

Special Temporary Authority to Test Radar Instrumentation

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Scott Spear
Remote Sensing Center
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama
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A. Purpose of Operation and Need for License

The purpose of this application is to request authorization from the FCC for the Remote Sensing Center at The University of Alabama to operate an aircraft-mounted radar system from October 25 of 2021 to March 28 or 2022 (2-4 hours each flight), near the University of Alabama Arboretum and the Talladega National Forest in Alabama, to develop, calibrate and test the radar system and collect radar data on soil moisture in low and high vegetation areas. The objective of the overall project is to collect soil moisture data to improve the national water model (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) contract number NA19NES4320002. The radar data will be used to map the soil moisture for estimating the water retained over vegetated areas.

We are requesting operations near the Remote Sensing Center's R&D facilities in Tuscaloosa, AL. We are including nominal operating parameters (frequency and power) and can adjust these parameters to accommodate FCC requirements.

B. Locations of Proposed Operation

The STA schedule is requested for the development, calibration, and testing of the aircraft-mounted radars prior to semi-operationally deployment. The locations of operation are outlined in Table 1.

Proposed Location	
Area near Tuscaloosa, AL	University of Alabama Arboretum and its surrounding area as shown in Figure 1. Coordinates are provided in section E.1 NSF National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) site in Talladega National Forest and its surrounding area near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, as shown in Figure 2. Coordinates are provided in section E.2

Table 1 – Summary of Proposed Operation Locations

The operation will be limited to flights lasting two to four hours, between October 25th, 2021 and March 28th, 2022. The transmitter height will be between 1500 and 10000 feet above ground (AGL).



Figure 1 - Proposed Site (University of Alabama Arboretum, Tuscaloosa, AL)



Figure 2 - Proposed Site (NSF NEON site, Talladega National Forest, near Tuscaloosa, AL)

C. Technical Specifications

1. Frequency of Operation

We request authorization to operate from 2.7 – 10.7 GHz. These parameters can be adjusted.

2. Effective Radiated Power (ERP)

The effective radiated power (ERP) will not exceed 2 W average for 2.7 – 10.7 GHz. These parameters can be adjusted.

3. Modulation Signal Description and Emissions

The emissions are a 2.7 – 10.7 GHz linear Frequency Modulated signal with a sweep time near 200 μ s with a duty cycle varying from 50% to 100%. These parameters can be adjusted.

4. Antenna Information

The transmit and receive antenna that will be used is by QPar (QMS-00447) Broadband waveguide horn antenna. The antenna exhibits 6 dBi to 15.9 dBi of gain across the 1-18 GHz band, with a maximum Horizontal 3dB beamwidth of 62° and maximum 3dB vertical beamwidth of 97°. The antenna will be radiating nadir towards the surface of the earth.

5. Equipment Utilized

Equipment used for this system is custom built at the Remote Sensing Center at the University of Alabama. One unit will be used for each frequency band under this STA application.

6. Station Class

This station will be Aeronautical Mobile in the areas described in section B, with a nominal altitude of 1500 feet AGL.

D. Contact Information

For questions about this application, please contact:

Dr. Scott Spear
Remote Sensing Center
University of Alabama
7th Avenue
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
sspear@ua.edu

E. Appendix

1. Flight Test Area Coordinates

University of Alabama Arboretum extending on radius 2 nautical miles from point coordinates:

N 33° 11' 42"

W 87° 28' 54"

2. Flight Test Area Coordinates

NSF NEON site, Talladega National Forest extending on radius 2 nautical miles from point coordinates:

N 32° 57' 1"

W 87° 23' 35"