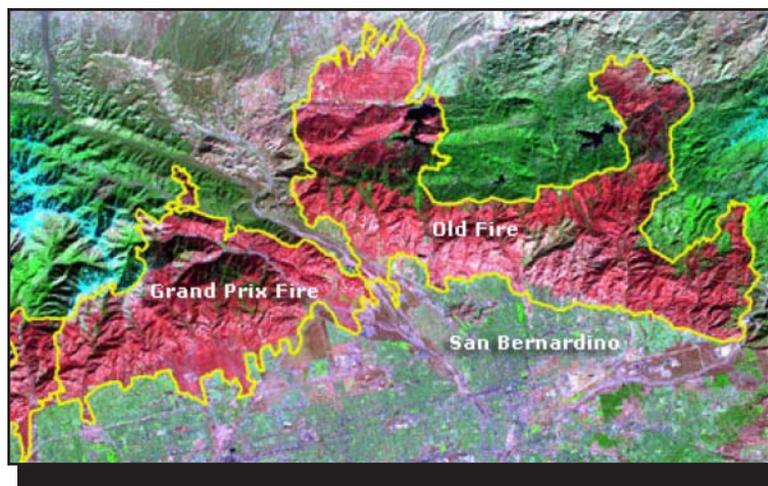

RSAC Receives Prestigious Awards

—Jess Clark, remote sensing/GIS specialist; and Keith Lannom, operations program leader, Remote Sensing Applications Center, Salt Lake City, UT

The USDA Forest Service Remote Sensing Applications Center (RSAC), a National Service Center of the Washington Office Engineering unit, earned the 2003 Forest Service Chief’s Award for Internal Technology Transfer. RSAC was recognized “For excellent support of the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program through the development and integration of remote sensing technologies for post-fire mapping and analysis.” In March 2004, RSAC also received the “Excellence in Rehabilitation and Restoration” group award from the Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service’s National Fire Plan organization.

RSAC provides remotely sensed imagery and burned area reflectance classification (BARC) data to BAER teams so they can develop a burn severity map, identify values at risk, and set priorities for rehabilitation treatment areas. The BARC data and other geospatial technologies help the BAER team develop rehabilitation and restoration plans more rapidly and to perform much of their postfire analysis in an office environment. Consequently, operations are less expensive and markedly safer. The team spends less time gathering extensive amounts of field data by flying in smoky conditions over the burned area or by hiking through acres of burnt snags.

RSAC began supporting Forest Service BAER teams during the 2001 fire season. Since the program’s inception, RSAC has supported 142 BAER teams in 15 States by mapping more than 4.6 million acres of burned areas. The fires ranged in size from a few thousand acres to the nearly half-million-acre 2002 Biscuit Fire in southwestern Oregon. RSAC continues to provide image and technical support to BAER teams in their efforts to produce the burn severity map.



Satellite imagery of the Grand Prix and Old Fires near San Bernardino, CA, shows the wildfires’ proximity to large urban populations. In the fall of 2003, many of the more than 700,000 burned acres were close to large populations, generating a critical need for Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams.