

NASA's Near-Earth Object Program Office

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In early 1999, NASA established its Near-Earth Object Program Office at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, with the stated objectives to:

- Facilitate communications within the observing community and between the community and the public with respect to any potentially hazardous objects.
- Establish and maintain a catalog of Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) and provide information on their future close Earth approaches and Earth impact probabilities.
- Help coordinate ground-based observations in order to complete the Spaceguard Goal of discovering 90% of the Near-Earth Asteroids (NEAs) larger than one kilometer within a ten year period.
- Support NASA Headquarters in coordinating with other government agencies and with foreign governments and international organizations on NEO issues.
- Develop and support a strategy and plan for the scientific exploration of NEOs including their discovery, recovery, ephemerides, characterization, in-situ investigations, and resource potential.

Significant progress has been made on all of these objectives. An award winning interactive NEO web site has been established (<http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/>) to communicate information to the scientific community and public. An automatic update process (Sentry) has been established for all NEOs. As new astrometric data become available for a particular NEO, its orbit is automatically updated and future close Earth approach circumstances determined - including impact probabilities when appropriate. At timely intervals, metrics are generated and displayed on the web site to track the contributions of each NASA supported search site toward meeting the Spaceguard Goal. Initial efforts to coordinate the nightly search for NEAs within the United States have been undertaken. In an effort to facilitate the coordination of NEO activities on an international scale, fruitful interactions have taken place with personnel of the British Task Force, the Spaceguard Foundation, the Japanese Spaceguard Foundation and the international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).