



The Protected Areas Database – U.S. (PAD-US) is the start of a new system for inventorying lands set aside for their natural, open space uses. Developed by the public-private PAD-US Partnership, this new enterprise will undertake a major implementation project in 2010-2012 – and we'll need YOUR help!

more at www.protectedlands.net



What's Going On?

It's time to create a comprehensive and current inventory of America's protected lands – a **Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US)**. A public-private collaboration, the PAD-US Partnership, is bringing together the best practices and resources of federal, state and non-governmental groups to achieve this goal.

Over the next three years, the Partnership will oversee the transformation of current protected land inventories:

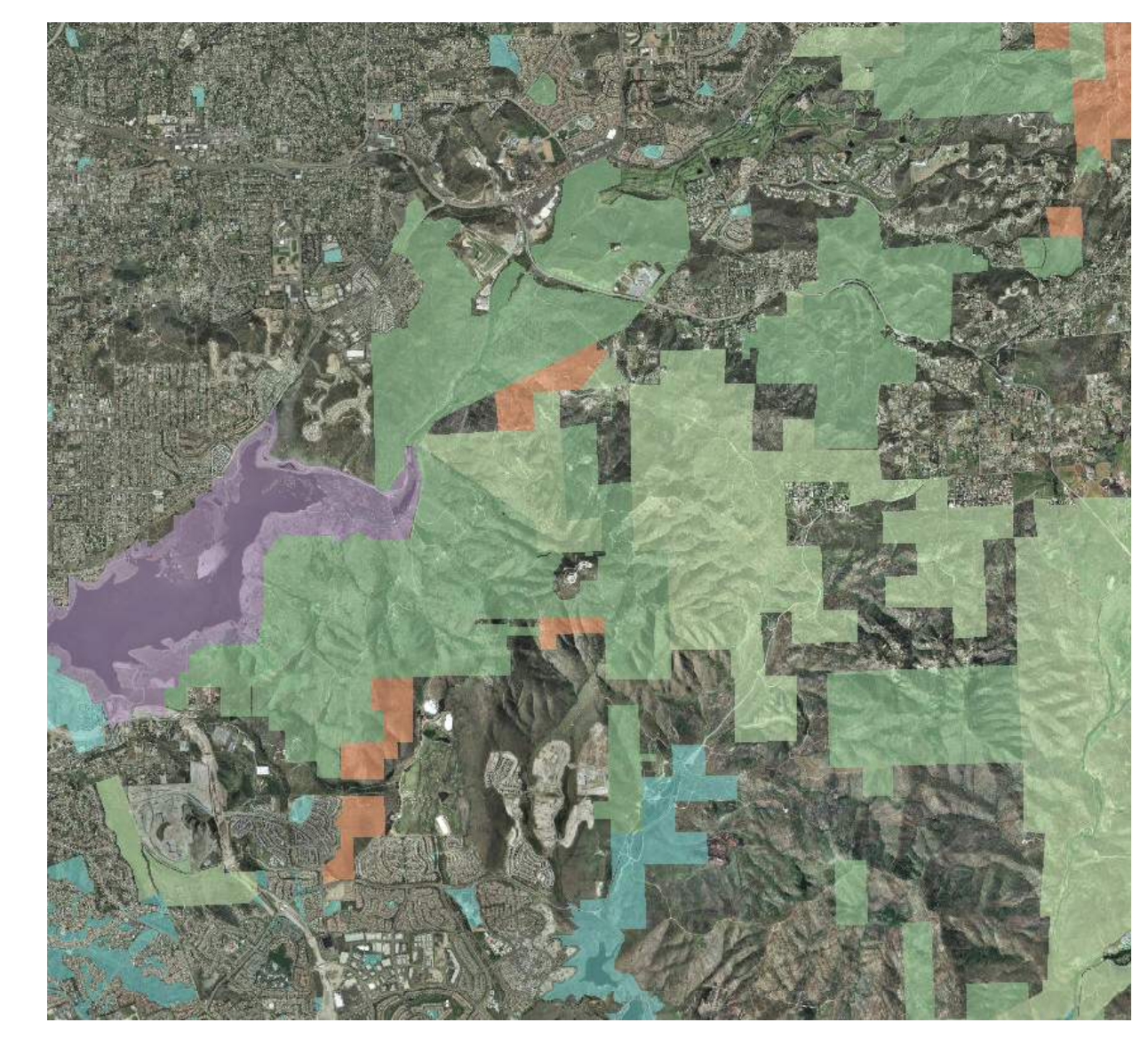
- A **single database** will focus many state and national efforts into a highly flexible and technologically robust nationwide data management system.
- **States** will be given resources to greatly improve their inventories that in turn form the foundation of the national data.
- **Federal** agencies will improve their coordination and data gathering, gaining better overall information for less cost.
- The **usefulness** of protected area inventories to the public, government and business will grow, enabling much more evidenced-based global, national, regional and local conservation planning and assessment, far more accurate land use and acquisition planning, and easier and more complete public knowledge of recreational opportunities.
- Emerging challenges of how to address **climate change** and improve **fiscal and economic productivity** will be better met by this confluence of many unconnected data gathering efforts into a single system for planning and monitoring.

The organizations involved in the PAD-US Partnership include the USGS Gap Program, the Conservation Biology Institute, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy and others. Over the past year, this group has worked on a program to redesign how we inventory protected areas in the U.S. Financial support has been provided by USGS and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with coordination by GreenInfo Network and technical assistance from Applied Geographics.

VISION: *We will create a spatially explicit inventory that lets any user – from the general public to professional land managers – to know exactly what lands are protected anywhere in the United States, and to easily apply this inventory to conservation, land management, planning, recreation and other uses.*

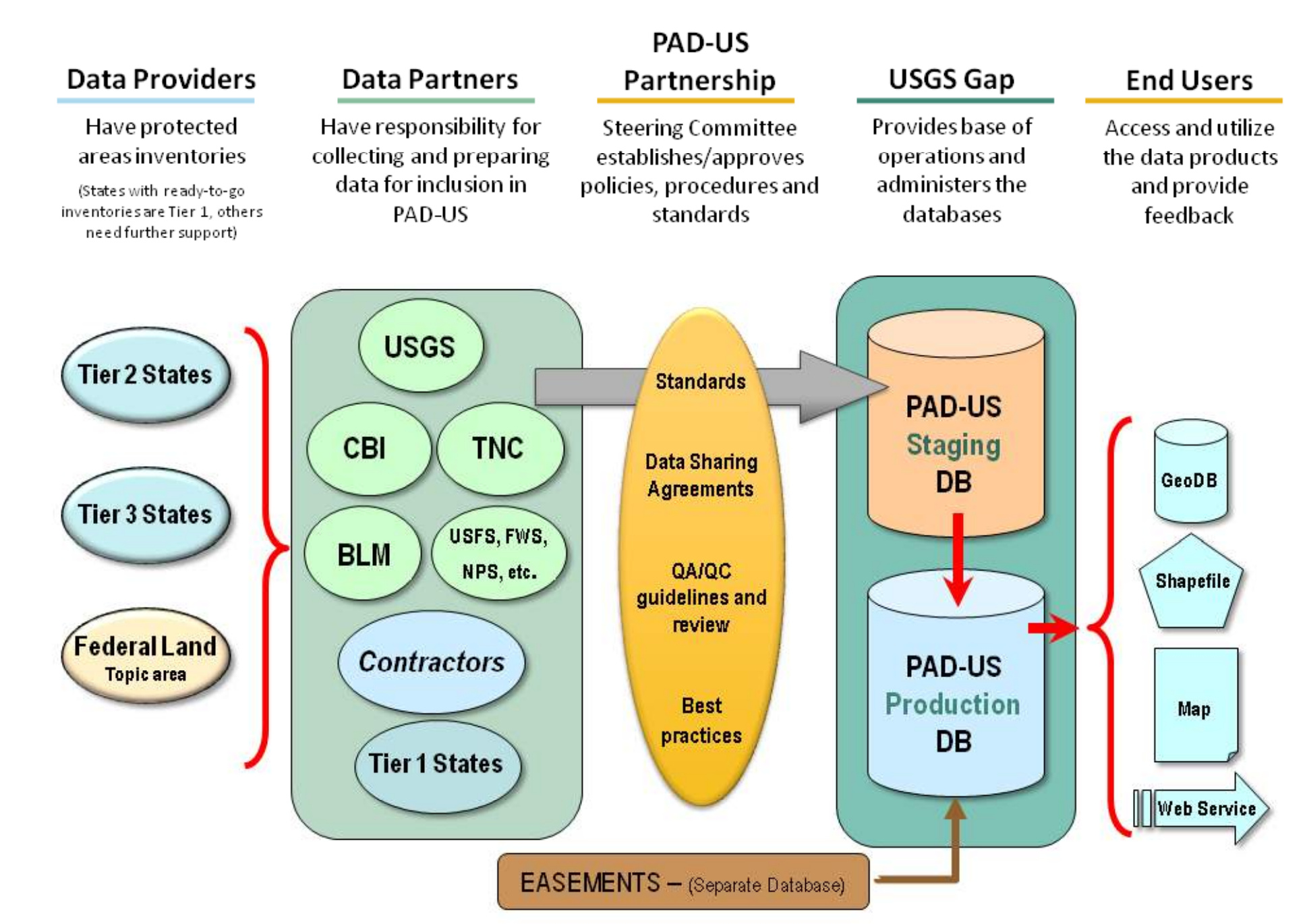
The PAD-US Database

The initial focus of the PAD-US is on **fee-owned lands** that are protected in perpetuity. Efforts to incorporate data on private land **easements** are being undertaken in a parallel effort that will balance the needs of private owners with the importance of knowing where easements are for strategic conservation assessments and acquisition and land use planning.



PAD-US begins with emphasis on lands critical for biodiversity preservation, but at the same time seeks to enhance data on all recreation and other open space resource lands. Additional protected areas data will also be considered in the near future – marine protected areas, lands protected for limited periods of time, and other types of restrictions will be evaluated for inclusion into PAD-US.

The recommended database framework will be published in May 2009. A conceptual model of the proposed data gathering and management process is shown, right.



The PAD-US Partnership

The PAD-US Partnership is the overall policy and coordination organization for the new protected areas inventory. Initially composed of several federal agencies, national non-profit organizations and state representatives, the Partnership will lead the full implementation effort of the PAD-US during 2010 and 2012. A Steering Committee manages the affairs of the Partnership, while a future Advisory Council will provide other agencies and organizations with a means to contribute their expertise to the effort. A Technical Advisory Team will enable those with significant GIS background to offer input. In the late spring of 2009, the Partnership will provide information for those interested in participating at any of these levels.

PAD-US – VERSION 1.0

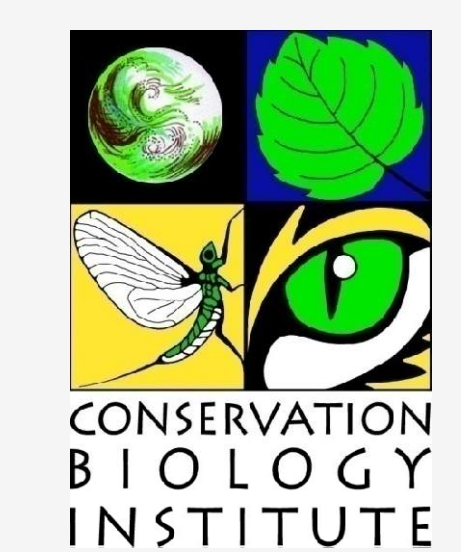
Shown in the map above, the first version of PAD-US was published in April 2009 by the USGS Gap Analysis Program, in collaboration with the PAD-US Partnership. In the future, efforts by USGS, Conservation Biology Institute and others will be focused on improving this single, nationwide data set. The version 1.0 data set is also being used in global conservation assessments by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC).

Protected Areas are lands dedicated to the preservation of biological diversity and to other natural, recreation and cultural uses, and managed for these purposes through legal or other effective means. (adapted from IUCN)

Historically, two efforts have worked on inventories of U.S. protected areas:

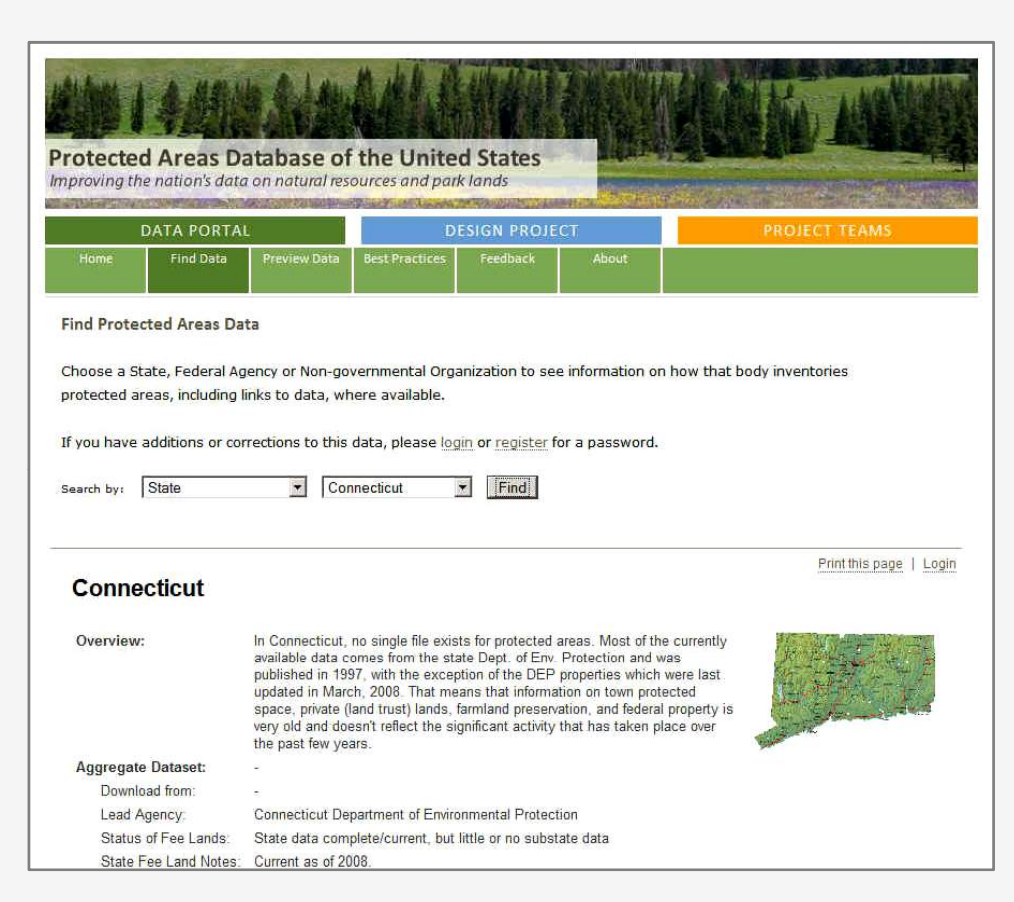


USGS Gap Stewardship Layer – The U.S. Geological Survey Gap Analysis Program supports biodiversity assessment primarily at the federal and state level, with extensive development and analysis of habitat data and the preparation of protected lands data (the Stewardship Layer) with GAP and IUCN scores. For a number of years, this data was gathered state by state, then later by multi-state regions. As of early 2009, USGS data is now part of the national PAD-US.



The Conservation Biology Institute Protected Areas Database (PAD) – First published in 1999, the PAD is a national data inventory that includes conservation rankings (GAP and IUCN scores). It includes most federal and many state lands, but also includes more local holdings in areas where available, and has been released 4 times. Updates have been conducted as funding has been available, and have included extensive efforts to improve accuracy of land boundaries. CBI PAD is now being integrated into PAD-US.

How You Can Help – Improve Our Data Portal



The PAD-US Partnership has developed a web site that can show for each state what protected areas data is available. You can help by adding or reviewing that information for your state or agency – simply go to www.protectedlands.net and choose "FindData" – then follow registration and login information. Choose your state/agency and edit information as appropriate.

NOTE: this is not access to actual GIS data, just information about available data.

What's Next?

The first report of the PAD-US Partnership will be released in May 2009. Included will be the rationale and design of the new inventory, along with a more detailed technical explanation. From May 2009 to February 2010, work will be undertaken to prepare for the full implementation of PAD-US. Updates to PAD-US v1 by the Conservation Biology Institute and the USGS Gap Program will also take place, aiming for a version 1.1 release by the end of 2009. During 2010-2012, in a major project, the Partnership expects to work at many levels to produce a much more complete and robust data inventory. This will include assisting states to improve their data, building the technology infrastructure to manage the data and creating the integration and quality assurance processes needed. Stay in touch with news and participation opportunities at www.protectedlands.net