

3.5.6.7 Special Bureau for Gravity/Geocenter

Web site A major redesign and upgrade of the SBGG website began in October 2002 to be completed in the first quarter of 2003. At that time, the additional datasets described below will be included.

Gravity During 2002, most of the attention of the SBGG staff was dedicated to GRACE mission data analysis, archiving, and documentation. Recall that the SBGG website will serve as a portal for access to the GRACE Level-1 data and Level-2 gravity field products archived at the Physical Oceanography Distributed Active Archive Center and at the GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam. The SBGG will provide not only links to these archives, but provide a forum for understanding the formats and standards of the data products, provide access to gravity solutions from other satellites including CHAMP and the SLR satellites, and links to access the geophysical data needed to interpret these changes. SBGG staff have continued to contribute significantly to the preparation of GRACE Product Specification Document and the User Guide, which will be made publicly available in early 2003.

In addition, the SBGG staff have been heavily involved in setting up the systems that generate gravity dealiasing products for GRACE (and CHAMP) data analysis. These dealiasing products involve the generation of time series of gravity changes due to the atmosphere, nontidal ocean mass changes, and ocean tides. Currently, for a variety of reasons, these products are not the same as those produced in the other IERS Geophysical Fluids special bureaus. In 2003, we intend to work with the IERS to understand if merging these activities is feasible.

Concurrent with the launch of the new website, and recognizing the renewed interest in the SLR-based determination of the Earth's oblateness due to the apparent anomalous changes beginning in the late 90's, a new call for SLR-based J-even and J-odd time series will take place. We encourage all solution providers to actively participate in making solutions available to the analysis community through the SBGG website.

Geocenter After some years of reduced community interest in the geocenter relative to gravity, there has been recent increased interest due both to renewed recognition that of its critical role in reference frame definition, and to a series of papers with alternate methodologies for tracking degree one changes in the Earth through loading effects. Based on a number of internal discussions in 2002, the SBGG has decided, with strong support from the IERS, to significantly increase activities in this area in 2003.

Michael M. Watkins