

Effects of Real-Time NASA Vegetation Data on Model Forecasts of Severe Weather

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The NASA Short-term Prediction Research and Transition (SPoRT) Center has developed a Greenness Vegetation Fraction (GVF) dataset, which is updated daily using swaths of Normalized Difference Vegetation Index data from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) data aboard the NASA-EOS Aqua and Terra satellites. NASA SPoRT started generating daily real-time GVF composites at 1-km resolution over the Continental United States beginning 1 June 2010. A companion poster presentation (Bell et al.) primarily focuses on impact results in an offline configuration of the Noah land surface model (LSM) for the 2010 warm season, comparing the SPoRT/MODIS GVF dataset to the current operational monthly climatology GVF available within the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) models. This paper/presentation primarily focuses on individual case studies of severe weather events to determine the impacts and possible improvements by using the real-time, high-resolution SPoRT-MODIS GVFs in place of the coarser-resolution NCEP climatological GVFs in model simulations.

The NASA-Unified WRF (NU-WRF) modeling system is employed to conduct the sensitivity simulations of individual events. The NU-WRF is an integrated modeling system based on the Advanced Research WRF dynamical core that is designed to represent aerosol, cloud, precipitation, and land processes at satellite-resolved scales in a coupled simulation environment. For this experiment, the coupling between the NASA Land Information System (LIS) and the WRF model is utilized to measure the impacts of the daily SPoRT/MODIS versus the monthly NCEP climatology GVFs. First, a spin-up run of the LIS is integrated for two years using the Noah LSM to ensure that the land surface fields reach an equilibrium state on the 4-km grid mesh used. Next, the spin-up LIS is run in two separate modes beginning on 1 June 2010, one continuing with the climatology GVFs while the other uses the daily SPoRT/MODIS GVFs. Finally, snapshots of the LIS land surface fields are used to initialize two different simulations of the NU-WRF, one running with climatology LIS and GVFs, and the other running with experimental LIS and NASA/SPoRT GVFs. In this paper/presentation, case study results will be highlighted in regions with significant differences in GVF between the NCEP climatology and SPoRT product during severe weather episodes.

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