



Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station

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Who We Are, What We Do

When you watch the news and see pictures of weather from around the United States or the world, you are seeing data from NOAA's environmental satellites recovered and delivered from the Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station (WCDAS) located near Chincoteague, Virginia. This is one of two NOAA command and data acquisition stations with the other site located in Fairbanks, Alaska. NOAA's environmental satellites provide data from space to monitor the Earth to analyze the coastal waters, relay life-saving emergency beacons, and track tropical storms and hurricanes. The Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station (WCDAS) has been responsible for delivering this vital satellite data everyday since 1966. The Station acquires, maintains, and distributes a continuous flow of meteorological satellite data and executes spacecraft commands on a 24X7 basis.

Command and data acquisition systems housed at the Station support:

- NOAA's Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES)
- NOAA's Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellites (POES)

Other activities supported at WCDAS include:

Non-NOAA missions: Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

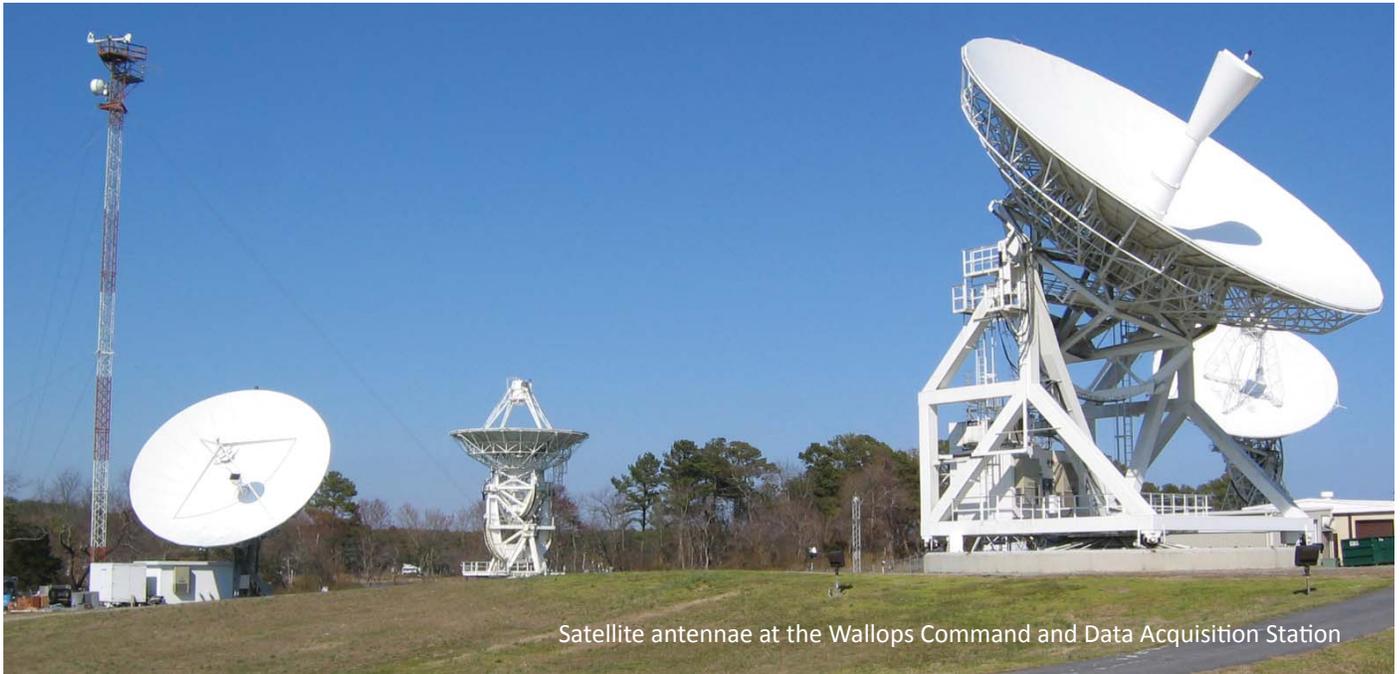
International missions: JASON-2, MetOp, COSMIC, and MeteoSat Second Generation

Other NOAA mission components (referred to as auxiliary services) include: Data Collection System (DCS), Low Rate Information Transmission (LRIT), and Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN).

Wallops also serves as the Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) backup site for NOAA's Environmental Satellite Processing Center (ESPC) and NOAA's Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking (SARSAT) system. The Station develops and maintains records of Station performance, analyzes system failures, and establishes failure trends and implements corrective action. It prepares and issues reports on system anomalies, maintains station control configuration, and ensures operator and maintenance crew proficiency.

The Station plans, designs, and implements system modifications, tests and evaluates new systems and techniques for satellite tracking and communications, and assists in developing emergency procedures to safeguard spacecraft health and safety. It independently executes emergency plans in the event of a communications outage with the NESDIS Satellite Operations Control Center in Suitland, Maryland. The Wallops workforce has a diverse skill mix. Scientists and engineers make up 23 percent of the population, 53 percent are in the technician and trades category, and the remaining 24 percent provide administrative functions.

For more information visit www.wcda.noaa.gov.



Satellite antennae at the Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station

WCDAS Statistics

Annual Funding at Wallops (NOAA Appropriations): Approximately \$11 million*

Workforce: 91 (mixture of Government and contractors)

Number of buildings and square footage: Seven buildings with 48,920 square feet (not including antenna shelters)

Number of antennas: 16

Data rate throughput: Currently 41.7 megabits/second

Date NOAA occupied site: Original permit signed on February 2, 1965

Facility dedicated on: June 22, 1966

*Dollars above support salaries, utilities, travel, training, supplies, equipment, small grant with local university, printing, and transportation.

Future Activities

WCDAS will play an integral part in NOAA's next generation Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite Series R, which will launch in 2015 and operate through 2028.

Links

More about satellites and products: www.nesdis.noaa.gov

Satellite data and products: www.nesdis.noaa.gov/sat-products.html

NOAA satellite programs: www.nesdis.noaa.gov/satellites.html

Archived data and products: www.nesdis.noaa.gov/datainfo.html

Geostationary satellite images: www.goes.noaa.gov

Polar-orbiting satellite images: www.oso.noaa.gov/poes

Visualizations of significant weather events: www.nnvl.noaa.gov

Education and Outreach: www.nesdis.noaa.gov/outreach_edu.html

Image of the Day: www.osei.noaa.gov/iod.html

Hurricane Imagery: www.nhc.noaa.gov/satellite.shtml

Search and Rescue/Beacon Registration: www.sarsat.noaa.gov

