

# NRCS/USDA Geospatial Data Gateway – Distribution of a Variety of Base Maps and Other GIS Data

<http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>

## Program Highlights

### Data Product

- The Geospatial Data Gateway provides one-stop shopping for natural resources or environmental data.
- Source for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Countywide Compressed Orthophoto Mosaics.

### Advantages

- Data downloads are free and near-real time.
- Compressed, mosaicked counties are easier to work with, color/tone balanced, and potentially more accurate than individual quarter quad National Digital Orthophoto Program (NDOP) Digital Orthophoto Quadrangles (DOQs).

### Disadvantages

- Compression of imagery may degrade visual quality.
- County mosaics generally use first generation NDOP imagery so they are fairly old.
- USDA is not the authoritative source for all data on the site, so some data may be out of date.

## Program Overview

The Geospatial Data Gateway is intended to provide a single access point for resource data. It provides a way to easily locate data that exist for selected geographic areas, find the types of data for that area, and deliver the data packaged in formats compatible with commercial and USDA Service Center application formats.

One major purpose of the Gateway is to support the development, presentation, and dissemination of information by Service Center field staff working in the field with customers away from the office. However, the public has access to the Gateway to find and retrieve resource data.



## **Data Details**

The data sets served by the Gateway are primarily determined by the USDA Service Center Geographic Information System (GIS) Strategy. The data themes are listed on the Gateway Data Management page at [http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/GDGHome\\_StatusMaps.aspx](http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/GDGHome_StatusMaps.aspx). This page also identifies non-geospatial data that may be available through the Gateway.

The Gateway provides metadata that comply with the Federal Geographic Data Committee metadata standards for all data available through the Gateway. Metadata enable users to assess the applicability of a dataset to their needs before downloading or ordering it.

## **Data Applicability to Flood Mapping Program**

County orthophotograph mosaics can be used as Flood Insurance Rate Map base maps provided the compression does not reduce the usability of the image. These mosaics are much easier to work with, have more consistent image brightness, contrast, and sometimes improved positional accuracy compared to the first-generation tiled DOQs.

## **Data Availability**

The Geospatial Data Gateway provides access to many different data layers, which may be updated as frequently as once per week. The most critical themes are generally available nationwide.

### ***Critical Themes***

- Orthoimagery
- Soils
- Common Land Unit

## **Data Ordering**

Users can download the data from the Web site directly, retrieve it from a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site, or order it on CD or DVD.