

A circular inset showing a historical map of the Mississippi River region. The map is in sepia tones with blue ink for the river. Labels include "HILLIERS", "Mississippi", "Sunflower", and "M. V.". The river is depicted winding through the landscape.

# Mapping the Flow: GIS Storytelling for Conservation

## *Additional Resources and Chat Q&A*

This River Network Learning Session was hosted on May 20, 2025. We are grateful to speakers Andria Olson and Heidi Daulton from Esri who shared their expertise with the network. To watch a recording of the session, visit:

**[bit.ly/MappingTheFlow](https://bit.ly/MappingTheFlow)**

## *Additional Resources*

- [What is ArcGIS StoryMaps](#) (a StoryMap and the speaker presentation)
- [ESRI's nonprofit program - Overview and the speaker presentation](#)
- StoryMap examples:
  - Multiple examples from River Network and Groundwork USA via the [Urban Waters Learning Network StoryMap library](#)
  - [Okavango Explore](#)
  - [Vjosa Wild River National Park](#)
  - [Doing conservation on the ground, Maine Coast Heritage Trust](#)
  - [The river roads of India](#)
  - [What you CAN'T see in the Tennessee River](#)
- A [StoryMap Readability Tool](#) that returns various metrics for analyzing what grade level your Story is appropriate for.
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# Chat Q&A

**Question:** Aside from the StoryMap blog, is there a singular source where I can go to find all updates and enhancements by version?

**Answer:** At the bottom of each **What's New** in [ArcGIS StoryMaps blog](#), there is a link to the [release notes](#), which is a comprehensive record of all updates and enhancements by date.

**Question:** If we already have a story map (built on an older platform), can we copy and publish with these new tools?

**Answer:** If you still have the assets, you can rebuild within the new builder. Otherwise you will need to convert it. [See article Try the Classic Story Conversion Helper.](#)

**Question:** I've used the free NVDA screenreader with StoryMaps to gauge accessibility with different results than the JAWS screenreader. Can you recommend a screenreader?

**Answer:** This is a great article on accessibility in StoryMaps with some info on screenreaders; [“Getting Started with Accessible Storytelling”](#)

**Question:** What is the level of effort to create a story such as the one you have up on the screen?

**Answer:** If you have your story written and your graphic assets ready, it can be a fairly fast build. We have lots of resources for planning your narrative, which are linked within our presentation.

**Question:** For the Maine StoryMap - that seems like a lot of text! Are people reading all that? (sad to have to ask that...)

**Answer:** This was an instance where the information was really critical, but they split it up with media and maps.

**Question:** Have you ever encountered difficulties embedding a StoryMap on websites (specifically Wordpress websites)?

**Answer:** Here are a few links on [promoting story maps](#) and [hosting on Wordpress sites](#).

**Question:** I love those big graphics but I've found they are difficult to see on a mobile device.

**Answer:** Yes! Super important to see how things look on mobile.

**Question:** Can you tell me if the support of 40 languages also means that the StoryMap can be one click translated? What are the accessibility features, if any?

**Answer:** At this time, it is not a simple switch to another language. Rather, it supports the text in those languages.



# Chat Q&A (continued)

**Question:** Google Translate is much more robust than it used to be. Is it good enough to use for this purpose, in your opinion Heidi? Or what are some other ways to offer translation?

**Answer:** With the nuances of translating content to another language, the most comprehensive way to add multi-language StoryMaps is to have someone physically translate the content. Google Translate can get the point across, but the complexities of language still require a human touch. We use translation services when a story is translated. Typically, a customer will have a native speaker or service they prefer to use.

**Question:** As a non-profit conservation organization, how to build StoryMaps without additional fees for data storage?

**Answer:** Building StoryMaps will only consume credits in your organization if your story is in very specific cases. I have found that most organizations are not incorporating those premium capabilities within a StoryMap. [Here is an additional article for reference.](#)

**Question:** Are these story maps available for non ESRI users? If we do not have an ESRI or ARCGIS license?

**Answer:** Yes! Although you would need an ArcGIS Online license to build out a StoryMap. Summer will go through getting started with our [nonprofit program](#) to obtain deeply discounted licensing later in the presentation.

**Question:** Hoping Andria or team can show how to link/display shape files/data that an org already has in ESRI.

**Answer:** Andria will likely show this, but you would need to have a web map built in map viewer first. Then you would select this map when you “add” it.

**Question:** When adding the image, what kind of size should the image be? i.e. pixel size, etc.?

**Answer:** We aim for highest res possible (300 dpi) as much as we can. As for pixels, I design full screen images at 1080 x 1920 px. (Read more about [using images in ArcGIS with storymaps.](#))

**Question:** Where are you pulling this image from?

**Answer:** We have a folder of the assets for this demo. You can upload from your device.



# Chat Q&A (continued)

**Question:** Can users create their own (organizational) themes?

**Answer:** An organization theme specifically is created by an organization administrator and will then show up as an option in the theme builder for organization members to modify as needed. More information about shared organization themes can be found in the [\*\*What's New in AGSM \(February 2025\) blog\*\*](#). Outside of a shared organization theme, users can also just create a theme that matches their organization's branding guidelines by choosing relevant colors, fonts, etc in the theme builder. Here's a [short video](#) about creating your own theme.

**Question:** Can you provide some resources that show me how to make these 3D maps with satellite images of the watershed?

**Answer(s):**

- See "[Creating a 3D Race Report with ArcGIS StoryMaps](#)" and "[Get started creating scenes](#)"
- I have done this with the [web scene in AGOL](#).
- You set up each view as a slide. Check out [this example](#) that I used in a StoryMap.

**Question:** Can you talk about recommendations for hosting StoryMaps and related content? For example, if a client does not have an AGOL account, what are my avenues for hosting it on my org account, pros, cons, best practices, licensing issues, etc.

**Answer:** I don't have a specific answer but I know that when we work with folks and host their stories, a con is that we are the ones who need to make updates for them; we transfer them to their org as much as possible. Also, for asset licensing, make sure they license them after the transfer.

**Question:** Does a StoryMap HAVE to have a map? Or can it just be a way to build a dynamic comms product with images and text etc.

**Answer:** Nope! You can use it as a really immersive, visually stunning storytelling tool without maps. 😊

