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DATA USERS GUIDES

1: Digital Line Graphs from 1:24,000-Scale Maps
2: Digital Line Graphs from 1:100,000-Scale Maps
3: Digital Line Graphs from 1:2,000,000-Scale Maps
4: Land Use and Land Cover from 1:2,000,000-Scale Maps
5: Digital Elevation Models
6: Geographic Names Information System
7: Alaska Interim Land Cover Mapping Program

Data Users Guides 1-7 replace Geological Survey Circular 895 B-G.

Questions regarding availability and ordering of US GeoData (all types of digital cartographic and geographic data produced and distributed by the U.S. Geological Survey) should be addressed to:

User Services Branch
Earth Science Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
507 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092
1-800-USA-MAPS or (703) 648-5920

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Users Guide 6

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PREFACE

This Data Users Guide is the result of the efforts of a number of people who have contributed to the research, development, and implementation of the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). Roger L. Payne prepared and wrote this Data Users Guide, which is designed to provide a description of the data in each of the data elements of the three data bases of GNIS. The GNIS program, which includes the automated names system and the National Gazetteer program, is a coordinated effort in the Branch of Geographic Names. The automated system was initially developed by Sam Stulberg and Roger L. Payne. Mark Brooks and Laura Downey provide system enhancement and software development. Coordination of the research and compilation of certain gazetteers is directed by Robin D. Worcester with research assistance and support from Jon Campbell, Linda S. Davis, Nancy Dukes, and Kathy Nowak.

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INTRODUCTION

The Earth Science Information Center (ESIC) distributes digital cartographic/geographic data files produced by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as part of the National Mapping Program. Digital cartographic data files may be grouped into four basic types. The first of these, called a Digital Line Graph (DLG), is the line map information in digital form. These data files include information on planimetric base categories, such as transportation, hydrography, and boundaries. The second type, called a Digital Elevation Model (DEM), consists of a sampled array of elevations for a number of ground positions that are usually at regularly spaced intervals. The third type is Land Use and Land Cover digital data which provides information on nine major classes of land use such as urban, agricultural, or forest as well as associated map data such as political units and Federal land ownership. The fourth type, the Geographic Names Information System, provides primary information for all known places, features, and areas in the United States identified by a proper name.

The digital cartographic data files from selected quadrangles currently available from ESIC include the following:

- Digital Line Graphs (DLG's)
  --1:2,000,000-scale maps
  --7.5- and 15-minute topographic quadrangle series
  --1:100,000-scale quadrangle series

- Digital Elevation Models (DEM's)
  --7.5-minute topographic quadrangle series
  --1-degree quadrangle coverage

- Land Use and Land Cover digital data
  --1:250,000- and 1:100,000-scale land use and land cover and associated maps
  --1:250,000-scale Alaska Interim Land Cover Maps

- Geographic Names

The digital data are useful for the production of cartographic products such as base maps and for various kinds of spatial analysis. A major use of these digital cartographic/geographic data is to combine them with other geographically referenced data, enabling scientists to conduct automated analyses in support of various decision making processes.

This document describes the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), which

was developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to meet major national needs regarding geographic names and their standardization and dissemination. Information in the system can be retrieved, manipulated, arranged, and analyzed to meet the needs of a wide variety of users for either research or application. Primarily, GNIS was designed to:

1. Assist in establishing uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names;

2. Provide an index of names found on Federal, State, and other maps;

3. Eliminate duplication in time and money spent by Government agencies, industry, and institutions to organize similar data files for specific needs;

4. Provide an interface for integrating data from other systems for multidisciplinary use;

5. Provide for standardization of data elements and their coded representation for use within the information processing community;

6. Provide support for the nation’s infrastructure; and

7. Meet Federal public information requirements prescribed by law.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

The GNIS is currently composed of three data bases:

1. National Geographic Names Data Base (NGNDB),
2. Topographic Mapnames Data Base (TMNDB), and
3. Reference Data Base (RDB).

The NGNDB is the paramount and by far the largest database of the system. It lists names and locative information for almost 2 million geographic features throughout the U.S. The TMNDB and RDB developed as adjuncts to the NGNDB. The TMNDB is an inventory of names of all USGS topographic maps. The RDB contains information about the sources used in compiling the NGNDB.

Research and initial compilation of data for GNIS were begun in 1968 when geographic names data for Massachusetts were collected and stored in a computerized file. In 1976, geographic names data for Kansas and Colorado were collected as a pilot project to determine the feasibility of compilation on a national scale. After analysis and a favorable evaluation of this pilot project, geographic names data for the remaining States and territories were compiled from 1978 through 1986. The initial compilation, or Phase I, is now complete, and the system contains entries for most named features shown on USGS topographic maps with the exception of roads and highways. As maps of the largest scale available were used during Phase I compilation, the majority of the names were compiled from 1:24,000-scale, 7.5-minute by 7.5-minute topographic maps. For areas where no published or advanced 1:24,000-scale maps existed, 1:62,500-scale maps were used; when there was no coverage by either series of maps, 1:250,000-scale maps were used.

In addition, entries for features shown on U.S. Forest Service maps and National Ocean Service charts, as well as from the files of the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Communications Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers were compiled during Phase I. After Phase I data compilation, the geographic names records were edited by comparing the

computer files with the accumulated records of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN). Some variant names and other BGN related data were added at this time.

Optimum use and effectiveness of the automated names system requires that the names of features not named on Phase I sources be added, together with specific types of feature names excluded from compilation during Phase I (see Appendix A), as well as other names of importance to researchers and users such as historical and additional variant names. The systematic collection of names from official State and local sources, including historical sources, is termed Phase II.

PRODUCTS

Standard reports from the NGNDB are available for each State and territory which list feature names alphabetically with associated information, including most of the locative data elements. These reports are available on paper, microfiche, magnetic tape, and diskettes. The same data without titles and headings are available on magnetic tape and diskettes. Standard reports and digital files from the TMNDB are also available. Customized reports and digital files tailored to the individual needs of users are available from all three databases.

A more formal publication derived from the NGNDB is The National Gazetteer of the United States of America, published as U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1200. The names of features in each State and territory will be published as separate volumes of the gazetteer series as Phase II compilation and edit are completed.

The Digital Gazetteer of the U.S., available on compact disk, is also derived from GNIS. The disk includes all three databases of GNIS, as well as search and retrieval software.

GNIS is available for interactive access by information specialists of agencies in the Federal Government. Use of GNIS information is varied, and usually has a wide range of application. However, broad categories of use include emergency preparedness, local transportation planning, regional planning, product marketing, site selection and analysis, genealogical research, and generally solving toponymic problems requiring the use and analysis of geographic names.

MAINTENANCE

GNIS resides and operates on a mainframe computer. All users have retrieval capability, but only GNIS and U.S. BGN staff have the capability to add, alter, or delete information. The system is maintained by the USGS National Mapping Division (NMD). Each regional mapping center of the NMD, as well as the U.S. Forest Service and National Ocean Service, compiles and electronically transmits names data to the GNIS staff for review and entry into the system. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names transmits information directly to the system concerning new names and the resolution of geographic names found to be in conflict on Federal sources. A series of checks and balances ensures integrity and security so that all users can retrieve and use data with confidence.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA BASES

The following tables list the data elements and their associated labels in each of the three data bases. Each table is followed by a detailed explanation of the data elements. Sample records from the NGNDB are given in Appendix D.

National Geographic Names Data Base

The National Geographic Names Data Base is the primary and largest data base in GNIS. It contains files representing each State, territory and outlying area, and the District of Columbia; as well as certain specialized files. Each State file contains, as a minimum, the names compiled from Phase I (see Appendix A), but many State files contain information from other source materials. Eventually, all State and territory files will contain information from other sources. There are currently three specialized files, two of which contain thematic data on a national scale and a third for names of features in Antarctica. One of the thematic files contains entries for most of the populated places in the United States. The second file is the Federal Information Processing Standards Codes for Named Populated Places, known as FIPS 55.

The following data element descriptions are designed to provide the necessary information for understanding and retrieving data. Data elements and their descriptions for the FIPS 55 and Antarctica files are not listed in this publication. Table 1 lists each data element and the appropriate label abbreviation used when retrieving or requesting information from the NGNDB.

Table 1.--Labels and data elements from the National Geographic Names Data Base

Label	Data Element
BIBLIO	BIBLIOGRAPHIC CODE
COUNTY	COUNTY NAME
DESCR	DESCRIPTION
DESIG	TYPE OF FEATURE
ELEV	ELEVATION (FT)
ENTDATE	RECORD ENTRY DATE
FOREST	NATIONAL FOREST FEATURE LOCATION
HEADS	SOURCE OF FEATURE (LATLONG)
HIST	HISTORICAL NOTE
LATLONG	GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES
LOC	STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE
MAPNAME	MAP OR CHART NAME
NAME	FEATURE NAME
NUMBER	ID NUMBER
QUAD	USGS QUADRANGLE CODE
SIZE	SIZE
STATE	NAME OF STATE (FIPS)
STATUS	FEDERAL STATUS
STR	SECTION, TOWNSHIP, AND RANGE
VAR	VARIANT NAME(S)

BIBLIO - A variable-length alphanumeric coded entry that references the source for each name record not compiled from USGS topographic maps during initial compilation. The first two characters of the code are the alphabetical State Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code, followed by a hyphen and an M or a T corresponding to Map or Text respectively. The M or T is followed by one or more digits that reference the specific source from which that name was obtained. Some entries may begin with the characters US instead of a State FIPS code, which means that source is used in compiling data for features throughout the U.S. If the source referenced is an atlas or text, the code will be followed by a slash (/) and the appropriate map or page number(s). The codes are cross-referenced to fully documented and annotated bibliographies in the Reference Data Base. The absence of a code indicates that the name was compiled during Phase I (1978-1981) from the most current, largest scale USGS topographic map available.

COUNTY - The variable-length upper- and lower-case name(s) of the primary civil division(s) (county level) in which the feature is located. Multiple county entries are separated by a comma and a blank. For linear features the counties are ordered from the mouth to the source of the feature, while the order for areal features generally radiates from the center of the feature outward. If the feature crosses State boundaries, counties outside the primary State are listed followed by the appropriate two-character alphabetic State FIPS code in parentheses.

DESCR - Variable-length upper- and lower-case text that defines the situation, or relative position, to nearby features and to at least one close, well-known feature, usually a major town or city. Distances are provided, as well as the names of all major and minor civil divisions associated with the feature. The data element is available on a limited basis.

DESIG - A variable-length lower-case alphabetic element that is designed to group similar features into broadly defined categories to facilitate search and retrieval. Appendix B contains a list of categories and their definitions.

ELEV - A variable-length field that gives the height above or depth below sea level, in feet, of the highest or lowest point respectively of the feature. For those files that have not undergone Phase II data compilation, an entry is present only if the feature elevation was published on the source topographic map. State and territory files that have been completed through Phase II contain interpolated elevations for all populated places, summits, and hospitals. Some other features compiled during Phase II may have interpolated elevations.

ENTDATE - The date the record was entered into the database in the form year/month. Information is present in this field for records added since July, 1988.

FOREST - A variable length field containing the name or names of the National Forest or National Grassland in which the feature is wholly or partially located. The name of the forest or grassland is followed appropriately by NF or NG.

HEADS - A fixed-length alphanumeric field that locates the source of linear features by geographic coordinates. The format of the coordinates is identical to that of the geographic coordinates in the data element LATLONG; however, there is only one entry per applicable record in this field. The source coordinates correspond to the last entries in the data elements MAPNAME and QUAD. If the source of a linear feature could not be determined by name placement, textual description, or any other indicator, the coordinates were taken at the beginning of the longest, straightest drain in accordance with the policies of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

HIST - Variable-length upper- and lower-case text that provides as much information as is available from all known reputable sources about the physical and cultural history of a named feature. Additionally, special attention is given to name origin, if known, and detail is provided for background research. The data element is present only on a limited basis.

LATLONG - A variable-length alphanumeric field that contains geographic coordinate pairs locating the feature. Each coordinate pair is compressed into and fixed at 15 characters. Latitude and longitude values are in degrees, minutes, and seconds followed by a one-character directional indicator. If the degrees of longitude are less than 100, a leading zero is present. The first coordinate pair listed in this element are termed the primary coordinates. In the case of areal features, they represent the location of the approximate geographic center of the feature, while the primary coordinates of linear features represent the location of the mouth of the feature. If the location of the geographic center of a large populated place was difficult to identfy, additional guidelines were used to determine the placement of the primary geographic coordinates such as the location of the city or town hall, main post office, main library, central business district, or main intersection. The primary coordinates correspond to the first entries in the data elements MAPNAME and QUAD. All subsequent coordinate pairs in this element are termed secondary coordinates and locate the feature on each 7.5-minute x 7.5-minute topographic map that covers the area where the feature is located. All secondary coordinates correspond on a one-to-one basis with secondary entries listed in the data elements MAPNAME and QUAD. Coordinate pairs for

linear features are listed in order from mouth to source while the order of coordinate pairs listed for areal features generally radiates from the center outward. The geographic coordinates given are accurate to within ± 5 seconds of latitude or longitude.

LOC - A variable-length alphanumeric field that contains one or more five-digit FIPS codes referring to the State(s) and county(s) or equivalents in which the feature is located. The first two digits of each code represent the appropriate State or territory and the last three digits refer to the county, parish, municipio, or other civil division. Codes for all counties in which a feature is located are present with multiple entries separated by a blank. Multiple codes are ordered from mouth to source for linear features and generally from the center outward for areal features. All codes are numeric except when the State or territory borders a foreign country, in which case the appropriate two-character alphabetical FIPS code is given -- CA for Canada, MX for Mexico, UR for Russia, UK for the United Kingdom, and WS for Western Samoa.

MAPNAME - A variable-length upper- and lower-case entry that lists the names of USGS large-scale topographic maps that portray the area where the feature is located. If the feature falls completely outside the bounds of USGS topographic map coverage, a reference to the source map used in compilation is present. The order of the entries in this data element correspond to the order of the entries in LATLONG and QUAD. If the feature crosses State boundaries, the names of maps of areas outside the primary State are followed by a blank and the appropriate two-character alphabetic State FIPS code in parentheses.

NAME - A variable-length upper- and lower-case alphanumeric entry that contains the official name of the feature. In most cases the name includes a generic that indicates the feature type. Some names are followed by a space and an asterisk, which denotes a diacritical mark somewhere in the name. This arrangement is temporary and will at some point be replaced by the inclusion of the appropriate diacritical mark and the removal of the asterisk. In some cases the generic part of the name may be in the first position, followed by the specific part. In those cases, the position of the generic within the name is reversed; for example, Mount Saint Helens becomes Saint Helens, Mount. The generic, however, is not reversed if the feature is a populated place or if the specific part of the name contains an Arabic number. Additionally, if the definite article occurs in the initial position in the name, it is reversed; for example, The Plains becomes Plains, The, and La Mesa becomes Mesa, La. Some names are followed by a parenthetical entry that provides additional information about the name; for example, Gold Town (site), Seven Springs (flowing), Big Flat (mud). Appendix C contains a listing of parenthetical entries used thus far. Two special terms are used in parentheses. The word historical signifies a feature that no longer exists, and the word subdivision indicates a named population cluster within another populated place or civil division.

NUMBER - An eight-digit number that is the unique identifier of each feature and its associated information. It is used internally for system maintenance.

QUAD - A variable-length alphanumeric field that contains coded entries for each USGS topographic map that shows area where the feature is located. Each code is eight alphanumeric characters. This code is also known as the USGS Map Reference Code (MRC). The first five characters are digits that represent the degrees of latitude and longitude of the particular 1° latitude x 1° longitude square in which the map area is located. The

digits are followed by a hyphen and a grid reference to the specific 7.5-minute x 7.5-minute cell within the 1° x 1° square. The grid reference is a two character alphanumeric. The rows of the grid are coded A through H, and the columns are coded 1 through 8, each beginning in the southeast corner of the 1° x 1° area.

SIZE - A short variable-length alphanumeric phrase that gives the length of linear features and the width of areal features in English units. This element is in limited use.

STATE - A two-character alphabetic element that contains the standard FIPS abbreviation for State and territory names in which the feature is located. The element is used only in national topical files.

STATUS - A variable-length alphabetic entry that indicates the year of any decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) regarding the feature name or its application. This means the name or application of the name of the feature has been the subject of controversy and has undergone special research and consideration by the Board. The format of the entry is BGN YEAR, where YEAR is the appropriate year of the BGN decision. If the name has been made official by an act of Congress the format will be US YEAR.

STR - A variable-length alphanumeric data element that identifies the appropriate section, township(s), and range(s), and principal meridian in which the feature is located. If the feature is in more than five sections, only the township(s) and range(s) and principal meridian are given. The township and range system was established in the late l8th century to systematically divide Federal lands. The original 13 States and Vermont, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maine, Texas, Hawaii, part of Ohio, and all territories are not included in the township and range system. The element is presently available on a limited basis.

VAR - A variable-length upper- and lower-case field containing any other current or former names of the feature, or former spellings of the current official name. If more than one variant is present, they are ordered alphabetically and separated by a comma and a blank. Additionally, if the BGN rendered a formal decision for what is now a variant, the year of that decision is given in parentheses following the variant name with which it is associated. A variant obtained from a source other than the BGN is followed by a code in parentheses that is a reference to a complete annotated bibliography of the source of that name. All bibliographic codes are cross referenced and expanded in the Reference Data Base.

USGS Topographic Mapnames Data Base

The USGS Topographic Mapnames Data Base contains 5 separate files; one for each topographic map series. They include the 7.5-minute by 7.5-minute series, the 15-minute by 15-minute series, the 30-minute by 30-minute series (out of print), the 30-minute by 1 degree series, and the one degree by two degree series.

The following data element descriptions are designed to provide the necessary information for understanding and retrieving data. Table 2 lists each data element and the appropriate data element abbreviation (label) used when retrieving data.

Table 2.--Labels and data elements from the USGS Topographic Mapnames Data Base

Label	Data Element
CNTYPCT	PERCENT COVERAGE BY COUNTY
COORD	LAT/LONG (SE CORNER) - QUAD SIZE (MINUTES)
COUNTY	COUNTY NAME
DATE	DATE OF NAME CHANGE
FIPS	STATE ALPHA FIPS CODE
HIST	FORMER QUADRANGLE NAME(S)
NAME	QUADRANGLE NAME
NUMBER	ID NUMBER
QUAD	USGS QUADRANGLE CODE
SCALE	QUADRANGLE SCALE
STATE	QUADRANGLE STATE(S)
XNAME	7.5 x 15 MINUTE MAP NAME
250	QUADRANTS 250000 SERIES

CNTYPCT - The approximate percentage of area depicted for each county on the map. The percentages are in the same order as the names in the COUNTY field. This data is available only for 7.5-minute x 7.5 minute maps.

COORD - Contains an 11-character alphanumeric code that represents the geographic coordinates of the southeast corner of the map, or the northeast corner of the map in American Samoa and the southwest corner of the map in Guam and certain Alaska maps. The coordinates are given in degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude, each followed by the appropriate directional indicator. Longitudes of less than 100◦ are preceded by a leading zero. Example: 3515N08252W

COUNTY - A variable-length alphabetic entry containing the name of the county(s) or equivalent(s) portrayed by the topographic map.

DATE - If applicable, the year the name of the map was changed.

FIPS - A fixed-length numerical element that contains the five-digit FIPS code that identifies the State(s) and county(s) or equivalent(s) covered by the map. The 1:100,000-scale and 1:250,000-scale files contain only the two-digit FIPS code that identifies the State(s) or equivalent(s).

HIST - A variable length field containing information of historical significance regarding the map, especially former names.

NAME - A variable-length alphanumeric entry that represents the full map name as it appears on the published topographic map. In cases where the land area portrayed by the map is slightly larger than the standard grid area, two records will be present in the database. One record will describe the standard grid portion of the map, and this field will give the name as it is published. The other record will describe the "overedge" portion of the map, and will show the map name followed by OE. Additionally, some special l:24,000-scale maps show oddly shaped areas, such as the Isle Royal, Michigan map. These maps have been segmented into separate records in the database according to the standard grid overlay.

Each record pertaining to these oddly shaped maps describes a standard grid cell, showing the name of the published map followed by the word digital in parentheses. The record describing the grid cell covering the southeast corner of the map will not have the parenthetical entry following the name.

NUMBER - An eight-digit number that is the unique identifier of each record in the database. It is used internally for maintenance of the system.

QUAD - A fixed-length field containing the first eight characters of the USGS map reference code. The first five digits of the code represent the degrees of latitude and longitude of the area in which the quadrangle is located. These digits are followed by a hyphen and then a two character alphanumeric grid reference to a cell within the 1° x 1° block of area. The rows within each block are coded A through H and the columns are coded 1 through 8, both beginning in the southeast corner of the 1° x 1° area. Example: 37085-A5

SCALE - A two or three digit entry which indicates the ratio of unit length on the map to unit length (in thousands) on the Earth. The valid entries are: 20, 24, 25, 62, 63, 100, 125, and 250.

STATE - The two-character alphabetic FIPS code indicating the State(s) covered by the map.

XNAME - A variable-length alphabetic element for the names of maps in the USGS 7.5- x 15-minute map series. Since the 7.5- x 15-minute map generally spans the same area as two 7.5- x 7.5-minute maps, the east half containing the southeast corner coordinate contains the name of the 7.5- x 15-minute map, while the west half contains the word "SEE", followed by the name of the 7.5- x 15-minute map.

250 - The entries are variable length and are limited to records describing 1:100,000-scale maps. This element contains the name of the 1:250,000-scale map covering the area of the particular 1:100,000-scale map being described, followed by a directional indicating the quadrant of the 1:250,000-scale map where the 1:100,000-scale map is located.

Reference Data Base

The Reference Data Base is designed for use as a research and reference tool as well as a depository of reference information for GNIS. The information in the RDB contains the complete annotated bibliographies of all source material (in addition to USGS topographic maps) used in the compilation of the National Geographic Names Data Base.

The following data element descriptions are designed to provide the necessary information for understanding and retrieving data. Table 3 lists each data element and the appropriate label used when retrieving data.

Reference Data Base Element Descriptions

BIBLIO - A variable-length alphabetic field containing the complete annotated bibliographic entry and associated code for each source (other than USGS topographic maps used in Phase I) used in compilation of the NGNDB. Records in the NGNDB cite the appropriate bibliographic code referencing the source from which the information for that record was derived. For State specific sources, the first two characters of the code are the State alphabetic FIPS code. For national sources, the first two characters are US. A hyphen then follows, followed by an M or T corresponding to map or text respectively. The M or T is then followed by one or more digits identifying a specific source. The code is followed by a dash and the bibliographic citation and appropriate annotation describing the content of the source.

Table 3.--Labels and data elements from the Reference Data Base

Label	Data Element
BIBLIO	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCE MATERIALS

ORDERING INFORMATION

Questions regarding the structure of GNIS, other technical matters, or individualized search possibilities should be addressed to:

Manager, GNIS
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092
(703) 648-4544
(703) 648-5542 FAX

Questions regarding changing the names of features or proposing new names for features in the United States should be addressed to:

Executive Secretary, Domestic Names Committee
U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092

Standard products and specialized searches may be ordered from any of the regional information offices of the U.S. Geological Survey listed below.

National Headquarters
Earth Science
Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
507 National Center
Reston, VA 22092
(703)860-6045

Mid-Continent Mapping
Center-NCIC
U.S. Geological Survey
1400 Independence Road
Rolla, MO 65401
(314)341-0851

Western Mapping Center-
NCIC
U.S. Geological Survey
345 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(415)329-4309

National Cartographic
Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
National Space Technology
Laboratories, Bldg. 3101
NSTL Station, MS 39529
(601)688-3544

National Cartographic
Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
Skyline Building
218 E Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907)271-4159

Rocky Mountain Mapping
Center-NCIC
U.S. Geological Survey
Box 25046, Stop 504
Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225
(303)236-5829

EROS Data Center
U.S. Geological Survey
Sioux Falls, SD 57198
(605)594-6151

Digital data obtained on magnetic tape can be written to most technical specifications.

Official State Gazetteers must be ordered from:

Western Distribution Branch
U.S. Geological Survey
Books and Open-File Reports
Federal Center, Bldg. 41
Box 25425
Denver, CO 80225

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A.--Categories of Named Features not yet included in the Geographic Names Information System

Phase I

Generally, all named features on the most current largest scale USGS topographic maps were included for Phase I compilation. Some categories of named features, however, were omitted from Phase I because more complete lists of these categories were available from other sources. If a State or territory has only been completed through Phase I, the following categories of named features will not be present:

federally administered areas greater than 30 square miles,
major and minor civil divisions,
some major features that are too large to be named on 7.5-minute, 1:24,000-scale topographic maps,
regional names,
historical names,
most building names,
roads and highways.

Immediately following compilation from U.S. Geological Survey Topographic maps, names were added from U.S. Forest Service maps and the charts of the National Ocean Service. Subsequently, complete information from the files of the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Communications Commission, and the Army Corps of Engineers has been added.

Phase II

Available information from the categories not compiled during Phase I, as well as geographic names from other sources, are added during Phase II. If a State or territory has been completed through Phase II compilation, information for all known, named features should be present except for:

roads and highways.

spaces have been added to right-justify indented material

APPENDIX B.--Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
Feature Class Definitions

The feature class terms and abbreviations currently consist of nine or fewer letters and were chosen for computer search and retrieval purposes. They do not necessarily represent terminology for the identification of all kinds of cultural and natural features. Although some of the terms may agree with dictionary definitions, they represent more generalized categories. Some commonly used generics are listed in paren- theses at the end of each entry to assist in understanding the range of cultural and natural entities represented by the term. Refer to the Reference Data Base to retrieve all generics thus far encountered in geographic names compilation. In most instances a plural form is listed as if it were singular; for example, archipelago or islands would be categorized as island. The terms and the definitions are as follows:

airport - manmade facility maintained for the use of aircraft (airfield, airstrip, landing field, landing strip).

arch - natural arch-like opening in a rock mass (bridge, natural bridge, sea arch).

area - any one of several areally extensive natural features not included in other categories (badlands, barren, delta, fan, garden).

arroyo - watercourse or channel through which water may occasionally flow (coulee, draw, gully, wash).

bar - natural accumulation of sand, gravel, or alluvium forming an underwater or exposed embankment (ledge, reef, sandbar, shoal, spit).

basin - natural depression or relatively low area enclosed by higher land (amphitheater, cirque, pit, sink).

bay - indentation of a coastline or shoreline enclosing a part of a body of water; a body of water partly surrounded by land (arm, bight, cove, estuary, gulf, inlet, sound).

beach - the sloping shore along a body of water that is washed by waves or tides and is usually covered by sand or gravel (coast, shore, strand).

bench - area of relatively level land on the flank of an elevation such as a hill, ridge, or mountain where the slope of the land rises on one side and descends on the opposite side (level).

bend - curve in the course of a stream and (or) the land within the curve; a curve in a linear body of water (bottom, loop, meander).

APPENDIX B.--Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
Feature Class Definitions (continued)

bridge - manmade structure carrying a trail, road, or other transportation system across a body of water or depression (causeway, overpass, trestle).

building - a manmade structure with walls and a roof for protection of people and (or) materials, but not including church, hospital, or school.

canal - manmade waterway used by watercraft or for drainage, irrigation, mining, or water power (ditch, lateral).

cape - projection of land extending into a body of water (lea, neck, peninsula, point).

cave - natural underground passageway or chamber, or a hollowed out cavity in the side of a cliff (cavern, grotto).

cemetery - a place or area for burying the dead (burial, burying ground, grave, memorial garden).

channel - linear deep part of a body of water through which the main volume of water flows and is frequently used as a route for watercraft (passage, reach, strait, thoroughfare, through- fare).

church - building used for religious worship (chapel, mosque, synagogue, tabernacle, temple).

civil - a political division formed for administrative purposes (borough, county, municipio, parish, town, township).

cliff - very steep or vertical slope (bluff, crag, head, headland, nose, palisades, precipice, promontory, rim, rimrock).

crater - circular-shaped depression at the summit of a volcanic cone or one on the surface of the land caused by the impact of a meteorite; a manmade depression caused by an explosion (caldera, lua).

crossing - a place where two or more routes of transportation form a junction or intersection (overpass, underpass).

dam - water barrier or embankment built across the course of a stream or into a body of water to control and (or) impound the flow of water (breakwater, dike, jetty).

falls - perpendicular or very steep fall of water in the course of a stream (cascade, cataract, waterfall).

flat - relative level area within a region of greater relief (clearing, glade, playa).

forest - bounded area of woods, forest, or grassland under the administration of a political agency (see woods) (national forest, national grasslands, State forest).

gap - low point or opening between hills or mountains or in a ridge or mountain range (col, notch, pass, saddle, water gap, wind gap).

geyser - eruptive spring from which hot water and (or) steam and in some cases mud are periodically thrown.

glacier - body or stream of ice moving outward and downslope from an area of accumulation; an area of relatively permanent snow or ice on the top or side of a mountain or mountainous area (icefield, ice patch, snow patch).

gut - relatively small coastal waterway connecting larger bodies of water or other waterways (creek, inlet, slough).

harbor - sheltered area of water where ships or other watercraft can anchor or dock (hono, port, roads, roadstead).

hospital - building where the sick or injured may receive medical or surgical attention (infirmary).

island - area of dry or relatively dry land surrounded by water or low wetland (archipelago, atoll, cay, hammock, hummock, isla, isle, key, moku, rock).

isthmus - narrow section of land in a body of water connecting two larger land areas.

lake - natural body of inland water (backwater, lac, lagoon, laguna, pond, pool, resaca, waterhole).

lava - formations resulting from the consolidation of molten rock on the surface of the Earth (kepula, lava flow).

levee - natural or manmade embankment flanking a stream (bank, berm).

locale - place at which there is or was human activity; it does not include populated places, mines, and dams (battlefield, crossroad, camp, farm, ghost town, landing, railroad siding, ranch, ruins, site, station, windmill).

mine - place or area from which commercial minerals are or were removed from the Earth; not including oilfield (pit, quarry, shaft).

oilfield - area where petroleum is or was removed from the Earth.

APPENDIX B.--Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
Feature Class Definitions (continued)

other - category for miscellaneous named manmade entities that cannot readily be placed in the other feature classes listed here.

park - place or area set aside for recreation or preservation of a cultural or natural resource and under some form of government administration; not including National or State forests or Reserves (national historical landmark, national park, State park, wilderness area).

pillar - vertical, standing, often spire-shaped, natural rock formation (chimney, monument, pinnacle, pohaku, rock tower).

plain - a region of general uniform slope, comparatively level and of considerable extent (grassland, highland, kula, plateau, upland).

ppl - (populated place) place or area with clustered or scattered buildings and a permanent human population (city, settlement, town, village).

range - chain of hills or mountains; a somewhat linear, complex mountainous or hilly area (cordillera, sierra).

rapids - fast-flowing section of a stream, often shallow and with exposed rock or boulders (riffle, ripple).

reserve - a tract of land set aside for a specific use (does not include forests, civil divisions, parks).

reservoir - artificially impounded body of water (lake, tank).

ridge - elevation with a narrow, elongated crest which can be part of a hill or mountain (crest, cuesta, escarpment, hogback, lae, rim, spur).

school - building or group of buildings used as an institution for study, teaching, and learning (academy, college, high school, university).

sea - large body of salt water (gulf, ocean).

slope - a gently inclined part of the Earth’s surface (grade, pitch).

spring - place where underground water flows naturally to the surface of the Earth (seep).

stream - linear body of water flowing on the Earth’s surface (anabranch, awawa, bayou, branch, brook, creek, distributary, fork, kill, pup, rio, river, run, slough).

APPENDIX B.--Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
Feature Class Definitions (continued)

summit - prominent elevation rising above the surrounding level of the Earth’s surface; does not include pillars, ridges, or ranges (ahu, berg, bald, butte, cerro, colina, cone, cumbre, dome, head, hill, horn, knob, knoll, mauna, mesa, mesita, mound, mount, mountain, peak, puu, rock, sugarloaf, table, volcano).

swamp - poorly drained wetland, fresh or saltwater, wooded or grassy, possibly covered with open water (bog, cienega, marais, marsh, pocosin).

trail - route for passage from one point to another; does not include roads or highways (jeep trail, path, ski trail).

tower - a manmade structure, higher than its diameter, generally used for observation, storage, or electronic transmission.

tunnel - linear underground passageway open at both ends.

valley - linear depression in the Earth’s surface that generally slopes from one end to the other (barranca, canyon, chasm, cove, draw, glen, gorge, gulch, gulf, hollow, ravine).

well - manmade shaft or hole in the Earth’s surface used to obtain fluid or gaseous materials.

woods - small area covered with a dense growth of trees; does not include an area of trees under the administration of a political agency (see forest).

APPENDIX C.--Parenthetical Descriptors used with Names

The following terms have been used on USGS topographic maps and other sources to provide additional information or clarity about the name or the feature to which the name refers.

Abandoned
Active Mine
Alkali
Archaeological Site
BLM - refers to Bureau of Land Management
Campground
Cemetery
Diabase Dike
Dry Spring
Flowing
Foot Bridge
Ghost Town
Historic
Historical
Historical Monument
Historical Ruins
Historic Site
Inactive Mine
Jeep Trail
Mud
Natural Arch
Oil Field
Old Channel
Old Stage Station
Oxbow
P.O. - refers to Post Office
Pack Trail
Placer - refers to mining activities
Polluted Spring
Post Office
Private
Rock Formation
Ruins
Salt Lake
Secondary Name - refers to alternate or a prior name; for example:
Lake Mary (Old River Lake)
Siding
Site
Station
Subdivision
Submerged Rock
Sulphur Spring
USDA - refers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS - refers to U.S. Forest Service
USGS - refers to U.S. Geological Survey
1941 - refers to year of occurrence

APPENDIX D.--Sample Records from the National Geographic Names Data Base

Sample 1

ID NUMBER - 34003474
NAME - Jersey City
TYPE OF FEATURE - ppl
FEDERAL STATUS - BGN 1931
COUNTY NAME - Hudson
STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE - 34017
GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES - 404341N0740441W 404508N0740225W
MAP OR CHART NAME - Jersey City, Bayonne
USGS QUADRANGLE CODE - 40074-F1 40074-H1
ELEVATION (FT) - 83
VARIANT NAME(S) - Hudson, Paulus Hook, Powles Hook
STATE - NJ

Sample 2

ID NUMBER - 34003631
NAME - Kittatinny Mountain
TYPE OF FEATURE - summit
FEDERAL STATUS - BGN 1938
COUNTY NAME - Warren, Bergen, Adams (PA), Burlington
STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE - 34041 34037 42089 36071
GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES - 411915N0743943W 410106N0750159W
410435N0745605W 410741N0745241W
411010N0744758W 411355N0744202W
MAP OR CHART NAME - Portland, Big Creek, High Mountain, Bergens Mountain,
Rapidan River, Blue Level
USGS QUADRANGLE CODE - 40074-H1 40074-A2 40074-A3 40074-B1 40074-B2 40074-D6
ELEVATION (FT) - 1549
VARIANT NAME(S) - Blue Mountains, Kittatinny Mountain Range, Kittatinny Mountains
STATE - NJ

Sample 3

ID NUMBER - 34009173
NAME - Franklin Park
TYPE OF FEATURE - ppl
FEDERAL STATUS - BGN
COUNTY NAME - Burlington
STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE - 34005
GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES - 400130N0745430W
MAP OR CHART NAME - Beverly
GNIS MAP NO - 0090
USGS QUADRANGLE CODE - 40074-A8
ELEVATION (FT) - 40
VARIANT NAME(S) - Strawberry Hill
BIBLIOGRAPHIC CODE - NJ-M2
STATE - NJ

APPENDIX D.--Sample Records from the National Geographic Names Data Base
(continued)

Sample 4

ID NUMBER - 34009182
NAME - Pisgah, Mount
TYPE OF FEATURE - summit
FEDERAL STATUS - BGN
COUNTY NAME - Burlington
STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE - 34005
GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES - 400038N0744024W
MAP OR CHART NAME - Columbus
GNIS MAP NO - 0092
USGS QUADRANGLE CODE - 40074-A6
ELEVATION (FT) - 186
VARIANT NAME(S) - The Old Weavers Hill
BIBLIOGRAPHIC CODE - NJ-T3/p. 34
STATE - NJ

Sample 5

ID NUMBER - 34001385
NAME - Cohansey River
TYPE OF FEATURE - stream
FEDERAL STATUS - BGN 1954
COUNTY NAME - Cumberland, Bergen
STATE/COUNTY FIPS CODE - 34011 34033
GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES - 392039N0752127W 392230N0752057W
392237N0751500W
SOURCE OF FEATURE (LATLONG) - 393356N0751613W
MAP OR CHART NAME - Ben Davis Point, Old Mill, Hansoms Hill, Big Gap
USGS QUADRANGLE CODE - 39075-C3 39075-A2 39075-B1 39075-A4
VARIANT NAME(S) - Cohansey Creek, Cohanzey Creek, Cohanzy Creek
STATE - NJ