Downloading NED (Elevation) Data

NED data can be downloaded from the National Map Seamless Server:

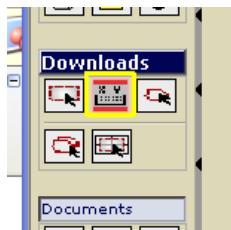http://seamless.usgs.gov/website/seamless/viewer.htm

The viewer seems to work the best using IE, once the viewer starts up look at the right hand side:
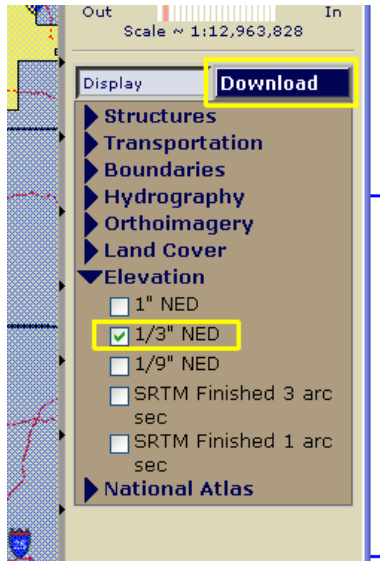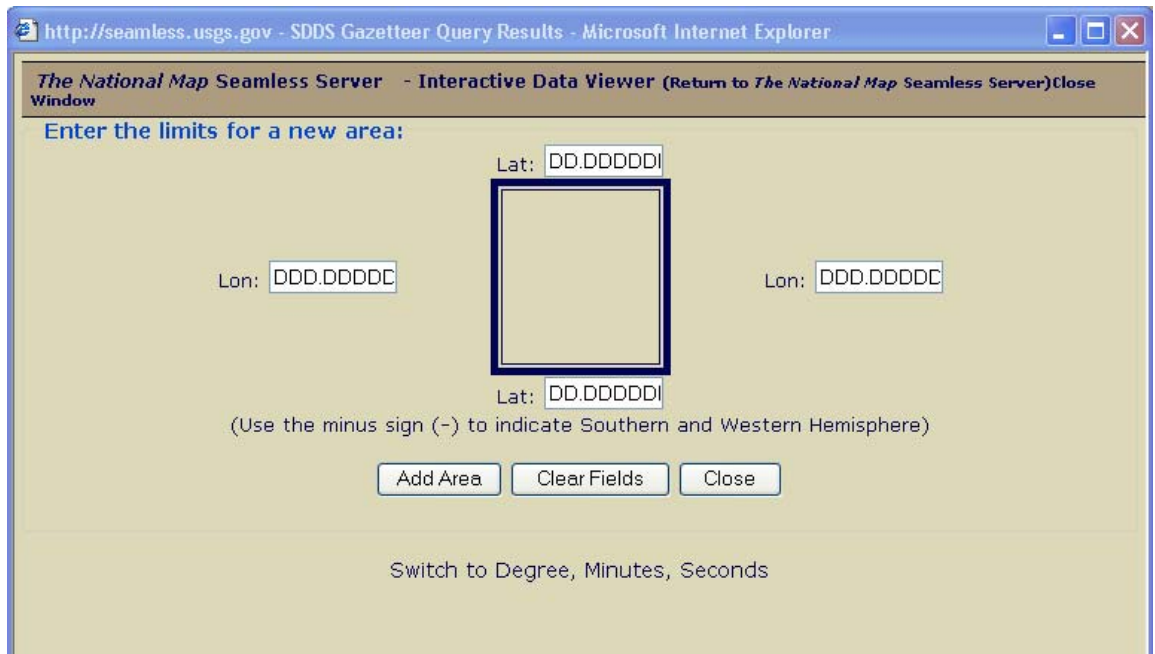

Click on the Download tab and make sure that 1/3" (10m) NED is the only item selected.

Now look on the left hand side at the Downloads section:

Click on the second icon, "Define Download Area By Coordinates" and the following dialog will open:

The dialog will initially open with fields for Degrees, Minutes, Seconds - click on the bottom link to swith to Decimal Degrees (as shown in the figure).

Here you enter the coordinates for an area (**remember that east and west values have to be negative**) and click on the "Add Area" button. The system will break the area into chunks and present Download buttons. Once you hit a Download button the system will work on extracting the data and eventually present you with an actual download link - click that and download the data.

Some Notes
- The system will let you select area via the UI but it won't let you select the whole state (there is a MB limit), therefore using the coordinate entry dialog is the best way to get complete coverage (with no gaps or overlaps).
- I've found - for a typical size state - that using 100k quad areas is a good balance between area covered and number of tiles to download per area defined. But any size works as long as you can keep track of it all…
- The server can be really slow during prime time, performance is much better late at night or early in the morning.
- Some states, for example Utah, have agencies that have this data available via FTP which is MUCH, MUCH easier. So before you start on a state do some Googling….