Part B

LEAD AGENCY/BUREAU AND/OR SUBCOMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP REPORT (Agencies with Lead Responsibilities Assigned under Circular A-16 in Appendix E - http://www.fgdc.gov/publications/a16final.html#appendixe) (Please provide a separate report for each activity for which you have the lead)

1. Program/Activity Name: Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)
Roger Payne, U.S. Geological Survey

2. What are the specific federal programs this data supports?

Public Law 242 mandates the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) to standardize geographic names for use throughout the Federal Government, and to promulgate these standardized names. The USBGN has authorized the GNIS to be its mechanism for promulgating official domestic geographic names. Therefore, GNIS supports all Federal products that use geographic names. Specifically, GNIS is one of eight foundation layers in *The National Map,* it supports topographic map revision projects in the USGS; the Single Edition Quad project, and revision of visitor maps in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS); National Ocean Service (NOS) production of charts; and enhancement of National Park Service brochures, as well as other related products.

3. Uses of Data: How does your data benefit customers and support agency missions?

The GNIS benefits customers by allowing them to access the official geographic name of features over the Internet. GNIS is a general research tool used by Federal, State, county, local, and commercial sector employees in such fields as geography, history, toponymy, and others. It is also used by the general public for numerous commercial applications as well as genealogical research.

It is essential to the bureau's mission of describing the earth, since the names of geographic features are frequently used to relate reference points. The use of non-standard names and their applications would at least lead to confusion, if not chaos. GNIS has been used for emergency preparedness and search and rescue, thereby fulfilling another aspect of the USGS mission "to minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters."

GNIS supports *The National Map* in two ways. It provides the active layer in *The National Map* for geographic features not available from other Federal, State or local sources, with emphasis on natural features. Efforts are in progress to coordinate and integrate geographic feature names and feature geometries with other vector layers. Secondly, a gazetteer search using the GNIS web capability within *The National Map* viewer, allows a full names data search and automatic display of features of interest.

4. Charter/Plan: Do you have a current charter or plan for collection? If so - please describe (include how recently the charter/plan was implemented and whether it is in need of update).

GNIS has had a plan for collection since its inception in 1973. Phase I of data compilation consisted of collecting all the names that appeared on 1:24,000-scale, or the largest scale USGS topographic map covering an area at the time. Phase Ia included the collection of the names of geographic features that were named on USFS maps, and NOS charts, but not named on USGS maps. The Phase II data compilation program was initiated as a 30 year program in 1982 to contract by competition, and usually with State agencies and universities on a State by State basis to collect the names of features named on State, local, and historical maps and text, but not named on Federal maps. This program is either complete or in progress for all States and territories except Alaska, Kentucky, Michigan, and New York. USGS already had plans in place for Federal mapping agencies and State Geographic Names Authorities to maintain GNIS in

anticipation of *The National Map* in some form. Through *The National Map* and related activities, we are actively seeking additional partnerships with Federal, State, and local sources to coordinate our data and to add or revise data in GNIS. Data collection processes, tools, and automated mechanisms through partnerships are being coordinated with the other vector layers.

Partnerships have been established with Delaware, West Virginia, and North Carolina for assistance in maintaining GNIS, and current discussions are expected to lead to similar agreements with Florida and Oregon this fiscal year. At the Federal level, partnerships are being pursued with the Geology Discipline of USGS (for mines data), NOAA (for underwater features within the 12 mile limit), the Army Corps of Engineers (for dams), and in planning with the FAA (for airports). Other partnership efforts will follow.

5. Performance Measures: Does your agency have performance measures for your data theme? If so, please list the measures and whether you achieved your goals.

All USGS performance measures are provided in the FY 2004 Annual Performance and Accountability Report (http://www.doi.gov/pfm/burrept.html).

6. Metadata Status: Is metadata discoverable and served through the NSDI Clearinghouse? What percentage of this theme's data has metadata and is in a Clearinghouse node?

Yes, 100 percent.

7. Standards: What is the status of this theme's data, process, transfer, and classification standards?

As part of *The National Map*, and in coordination with other themes, preliminary standards and guidelines concerning names data content, attributes, models, presentation, metadata, catalog parameter population, and catalog acceptance criteria have been developed. Efforts are ongoing to coordinate and reconcile these standards with other Federal and industry standards, including Geospatial One-Stop, and to propose them as formal standards to FGDC and ANSI. In addition, we are coordinating with the FGDC to develop and implement an OGC-compliant web gazetteer service in GNIS.

8. Progress: List FY 2004 activities/progress to date (quantify where possible).

As indicated, theme standards and system development and coordination were continued, and partnerships were developed and implemented in accordance with the strategy of *The National Map* A contract has been awarded (four years in duration) to collect data for primarily man-made features for the first 46 of the133 urban areas in support of Homeland Security activities for inclusion in GNIS. This is a temporary departure from our normal Phase II Data Compilation Program, which is being done on a State-by-State basis, and has only Alaska, Kentucky, Michigan, and New York outstanding. A gazetteer search was implemented using the GNIS web capability within *The National Map* viewer allowing a full names data search and automatic display of features of interest.

A new GNIS web application is in development with expected implementation in the first half of calendar year 2005. It includes public query and full data entry, edit, and maintenance for authorized contributors and partners, as well as, geographic query and display. An XML web data service has been implemented and is in testing providing dynamic access to names data by web applications.

These theme data are accessible via the Geospatial One-Stop Portal (www.geodata.gov) and *The National Map* Portal (www.nationalmap.usgs.gov).

9. Participation: List participating Federal agencies.

(See under # 4, above).

10. Planned Activities: What are your planned activities for FY05?
(See under #'s 4, 7, and 8, above).

11. Policy: Do you have a formal agency policy in place for full and open access or data sharing? Are you able to fulfill this policy and provide public access with your current agency financial resources as allocated or are you in pursuit of collaborative federal partnerships to support data access?
Yes, there is a formal USGS policy in place; however we are falling behind in this respect with our current financial resources. We are continuing to pursue collaborative Federal and State partnerships to support data access through our existing network of BGN agencies, and the Council of Geographic Names Authorities, which is the umbrella organization for State Geographic Names Authorities. We are also actively seeking partnerships within *The National Map* to establish collaboration among GNIS, State GIS Agencies, and the various State Names Authorities. This effort includes processes, procedures, and tools for integrating names data at all levels.

Are there areas or issues regarding lead responsibilities for spatial data themes that require attention, or lessons-learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe.
Not at this time.