Need GISCorps volunteers for a crowd sourcing project – Syria, Lebanon, Iraq
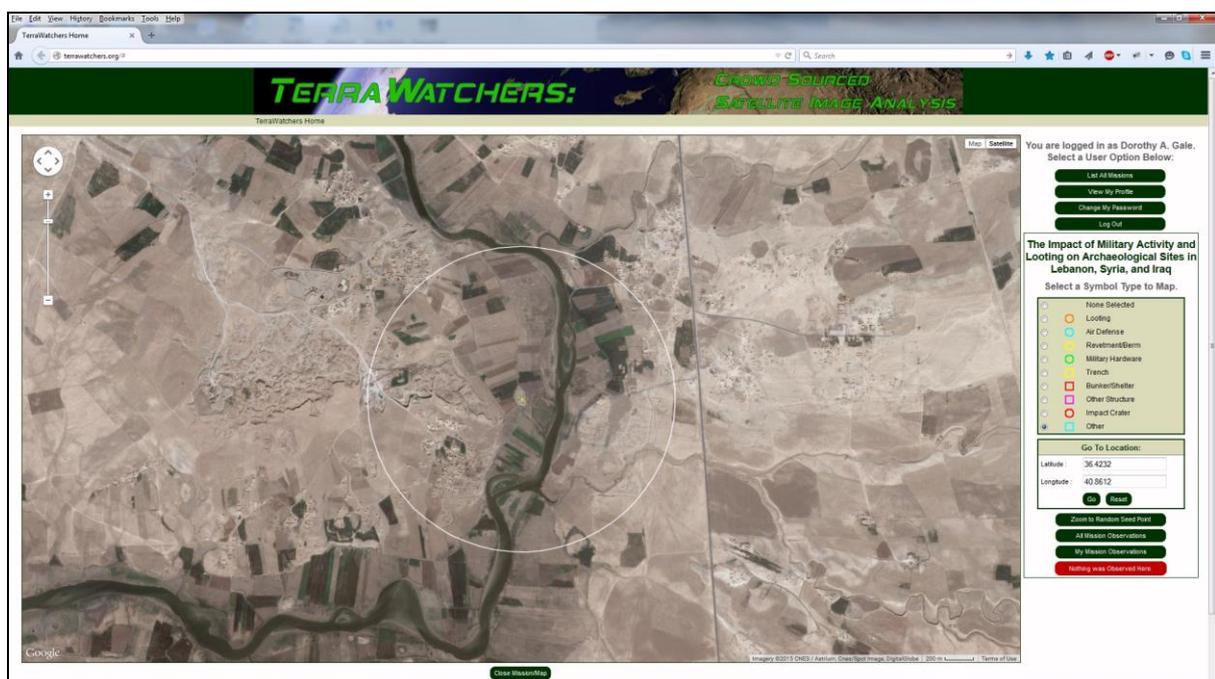
TerraWatchers is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing web-based, crowdsourced satellite image monitoring and overwatch tools for critical missions related to current events.

TerraWatchers is in need of volunteers for a mission that spans from Syria to Lebanon and Iraq. The goal of the mission is to examine a large number of archaeological sites for evidence of looting and other military-related damage. Results of the effort will be shared with the American Schools of Oriental Research Syria Cultural Heritage Initiative, the FBI's Art Recovery Team, the International Council on Monuments and Sites and UNESCO.

Please see this article for a description of the problem we face in the Middle East related to the warfare that's been endemic in the region since the 1980s. Based on earlier work under a NASA Space Archaeology grant, it's been estimated that about 10% of the archaeological sites in Lebanon and western Syria have suffered impacts related to warfare and looting, but we need a much larger sample of sites to strengthen our earlier findings.

The web application sends users to randomly selected seed points (in this case, archaeological sites), and asks them to examine the region within one kilometre of the site (see the picture below). A group of symbols has been pre-defined, and users simply select the appropriate symbol and double-click the map to indicate where they have observed the phenomenon. If our early work is any indication, probably 90% of the sites examined won't show evidence of looting or military activity, and users can simply press the "Nothing was Observed Here" button when they don't see anything. Not finding these kinds of damage is a good thing, and it's important to be able to know which sites haven't been damaged, as well as which ones have. If the user records observations, the red button will say "Submit My Observations." Press it to send your observations to the TerraWatchers server. In either situation, once you've pressed the red button, you'll be sent to a new site. Log out to stop.

Participants must register on their website to be able to record their observations. Detailed training material is posted at: http://terrawatchers.org/#.

Qualifications:
- Must follow detailed instructions;
- Experience in aerial/satellite image interpretation is desired but not necessary; in fact, since this application will be open to the public, we want some of our testers to have no experience in image interpretation;
- Fast connection to the Internet;
- Available for 5-7 hours per week for approximately the next 4 weeks.

Hardware/Software: The volunteer must have access to own hardware and will be working on the project using a browser. FireFox and Google Chrome are the preferred platforms.

Duration: The volunteer must be able to commit to this project for +/- 4 weeks (5-7 hours per week). The work starts immediately.

Type of mission: This mission does NOT require traveling and is conducted remotely.

If you are interested and available, please add your information to this Google doc by June 6th, 2015. Please make sure to fill out the spreadsheet completely.

The project will close approximately at the end of July 2015.