

WRTT Conference Call

February 15th, 2011

Tuesday 11:00 PM Mountain Time
Call: 1-877-612-4949 Passcode: 8870122

WRTT

TIPS, Technology Transfer, Training and General Information:

- Please check out the updated **TIPS** website for recent updates! These are located in the “What’s New?” section of the page. ***Note: A new version of the TIPS website will be unveiled in the coming weeks. Please check the site frequently.**
<http://www.tips.osmre.gov>
- Please check out the updated **NTTT** website for recent updates! These are located at: <http://www.techtransfer.osmre.gov>
- Check out the newly designed **OSMRE** website at: <http://www.osmre.gov>
- Check out the newly designed **OSMRE-WR** website at:
<http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov>
- Please review the *new* **WRTT** *SharePoint* site at:
<https://nttt.osmre.gov/TechTransfer/default.aspx>
- Upcoming events: <http://amd.osmre.gov/ttcalroot/TTCalendar.aspx>

Discussion Topic:

OSMRE is currently concentrating the majority of its remote sensing efforts on two “pilot” projects. The preliminary results from these projects are showing great promise. How much remote sensing data are you using presently? What is the primary purpose of the remote sensing data you are using? What type of remote sensing data would you like to see from OSMRE to help you achieve your Title IV and V program goals?

The meeting began with our special guest (Dianne Osborne) giving a short description of what is currently occurring in the Technology Management Division (TMD) - specifically, remote sensing. She noted that the division is currently concentrating all of their efforts on “pilot projects”. One of the pilot projects has TMD concentrating all of its efforts on acquiring data from three mine sites. She noted that, with her staff being as small as it is, three mines takes a tremendous amount of time and energy, and that her staff has no time to work on requests from states and tribes. She noted that she has over fifty requests in her queue right now and will be getting to those requests upon completion of the pilot project.

One of the pilot projects is broken into three parts:

1. A partnership is being developed between OSMRE and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) to obtain imagery cheaply, or, in many cases, for free.
2. The team is working on Virtual Inspection Procedures (VIP). This was originally based off of the federal inspection and enforcement tracking system (Mining Inspection and Enforcement Reporting system or MEIR). The team started by concentrating on forty of the fifty nine elements. This list was eventually pared down to 10 elements that the team deemed VIP worthy. A VIP manual will soon be available via the new TIPS website.
3. The team looked at the Return on Investment (ROI) of the pilot project.

One of the early findings is that the imagery cannot be obtained quickly enough to meet quarterly enforcement standards. Obtaining imagery every five months seems to be the best estimate right now. Another hurdle is the fact that this imagery cannot be used for enforcement purposes right now. This may change within the next few months.

North Dakota began by stating that they thought AML was involved in this project. *Dianne explained that they had been involved in the process and that a memorandum of agreement was still being drawn up (clarification here).... Due to the backlog of fifty projects she has, the pilot project is concentrating its efforts on Title V issues.* Montana wondered about the resolution of the imagery. Dianne stated that Quickbird 2 imagery was good down to 2.4 m, Geoeye1 was down to 0.41 m, and, Worldview2 now had 8 different spectral bands with the multi-spectral bands doing 1.5 m and black and white bands doing 0.5 m of accuracy. Montana wondered if we were keeping a library of this imagery. Dianne answered we were keeping both current and historical imagery. Montana asked if, by using these different spectral bands, if factors such as soil moisture or differences between grasses/forbs/shrubs could be determined. New Mexico answered that this is currently being done, but, it may not be as accurate as Montana might want the data to be. OSMRE DFD mentioned that remote sensing was recently used on a mine site in Washington State to determine volumetrics. Montana stated that it would be nice to know what computer requirements are needed to use all of the new remote sensing software. Everyone on the call agreed. This information will be posted on the new TIPS website. North Dakota stressed, more than once, that the latest greatest imagery needs to be available to them now. They currently use this data actively in the field on their mobile devices. TIPS mentioned that the imagery will be available, and will be available quickly if each state/tribe has a person who can orthorectify and georeference the images. We can get the images to anyone in a very short period of time if the image can be sent out without orthorectifying or georeferencing the image. North Dakota then asked if classes were going to be made available to the states/tribes so that they have a person to do what TIPS just asked. TIPS responded yes, and, to contact their local service manager to make sure they knew where to sign up for the classes. Montana finished by stating that they hoped they could use remote sensing for some AMD projects.

Overall, the discussion went very well. Remote sensing seems to be a very important tool for many of our states/tribes and the likelihood of increased usage of remote sensing data among all states/tribes is one hundred percent.

WRTT Member Reports/Information

Alaska: An environmental group is opposing the permitting of the Chuitna mine. A “lands unsuitable” petition has been submitted to the state in an attempt to stop this permit. A coal gasification project is a high priority topic for the state of Alaska.

Arizona (Navajo): Not present.

Arizona (Hopi): Not present.

Colorado: New permit applications/multiple revisions/bond releases are many of the things happening in Colorado. The New Horizon case is ongoing. A contractor is working on a new reprogramming cost estimation program for the state of Colorado.

Montana: Title IV stated that they are working on “stamping out” coal fires in the Eastern part of the state. Problems have arisen with addressing these fires on both private and federal lands. AMD assessments for AML sites are ongoing. There are numerous hardrock sites to address.
Title V: MT requested help with a document management system.

Montana (Crow): Not present.

New Mexico: Title IV: A big project in Raton is expected to start this year. Coal mine fires are being addressed.

North Dakota: Title IV: Two big projects are ongoing. They hope to put their new downhole camera to good use this field season.
Title V: A new mine (South Heart) is under technical review. There are lots of revisions for all the North Dakota mines to review.

Utah: Happy that we have a WRTT call☺ Utah is a cooperating agency in the ongoing draft EIS stream protection rule. A new permit application has been submitted for an underground mine. A current underground mine (Crandall Canyon) has an AMD issue and is challenging the states response that they have a bond in place for perpetual treatment of the AMD discharge.

Wyoming: Don McKenzie, LQD Administrator, resigned his job a couple of weeks ago. WY is having other personnel cover his position and workload for now. John Corra (DEQ director) will advertise the position in the near future.

Casper Field Office: Business as usual.

Program Support Division/Albuquerque Area Office/Farmington Area Office: This month’s deliverable project is the complete stream protection draft EIS.

There have been many comments on the draft EIS rules to date. The timeline to publish a final rule is April 2011.

Denver Field Division/ Olympia Area Office: Bond release inspections are pending. DFD is dealing with the New Horizon Mine citizen complaints. DFD stated that remote sensing imagery was recently used on the John Henry Mine in Washington to help with a volumetrics issue.

TIPS: The NEW TIPS website will be unveiled in the coming months. Much of our shared equipment is now available to be shipped out to any state/tribe that needs this equipment.

Next Call: March 15th, 2011 (subject to change)