



DOI
VS
NATIONAL
ROLE

Support of Department of Interior and National Program Science Needs

Team Leader: Kim Goddard

Contacts: Tom Casadevall & Tim Miller

Background:

Upon creation of the USGS, the Organic Act (1879) specified the responsibilities of the USGS as: "...*Provided: That this officer shall have the direction of the Geological Survey, and the classification of the public lands and examination of the Geological Structure, mineral resources and products of the national domain. And that the Director and members of the Geological Survey shall have no personal or private interests in the lands or mineral wealth of the region under survey...*" This provision has for more than a century been considered to cover the entire nation in the USGS's investigation purview. More recently, additional authorities (numerous) have come to the USGS through the addition of the Biological Resources Discipline (BRD). Those are authorities originating with other Bureaus of the Department of Interior (DOI) from which programs and scientists were transferred to USGS at the creation of BRD. These additional authorities address DOI trust resources (lands and living organisms).

Issue:

Although USGS is a sizable agency with talented staff, resources (people and funding) always are inadequate to address the many science questions of interest to the nation and each successive administration. As a result USGS finds itself in the position of allocating resources to address DOI and other science questions. USGS has had a long history of activities addressing DOI science questions, and questions of broad interest to the nation as a whole. Further, the FY 03 budget passback from the Office of Management and Budget criticized the USGS slogan of "Science for a Changing World," as way off the mark and suggested that USGS focus on providing science for the DOI Agencies.

Given the limitation of resources, the question for this learning scenario is:

"How are some ways that USGS can strengthen research ties with DOI agencies in response to the Administration's statements but at the same time protect and strengthen the larger national mission programs of the traditional USGS?"

In addressing this question, here are some additional issues and questions you may choose to think through or address:

- 1) How or when does USGS know it has achieved appropriate balance between DOI and national science needs?
- 2) When or do DOI science needs supplant national interest/needs for scientific information?
- 3) To what extent should USGS use appropriated funds in addressing DOI needs, and when (if ever) is it appropriate for other DOI bureaus to fund USGS science?
- 4) When do DOI science needs align best with the USGS mission, is there any distinction between DOI needs and a full USGS mission?
- 5) When USGS resources are most limited, what comes first DOI or national science needs?



**DOI
VS
NATIONAL
ROLE**

*Leadership Development
201
June 17-21, 2002*