GEO Health Community of Practice (CoP)
Community Telecon
September 27, 2022

In Attendance: 17 participants
John Haynes (NASA HQ), Juli Trtanj (NOAA), Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH), Ricardo Quiroga (NASA), Trisha Castranio (NIEHS/NIH), Kim McMahon (NOAA NWS), Dana Keil (NY Department of Health), Steve Moran (Breezometer), Cascade Tuholske (Montana State Univ.), Mercy Borbor (ESPOL, Ecuador), Olayinka Osuolale (Elizade Univ., Nigeria), Adrian Guzman (Mexican Space Agency), Carlos Barboza (Ministry of Public Health, Uruguay), Dania Men (UNITEC, Honduras), Ronald Barrera (UNITEC, Honduras), Reyna Durón (UNITEC, Honduras), Ram.

Summary Notes: *Prepared by Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH)

John Haynes (NASA HQ) and Juli Trtanj (NOAA) opened the telecon by welcoming all participants.

John Haynes (NASA HQ) mentioned that the GEO Week 2022 will be held from October 31-November 4, 2022 in Accra, Ghana. He said that the EO4Health team will be supporting three sessions during GEO Week 2022: 1) Earth Observation and Health: Early Warning Systems and beyond! side event at GEO Week on November 1; and 2) Resilient and Sustainable Communities session (Antar Jutla, Univ. of Florida) with cholera forecasts and Sustainable Urban Development session (Emma Knowland, NASA Goddard; Vivek Shandas and Joey Williams, CAPA Strategies) with air quality applications in Senegal and heat mapping in Freetown at the AfriGEO Symposium on October 31. Then, he shared the recent NASA web feature (NASA and Google Team up to Better Track Local Air Pollution) from September 2022.

Juli Trtanj (NOAA) highlighted the upcoming funding call through the Belmont Forum for early 2023. She also introduced Carlos Barboza (Ministry of Health, Uruguay) as a new CoP member, who has interest in connecting with CoP members within the Americas region.


John Haynes (NASA HQ) thanked the CoP members for preparing their flash talk presentations and attending the Special Edition: AmeriGEO telecon. He commented that there were over 70 attendees at this event.
Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH) commented that the GEO Secretariat has shown significant interest in Heat-Health initiatives for potential funding opportunities as well as themes for the GEO Symposium and GEO Week 2023. Juli Trtanj (NOAA) mentioned that she plans to coordinate a brief meeting with Ben Zaitchik (John Hopkins Univ.) and Cascade Tuholske (Montana State Univ.) to discuss specific gaps, needs, and potential products, which can offer a basis for urban heat mapping to assess risk and/or seasonal forecasts. She noted her interests in learning more about the interests of private sector partners.

John Haynes (NASA HQ) shared two upcoming plans for the CoP: 1) The CoP Annual Meeting will be held in December, most likely with a two-day agenda (virtual Day 1, hybrid Day 2), aligned with the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting 2022; and 2) The CoP/GEO Special Edition Webinars will expand to the two regional GEOs (Europe, Asia-Oceania) in 2023.

Trisha Castranio (NIEHS/NIH) mentioned that there is potential funding for oceans and health through US Congress. Juli Trtanj (NOAA) commented that NOAA, NASA, and NIEHS have previously funded harmful algal bloom projects. She mentioned that ocean observations – including coral reefs and algal blooms – would be valuable conversations within the CoP, including finding ways to connect the GEO Earth Observations for the Sustainable Development Goals (EO4SDG), AquaWatch, BluePlanet, and the CoP Food Security and Safety Small Work Group. John Haynes (NASA HQ) mentioned that NASA has previously funded harmful algal bloom projects, led by Richard Stumpf (NOAA), especially with early warning for harmful algal blooms related to air quality impacts on health in Florida (Space Views Aid Florida ‘Red Tide’ Health Alerts). He said that NASA, NOAA, and EPA have also funded research on fresh water algal blooms, and they are currently exploring a NASA Challenge on developing better algorithms using satellite data for harmful algal blooms. Then, he shared the NOAA Satellite and Information Service link (Coral Reef Watch Satellite Monitoring and Modeled Outlooks). Juli Trtanj (NOAA) wondered about how the private sector is currently involved in ocean sustainability and related activities.

Reyna Durón (UNITEC, Honduras) introduced Ronald Barrera (UNITEC, Honduras) who is an engineer working on coral reef conservation in the Tela Bay, on the northern coast of Honduras. She said that they would like to expand their network and develop capacities in northern Honduras. Ronald Barrera (UNITEC, Honduras) said that coral reefs are at risk of river pollution from agriculture and other sources (Tela Bay in Honduras, home of extraordinary coral reefs in danger of extinction) in the UNITEC’s INNOVARE Ciencia y Tecnología journal. Mercy Borbor (ESPOL, Ecuador) mentioned that as an oceanographer, she has observed efforts to build laboratory capacity related to harmful algal blooms in Europe, albeit diverse capacities in remote sensing data across Colombia, Chile, and Peru. She mentioned that building capacity related to remote sensing data and ocean parameters would be valuable for the Americas region.

John Haynes (NASA HQ) and Juli Trtanj (NOAA) thanked CoP members for their continued contributions to the field and engagement in the group discussion. They agreed that this teleconference had provided an opportunity to share information, connect researchers, and leverage resources that can amplify current activities using Earth observations for public health applications. Helena Chapman (NASA HQ/BAH) encouraged CoP members to join one of the CoP Small Work Groups.

John Haynes (NASA HQ) closed the teleconference and mentioned that the next community teleconference will be scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 11:00AM EDT (GMT-4).

Adjourned: 9:20AM EDT (GMT-4)