

18th CHRIS MEETING
26-29 September 2006, Cairns, Australia

RASTER NAVIGATIONAL CHART STATUS
(August 2006)
United States (NOAA)

1. Summary

<i>Executive summary:</i>	The USA (NOAA) is continuing to produce official RNCs and weekly updates. The resulting RNCs are distributed for free over the Internet. A network of certified redistributors has been established.
<i>Actions to be taken:</i>	None
<i>Related documents:</i>	None

2. Introduction / Scope

The Office of Coast Survey, NOAA produces official raster navigational charts (RNCs) and weekly updates for the USA. These RNCs have become an important and successful contributor to safe, efficient, and environmentally sound marine transportation. They have been incorporated into international standards for electronic chart systems including ECDIS. NOAA RNCs are considered “official” in the USA, and meet federal chart carriage regulations in the USA where specified in U.S. Coast Guard regulations.

3. Analysis/Discussion.

USA (NOAA) has been producing RNCs for over a decade and weekly updates for over 5 years. In December 2005, USA (NOAA) began distributing those RNCs and weekly updates over the Internet. They are available for free from the official site at: <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/Raster/Index.htm>. In the first 7 months of operation, 2.5 million free RNCs and updates have been distributed. Planned improvements of the distribution site include the ability to download regional groups of RNCs by a single operator action rather than requiring RNCs to be downloaded individually. A GeoTIFF version of each chart will be offered in the near future for GIS users.

In addition, USA (NOAA) has begun a “Certified RNC Distributorship” program. Anyone wishing to redistribute official NOAA RNCs may participate. The Distributorship program requires adherence to certain practices of quality, timeliness, and truth in labeling. NOAA RNCs provided by certified distributors retain their official status, and may be used to meet chart carriage requirements under conditions specified by the U.S. Coast Guard. Details of the distributorship program are at: <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/Raster/distributor.htm>. Thirty-eight distributors have been certified to date. Approximately 50% of the 2.5M RNCs distributed were distributed by these partners.

4. Benefits.

The change to “free distribution” has brought NOAA’s RNC distribution policy in-line with its ENC distribution policy, and should increase the use of official electronic charts.

5. Working Groups.

Not Applicable.

6. Other relevant information.

None.

7. Priority.

Not Applicable

8. Target completion date.

This activity will continue indefinitely.

9. Action Required.

None.