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United States Department of Agriculture
National Food and Agriculture Council

APR 15 2005

SUBJECT: USDA Service Center Agency Policy on Geospatial Data Distribution

TO: State Food Agriculture Council Chairs

The United States Department of Agriculture Service Center Agencies (SCA) have established a shared set of geospatial data, used for a wide range of program delivery. Some of these data sets are produced by the SCA, and others are acquired from public and private sources. The SCA has also developed a shared Geospatial Data Warehouse (GDW) and the shared Geospatial Data Gateway that enables Web access to the information in this warehouse. The Gateway allows the GDW to easily distribute data to service centers and other locations within the agencies and to entities outside the agencies. The Gateway is implemented jointly, and shared by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Aerial Photography Field Office (APFO), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the National Cartography and Geospatial Center (NCGC). Use of the Gateway enables SCA to reduce staff workload significantly, and provides a process to ensure access and delivery of accurate, up-to-date, and authoritative geospatial data.

This document establishes SCA policy on the distribution of geospatial data to entities outside of SCA and to SCA offices.

Geospatial Data Distribution to Outside Entities

The following geospatial data sets produced or financed by SCA are in the public domain and will be made available to entities outside of SCA through the Geospatial Data Gateway:

1. Climate – Precipitation.
2. Certified Common Land Unit – includes field boundaries, identifier and acreage only.
3. Digital Imagery.
4. DRG Mosaics.
5. Resource Areas.
6. Soil Survey.
7. Watershed Boundaries.
8. Other miscellaneous data of general value to the public.

All requests received by agency staffs for these data will be directed to the Geospatial Data Gateway. APFO and NCGC have developed policies defining which data sets will be delivered from each location in order to balance the workload and eliminate redundancy. They have

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policies limiting the size of datasets downloaded via File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to minimize the impact on the GDW and telecommunications services.

All requests received by agency staffs for geospatial data sets, other than those listed above, will be referred to geodata.gov or other known sources. The Web site is the Federal geospatial portal jointly developed and funded by Federal agencies, including USDA, under the Geospatial One-Stop Presidential Management Initiative. The SCA Geospatial Data Gateway is linked to geodata.gov. It is SCA policy to distribute only public domain data produced and/or funded by SCA, with duplication of services provided by commercial entities or other Federal agencies.

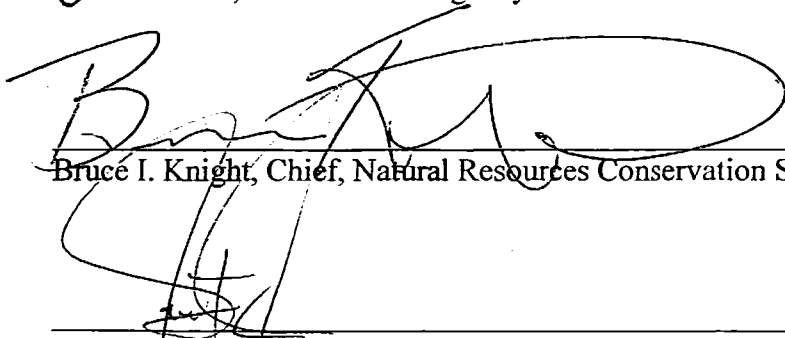
Geospatial Data Distribution to SCA, Conservation Districts, and other USDA agencies

All other data that are in the SCA geospatial data warehouse and accessible through the Geospatial Data Gateway will be made available to SCA, conservation districts, and other USDA agencies without cost recovery utilizing e-authentication technologies. The exception to this is data licensed for use by USDA agencies who have paid for annual access. The TeleAtlas transportation data and geocoding services are only available to SCA and USDA agencies that have a current paid subscription. TeleAtlas data can be used to produce digital and hard copy map products, but TeleAtlas geospatial vector and attribute data are not to be redistributed outside of the USDA signatory agencies listed in the license agreement.

Commercial data is subject to licensing restrictions and agreements which may vary over time. Questions regarding data use and access should be addressed to the agency contacts listed below. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Shirley Hall, FSA, (202) 720-3138, Christine Clarke, NRCS, (301) 504-3969, or Dennis Crow, Rural Development, (202) 720-4721.



James R. Little, Chair, National Food and Agriculture Council and
Administrator, Farm Service Agency



Bruce I. Knight, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service



Gilbert G. Gonzalez, Jr.
Acting Under Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary for Policy and
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cc:

Regional Assistant Chiefs, NRCS

State Conservationists, NRCS

State Directors, Rural Development

State Executive Directors, FSA

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John Johnson, Deputy Administrator, FSA

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