

NOAA, National Geodetic Survey
HEIGHT MODERNIZATION COORDINATION MEETING
Meeting Notes – January 10, 2008

In attendance:

- **call-ins from: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, ID, IL, KY, LA, MI, MN, MT, NE, NM, OH, OR, SC, VT, WI, WA, WY**
- **in Silver Spring and other NGS, Renee Shields, Dave Doyle, Ronnie Taylor, Sonita Tiwari, Ajit Singh, Joe Evjen, William Henning, Michelle Ho, Frank Mowry, Eric Linzey, Lucy Hall, Gilbert Mitchell, Kendall Fancher, Charlie Geoghegan, Dan Winester, advisors from attending states**

Special Report: Status of guidelines being developed at NGS to transfer orthometric heights to CORS by leveling and other means, led by Charlie Geoghegan

Charlie provided an overview of the efforts in Corbin to test various means of transferring NAVD88 heights to CORS. Included in this discussion was the description of a piece of equipment designed to aid with leveling to the Antenna Reference Point (ARP). A report describing the testing being done is circulating in NGS, but is not yet ready for prime time. Given the varying opinions on the value of orthometric heights on CORS, this topic definitely warrants further discussion.

Program Developments

Grants

- The Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcement mentioned at the December meeting was published in the Omnibus 1 week after we had been told it would be released, and 3 days after Christmas. (Fortunately many people continued to search the grants.gov web site and found the FFO shortly after it was published.) The FFO is part of NOAA's Broad Agency Announcement and is for activities specific to the Height Mod program. This year's announcement is for grants and cooperative agreements which will be awarded through a competitive process. This is the first year NGS has advertised competitive awards in this fashion, and following the lead of other offices in NOAA, NGS chose to require a Letter of Intent be submitted by anyone who would wish to apply for funding. Details of these requirements were stipulated in the FFO. LOIs were to be submitted to NOS by 4:00 Eastern time on 1/8/2008, which means they are due 30 minutes after the end of this meeting. LOIs will be reviewed by NGS, and qualified submitters will be invited to submit a full proposal application. February 11 is the deadline to the applications themselves. FFO provides guidelines on what to include, and how the grants will be 'scored.'
- Appropriations were signed for NOAA right around the holidays. Geodesy and Shoreline (NGS' budget) was funded at the same level as in FY07, which essentially means NGS took a cut taking into account inflation. The Height Modernization was funded as a combination of a National Height Modernization line item (\$5 Million) and 3 earmarks (averaging just over \$400k each). The earmarks included a new state, Illinois. Taking into account the addition of a new state, Height Mod took a funding cut of about \$4 Million from last year's funding. This will significantly impact the

funds available for grants, which last year were awarded at a level of \$7.5 Million after overhead and program expenses.

Outreach – website, publications

- Renee is finalizing notes on the meeting current HM partners had with NOAA Administrator VADM Lautenbacher for posting on the web site. The notes will be on the News page and will include the presentation made to the Admiral.
- Bench Mark Reset Guidelines have been printed and a copy has been sent to each of the advisors. More copies will be sent out soon. This guide was published in paper format, as it is considered a field manual, but a digital copy is being prepared for download from the web site. Michelle Ho and Frank Mowry from NGS' Systems Development Division were at the meeting to report the digitizing of the forms in the document has been moved up in the priority queue.
- Another tool soon to be launched by our Systems Development Division, according to Frank Mowry and Michelle Ho, is a prototypes page that has the current projects Systems is working on. Users can see the current layout of the projects and comment on changes, requests and functionality. This will be on the intranet initially but a version may also reach the internet.
- Renee reported that information on the leveling workshop developed by Curt Smith and other NGS folks will be announced on the Corbin training web site. The link to the site is on the NGS home page, or go directly there at <http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/corbin/>

Events – meetings, workshops

- Renee will be giving a 3-hour HM workshop in Indianapolis for the Indiana Society for Professional Land Surveyors on Friday, January 18.
- North Carolina Geodetic Survey is hosting a South Atlantic Regional meeting on January 24-25 in Asheville, NC. This is the first Regional event which we hope will begin to move us towards expansion of HM into a National Program.
- NGS will be holding its Convocation in Virginia Beach February 19-23 (19th and 23rd are travel days). Details about lodging and agenda will be sent out soon, including invitations to many of our partners.
- TSRC is giving several leveling seminars around the state.
- CSRC with CLSA will be holding 2 Real Time Symposiums, May 2 (in Orleans) and 9 (San Jose or Santa Clara). Yehuda requested NGS participate. Bill Henning said he would check his calendar.
- Gene Trobia mentioned the NSGIC Mid-year conference in Annapolis. Eric Linzey said we expect NGS will have a presence there to highlight the new GRAV-D plan and height mod. Gene suggested NGS have more advisors attend.
- Roy Dokka reported that VAdm Lautenbacher would be attending the annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society in New Orleans. Roy plans a tour of the levees for the Admiral.

Software developments

- Texas HM Level Tool is under development at TAMUCC. The link is available from their web page, accessible through the NGS HM web site TX state page, or go

directly there at <http://meridian.tamucc.edu/THM/HomePage> . The programmer for this software left recently but a new programmer is picking up where he left off. The current issue is getting other brands' digital levels to make modules for the software specific to those instruments.

- Yehuda requested that the CSRC's Pocket GPS Manager (PGM), the GPS equivalent of THM, be highlighted on the NGS Height Mod Web site.

Specifications and Guidelines

- NGS' New Bench Mark Reset Guidelines have been printed since it is considered a field manual. One copy was sent over the holidays to each of the advisors (10 were supposed to be sent so another mailing will be done). An online version is being prepared. Digitizing the forms is the one item holding this up just now, and the programmer reported this has been moved into a priority status.
- The Guidelines for GPS-derived 2-5 cm orthometric heights, nicknamed NGS59, is in another peer review circulation at NGS. Renee will follow up on this to find out if a publish date is known.

Other Business

- Dave Minkel requested a written policy explaining the limitations of how grant funds can support real time networks. Renee said she would work on this.
- The next monthly phone conference will be Thursday, February 14, 2008, 2:00-3:30 ET. Renee welcomes suggestions for topics for presentation or in depth discussion.