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NASA Scientist to Present Satellite Images of Earth at UNH

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Sept. 22, 2004

DURHAM, N.H. – Michael King of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center will present animated satellite images of Earth observations from space Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2004, from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in the Memorial Union Building Theater II.

Shown in High Definition TV resolution, the NASA “E-Theater” visualizations include tropical cyclone Elene and the resulting flooding of Mozambique; flybys of Cape Town, South Africa, with its dramatic mountains and landscape; and global fires with a special emphasis on fires in the western United States during summer 2001.

“These are visualizations of the Earth system as seen from space. They show the power of space-based observations to understand our home planet,” said King, senior project scientist for NASA’s Earth Observing System or EOS.

EOS, which began in 1991 as part of the agency’s Earth System Enterprise, was designed to improve the understanding of the Earth as an integrated system through a coordinated series of satellites observing the land surface, biosphere, solid Earth, atmosphere, and oceans. Viewers can see when and where carbon is absorbed by vegetation on the land and in the ocean as the product of photosynthesis. There are demonstrations of the 3-D structure of hurricanes and cloud structures, and how hurricanes can modify the sea surface temperature in their wake. There are images of dust storms in the Middle East as well as dust transport from northern Africa to South America and the Gulf of Mexico.

“I often show global distribution of aerosols from Africa that fertilize the Amazon, transport iron nutrients to the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Islands, and then in the summer contribute to red tides near the west coast of Florida. I also often show 20 years of Landsat (satellite) data depicting urban growth and expansion in Phoenix, Arizona, and deforestation in Bolivia, which shows the time evolution of changes occurring on our planet,” King said.

King’s presentation is part of the UNH Environmental Science Seminar Series sponsored by the departments of Earth Sciences and Natural Resources, the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, and NASA. The theme for the seminar series this fall is NASA Earth System Science for the 21st Century. The series is coordinated by UNH professors George Hurtt and Cameron Wake, who are also teaching a new grant-supported, intercollege course titled “Earth System Science.”

“Earth System Science is the study of how the various components of the Earth (e.g., atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and solid Earth) interact to produce the environmental conditions found on the planet. We are exceptionally fortunate to be bringing a series of leading NASA scientists to UNH to showcase the technological capabilities that only NASA can bring to bear on these issues,” Hurtt said.

The seminar series is intended for general audiences. All students, faculty, staff, and the public are invited to attend these free presentations.

Sept. 28, 2004

Michael King, NASA-GSFC

Topic: Earth System Science & Remote Sensing

Title: Visions of our Planet's Atmosphere, Land & Oceans

Time/Place: 12:30-2 p.m., MUB Theater II

Sept. 30, 2004

David Adamec, NASA-GSFC

Topic: El nino/La Nina

Title: Why Predicting El Niño Is So Hard

Time/Place: 3:30-5 p.m., James 303

Oct. 7, 2004

Robert Bindschadler, NASA-GSFC

Topic: Cryosphere

Title: Disturbing Changes in the High Latitudes

Time/Place: 3:30-5 p.m., James 303

Oct. 21, 2004

Compton Tucker, NASA-GSFC

Topic: Remote sensing of terrestrial biosphere

Title: Satellite studies of ecologically coupled diseases (Ebola, plague, Rift Valley Fever)

Time/Place: 3:30-5 p.m., James 303

Oct. 28, 2004

Robert Cahalan, NASA-GSFC

Topic: Solar Forcing of Earth's Climate

Title: Solar Forcing of Earth's Climate

Time/Place: 3:30-5 p.m., James 303