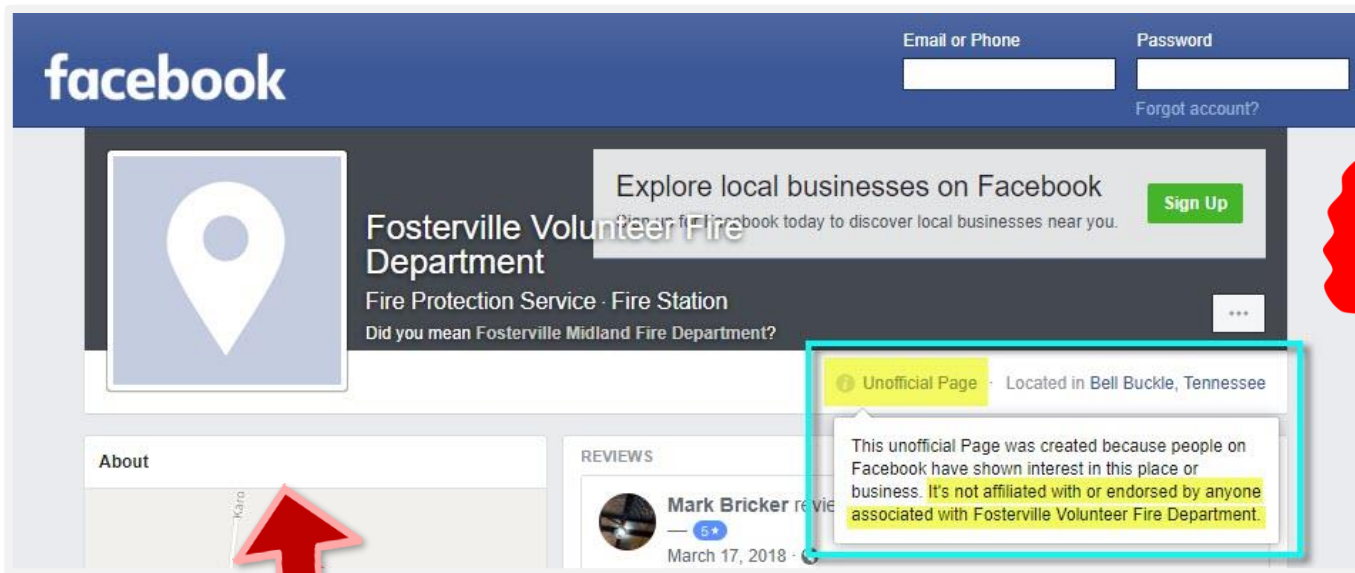
Because The National Map is a public domain dataset, some aggregate sources and commercial mapping services include our data in their products.

When is social media not an authoritative source?

Facebook also [automatically generates pages](#) for entities which may not be "claimed" or maintained by an entity. This happens when a Facebook user [tries to check in](#) to a location or business which doesn't already maintain their own official page. Even if an official page exists, duplicates often still get automatically created.

You can tell if a Facebook page was automatically created based on the page's layout and disclaimer. *Check out the next page for an example of an unofficial Facebook page.*

Social Media as an Authoritative Source (Continued)



Fosterville Volunteer Fire Department, for example, has an [unofficial Facebook page](#). You can tell that it's unofficial by the **lack of a profile photo, lack of a cover photo, lack of posts, and the "Unofficial Page" disclaimer**. Since this page was automatically created, it would be considered an **aggregate / third party source** and should not be used to update points.

UNAVCO/TNMCorps Team Up to Host Summer Interns

For the last couple of months, the TNMCorps team has been privileged to host two interns, Sean Vogel and Celeste Briefs, from the [University NAVSTAR Consortium's Geo-Launchpad program](#). Read on to learn more about UNAVCO, Geo-Launchpad, and Sean and Celeste's experience helping out The National Map Corps!

By Sean Vogel and Celeste Briefs

Started in 2001, UNAVCO is a non-profit organization that facilitates geoscience research and education. They are sponsored by the [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) and the [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#), supporting multiple organizations through the use of [geodesy](#) (the study of the Earth's shape, gravitational field, and rotation). UNAVCO has several internship opportunities, including the Geo-Launchpad program, which has been open to all Colorado and New Mexico community college students interested in geoscience since 2015. Their summer internship programs focus on professional development, mentorship, technical training, and real-world/geoscience career experience through work with scientists in the geoscience fields.

The internship is paid and takes place over eleven weeks during the summer. It is open to any students who have an interest in studying or pursuing a career in geosciences, which include atmospheric science, environmental science, geology, and hydrology among many others. Students are introduced to communication, career, and research skills and participate in seminars which allow them to apply these skills practically. Students are supported in their research projects by staff mentors who supervise and guide their progress over the course of the internship. At the end of the summer, students present the results of their research projects to a professional conference funded by the NSF.

Continued on [next page](#)

UNAVCO/TNMCorps Team Up to Host Summer Interns (Cont.)

Since both geology and geography are important parts of what UNAVCO, and Geo-Launchpad in particular, does, UNAVCO has been partnered with the USGS NGTOC (National Geospatial Technical Operations Center) at the Denver Federal Center in Lakewood, Colorado to develop projects that give interns a chance to practice research skills. Sean and Celeste participated in The National Map Corps through targeted editing assignments, similar to [mapping challenges](#).

Lessons Learned and Application to Career Goals

Sean

So far, I have learned a great deal about the importance of data management, city planning, and mapping of public lands. Correctly labeling, editing, and updating important public buildings for use on The National Map can sometimes be a lengthy process, but this experience has taught me how to make better use of the internet in researching these types of structures. As far as working on edits, I make sure to pay close attention to the date that data was entered into websites or what the timestamp was for a picture on Google Maps, especially in Street View™.

While not being directly applicable, this internship still has ties to my future career goals of Civil Engineering. By following the footsteps of previous city builders and studying their layouts I can get a better understanding of what has and hasn't been effective in the past. This will hopefully lead to better designs in the future as far as any roads, bridges, and other public use items I have a hand in constructing.

Celeste

I have always known that maps were important, but until I started volunteering with The National Map Corps, I don't think I was aware of just how important mapping is, not just in the realm of geography, but also topographic and geological mapping. While man-made structures may have little to do with the structures of the Earth itself, these locations do interact directly with the land and the surrounding environment as a whole. Knowing exactly where they are located can help researchers to pinpoint certain areas of interest and can help to orient the layout of the land for them. Because humans' impact on the environment is so widespread and deeply influential, it is important to know where certain buildings are relative to major natural resources or features, such as rivers, lakes, forests, and reservoirs.

Simply put, my career goals at this time in my life lie very much outside the realm of science and geodesy. My dream is to become a writer, and poetry in particular is my calling. However, I am also very passionate about science and the environment, and one of the main reasons why I took this opportunity was to learn more about what I could do to contribute to the environmental sciences and gain a better understanding of how scientists are trying to save the planet. Even though I didn't end up working with any special equipment or taking samples from nature, I still believe I've learned a lot about myself as a scientist and as a researcher. Writing is a very important part of science as well, and the more technical knowledge I gain, the more it informs my writing in other genres, even fiction. So, I am very grateful that I was given this opportunity, even if it doesn't directly tie into what I ultimately want to pursue as a career.

Thank you, Sean and Celeste, for helping us out this summer! Needless to say, conditions weren't totally normal, but we're glad we had the opportunity to work with you and get to know you, and we wish you nothing but the best!



Intern Bios: Sean and Celeste

Celeste Briefs

My name is Celeste and I live in Denver, Colorado. I recently graduated from Arapahoe Community College and I'm currently studying Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Colorado Denver. During the summer of 2020, I participated in the Geo-Launchpad internship for UNAVCO and worked as a volunteer with The National Map Corps, collaborating with Emily Anderson and Erin Korris. Although my life goal is to be a writer, I am very passionate about science and the environment, and so when I heard about this incredible opportunity, I wanted to take advantage of the chance to learn more about how I could contribute to the scientific community. In my spare time you may find me writing poetry and/or fan fiction, reading books, watching movies, listening to music, or going for long walks. I'm basically your average twenty-year-old!



Sean Vogel

Sean has been an intern working with The National Map Corps through the Geo-Launchpad program since late May. He previously served as an Avionics Technician in the U.S. Air Force but is currently working toward a BS in Civil Engineering. Since moving to Denver in 2018, Sean has been working part-time with the Air National Guard at Buckley Air Force Base while pursuing his degree, including a deployment to Afghanistan in 2019. In his free time, Sean enjoys hiking and exploring the Colorado landscapes with his dog. Sean is grateful to have the opportunity to work with the USGS TNMCorps!



Volunteer Bio: claraapt246

Welcome to the [Theodolite Assemblage](#), claraapt246!

"Volunteering with The National Map Corps means that I can contribute to our geographical knowledge of the United States. I have a deep appreciation for our park system and love to walk local trails but helping the TNMCorps community allows me to give back on a national level! I hope to continue to provide relevant and accurate data to the system."

I also have other interests! I am a rising senior, so a lot of my time has been spent researching colleges and the like. I also birdwatch, read, and am currently learning German online. I love nature. Thank you for this opportunity! I hope to volunteer with you all even more!"



claraapt246's
(p)awesome mapping
companion, Gatsby!



Have a story or photo you'd like to share?

We want them! This could be anything from a photo of you verifying a structure or an interesting story that you discovered while editing.

Photos, graphics, and stories may be used in future news releases and social media posts. All materials submitted become part of the “[public domain](#),” and can be used by USGS in the future unless otherwise specified.

Please email them to nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov



New Recognition Category Members



Squadron of Biplane Spectators (6000-6999)

- LB2019gis



Ring of Reconnaissance Rocketeers (5000-5999)

- LB2019gis



Family of Floating Photogrammetrists (3000-3999)



Theodolite Assemblage (2000-2999)

- Carat17
- JoanMCCameron
- claraapt246
- ktomansager



Flock of Winged Witnesses (4000-4999)

- Vy Phan Tuong Le



Alidade Alliance (1000-1999)

- ktomansager
- doug_lane
- claraapt246
- hercula24



Stadia Board Society (500-999)

- claraapt246
- NorthwoodsGal
- LabradorSky
- hercula24
- vogelseane
- celesteb_TNM



Circle of the Surveyor's Compass (200-499)

- Cgibson
- hercula24
- celesteb_TNM
- Sean31384
- vogelseane
- AnneG
- AFarrar



Pedometer Posse (100-199)

- celesteb_TNM
- vogelseane
- cplank
- vanij
- caitlynsb
- Sean31384
- AFarrar



Society of the Steel Tape (50-99)

- AFarrar
- caitlynsb
- celesteb_TNM
- vogelseane
- Sean31384
- Neeti123
- Vol8nteer
- sjr_91
- Alex B
- vanij
- Lidia.roy
- Cesar B Otavalo
- atm13



Order of the Surveyor's Chain (25-49)

- celesteb_TNM
- vogelseane
- Laurafinlay6
- Molly Ryan
- Vol8nteer
- atm13
- Alawyn
- Lidia.roy
- Sean31384
- ronnieblanco
- Neetashree surange
- sjr_91
- Alex B
- ChloeMillstein
- Marquee12
- AJulian
- CarolsNotinMN
- vanij
- axel.arroyo
- jaylihusband
- shana
- drjanaye
- VM

CONTACT US AT: nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov for suggestions, questions, additions to the next newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from the email list.

