WRF Modeling System Overview

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What is WRF?

- WRF: Weather Research and Forecasting Model
  - Used for both research and operational forecasting

- It is a supported "community model", i.e. a free and shared resource with distributed development and centralized support

- Its development is led by NCAR, NOAA/ESRL and NOAA/NCEP/EMC with partnerships at AFWA, FAA, and collaborations with universities and other government agencies in the US and overseas

WRF as a Community Model

- Version 1.0 WRF was released December 2000
- Version 2.0: May 2004 (NMM added, EM nesting released)
- Version 2.1: August 2005 (EM becomes ARW)
- Version 2.2: December 2006 (WPS released)
- Version 3.0: April 2008 (includes global ARW version)
- Version 3.1: April 2009
  - Version 3.1.1 August 2009
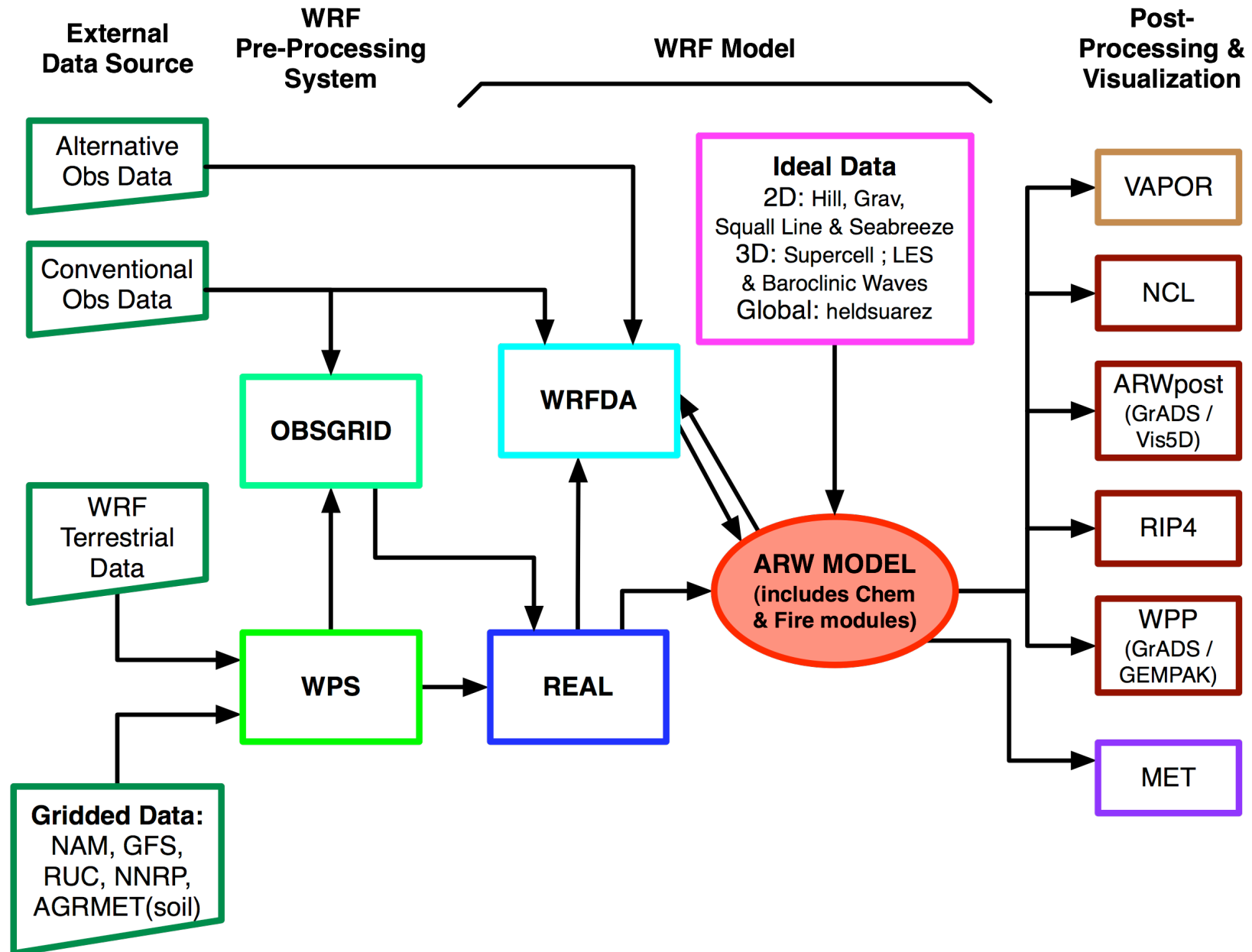- Version 3.2: just released in April 2010

What can WRF be used for?

- ARW and NMM
  - Atmospheric physics/parameterization research
  - Case-study research
  - Real-time NWP and forecast system research
  - Data assimilation research
  - Teaching dynamics and NWP
- ARW only
  - Regional climate and seasonal time-scale research
  - Coupled-chemistry applications
  - Global simulations
  - Idealized simulations at many scales (e.g. convection, baroclinic waves, large eddy simulations)

Who uses WRF?

- Academic atmospheric scientists (dynamics, physics, weather, climate research)

- Forecast teams at operational centers

- Applications scientists (e.g. Air Quality, Hydrology, Utilities)

WRF Modeling System Flow Chart

External Data Source

WRF Pre-Processing System

WRF Model

Post-Processing & Visualization

Alternative Obs Data

Conventional Obs Data

WRF Terrestrial Data

Gridded Data: NAM, GFS, RUC, NNRP, AGRMET(soil)

OBSGRID

WPS

WRFDA

REAL

Ideal Data
2D: Hill, Grav, Squall Line & Seabreeze
3D: Supercell ; LES & Baroclinic Waves
Global: heldsuarez

ARW MODEL (includes Chem & Fire modules)

VAPOR

NCL

ARWpost (GrADS / Vis5D)

RIP4

WPP (GrADS / GEMPAK)

MET

Modeling System Components

- WRF Pre-processing System (WPS)
  - Real-data interpolation for NWP runs
  - New obsgrid program for adding more obs to analysis
- WRF Model (ARW and NMM dynamical cores)
  - Initialization programs for real and (for ARW) idealized data (real.exe/ideal.exe)
  - Numerical integration program (wrf.exe)
- Graphics and verification tools including MET
- WRFDA (separate tutorial)

- WRF-Chem (separate tutorial)
- WRF-Fire - fire-spread model for forest fires

WPS Functions

- Define simulation domain area (and nests)
- Produce terrain, landuse, soil type etc. on the simulation domain ("static" fields)
- De-grib GRIB files for meteorological data (u, v, T, q, surface pressure, soil data, snow data, sea-surface temperature, etc.)
- Interpolate meteorological data to WRF model grid (horizontally)
- Optionally add more observations to analysis (separate obsgrid program)

WPS and WRF

Running WPS

- Several executable stages with namelist input
  - geogrid.exe (interpolate maps and time-independent fields)
  - ungrib.exe (convert time-dependent Grib-formatted data to simple binary format)
  - metgrid.exe (interpolate time-dependent initial and boundary data)
  - obsgrid.exe (optional stage to add more observations)

Running WRF

- Two executable stages with namelist input
  - real.exe or real_nmm.exe (set up vertical model levels for model input and boundary files)
  - wrf.exe (run model)

WRFDA (Data Assimilation)

- Variational data assimilation (3D-Var and 4D-Var)

- Ensemble DA

- Hybrid variational/ensemble DA

Function

- Ingest observations to improve WRF input analysis from WPS

- May be used in cycling mode for updating WRF initial conditions after WRF run

- Also used for observation impact data studies

WRFDA

- ## Supported data types

  - Conventional surface and upper air, wind profiler, aircraft

  - Remote sensing data: Cloud-tracked winds, satellite-retrieved profiles, ground-based/satellite GPS, scatterometer ocean surface winds, radar radial velocity and reflectivity, satellite radiance

- ## Background error covariance for ARW from

  - NMC method
  - Ensemble method

WRF-Chem

- Supported by NOAA/ESRL
- Includes chemistry species and processes, many chemistry options
- Also needs emissions data
- Included in WRF tar file, but requires special compilation option

WRF real and ideal functions

- REAL
  - Creates initial and boundary condition files for real-data cases
  - Does vertical interpolation to model levels (when using WPS)
  - Does vertical dynamic (hydrostatic) balance
  - Does soil vertical interpolations and land-use mask checks
- IDEAL (ARW only)
  - Programs for setting up idealized case
  - Simple physics and usually single sounding
  - Initial conditions and dynamic balance

WRF Model

- WRF

  - Dynamical core (ARW or NMM) is compile-time selectable

  - Uses initial conditions from REAL or IDEAL

  - Real-data cases use boundary conditions from REAL

  - Runs the model simulation with run-time selected namelist switches (such as physics choices, timestep, length of simulation, etc.)

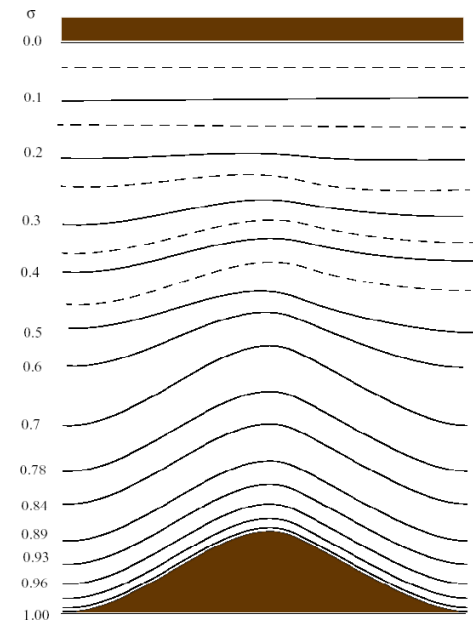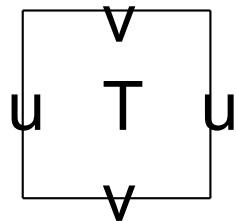 - Outputs history and restart files

ARW Dynamics

Key features:

- Fully compressible, non-hydrostatic (with hydrostatic option)
- Mass-based terrain following coordinate, η

$$\eta = \frac{\left(\pi - \pi_t\right)}{\mu}, \qquad \mu = \pi_s - \pi_t$$

where π is hydrostatic pressure,
μ is column mass

- Arakawa C-grid staggering

ARW Model

Key features:

- 3rd-order Runge-Kutta time integration scheme

- High-order advection scheme

- Scalar-conserving (positive definite option)

- Complete Coriolis, curvature and mapping terms
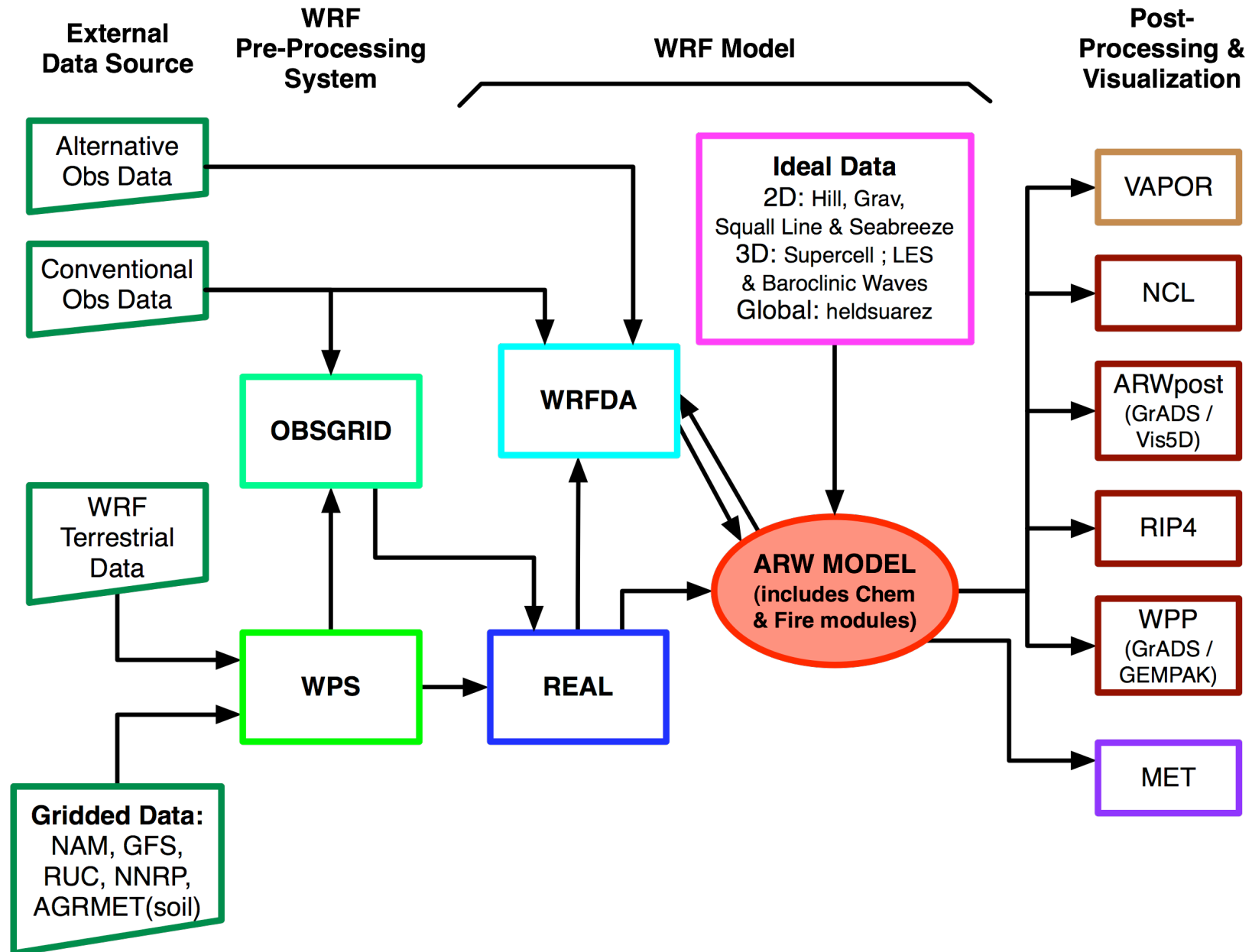
- Two-way and one-way nesting

ARW Model

Key features:

- Choices of lateral boundary conditions suitable for real-data and idealized simulations

    – Specified, Periodic, Open, Symmetric, Nested

- Full physics options to represent atmospheric radiation, surface and boundary layer, and cloud and precipitation processes
- Grid-nudging and obs-nudging (FDDA)
- New Digital Filter Initialization option

Graphics and Verification Tools

- ## ARW and NMM

  - RIP4 (Read, Interpolate and Plot)
  - WRF Post-Processor (WPP)
    - Conversion to GriB (for GrADS and GEMPAK)
  - MET (Model Evaluation Toolkit)

- ## ARW

  - NCAR Graphics Command Language (NCL)
  - ARWPost
    - Conversion program for GrADS and Vis5D

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Basic Software Requirement

- Fortran 90/95 compiler
- C compiler
- Perl
- netCDF library
- Public domain mpich for MPI

Portability

- Runs on Unix single, OpenMP and MPI platforms:
  - IBM SP AIX (xlf)
  - Linux (PGI, Intel, g95, gfortran, Pathscale compilers)
  - SGI Altix (Intel)
  - Cray XT (PGI, Pathscale)
  - Mac Darwin (xlf, PGI, Intel, g95 compilers)
  - Others (HP, Sun, SGI Origin, Compaq)

User Support

- Email: wrfhelp@ucar.edu
- User Web pages:

    ARW:http://www.mmm.ucar.edu/wrf/users/

    NMM:http://www.dtcenter.org/wrf-nmm/users/

    – Latest update for the modeling system

    – WRF software download

    – Various documentation

      - Users' Guide
      - Technical Note (ARW Description)

ARW Hurricane Katrina Simulation (4km)
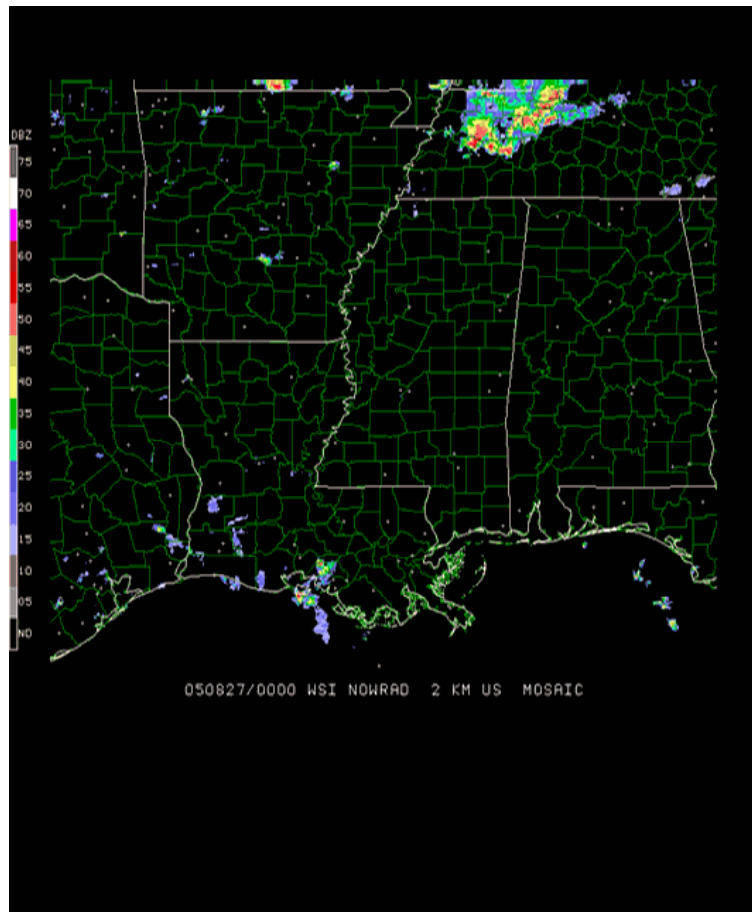
ARW Convective-scale Forecasting (4km)

00 h forecast 00 UTC 04 June 2005