



Southwest Coordinating Group



November 9, 2004

Memorandum

Directed to: Barbara J. Ryan, Associate Director for Geography - USGS

From: Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Topic/Issue: Reduction or Elimination of EDC Greenness Mapping

It has come to our attention that funding may be eliminated for AVHRR NDVI-derived greenness mapping activity at the EROS Data Center (EDC), forcing the greenness mapping program to be significantly reduced or possibly even eliminated. AVHRR NDVI and greenness imagery products are critical tools for wildland fire agencies in the southwest and throughout the United States.

Greenness imagery is used by:

- Practitioners, specifically predictive service units, and fire behavior and fire danger analysts, to develop assessments and support decisions regarding expected and actual fire events
- Fire research, to improve fuel moisture modeling critical to assessment of fuel condition, fire behavior, and fire danger rating

Information important to fire agencies that is provided by greenness imagery includes:

- A unique weekly description of fuel/vegetation moisture condition
- A gridded, 1 km resolution data source which complements agency weather station point data
- A comparison of current conditions to climatology and to vegetation potential

Types of decisions supported by greenness imagery include:

- Allocation of resources for wildland fire suppression and fire use
- Strategies and tactics for wildland fire suppression and fire use
- Allocation of severity funding

The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) strives to use the best available information to safely and efficiently manage wildland fire on an interagency basis across Arizona, New Mexico and west Texas. On behalf of the SWCG, I urge you to continue to support the greenness mapping program at EDC.

Sincerely,

/s/ William C. Waterbury

William C. Waterbury, 2004-2005 Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group