



October 11, 2011

From the Desk of Mary Kicza

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Dear Colleagues,

October is going to be a momentous month for NOAA and NESDIS. First, we look forward to the launch of a new polar-orbiting environmental satellite (NASA's NPP on October 27, 2011) whose data will enable NOAA to continue issuing accurate forecasts and provide advance warnings for severe weather. NPP is the precursor to NOAA's next generation of polar-orbiting satellites. NOAA satellites are the foundation on which the Nation's forecasts, warnings, and environmental observational systems are based. NESDIS observations are key national infrastructure that help protect lives and property and add immense value to the national economy. Click [here](#) to check out a video on how NOAA is preparing for NPP.



Second, we welcome two new senior level officials to NESDIS - - Tahara Dawkins as our new Director of Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs Office and Dr. Catrina Purvis as our new Chief Information Officer (CIO). Both bring a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and experience to our organization. Please join me in welcoming Tahara and Catrina in their new roles at NESDIS. They are profiled in this month's issue.

Finally, we celebrate our National Oceanographic Data Center's new [Facebook page](#) and the Office of Satellite and Product Operation's new presence on [Twitter](#) - - both which debuted this month. These fora give us a new way to showcase the innovative science and achievements of our talented NESDIS employees. It is always a pleasure to share with you the noteworthy events that happen in our organization and there are many this month that make it special.

Highest regards,



NPP Launch Update

Next week, the long-anticipated NPOESS Preparatory Project (NPP) satellite will roar into orbit, lifting the hopes of NOAA scientists that a stream of new data, which will enable them to continue making life-saving forecasts for severe weather days in advance, is close behind.

This Month in History

On October 11, 1984, space shuttle Challenger astronaut Kathryn Sullivan became the first U.S. woman to walk in space.

NPP is a NASA Earth-observing satellite, with five new instruments, developed in close partnership with NOAA. NASA will use NPP as a research mission, while NOAA will use the data for short and long-term weather forecasting, climate and environmental monitoring.

NPP will orbit Earth every 102 minutes, flying 512 miles above the surface, capturing data from the land, oceans, and atmosphere.

Polar satellites are crucial for developing forecasts several days in advance. This year, data from polar-orbiting satellites helped NOAA – five days in advance -- warn of the dangerous conditions that triggered deadly tornado outbreaks in Alabama and parts of the Southeast.

NPP data will eventually replace data from the NOAA-19 satellite in the 'afternoon orbit,' meaning the satellite passes over the U.S. during full daylight hours. NPP is the bridge that links NOAA's current polar-orbiting satellites to the next generation of advanced spacecraft called the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS).

"NPP is a big deal for America," said Mary Kicza, Assistant Administrator for NOAA's Satellite and Information Service (NESDIS). "We need data from NPP to inform the public about what's coming down the pike and how to plan for it appropriately." Kicza added that the success of NPP is a credit to the long, successful partnership between NOAA and NASA.

NASA developed the NPP spacecraft and NOAA provided several key instruments for the spacecraft. NPP will test how these instruments perform before they are deployed on the JPSS series satellites. Data

from NPP, like all other U.S. weather satellite data, will be processed and distributed from NOAA's Satellite Operations Facility in Suitland, MD.

To find out how NOAA is preparing for NPP, click [here](#).



Tahara Dawkins

NESDIS Welcomes Tahara Dawkins

NOAA is pleased to welcome aboard Tahara Dawkins, who has been selected to serve as the Director of NOAA's Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs Office. Tahara has 10 years of commercial remote sensing policy experience. Her most recent role was at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) where she spent three years focusing on the security and counterintelligence implications of the Government's use of commercial satellite imagery, as well as policy development and implementation for NGA, the DoD, and the Intelligence Community. Before joining NGA in 2008, Tahara worked for six years for NOAA/NESDIS as a Senior Licensing Officer in NESDIS' Commercial Remote Sensing Licensing Regulatory Affairs Office where she was instrumental in the development and implementation of CRSL regulations and policies.

Needless to say, Tahara has a deep love for commercial remote sensing and NOAA. She will bring a keen intelligence and an energetic approach to NOAA's regulatory responsibilities in the Commercial Remote Sensing domain.

To learn more about the Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs Office, click [here](#).



Dr. Catrina Purvis

Dr. Catrina Purvis Becomes New NESDIS CIO

We are pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Catrina Purvis as the NESDIS Chief Information Officer (CIO). Catrina is a United States Air Force (USAF) veteran with over 15 years of Agency-level leadership experiences in information technology (IT) architecture, IT security, systems development, acquisitions, operations and maintenance, and program management.

Catrina was most recently selected to be the NESDIS Deputy CIO early this year and has filled the role of Acting CIO since March 1, 2011. In her short tenure, she has made significant positive contributions to ensuring the security posture of critical NESDIS high impact systems including NPP, GOES R, and multiple international level agreements for foreign data acquisition/exchange. She has additionally initiated a long over-due infrastructure upgrade for our Headquarters local area network (LAN), and is poised to lead NESDIS through the upcoming migration to Unified Messaging Service.

Prior to her federal service with NESDIS, Catrina served as a Senior Manager Consultant to the NESDIS OCIO from the Noblis Earth Observation Systems Cyber Security/Information Assurance Group. Her work with NOAA and other Federal Agencies in this capacity dates to 2001. In the Air Force, she was a Communications and Computer Systems Officer. Her

last assignment was at the USAF Office of Special Investigations as Chief of the Computer Operations Division.

Catrina holds a Bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University, a dual major Master's degree in Acquisitions and Procurement, and Computer Information Resources from Webster University in St. Louis, and a Juris Doctor degree with a Technology Law emphasis from George Mason University Law School.



Changyong Cao

NOAA Establishes New Center to Improve Satellite Data Quality

A team of experts at NOAA have established a new center to fine-tune data from NOAA environmental satellites and others from around the world, to improve the forecast skill of NOAA's weather, climate and ocean models. The new National Calibration Center (NCC) is located in the NOAA facility in College Park, MD.

The top goal of the NCC, which falls under NOAA's Satellite and Information Service's Center for Satellite Applications and Research, is to set up stricter quality controls on the satellite data from NOAA's spacecraft and to make them consistent with the calibration standards used for NASA research and international satellites.

Calibrating satellite data centrally maximizes the benefits for all users by providing a single integrated, trustworthy source of well-calibrated satellite data. It removes the burden of having each user understand a multitude of instrument specifics, orbits, and scientific subtleties associated with various satellite

measurements.

The NCC will improve the accuracy of data coming from the various environmental measuring instruments by removing the differences -- called biases -- between the instruments. The better calibrated satellite observations of the Earth will improve predictions of changing atmospheric and ocean conditions.

"Never before has there been a dedicated effort to simplify the measurements from a broad range of satellite instruments," said Mary Kicza, Assistant Administrator for NOAA's Satellite and Information Service (NESDIS). "Having the ability to leverage our partners' satellites increases the number and quality of observations our scientists can use, and for a much lower cost than building more satellites."

Already in 2011, there have been 10 weather events in the United States with damage costs of at least \$1 billion each. NOAA's forecasters credit the imagery and data from NOAA satellites in the outlooks and warnings for the tornado outbreaks, floods, snowstorms, wildfires, and heat waves.

"NOAA is committed to providing the best possible satellite data and putting standards in place to ensure the highest quality measurements are available from the satellites we use today and in the future," added Kicza.

NCC Director Changyong Cao (see picture) said, "our NESDIS leadership recognizes that calibration is the centerpiece of data quality assurance and is part of the core competency of any satellite program." Stay tuned for more innovative initiatives from our new center. Currently, NESDIS is working with NIST and NASA to form a Science Steering Committee for NCC.

NESDIS Milestones

New Hire: Laila Yates; August 28, 2011; CWIP
Budget Analyst, GOES-R Program Office; from Federal
Emergency Management Agency

New Hire: Antonio Rouse; September 12, 2011; IT
Specialist (Network Services), JPSS IDPS Network
Manager; OSPO/MOD/Information Technology
Services Branch

New Hire: Tyshell Smith; September 12, 2011; IT
Specialist (Network Services), JPSS C3 Network
Manager; OSPO/MOD/Information Technology
Services Branch

New Hire: Michael Maldony; September 12, 2011; IT
Specialist (Policy & Planning), USMCC Operations
Manager; OSPO/SPSD/Direct Services Branch

New Hire: Shiju Nair; September, 26, 2011;
Aerospace Engineer, JPSS ACS Spacecraft Engineer;
OSPO/MOD/Engineering Branch

New Hire: Melissa Zweng; October 9, 2011;
Oceanographer; NESDIS/NODC; from private industry

Transfer: George Riefler to FAA; September 22, 2011;
Electronic Technician, OSPO/WCDAS/Operations
Branch (6 years of service at WCDAS)

Transfer: James Morris from EPA; September 25,
2011; CLASS Systems Engineer

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 16-19, 2011

GEOINT 2011 Symposium
San Antonio, TX

October 20-21, 2011

7th GOES Users' Conference
Birmingham, AL

October 27, 2011

NPOESS Preparatory Project (NPP) satellite launch.
NPP will fly a suite of advanced-technology remote sensing instruments that include:

- The Visible/Infrared Imager Radiometer Suite (VIIRS)
- The Cross-track Infrared Sounder (CrIS)
- The Advanced Technology Microwave Sounder (ATMS)
- The Ozone Mapping and Profiler Suite (OMPS)
- The Clouds and the Earth Radiant Energy System (CERES)

Vandenberg Air Force Base, Lompoc, CA

December 5-9, 2011

American Geophysical Union (AGU)
San Francisco, CA

January 4-6, 2012

The Federation of Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP) Winter Meeting
Theme: Connections Through Collaboration- Engaging Community Throughout the Data Life
Washington D.C.

January 22-26, 2012

American Meteorological Society (AMS) Annual Meeting
Theme: Technology in Research and Operations—How We Got Here and Where We're Going

New Orleans, LA

RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE

NPP-related

[NPP Kicks Off New Earth Observation Era \(Aviation Week\)](#)

[NPP Climate Satellite on Track for Oct 27 Launch \(SpaceNews\)](#)

[NASA Set to Launch Next Weather Satellite \(Alabama Live\)](#)

[NASA preparing for Earth-observing satellite launch \(Capital Weather Gang - The Washington Post\)](#)

[New weather, climate satellite to launch \(MSNBC.com\)](#)



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