



U.S. Geological Survey

National Treasure Expands: National Archives to Include Earth Imagery

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The story of the Nation's land during the last 75 years can be told impartially through records of earth observation — aerial photographs dating from the 1930s and satellite images dating from the 1960s. This vast reservoir of data supplies objective reference points that are essential in documenting land change and in understanding climate change. Preserving important records of the Nation's history while providing convenient public access to them is a vital responsibility of government.

To meet this responsibility in the field of earth observation, Professor Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States, and Dr. Mark Myers, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), today signed an agreement creating a cooperative framework for how the two Federal agencies will together ensure the preservation and access of the massive earth imagery and geospatial data resources currently archived by the USGS at its Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

During the signing ceremony Dr. Weinstein remarked, "Today we are marking an important milestone for USGS EROS to become an affiliated archive within the National Archives system. This agreement between NARA and USGS is a guarantee that our Nation's collections of aerial and satellite images of the world's land areas will be permanently maintained, preserved, and accessible to the public. These records are crucial to scientists and policy makers around the world in understanding how man and society affect the natural landscape."

Director Myers added, "The USGS EROS archive of historic satellite imagery and aerial photography is the largest civilian archive of such data in the United States. Occupying over 40,000 square feet and totaling nearly three petabytes (3000 terabytes) of electronic data and millions of film frames, the EROS archive is massive, essential, and irreplaceable. We have a daunting responsibility to care for this collection. Working with the National Archives, we will continue to preserve and make these records readily available to all users worldwide."

The agreement establishes a joint commitment to enhance the preservation and access capabilities of both NARA and the USGS. The two agencies will work together to ensure that NARA has legal custody and ultimate responsibility for the preservation of the archived EROS holdings and that USGS will meet the stringent preservation and access standards of NARA. The records will remain at the EROS Center under the day-to-day control of USGS, which has already created advanced information management system that enables public electronic access to historical earth observation data.

For more information about USGS Earth Imagery and Data products and services visit the [Land Remote Sensing](http://remotesensing.usgs.gov/) (<http://remotesensing.usgs.gov/>) Web site.

Visit the [National Archives and Records Administration](http://www.archives.gov/) (<http://www.archives.gov/>) for more information.

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