**NASA DEVELOP National Program**

**** University of Georgia

**Fall 2015**

**Short Title: Georgia Water Resources**

**Subtitle:** Groundwater Contamination Vulnerability Analysis using modified DRASTIC Model combining sinkhole formation susceptibility in Dougherty County, Georgia

**VPS Title:** Digging into Sinkholes: Groundwater Storage and Contamination Risk in Dougherty County, Georgia

**Project Team & Partners**

**Project Team:**

Wenjing Xu (Project Co-Lead), wx25270@uga.edu

Jason Reynolds (Project Co-Lead), jdreyno3@gmail.com

Linli Zhu

Mingshu Wang

Doori Oh

**Advisors & Mentors:**

Dr. Adam Milewski (Department of Geology, University of Georgia)

Matthew Cahalan (Department of Geology, University of Georgia)

**Past or Other Contributors:**

Kimberly Berry

Mohamed Amin

Tunan Hu

**Partner Organizations:**

City of Albany and Dougherty County Planning and Development Services (End-User/Boundary Organization), POC: Randy Weathersby

Southwest Georgia Water Resources Task Force (End-User), POC: Randy Weathersby

**Project Details**

**Applied Sciences National Applications Addressed:** Water Resources, Disasters

**Study Area:** Dougherty County, GA

**Study Period:** 2002 to 2009

**Earth Observations & Parameters:**

GRACE – Groundwater storage

**Ancillary Datasets Utilized:**

* Summer 2015 Georgia Disasters DEVELOP Team sinkhole inventory maps- locations of sinkholes in Dougherty County
* USGS Principal Aquifer of the United States - aquifer characteristics
* Georgia GIS Clearinghouse STATSGO Soils - soil characteristics
* USGS National Elevation Data 30m DEM- elevation and topography
* MODIS Global Terrestrial Evapotranspiration Data Set - 1km annual evapotranspiration data
* PRSM precipitation data- 4km yearly average precipitation data

**Models Utilized:**

* US Environmental Protection Agency DRASTIC model

**Software Utilized:**

ArcGIS - raster manipulation/analysis, map creation of Grace and groundwater contamination vulnerability map

R - Statistical analysis

Python - data preprocessing

**Project Overview**

Groundwater resources are crucial for providing clean drinking water and supplying both industrial and agricultural needs in southwest Georgia. Dougherty County, Georgia is highly susceptible to groundwater contamination because of its location in a karst environment that promotes cover-collapse and cover subsidence sinkhole formation. This project uses water storage data derived from GRACE to analyze potential contamination by following the DRASTIC model for groundwater risk assessment.

**Abstract:**

Groundwater from karst aquifers is the primary water source for domestic, industrial, and agricultural use in southwest Georgia. However, these aquifers are highly vulnerable to pollution due to their geological structure and characteristics. Groundwater storage and contamination risk monitoring can improve water consumption and protection management decisions. This project used an applied methodology that incorporated remote sensing data for groundwater monitoring. Specifically, the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) was used to estimate groundwater depth change from 2002 to 2009 and correlated with sinkhole inventory data during this time period. The DRASTIC model was combined with sinkhole susceptibility maps generated by the Summer 2015 NASA DEVELOP Georgia Disasters team to create corresponding groundwater contamination vulnerability maps. Building upon the traditional DRASTIC model, sinkhole susceptibility was incorporated as a multiplier term to calculate a final, modified DRASTIC index (DRASTICS). This augmented DRASTIC model will provide end-users working in karst aquifer systems a tool designed to enhance decision-making processes associated with managing groundwater contamination risks.

**Community Concerns:**

* The growing population in southwest Georgia means public consumption of water will increasingly rely on groundwater supply.
* Dougherty County’s sustainable groundwater supply is continuing to see growing risks for contamination and pollution associated with local sinkhole development.
* There is a lack of applicable protocol for groundwater quantity/quality monitoring which can take advantage of GIS technology in Dougherty County.

**Current Management Practices & Policies**:

The City of Albany and Dougherty County Planning and Development Services (PDS) is responsible for governing land use and development and ensuring the local environment is safe. The PDS works primarily with GIS technology for mapping purposes.

The Southwest Georgia Water Resources Task Force strives to educate the public and advise local stakeholder groups on sustainable water resource management practices. This task force is made up of volunteers with expert knowledge on a variety of related fields.

**Decision Support Tools & Benefits:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **End-Product** | **Earth Observations Used** | **Benefit & Impact** |
| Groundwater storage change trend chart | GRACE | Groundwater storage change over multiple years will help quantify recent conditions and assist predictions of future scenarios, further enhancing decisions concerning sustainable management strategies |
| Groundwater contamination vulnerability map | MODIS, GPM | Identification of vulnerable groundwater contamination areas will help to establish protection zones and develop effective water quality management strategies |

**Project Imagery**

**[Insert image here]**

**Caption:** [Insert Caption Here. Max of 25 words.] Image Credit: [Insert project short title] Team.

**Image:** File Name (Please submit your image as a separate .jpeg as well as inserting it in this document)

**Software Release Requirements**

What category do the tools your project is creating fall within? Category II