

AGU PLANETARY SCIENCES SECTION NEWSLETTER #49 (April 2013)

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1) Letter from the Section President

Dear Colleagues:

Most of you have heard the recent good news for the planetary program: President Obama signed Appropriations Bill HR933, which was very recently passed by Congress. The bill restores \$223 million of the proposed \$309 million in funding cut from the planetary program in the President's FY13 budget request and it clearly signals the high priority Congress places on the program. The language in the bill (now law) is specific about increases for Europa (\$75 million) and for plutonium production (\$14.5 million), as well as additional monies for Mars Exploration, the Discovery program, and research and analysis. This budget represents a substantial step toward restoration of the budget cuts proposed last year to NASA's planetary science program. If sustained, the restored budget will enable NASA to make significant progress toward fulfilling the key recommendations of the most recent National Research Council Planetary Decadal Survey.

What we don't know is what the impact of sequestration and (buried in the language of the bill) an additional overall rescission will be on the FY13 planetary budget. We also don't know what the President will propose in his budget for NASA for FY14, which should be released 10 April. I note that the President's last budget request continued to cut NASA's planetary program for at least the next two years before leveling off at a greatly reduced level compared with FY12. So while it would certainly be appropriate to thank your congressperson or senator for their support for some of NASA's most visionary work, planetary is not out of the woods by any means. I urge members of the AGU Planetary Sciences section to remain vigilant for further developments in the weeks ahead.

As always, my best, and on behalf of the Planetary Sciences Section Executive Committee,

—Bill McKinnon, AGU Section President, Planetary Sciences

2) Whipple and Greeley Award Deadlines pushed back to 30 April

Nominations are now being solicited for the Ronald Greeley Early Career and Whipple awards. Details are provided on the [Planetary Sciences Section Web site](#). Please consider outstanding early career scientists for the Greeley Award and colleagues for the Whipple Award. Awardees represent the best and brightest in our community, showing the talent and vitality of AGU's Planetary Sciences section. Nominations due on 30 April and should be sent to [Phil Christensen](#).

3) Interview with Greeley Award winner Alex Hayes

Speaking of awards, AGU now has a link to an inspiring and insightful interview with Alex Hayes, the recipient of the first Greeley Award last year. You can [find the interview on the Planetary Sciences Section Web site](#) and also via the [AGU Blogosphere](#).

4) Planetary Sciences Section's student survey

Sona Hosseini, the Planetary Sciences Section Student Representative, has created a survey to compile statistics on students' activities, interests, and concerns. Students should expect an e-mail from Sona soon. Please contact [Sona Hosseini](#) with any questions or if you are interested in volunteering for Section activities.

5) Special and SWIRL sessions for 2013 AGU Fall Meeting

Consider submitting a proposal for a special session for the 2013 AGU Fall Meeting (9–13 December). As a people's organization, AGU strives to get sessions that reflect the current thinking and emerging trends in all of its sections. Within the Planetary Sciences Section, we are seeing revolutionary advances and discoveries. Especially in these tough fiscal times, it is important that these results be highlighted. In addition, consider a "SWIRL" track, which is a virtual organization of common themes throughout the meeting's various sessions. Further information can be found on the [2013 AGU Fall Meeting Web site](#). The deadline is 19 April.

6) New Planetary Sciences Editor at *Geophysical Research Letters*

Geophysical Research Letters is seeking to expand its role as a top journal in the Planetary Sciences. To that end, *GRL* has hired Andrew Dombard of the University of Illinois as an additional editor to handle papers submitted in that field. *GRL* publishes short letters of broad interest that have an immediate impact on the research of others. *GRL* is the fastest publishing, high impact journal in earth and space sciences. [Consider submitting your best work to *GRL*](#) (mean time from submission to publication = 12 weeks).

—E. Calais, *GRL* Editor in Chief and A. Dombard, *GRL* Editor for Planetary Sciences

This is great news for the Planetary Sciences Section. Congratulations, Andrew!

7) Results of poll on location for Section reception at the AGU Fall Meeting

In our February newsletter, we asked section members to fill out a Doodle poll on the appeal of Sellers Market for future Fall Meeting receptions. We received 10 responses, of which 3 were satisfied and 7 asked for another venue "only if something better cannot be found." The Section Executive Committee interprets this to mean that there is some interest in seeking alternatives. We will therefore work with AGU to vet other possibilities. If you have any ideas, please drop an e-mail to [Nathan Bridges](#) (a general requirement is that the venue be within walking distance of Moscone Center).

8) Pluto Pre-encounter Conference abstract deadline

The Pluto System on the Eve of Exploration by New Horizons: Perspectives and Predictions

Meeting Dates: 22–26 July 2013

Abstract Deadline: 15 April

Early Bird Registration Deadline: 31 May

The meeting will be held at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, USA. Both [registration and abstract submission are now open for the Pluto-2013 Conference](#).

Abstracts are solicited on all facets of the Pluto system—including origins, interiors, surfaces, compositions, atmospheres, satellites, plasma, and context in the Kuiper Belt. Special issues are planned to publish new results and prediction papers in 2014.

—Alan Stern, Program Committee Chair and Hal Weaver, Local Organizing Committee Chair

9) International Academy of Astronautics Low-Cost Planetary Missions Conference, LCPM-10

The 10th International Academy of Astronautics Low-Cost Planetary Missions Conference, LCPM-10, will be held on the campus of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California, on 18–20 June 2013.

The focus of the 10th Low-Cost Planetary Missions Conference is on missions characterized by those of NASA's Discovery program and ESA's Cosmic Visions Medium-Class program. These missions of scientific exploration are conducted at a fixed cost that includes spacecraft and science payload development, launch, operations, science data analysis, and all relevant mission-specific technology development.

The conference is a forum for planetary scientists, technologists, engineers, project managers and agency officials to gather for the exchange of information and ideas for making this class of robotic mission richer scientifically while remaining affordably low-cost.

LCPM-10 will be followed on 21 June 2013, by an IAA-sponsored symposium celebrating the life and many accomplishments of Theodore von Kármán. The von Kármán symposium will also to be held on the Caltech Campus in Pasadena.

Please see the [LCPM-10 Web site](#) for further information.

Thank you very much!

—Aline Zimmer, Jet Propulsion Laboratory

10) SOCET SET training opportunity

The Planetary Photogrammetry Guest Facility at the Astrogeology Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey would like to announce its Call for Participation for a training opportunity on the production of topographic maps from planetary stereo images using the SOCET SET[®] software by BAE Systems. The training is free to participants, and will cover end-to-end, hands-on photogrammetric procedures for surface extraction from Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter HiRISE image pairs. The topics include:

- An introduction to photogrammetric procedures and surface generation techniques;
- Overview of HiRISE imagery;
- Workflow and data exchange between ISIS and SOCET SET; and
- ISIS HiRISE processing steps.

The hands-on training will include SOCET SET import of image and reference data, orientation procedures, multisensor triangulation, manual and automated surface extraction of digital terrain models (DTM), editing, and data export.

If you are interested in participating in this opportunity, then please send an email to Dr. [Raad Saleh](#) with the following specific information: your name, title, affiliation, address and full contact information. Please also include your most preferred dates to attend and a short statement describing your interest in the training. Please note that seating for this session is very limited, so please express your interest as soon as possible.

Because of U.S. Department of Interior policies related to sequestration, we will not be able to operate a USGS Astrogeology booth and SOCET SET demo at the 44th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference (LPSC), the Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, The Woodlands, TX, 18–22 March 2013. If you have questions about the Guest Facility, please contact us by email.

Please note the following:

1. Training will be 3 days, preferably starting on a Monday or Tuesday.
2. Participants will use standardized sets of HiRISE images throughout the training.
3. SOCET SET and the Guest Facility support the use of images from several planetary cameras in addition to HiRISE. If you are interested in using other datasets, please contact us. This hands-on training will focus on HiRISE, but we can discuss some of the differences in the processing of other datasets and provide additional one-on-one training when you are ready to begin producing DTMs. We are also happy to advise potential users on the suitability of different sensors for their research projects.
4. If you would like to stay longer to process your own datasets, please let us know how many DTMs you hope to produce. The Guest Facility has a single workstation available for DTM production; therefore, users need to schedule one or more additional visits after training to generate their products.
5. For more information about the Guest Facility, please visit the [USGS/NASA Photogrammetry Guest Facility's Web page](#).
6. If you are interested in ISIS training, please visit the [Isis Workshop Web page](#).

With your participation, we look forward to realizing another successful and productive training session. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions or require further information. Thank you.

—Dr. [Raad Saleh](#), Training Coordinator, Planetary Photogrammetry Guest Facility, U.S. Geological Survey

For future newsletter items please contact:

Section Secretary [Nathan Bridges](#)