



National Ecological Observatory Network, Inc.

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PRESS RELEASE

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Stimulus Money Helps Ecological Research Take to the Air

BOULDER, CO – National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.'s Airborne Observation team will receive stimulus money to develop a new imaging spectrometer to study ecosystems from aircraft, a significant advancement for the field of ecological research.

The team will receive an award totaling almost \$10 million from the National Science Foundation, which is supported via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), to develop airborne technology that will provide opportunities for research previously unavailable to the general U.S. science community. The airborne imaging spectrometer will be used to study vegetation growth, land use and invasive species across the U.S., providing a clearer picture of the state of the continent's ecosystems to scientists.

The imaging spectrometer is a critical component of NEON's planned Airborne Observation Platform (AOP), which contains other airborne instruments such as a waveform LiDAR instrument and a high-resolution digital camera.

"This is a truly exciting opportunity for NEON scientists to develop a new technology that will advance the field of ecological research," said Dr. Brian Johnson, Team Lead for the AOP. "Now, not only will NEON provide data and the infrastructure for data collection, but we can also contribute a brand new method for collecting important ecological data, as well."

With the additional data provided by the imaging spectrometer, the AOP system will surpass existing systems in ability to produce quantitative ecological information about climate change, land use change and invasive species impacts on ecology. An example of a continental-scale issue impacting ecology that can be analyzed using the AOP platform is the distribution of, effects from, and recovery from the Mountain Pine Beetle in Colorado.

"NEON's Airborne Observation Platform is the key link between local measurements and continental-scale ecology, thus allowing us to clearly understand the impact of large-scale issues such as climate change on our natural resources," said Dave Schimel, CEO of NEON, Inc.

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NEON, Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) corporation created to enable understanding and forecasting of the impacts of climate change, land-use change, and invasive species on continental-scale ecology. The Observatory will be the first of its kind to collect ecological data at continental scales over multiple decades, which will be readily available to scientists, educators, students, decision makers and the public to use to understand and address ecological questions and issues.

The National Ecological Observatory Network is a project sponsored by the National Science Foundation and managed under cooperative agreement by NEON, Inc. For more information, please visit www.neoninc.org.