

**The National Maps Users Conference
Connect. Engage. Discover**

Executive Summary

The *National Map* Users Conference was held in Golden, Colorado on May 12 and 13, 2011. The primary objectives of the inaugural conference were to provide a forum to communicate with and strengthen the community of *The National Map* users and to “Connect. Engage. Discover.”

The Users Conference, coupled with the eighth biennial U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Geographic Information Science (GIS) Workshop, brought together over 420 conference attendees representing 15 federal agencies, 11 states, 5 local agencies, 13 academic institutions, 25 or more private sector organizations, and many US Geological Survey programs. Scientists, managers, partners, and data users shared accomplishments on a wide variety of geospatial topics through a poster session, a variety of plenary addresses, six panel discussions, over 60 concurrent session presentations, and informal gatherings.



Highlights of the conference included a keynote address by author Frederick Reuss, titled *The Question “What is a Map?” is More Relevant than Ever*. Reuss intrigued the audience as he told the story of the map, demonstrating its relevancy and value for the layman. In his opening address, Mark DeMulder, Director of the National Geospatial Program, reflected on the history of *The National Map*, shared success stories and current projects, and committed to keeping the community of users and partners engaged and informed. At the Awards Ceremony on Thursday evening, USGS Director Marcia McNutt presented Keven Roth, US Geological Survey (Retired) and Tommy Dewald, US Environmental Protection Agency with the second annual Henry Gannett Award for their work in developing the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). EPA Scientist Dr. Joel Scheraga made the case for geospatial

information delivered through *The National Map* is necessary for us to be successful in fighting and adapting to climate change.

Concurrent sessions provided a forum for engaging and discovering best practices and lessons learned in implementing and using *The National Map*, while demonstrations of emerging uses and tools stirred discussions about the community of practice working more collaboratively and leveraging expertise and funding.

Some of the feedback that surfaced during the conference included challenges with: improving visibility and access, integration of data, and communication between users and *The National Map* staff, as well as better defining the future role of *The National Map*.

The conference participants suggested concrete recommendations to improve business practices and communications among the users, potential users of *The National Map*, and the USGS National Geospatial Program Office. Recommendations emerging from the participants included:

- Improve communication mechanisms between users and *The National Map* program
- Identify and share community expertise
- Continue to define, refine, and implement the essential requirements of *The National Map*
- Plan for ongoing collaboration with the users
- Develop a marketing message to demonstrate the importance of geospatial information to achieving the USGS mission

For more information and specific results of the workshop, visit <http://nationalmap.gov/uc/>.

