

John Peterson, 2019 Wheeler Peak Lifetime Achievement Award



John is an Albuquerque native, who after a 12 year tour in the public school system, graduated from Del Norte High School in 1974. He entered the University of New Mexico after graduating and was drawn to the earth sciences with a focused interest in Geography after taking an entry level class from Dr. Rodman Snead. He pursued Geography as a major and concurrently prepared with harder science subjects that steered him toward Remote Sensing and other Geospatial frontiers. He completed his undergraduate Geography degree in 1979.

In the summer of 1978 he had a lucky break to be hired as a summer student at the University of New Mexico's, New Mexico Engineering Research Institute (NMERI), working on Air Force research related projects using enhanced Landsat imagery and field collection radiometers. He continued working at NMERI for close to 18 years where he completed his Masters of Arts in Geography under the artful guidance of Dr. Stan Morain. After throwing out the concept of "Synergy" during a graduate seminar free-for-all discussion on the definition of "Geography" he has been hounded ever since by his much adored peer, aka Gar, for over use of the term. "But hey...It's all about Synergy", he says.

After the NMERI years, John worked in the private sector; 1st for EarthData Aerial Surveys, located here in Albuquerque, during the cross-over years of film camera collection systems to Digital cameras and the rapidly advancing development of "Soft Copy" post-processing software. In his second private sector job he again had the lucky break to share the amazing, never before seen, technology of MrSID image compression working as the southwest Sales Manager for LizardTech. Life after LizardTech included several years as a private business owner operating as "One-Stop-Airborne Solutions".

Through another serendipitous break he was offered an opportunity to become a Corps of Engineer Federal employee in 2004 where he presently fills the position of Geospatial Unit

Leader. In this position he leads a small group of exceptionally talented Geospatial Analysts in the management of the Albuquerque District's Enterprise GIS holdings and related projects.

He feels that he caught the wave of excitement that draws us all to the geospatial sciences and has had the good fortune to have seen, and continues to see, amazing advancements that bring us all together as a unique community. On top of all of this he has more importantly been blessed with many good friends that he has been lucky to have worked with and have made the journey a joy.

Some highlights of his career include:

- Has been participating on the State's GAC 3DEP LiDAR Sub-Committee monitoring the progress of updating our state's terrain data to QL2 level.
- Overseeing the production of the Albuquerque district's web based multi-viewer portal since 2004.
- Facilitated the production and documentation of the most comprehensive GIS based multi-year history of Cochiti Lake's Bathymetric life cycle.
- Facilitated multi-beam bathymetric surveys for the Albuquerque district's lakes and reservoirs including John Martin, Trinidad, Abiquiu, Cochiti, Santa Rosa, and Conchas.
- Commissioned the production of the most accurate Pre-Cochiti Dam, 1962 photo and terrain mosaics of the Rio Grande from Cochiti area down to Elephant Butte using "Structure from Motion" processing.
- First to use of a remote controlled multi-beam sonar "Echo Boat" for mapping the John Martin Stilling Basin to map sediment volume to be dredged. First use in our district of a Drone to inspect the same "clean" dredged stilling basin.
- Coordinated the production of the "2016 All Hazards Run Book" for the Middle Rio Grande in cooperation with City, County, Regional, and Tribal agencies and Emergency Responders.
- Facilitated the first collection of the Grand Canyon using a commercial airborne digital camera through his One-Stop-Airborne Solutions business.

- Worked on the team to set up the first internet accessible Trimble base station in the state.
- Was on the founding team made up of NMERI, EDAC, and BBER responsible for the advocacy and initial funding of the RGIS Clearing House
- Produced a popular poster of Albuquerque in 1983 while in graduate school