

PROJECT 02

PERCIVAL
ISLAND :
HETEROTOPIAS
& INTENSITIES

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

introduction

Issue Date: 23 February 2024
Due Date: 06 May 2024 @ 9am via Canvas
Presentation Date: 06 May 2024 (Cowgill 300, time is TBC)
Assessment Weight: 60% of the course grade

Project 1 served as a primer of sorts for this second project, a way in which you could test and stretch your creative muscles. It also introduced you to the core materials of landscape architectural design: movement, experience, sensation, topography, vegetation, structures, and surfaces. Project 2 will continue to push you out of your comfort zone by making you work with these same materials in a much more complex and 'landscapey' situation. Whereas in Project 1 featured a much more restrained form of design as it revolved around a community engagement dimension, Project 2 demands of you to envisage creative and novel ways of designing instead of what is immediately practical or expected. As such, you're going to learn how to experiment with the (landscape) material you have at hand so that you can generate design responses to the site and situation we're grappling with. Relying on first intuitions or the easy way will not take you, or the lab as a collective, as far as needed. Further, you are also tasked with going beyond simplistic ideas such as 'nature vs culture', everything that isn't human being natural, and landscape architectural kneejerk responses to immediately restore or green everything in sight.¹

We will also be integrating with the landform design course taught by Prof. Curruli that you are currently taking. You will be designing and detailing one aspect of your design from the perspective of both courses so that you can grapple with the full complexities of your design challenges all at once.

Importantly, this is a collective design lab investigation. We are all approaching the situation of Percival Island together, looking at it from our own perspectives. As such, it is expected that you all work collaboratively, sharing resources, material, and insights to each other's design work. There is no competition in a design lab, but instead a shared responsibility to investigate this landscape as best we can, and as rigorously as we can.

the site

The site for our investigation is Percival Island in Lynchburg, VA. Sitting within the James River, directly adjacent to the downtown and industrial areas, the Island serves as a (literal) bridging point to the wider landscape of Virginia as well as the surrounding regions. It was formerly used as a point railroads to cross from the other side of the James River to Lynchburg, making it a critical piece of 19th and 20th century infrastructure. In 1991 Lynchburg purchased the island in order to fold it into the city's recreational network. In 1998 the Island re-opened as a 'Natural Area' reserve with the former rail corridor acting as a linear line of movement through the long, skinny island. One bridge at each end connects to the mainland either side, producing a strong linear movement through the Island. Currently a variety of avian, reptilian, and mammalian wildlife occupies the Island, allowing for some form of refuge from the urbanised landscape of Lynchburg.

the design challenge

You are each tasked with grappling with the content and 'nature' of Percival's Island.² There is already a pre-existing, strong, linear movement through the Island which presents an opportunity for us to explore and experiment with a variety of design opportunities either side of this movement line. The

1 I'm challenging you with this as, at large in the LA discipline, the idea of nature and culture being separate has been moved past, instead seeing the world as a nature-culture or humans being just another part of the cosmos, no better or worse, more or less significant. Modernity has done a fantastic job of separating the human out from the more-than-human. I want you to think about you might address this split through design.

2 'Nature' here does not mean "nature" in the sense of animals and trees but rather the characteristics or character of the Island. Put more simply, how it might describe itself, or how you might describe it. I find the idea of 'nature' being out there, as in not in the built environment, to be ridiculous and not useful to contemporary landscape architecture or environmental relationships.

challenge here is left intentionally open and partially ambiguous so that you are forced to come to grips with what this site and project means to you as an apprentice to landscape architecture and to the world at large.³ Below are some guiding principles or 'boundaries' for the project that establish the field of experimentation you must occupy:

1. We are already given a strong linear movement from one end of the Island to the other. We should not drastically later this line, though some alterations may be made. Instead, we should focus our designerly attention to either or both sides of the path in the area that you are working in.
2. You are not expected to design across the entire site in full detail, though you are expected to have a masterplan or schematic for how you envisage it unfold.
3. You will be choosing 2-3 locations within the site to more fully 'flesh out' your scheme in serious detail based on the intentions of the larger schematic design.
4. Engagement with the river as a water body, its edge conditions, and the banks of the river on either side of the Island is encouraged.
5. You must go beyond the everyday forms of design typically found in these natural reserve areas or natural forests. How can you bring the weight of your designerly interests and capacities to bear on this island such that you can envisage an alternative future for this landscape and those who occupy it (human and more-than-human).
6. Experiential and social dimensions of landscape are to be given high importance in your designing. The layout or design of program is not the design of landscape experience. We will talk at length about this and how one might grapple with this as a design challenge.
7. Your areas of detailed design much incorporate topographical manipulation, design of vegetative areas or manipulation of what is pre-existing, some elements of structural design that expresses the design or conceptual intent, and management of hydrological conditions or issues in this area.
8. You must show a rigorous engagement with the more-than-human entities present on and around Percival's Island. They are not to be treated as objects (as we tend to do with plants) but entities with their own agency, history, future, and desires.

This list is not exhaustive as I fully intend to discover aspects of this site or the design project as it unfolds that might shift or direct these or new boundaries in unforeseen ways. We will discuss the implications of this as a collective when appropriate.

You should consider the following aspects in your design processes:

- Access links outside of the site boundaries
- Sightlines and visual impact
- How one enters the site and the significance of entry
- Alternative entrance points
- A hierarchy of movement and paths
- Landform design that engages with the river edge
- Landform design that engages with the island's center
- Structural planting design
- Landscape architectural structures
- Materiality of site
- Light conditions
- A loose sense of feasibility/believability
- Wider context and history of the site and region
- Regional geomorphology
- Agency of material
- Non-human agency

³ I've always found the idea of an apprenticeship to design, and the world, to be much a stronger way to think about your education (and beyond). It really forces you to take ownership of your role in your education, to think through making, and making mistakes so that you can learn. This to me suggests a more rigorous design education than a student expecting to have knowledge and skills poured into an empty mind.

- Scale
 - Bodily experience
 - The Sublime
 - What to do with leftover material
 - The James River as a major aspect of this landscape
 - The sectional profile of the Island and how that changes along its length
 - How to use the drama of the site?
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resources

- [10 Things to do at Percival Island](#)
- [VA DWR page on Percival Island](#)
- [Lynchburg page on Percival Island](#)
- [Historic Imagery of the railroad](#)
- [A visitor's account](#)
- [Birding on the Island](#)

More resources will be supplied by various agencies at Lynchburg who have an interest in this project and are kindly assisting this investigation. You are also expected to share with your colleagues any relevant or interesting material you come across.

project submission

The project is due for submission on 06th May 2024 at 9 am via Canvas.

You will be presenting your work to internal and external critics in Cowgill 300 on the 6th of May 2024, at 12.30pm All work must be pinned up in Cowgill 300 by 12pm.

You are required to be present at this review. Failure to present without a pre-approved exemption will result in a 20% penalty being applied to your project's grade.

A single PDF document containing all your work should be compiled. You are tasked with creating your presentation panels as it suits your inquiry. This likely means stepping away from the comfort of single large panels and instead using multiple smaller sheets. If the layout is important to your project, then also take a photo (before/after your presentation) or have someone else photograph it appropriately during the presentation session. If you have original analogue drawings, especially those created on vellum, please document these with photographs and include these in your compiled pdf for reference.

submission requirements

1. **Project Title** that has resonance with the design intent/concept
2. **Project Manifesto** describing your proposal for how a nature (p)reserve might look if we treat the more-than-human seriously. 250 words.
3. **Relevant introduction to, and analysis of, the site**, including both scientific and experiential/movement drawings – imagine the reviewers do not know the site. This should include maps, sections, diagrams, and notes collated in a graphic form.
4. **Documentation of the site's history**. This must include indigenous, colonial, and modern occupation and history, geomorphological and ecological history, and other relevant forms of information. This should include maps, diagrams, and notes collated in a graphic form.
5. **Collage documenting your position towards the site and design situation/challenge**. This should be both interpretative but also rigorous. In a way, this should form the crux, or spine, of your design argument – acting as a touchstone for the reviewers and your classmates to understand where you are coming at the design from. Size: should be approx. the size of an 11x17 sheet.
6. **Precedent Studies** – analysis of at least 3 design precedents using annotated drawings and diagrams showing specifically what has been learned from each and how that has been translated into your design proposal. Each study should be approx. as large as an 11x17 sheet.
7. **Evidence of testing/iteration of ideas/the story of your designing** – this

may take the form of drawings, text, selections from your design journal/sketchbook, and other works. Include at least 2-3 design experimentations.

8. **2x Diagrams communicating key parts or concepts of your design** – these are to quickly communicate the core parts of your proposal in a quick and efficient manner. Consider phasing as one of these diagrams. Must be drawn digitally.
9. **Master plan** – Drawing should be approx 24" long (either vertical or horizontal) on either a 24x36 or 18x24" sheet - this correlates to a 1" - 250' drawing scale. Drawing should communicate the design's spatiality and contextual links. This a keystone drawing as other drawings will cross-reference to it. Must be drawn digitally.
10. **Detailed design plans** - 24x36 sheet, drawing scale 1" - 20'. These must show the key areas within your scheme that have been detailed further to explore how your concept/intent works at a more resolved level.
11. **4x Sections through your detailed site design** – Scale should be discussed with Shaun and/or Jun as each design will use sections differently. The physical length of the section should be at least 17", ideally larger. Sections should cut through relevant and interesting parts of your design that require further drawings to show how your design concept has been translated into designed space. Use a variety of scales to communicate the depth and complexity of your design proposal - this probably means getting closer in your sections that you initially thought. You can also "nest" sections within each other, having a larger scale section and then having a closer scale one zooming into a key area. Must be drawn digitally or use mixed modes (scanning in analogue content and combining with digital work).
12. **2x 3D perspectives** – these should communicate the most compelling part of your design. Must be drawn digitally, though combining analogue and digital techniques here is also encouraged. Each should be no smaller than an 8.5x11" sheet.

All drawings should be appropriately cross-referenced and annotated to describe key design elements.

assessment criteria

- Degree of rigour within the design exploration - 40%
- Ability for the designed landscape to make a difference - 10%
- Quality and depth of precedent analysis - 15%
- Depth of experimentation within the design process - 25%
- Quality of graphic representation and documentation - 10%

plan of attack

We will be conducting fieldwork on-site on Monday 26th February, leaving campus prior to noon and returning at approx. 5pm. Bring sketching tools, camera (cellphones aren't up to the task), and clothing appropriate for the weather.

You are tasked with the following order of operations for this project:

Stage 01

- 26th Feb – 03 March. Fieldwork at Lynchburg, site analysis, and ASLA student award winner analysis.
- 04 – 10 March. Spring Break. Continued site analysis and historical documentation.
- 11 – 17 March. Initial conceptual development at site scale and 1x intervention scale. Finalised site analysis. Presentation of site analysis, concept, and initial positioning collage on Friday 15 March.

Based on the number you've been designated, you're tasked with conducting a detailed site analysis of Percival Island as a whole, and the area of the island tied to your number (see map at the end of this brief). You will need to do 'traditional' site analysis of the island as a whole, and an embodied, experiential analysis of your given area. We will talk on site about what you might focus

on to do this embodied analysis, how to think about, and how to document experiential material. The intent is that we should have a large number of both general sitewide analysis work paired with highly detailed experiential documentation. Mapping/representing the big and small in tandem. You must also engage with several more-than-human entities on the island. Who inhabits this place already? How do they live? What landscape processes are they a part of? How can you begin to unpack this through drawing or other means of representation?

I will provide you with a google earth map that you can use on your phone to help you determine where your section starts and ends on site.

Stage 02

- 18 – 24 March. Precedent analysis and conceptual development at site scale.
- 25 – 31 March. Conceptual development at site scale. Site scale concept + accompanying material presented on Friday 29 March.
- 01 – 14 April. Conceptual Development of chosen sites at intervention scale. Presentation of entire conceptual development to date on Friday 12 April.

At this stage in the process, you're tasked with rapidly and widely experimenting with a range of different design outcomes and possibilities. The important thing here is to go wild instead of playing it safe. Dream big, forget restrictions. Feasibility can be figured out later. Come up with the most powerful and impactful design you can at this stage, and start to make it feasible from there.

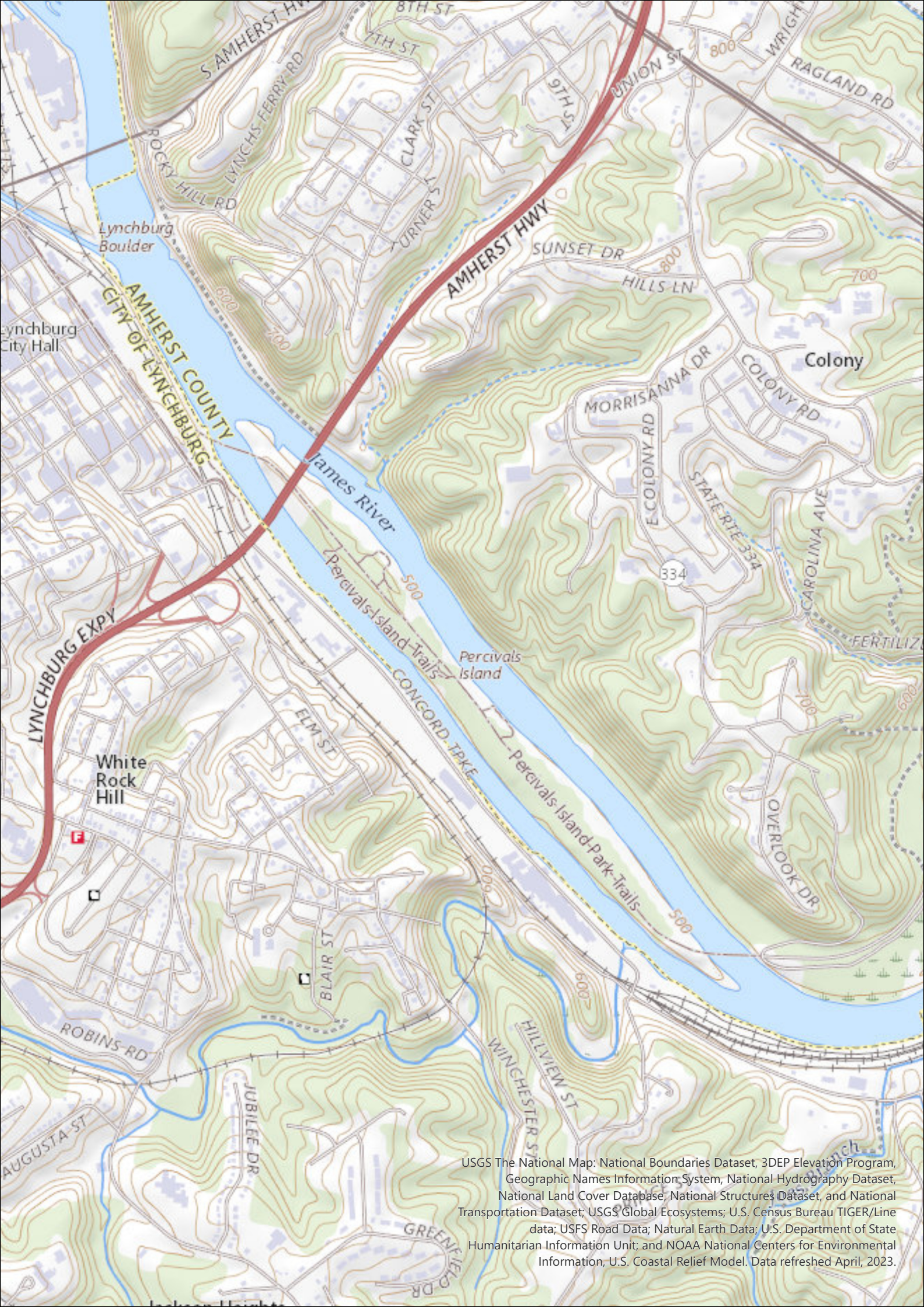
Think about what you can learn or discover at the range of scales you'll be working at. If you discover something cool at the intervention scale, can you scale that up to the whole site? Or vice versa?

Stage 03

- 15 – 28 April. Developed and detailed design of scheme at site and intervention scales. Presentation of developed design on Friday 26 April.
- 29 April – 05 May. Preparation of final design drawings and representation package. Design of presentation layout and strategy.
- 06 May. Final Project Presentation.

Here you are making the design work by making it fit into the realm of feasibility and practicality, but without losing what made it interesting and powerful to begin with. This is not necessarily easy, though you will learn a lot by going through this process. More research and investigation will happen at this stage as you discover more about the site or what you are designing, demanding more information to be brought into the design process.





USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line data; USFS Road Data; Natural Earth Data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit; and NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, U.S. Coastal Relief Model. Data refreshed April, 2023.



Lynchburg

Lower Bluffwalk

Riverfront Park

Lynchburg Expy

29

805 ft

746 ft

Esri Community Maps Contributors, City Of Lynchburg, VA, VIRGIN, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA



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