

RYAN BOWE

INTERVIEW

The Young Professionals Council liason gives insight into her life as a professional GIS technician, and the benefits of being an ASPRS member.

If you had all the money and time in the world, what would you be doing right now?

Living on a ranch near Yellowstone National Park doing photography and making sure my dogs were able to go everywhere with me. I would stay active in the industry by continuing to attend conferences and mapping my photographic adventures.

What drew you to a career in the geospatial industry?

When my undergraduate advisor asked me what I wanted to do when I graduated, I said I wanted to do anthropology with a GPS unit on my back, a camera around my neck and a GIS enabled computer. I thought it would be great to photographically record cultures and to use GIS to document how the people in that culture interacted with their environment. The opportunity to work in the modern geospatial industry was a logical transition. In many ways it can be viewed as working with our current culture rather than an antiquated culture in a remote location. I thought it would be great to photographically record people and to use GIS to document how the people interact with their environment. Working at Photo Science, a Quantum Spatial Company, is my dream job on steroids. The GPS unit is on the “back” of a plane and the camera is in the belly of the aircraft. I can travel virtually to many locations by viewing the imagery and I occasionally am able to travel to the actual locations as a sensor operator.

Describe your job in five words.

Metadata, Flight Planning, Sensor Operator.

How do you describe your job to others?

I make maps at an aerial survey company. I ask them if they use Google Earth or Bing Maps and point out that the imagery base map in some locations is imagery I worked on creating and acquiring. At this point I usually start showing them camera phone photographs of the planes, mobile mapper, sensors, and some unique skylines I have seen from planes. I tell them that although I have used my personal digital camera for work photography, our cameras are much larger. I also explain that since I have the opportunity to acquire data, I have two desks -- one just happens to be in a plane -- but when I am out of the office flying, I still have to complete my in-office tasks. If we are outside, I will look up and tell them if it is or isn't a good day for remote sensing based on cloud cover.



What is your favorite ASPRS member benefit? Or what is the one thing you value most about your membership with ASPRS?

I originally joined for access to *PE&RS*. I still look forward to receiving my copy in the mail because it is my link to the profession. Although I typically am only on the acquisition side of remote sensing, *PE&RS* provides content that broadens my horizons by exposing me to more than simply acquisition. It is always exciting to see how the information created is used in a final product. And, reading *PE&RS* also allows me to consider how other individuals use the data I help to create and, based on that, how I might make it more useful to them. The news about potential or actual changes in the profession and information about evolving technology is also interesting and useful.

The workshops and webinars are a tremendous source of information. The webinar series is particularly useful to me because I do not have the budget to travel. I attended what I believe was one of the very first webinars – Preparing for ASPRS Certification – in 2009. I enjoyed it so much I attended several others.

What does your ASPRS membership mean to you? How has it impacted your work and influenced your career?

I am proud to be a member of ASPRS; they set the standards for my job. Although I was initially too intimidated to participate, I started with a book review and now I am trying to figure out on which committee I can be the most effective. No matter with which committee I choose to work, ASPRS has given me the opportunity to network with other professionals in the industry and has provided me with access to actually help write these standards.

Why did you join the ASPRS Young Professionals Council?

After becoming a URISA Vanguard Cabinet member, I heard about Young Professionals Council (YPC) and wanted to investigate. While I was talking with Ekaterina Fitos about it to take the information to my boss but she skipped a few steps and invited me to join. I was thrilled! And, being able to interact with Kim Tilley and Jim Plasker made joining YPC even better. I am really looking forward