

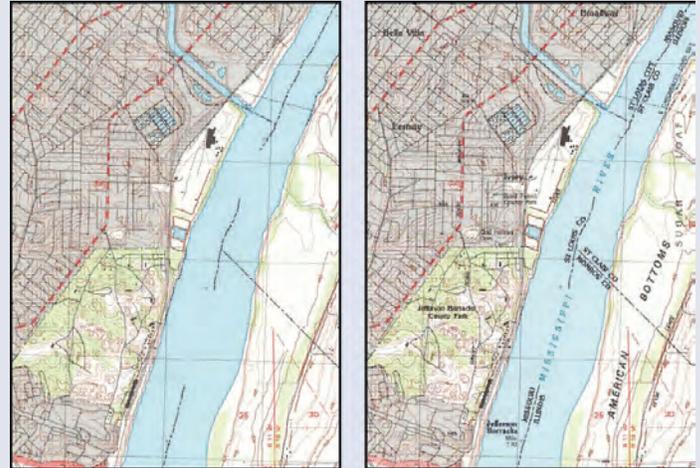
## The National Map—Geographic Names

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN), contains information about the official names for places, features, and areas in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the territories and outlying areas of the United States, including Antarctica. It is the geographic names component of *The National Map*. The BGN maintains working relationships with State names authorities to cooperate in achieving the standardization of geographic names.

The GNIS contains records on more than 2 million geographic names in the United States—from populated places, schools, reservoirs, and parks to streams, valleys, springs, ridges, and every feature type except roads and highways. Entries include information such as the federally recognized name and variant names and spellings for the feature; former names; the status of the name as determined by the BGN; county or counties in which each named feature is located; geographic coordinates that locate the approximate center of an aerial feature or the mouth and source of a linear feature, such as a stream; name of the cell of the USGS topographic map or maps on which the feature may appear; elevation figures derived from the National Elevation Dataset; bibliographic code for the source of the name; BGN decision dates and historical information are available for some features. Data from the GNIS are used for emergency preparedness, mapmaking, local and regional planning, service delivery routing, marketing, site selection, environmental analysis, genealogical research, and other applications.

### Data Availability

Data for each State or territory are compiled in two phases. Phase One, which is complete, entailed the collection of most



**Webster Groves, MO-IL 7.5 Minute Topographic Map without Geographic Names (left) and with Geographic Names (right)**

feature names from 1:24,000-scale topographic maps published by the USGS and the U.S. Forest Service and from charts of the National Ocean Service. Phase Two is a long-term project to gather additional names from state and local materials and a variety of historical documents. This phase is accomplished on a state-by-state basis and has recently been completed (February, 2012). Ongoing stewardship agreements are in place to continually update the data in many states.

Responses to special requests for GNIS digital reports are available through customized files. Standard state and territory digital gazetteers also are available for download at the GNIS Web site [http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/download\\_data.htm](http://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/download_data.htm). Special topical files are available at this site and include Populated Places (all populated place records in the GNIS), Concise (major features) and Historical (features that no longer exist).

The BGN research files currently are being scanned. When completed, the files will be attached as PDF documents to the appropriate GNIS entry and will be viewable online in late 2009.

### Partnership Opportunities

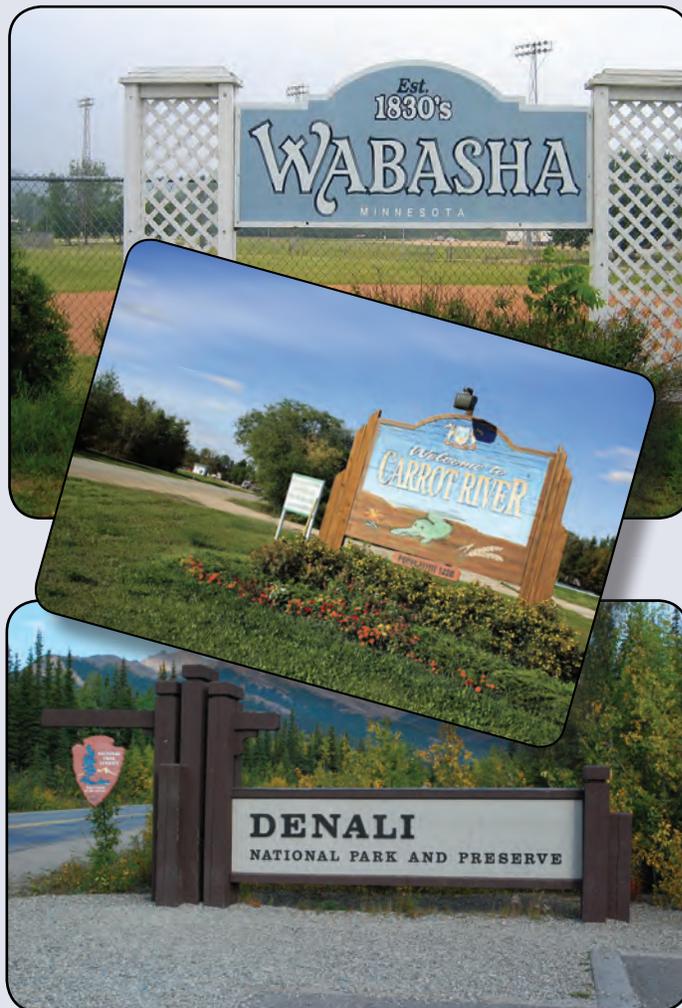
Organizations interested in partnering with the USGS to compile and maintain geographic names data for *The National Map* should contact the USGS geospatial liaison in their State. The list of geospatial liaisons is available at [http://nationalmap.gov/tnm\\_partnerships.html](http://nationalmap.gov/tnm_partnerships.html).

## The Nation Needs *The National Map*

As one of the cornerstones of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Geospatial Program, *The National Map* is a collaborative effort among the USGS and other Federal, state, local, and Tribal partners to improve and deliver topographic information for the Nation. *The National Map* has many uses ranging from recreation to scientific analysis to emergency response. *The National Map* is easily accessible for display on the Web, as products and services, and as downloadable data. The geographic information available from *The National Map* includes orthoimagery (aerial photographs), elevation, geographic names, hydrography, boundaries, transportation, structures, and land cover. Other types of geographic information can be added within the viewer or brought in with *The National Map* data into a Geographic Information System to create specific types of maps or map views.



*The National Map* is a significant contribution to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) and provides high quality, integrated geospatial data and improved products and services including new generation digital topographic maps. *The National Map* also is foundational to implementation of the Department of the Interior (DOI) Geospatial Modernization Blueprint and meeting the DOI mission. *The National Map* underpins the USGS Science Strategy, which is based on a systems approach to help address multi-faceted issues, provide better understanding of earth processes, and evaluate broad causes and consequences of the use and management of natural resources. *The National Map* promotes this type of interdisciplinary science by providing nationally consistent, trusted geospatial data and establishing a consistent national geographic context.



## Further Information



For more information on the GNIS or on individual State and territory database file status, contact:

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U.S. Geological Survey  
523 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192  
Phone: 703-648-4552  
Fax: 703-648-4549  
E-mail: [GNIS\\_manager@usgs.gov](mailto:GNIS_manager@usgs.gov)

The address for the GNIS home page is <http://geonames.usgs.gov/>.

You can view and download more information about *The National Map* at <http://nationalmap.gov/>.

For information on other USGS products and services, call 1-888-ASK-USGS or visit the general interest publications Web site on maps, imagery, and publications at <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/>.

For additional information, visit the <http://ask.usgs.gov/> Web site or the USGS home page at <http://www.usgs.gov/>.

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