



Status of City/Town Halls Nationwide

You may recall that back in our [July 2020 newsletter](#), we noted that volunteers had collected and updated over 70% of the estimated total city/town hall features in the U.S. We're happy to announce that **volunteers continue to make progress and have now collected almost 85% of all the city/town halls**, which is amazing! What's even more amazing is that this percentage is probably higher since this calculation assumes all of Census.gov's incorporated places have a city/town hall and we know that is not the case. This is even more impressive, since a lot of this data was collected from scratch. *GREAT JOB!*

TIMELINE

[September 2018](#): City/Town Halls first announced

[March 2020](#): City/Town Halls over 50% collected

[July 2020](#): City/Town Halls over 70% collected:

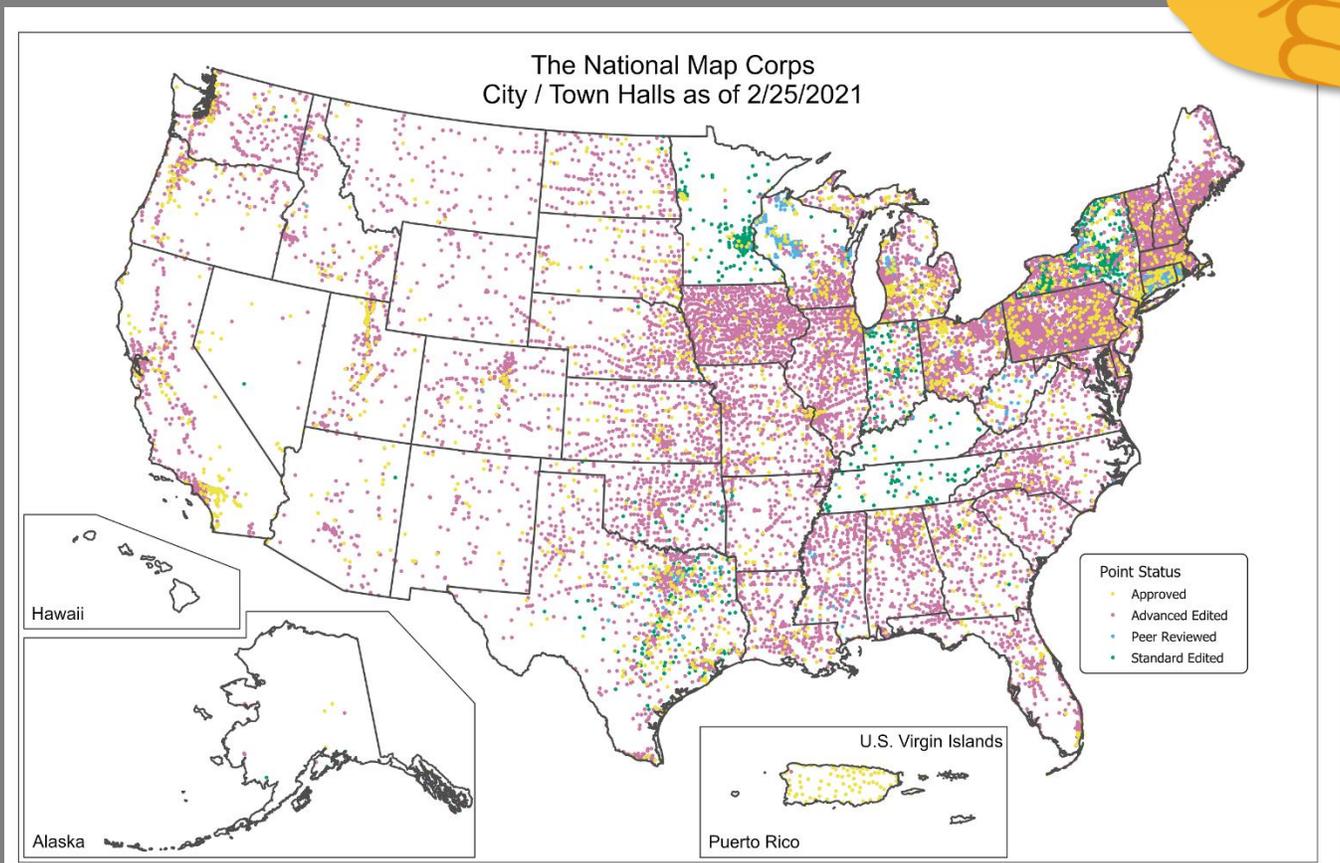
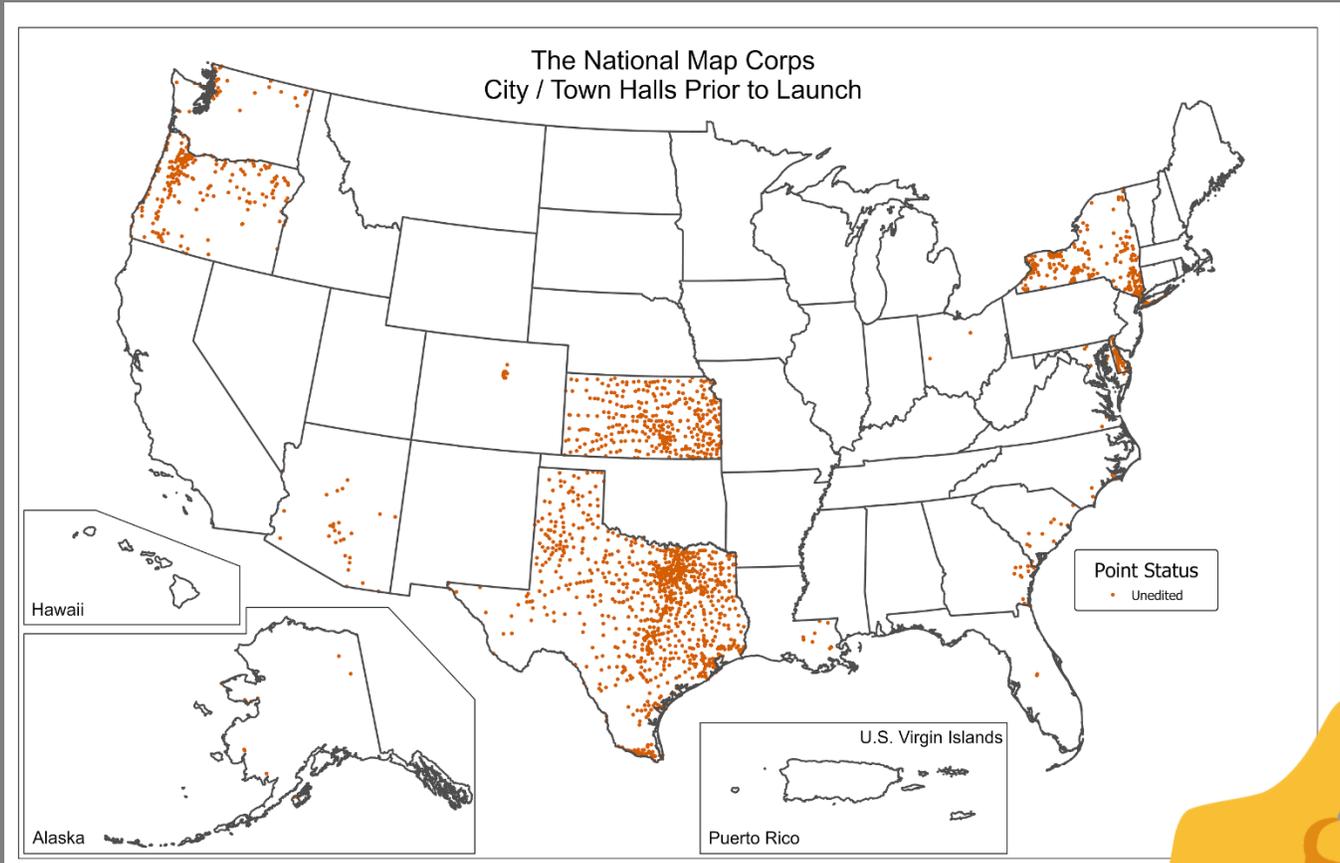
March 2021: City/Town Halls over 85% collected

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Check out the maps on the following page to see how much of the city/town hall data has been collected from scratch since September 2018!

Status of City/Town Halls Nationwide (Continued)



Mapping Challenges Updates



We're continuing to play at the beach with a new challenge launched on the Atlantic coast! If you're stuck at home during Spring Break this year, consider doing some virtual traveling while participating in TNMCORPS. Challenges will remain in the east for a bit as we prepare those areas for US Topo production. The table below shows challenges completed since our last newsletter was released as well as new challenges launched.

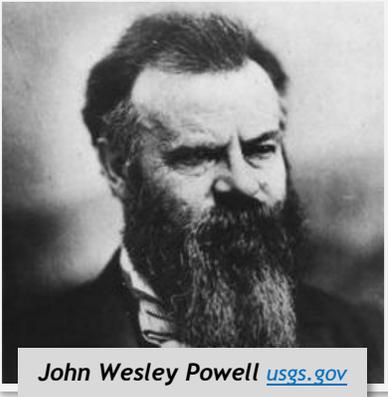
WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	LENGTH (DAYS)	# OF UNIQUE POINTS	# OF VOLUNTEERS
Fire Stations	AR	2/11/21 – present	(See our original post from 2/11/21 for tips and tricks on this challenge)		
City / Town Halls	NC	2/11/21 – present	(See our original post from 2/11/21 for tips and tricks on this challenge)		
Schools	CA / NV	2/18/21 – present	(See our original post from 2/18/21 for tips and tricks on this challenge)		
Fire Stations	CA / NV / AZ	1/28/21 – 2/18/21	21	706	14
(January 2021 Newsletter)					
City / Town Halls	CA / NV	1/7/21 – 1/28/21	21	120	8
Schools	MO	11/10/20 – 1/14/21	65	809	21
Schools	TX	11/24/20 – 2/4/21	72	4,770	25

All challenge updates are listed on our [website](#) under Resources > Mapping Challenges.



History Meets Geography: The 100th Meridian

A [meridian](#) is a geographic term for a line connecting the North and South Poles along the same longitude. The 100th Meridian is a line connecting the North and South Pole at -100 degrees longitude, the significance of which was first observed by USGS's own [John Wesley Powell](#).



John Wesley Powell [usgs.gov](https://www.usgs.gov)

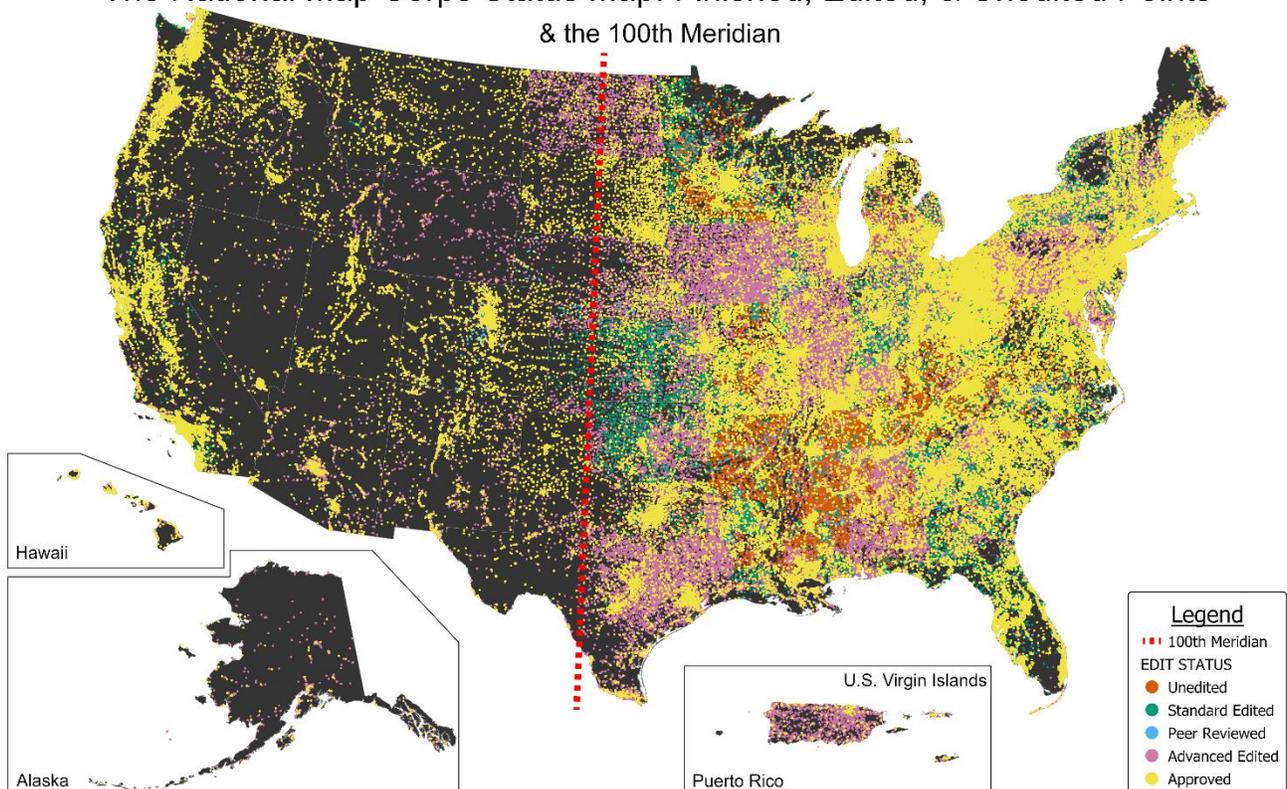
Powell was an “[explorer, geologist, geographer, and ethnologist](#)” who led expeditions into the West and later became the second director of the USGS (1881-1894). Powell pulled from his vast field experiences and observations of native vegetation when he noted the climatic and ecological significance of the 100th meridian. Powell noted that this meridian delineated land in the east that he believed was suitable for agriculture (i.e., the [humid region](#)) vs. land in the west which he believed was much less suitable (i.e., the [arid region](#)). Powell detailed his observations of these lands and documented all of his findings in his [Lands of the Arid Region of the United States](#) (1879) report.

As homesteads and the frontier marched westward, [fewer established in the west](#) compared to the east despite the federal government [promoting westward development](#). One reason for this is that the establishment and success of homesteads was [influenced by availability of water](#).

Powell noted that lands east of the 100th Meridian received [more than 51 cm of precipitation](#) which was considered enough for farming without irrigation while lands west of the Meridian received less than 51cm. Homesteading was also difficult for a variety of other reasons and those that did establish [didn't always succeed](#). Those that succeeded served as starting points for communities to grow and expand.

If you look closely, you can see evidence of the homestead movement as you're reviewing points. For example, signage for [Springhill Cemetery](#) in Montana notes that the cemetery was established in 1906, which is around the time homesteads started [appearing there](#). Evidence of these trends is also visible in TNMCorps' Status Maps via a decrease in point density west of the meridian.

The National Map Corps Status Map: Finished, Edited, & Unedited Points & the 100th Meridian



The Hunt for Van Meter Cemetery

Back in our [January Newsletter](#) we highlighted [detour's fun find](#): A giant cowboy skeleton shaped corn maze run by [Brookedale Farm](#) in Fort Ashby, West Virginia! detour came across this corn maze while researching the Van Meter Cemetery. A point representing Van Meter Cemetery was [located within the boundaries of the corn maze](#), but we couldn't track down any record of a cemetery on this property, nor could any headstones or cemetery outlines be seen in the imagery.

As excited as we were to have possibly discovered a cemetery in a cowboy skeleton shaped corn maze, the clues were pointing elsewhere. Initially, the only online source we could find mentioning a Van Meter Cemetery in Fort Ashby was [BillionGraves](#). Without much additional evidence indicating that there was a cemetery located on the Brookedale Farm property, the easiest way to find out for sure was to contact the farm. The owner noted that they'd never seen any signs of graves on their property, but that there were some headstones located on a neighboring farm which had been owned by the Van Meter brothers.

We did a bit more research into the Van Meter family in West Virginia and discovered that most of the [original family structures and dwellings](#) are concentrated near Old Fields, West Virginia, about 30 miles south of Fort Ashby. We came across a cemetery marked in the Historical Topo layer near Old Fields, but not yet represented by a point in the editor. According to Find A Grave, this is the location of the [Old Fields Church Cemetery](#), and it just so happens to contain [many Van Meter graves](#).

Because the Old Fields Church Cemetery was unmarked by a point in the editor, is located near the Van Meter dwellings in Old Fields, and contains a bunch of Van Meter graves, we were pretty confident that this was where the Van Meter Cemetery point should be moved.



However, after coming across this [compilation of Hardy County cemetery records](#) that lists a Van Meter Cemetery located on the [Buena Vista Farm property](#), our confidence was a bit shaken and we hesitated on moving the point.

VAN METER CEMETERY – (N39° 08.007' & W078° 56.625') – At Old Fields on US 220, go east on CR 2 (Reynolds Gap Extension), go 0.1 miles, go straight onto the driveway of residence 428, follow the farm road to the right of the barn and left of the house (ca 1831) to the gate. The cemetery is 250 yards straight ahead and 150 yards north of the farm road in a corn field. (22 Mar 2011 JH)

This is the only other record (besides BillionGraves) that even mentions a cemetery by the name of Van Meter, albeit in a different location. So, while we were pretty confident about moving the original point to the Old Fields Church Cemetery grounds, we wanted to reach out to the Buena Vista Farm just to be sure there weren't any Van Meter graves on their property. The owner explained that the only Van Meter graves they are aware of are in the Old Fields Church Cemetery.

Continued on [next page](#)

The Hunt for Van Meter Cemetery (Continued)

Since the Old Fields Church Cemetery was not yet represented by a point in the TNMCORPS editor, we looked it up in the GNIS records. Sure enough, the [GNIS entry for Old Fields Church Cemetery](#) lists the variant name as Van Meter Cemetery. Mystery solved!



Image from [Find A Grave](#)

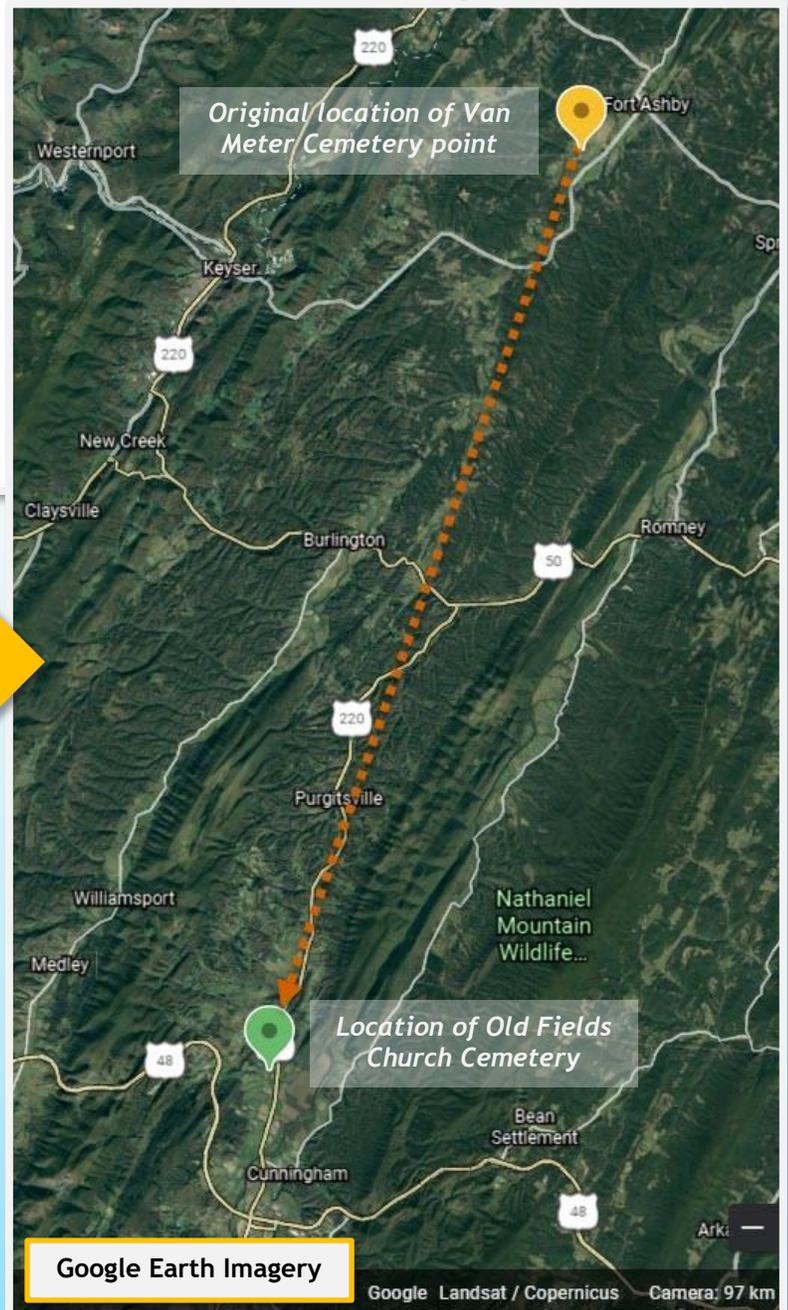
Feature Detail Report for: Old Fields Church Cemetery

ID: 1937408
 Name: Old Fields Church Cemetery
 Class: Cemetery ([Definitions](#))
 Description: This cemetery is located in Frankfort District.
 Citation: U.S. Geological Survey. The National Map Vector Model (NVM) Datasets. 02-AUG-2011.
 Address: Old Fields Road
 City: Old Fields
 State: WV
 ZIP: 26845
 Entry Date: 13-Sep-1996
 *Elevation: 801/244

*Elevations in feet/meters from the [National Elevation Dataset](#)

Variant Names

Variant Name
Van Meter Cemetery Citation



Google Earth Imagery

Google Landsat / Copernicus Camera: 97 km

With our research complete, we [moved the Van Meter Cemetery point](#) from the cowboy skeleton corn maze in Mineral County to the Old Fields Church Cemetery grounds in Hardy County and updated the name.



TNMCORPS Puzzle: Cryptogram

Every volunteer gets recognized for adding and editing points for The National Map Corps. Guess the range of recognition categories in this cryptogram. Each letter in the phrase has been replaced with a random letter or number. Try to decode the message!

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
		5												4			13		10						

R O T O R O T
 6 13 4 25 10 3 8 4 13 1 8 13 4 6 10 3 8
 R O R C T O T
 12 18 13 14 8 11 4 13 12 5 3 15 26 22 10 4 10 3 8
 R O O
 12 19 18 15 1 13 4 22 4 6 24 26 21 16 15 22 8
 C T T O R
 12 21 8 5 10 15 10 4 13 12

<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>

Key: "From the Order of the Surveyor's Chain to the Squadron of Biplane Spectators"



Recognition Shout-Out: genovt

Congratulations genovt, on becoming the newest member of our highest recognition category, the [Squadron of Biplane Spectators](#)! Thanks for your hard work and dedication to The National Map Corps!

Have a story or photo you'd like to share?

We want them! This could be anything from a photo of you verifying a structure or an interesting story that you discovered while editing.

Photos, graphics, and stories may be used in future news releases and social media posts. All materials submitted become part of the “[public domain](#),” and can be used by USGS in the future unless otherwise specified.

Please email them to nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov



New Recognition Category Members



Squadron of Biplane Spectators (6000-6999)

- genovt



Ring of Reconnaissance Rocketeers (5000-5999)



Family of Floating Photogrammetrists (3000-3999)



Flock of Winged Witnesses (4000-4999)



Theodolite Assemblage (2000-2999)

- Rlsailor



Alidade Alliance (1000-1999)

- Jason Paquette
- TucsonKen



Stadia Board Society (500-999)

- Jason Paquette
- tcunningham
- TucsonKen
- Markturner0791



Circle of the Surveyor's Compass (200-499)

- Jason Paquette
- jonny-cox
- DevOpp
- TucsonKen
- jchamb
- stormlloyd5355
- Markturner0791
- S Jones



Pedometer Posse (100-199)

- HBR
- S Jones
- jchamb
- Mules21'
- trevorstratton
- Ryan Anderson
- TucsonKen
- stormlloyd5355
- sjr_91
- Markturner0791
- skirunplay



Society of the Steel Tape (50-99)

- BillRistow
- HBR
- Fritz Raish
- jchamb
- Mules21'
- S Jones
- TucsonKen
- VM
- stormlloyd5355
- trevorstratton
- Lost
- Ryan Anderson
- Markturner0791
- airborne1977
- skirunplay
- natwalts
- rachelwoodard



Order of the Surveyor's Chain (25-49)

- HollyHolmes
- JuanJondred
- Lost
- jchamb
- Trailmaster
- ortiz4416
- Ryan Anderson
- madelinehrtn
- Amelia Richardson
- S Jones
- soph.robins
- DMac
- LauraWellborn
- xingzhe
- Suki
- TucsonKen
- skirunplay
- stormlloyd5355
- trevorstratton
- Markturner0791
- rachelwoodard
- NicholasMinich
- That1Batgirl
- airborne1977
- Sat4029
- natwalts
- Andrea Holt
- caris.hill7

CONTACT US AT: nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov for suggestions, questions, additions to the next newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from the email list.

