United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
National Center for Earth Resources Observation and Science
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57198

In Reply Refer To:
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May 1, 2015

Memorandum

To: All

From: Frank Kelly, Director, USGS EROS

Subject: USGS EROS Center-wide Priorities for Fiscal Year 2016

Our priorities for FY 2016 that I want to share with you today will further align the Center's resources to meet our vision and overarching grand challenge to:

- Improve the understanding of the rates, causes, and consequences of land-use and land-cover change by monitoring land change as it is occurring;
- Provide real-time and other assessments of those changes; and
- Inform stakeholders on the potential threats and the management options to mitigate adverse consequences.

Three exciting and timely priorities for EROS this next year are to continue progress towards development of the Land-Change Monitoring, Assessment, and Projection (LCMAP) system; support the initiation of the Sustainable Land Imaging (SLI) program – ensuring a robust and reliable source of data for the long term; and begin the implementation of the EROS Architecture Study Team (EAST) recommendations – providing a solid underpinning for our future. These three priorities are summarized as:

1. **Develop the EROS Land-Change Monitoring, Assessment, and Projection System**
   Currently LCMAP is in the early stages of acquiring its initial system components and making the first collection of analysis ready data available. These preliminary activities are in preparation for initial operations in early FY 2018. Tom Loveland will lead this effort, in primary consultation with Dave Hair.

2. **Plan, Initiate, and Execute the EROS Response to Sustainable Land Imaging**
   SLI is a program of work to provide our stakeholders with necessary land imaging data operationally over the long term. SLI will include missions, science, data, information, requirements, access, distribution, policy, technology, and other necessary parts of an operational program. EROS will work with the USGS Land Remote Sensing Program and NASA to put us on the right course. Jenn Lacey, in primary consultation with Tom Kalvelage and Tom Holm, will lead this effort.

3. **Plan for and Begin Implementation of the EROS Architecture Study Team Recommendations**
   In FY 2015, the EAST was chartered to review the EROS architecture and recommend changes to best prepare for the future, in particular the Land-Change Monitoring, Assessment, and Projection (LCMAP) system and Landsat 9, now part of the SLI. In FY 2016, we will begin to implement the recommendations. Its leader will be named shortly after the EAST recommendations are delivered in July 2015. Until then, Tom Kalvelage will continue its coordination.

For each of the priorities, the individual named will play the principal and guiding role to further define the activities, develop a schedule, and report progress to my office. That responsible official will be held accountable for ensuring key staff throughout the organization are consulted. These priorities require extra attention and initiative from within EROS to ensure their success.

As well in FY 2016, there are a number of items that are of particular interest to the Director's Office that will further our mission objectives, which include:

- Landsat Longevity – Estimate/lengthen Landsat 7 and 8 operational lifetimes (OSB).
- Spectrum Sale Planning and Acquisition – Planning and operations (OSB).
- EROS Calibration/Validation – Future strong EROS leadership role (OSB/SAB).
- Science Plan Implementation – Implement the FY 2015 Plan (SAB).
- Continuity of Operations – For off-nominal operations (CRO).
- Alignment of International Activities – Strategy and planning (P&CO).
- Workforce Alignment – Succession planning and training (ASB).
- Services Orientation – Explore business models for services (DO).

While we have made solid progress on our FY 2015 priorities as a result of the hard work and dedication of the EROS workforce, I recognize and appreciate all the work done at EROS as important and directly contributing to our mission. Your feedback on these priorities and items of interest is important. Feel free to provide comments via erosfeedback@usgs.gov.

As a world-class Center for land remote sensing, we must continually and proactively plan for our future – a future that has endless opportunities if we continue to execute our mission together while pursuing our vision.

Attachment

USGS EROS Center Mission and Goals
(Updated - FY 2016)

Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center Mission
Contributing to the understanding of a changing Earth.

Vision (To be…)
1. The world's primary source of remotely sensed land images of the Earth.
2. Authoritative providers of land-change science data, information, and knowledge.
3. Leaders in understanding how changes in land use, cover, and condition affect people and nature.

EROS Description
EROS is a USGS Science Center and the steward of the Landsat satellite and other global land data records, which are accessible by everyone, anywhere, anytime, and at no charge. The EROS mission is accomplished through science and applications, systems development, information technology, and operations that use remotely sensed land data to monitor, assess, and project how changes in land use, cover, and condition affect people and nature.

EROS in a Sentence
EROS, a USGS Science Center, is the steward of Landsat satellite imagery and other global land records, and the provider of land-change science data, information, and knowledge to aid in the understanding of a changing Earth.

USGS EROS Guiding Principles
(Unchanged for FY 2016)

Steward Leadership
- Branches, teams, and our contract partners first, foremost, and always put the USGS and EROS Center mission first.
- Stewards, ensuring long-term preservation of land remote sensing data and information holdings, dedicated to understanding a changing Earth.
- Committed to the continuation of the Landsat record.

Requirements Focused
- Responsive to community requirements.
- Undertake projects that are appropriate mission-relevant activities.

Collection and Access to Data
- Underscore the Landsat archive as the centerpiece of EROS and the land change science program.
- Dedicated to timely access of the EROS archive holdings to all parties requesting data at no cost in the use of land change information and knowledge.

Science Relevance
- Emphasize the advancement of science, technology, and societal benefits of remote sensing products and services.
- As a USGS science center, ensure that stakeholder science needs and priorities are considered in all areas - operations, research, and administration.
- Adhere to science best practices, such as transparency, peer review, and communications.