



"Outreach" Day At Boston Geosciences Symposium Features UNH Forest Watch Program

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DURHAM, N.H. -- On Wednesday, July 9, 2008, students in grades K-12 are invited to participate in the 2008 IEEE International Geoscience & Remote Sensing Symposium's (IGARSS) educational outreach activities, which are designed to engage schoolchildren in all facets of studying Earth using satellite "remote-sensing" and other technologies.

At part of Wednesday's activities, University of New Hampshire professor of natural resources Barry Rock, along with fellow outreach co-coordinator Linda Hayden of Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, will present some of their work that has focused on engaging students of all ages in exciting opportunities in science and mathematics. One of Rock's programs that does this is called Forest Watch, which began in 1991 at UNH.

Among the day's events will be essay and art contests with awards given, educational exhibits, oral presentations and posters on aspects of geoscience and remote sensing, and interviews with students that will be included on the IEEE "Earthzine" website. All activities are free of charge and no registration is required.

The six-day IGARSS event, at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center in Boston, continues a 28-year tradition of gathering world-class scientists, engineers and educators engaged in the fields of geoscience and remote sensing (many with a special focus on climate change) to meet and present their latest activities. The theme of the 2008 symposium is "The Next Generation" and defines the event's overarching focus on outreach.

"Outreach Day will allow pre-college students to learn more about how Earth-orbiting satellites assist us in studying our home planet. In the process, hopefully, they will see themselves involved in this type of science at some point in the future," says Rock, who is IGARSS outreach co-coordinator.

Forest Watch (www.forestwatch.sr.unh.edu) is a unique way of conducting science with the help of primary and secondary school students who collect and process data relating to air pollution damage in forest stands in New England. More than 350 schools have participated in the program. Over the course of 16 years, Forest Watch has demonstrated that students can collect valuable data for ongoing scientific research and learn science and mathematics by doing research in their local area. Student data have clearly shown how responsive white pines are to year-to-year variations in ozone levels.

At "The Next Generation" symposium, eight 7th-grade Forest Watch students from two New Hampshire schools will present their research during Wednesday's poster session.

"Getting younger students excited about Earth science, especially in light of growing concerns about climate change, is a very important part of the IGARSS conference," says Rock.

For more information on IGARSS visit <http://www.igarss08.org>

-30-

A photograph is available to download here:

http://www.eos.unh.edu/newsimage/earth_lg.jpg

Photo caption: NASA digital image acquired by Earth-orbiting satellites. Images or data similar to this are used by the international group of geoscientists attending the IGARSS meeting in Boston next week.

