

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group, Meeting Minutes*

7 January 2003, 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM, NASA HQ Room 5K35

Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

**approved by co-chairs*

Co-Chairs: Rosalind Helz, USGS
Steve Ambrose, NASA

Attendees:

USGS

John Pallister, USGS
Rosalind Helz, USGS

NASA

Craig Dobson, NASA HQ
John LaBrecque, NASA HQ
Steve Ambrose, NASA HQ

NSF

Rick Fragaszy, NSF

USDOT

K. Thirumalai, USDOT/RSPA

NOAA/NESDIS

Christopher Lewis, NOAA/NESDIS
Michael Hales, NOAA/NESDIS
Nathalie Valette-Silver, NOAA/NESDIS
(by phone)
Pablo Clemente Colon, NOAA/NESDIS
(by phone)
Peter Colohan, NOAA/GRS

US Forest Service

Bill Belton

VISITING

David Applegate, American Geological
Institute

I. Call to Order

Rosalind Helz called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM and led a round of participant introductions.

II. Presentations

A briefing on the Senate Natural Hazard Caucus
David Applegate, of the American Geological Institute. (Slides distributed.)

Following his presentation on the history, purpose, and sponsorship of the caucus, David Applegate led a question and answer session about the format and nature of Hazard Caucus briefings. Such a briefing should be about an hour and half long and include approximately five presentations, three to ten minutes in length, with strong, graphically interesting PowerPoint presentations. Given the current Caucus calendar, an April/May time frame would be available for a brief by RSAWG members on Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) to the Senate Natural Hazards Caucus.

III. Discussion of Possible SAR Briefing for the Senate Natural Hazard Caucus (Summary)

After several clarifying questions, the group discussed the appropriateness of providing Senate staffers with a basic education in the nature of SAR and its applications for hazard management. Several participants expressed concern about the appearance of lobbying, and David assured the group that educational briefings of this nature, that do not advocate specific legislative measures, are appropriate and common, often involving experts from federal agencies. Questions were also raised about reaching the House side of the Hill, and David indicated an approach to the House Wind Hazard Caucus might be appropriate in the future, but would require a separate effort.

The discussion then turned to the substance and approach of the briefing: what aspects of SAR should be presented, what features emphasized, what format. The group agreed that the brief should emphasize the hazard applications of SAR (given the venue) and that many technological applications of SAR could be presented in a hazard context. The group also discussed the absence of civilian U.S. SAR capability as a technology gap that should be highlighted in the briefing. Further, the group discussed including members of academia and the user community in the briefing. Jim Davis from the California Division of Mines and Geology was mentioned as possibly familiar with a range of SAR and InSAR applications. The group concluded that a Senate Hazard Caucus briefing would be both appropriate and beneficial and requested that David Applegate inquire about arranging one, and he agreed to proceed with exploring the idea with the Caucus.

IV. Discussion of SAR White Paper (Summary)

Steve Ambrose introduced the topic of the SAR white paper by suggesting that it should be complete in time to distribute at the Hazard Caucus briefing, or at least a one/two-page summary should be made available. The group agreed that this was a good goal, and John LaBrecque reaffirmed his commitment to revise the initial draft and distribute it to the writing team identified at the November meeting. On the substance of the paper, working from the initial draft presented at the November meeting, it was suggested that the “carbon-cycle” section be transformed into “fuel-loads and wildfire” discussion to keep the hazard focus. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers could be asked to develop a section on soil moisture and river/coastal flooding. John Pallister raised the idea of including a section on SAR’s ability to assess quantitatively the state of natural resources, such as water, forest density, and earth-surface deformation. Rosalind Helz suggested that such applications could be mentioned in the course of describing the hazards applications, as essential parts of evaluating the SAR data.

A general discussion followed about rounding out the writing group. Bill Belton indicated that interest at the Forest Service in SAR was research-focused and not as high a priority as LIDAR, for example, but said he would inquire further if USFS would like to participate in the paper. Pablo Clemente Colon suggested that Don Klein and or Cheryl Bertoia of the National Ice Center be brought in to address snow and ice related issues. Rosalind Helz raised a cautionary note about keeping the paper focused and limiting length of the text to five pages.

Actions:

- John LaBrecque will email the writing group within the week to begin the re-drafting process.
- Rosalind Helz will provide a verbal progress report at the January 9 SDR meeting.

V. Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet again on February 11, 2003 from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM at NASA HQ, room TBA.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.