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NASA/JPL OST Outreach
Oral
As federal budgets shrink and funds for education and public outreach are reallocated, NASA outreach teams are faced with figuring out how to continue providing for the public's need and right to know how NASA is improving their daily lives. The Ocean Surface Topography (OST) outreach team is leading, or is involved in some new outreach activities and is maintaining some historical ones. Over the past year we have organized and/or participated in many events that focus on thematic Earth science outreach, especially in the area of climate change literacy, but have still made sure that the events include specific information about, and references to, oceanography from space, ocean surface topography, and the Jason radar altimetry missions.

In April 2012 and October 2012, Earth Public Engagement hosted Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Earth Science Patch events at JPL. 80 scouts at each event rotated through a series of four activities, two of which were Jason related, which helped them earn JPL/GSGLA Earth Science patches.

In April 2013, the OST and GRACE outreach leads developed and coordinated a workshop for the University of Southern California and University of California, Riverside student chapters of the Society of Women Engineers and Minority Engineers groups. Twelve JPL engineers, including two from the Jason missions rotated through five roundtable discussions with 32 engineering undergraduates. This was the first time the JPL Earth Public Engagement organization had undertaken a workshop that focused not on science, but on engineering and technology. The event was so highly regarded by the students and the professional engineers, that a repeat workshop is being discussed for 2014.

In 2012 as part of our continued partnership with the French outreach team and with the CNES-sponsored Argonautica program, we had planned to support a class of San Diego, California students who, in conjunction with their study of marine debris, would follow the "7th Continent Expedition". The expedition was to set sail from San Diego to examine and take samples in the area of accumulated micro-plastics, known as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch", in and around the North Pacific Gyre. The students were to receive daily updates from the crew, and were to use the Argonautica web site and Jason data to track buoys drifting in the area. We had hoped to have a subset of the students present their work at the OSTST meeting. Unfortunately the 2012 expedition was cancelled.

The 7th Continent Expedition was rescheduled and conducted in May 2013, and the JPL OST Outreach Lead joined members of the expedition team to visit San Diego's Wangenheim Middle School to talk about the expedition and their participation, and about the Jason satellite. However, the 2013 Expedition operating budget was much smaller, precluding most real-time interaction, and some JPL EPO activities were put on hold pending resolution of the U.S. federal budget, so student participation in the OSTST will have to wait for a future science team meeting.

Also victims of the budget, two major activities (JPL Open House and NASA/JPL Climate Day), were conspicuously absent from our 2013 outreach calendar. However we still managed to keep busy with old and new events. The presentation will give highlights of some of those events, what's on tap for the near future, and how EPO plans might change in this changing budget climate.

OSTS session
Outreach, Education and Altimetric Data Services
Meeting name
Ocean Surface Topography Science Team (OSTST) Meeting
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