

Monthly Review: April 2012

The American Geosciences Institute's monthly review of geosciences and policy goes out to the leadership of AGI's member societies, members of the AGI Geoscience Policy Committee, and others as part of a continuing effort to improve communications about the role of geoscience in policy. The current monthly review and archived monthly reviews are all available online. Subscribe to receive the Geopolity Monthly Review by email.

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1. Congressional Visits Day in September – Join Us in DC

Geoscientists are invited to join other geoscientists from our member societies for workshops and visits with congressional members and committees in September 2012. Decision makers need to hear from geoscientists. Become a citizen geoscientist and join many of your colleagues for a workshop at AGU headquarters followed by a day conducting visits with members of Congress or congressional staff on Capitol Hill to speak on the importance of geoscience research, development, and education.

September 11-12, 2012

Geosciences Congressional Visits Day (GEO-CVD), an event specifically geared towards geoscientists.

Please contact Linda Rowan by replying to this email or send an email to govt@agiweb.org for more information or to sign-up.

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2. Geoscientists Support Federal Funding on Capitol Hill

As part of the 17th annual Science – Engineering – Technology Congressional Visits Day (SET-CVD), 14 geoscientists from across the country came to Washington, DC to raise awareness among policymakers about the value of and the continued need for geoscience research, development, and education.

Scientists and engineers from the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists (AEG), American Geophysical Union (AGU), and the Geological Society of America (GSA) came to Washington, DC as part of the two-day annual event. They attended one day of workshops and educational briefings on federal science agencies, the budget process and Congress, followed by a day of meetings with members of Congress and their staff. Many other scientists, engineers, researchers, educators, and technology executives joined the geoscientists in promoting the core message: “Economic Recovery through Science and Engineering Research.”

At a morning workshop at AGU headquarters, the geoscientists were briefed on communicating with policymakers, congressional processes, the status of geoscience funding, and life on the Hill. At a seminar at AAAS headquarters in the afternoon, all SET-CVD participants were briefed on the President’s budget request for science and engineering. The Stand with Science movement, which was started by graduate students at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, gave the participants a presentation of their outreach efforts.

The climax of the first day was the Science, Engineering, and Technology Working Group Reception in the Rayburn House Office Building. Twelve exhibitors from industry to academia showcased innovative research to members of Congress and their staffs. The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), AGU, and GSA co-sponsored an exhibit for the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Volcano Hazards Program. USGS brought educational material and expertise to Members of Congress and their staff who were very interested in the instruments and facilities used by the program. 2012 marks the 100-year anniversary of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO) and staffers from Hawaiian congressional offices were particularly interested in speaking with the USGS geoscientists.

The evening reception included an award ceremony to honor House Science, Space and Technology Committee Member Randy Hultgren (R-IL) and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Member Mark Udall (D-CO) for their continued support of science. The annual award is given in honor of the late Representative George E. Brown, Jr. a long time member of Congress who was a champion for science and technology over a long and distinguished career in Congress.

The next day AGI, AGU, and GSA staff members and the SET-CVD participants visited 38 congressional offices and had seven personal visits with five senators and two members of the House of Representatives. Participants told stories about how federally funded geoscience research and development has benefitted their local communities by adding jobs, providing safe and clean natural resources, and mitigating the risk of economic and human loss as a result of natural hazards.

Visit the AGI webpage for SETCVD and make plans now to attend next year's 18th Annual Science – Engineering - Technology Congressional Visits Day. If you are interested in participating, please contact AGI Geoscience Policy by email: govt@agiweb.org.

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3. Obama Creates Hydraulic Fracturing Working Group

On April 13, 2012 President Barack Obama signed an executive order creating a working group of more than twelve agencies to promote the safe domestic production of natural gas through unconventional techniques such as hydraulic fracturing. The working group, chaired by the director of the Domestic Policy Council, will coordinate policy efforts among agencies.

Hydraulic fracturing is a technique to extract natural gas and oil out of relatively impermeable shale formations by injecting fluids at high pressure to fracture the shale and allow the hydrocarbons to migrate to the borehole for efficient extraction. Shale gas extraction via hydraulic fracturing is booming throughout the U.S. because natural gas provides a relatively clean and inexpensive alternative to coal. As shale gas production has ramped up, concerns have been raised about environmental problems, such as contamination of water wells and triggered seismicity. Although industry and the government have noted that any potential problems might be related to wastewater injection rather than hydraulic fracturing, the public does not appreciate the distinction and considers the problems associated with “fracking” in general.

In addition to the working group, the Obama Administration requested \$45 million to study hydraulic fracturing in fiscal year 2013 at the United States Geological Survey, the Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Later this year the Bureau of Land Management is expected to release a set of rules regulating the practice of hydraulic fracturing on public lands.

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4. Administration Announces Big Data Initiative

Six federal agencies including the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) joined the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to announce the new Big Data Research and Development Initiative. There will be more than \$200 million in commitments across the six departments and agencies to improve the cyberinfrastructure and techniques to store, access, organize, and acquire information from large amounts of data. In 2012, NSF will be awarding the first round of grants to support EarthCube, an initiative to support integrated data management structures in the geosciences. DOE will provide \$25 million in funding to establish the Scalable Data Management, Analysis and Visualization (SDAV) Institute. Based at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the SDAV Institute will develop tools to manage and visualize data on DOE’s supercomputers. USGS has announced its fiscal year 2012 working groups for the John Wesley Powell Center for Analysis and Synthesis. Working groups at the Powell center collaborate on Earth systems science projects with state-of-the-art computing and facilities.

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5. OSTP Releases Interagency Public Access Coordination Report to Congress

As required by Section 103 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has submitted to Congress a report detailing the progress made toward coordinating federal science agency policies related to open access of federally funded scientific research. The report includes summaries of two Requests for Information issued in 2009 on public access policies and 2011 on data sharing and public access for scholarly publications. The report also updates agencies’ progress in crafting open access policies.

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6. White House Releases Women and Girls in Science Report

The Office of Management and Budget and the Economics and Statistics Administration within the Department of Commerce worked together to create a new report entitled *Women in America* in cooperation with the Administration’s Council on Women and Girls. The report includes a section on education and details the status of women in obtaining degrees and training in science fields. More girls graduate from high school than boys and more women attend college and attain graduate school degrees than men. In college and beyond, fewer women pursue degrees in science than men.

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7. Appropriations Update for April 2012

Throughout April of 2012, the Appropriations Committees in the House and the Senate continued to prepare appropriations bills for discretionary spending for fiscal year (FY) 2013. The House completed bills for science, energy and water programs (H.R.5326 and H.R.5325) while the Senate completed bills for agriculture, science, energy and water programs (S.2375, S.2323 and S.2465). Most science agencies, except for those within the Department of Energy (DOE), would receive about the same funding as last year with small changes in programs to reflect congressional priorities. The boldest change came from the Senate science appropriators, who called for the transfer of spending for Earth-observing satellites from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The Senate has little faith in NOAA’s abilities to manage its satellites and calls for NASA to take over.

House appropriators would reduce spending for science within the Department of Energy (DOE) with cuts for climate science and other basic geoscience-related research compared to fiscal year 2012 (FY12) for Basic Energy Sciences and Biological and Environmental Sciences within the Office of Science. The House remains opposed to the transfer of gas hydrates research from Office of Fossil Energy to the Office of Science and recommends against further development of the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory (DUSEL).

Senate appropriators would slightly increase spending for science within DOE compared to FY12 and the two chambers will need to compromise on amounts ranging between tens to hundreds of millions of dollars for their slightly different priorities. Far greater debate and controversy will likely ensue over nuclear waste disposal from nuclear power plants. House appropriators support progress on licensing Yucca Mountain as a long-term geologic repository for nuclear waste and call for \$25 million in FY13, while Senate appropriators support a “pilot program for a consolidated storage facility” with no funding for Yucca Mountain. The American Geosciences Institute provides an overview of appropriations for geosciences research and education with summaries of some hearings.

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8. Ranking Member Johnson Introduces STEM Education Legislation

On April 27, Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee introduced the Broadening Participation in STEM Education Act (H.R. 4483). The bill would require the National Science Foundation (NSF) to award grants to colleges and universities to implement or expand reforms in undergraduate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education to recruit minority students who are underrepresented in STEM fields.

The grants would target reforms that include mentoring programs, faculty development programs, outreach to minority students, and efforts to increase the participation of minorities in research. As of 2011, only about 8 percent of 24 years-olds from underrepresented minorities had obtained a bachelor’s degree in a science or engineering discipline. Less than one percent of tenure-track science and engineering faculty members at the nation’s top 100 research universities are from underrepresented groups.

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9. Senators Introduce Bipartisan Helium Stewardship Bill

Senators Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and John Barrasso (R-WY) introduced legislation to deal with helium supplies and demands. The Helium Stewardship Act of 2012 (S. 2374) would amend the Helium Act “to ensure the expedient and responsible draw-down of the Federal Helium Reserve in a manner that protects the interests of private industry, the scientific, medical, and industrial communities, commercial users, and Federal agencies, and for other purposes.”

The measure would setup sales of helium from the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir and some proceeds of the sales shall go to the maintenance of the reservoir. A helium gas resource assessment would be initiated in coordination with the state geological surveys and the Department of Energy would initiate research and development programs for helium gas separation, helium gas conservation and helium-3 separation. Senators Michael Enzi (R-WY) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) signed on as co-sponsors when the legislation was introduced.

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10. Natural Resources Committee Holds Hearings on Minerals Bills, Mapping Bill

The House Committee on Natural Resources held hearings in April on the Map it Once, Use it Many Times Act (H.R. 4233), the Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform Act of 2011 (H.R. 1620), the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of 2012 (H.R. 4402), and the Soda Ash Royalty Extension, Job Creation, and Export Enhancement Act of 2011 (H.R. 1192).

H.R. 4233 would establish a National Geospatial Technology Administration within the U.S. Geological Survey while H.R. 1620 would require the Department of the Interior to set up a multi-purpose cadastre of federal real estate property. In theory, organizing data within the federal government should promote efficiencies and data access, however, in practice both measures call for the private sector to play a primary role, which may defeat data accessibility.

H.R. 4233 would promote the transfer of accumulating, managing, and storing geospatial data that is now performed by the government to the private sector. The bill would establish a National Geospatial Policy Commission to craft a National Geospatial Data Plan and would direct the administrator of the National Geospatial Technology Administration to develop a Geospatial Research Plan to direct federal investment in geospatial research and development. The committee held a hearing on the bill in Colorado Springs, Colorado on May 3. Steve Jennings, a member of the Association of American Geographers (AAG), a member society of the American Geosciences Institute (AGI), was present to provide testimony and answer questions from committee members. Jennings’s testimony was endorsed by AAG and AGI.

H.R. 4402, introduced by Representative Mark Amodei (R-NV), defines strategic and critical minerals as minerals necessary for

national defense, the nation's energy infrastructure, to support domestic manufacturing, and for the nation's economic security. Any mine that could provide strategic and critical minerals "shall be considered an 'infrastructure project' as described by a March 22 Presidential Order. It would limit the total review process for mining permits to a maximum of 30 months unless signatories agree to an extension. H.R. 1192 would extend a reduced royalty rate of 2% for the development of soda ash, which expired in 2011, through October of 2016. The Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on H.R. 4402 and H.R. 1192 on April 26.

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11. Bipartisan Group of Congressmen Announce Award for Basic Science

On April 25, Representatives Jim Cooper (D-TN), Robert Dold (R-IL), and Charlie Dent (R-PA) announced the creation of the Golden Goose Award. The award will honor federally funded researchers whose work, which had been viewed as obscure, has ultimately produced important discoveries for society.

The first Golden Goose Awards will be announced in September 2012 and will be selected by a group of outside scientists and editors. Federally funded obscure research projects have occasionally been targeted by politicians as wasteful spending. Former Senator William Proxmire (D-WI) often gave the Golden Fleece Award, meant to indicate examples of wasteful government spending, to federally funded basic research. Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) released a report entitled Under the Microscope in April 2011 that urged the National Science Foundation (NSF) to quit funding projects "simply satisfying the random curiosities of some researchers." Cooper remarked, "We've all seen reports that ridicule odd-sounding research projects as examples of government waste. The Golden Goose Award does the opposite. It recognizes that a valuable federally funded research project may sound funny, but its purpose is no laughing matter. I hope more of my colleagues will join us in supporting, not killing, the goose that lays the golden egg."

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12. BLM Releases Proposed Disclosure Rule for Hydraulic Fracturing

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced the availability of its draft proposed rule for regulating hydraulic fracturing on public land. The rule would require disclosure of chemicals used on public and Indian land, increase regulation of well bore integrity to prevent leaks, and require companies to have a water management plan for handling flowback water.

The proposed rule includes several new requirements for companies using hydraulic fracturing. Before a fracturing job, companies must submit a Notice of Intent Sundry at least 30 days before well operations begin. This notice must include among other requirements cement bond logs for well casings, the geological names and description of the formation into which fluids would be injected, an estimate of the total volume of fluid to be used, the maximum injection treating pressure, and the estimated or calculated fracture length and fracture height. Within 30 days of the completion of the fracturing job, companies must submit a Subsequent Report Sundry Notice which includes a disclosure of the types and amounts of chemicals used, the actual total volume of fluid used, the actual surface pressure and final pump pressure, and a description of how the flowback water was recovered, handled, and disposed of. Where previous regulations distinguished between "routine fracturing jobs" and "nonroutine fracturing jobs," the proposed rule would remove these terms to eliminate the distinction.

An economic analysis of the proposed rule provided by the BLM found that the rule would increase the costs of drilling on federal lands but would benefit society by removing risk associated with the process and by making the names and types of chemicals used available to the public. The economic analysis estimates the proposed rule would not affect the supply, distribution, or use of energy and it is not expected to reduce employment.

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13. EPA Releases Final Emissions Standards for Oil and Gas Operations

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its final new source performance standards and national emissions standards for oil and natural gas operations on April 17. Though full implementation of the rules will not begin until 2015, these rules mark the first federal air standards for natural gas wells that are hydraulically fractured.

The new source performance standards are meant to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and sulfur dioxide from oil and gas operations. The hydraulic fracturing process and its associated equipment have been criticized for emitting significant amounts of VOCs and methane through leaks. The rules require new hydraulically fractured gas wells to use green completion technologies which limit emissions and produce byproducts of methane and other hydrocarbons for producers to sell.

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14. USGCRP Finalizes Strategic Plan for 2012-2021

As required by the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-606), the United States Global Change Research Program has released its strategic plan and guiding document for the next decade. "The National Global Change Research Plan 2012-2021" is structured around four strategic goals: advance science, inform decisions, conduct sustained assessments, and communicate and

educate. The plan was developed by federal scientists based on the advice of the National Academies and public comments. The plan encourages the program, made up by 13 government agencies, to continue leveraging federal investments through national and international partnerships and requires the inclusion of other parts of the federal government to ensure a strong interdisciplinary focus for the next decade.

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15. Interior Announces Funding to Combat White Nose Syndrome

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced \$1.4 million in grants on April 6 to study and manage the spread of white nose syndrome; a syndrome that has caused the deaths of 7 million bats in the eastern United States since its discovery in 2006. Though the FWS was directed by Congress to spend \$4 million on white nose syndrome management and research, the Center for Biological Diversity is petitioning for a coordinated federal response to prevent the further spread of the disease.

The syndrome owes its name to the fuzzy white fungal spores visible on the nose of an infected bat. By attaching itself to the hair and exposed skin of bats, the fungus causes lesions and burns holes in their wings so they can no longer fly. Once it has penetrated the skin, the fungus causes bats to use limited body-fat reserves, retreat deeper into caves or exhibit odd behavior, such as flying in daytime and cold weather when there is limited access to food resources. Because the fungus thrives in cold conditions it targets bats mainly during hibernation season, killing as many as ninety percent of a hibernating bat colony. Little-brown bats and tricolored bats have been hit hardest by the fungus. Since its discovery in a New York cave in 2006, the fungus has been located in 19 states and 4 Canadian provinces and is traveling westward.

The President's budget for fiscal year 2013 would provide the United States Geological Survey's Ecosystems Mission Directorate \$1 million and the FWS \$7.3 million in State Wildlife Grants for additional work to prevent the spread of white nose syndrome.

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16. Hawaiian Volcano Observatory Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) released a new publication on April 5 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Hawaiian Volcanic Observatory (HVO). "The Story of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory – A Remarkable First 100 Years of Tracking Eruptions and Earthquakes" is available online.

HVO was founded in 1912 through the pioneering work of Frank Perret and Thomas Jaggar. Initial funding for HVO was provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Carnegie Institution of Washington's Geophysical Laboratory, and a group of Honolulu businessmen. The USGS took over control of operations at HVO in 1947 and the observatory is part of the USGS Volcano Science Center. The establishment of HVO, the first volcano observatory, paved the way for additional volcano observatories. These additional volcano observatories, all managed under the USGS Volcano Science Center, are the Alaska Volcano Observatory (Alaska and the Northern Mariana Islands), the Cascades Volcano Observatory (Washington and Oregon), the California Volcano Observatory (California), and the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory (Yellowstone National Park).

HVO works closely with the University of Hawaii to understand volcanic processes at Hawaii and elsewhere. HVO works closely with Hawaii Volcanoes National Park to ensure the safety and education of all visitors.

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17. Tennessee Passes Anti-Evolution "Monkey Bill"

On April 10, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam decided not to act on House Bill 368, effectively allowing the bill to become state law. The law allows Tennessee public school teachers to challenge controversial topics in science including global warming, evolution, and human cloning which arouse "debate and disputation" with agendas and opinions that are not science-based and may come from well-funded outside sources.

The legislation prevents teachers from being disciplined for speaking out against proven scientific findings and requires the state board of education to provide teachers with "effective ways to present the scientific curriculum as it addresses scientific controversies" such as global warming, evolution, and human cloning. Haslam did not believe the bill will change the Tennessee public school curriculum. The National Academy of Sciences, the Tennessee Science Teachers Association, the American Civil Liberties Union and others have spoken out against the law and believe it may affect teaching in the state. The National Center for Science Education (NCSE) tracks challenges to science education and has more information about the new Tennessee law.

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18. U.S. Surpasses China in Clean Energy Investments in 2011

Pew Charitable Trusts and Bloomberg New Energy Finance released a report in April 2012 examining global public and private spending for clean energy among G-20 nations. "Who's Winning the Clean Energy Race?" shows the United States in the lead for the first time since 2009 with clean energy technologies investments totaling \$48.1 billion. Globally, green investments continued to rise last year to a record high of \$263 billion, over half of which was made in solar technologies.

While the United States outspent China last year, it is unlikely the United States will remain first in clean energy investments in

the future. The report attributes the large amount of American investments last year to a rush to spend before renewable energy tax credits expire. The federal production tax credit expires at the end of 2012 and Republicans in Congress have objected to extending tax credits or loan guarantees. The National Governors Association wrote a letter on April 4 asking leaders in Congress “to pass a long-term extension of tax provisions that encourage the investment in renewable energy sources and diversify our nation’s energy portfolio.”

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19. World Bank Implements New Open Access Policy

The World Bank’s research and knowledge products will soon be freely available online as a result of its new Open Access Policy announced on April 10. Though much of the World Bank’s reports and products have been freely available for some time, this new policy has resulted in an aggregated portal where data is curated, content is easily downloadable, and individual researchers and institutions are free to use, reuse, and build on the accessible data.

On the day of the announcement, the World Bank adopted a set of copyright licenses for content published by the institution. These new licenses, offered by Creative Commons, allow anyone to distribute, reuse, and build upon the Bank’s published work though users are required to credit the Bank for the data. The portal, known as the Open Knowledge Repository, meets the Open Archives Initiative’s protocol for metadata harvesting.

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20. Key Reports and Publications

*****Government Accountability Office (GAO)*****

Department of Energy: Budget Trends and Oversight

Prepared as testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, this Government Accountability Office (GAO) report examines the Department of Energy’s (DOE) management of selected programs expanded or created by recent funding increases and potential opportunities to achieve savings or increase revenue. GAO examined the Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E), the Loan Guarantee Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program. GAO found that DOE, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency all receive federal funding to reduce diesel emissions from mobile sources. The report recommends the three agencies establish a strategy for reducing diesel emissions. The report identified selling DOE’s large uranium inventories as a potential source of additional revenue. From a management perspective, the report found the Loan Guarantee Program’s process for reviewing applications has differed from the established process and ARPA-E’s requirements for information on private funding as a selection criteria could be improved.

*****National Academy of Sciences (NAS)*****

Lessons and Legacies of the International Polar Year 2007-2008

This report, written by the Polar Research Board, highlights the scientific discoveries made as a result of the International Polar Year (IPY) in 2007-2008. IPY was the largest comprehensive scientific campaign to explore the Arctic and Antarctic. This report includes suggestions for scientific communities to use the IPY to begin efforts to assess the large-scale environmental change in the polar regions, to explore new scientific frontiers, and to make critical investments in infrastructure and technology to guarantee IPY leaves benefits to the nation.

New Research Opportunities in the Earth Sciences

This National Academies report is an update of the 2001 National Research Council report, Basic Research Opportunities in Earth Science, and identifies new and emerging research opportunities in Earth sciences over the next decade. New facilities and instrumentation are identified as key technologies to support the new and emerging research opportunities. Included in the research opportunities is a section describing how the National Science Foundation’s Earth Sciences Program within the Geosciences Directorate can help train the next generation of Earth scientists, support young researchers, and increase the participation of underrepresented minorities.

Global Navigation Satellite Systems: Report of a Joint Workshop of the National Academy of Engineering and the Chinese Academy of Engineering

On May 24-25, 2011, the U.S. National Academy of Engineering (NAE) and the Chinese Academy of Engineering held a joint workshop on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) in Shanghai, China. The participants sought to explore the issues of interoperability and interchangeability for all civil users, consider collaborative efforts for countering the threat of inadvertent or illegal interference to signals, and discussed ways to promote new applications for GNSS. This report is a summary of the discussions held at the workshop.

International Science in the National Interest at the U.S. Geological Survey

This report examines existing international projects at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and includes opportunities for the

USGS in international science for the next 5 – 10 years. International science projects undertaken by the USGS serve U.S. national interests by leveraging research capabilities in climate and ecosystem changes, natural disasters, spread of invasive species, and diminishing natural resources. While the report commends the USGS for carrying out many successful international projects in the past, it recommends that taking “a more coherent, proactive agency approach to international science would help the USGS participate in international science activities more effectively.”

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21. Key Federal Register Notices

EPA – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is publishing a draft strategy of how the agency will address climate change challenges to its mission in the future. Comments are requested and due on or before May 17, 2012. [Monday, April 2, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 63)]

NRC – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued a revision to its guide, “Water Sources for Long-Term Recirculation Cooling Following a Loss-of-Coolant Accident.” [Monday, April 2, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 63)]

NOAA – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has announced its lead authors for its 2013 National Climate Assessment report. The full list can be seen here. [Friday, April 6, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 67)]

EO – The President has issued a Presidential Determination to the Secretary of Energy, Secretary of the Treasury, and Secretary of Defense to begin a significant reduction in the volume of petroleum and petroleum products purchased from Iran. [Tuesday, April 10, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 69)]

BLM – The Bureau of Land Management is announcing an open meeting of the North Slope Science Initiative Science Technical Advisory Board in Anchorage, Alaska. [Wednesday, April 11, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 70)]

NRC – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission may begin to amend its regulations to strengthen and integrate onsite emergency response capabilities. This Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is a result of the NRC’s efforts to improve its operations in the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. [Wednesday, April 18, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 75)]

DOI – The Department of the Interior is requesting nominations of individuals to serve on the National Invasive Species Advisory Committee. Nominations are due by June 18, 2012. [Thursday, April 19, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 76)]

FWS – The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has announced the availability of the final Phase 1 Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment for restoring natural resources and services injured as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April, 2010. [Friday, April 20, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 77)]

BLM – The Bureau of Land Management is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on its Resource Advisory Councils. Nominations are due by June 4, 2012. [Friday, April 20, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 77)]

NSF – The National Science Foundation (NSF) will hold an open meeting of its Advisory Committee for Education and Human Resources on May 9 and 10 in Arlington, VA at NSF Headquarters. [Friday, April 20, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 77)]

EO – The President issued a proclamation of Earth Day on April 20. [Wednesday, April 25, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 80)]

EO – The President issued a proclamation of National Park Week from April 21-29. [Wednesday, April 25, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 80)]

NRC – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is announcing an open meeting of its Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards on May 9 in Rockville, Maryland at NRC headquarters. [Wednesday, April 25, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 80)]

NOAA – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Hydrographic Services Review Panel will hold an open meeting on May 22-24 in Anchorage, Alaska. [Thursday, April 26, 2012 (Volume 77, Number 81)]

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22. Key AGI Geoscience Policy Updates

- Hearing to Review the Open Access of Federally Funded Research (3/29/12)
- Hearing on NOAA's Weather Forecasting Abilities (3/28/12)
- Hearing on DOE EERE, FE Budget Proposal for FY 2013 (3/27/12)

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Monthly Review prepared by Wilson Bonner and Linda Rowan, Staff of Geoscience Policy; Aaron Rodriguez AAPG/AGI Spring 2012 Intern.

Sources: Associated Press, AAAS, Environment and Energy Daily, Greenwire, New York Times, Washington Post, National Academies Press, Government Accountability Office, Open CRS, Thomas, House of Representatives, U.S. Senate, the White House, Department of Energy, Department of the Interior, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Environmental

Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Commerce, United Nations, Department of Education, Department of Defense, Department of State, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Pew Charitable Trusts, Bloomberg New Energy Finance, World Bank Group, Tennessee Legislature, U.S. Global Change Research Program, Bureau of Land Management, Association of American Geographers

This monthly review goes out to members of the AGI Geoscience Policy Committee, the leadership of AGI's member societies, and others as part of a continuing effort to improve communications about the role of geoscience in policy. For additional information on specific policy issues, please visit the web site or contact us at govt@agiweb.org or (703) 379-2480.

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