



Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative

Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs
Department of Natural Resources
University of Alaska
<http://www.alaskamapped.org>

Summary:

Alaska's Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative is an interagency effort to produce high-resolution, digital base maps of the entire state. Existing topographic maps of Alaska are more than 40 years old, and it's common to find inaccuracies of up to a quarter-mile. Government and military operations and, just as importantly, private entities, need accurate digital base maps to succeed in computerized data environments. This initiative is timely because Alaska is the only state without digital imagery and elevation maps at nationally accepted standards.

Why the maps are needed:

- Accurate high-resolution imagery and elevation maps are critically important in identifying changes to Alaska's landscape due to climate change, such as new river channels and oceanfront erosion.
- Digital maps are essential for responsible management and development of the state's vast natural resource potential, helping to minimize costs and risks while ensuring safe and healthy stewardship of the resources.
- Updated maps – especially the digital elevation feature -- would allow scientists to create reliable models for responding to such natural hazards as coastal storms and flooding, wildfires, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. The military and Homeland Security also would benefit from digital base maps.

Progress to date:

- The State of Alaska has contributed \$4 million from the general fund to the project, intended as seed money for initial planning efforts and, subsequently, to help fund project start-up. The Alaska Legislature this past session, for the second year in a row, approved a \$2 million general fund appropriation for the initiative, demonstrating the state's support for the project and its understanding that the initiative requires a cost-sharing commitment by the state in order to succeed.
- The initiative provided final funding to the Kenai Watershed Forum in support of acquiring digital elevation data for the entire Kenai Peninsula. The funding effectively leveraged \$250,000 of state money into \$1.5 million of work product through collaboration with federal partners.
- The initiative has developed and implemented a Web portal showing high-resolution imagery that exists for Alaska, and will add to the Web site as more material becomes available.
- To ensure a broad range of public and private involvement, the initiative's executive committee created an advisory and outreach board comprised of stakeholders representing a range of disciplines and interests. A stakeholder Web site provides for involvement, education and up-to-date information on the initiative's strategic planning.
- To manage the undertaking, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and University of Alaska in January 2006 signed a Memorandum of Agreement, setting up an executive committee of high-level staff to direct the Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative. In addition, several other agencies have signed on to the project through Memoranda of Endorsement.

SDMI Executive Committee:

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