

## Chronology of Major Events in Federal Science Policy, 1787-2007

- 1787 U.S Constitution gives Congress power “to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts”
- 1789 First Congress passes Patent and Copyright Acts
- 1804-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition
- 1844 Samuel F. B. Morse receives \$30,000 from Congress to build first telegraph line
- 1849 Smithsonian Institution develops weather observation network
- 1863 National Academy of Sciences Act 12 Stat. 806-07
- 1870 Congress creates Weather Bureau in War Department
- 1890 Congress creates civilian Weather Bureau in Dept. of Agriculture
- 1901 National Bureau of Standards created 31 Stat. 1449-1450
- 1915 national Advisory Committee on Aeronautics created
- 1930 National Institute of Health created, consolidates other federal Medical research programs
- 1941-47 Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) created by executive order; coordinated federal scientific R&D during World War II, including the Manhattan Project
- 1945 *Science—The Endless Frontier*, report by Vannevar Bush, head of OSRD
- 1946 Atomic Energy Act of 1946, created Atomic Energy Commission; commercial nuclear power made possible in 1954
- 1950 National Science Foundation Act, PL 507, with a mission “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; and to secure the national defense.”
- 1957-58 International Geophysical Year
- 1957 Soviet Union launches *Sputnik* on October 4
- 1958 National Aeronautics and Space Act, PL 85-568  
Advanced Research Projects Agency (later DARPA) in DOD
- 1959 Treaty on Antarctica
- 1960 NSF Institutional Support Program, a capital program for university research infrastructure
- 1961 NASA Mercury Program begins; Alan Shepard becomes the first American in space on May 5
- 1962 NASA John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth
- 1962-69 ARPA develops early Internet, ARPAnet launched in 1969
- 1965 NASA First American Space Walk  
Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) created
- 1967 Weather Bureau renamed National Weather Service  
NASA Loss of Apollo 1
- 1969 NASA Apollo 11 lands on the moon

1970 First "Earth Day"  
NASA Apollo 13  
ESSA becomes National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

1972 NSF takes over management of twelve labs of DARPA  
Space Shuttle Program authorized, PL 92-304

1973 NASA Skylab  
Yom Kippur War; first oil embargo by OPEC on October 17

1974 Energy Research and Development Administration ERDA created in response to oil crisis

1975 NASA Apollo-Soyuz

1976 National Science and Technology Policy, Organization and Priorities Act, PL 94-282; Established Office of Science and Technology Policy in Executive Office of President  
NASA Viking 1 and 2 probes reach Mars

1977 NASA Voyager "Grand Tour" of the Solar System

1978 Department of Energy created

1979 Voyager 1 reached Jupiter's orbit  
Creation of the Department of Energy

1979 Three Mile Island accident, March 28  
Beginning of second oil crisis, April

1980 Synthetic Fuels Corporation created

1981 NASA Space Shuttle Program begins, first launch, April 12

1983 US Antarctic Program established

1985 NSF research in South Pole for ozone loss  
Synthetic Fuels Corporation created and abolished

1986 NASA space shuttle *Challenger* disaster

1980s NSF assumes primary financial support and coordination of Internet, NSFnet

1990 NASA Hubble Space Telescope

1990s NSF develops math education standards with National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

1992 Land Remote Sensing Policy Act (Landsat), PL 102-555

1993 NSF supported National Center for Supercomputing Applications at Univ. of Illinois, develop "Mosaic," first web browser

1994 NSF, NASA, and DARPA launch Digital Library Initiative, predecessor of "Google"

1996 NSF discovers Antarctic Ozone hole

1998 NASA International Space Station (ISS)

2000 NSF, with other agencies, develops National Nanotechnology Initiative

2003 NASA space shuttle *Columbia* disaster

2007 America COMPETES (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science) Act, PL 110-69



The Very Large Array, located near Socorro, New Mexico, consist of 27 radio antennas that are each 25 meters (82 feet) in diameter. It is the most scientifically productive ground-based telescope in the history of astronomy. (Photo courtesy of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory/Associated Universities, Inc.)



Carbon-free electricity from solar and nuclear power. (Photo courtesy of Warren Gretz/Department of Energy/National Renewable Energy Library)