



Set of Topographic Maps Illustrating Physiographic Features

*The National Atlas of the United States® has launched a new way for users to gain a greater understanding of America's physical geography by using current and historic topographic maps. The new **Set of Topographic Maps Illustrating Physiographic Features** is a novel implementation of an old product idea. It's a simple online viewer that allows you to roam your cursor across maps and images to learn more about selected geographic features and their representation on old and new maps.*

Structural feature



The Original Set of 100

More than 50 years ago, a team of scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) selected a set of 100 topographic maps that included good examples of a wide range of physical features. The team members had a twofold purpose. First, they wanted to help students of physical geography learn more about the geologic evolution of the Nation's natural landscapes. These geologists, cartographers, and geographers also wanted to help map users gain a richer understanding of how topographic maps reveal much more about the land surface than just its shape and elevation.

The "Set of 100 Topo Maps" was sold to schools and individuals at a discounted price. It included out-of-print USGS maps that were unavailable elsewhere and maps that were specially printed without vegetation tints to facilitate terrain interpretation. Also provided was an authoritative physical divisions map published in 1928 by Nevin Fenneman that served to set the regional geographic context for all maps in the set. A full color rendition of Fenneman's map was printed in the 1970 edition of The National Atlas of the United States of America®.

The original Set of 100 Topographic Maps Illustrating Specified Physiographic Features sold out long ago. Intact copies of all maps in the set are difficult to locate, even in the best of map libraries. For these and other reasons, we've begun to generate a digital replacement for the "Set of 100 Topo Maps."

First Steps Towards a New Set

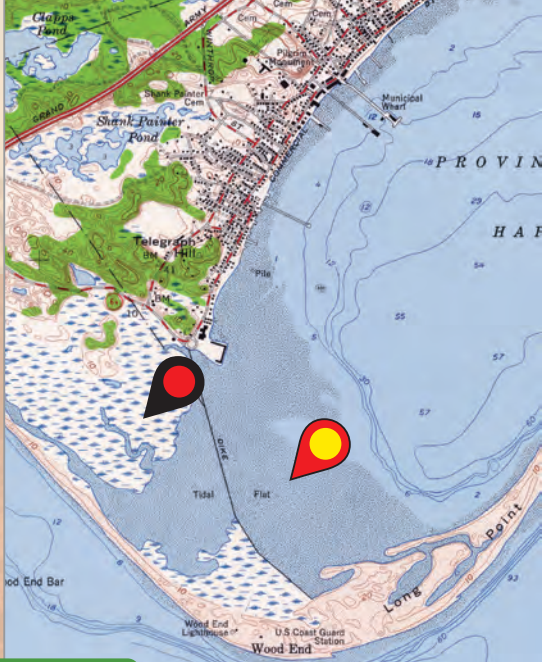
The first maps in the new **Set of Topographic Maps Illustrating Physiographic Features** are online at <http://nationalatlas.gov>

New maps will be added every few months. Work is under way to enhance the viewer's capabilities and improve its user interface. New features that add printing functions, map downloads, and more ways to visualize the natural geography of the United States are in development. Consider this a work in progress. As always, we solicit your interests and needs as well and will be eager to learn more about your experiences and expectations.



Provincetown, Massachusetts

1958 edition Aerial Photography Shaded Relief Select a Feature ...



Physiographic Setting:
Appalachian Highlands division, New England Province, Seaboard Lowland Section - Peneplains below 150 meters (500 feet) post maturely eroded and glaciated.

Prominent Features:
This area at the northern end of Cape Cod, called the Province Lands, is a large protruding compound recurved spit formed entirely of material deposited by longshore currents and the wind. The Atlantic (northern) side of the Province Lands is covered by numerous large sand dunes while the Bay side around Provincetown Harbor contains a mix of smaller stabilized dunes

 **tidal flat**

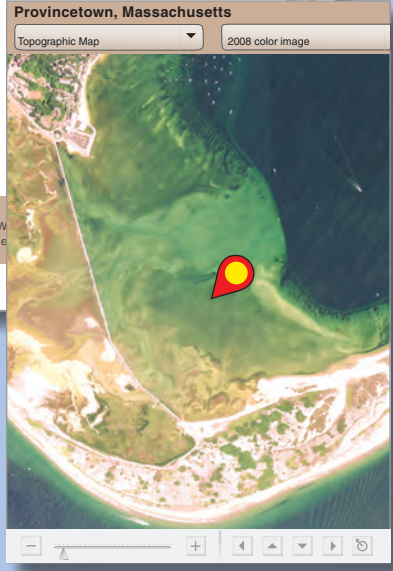
More Information



tidal flat:
These are indicated by a black stipple pattern on blue on the 1972 map. On the air photo, these show as pale green to aqua on the Provincetown Harbor side. The long linear shallow areas along the northern Atlantic coast are submerged longshore bars.

Topographic Map > 1958 edition:
U.S. Geological Survey, Provincetown quadrangle, Mass. [map], 1958. Topo-Bathy, W Series (Topographic). N42000-W7007.5. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior.

Hide Markers



Something Old, Something New

Did you know that the USGS is scanning all of the historic topographic maps it has made since 1879? Have you seen the organization's newest offering, the US Topo map? We're taking advantage of both of these endeavors as we fashion this new product. US Topo maps are included in our set whenever they're ready. These will be available for half of the conterminous United States by the end of 2010. Historic maps are used extensively.

Will the new National Atlas product include the same 100 maps as the original set? That's not likely. There were only 48 States when the first set was compiled, and we will ensure that examples of geographic features found only in Alaska and Hawaii are represented in maps gathered for the new set. We also won't promise to generate 100 maps. However, we will commit to offering an online edition that is richer and more useful than the original paper collection.