Minutes of WInSAR Executive Committee Telecon, 10 March 2017

On the call:

Gareth Funning (Chair)
Zhong Lun (Ex-officio)
Eric Hetland (Secretary, note taker)
Piyush Agram
Kristy Tiampo
Chris Crosby (UNAVCO)
Scott Baker (UNAVCO)

Franz Meyer (Vice Chair) absent.

Meeting called to order 10AM MST

1) Upcoming short course

WInSAR sponsors several training courses per year, e.g. a Scripps Institute of Oceanography training course on GMTSAR led by D. Sandwell, and the RoiPac short course at UNAVCO annual meetings. The Scripps short course is self-organized and will be held 16-18 July 2017. We would like to offer another short course focussed on the ICE InSAR computing platform again this summer, avoiding conflicts with the GMTSAR short course, as well as the EGU (April 23–28, Vienna), Fringe (June 5–9, Helsinki), and IGARSS (July 23–28, Fort Worth, Texas) meetings. Additionally, UNAVCO staff are unavailable or there are conflicts with other short-courses June 12-16, June 19-23, July 31-Aug 4. There was some preference expressed for the workshop in August, to coincide with the start of the academic year, although there is a conflict with being too close to the GMTSAR short course. Piyush Agram expressed desire to offer an ISCE-based short course this summer, and July is the best timing for him.

Previous year offerings of the ISCE-based short course included PS-InSar and STAMPS, in addition to ISCE and GIAnT. Including PS-InSar takes at least a day, and comes at the expense of background/theory and InSAR fundamentals. The general feeling of the EC was that focussing the short course on ISCE, pyaps, and GIAnT/MInTS would be a better use of limited time for the short-course. Sufficiently covering the fundamentals of ISCE and pyaps will provide a good foundational basis for participants to later explore more advanced tools and techniques. It was also suggested that the workshop include some component of using existing data portals, and that the portion on time-series analysis utilize publicly available interferograms. Gareth will request the participant evaluations of last year short course from UNAVCO.

2) WInSAR representation at upcoming meetings

Zhong submitted an abstract to the 2017 Fringe meeting, along with previous EC members, to present a poster on WInSAR activities. Zhong indicated he will change the presenter to Gareth Funning, who will be attending the Fringe meeting this summer. UNAVCO will have presentations at the Fringe meeting, as well the upcoming EGU meeting. Question was posed as to whether the EC wanted WInSAR to have a presence at IGARSS. It is too late to submit for a presentation at the upcoming IGARSS, but there was general support to consider

submitting to the 2018 IGARSS meeting, which requires a full paper submission. WInSAR led presentations can focus on data issues and access, education issues, software, etc. There is some support from UNAVCO to partially offset travel for EC members to represent WInSAR at scientific meetings.

3) Election of Executive Committee (EC)

The WInSAR charter states that only the chair is specifically voted on, and candidates for EC are voted on without specific reference to their position. The vice chair (VC) and Secretary are then filled according to the number of votes received for non-chair EC members. For 2017 the VC is Franz Meyer and Secretary is Eric Hetland. The policy was discussed and agreed that it should remain unchanged. Future elections will run according to the existing policy, with VC and Secretary being confirmed based on vote count.

4) Adjunct levels in WInSAR memberships

Currently WInSAR distinguished between Level 1 Adjunct and Level 2 Adjunct memberships for WInSAR, with Level 1 being non-US members from North America (i.e., Canada and Mexico) and Level 2 being all other non-US members. This was due to data access reasons, specifically with regard to RADARSAT data. Currently, RADARSAT data requests are limited (Canadian institutions can get RADARSAT data through the Canadian Space Agency, and there is no RADARSAT coverage in Mexico). It was discussed whether to keep the two levels of adjunct member, or whether having only one level of adjunct membership would simplify, with location of adjunct member being all that is needed to work out any data access issues. One level of adjunct might also simplify on the user end. However, changing from two levels of adjunct members to one would require a charter change, and would need to be done by a full vote of the membership. EC agreed to table the issue until closer to the vote for the 2018 EC membership.

5) Institutional applications for WInSAR membership

Currently, applications for institutional membership to WInSAR requires some manual effort by WInSAR/UNAVCO administrative staff, for instance to set up specific polls for the EC members to vote on the application. The EC supports efforts to streamline the process from application being received to the vote by the EC. Specifically, users should first request an account, and then have the application feature in the portal only available to those that qualify for submission of the application (i.e., requiring an official email address from the users institution and only from permanent employees of that institution). The question was raised whether we should have a preliminary review of applications by an EC member before forwarding to the full EC for vote, to ensure that the application is valid. General sentiment was that the applications for institutional membership from students, postdocs, etc., can be avoided by not making the institutional application visible to those users who are not qualified to request an institutional membership on behalf of their institution. Upgrading the WInSAR portal in such a way would streamline the application process.

6) Merging WInSAR site and portal

UNAVCO is merging the WInSAR portal with the general UNAVCO portal. Once a user logs onto the UNAVCO portal, specific WInSAR options (e.g., WInSAR EC meeting minutes,

data access, software) will then be available depending on that users status (whether they are from a WInSAR institutional member organization, etc). Software and DEM sections will be folded into the UNAVCO wiki structure. There is the issue that several pages of the existing WInSAR pages are perhaps obsolete, and whether the EC wanted to do a full review of the WInSAR site before folding that content into the UNAVCO portal. It was agreed that UNAVCO staff will set up a google doc with the specific content and open up for comments from the EC, before folding the WInSAR material into the portal.

7) ESA data ordering

ESA has changed ordering procedure, and now all data will be available through their on-the-fly processing, requiring a search and then to manually click to download the data, with the L0 Envisat data being delivered as full swaths, not frames, and with limitations on bulk downloads of data. This poses an issue for the current ESA data ordering through the UNAVCO data archive portal, requiring considerable effort from the UNAVCO staff. Current request of the data affected by this change is rather low (five users in the last two years have used this feature, requesting about 900 frames). EC suggested to provide guidance to users to allow users to upload data acquired through the ESA on-the-fly data access site that needs long term storage. EC also recommended meeting with ESA representatives at the Fringe 2017 meeting to request further guidance.

8) Next ISCE release

Piyush Agram plans to include ionospheric corrections, GPU process processing capabilities, and some other features into ISCE, targeting the June NISAR mission meeting to complete those additions. Packaging the ISCE with the new modifications and public release could be done following that meeting, and it would good to have a new release of ISCE before July short course.

8) Business for next EX teleconference

The next WInSAR EC teleconference will be in a few months (targeting late April or early May), allowing time for review of WInSAR website content. ISCE/GIAnT short course should be finalized in the next teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 10:57 PM MST