



**2021 Lead Covered Agency
NGDA Theme Annual Performance Report
and Self-Assessment
for
Cultural Resources Theme**

**Geospatial Data Act of 2018
Section USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3) Requirements**

February 4, 2022



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Introduction

The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) was signed into law on October 5, 2018. The GDA was included as a component of the FAA Reauthorization Act (H.R. 302, P.L. 115-254). The GDA is now in [U.S. Code, Title 43 – Public Lands, Chapter 46: GEOSPATIAL DATA](#).

The GDA Section 2805(b)(3)(E)(I) requires performance reports to be submitted to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) that document “the activities relating to and implementation of the National Geospatial Data Asset [NGDA] data theme, including progress in achieving the requirements under subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), and (D)” of Section 2805(b)(3).

This 2021 Lead Covered Agency NGDA Theme Annual Performance Report (LCA NGDA Theme Report) covers the period of October 1, 2020 through Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, September 30, 2021 and uses agency self-assessments for this report to the FGDC. Reports will be developed annually and will span one fiscal year period. Lead covered agencies will ensure that one consolidated report per NGDA theme is submitted to FGDC. This report will include a rating for each responsibility of "meets expectations," "made progress toward expectations," or "fails to meet expectations," as required by the GDA. A report template and survey were developed to facilitate consistent self-assessments and consolidated reports. As per the GDA, a summary and evaluation of the progress to achieve the requirements will be generated by FGDC and will be provided to the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) for comment. Summary reports with NGAC comments and other required reports and information will be available online via the [FGDC GDA pages](#).¹

The revised Circular A-16 is currently in development for release by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and is intended to provide guidance and direction for the FGDC on management of the GDA requirements. Following the release of the updated OMB Circular A-16, the FGDC anticipates conducting a review of its governance structure, including its working groups and subcommittees, to ensure that they support the needs of FGDC agencies and have the proper resources and structure to meet the requirements for facilitating agencies’ work to meet requirements of the GDA.

This 2021 NGDA Theme LCA annual performance report template uses the GDA definition for NGDA data theme as the foundation for reporting compliance *for the data within the theme*. From the GDA definitions, NGDA data theme “means the NGDA core geospatial datasets (including electronic records and coordinates) relating to a topic or subject designated under Section 2805.” FGDC anticipates that future enhancements to the reporting process will include a mechanism to gather information at the dataset level which can then be reported at the theme and agency level to provide a greater level of granularity for annual reporting and better management of the NGDA Portfolio.

The focus of this report will be to document both the ongoing processes, procedures, and actions within agencies that manage the NGDA datasets, and the FGDC activities underway for identifying common definitions and approaches for meeting the requirements for plans and actions identified in the GDA.

Executive Summary

This report is the result of continued efforts across the FGDC and the NGDA theme community to evaluate the requirements of the GDA in the context of the goals and objectives of the [National Spatial Data Infrastructure \(NSDI\) Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#).² The report is meant to highlight an emerging understanding of these requirements, communicate the steps that FGDC is undertaking to ensure governance processes are in place that build on the accomplishments to date, and lay out an approach for collaboratively moving forward. Communication of the necessary actions and next steps across the FGDC is the cornerstone of this report.

This annual performance report documents progress made in meeting GDA requirements since the initial, baseline, report was submitted in 2020. This second annual report for the Cultural Resources Theme provides insights into both ongoing, cross-cutting FGDC portfolio management, and agency and theme-specific activities that align with GDA requirements.

FGDC agencies, in coordination with the FGDC Office of the Secretariat (OS), provided leadership and input for GDA requirements analysis as part of ongoing theme strategic planning and implementation activities. Progress made by all NGDA themes for this reporting cycle centers on two key GDA requirements – geospatial data standards and establishing a plan for nationwide population of the NGDA data themes (or core datasets). The collaborative efforts included development of two briefing papers outlining the issues, benefits, challenges, and recommended actions for advancing each requirement. The anticipated outcomes, with FGDC Steering Committee approval, will include formation of two task teams to further evaluate the respective GDA requirements, establish a collaborative approach with government and nongovernment leaders, partners, and stakeholders, and develop recommendations for FGDC on required governance, technical guidance, and actions.

Theme-related information gathered during the 2020 LCA reporting process will also be used to support GDA requirements for geospatial data standards and nationwide population of the data theme. The reported information included participation in FGDC Subcommittees and Working Groups, National and International voluntary consensus standards bodies, International geospatial Working Groups supporting standards, other activities undertaken by agencies to support standards, and theme partners and partnership programs. FGDC will analyze the information collected and the existing GeoPlatform [Theme Community](#)³ content to determine how best to redesign the theme pages to host the relevant information.

Prior to the enactment of the GDA, the FGDC conducted Lifecycle Maturity Assessments (LMA) based on the A-16 Supplemental Guidance [Stages of the Geospatial Lifecycle](#).⁴ As described in the FY2020 LCA NGDA Theme Reports, these assessments were conducted in 2015 and 2017 and resultant [Theme LMA Summary Reports](#)⁵ and Dashboards were made available online through GeoPlatform.gov. While the LMA process was put on hold following the enactment of the GDA, it is seen as a key component moving forward. Following the release of the updated OMB Circular A-16, the FGDC will analyze that guidance and evaluate the LMA process for adoption and use to capture the lifecycle information from agencies and dataset managers. The LMA process could be used to dynamically augment these GDA annual reports and will also be analyzed as part of developing and implementing the plan for nationwide population of the NGDA data themes (core datasets).

This report has been developed using an NGDA Theme Lead consensus-driven report template that provides consistent reporting across all NGDA Themes.

Official Theme Related Information

As per the OMB Circular A-16 Supplemental Guidance, official theme related information includes designated points of contact for NGDA Portfolio management, including Theme Leads and Executive Champions, and the official list of NGDA datasets. As further described in the sections below, this information is maintained on the GeoPlatform [NGDA Portfolio Community](#)⁶ site.

NGDA Theme Points of Contact

Reference: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(3\)\(E\)\(i\)](#)

Section 2805(b)(3)(E)(i) requires lead covered agencies to “designate a point of contact within the lead covered agency who shall be responsible for developing, maintaining, coordination relating to, and disseminating data using the GeoPlatform” as part of administering the NGDA theme.

In accordance with the current OMB Circular A-16 Supplemental Guidance, NGDA theme personnel play an ongoing, vital role in the operation and maintenance of a theme. They are individuals who provide interdepartmental leadership and coordination at the NGDA theme level and work with NGDA dataset managers to facilitate, among other things, portfolio development including activities associated with standards and guidance.

Traditionally, these roles have been coordinated through lead covered agencies with the FGDC Office of the Secretariat and the NGDA theme lead assuming a majority of NGDA theme responsibilities. Transitioning to meet specific GDA responsibilities provides opportunities for lead covered agencies to designate specific points of contact to coordinate an expanding portfolio of datasets across the NGDA theme and for greater dissemination of data through the GeoPlatform.

Theme and agency points of contact provided in Table 1 below are maintained to meet requirements from the [A-16 Supplemental Guidance Roles and Responsibilities](#).⁷ This information is kept up-to-date in the NGDA Portfolio Community on [NGDA Theme Leads](#)⁸ and [NGDA Executive Theme Champions](#)⁹ pages.

| Cultural Resources Theme Contacts | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Theme Lead(s): | Deidre McCarthy, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service |
| Executive Theme Champion(s): | Joy Beasley, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service |

Table 1. Theme and Lead Covered Agency Points of Contact Involved in Theme Management.

NGDA Theme Portfolio Datasets

The NGDA datasets and the agencies listed in Table 2 are provided as the official list of NGDA that currently populate the Cultural Resources Theme. If the theme includes NGDA datasets managed by non-covered agencies, they are shown in bold. Support for GDA requirements by these non-covered agencies is very important to the success of the themes. The official list of [NGDA Portfolio Datasets](#)¹⁰ is maintained on the GeoPlatform and is provided here [filtered by the Cultural Resources Theme](#). Each

NGDA dataset also has a unique value assigned, called an NGDAID, that allows the dataset to be tracked throughout its lifecycle.

| NGDAID | Cultural Resources Theme NGDA Datasets | Agency |
|--------|--|--|
| 34 | Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection | U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey |
| 36 | National Register of Historic Places | U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service |

Table 2. Theme NGDA Datasets.

Meeting General Responsibilities – USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(2)

Reference: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(2\)](#)

Q1. How is the Lead Covered Agency(ies) participating in ensuring the coordinated management of the Theme? (Select all that apply - see Appendix A for complete list of optional responses)

- Lead Agency, or Co-Lead Agencies, have published a geospatial strategy as required by the GDA
- Theme Lead(s) attend NGDA Theme Community Meetings
- Theme Lead(s) participate in GDA Working Group meetings
- Theme Lead(s) review the outcomes from GDA Working Group meetings and provide feedback on approaches for GDA compliance
- Theme Lead(s) coordinate GDA compliance activities with Theme personnel
- Theme Lead(s) communicate new and ongoing Portfolio Management activities and priorities with Dataset Managers in the Theme
- Steering Committee members coordinate with the Theme

Managing Theme-Related Content on GeoPlatform

The baseline 2020 LCA NGDA Theme Report gathered theme specific information in a series of tables to reflect compliance with the GDA requirements. This content was captured to describe agency efforts that can be used moving forward to support development of the plans required by the GDA. As continued progress towards meeting requirements of the GDA, the NGDA theme community will evaluate redesign of theme community sites to allow agencies to provide current information to the public and stakeholders related to theme management.

A. Geospatial Data Standards

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| GDA Requirement | <p>USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3)(A) – Provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of geospatial data standards for the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, with a particular emphasis on a data content standard for the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, including by—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. assessing existing standards; ii. identifying anticipated or needed data standards; and iii. developing a plan to originate and implement needed standards with relevant community and international practices — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A– 119, or any successor thereto; and II. consistent with or as a part of the plan described in subparagraph (B); |
| Lead Covered Agency Self-Assessment | Made Progress Toward Expectations |
| Key to Self-Assessment | <p>FGDC agencies continue work to evaluate options for establishing a common understanding and approach to meeting GDA requirements. The FGDC Steering Committee has the <i>Briefing Paper – Reestablishing the FGDC Standards Process 8-4-21</i> under consideration. The paper outlines a path forward for reestablishing a resourced and sustainable standards process that will be compliant with the GDA and responsibilities for managing standards. This work provides a foundation for designating “Made progress toward expectations” for all themes the FY2021 reporting year. Response options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to Meet Expectations • Made Progress Toward Expectations • Meets Expectations |

Reference: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(3\)\(A\)](#)

Meeting Requirements for Geospatial Data Standards

This section of the GDA calls on the FGDC agencies to provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of geospatial data standards and outlines activities that include development of a plan to originate and implement needed standards with relevant community and international practices in accordance with OMB Circular A-119 and consistent with, or as part of the plan that will be established to meet subparagraph (B) requirements.

On August 11, 2021, the FGDC Steering Committee was presented for their consideration and approval the *Briefing Paper – Reestablishing the FGDC Standards Process 8-4-21* which outlined the need for reestablishing an FGDC standards process and included a Draft Position Statement (provided below). The paper states that an updated standards process will guide the FGDC agencies in their assessment, development, vetting, and approval of draft standards through the FGDC governance and endorsement steps (for both FGDC developed internal and FGDC endorsed external standards), and follow-on

maintenance and update steps. The standards process should also address FGDC representation and participation in other standards bodies and the administrative support required to manage and maintain the FGDC's standards inventory, web pages, and process documentation.

The briefing paper provided a set of short-term actions that include approval of the position statement and for FGDC to establish a task team to evaluate and recommend a path forward for reestablishing a resourced and sustainable standards process.

The FGDC Draft Position Statement:

The Geospatial Data Act of 2018 (GDA) establishes the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as the lead entity in the executive branch of government for the development, implementation, and review of policies, practices, and standards relating to geospatial data. The GDA describes responsibilities related to geospatial standards for the FGDC and the agencies covered by the law (covered agencies). These responsibilities are reinforced by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16. The covered agencies are responsible for geospatial related standards development, coordination, approval, implementation, and use. The FGDC is determining how to reestablish and resource a sustainable standards process, implement supporting governance requirements, update and improve legacy processes, and begin establishing standards as required under the GDA. Agencies should continue, to the extent possible in lieu of an active standards process, to develop, review, update, and implement existing and pending standards, and become members of the appropriate FGDC standards body when it becomes active.

A document providing the longer-term tasks and outcomes expected of the team is now under development as requested by the Steering Committee and includes:

- Evaluate FGDC and agency geospatial standards requirements in associated laws and policies
- Review legacy FGDC standards policies and procedures and recommend establishing, updating, or retiring them
- Evaluate and recommend a process for FGDC to establish standards as per the GDA and for evaluation of the NGDA baseline standards inventory, which includes currently endorsed FGDC standards, that will result in the list of standards in use across FGDC
- Evaluate opportunities to leverage work or recommendations from other existing standards bodies
- Evaluate governance requirements for managing standards and recommend necessary changes to the FGDC governance structure.
- Develop recommendations for resourcing a sustainable FGDC standards governance process

[FY2020 Report Follow up](#)

The FY2020 reports provided information on the FGDC subcommittees and working groups, national and international voluntary consensus standards bodies, the international geospatial organizations supporting standards and other activities that support standards for the data within the theme. This information will be evaluated for inclusion in the redesign of the FGDC theme community sites.

Highlighting FGDC Agency Efforts to Support NGDA Data Standards

The FGDC agencies with responsibilities for managing NGDA themes and datasets have developed the following questions to highlight on-going agency efforts to support standards for the NGDA portfolio datasets.

QA.1. Are there activities ongoing that you would like to highlight regarding development, modification, or establishment of standards for any of the data within the Theme?

Clarifying Text: This question provides agencies and dataset managers an opportunity to highlight significant efforts which are ongoing and may facilitate the work of any standards task team established as described above. Please consider agency work to evaluate or develop standards or work that has been completed and has resulted in standards that are ready to be endorsed, or established, under Section 2806. (Ongoing agency work would include a review or assessment of existing national and international standards, assessment for meeting user needs, and other work that meets the requirements of the GDA.)

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information on work to support standards.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection
- National Register of Historic Places

Next, please provide a brief description of work you would like to highlight that supports standards, including citations and resource links as necessary.

The FGDC Cultural Resource subcommittee has developed a draft cultural resource spatial data transfer standard. The draft has been tested by state and federal agencies for practicality and ease of use. The FGDC data standards working group has been dissolved and is being reconstituted at the current time. When possible, the cultural resource subcommittee will submit the draft standard for FGDC approval.

The National Register of Historic Places data set follows the National Park Service cultural resource spatial data standard until the FGDC standard is approved. The National Register of Historic Places data set also maintains ISO data set metadata.

For the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), the GNIS Feature ID, Official Feature Name, and Official Feature Location attributes continue to adhere to the ANSI INCITS 446-2008 Standard (Identifying Attributes for Named Physical and Cultural Geographic Features (Except Roads and Highways) of the United States, Its Territories, Outlying Areas, and Freely Associated Areas, and the Waters of the Same to the Limit of the Twelve-Mile Statutory Zone). We support the maintenance of this standards through participation in the INCITS L1 national standards body. GNIS also continues to be described and made available via CSDGM (FGDC-STD-001-1998) metadata.

QA.2. Please check all the activities that have been taken to establish, develop, or modify standards for data within the theme (select all that apply and use the “other” textbox to briefly describe additional activities):

- Reviewed ISO metadata collection tools
- Maintain active licenses for all standards (where applicable)
- Agency established processes for standards management
- Agency examined comparable international standards for suitability with NGDA data set
- Agency examined comparable FGDC endorsed standards for suitability with NGDA data set
- Agency examined comparable open-source standards for applicability to NGDA data set
- Agency developed comparable agency-specific standards to apply to NGDA data set
- Theme analyzed related international/FGDC/open-source/agency-specific standards to identify components to modify or adapt into specific NGDA data set standard
- Theme analyzed related international/FGDC/open-source/agency-specific standards to identify components to incorporate into a new specific NGDA data set standard
- Theme established an appropriate subject-matter expert committee to develop a new standard to meet agency-specific/FGDC/international needs for the NGDA data set
- Theme committee created a draft agency-specific/FGDC/international standard for the NGDA data set
- Theme initiated the agency-specific/FGDC/international standard creation process for the NGDA data set
- The agency-specific/FGDC/international standard creation process in progress for the NGDA data set

QA.3. Brief Summary (Limit 5,000 characters, or approximately 1.5 pages): Please provide a brief description of FY2021 actions and accomplishments in addressing Section 2805(b)(3)(A).

Clarifying Text: Please ensure that the Brief Summary comments you submit this year highlight efforts that agencies are engaged in at the dataset or agency level that relate to GDA requirements, including involvement in and accomplishments of groups in support of NGDA data, such as:

- ✓ FGDC subcommittees and working groups
- ✓ Agency working groups and partner efforts
- ✓ National and international voluntary consensus standards bodies
- ✓ International geospatial organizations supporting standards
- ✓ Other activities that support standards

The cultural resource theme has an associated FGDC cultural resource subcommittee with state, local, tribal, federal and NGO participants. This subcommittee is engaged in developing a cultural resource spatial data transfer standard, as well as pursuing the recommendations made by the NGAC cultural resource subcommittee in its 2019 report (<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/september-2019/ngac-paper-protecting-federal-cultural-and.pdf>). In FY21 the FGDC cultural resource subcommittee prioritized these NGAC recommendations and is beginning to work on defining cultural resource spatial data (recommendation 1).

This year the technology stack supporting GNIS was updated to better conform to open-source software standards (PostgreSQL). We continue to support INCITS L1 National Standards Body in regard to maintenance of the ANSI INCITS 446-2008 Standard (Identifying Attributes for Named Physical and Cultural Geographic Features (Except Roads and Highways) of the United States, Its Territories, Outlying

Areas, and Freely Associated Areas, and the Waters of the Same to the Limit of the Twelve-Mile Statutory Zone)

Bureaus represented in the cultural resource theme (NPS, USGS) participate in agency-specific data standard review and creation working groups and partner efforts.

B. Nationwide Population of the Data Theme

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| GDA Requirement | <p>USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3)(B) – provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of a plan for nationwide population of the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, which shall—</p> <p>(i) include developing partnership programs with States, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, private sector entities, other Federal agencies, and local governments;</p> <p>(ii) meet the needs of users of geospatial data;</p> <p>(iii) address human and financial resource needs;</p> <p>(iv) identify needs relating to standards, metadata for geospatial data within the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme, and the GeoPlatform; and</p> <p>(v) expedite the development of necessary National Geospatial Data Asset data themes;</p> |
| Lead Covered Agency Self-Assessment | Made Progress Toward Expectations |
| Key to Self-Assessment | <p>FGDC agencies continue work to evaluate options for establishing a common understanding and approach to meeting GDA requirements. A briefing paper, described in this section, is being developed for FGDC Steering Committee consideration. It outlines a path forward for engaging partners and stakeholders regarding nationwide population of data and establishing common practices that can be used to advance the NSDI, the goals and objectives of the NSDI Strategic Plan, and meet requirements of the GDA and other legislation. This work provides a foundation for designating “Made progress toward expectations” for all themes the FY2021 reporting year. Response options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to Meet Expectations • Made Progress Toward Expectations • Meets Expectations |

Reference: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(3\)\(B\)](#)

Meeting Requirements for Nationwide Population of NGDA Datasets

This section of the GDA calls on the FGDC agencies to, “provide leadership and facilitate the development and implementation of a plan for nationwide population of the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme.” Using the GDA definition of NGDA data theme, the required plans would focus on nationwide population of the core datasets within the theme and include the work to expedite development of necessary core datasets.

FGDC agencies manage NGDA core datasets and other geospatial data to meet mission requirements and to address priority needs of the agency and the nation. There are multiple examples of ongoing agency efforts to establish partnerships, conduct requirements and user needs analysis, identify options

for appropriate human and financial resourcing, and identify needs relating to standards for NGDA datasets in support of nationwide population of priority geospatial datasets.

To support development of a common approach for meeting GDA and other legislative requirements and address the goals and objectives of the [NSDI Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#), a briefing paper has been developed for consideration by the FGDC Steering Committee. The briefing paper proposes that FGDC engage the NGAC to provide advice and recommendations for federal and non-federal partners and stakeholders regarding nationwide population of data and establishing common practices that can be used to advance the NSDI.

The briefing paper documents the need for establishing common approaches and a common understanding of what constitutes “nationwide population of datasets;” a methodology for identifying datasets that should be considered for nationwide population and a means to prioritize those efforts; and a process for identifying data that requires integration with government and nongovernment data or those that only require national coverage of federal data.

As FGDC agencies continue to develop common approaches for meeting requirements for geospatial data management, they will be incorporated into the reporting process. This FY2021 report highlights ongoing efforts that support these requirements. The information gathered here will be available for further evaluation of processes and activities across FGDC agencies that can be used as best practices and established in guidance and governance documents.

[FY2020 Report Follow up](#)

The information on theme partners and partnership programs supporting data within the theme reported as part of the FY2020 Reports will be evaluated for inclusion in the redesign of the FGDC theme community sites.

[Highlighting Key Examples of FGDC Agency Efforts to Support Plans for Nationwide Population of NGDA Datasets](#)

The following suite of questions was established to highlight ongoing agency efforts to support nationwide population of the NGDA portfolio datasets. FGDC anticipates using this information moving forward as work continues to identify and establish best practices to develop common approaches.

QB.1. Are there activities ongoing that you would like to highlight that support nationwide population of NGDA datasets within the Theme, or efforts that support any of the elements included in this requirement?

- Yes

QB.1a. Are there existing or planned partnership programs with a wide range of stakeholders supporting NGDA datasets within the Theme that you would like to highlight?

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information related to partnership activities.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection
- National Register of Historic Places

Next, please provide a brief description of partnership with citations and resource links as necessary.

For the National Register of Historic Places data set:

Under the National Historic Preservation Act, federal, state, tribal and local agencies must maintain inventories of cultural resources that lie within their jurisdictions. These agencies nominate resources to the National Register of Historic Places from these inventories. The NPS reviews these nominations and lists resources on the National Register on an ongoing basis, creating a nation-wide data set. This data set is used to meet regulatory requirements throughout federal, state, local and tribal land holdings based on the impact of their undertakings on potential cultural resources.

To accomplish the ongoing population of the National Register of Historic Places data set, partnerships are maintained with major stakeholders at local, state, tribal and federal levels.

For the Geographic Names Information System:

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a Federal body created in 1890 and established in its present form by Public Law in 1947 to maintain uniform geographic name usage throughout the Federal Government. The BGN comprises representatives of Federal agencies (United States Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Bureau of the Census, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Homeland Security, Government Publishing Office, United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Library of Congress, United States Postal Service).

The GNIS dataset fulfills DOI's requirement (per the 1947 law) to promulgate the BGN's decision regarding official geographic names. The BGN staff also participate in Council of Geographic Names Authorities (COGNA), an association of state and federal government agencies representing the official and recognized geographic names authorities in the United States who work to promote national standardization of the names of geographic features for official use throughout the country.

The BGN also works with Pan American Institute of Geography and History- Names subcommittee and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. GNIS also has formal MOU's, one with U.S. Census and another with Office of Personnel Management/General Services Administration.

QB.1b. Are processes, or plans for processes, in place to meet the needs of users? Note that Section 2805(b)(3)(D) of this report covers efforts to collect and analyze user needs and incorporation of those needs into agency strategies. However, you may include the information on those efforts in your response for this question.

Clarifying Text: If no formal process exists, but information on summits, training events, or other activities that supported the collection or understanding of user needs may be included.

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information on efforts to meet user needs.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection
- National Register of Historic Places

Next, please provide a brief description of efforts to meet user needs, including citations and resource links as necessary.

For the National Register of Historic Places data set:

The FGDC cultural resource subcommittee, the NPS and the National Register of Historic Places data steward define and address user needs with the coordination of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation individual efforts. Ongoing efforts at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of Historic Preservation Offices are identifying recommendations to better meet user needs for this data set.

The National Geospatial Advisory Committee, Cultural Resource Subcommittee, studied user needs and produced a set of recommendations for the Cultural Resource Theme which were prioritized in FY21 by the FGDC Cultural Resource Subcommittee are being pursued in ongoing efforts.

<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/september-2019/ngac-paper-protecting-federal-cultural-and.pdf>

For the Geographic Names Information System:

This year several components related to GNIS were updated to better enable maintenance and accessibility of GNIS data. This includes the public geographic names proposal form (PDF version), and the online version. Also, the public-facing GNIS data search application provides information for providing user feedback as does the BGN website. The BGN staff work directly to users submitting geographic names proposal forms and any user providing comments on the proposal.

QB.1c. Are there existing or planned program and data management plans in place that address human and financial resource needs?

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information on efforts to address human and financial resource needs.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection

Next, please provide a brief description of efforts to meet financial and human resource needs, including citations and resource links as necessary (Limit 5,000 characters, approximately 800 words).

This past year the Board on Geographic Names began development of their strategic plan. The plan includes resource needs for GNIS (system and data). The plan will be completed in 2022.

QB.1d. Are processes, or plans for processes, in place to identify needs related to standards?

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide information on needs related to standards.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection
- National Register of Historic Places

Next, please provide a brief description of efforts to identify needs related to standards, including citations and resource links as necessary.

For the National Register of Historic Places data set:

The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Offices, National Alliance of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation all participate in the FGDC cultural resource subcommittee to identify needs for data standards, in addition to working with federal, state, tribal and local agencies to draft data standards that reflect the identified needs.

The National Geospatial Advisory Committee, Cultural Resource Subcommittee, studied user needs and produced a set of recommendations for the Cultural Resource Theme which were prioritized in FY21 by the FGDC Cultural Resource Subcommittee are being pursued in ongoing efforts. The top priority is to complete the ongoing creation of a cultural resource spatial data transfer standard.

<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/september-2019/ngac-paper-protecting-federal-cultural-and.pdf>

For the Geographic Names Information System:

This past year the Board on Geographic Names began development of their strategic plan. The plan includes looking at standardization. This plan will be completed in 2022.

QB.1e. Are there any other processes in place that support nationwide population of data sets (e.g., data quality control processes that cover data collected by external stakeholders)?

- Yes

Please identify all the NGDA datasets for which you would like to provide additional information related to nationwide population of data.

- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) - USGS National Map Downloadable Data Collection
- National Register of Historic Places

Next, please provide a brief description of other efforts that support nationwide population of data, including citations and resource links as necessary.

For the National Register of Historic Places:

The NPS National Register program establishes a standard methodology for collecting and creating locational data for resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are ongoing efforts at the NPS to update these processes to incorporate more geospatial technologies and the acceptance of digital spatial data that meets cultural resource spatial data transfer standards. Locational data is reviewed at state, tribal and national levels for quality.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB16A-Complete.pdf>

For the Geographic Names Information System:

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names is a nationwide process. Data may be added into GNIS through U.S. Board on Geographic Names decisions based on its Principles, Policies, & Procedures, which outline relationships with States, other Federal agencies, and local governments, as well as provides opportunity for input from geospatial data users, Tribes, and the private sector.

QB.2. Brief Summary (Limit 5,000 characters, approximately 800 words): Please provide a brief description of FY2021 actions and accomplishments in addressing Section 2805(b)(3)(B).

Clarifying Text: Summary comments provide an opportunity to further highlight and expand on significant efforts agencies are engaged in at the dataset or agency level that relate to GDA requirements.

Data sets within the cultural resource theme are national in scope and follow processes to identify needs for data standards, improving data quality and addressing human/financial needs. These data sets meet their regulatory requirements under associated laws, Secretarial Orders as well as the GDA.

C. Establish Goals That Support the NSDI Strategic Plan

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| GDA Requirement | USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3)(C) – establish goals that support the strategic plan for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure prepared under section 2804(c); |
| Lead Covered Agency Self-Assessment | Made Progress Toward Expectations |
| Key to Self-Assessment | <p>FGDC agencies continue work to evaluate options for establishing a common understanding and approach to meeting GDA requirements and the goals and objectives of the NSDI Strategic Plan. The briefing paper being developed for consideration by the FGDC Steering Committee, and described in Section B, outlines a path forward to establish common practices that can be used to advance the NSDI, and meet requirements of the GDA and other legislation. This work provides a foundation for designating “Made progress toward expectations” for all themes for the FY2021 reporting year. Response options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to Meet Expectations • Made Progress Toward Expectations • Meets Expectations |

References: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(3\)\(C\)](#) and [NSDI Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#)

Establishing Common Goals and Priorities Supporting the NSDI and Its Strategic Plan

The FGDC and the geospatial community have partnered for decades in building the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Much has been accomplished and exploitation of the internet, combined with advances in technology and availability of mobile devices, have increased public awareness that everything happens somewhere. Having Geospatial data and information available at people’s fingertips has become an expectation for most users. The vision of the NSDI Strategic Plan 2021-2024 of a “geo-enabled Nation and world for place-based decision making” provides a platform for partnerships that help ensure required data is the best possible data. FGDC has adopted as its mission to enable a “national network of geospatial resources that seamlessly integrate location-based information to serve the needs of the Nation and wider global interests.”

FGDC agencies are focused on meeting mission requirements for national geospatial data assets they manage while working collaboratively with partners to implement the NSDI strategic plan and meet its goals and objectives. For the NGDA portfolio, these objectives include efforts to: 1) streamline portfolio management practices and establish standards for NGDA themes and associated datasets, 2) develop common approaches to implement data acquisition and lifecycle management strategies, 3) advance the practice of integrating government and nongovernment data into national datasets, as necessary and 4) ensure that geospatial and other meaningful data can be easily integrated and used.

As described previously in this report, the FGDC intends to continue work across agencies and with the NGAC to understand the priorities of government and nongovernment stakeholders and gather their advice and recommendations for further prioritizing collaborative efforts. Establishing the team of federal and non-federal stakeholders and representatives of the NGDA data theme community will allow

for establishing common understanding of opportunities and constraints and will allow agencies to identify “goals that support the strategic plan for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.” This work would build on the upcoming release of the OMB Circular A-16, the GDA, and other legal and policy requirements in order to establish practical guidance about how agencies can achieve what is being described in the generic, high level, language used in the NSDI Strategic Plan.

Highlighting FGDC Agency Strategies that Support the NSDI and Geospatial Data

QC.1. Do geospatial strategic plan(s) exist for the agencies that manage and support the NGDA datasets within the Theme?

- Yes

If yes, please provide a short description and examples of where these strategies are documented.

For the National Register of Historic Places: Theme strategic plan has been completed. (https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-cultural/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Cultural_Resource_Theme_Strategic_Plan_20160621.pdf). This strategic plan is being updated now and will be approved in FY22. NPS Geospatial Program strategic plan has been completed but is not currently published publicly. This strategic plan is being updated now and will be approved in FY22 and be made publicly available. (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/gisandmapping/gis-in-nps.htm>) USGS Geospatial Program strategic plan has been completed. (<https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/national-geospatial-program>) For the Geographic Names Information System: The U.S. Board on Geographic Names is developing a strategic plan that will be completed in 2022.

QC.2. Have goals or actions been identified that support the goals and objectives of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Strategic Plan for the NGDA datasets within the Theme?

Clarifying text: Identified actions can be part of the geospatial strategies for the agencies that manage data within the theme, and/or other documents that specifically relate to the data within the theme.

- Yes

If yes, please provide a short description and examples of where these goals or actions are documented.

NPS: The NPS Geospatial Program strategic plan currently awaiting approval contains the following goals with associated actions - (1) Program sustainability; (2) Communication and Education; (3) Enterprise GIS Technology and Applications; (4) Data Governance and Lifecycle Management

QC.3. Brief Summary (Limit 5,000 characters, approximately 800 words): Please provide a brief description of FY2021 actions and accomplishments in addressing Section 2805(b)(3)(C).

Clarifying Text: Summary comments provide an opportunity to highlight significant efforts agencies are engaged in at the dataset or agency level that relate to GDA requirements.

Both strategic plans for the cultural resource theme and the NPS Geospatial Program are being revised and updated in ongoing processes in FY21. Final approval of the plans will take place in FY22.

D. Addressing User Needs

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| GDA Requirement | USC 43 Sec 2805(b)(3)(D) – as necessary, collect and analyze information from users of geospatial data within the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme regarding the needs of the users for geospatial data and incorporate the needs of users in strategies relating to the National Geospatial Data Asset data theme; |
| Lead Covered Agency Self-Assessment | Made Progress Toward Expectations |
| Key to Self-Assessment | <p>FGDC agencies continue work to evaluate options for establishing a common understanding and approach to meeting GDA requirements. The briefing paper being developed for consideration by the FGDC Steering Committee, and described in Section B, outlines a path forward to engage partners and stakeholders and work towards establishing common practices that can be used to address the needs of users, advance the NSDI, and meet requirements of the GDA and other legislation. This work provides a foundation for designating “Made progress toward expectations” for all themes the FY2021 reporting year. Response options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to Meet Expectations • Made Progress Toward Expectations • Meets Expectations |

Reference: [USC 43 Sec 2805\(b\)\(3\)\(D\)](#)

Highlighting FGDC and FGDC Agency Efforts to Meet User Needs

This section of the GDA calls on the FGDC agencies to understand the needs of users through collection and analysis of user needs information from the users of NGDA datasets and to incorporate those needs into strategies relating to the NGDA datasets and themes. In addition to agencies efforts to collect and analyze user needs there are many use cases and needs assessments being developed by stakeholders and users of geospatial data, some of which were highlighted and are available in the FY2020 GDA reports.

The desired outcome of efforts to develop the NSDI and advance nationwide population of geospatial data is to meet the needs of geospatial data users and the nation. The result will be for users and stakeholders to be empowered to accomplish tasks that are important to them, to increase the likelihood they will benefit from the decisions that are made, and to provide them access to use geospatial data that improves their day-to-day lives.

As previously highlighted in this report, the efforts to develop a common understanding of the objectives and goals in the NSDI Strategic Plan 2021-2024 will be key to incorporating relevant strategies and approaches to meeting the needs of users for NGDA data.

FY2020 Report Follow up

The FY2020 reports gathered on theme use cases, user needs User Needs Assessments, Workshops, and Summits that support the data within the theme. Additionally, a suite of use cases developed by partners and stakeholders was provided in Appendix A: NGDA Use Cases including those from the Federal Data Strategy, NGAC, HIFLD, the FGDC GDA Communications Working Group, the Joint HIFLD/GeoPlatform Feedback Sessions, and other types of user feedback and use cases. This information will be evaluated for inclusion in the redesign of the FGDC theme community sites.

Highlighting FGDC and FGDC Agency Efforts to Meet User Needs

The FGDC agencies with responsibilities for managing NGDA themes and datasets have developed the following questions to highlight on-going agency efforts to support understanding user needs and incorporating those needs into strategies relating to the NGDA portfolio datasets.

QD.1. Do the agencies, sub-agencies, or bureaus that manage NGDA within the Theme have processes to collect and analyze the needs of users and incorporate those needs of users into strategies relating to the NGDA datasets?

- Yes

QD.2. Did you provide information in response to QB.1b. on any of the NGDA datasets for which user needs information is collected, analyzed, or incorporated into strategies?

- Yes

QD.3. Brief Summary (Limit 5,000 characters, approximately 800 words): Please provide a brief description of FY2021 actions and accomplishments in addressing Section 2805(b)(3)(D).

Clarifying Text: Summary comments provide an opportunity to highlight significant efforts agencies are engaged in at the dataset or agency level that relate to GDA requirements.

The FGDC cultural resource subcommittee, in combination with local, state, tribal and federal partners and stakeholders performs needs assessments on an ongoing basis. The National Geospatial Advisory Committee, Cultural Resource Subcommittee, has further studied user needs and produced a set of recommendations for the Cultural Resource Theme which were prioritized in FY21 by the FGDC Cultural Resource Subcommittee are being pursued in ongoing efforts.

<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/september-2019/ngac-paper-protecting-federal-cultural-and.pdf>

Appendix A: Survey Picklists

This appendix provides the full set of choices presented in the self-assessment survey for questions that have multiple response options, including those that are “select all that apply.”

Q1. How is the Lead Covered Agency(ies) participating in ensuring the coordinated management of the Theme? (Select all that apply)

- Agency has published a geospatial strategy as required by the GDA
- No participation in ensuring coordinated management of the Theme
- Theme Executive Champion(s) attend NGDA Theme Community Meetings
- Theme Lead(s) attend NGDA Theme Community Meetings
- Theme Lead(s) participate in GDA Working Group meetings
- Theme Leads(s) review the outcomes from GDA Working Group meetings and provide feedback on approaches for GDA compliance
- Theme Lead(s) coordinate GDA compliance activities with Theme personnel
- Theme Lead(s) communicate new and ongoing Portfolio Management activities and priorities with Dataset Managers in the Theme
- Steering Committee members coordinate with the Theme
- Other [Textbox provided]

QA.2. Please check all the activities that have been taken to establish, develop, or modify standards for data within the Theme (select all that apply):

- Agency reviewed ISO metadata collection tools
- Agency reviewed conformance assessment procedures with assistance from existing standards bodies
- Agency maintains active licenses for all standards (where applicable)
- Agency generates Requests for Information (RFI) to develop new standards and tools
- Agency established processes for standards management
- Agency examined comparable international standards for suitability with NGDA dataset
- Agency examined comparable national standards for suitability with NGDA dataset
- Agency examined comparable FGDC endorsed standards for suitability with NGDA dataset
- Agency examined comparable open-source standards for applicability to NGDA dataset
- Agency developed comparable agency-specific standards to apply to NGDA dataset
- Agency analyzed related international, national, FGDC, open-source, or agency-specific standards to identify components to modify or adapt into specific NGDA dataset standard
- Agency analyzed related international, national, FGDC, open-source, or agency-specific standards to identify components to incorporate into a new specific NGDA dataset standard
- Agency established an appropriate subject-matter expert committee to develop a new standard to meet agency-specific, FGDC, national, international, user, or stakeholder needs for the NGDA dataset
- Appropriate committee created a draft agency-specific, FGDC, national, or international standard for the NGDA dataset
- Agency initiated the agency-specific FGDC, national, or international standard creation process for the NGDA dataset

- An agency-specific, FGDC, national, or international standard creation process in progress for the NGDA dataset
- A draft agency-specific, FGDC, national, or international standard for the NGDA dataset is in public review
- A draft agency-specific, FGDC, national, or international standard for the NGDA dataset is waiting for final approval by the appropriate standards governing body
- Other [Textbox provided]

Endnotes

- ¹ FGDC GDA Information:
<https://fgdc.gov/gda>
- ² NSDI Strategic Plan:
<https://www.fgdc.gov/nsdi-plan>
- ³ GeoPlatform Theme Communities:
<https://www.geoplatform.gov/communities>
- ⁴ Stages of the Geospatial Lifecycle:
<https://www.fgdc.gov/policyandplanning/a-16/stages-of-geospatial-data-lifecycle-a16.pdf>
- ⁵ Theme LMA Summary Reports:
https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/national-geospatial-data-asset-ngda-reports/?wdt_column_filter%5bYear%5d=2015&wdt_column_filter%5bReport%20Type%5d=Theme%20Summary%20Report
- ⁶ NGDA Portfolio Community Site:
<https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/>
- ⁷ OMB A-16 Supplemental Guidance Roles and Responsibilities:
<https://fgdc.gov/policyandplanning/a-16/key-roles-and-responsibilities-a16-supplemental.pdf>
- ⁸ NGDA Theme Leads:
<https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/ngda-theme-leads/>
- ⁹ NGDA Executive Theme Champions:
<https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/ngda-theme-executive-champions/>
- ¹⁰ NGDA Portfolio Datasets:
<https://communities.geoplatform.gov/ngda-portfolio/ngda-portfolio/>