



UAS/DRONE USERS GROUP

The Center for Regional Disaster Resilience addresses emergency preparedness and disaster resilience across the Pacific Northwest. The CRDR operates under the umbrella of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER), and is committed to working with states, provinces, territories, and communities to create public-private partnerships, develop action plans, and undertake pilot projects and activities to improve regional disaster resilience cooperation. More information is at www.regionalresilience.org or (206) 443-7723.

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) is rapidly growing in momentum in both the public and private sectors. UAV usage is moving quickly from mere hobbyists and real estate agencies to full fledged usage of systems that can have sophisticated cameras and other sensors, that when linked with other technologies can make a significant impact on the cost of operations and the capabilities of agencies and companies.

Federal regulation also continues to evolve and there is a corresponding dialog about the regulation of this new disruptive technology at the state and local government levels. As with any new technology there is a possibility for it to be used for both the public good or, in some cases, by criminal elements in our society.

Collectively we can expect to see new uses and new systems fielded that will aid people and organizations in providing services and products to citizens and customers. One area of particular interest is the use of UAV to assist in the assessment of critical infrastructure following a disaster. This may include the generalized assessment of impacts and the use of new technologies and their adaptation to provide better decision-making tools to government and private sector leaders coping with disasters.

Infrastructure owners and operators can use UAV technology as can emergency management and a wide variety of public and private organizations that

will respond to emergencies and disasters here in the Pacific Northwest.

We are already seeing governments form informal working groups of users, either by geographical, e.g., county, region or by discipline, e.g. law enforcement.

THE PURPOSE

With the rapid advancement of the UAV technology and use it is appropriate to establish an informal user's group that includes both the public and private sector representatives and their associated organizations. The potential for collaboration and information sharing between the public and private sector UAV users is significant.

This user's group would serve as a forum for the sharing of information between participating personnel and organizations. This user's group is not for the purpose of replacing existing associations already in existence or usurping the legislatively mandated responsibilities of any one agency.

Facilitating Bi-National Regional Resilience Since 2001

Likely topics for information sharing could include:

- The interpretation and implementation of new regulations as they are being promulgated.
- The sharing of new uses for the technology for infrastructure inspections and other purposes.
- Briefings on new systems, both UAV and on-board sensors, etc.
- Best practices briefings by participating organizations as their frequency of use and expansion of mission perimeters broaden.
- Lessons learned from specific missions or events that are applicable to a wide variety of agencies and businesses.
- Advances in the use of UAV to assess critical infrastructure

THE SCOPE

The geographical region that will be initially used will be inclusive of Washington State with the opportunity to expand it, based on experience, to adjacent states and those within the Pacific Northwest. Potentially, the user's group could be expanded to NW Canadian Provinces as the usage of UAV expands along with the potential for cross-border coordination and uses by government agencies and commerce.

MEMBERSHIP

There would be no "formal" membership other than the sharing of contact information of individuals who wish to be informed of user's group conference calls so that they can be contacted and kept in the loop. Membership will not include hobbyists.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Washington State Department of Transportation (WADOT), Aviation Division and the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), Center for Regional Disaster Resilience (CRDR) agree to jointly administer the conference calls and maintain a list of participating organizations, along with an inventory of agencies, UAV resources/capabilities and contact information for responsible individuals.

Coordination and information sharing will be primarily conducted via a series of conference calls with participation by organizations which have expressed an interest in participating. The frequency of calls will be established by the participating organizations, but not less than quarterly.

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