



United States Department of the Interior
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Virginia 20192

In Reply Refer to
Mail Stop 511

September 30, 2022

Dear Ms. Schafer-Kramer -

On behalf of the U.S. Geological Survey National Geospatial Program, I want to thank you for your support and stewardship of the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). With the significant contributions of the Stewards over the last 25 years, the NHD has become the most complete and comprehensive inventory of the Nation's surface water resources, supporting science and management applications across the country.

Much has changed since we started building the NHD. Advances in computing technology have enabled more detailed and sophisticated modeling applications like the National Water Model. Advances in airborne lidar technology have enabled the collection of high-resolution digital elevation models (DEMs) that were unimaginable when we were still using 1-arc second DEMs. In fact, today the Nation has more than 84 percent of the Nation with 3D Elevation Data available or in progress. These advances along with new capabilities in geospatial software technology necessitate a strategic shift towards the next generation of hydrography data.

Over the course of the next year, we will transition from maintaining the NHD, the Watershed Boundary Dataset, and NHDPlus High Resolution to developing the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP). 3DHP will be easier to maintain, based on a modern data model and architecture, and better meet the requirements of users that were documented in the Hydrography Requirements and Benefits Study (2016). Given resource constraints, the transition to the 3DHP database and tools requires us to close Steward and internal editing of the NHD database. As you may have heard through our outreach on this transition, job check-ins should be completed by December 31, 2022, to ensure inclusion in the final, static version of the NHD we will publish later in 2023. We apologize for any inconvenience these changes may cause and appreciate your patience as we move forward with 3DHP.

Though we are ending this chapter in our hydrography program, we anticipate continuing roles for Stewards. 3DHP will require coordination in your local user community, reviewing corrections submitted through markup, and other roles to be defined during the transition.

If you have technical questions related to this transition, please contact your Partner Support Point of Contact. If you have programmatic questions related to this transition, please contact Steve Aichele (saichele@usgs.gov).

Thank you again for your support of the NHD, and we sincerely appreciate your ongoing collaboration as we work together to build 3DHP to meet the next generation of user needs and applications.

Sincerely,

Michael Tischler, Ph.D.
Director, National Geospatial Program