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## **Local-Scale Technologies for Measuring and Monitoring Sediment Process**

*by Dan Y. Eng*

**PURPOSE.** This Coastal and Hydraulics Engineering Technical Note (CHETN) presents results of a Regional Sediment Management (RSM) research program technical workshop conducted in Mobile, AL, 21-22 May 2002. The purposes of the workshop were to identify information, data needs, and appropriate technologies for gathering such needs (including existing and emerging technologies) at a variety of spatial and temporal scales for supporting RSM.

**BACKGROUND.** One of the topic areas in the RSM research program is “Measuring and Monitoring Sediment Process,” which focuses on evaluating and adapting new technologies for ascertaining sediment transport and yield on regional scales to support RSM. To determine what current and emerging technologies are available to support RSM, one must determine the key users and vendors of these technologies and their current applications. As part of the overall objectives of the Measuring and Monitoring Sediment Process research effort, a technical workshop was conducted to: (1) identify the major end users, (2) identify and define RSM measurement needs, and (3) identify existing and emerging measuring and monitoring technologies that best support RSM.

The technical workshop was set up as a joint effort between the Local- and Large-Scale work units within the RSM Measuring and Monitoring Sediment Process focus area, with assistance from the US Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District, and the Joint Airborne LIDAR<sup>1</sup> Bathymetry Technical Center of Expertise (JALBTCX). The contributions made by the Mobile District and the JALBTCX to the workshop were invaluable due to their experience in the National RSM Demonstration Program. The workshop objectives were to: (1) define what data are needed, (2) determine how to gather, manage, and present the data, and (3) prioritize current and emerging technologies based on needs. Invitations were sent to Corps Divisions and Districts, US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) laboratories, other Federal agencies, and academia. Thirty-five participants attended the workshop. ERDC laboratories were represented by 13 attendees from the Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, Information Technology Laboratory, Environmental Laboratory, and Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. Corps Districts were represented by 13 attendees from the Mobile, Wilmington, Omaha, Detroit, New York, New Orleans, and Jacksonville Districts. Academia was represented by 7 attendees from University of Mississippi, University of Minnesota, University of Florida, Pennsylvania State University, and Washington State University. The Federal Interagency Sedimentation Program was represented by 2 attendees.

**WORKSHOP.** The 2-day workshop covered both the Local- and Large-Scale Measuring and Monitoring Sediment Process research efforts. The following major topics were discussed:

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<sup>1</sup> Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR)

January 2004

- Regional Sediment Management Concepts and the Need to Define Information Requirements (Dr. William McAnally, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory)
- Data Acquisition Technologies at Multiple Scales (Brian Tracy, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory; Jeff Lillycrop, JALBTCX; Thad Pratt, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory)
- Data Management and Visualization Needs and Methods: SHOAL Tool Box (Lynn Hardegree, Mobile District)
- Synthesizing Information to Support Management Decision Making: RSM Demonstration (Susan Rees, Mobile District).

Researchers from academia presented some current and emerging research efforts in the field of measuring and monitoring sediment process. The following topics were presented:

- Future Directions for Remote Analysis of Beaches and Inlets (Dr. Andrew Kennedy, University of Florida)
- An Acoustic Measurement Technique for Obtaining High-Resolution Sediment Properties (Dr. Charles Holland, Pennsylvania State University)
- Source Fate Impact Methodology (Dr. Thanos Papanicolaou, Washington State University)
- Suspended-Sediment Surrogate Technologies (Dr. Daniel Wren, University of Mississippi)
- Laser Altimetry Assessment of Riverbank Erosion, Blue Earth River, MN (Dr. Satish Gupta and Dave Thoma, University of Minnesota).

Two breakout sessions were also conducted, one on large-scale measurements and the other on local-scale measurements. This technical note includes only the portion on local-scale measurement. The session on the large-scale measurements will be discussed in a separate technical note.

During the general workshop session, an overview on the concepts of RSM was presented. Issues such as environmental, economic, and social sustainability; variability in spatial and temporal scales; definition of sediment regions; and political and funding reality were discussed. Current technologies such as the use of LIDAR, multibeam sonar, side-scanning sonar, and Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) were also presented and discussed. Jeff Lillycrop from the JALBTCX presented an informative overview on the use of the Scanning Hydrographic Operational Airborne LIDAR Survey (SHOALS) system and its contribution to the National RSM Demonstration Program in Mobile District. The use of the SHOALS system to obtain bathymetric and topographic data at the meso-scale was a valuable asset to the Mobile District during their involvement in the National RSM Demonstration Program.

The local-scale breakout session focused on measuring and monitoring needs as defined under the context of RSM. As the breakout session progressed, it became apparent that the data needs identified were beyond the resources of the local-scale measuring and monitoring research effort. At the end of the breakout session, the participants narrowed the needs down to the following as a good starting point:

- Identifying sources and sinks at both temporal and spatial scales
- Quantifying transport load



An Acoustic Measurement Technique for Obtaining High-Resolution Sediment Properties. The presenter was Dr. Charles Holland from Pennsylvania State University, Applied Research Laboratory (ARL), State College, PA. Dr. Holland has been conducting seabed characterization using acoustic techniques as part of the underwater mine detection program for the US Navy for many years. In his presentation, he described a promising new technique for geoacoustic inversion that provides high-resolution, sub-bottom layering structure. The technique relies on reflection and scattering of acoustic energy to provide useful data for extracting physical properties and geometry of sedimentary strata (sediment density, porosity, sound speed, and attenuation). Dr. Holland indicated that silty clay is a common sediment type in shallow water that typically originates from terrestrial sources. The fine-grained sediment exhibits properties that play an important role in this new technique. One property of the silty clay is that the speed of sound through its bulk medium is lower than that of the seawater, and another property is that it has a density greater than seawater. The geo-acoustic inversion technique applies a classical theory that predicts an angle at which the reflection coefficient is zero, and a total transmission of sound into the seabed when the fine-grained sediment is at the water-sediment interface. This angle is known as the angle of intromission  $\delta$  (Figure 2). The subscript in the angle of intromission equation refers to the layer number (i.e., water and seabed). The geo-acoustic inversion technique relies on measuring the reflection coefficient versus angle. From these two measurements, the angle of intromission,  $\delta$ , and the normal incidence pressure reflection coefficient,  $v$ , can be easily extracted.

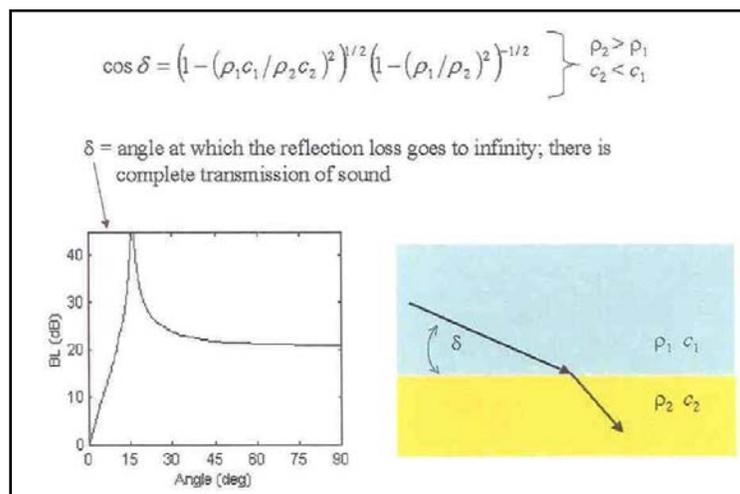


Figure 2. **Equation for angle of intromission,  $\delta$ .**

With these two parameters along with the density,  $\rho_1$ , and velocity,  $c_1$ , of the seawater, the density,  $\rho_2$ , and velocity,  $c_2$ , of the sediment can be obtained from the following equations:

$$c_2 = \rho_1 c_1 / \rho_2 (1+v) / (1-v)$$

**Equation 1**

This geo-acoustic inversion technique is quite elaborate, and the deployment/measurement scheme is illustrated in Figure 3. Dr. Holland has tested the technique at 20 sites in the Mediterranean, eight sites off the New Jersey shelf, and four sites on the Scotian shelf. At this time, the technique is applicable only to fine-grained sediment such as silty clay.

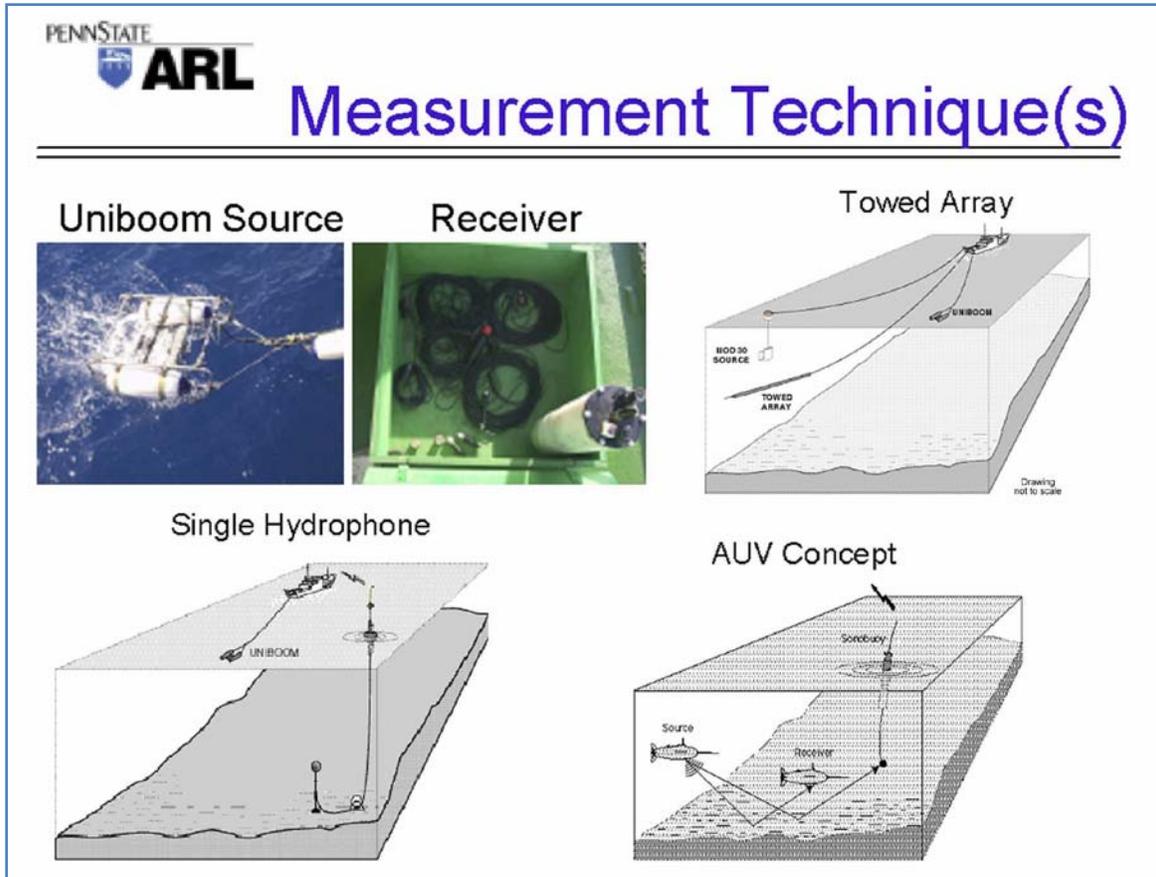


Figure 3. Pennsylvania State University, Applied Research Laboratory (ARL), deployment/measurement scheme. (Note: AUV = Autonomous Unmanned Vehicle).

Suspended-Sediment Surrogate Technologies. The presenter was Dr. Daniel Wren from the University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS. Dr. Wren's current research includes the measurement of suspended sediments using acoustic backscattering. Dr. Wren gave an overview of current technologies and how they are used as a surrogate in the measurement of sediment transport. Some of the technologies touched on by Dr. Wren included optical, nuclear, remote spectral, laser, digital optical, acoustic backscatter, vibrating tube, impact, and differential pressure. The purpose of Dr. Wren's presentation was to provide a better understanding of current technologies as a surrogate tool.

Laser Altimetry Assessment of Riverbank Erosion, Blue Earth River, MN. The presenters were Dr. Satish Gupta and David Thoma from the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN. Dr. Satish and Mr. Thoma gave an overview of a riverbank erosion study they conducted using LIDAR along the Blue Earth River in Minnesota. The technique and equipment used in this study were similar to the SHOALS system used by the JALBTCX (Figures 4 and 5). The SHOALS system contains both a topographic laser and a hydrographic laser, while the commercial system used by the University of Minnesota contains only a topographic laser. The SHOALS system is currently a more advanced system, and an upgrade is in the works to expand its capabilities further. During the workshop, the two groups had a chance to exchange ideas and plan possible future collaboration.

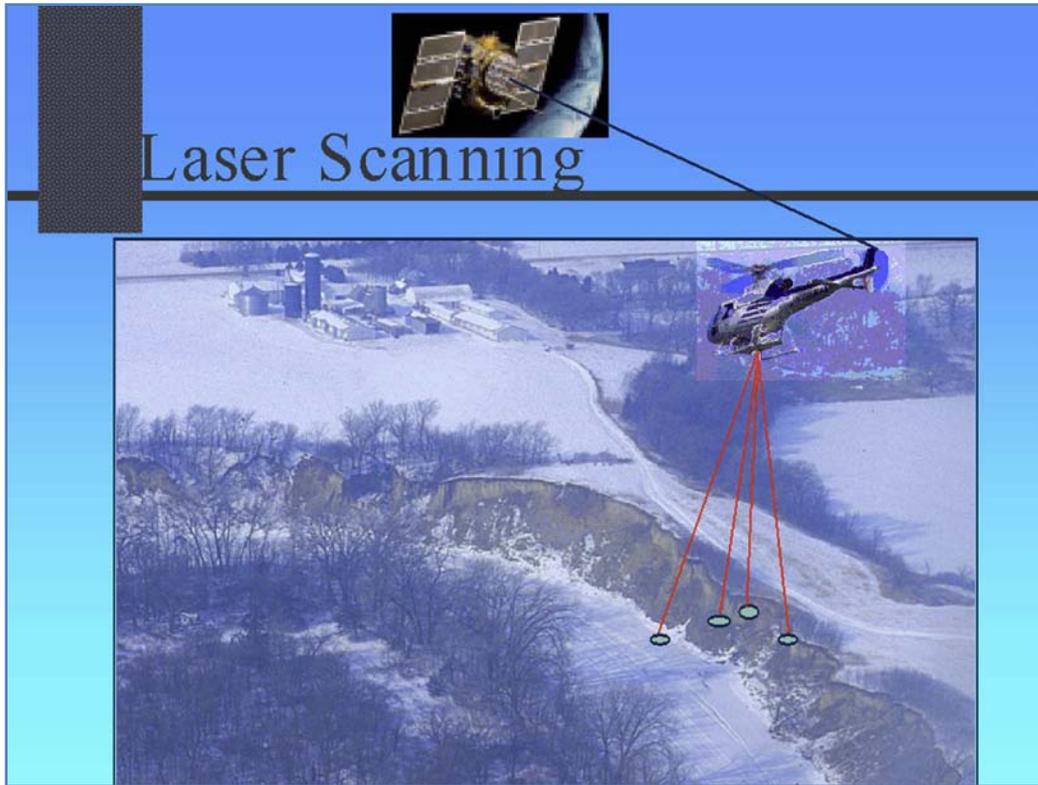


Figure 4. LIDAR scanning technique.

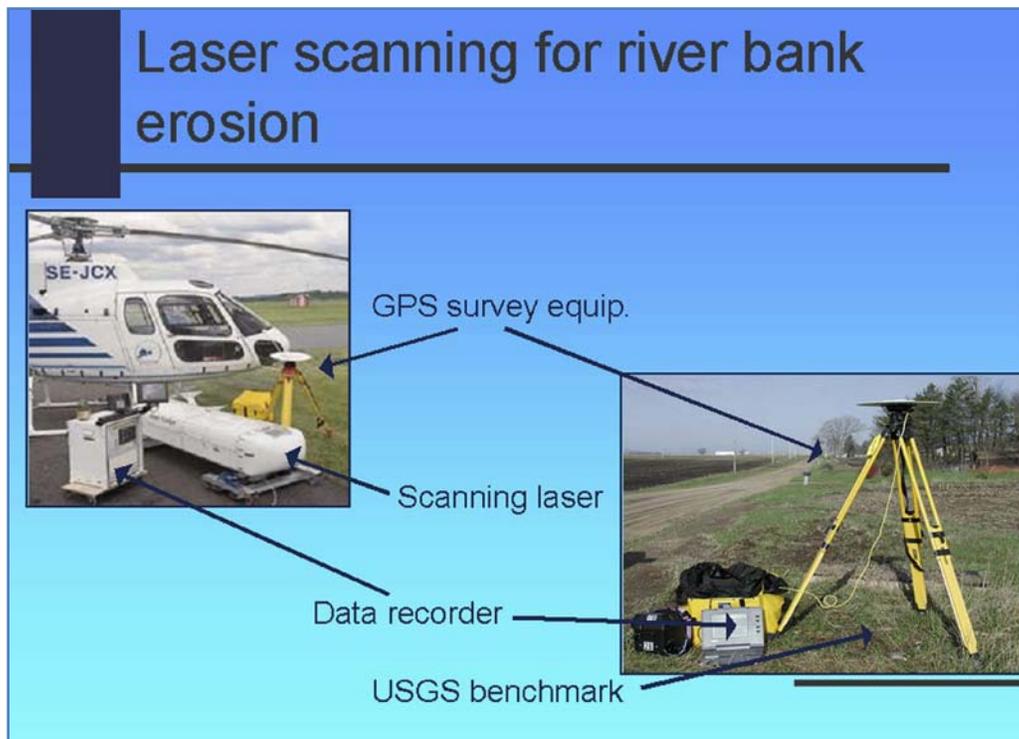


Figure 5. LIDAR system.



The test at Pool 8 (Abraham and Pratt 2002) involved taking four swaths (at least two are required for the ISDOT technique) of bathymetric data across the width of the river at different times for the same spatial location. The coordinates of a spatial location common to the four acquired swaths of bathymetric data were identified from the Global Positioning System (GPS). Using the identified common coordinates as a reference point, 1-ft square computational spatial grids were made for the width of the river. The four data sets were then superimposed over these computational spatial grids, generating four sets of bathymetric data that represent the exact spatial location on the river at four different points in time. The change in volume of a computational grid between any two given times can be determined by calculating the volume between the surface of the computational grid at time  $t_1$  and the same computational grid surface at time  $t_2$ . By applying the same time frame to all the computational grids on the same row for the width of the river, the net change in volume for a row can be determined by summing the volume change of each computational grid. The net change in volume for a row can then be multiplied by the density of the sediment-water mixture for that row to yield a bed-load transport rate. Presently, both deposition into and scour out of any element are considered as positive transport.

To assist in validating the ISDOT technique and determining its accuracy in estimating bed-load transport rate, a series of flume tests was conducted at the Agricultural Research Services National Sedimentation Laboratory in Oxford, MS, during December-February of FY03. To obtain the profiles of the test flume sand bed, an acoustic sand bed profiler measurement system was purchased from Seatek Instrumentation and Engineering, Alachua, FL. The Seatek acoustic sand bed profiler measurement system consisted of two stainless steel racks housing eight acoustic sensors spaced 25 mm (1 in.) center-to-center (Figure 7), and a 32-channel data acquisition system with software. The sensor racks were mounted parallel to the length of the flume on an automatic traversing mechanism spanning the width of the flume (Figure 8). The automatic traversing mechanism moved the sensor rack back and forth across the width of the flume at one location to record the profiles of the sand bed as it passed underneath. The data acquisition system recorded the outputs from the 16 acoustic sensors and the position encoder of the traversing mechanism. A Dynatrol density meter was also mounted at the end of the flume on the return pipe to measure the total transported sediment. A surface profile of the flume sand bed will be generated from the outputs of the acoustic sensors and the position encoder of the traversing mechanism. The data will be used in the ISDOT method to calculate the bed-load transport rate, and the results will be compared to the results of the Dynatrol density meter. The RSM Research Program is funding the instrumentation portion of the test. A complete report documenting the flume tests and results was generated in FY04.

Particle Velocimeter and Flux Meter. Dr. Jan Northby of the Department of Physics at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, has developed a particle velocimeter and flux meter using a new optical technique (Northby 2002). The technique uses noncoherent light to measure current velocity, suspended sediment particle size, and suspended particle size distribution at the water-sediment interface. Dr. Northby has built a prototype device and has conducted some very limited flume tests in ocean water with the device. Initial data indicated that the technique works. Currently in its simplest form, the technique uses two diode lasers to project two parallel, noncoherent ribbon beams at a distance,  $d$ , apart into a targeted area (Figure 9).

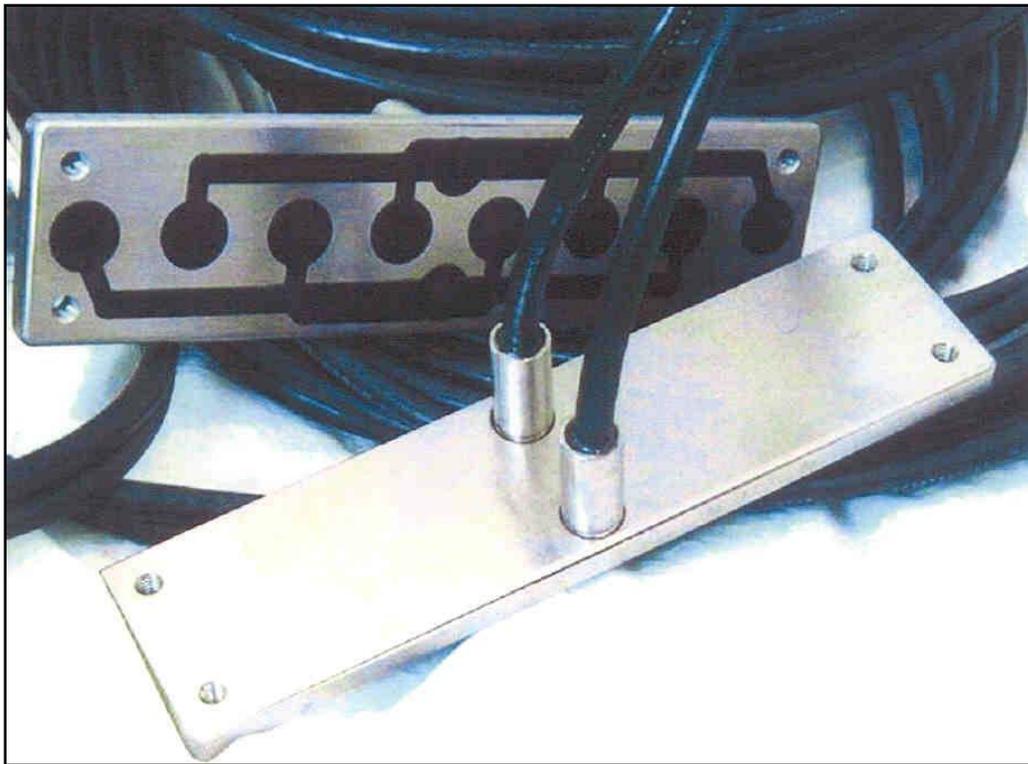


Figure 7. Seatek stainless steel sensor rack.



Figure 8. Seatek acoustic sensors mounted on the automatic traversing mechanism in test flume.

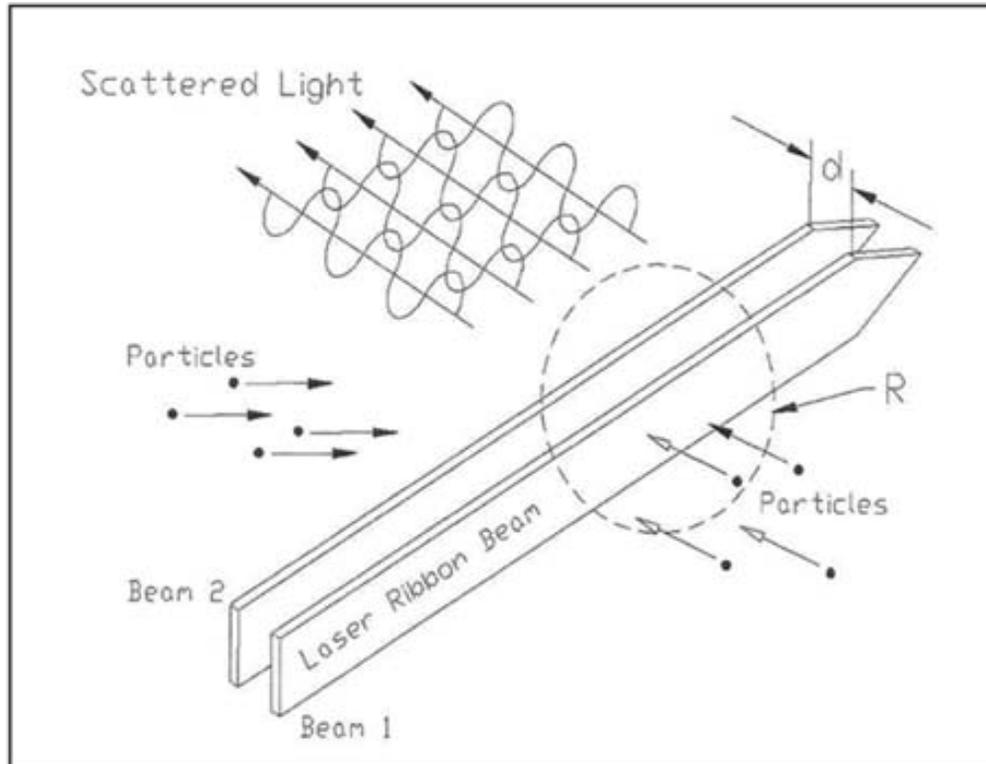


Figure 9. Simplified diagram of the two-beam technique.

As the suspended sediments cross the two beams, the lights from the beams are scattered. A photo-multiplier tube (PMT) detector (Figure 10) detects the scattered light and outputs the signals to a data acquisition system to produce two pulses. By calculating the time difference or delay between the two pulses, a velocity component can be determined. The particle size can be determined from the intensity or height of the pulse. Intuitively, it is reasonable to presume that the amount of light scattered is proportional to the size of the particle. The bigger the particle, the more light it scatters, which translates into a bigger pulse height. From the pulse height distribution, one can also determine the particle size distribution for a given volume. Velocity components for multiple axes can be obtained by using multiple ribbon beam pairs orientated orthogonal to each other (Figure 10). The scattered light from each beam can be identified and tagged by turning the beams on and off (modulating) at a different frequency. Another method that reduces the number of frequencies is to lock in each beam at a different phase angle. For example, locking in beam one at  $\Phi = 0$  and beam two at  $\Phi = \pi/2$  can reduce the number of frequencies used from two to one.

The device was demonstrated in a circular water tank filled with sand-filtered seawater at the University of Rhode Island. The initial demonstration was very limited in scope due to funding, but the results were very promising. During the water tank test, the device was able to detect current velocity up to 15 cm/sec, particle size greater than  $\sim 30 \rightarrow 35 \mu\text{m}$ , and 16.3 particles/cm<sup>3</sup> for a swept volume of 9.47 cm<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Northby pointed out that this was a proof-of-concept prototype. He is working on developing a more compact and robust version of the device. He is also working on developing a more comprehensive test program for the device to determine its practical limitations and capabilities.

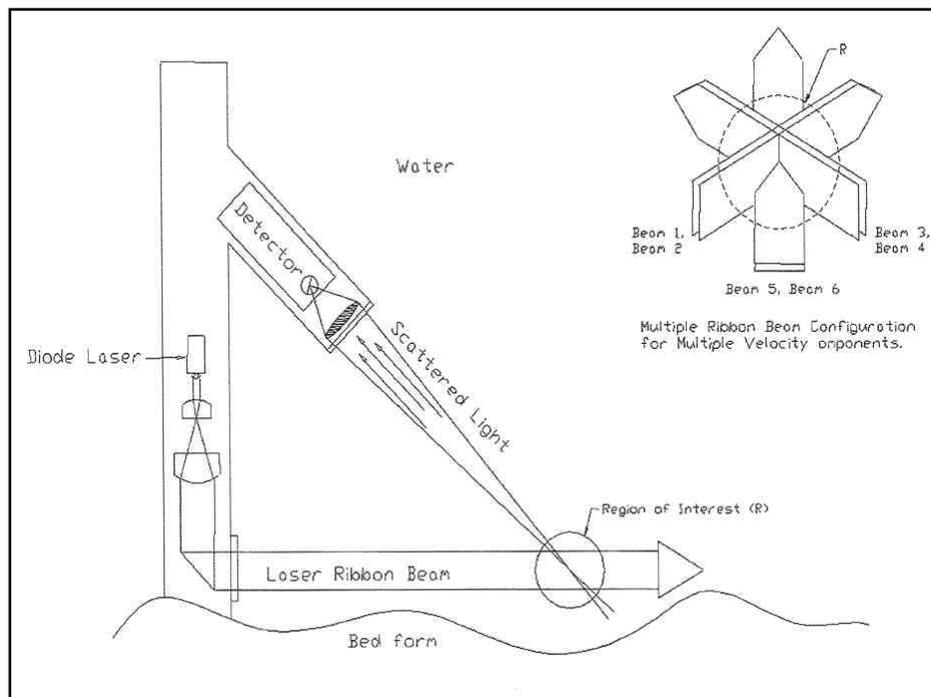


Figure 10. Laser and detector configuration, and multiple ribbon beam configuration.

When some of the laser/detector set-up parameters are changed, the device can be fine-tuned to meet certain sampling conditions and requirements. For example, the width of the laser ribbon can be varied to look at different sampling volumes, the placement of the laser and detector can be varied to optimize detection due to different sediment concentrations, and the distance between the ribbon beam pair can be varied to optimize for particle size and current velocity.

Being optical, this device faces the same problem that plagues all optical devices such as fouling of the optical window. One advantage this device has that most other optical devices do not have is that it uses non-coherent rather than coherent laser. By creating a ribbon beam at the source and using a cone pattern at the detector, it is less sensitive to fouling interference as opposed to using a point source like most other optical devices.

The ability to measure current velocity, particle size, and particle size distribution at the water-sediment interface is a very important need in the RSM research program. This device has demonstrated that it is capable of measuring these parameters. The question is: "How well can the device perform under actual field conditions?"

Source Fate Impact Methodology: Use of Natural, Stable Isotopes to Identify Sediment Source. Dr. Thanos N. Papanicolaou, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Albrook Hydraulics Laboratory, Washington State University, Pullman, WA, is currently working on a technique to use natural, stable isotope to identify the source of in-stream fine sediment (Papanicolaou et al. 2002). The technique involves using naturally occurring stable carbon and nitrogen isotope compositions coupled with measurements of carbon/nitrogen (C/N) ratios. This technique has been successfully used to identify sources of sedi-

ment organic matter in rivers (Onstad et al. 2000), and to differentiate between terrestrial and marine sources of organic matter in estuary sediments (Middelburg and Nieuwenhuize 1998). Dr. Papanicolaou has applied this technique in a study funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Sea Grant Office, in the Palouse Watershed in eastern Washington to identify the sources of upland sediment. With thorough consideration and analysis of the factors that control and modify the C/N ratios, and C and N isotopic compositions of soils and in-stream sediments, he was able to discriminate between agricultural (mainly wheat) and forest soils.

For the study, Dr. Papanicolaou collected 50 samples from the upland stations (labeled U stations in Figure 11) on the Palouse River. The samples were analyzed using a Finnigan MAT Delta Plus mass spectrometer from the University of Idaho. Approximately half of each sample was used to determine the C and N content and isotope composition in the total sediment matter while the other half was used to determine the C and N content and isotope composition in the organic matter.

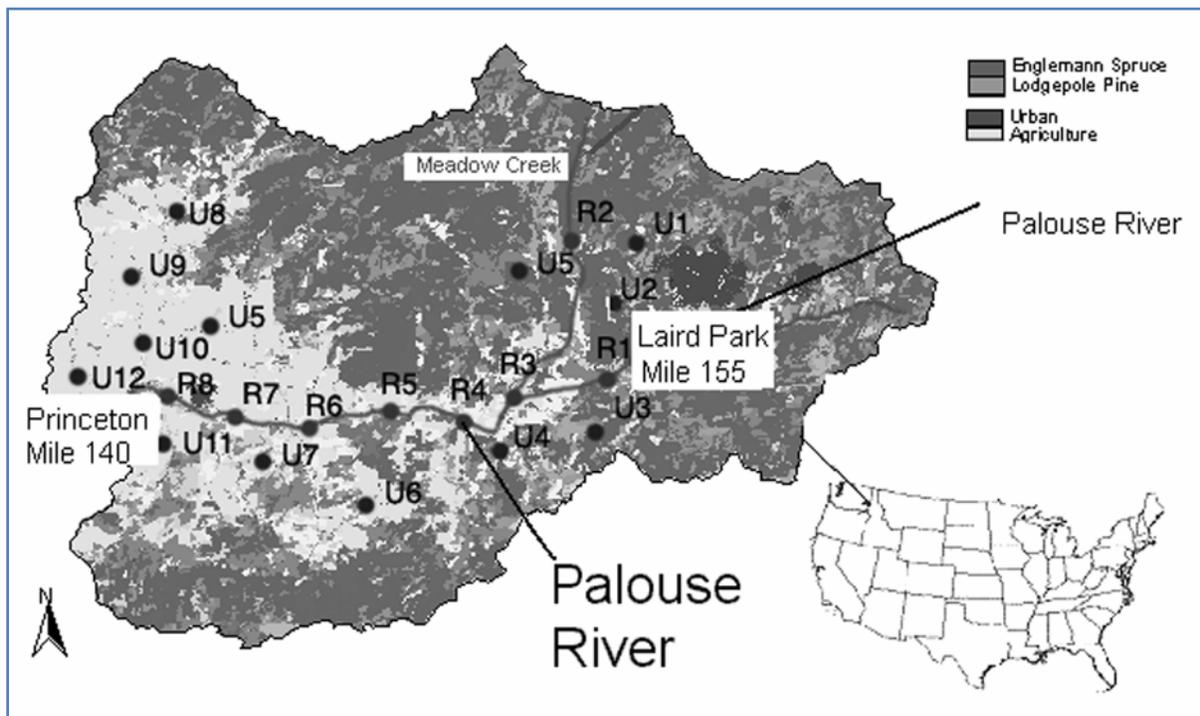


Figure 11. Map of the Palouse Watershed study area with upland (U) and river (R) sampling locations.

Preliminary results indicated a distinct signature between agricultural and forest soils in terms of the C/N ratio,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ , and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ . The C/N ratio for forest soil was 17.05 versus 11.62 for agricultural. The  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  for forest soil was 0.8 versus 5.6 for agricultural, and the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  for forest soil was -28.7 versus -26.7 for agricultural. Dr. Papanicolaou pointed out in his study that the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  of the agricultural soil appears to reflect the isotopic composition of C4 vegetations (corn, barley, lentil, and pea) that were grown in the region, whereas the forest has an isotopic composition indicative of predominantly C3 vegetations (tree, shrub, and grass). As a result of this monoculture environment, it is expected that the agricultural soil has a smaller isotopic variability than the forest soil.

Like all scientific techniques, there are limitations and factors that influence the results. To use the stable isotope technique, the following two conditions must be met: (1) variation between sources must be greater than the variation within, and (2) any modification of the fingerprint due to upland and in-stream biogenic processing must be accounted (Papanicolaou et al. 2002). Some factors and environmental conditions that can influence or modify the isotope ratio and composition are drought (both soil and atmospheric), elevation, and fertilization. Careful considerations must be given to these factors and conditions when using the stable isotope technique.

Dr. Papanicolaou is looking to refine and further establish this technique by applying it to other regions, and placing emphasis on the analyses of the factors (e.g., climatic conditions, latitude) that control and modify the isotopic composition of sediment. The stable isotope technique has the potential to be a powerful tool for sediment fingerprinting that can help in the determination of sediment sources and sinks.

**Noncontact Radar.** The use of pulsed Doppler radar to measure water surface velocity, and ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to measure river depth profiles, has existed for a number of years. The idea of using the two in combination mounted on a helicopter to compute river discharge is relatively new. Research scientists at the Applied Physics Laboratory of the University of Washington (APL-UW), and at the United States Geological Survey (USGS), conducted a series of joint studies using both the pulsed Doppler radar and GPR to measure river surface velocity and river bottom profile to calculate river discharge (Melcher et al., in press). The studies were conducted between September 2000 and May 2001 on the Lewis, Toutle, and Cowlitz Rivers located at the southwestern part of Washington State, close to the Columbia River. At the end of the study, it was concluded that a large number of discharge measurements can be computed rapidly from the data obtained from the helicopter-mounted radar measurements, and within reasonable accuracy of conventional methods.

The measurement system used in the study consisted of a pulsed Doppler radar, a GPR, differential global positioning system (DGPS), and an attitude and heading reference system (AHRS). The pulsed Doppler radar was developed at APLIUW and mounted underneath the helicopter with one antenna pointed directly toward the front and the other directly to the rear. The Doppler system transmits 10-GHz pulses for 50  $\eta$ sec every 25  $\eta$ sec and receives the backscattered power in 64-range bins that are spaced 7.5 m apart. The purpose of using the range-gated system was to investigate the maximum distance from the helicopter that the signals could be detected. The Doppler radar measures surface velocity by measuring the Doppler shift in the signals scattered back from a rough water surface based on the Bragg scattering and composite surface theory. In this application, the helicopter downwash enhances the water surface waves, and the technique used by APLIUW was able to separate the intrinsic phase speed of the waves including those generated by the helicopter downwash from the naturally occurring waves of the surface current. The phase speeds of the Bragg waves generated by the helicopter downwash always produce negative Doppler shifts because the waves are moving radially away from the helicopter. At the same time, the downstream waves of the river also produce negative Doppler shifts because they are moving away from the helicopter, while the upstream waves produce positive Doppler shifts because they are moving toward the helicopter. By subtracting the Doppler shifts produced by the waves on the upstream side from those produced on the downstream side of the helicopter, a result can be obtained that is directly proportional to the surface velocity, assuming the Doppler radar antennas are aligned to look directly upstream and downstream (Melcher et al., in press).

A commercially available GPR was mounted underneath the helicopter to measure river depth. The GPR transmits an electromagnetic wave at 100 MHz that penetrates both air and water. The GPR measures the time of reflection to each medium. Reflections occur wherever there is a change in the dielectric constant of the medium through which the electromagnetic wave travels. Since the electromagnetic wave at 100 MHz travels nine times slower in water than in air, the river depth can be determined based on the time difference between the river surface and bottom reflections.

To determine the position of the helicopter across the width of the river, a DGPS was mounted in the helicopter cockpit. The effects of the helicopter pitch, roll, and yaw greatly influence the accuracy of the Doppler radar in obtaining surface current. To remove these effects from the Doppler shift, an AHRS was mounted in the tail of the helicopter.

APL-UW is currently developing a smaller version of the 10-GHz pulsed Doppler radar that can be mounted on a fixed structure to measure current velocity. A commercial version will be available within the next 2 years.

**CONCLUSIONS.** The technologies covered in this technical note are just a few examples of those that are current and emerging. Based on the needs defined at the Mobile, AL, workshop and limitation of funding, the following technologies were identified for further investigation:

- ISDOT
- Particle velocimeter and flux meter
- Source fate impact methodology and natural stable isotopes to identify sediment source.

The ISDOT, and the particle velocimeter and flux meter, can play an important role in measuring and monitoring suspended sediment and bed-load transport, while the natural stable isotopes technique can play an important role in the identification of sources and sinks. The first two technologies have some additional advantages in that they have been through the proof-of-concept stage and are leveraged by other programs. The third technology requires a 1- to 2-year study period and is limited in application. Some of the other technologies covered in this technical note are already covered by other research efforts within the RSM research program (e.g., William Curtis' research effort "Future Directions for Remote Analysis of Beaches and Inlets") or by other research programs within the Corps (e.g., "Laser Altimetry Assessment of Riverbank Erosion, Blue Earth River, MN," which is covered by the SHOALS system). The noncontact radar technology is part of a program called Hydro21 created by the USGS in concert with APL-UW to investigate noncontact measurement technologies. USGS is interested in sharing its Hydro21 technologies with other Federal agencies. The author had a meeting with Dr. William J. Plant, Principal Research Scientist, of APL-UW in Seattle in September 2002 to discuss the non-contact radar. The meeting was very fruitful, and Dr. Plant provided some points of contact at USGS for future collaboration

**KEYWORDS.** Spatial, Temporal, Bathymetry, LIDAR, Topographic, Mesoscale, Morphology, Geoacoustic, Terrestrial, Intrusion, Multibeam, Bed load, Velocimeter, Flux meter, Noncoherent, Isotope, Noncontact radar, Doppler radar, Ground-penetrating radar

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. This Coastal and Hydraulics Engineering Technical Note (CHETN) was written by Dan Y. Eng, Information Technology Laboratory, US Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Vicksburg, MS. The work described herein was supported by the Regional Sediment Management (RSM) Demonstration Program (DP). Additional information pertaining to RSM can be found at the Regional Sediment Management web site <http://rsm.usace.army.mil>

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This ERDC/CHL CHETN-XIV-9 should be cited as follows:

Eng, D. Y. 2004. Local-scale technologies for measuring and monitoring sediment process. Coastal and Hydraulics Engineering Technical Note ERDC/CHL CHETN-XIV-9. Vicksburg, MS: US Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory.  
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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.

Term	Definition
ADCP	Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler
AHRS	Attitude and Heading Reference System
APL-UW	Applied Physics Laboratory of the University of Washington
ARL	Applied Research Laboratory
AUV	Autonomous Unmanned Vehicle
BIOPS	Beach and Inlet Observation and Prediction Systems
C/N	Carbon/Nitrogen
CHETN	Coastal and Hydraulics Engineering Technical Note
CHL	Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory
DGPS	Differential Global Positioning System
DP	Demonstration Program
ERDC	Engineer Research and Development Center
GPR	ground penetrating radar
GPS	global positioning system
ISDOT	Integrated Surface Difference over Time Technique
JALBTCX	Joint Airborne LIDAR Bathymetry Technical Center of Expertise
LIDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
MCNP	Monitoring of Completed Navigation Projects
PMT	Photo-Multiplier Tube
RSM	Regional Sediment Management
SHOALS	Scanning Hydrographic Operational Airborne LIDAR Survey
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USGS	US Geological Survey
UW	University of Wyoming

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