

FREQUENT QUESTIONS

United States Interagency Elevation Inventory

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NOAA Office for Coastal Management
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FEMA

USGS



US Army Corps
of Engineers®



What is the purpose of the United States Interagency Elevation Inventory?

The elevation inventory is designed to be a broadly applicable resource for elevation data information. Users can find out what data sets are available for their area, find more information about a particular data set, or use the information in the viewer to plan a future collection.

How is the U.S. Interagency Elevation Inventory maintained?

The elevation inventory is maintained by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). USGS, NOAA, and FEMA have collected footprints of data from federal, state, regional, and county groups that have topographic or bathymetric data available (for free or for a small fee). Where possible, 14 attributes are collected for topography and 7 attributes are collected for bathymetry to give users a better idea of data set quality. This information is routinely updated through the efforts of all five agencies. The topographic portion of the elevation inventory was last updated **March 2016**. USGS and NOAA update the information through the liaison network biannually, and the cooperating federal agencies also contribute their new collections. The bathymetric information (with the exception of "Other Bathymetric Surveys") is kept up to date dynamically using Web map services. These services are accessible on the viewer for more information.

What data are included in the inventory?

The elevation inventory focuses on high-accuracy elevation data like lidar, IfSAR, and multibeam bathymetry. The inventory includes all known data sets with a significant coverage area, but may not include very small data sets (e.g., 10 square miles). A small number of restricted data sets are included in the Inventory. These may require a small fee for access or may only be available to certain types of users free of charge. Additionally, the shapes shown in the inventory are simplified and may not show the exact project or data boundaries.

What information can I find out about a data set?

Where possible, 14 attributes are collected for topography and 7 attributes are collected for bathymetry to give users a better idea of data set quality. The attributes for topography and bathymetry are listed below.

Topography – Data Set Name, Data Access, Metadata Access, Collection Date, Project Status, Restrictions, Data Type, Vertical Accuracy, Horizontal Accuracy, Point Spacing, Vertical Datum, Horizontal Datum, Products Available, Quality Level, Inventory ID, and Notes

Bathymetry – Data Set Name, Data Type, Collection Date, Ship Name, Scale, Instrument, Notes

How do I navigate the Inventory Viewer?

There are many options available for navigating within the viewer:

- Zoom to a state/territory and county/island using the drop-down boxes. Use the icons shaped like geographic areas for common zoom selections.
- Use the mouse wheel or the zoom slider tool on the left side of the map to zoom to the area of interest.
- Press and hold the Shift key, and then click and drag on the map to select an area of interest. Press Ctrl/Shift and drag the cursor on the map to zoom out. Click and drag the map to pan.

How do I find out more information about a data set?

Zoom to your area of interest and click on the map. The results will display in the upper left-hand corner, and there is a tab for topographic data sets and bathymetric data sets. Click on the tabs to explore the available data sets. Click on the data set name or the down arrow to discover more information about each data set. The viewer includes up to 14 pieces of information for topography and up to 7 for bathymetry. To make another selection, click on the map in another location. To clear the selection, click the Clear button in the upper left-hand corner next to the topo and bathy tabs.

What does it mean when a project is “planned/funded” or “in-progress”?

The full definitions of “complete,” “planned/funded,” and “in-progress” are as follows:

- Complete – data are ready and available to the public.
- Planned/Funded – Project has not flown yet, but the funding is in place or contract has been signed.
- In-Progress – Project is currently being flown or is still in QA/QC. Data are not yet available to the public.

How do I access a data set?

In the results window below the viewer, a direct link can often be found in the column titled Data Access. If there is no direct link, information about the point of contact is often available.

How do I share my selection?

To share a map or selection, click on the red Share button in the upper left-hand corner. The viewer will generate a web address that will retain your selection, zoom extent, and the configuration of the viewer.

I know about a data set that is publicly available but not included in the inventory. Can it be added to the inventory?

Please contact the NOAA Office for Coastal Management (coastal.info@noaa.gov) so that this data set can be included.

Are these the authoritative boundaries for the data collection?

No, the footprints represented in the inventory are generalized to represent the coverage of the collection. This generalization is necessary to achieve fast draw times for the service. If you are looking for exact data coverage, please contact the data provider for the data or an authoritative footprint.