

# *Late Summer Newsletter 2013*

This is my first newsletter and I am pleased to record that since I was installed as President of the Potomac Region in February the annual program has been developing well. I was most grateful to John Manzer who carried the Region through my recovery from surgery in February / March and into April. The Region was well represented at the Annual Conference in Baltimore in March and the welcome reception that we co-sponsored was well received. “The Confluence by the Bay—A Gathering of Geospatial Insights” certainly attracted our present and former Board members. Past-President Dave Syzmanski was co-Director of the Conference and our immediate Past President John Manzer served as Technical Program Moderator Coordinator. A quick look at the Presenter Index shows Potomac Region members were active throughout the program

In my discussions with other Board members there seems to be agreement that a powerful way to create effective outreach to new members is to have them attend the national conferences and meet each other as well as the established membership. This seems to be particularly important for student members as many have not yet experienced the distinctive mix of technical and social events that constitute our national and regional meetings. Our membership drawn from commerce, industry, government and academia has daily involvement in the practice of our profession. It should be no surprise that where members meet we have informed and lively discussion, the mainstay of a vibrant Professional Society. ASPRS members certainly share a common interest and our members of widely varying ages and backgrounds in the Geospatial Sciences span the last 50 years of rapid development in our science and applications arena.

Experiencing this in an environment where people are willing to “meet and greet” and share their experiences provides a congenial setting for members to seek opinions and advice from across the spectrum of the Geospatial community. This is the essence of networking, a much emphasized element in building a career. It also helps in understanding pathways available to enter the workforce and reveals different specializations that can be followed. Many of these specializations are not in traditional academic disciplines and call for a variety of skills and talents that are not necessarily part of a conventional core curriculum.

A classic example of this was Dr. Archibald Park the Head of the Landsat Program (in the 1970’s) and a veterinary scientist from USDA who specialized in environmental epidemiology. In effect he brought a comprehensive approach to Landsat data applications as his appreciation of environmental monitoring extended through the physical components of environments to the richness of flora and fauna. He was very conscious of the conditions that supported the incubation and spread of disease and the impacts of this in human affairs. His greatest concern was in the area of food production and food security and the importance of understanding the ecological condition of the world’s major food producing areas.

For those of us who have been active in remote sensing applications development the opportunities to work in multi-disciplinary teams solving problems ranging from disaster response to food security and water resources management has proved invaluable. Invariably these studies lead to expanded opportunities to apply geospatial sciences in unexpected areas of related disciplines. Clearly we have migrated our focus from the initial questions “What can we see from space?” (aka “What Can be done with all the Landsat data?”) and “How can we use this information?” We now address the important areas of decision support, modeling and prediction that effective policy making requires. We have gone even further and we are assisting first responders in national and international disasters. We are contributing to the monitoring of recovery from disasters (both

natural and man-made). We are using these techniques in monitoring the state of the earth in meaningful ways and assisting planning and design of the world of tomorrow.

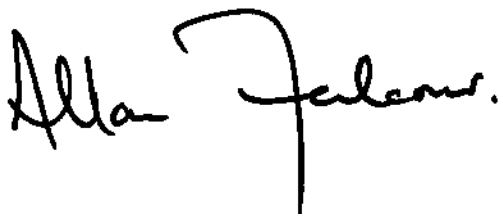
Introducing our new members, especially student members, to the variety of applications where geospatial sciences can be effective fits well with the region's focus on developing student chapters. We are about to have a new Student Chapter open in the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) system and on September 12<sup>th</sup> there was an initial meeting at Appalachian State University to begin the organization of their new student Chapter and Forum. To introduce our student members to the breadth and depth of remote sensing techniques and applications is a monumental task that is only slowly being tackled by our universities. Large parts of this load are being carried by the remote sensing business community, Federal Agencies and a host of international programs and companies.

We hope that the Potomac Region is contributing to this need and I am very encouraged by the response of local corporations who have supported our technical tours. As many of you are aware the Federal Government "sequestration" and shut down have inhibited our technical tours but our corporate members have generously accommodated our requests. Digital Globe hosted a Tech Tour on September 27<sup>th</sup> and attendance exceeded the 40 person maximum (by a small margin!) We are about to send out the announcement of another Tech Tour that will be hosted by MDA Systems LLC on October 25<sup>th</sup>. This will be an event for US citizens only. Watch your email box for details. Please do send emails and other expressions of appreciation of these events to our sponsors/hosts. Of course please encourage our student members to attend in addition to coming along yourself to meet fellow members.

There's even more to report but it's time for this "Summer Newsletter" (recently revised) to circulate before the Fall Newsletter becomes overdue!!

In closing I send an especially warm welcome to all our new members. You are the reason we have been Region of the Month four times already this year and we're thrilled to have you onboard.

Best wishes to all in your work that keeps the profession alive and well!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allan Falconer." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'A'.

Allan Falconer

President, Potomac Region 2013