

**NOAA ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR COMMERCIAL REMOTE SENSING
(ACCRES)
OPEN SESSION MEETING SUMMARY
March 10, 2006**

Open Session

The NOAA Advisory Committee for Commercial Remote Sensing (ACCRES) was convened on March 10, 2006, at 1:00 PM in the Ronald Reagan Building, International Gateway Room, Washington, DC.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

Kevin O'Connell, ACCRES Chair, thanked Committee members and members of the public for attending the eighth meeting of ACCRES. Kay Weston introduced the Committee members and moderated the session.

Committee Members Present:

Kevin O'Connell, ACCRES Chair, Center for Intelligence Research and Analysis
Karen Schuckman, ACCRES Vice-Chair, American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS)
Christian Kessler, Department of State
Sande Webster, Director for National Intelligence
James Lewis, Center for Strategic and International Studies
Ray Williamson, George Washington University (GWU)
Cary Ludtke, Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corporation (representing Dave Taylor)
Michael Luther, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
Jack Dangermond, ESRI, Inc.
John Curlander, Vexcel Corporation
Bill Schuster, GeoEye (representing Matthew O'Connell)
Walter Scott, DigitalGlobe (representing Jill Smith)
Kass Green, The Alta Vista Company

Presiding Staff of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

Greg Withee, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Satellite and Information Services
Mary Kicza, Deputy Assistant Administrator, NOAA Satellite and Information Services
Kay Weston, Chief, Satellite Activities Branch, NOAA Satellite and Information Services, International and Interagency Affairs Office
Glenn Tallia, NOAA General Counsel

Update on Landsat Mission

Gene Whitney of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) briefed the committee on the status of the Landsat Mission. He noted two goals for the mission: ensuring near-term data continuity and ensuring long-term data continuity. He went on to explain that it is the goal of the U.S. Government to transition the Landsat program from a series of independently planned missions to a sustained operational program funded and managed by a U.S. Government operational agency or agencies, an international consortium, and/or a commercial partnership. He noted that this program would be a “national asset,” operating as a national capability, not an agency capability. He explained that an interim report will be done by June 1, 2006, outlining the process for the transition into an operational program. The final report will be completed by December of 2007. He hopes that the system will be operational no later than 2010.

An OSTP working group consists of NASA, NOAA, Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), with outside contributors, such as the National Academy of Science brought in as necessary.

Dr. Whitney noted that a case must be made for establishing the need for this system, possibly using USGEO as a tool to demonstrate the program’s societal benefits. A communications strategy for the leadership team has been developed, which includes Congressional briefings.

Ray Williamson, of GWU, questioned the economic benefits of the system. Dr. Whitney explained that scientific benefits also have economic impacts. He went on to talk about the program’s intangible benefits such as enhancing homeland security and maintaining the health of the industry.

ACCRES Chair Kevin O’Connell noted that there seems to be very few benefits for society and asked whether any cost-benefit studies have been done. Dr. Whitney pointed out that analytical rather than anecdotal information would be better to present when making a case for the need for the system.

Kass Green, The Alta Vista Company, asked about how the commercial entities, state/local Governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) would be able to contribute to the report. Dr. Whitney responded that although the first draft will be done by a group of Federal agencies, public workshops will be held so that other groups can weigh in.

John Curlander, President of Vexcel, asked if there is a “data policy.” Dr. Whitney responded that all data will comply with Earth observation data standards and policies.

Satellite Data Archive Issues

Greg Snyder of the USGS reviewed The Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992 and explained how the subsequent successful launches of U.S. commercial remote sensing satellites provide the opportunity to preserve valuable remote sensing assets for future U.S. generations. As part of the USGS's National Satellite Land Remote Sensing Data Archive (NSLRSDA), these records will increase NSLRSDA's vitality and relevance to the Nation and to the global community.

Mr. Snyder discussed the draft guidelines that provide recommended procedures to facilitate the transfer of data from licensed U.S. remote sensing space data providers to the U.S. Government. He explained that sample formats will be given to vendors during site visits. The final guidelines will be sent to NOAA in a few weeks.

NOAA's Office of Space Commercialization

Ed Morris, Director of NOAA's Office of Space Commercialization (OSC) gave a briefing on the background and objectives of OSC, highlighting goals and near term actions. Mr. Morris explained that OSC was established with Department of Commerce (DOC) in 1988 and was then moved to Technology Administration in 1998 as part of the Technology Administration Act. In 1994, Congress moved OSC funding to NOAA.

Mr. Morris stated that the goals of OSC are:

- Foster an economic and policy environment that ensures the international competitiveness of the U.S. commercial space industry
- Enhance support to all NOAA FY06-FY11 Strategic Plan Goals
- Transition to "go-to" office for all DOC space issues
- Continue DOC National Space-Based PNT Coordination Office Support
- Industry POC for USG policy, access (requirements) issues
- USG POC for industry entrepreneurial commercial space capabilities

Mr. Morris described OSC's broad engagement responsibilities. These include supporting NOAA, becoming the leader on space commerce, and becoming an industry point of contact for space companies, entrepreneurs, and GPS and remote sensing companies. He stated that remote sensing would be one of OSC's prime areas of interest.

New Licensed Remote Sensing Space Systems

Kay Weston introduced two new commercial remote sensing licensees, who each gave a brief presentation on the NOAA licensing process.

Dr. Ashok Deshmukh, President and CEO of Technica, Inc., thanked NOAA for all the help that was provided as Technica obtained its NOAA license. He explained that Technica plans to have four satellites in operation by 2010. Vendors and customers will come from around the world but have yet to be determined. The company's mission control center will be based in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Bill Shuster, Chief Operating Officer of GeoEye, thanked NOAA for issuing the three IKONOS licenses to ORBIMAGE in such a timely matter. He also spoke on the status of the ORBIMAGE/Space Imaging merger, stating that because of the merger, GeoEye is now the largest commercial remote sensing company in the Nation. Mr. Schuster pointed out that combining Space Imaging and ORBIMAGE was good for each of the companies and for all the customers. OrbView imagery is downlinked to Dulles and processed there and in St. Louis, Missouri and all IKONOS operations are conducted from Thornton, Colorado. There are no plans to relocate any primary operations in the foreseeable future.

Global Marketing Insights (GMI) Aerial and Remote Sensing Study

Shawana Johnson, of GMI, detailed the results of the aerial remote sensing study which was done in 2004 and 2005. Her company conducted an online survey and personal interviews within eight project sectors: aerial film, aerial digital, aerial sensor, satellite, commercial end user, hardware/software, academic, and government. The survey was done in the United States, Canada, and Europe. The final results are listed in a 74-page report which can be found at NOAA's website, www.licensing.noaa.gov.

The survey went live online in February 15, 2005, and was live until August 15, 2005. 1547 surveys were completed online, and 250 personal interviews were conducted.

Dr. Johnson explained that national defense and homeland security are the number one issues of the political/economic/environmental trends in the satellite sector. In discussing other highlights of the government sector portion of the survey, Dr. Johnson noted that state, local, federal defense, and federal civilian segments comprised the largest response to the survey, with 30 percent responding. Of these, 46 percent were from the United States.

Because the Aerial and Remote Sensing database generated by the online survey was quite comprehensive, several Committee members asked if NOAA could make the database available to the public for further analysis and data mining. NOAA took an action item to check the terms of the contract and determine what, if any, information could be made publicly available.

NOAA Update

Tahara Moreno of NOAA's Commercial Remote Sensing Licensing (CRSL) program gave an update on NOAA's revised regulations, revised Charter, and the Commercial Remote Sensing Satellite Symposium. She noted that the current ACCRES Charter expires on May 3, 2006, and NOAA has recommended that the Committee be continued and renewed for an additional two years. The new Charter will be amended to provide the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere the authority to reappoint ACCRES Members for as many successive terms as deemed necessary and appropriate.

Ms. Moreno highlighted the proposed changes to NOAA's regulations, which are mostly administrative. Public comments have been received, and these regulations have been submitted to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for final interagency review. NOAA anticipates clearance to publish the final regulations before the end of March, 2006.

Ms. Moreno noted that NOAA will hold its second Commercial Remote Sensing Satellite Symposium on September 13-15, 2006. She outlined the proposed panel discussions and the expected outcomes of this Symposium. Among these outcomes are:

- Clear communication of international and national policies
- CRSL marketplace assessment
- Future trends and challenges
- Recommendations on how to improve government and industry relationships
- Civil and defense department representatives examining CRS policy and needs.

Public Comment Period:

In response to a request to summarize the main points discussed in closed morning session, the ACCRES Vice-chair, Karen Schuckman, described the morning meeting as free flowing, frank, and open discussions between the Committee and the invited guests. She explained that the 24-hour licensing condition was discussed in great detail, and an ACCRES Subcommittee would look further into the issue.

Kevin O'Connell concluded the meeting by thanking all participants for an interesting and productive day.

The meeting was adjourned by Kevin O'Connell at 3:30 PM.