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**Earth Observations: Bringing Together Critical Information for  
Disaster Preparedness and Response**

**Abstract**

NOAA's role is to bring together critical information to forecast major weather events, improve public understanding of the risks in coastal areas, and prepare and respond to disasters. NOAA utilizes oceanic and atmospheric observations, advanced remote sensing capabilities, and on-the-ground experience to provide decision makers with information to make better decisions when confronted with the forces of nature.

The recent intense cycle of hurricanes has focused attention on the vulnerability of our oceans and coasts, the stresses on the ecosystem, and the need for integrated ocean and coastal management. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) ([www.earthobservations.org](http://www.earthobservations.org)), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries, and the European Commission, to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes. GEOSS will build on and add value to existing observation systems by coordinating their efforts, addressing critical gaps, supporting interoperability, and improving delivery of information to help all nations prepare and respond to disasters.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce [<http://www.commerce.gov/>](http://www.commerce.gov/), is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources.

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**Short biographical notes**



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Dave Zilkoski holds a M.S. from the Ohio State University in Geodetic Science (Class of '79). As Director of NOAA's National Geodetic Survey he is responsible for the leadership and coordination necessary for NOAA's development of new geodetic technologies, such as the Shallow Water Positioning System (SWaPS), as well as maintaining the development and evolution of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS). NSRS includes NOAA's Continuously Operating Reference Stations and On-Line Positioning User Service, the determination of accurate elevation models, the delineation of the shoreline, and other coastal information. He is the Project Manager for NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System, a component of GEOSS. He has authored publications on coastal subsidence, surveying and vertical datums, and has served as President of the American Association for Geodetic Surveying, is a member of the American Geophysical Union, and is a fellow of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping and International Association of Geodesy. NOAA is comprised of the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Services; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Ocean Service; National Weather Services; Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Marine and Aviation Operations; and the NOAA Corps, the Nation's seventh uniformed service.