

# EMGCP Meeting – Geomatics Surge Capacity

February 14, 2024 | 14:00 – 15:00

Emergency Management Geomatics Community of Practice (EMGCP)

**Attendees** DFO, DND (CJOC), DND (MCE), ECCC, ESDC, ISC, NRCan (CFS), NRCan (EGS), PS (GOC Geo), PS (Virtual Risk Analysis Cell), PSPC (Real Property Services), RCMP, StatsCan, TC (Transportation of Dangerous Goods), TC (Transportation & Economic Analysis), CRC, PWGSC

**Location** Online (Microsoft Teams)

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

14:01-14:12

Presenter(s): Darlene Tran - PS (GOC)

### Description

Welcome, review of terms of reference, notice that meetings going forward will be recorded for note-taking purposes, call for meeting chairs.

### 1.1. CALL TO ORDER

### Description

The attendance is noted by an alphabetical roll call of all departments and/or agencies that are members of the EMGCP.

## 2. SURGE

14:12-15:00

Presenter(s): Cameron Bouchard - PS (GOC)

### Description

Discussion of experiences with surge support during the 2023 wildfire season. Topics mentioned include how teams can utilize surge support, challenges faced and considerations for the future.

### 2.1. PS (GOC)

Presenter(s): Cameron Bouchard

Experience of the GOC bringing in surge to help during wildfire season

- Unprecedented wildfire season last year, both in intensity and duration
  - Team had to produce thousands of static maps alongside regular job duties (ex: maintaining webmaps)
  - Team of six initially, down to four after departure of two students
  - Need for support was identified due to long hours and burnout
- The only time we received surge in the past was Darlene Tran
  - Not a lot of experience bringing external support into our team, learning experience for the GOC Geomatics team
- Prior to the wildfire season, GOC Geo had discussions with TC TDG
  - Willingness to provide support was communicated
  - Was determined later in the season that we would benefit from their support
  - TC TDG provided support by working on some national routine products that were being updated on a daily basis
  - The rest of the products that required more precise coordination with the Event team was handled by the GOC Geo team
  - We had briefing meetings with surge personnel to explain what our expectations were for the upcoming week
  - Surge personnel would produce the products and share them with GOC Geo team, with GOC Geo responsible for distribution and sharing onto our Cloud space
  - The provided support helped lessen the load on the GOC Geo team for the month where support was provided
- There has been a lot of hesitancy in the past for GOC Geomatics to bring on and onboard surge staff
  - Concern about the amount of onboarding and training that would be required before staff would be beneficial to the team
  - However, the experience of the wildfire season demonstrated that geomatics trained staff from other shops can absolutely be brought in to help with mapping
  - Their support (lasting for one month) helped lessen the load on the GOC Geomatics Team
- Lessons
  - In the future, it would be beneficial for surge support to be in-person full-time
    - Remote work agreements were waived for other surge personnel within the event team, would be beneficial for the same to apply to Geo surge
    - Data Licensing would also no longer be an issue by being in-person

- Value in being imbedded within the OpsCen and the ET
- More accessible for tasking/directions/corrections/training
- Surge for more than a week
  - Was done in agreement with TC TDG to ensure personnel would not be burned
- Plan ahead
  - Getting material ready for surge support is very important for us
  - Important to consider security clearances
- Take advantage of the support
  - With better planning, we would have arranged for surge support to have taken place earlier

## 2.2. Q&A

- Rachel Manderfeld: How do we anticipate the upcoming wildfire season?
  - A: We haven't seen the forecasting for this upcoming year, but we are still waiting to hear about the upcoming flood season. We are still going through the wildfire 2023 AAR, we haven't yet started thinking about the upcoming season.
- Ken Marshall (TC): Would it become a formal request between OpsCens?
  - A: Formal requests were made by the DG of the GOC and raised at the ADM-level and shared horizontally from there. They were asking for anybody who could be lent. What we could do is specify that Geomatics be added to that request by name. It has been fairly effective for the GOC for non-technical positions.
- Tony (ESDC): Has there be any forecasting on surge capacity for this upcoming season?
  - A: It depends on the size of the event. Lots of surge last summer, but a recent example of massive surge was for OSR was 300 from both PS and other departments. It really depends on the event and its pace, for examples 2022 wildfires were very manageable. Surge requests normally don't ask for a specific number of people, just for a list of necessary skillsets to build a pool of qualified candidates.

## 2.3. NRCan (EGS)

Presenter(s): Brad Lehrbass

- Spring Flooding Surge Capacity
  - Surge support was first employed in 2020, but was barely used
    - Difficulties with informal scheduling, team did not have time to assist surge staff who were less experienced
  - Formal surge capacity strategy was established in 2023
    - How it worked was with the establishment of an on-call rotation
    - Ops Lead rotate every other week, and oversee the team lead for that work
    - Operators are surge staff (8 of them) are only on for a single week and are back to their normal job for the following 3 weeks
- Survey was sent out for surge members following the 2023 season
  - Hoping for every surge member to be very prepared before their first scene in 2024
  - Surge personnel learned a lot
- Lessons learned
  - More in-person training
  - More core staff oversight for selecting thresholds
  - Less chatter in Teams chat – will be creating separate chats this year
  - More concrete examples in the SOPs
  - More fire mapping capabilities

## 2.4. Q&A

- Cameron Bouchard (GOC Geo): Surge support, is it strictly internal to NRCan?
  - A: Yes, all surge support was provided within CCMEO itself. There are many GIS professionals within CCMEO. Surge professionals needed specific training on Remote Sensing.
- Cameron Bouchard (GOC Geo): Who paid the OT for surge?
  - A: Since all staff was within CCMEO, there shouldn't have been any issues with determining what entity was responsible for paying surge OT.
- John Little (CWFIS): Sharing thanks to the NRCan EGS team for their support during the wildfire season support

## 2.5. PS (GOC)

Presenter(s): Cameron Bouchard

- Cameron Bouchard (GOC Geo): Would we see it being more beneficial if we, through this group, would set up our own surge repository within our field? Would make it easier for us to reach out for support when assistance is needed.
  - Ken Marshall (TC): Absolutely, that is a great idea, especially since we have the community here. An official list would make it much easier to reach out and obtain support. TC could have also made use of surge support as well
  - John Little (CWFIS): and perhaps include area of expertise in the list of surge capacity resources (?) i.e. remote sensing, GIS, scripting etc..
  - Harrison (CJOC): Could anyone share the capabilities that are/were used to share sensitive data. Curious to know how each community handles
  - Randy McGraw (PSPC): May I suggest that a survey be sent to get an idea of the surge capacity within the geo community. On my end (PSPC-RPS), I do not believe it would be feasible due to fact that my working hours are cost recovered by project financing. Therefore, it would be hard to organize the financial aspect of providing support.

## 4. ADJOURNMENT

15:00-15:01

Presenter(s): Darlene Tran - PS (GOC)

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on May 15<sup>th</sup>, meeting invites will be sent out in the next few months.