



# NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

June 16, 2005

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

**SAFETY  
FIRST**

**KEEP THIS AREA  
SAFE AND CLEAN**

June is National Safety Month and this year's theme is "*Safety where we live, work and play*". In light of our current metrics, this is an excellent opportunity for us to focus on safety in the workplace and also to make Safety a part of our everyday lives. As was highlighted by the Regional Safety Manger in a recent e-mail to the MICs and HICs, all of us in the Western Region need to take the position that every accident is preventable.

In May alone, Western Region had 4 incidents. We need to investigate and learn from each accident, we need to make safety the first thing we think of when we are in our workplace, we need to be able to identify any potential safety pitfalls and eliminate them, and we need to enlist the assistance of everyone in helping to reduce the occurrences of accidents. The Eastern Region took the lead in developing a Safety Newsletter. To view the newsletter, go to:

[ftp://ftp.werh.noaa.gov/share/Safety\\_Newsletters/statmay05.pdf](ftp://ftp.werh.noaa.gov/share/Safety_Newsletters/statmay05.pdf)

Additionally, I understand that the majority of the Western Region's accidents are "slips, trips, and falls". In VADM Lautenbacher's e-mail on June 15, he referenced the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO) website: <http://www.seco.noaa.gov>

Here is an excerpt from the SECO webpage with a few tips regarding slips trips and falls:

### Follow these tips to avoid serious injury from a fall:

- Keep all aisles, stairs and walkways free of clutter.
- Open cabinet drawers are a tripping hazard; keep them closed when you're not using them.
- Turn on the lights before you enter a room, and report any burned-out bulbs to housekeeping as soon as possible.
- Always use handrails on the stairs, and take one step at a time.
- Broken stairs or loose stair coverings? Report them right away!
- Make wide turns around corners, so you can see who's coming.
- If you spot a spill, clean it up or report it immediately.
- Stay away from shortcuts. The route less traveled may be less safe!
- Don't overload – take only what you can carry comfortably, and make sure you can see over it.

### *In This Issue...*

- **Statement of the Week**  
*by Shawn Weagle*
- **Activities Around the Region**
- **University Assignment Program**

- When walking on a wet or slippery surface, slow down, take small steps, and keep a hand free for balance.
- Make sure chains, guardrails, or warning tapes are in place around elevated areas.
- Keep all harnesses and other fall protection equipment in working order, and use them correctly.
- Wear the right shoes for the job, and keep the soles clean for better traction.

I welcome you all to visit the SECO webpage and to join me in putting safety first and foremost in our everyday lives.

## **METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION**

**Statement of the Week:** This week's Statement of the Week is an SPS written by forecaster Shawn Weagle of WFO San Francisco Bay area. Shawn does a nice job of including a discussion of climatology in his outlook statement calling attention to a forecast of rainfall during a normally dry period of the year. Good job Shawn!

SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAN FRANCISCO CA  
305 AM PDT WED JUN 8 2005

CAZ005>010-065-074-075-082300-  
SONOMA AND MARIN COUNTIES-SAN FRANCISCO-  
ALAMEDA AND CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES-SANTA CLARA COUNTY-  
COASTAL MONTEREY COUNTY-  
SALINAS VALLEY/INTERIOR MONTEREY COUNTY/SAN BENITO COUNTY-  
NAPA COUNTY-SANTA CRUZ COUNTY-SAN MATEO COUNTY-  
305 AM PDT WED JUN 8 2005

...LATE SEASON STORM WILL BRING RAIN TO CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TODAY AND TONIGHT...

AN UNSEASONABLE LATE SEASON STORM SYSTEM WILL BRING RAIN TO CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TODAY AND TONIGHT. RAINFALL TOTALS WILL BE LIGHT...HOWEVER RAINFALL SHOULD AFFECT BOTH SAN FRANCISCO AND MONTEREY BAY AREAS. SIGNIFICANT RAIN IS RARE ALONG THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COAST DURING JUNE...HOWEVER IT IS NOT UNHEARD OF. THE LAST TIME MEASURABLE RAIN WAS RECORDED IN JUNE AT SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT WAS IN 2001 WHEN 0.10 INCHES FELL...IN DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO THE LAST TIME MEASURABLE RAIN WAS RECORDED IN JUNE WAS IN 2002 WHEN 0.03 INCHES FELL.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE WEATHER FOR TODAY AND TONIGHT: JUNE IS A TIME OF YEAR WHEN OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS OFTEN HEAD UP TO THE HIGH COUNTRY FOR HIKING AND CAMPING...THINKING THE WEATHER WILL BE NICE AND WARM. THIS IS A COLD CORE LOW PRESSURE SYSTEM THAT WILL BRING A CHILLY RAIN AND POSSIBLY SNOW TO THE HIGHER TERRAIN OF THE SIERRAS AND THE SISKIYOU. SNOW IS POSSIBLE OVER THE SUMMIT ON INTERSTATE 80 AND HIGHWAY 50. PEOPLE

PLANNING TO SPEND THE NIGHT OUTDOORS IN THE HIGHER TERRAIN...EVEN IN THE HIGHER TERRAIN OF THE BAY AREA...SHOULD BRING PLENTY OF WARM CLOTHES.

\$\$

STROBIN/WEAGLE



*Las Vegas MIC Kim Runk is interviewed at Lake Mead National Recreation Area a few days prior to the Memorial Day weekend.*

### **Las Vegas Supports Memorial Day Weekend on Lake Mead:**

The Memorial Day weekend is traditionally the busiest weekend of the year at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. This year was no exception, as more than 200,000 people visited the park over the 3-day weekend, and roughly 5,000 boats took to the water.

WFO Las Vegas MIC Kim Runk gave 10 interviews prior to the busy weekend. Interest in the new Las Vegas Lake Wind Advisory product was high. The WFO issued a Lake Wind Advisory for the last day of the busy holiday weekend, with southwest winds expected to increase significantly.



*Larry Laknar (center) and Bob McWilliams (second from left) receive Mark Trail awards. Also pictured are General Johnson, Vice Adm. Lautenbacher, and Jack Elrod.*

### **Mark Trail Award presented to Beaverhead County**

**Officials:** In a ceremony held in Washington D.C. on May 26, Beaverhead County (Montana) Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Larry Laknar and Radio Specialist Bob McWilliams received Mark Trail awards. Vice Adm. Conrad C.

Lautenbacher, Jr. presented the award. Also present at the award ceremony were Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson and Mark Trail comic strip writer and illustrator Jack Elrod.

Now in its ninth year, the awards program honors individuals and organizations that use or provide NOAA Weather Radio All-Hazards receivers or transmitters to save lives and protect property. Seventeen award recipients were recognized nationally this year.

**Weather Planner a Hit with Fire Weather Customers:** On May 16-19, Basil Newmerzhucky, Fire Weather Program Leader at WFO Sacramento, visited several fire weather customers from the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and others to the south, including Lassen, Tahoe, Eldorado, and Stanislaus National Forests. California Division of Forestry (CFD) units in the Sierra foothills were also included in the visit. The highlight of this year's visit was to introduce customers to the new "Fire Weather Planner". This new grid based point forecast program allows the user to enter requirements for temperature, humidity, wind, and precipitation. The tool then produces a color coded 7-day output of time periods which fit the burn prescription for a specified location.

Basil reported that the Fire Weather Planner was a huge hit with everyone. "It was the most excitement that I have ever seen our Northern California customers express for NWS products in the five years that I've done these outreach visits. Most of the users wanted to know how these numbers were derived, and when I showed them our gridded temperature and wind fields from our web page, they were, as a whole, just amazed at the graphical resolution of our forecasts."

Thanks for the great fire weather outreach, Basil and WFO Sacramento!



*WCM Dan Gudgel conducts the seminar.*

**Flight Academy Seminar in Bakersfield:** The International Flight Training Academy (IFTA), located in Bakersfield, California, provides training to pilots of foreign air carriers, primarily from Asia. At IFTA's request, WFO San Joaquin Valley taught a seminar on aviation weather relevant to central California. Subjects included air-mass stability, pressure patterns, vertical motion, thunderstorms, and local effects.

WCM Dan Gudgel conducted the seminar, which was attended by 17 instructor pilots and students from Japan Air Lines (JAL) and local management.

**Ada County LEPC Quarterly Meeting:** On June 9, WFO Boise hosted the Ada County LEPC quarterly meeting. Twenty-seven individuals from the Ada County emergency response community were in attendance. Agencies represented include: Ada County Sheriff, Boise State University, Red Cross, Boise Police, Micron, Meridian Fire, Boise Airport, Idaho Power, Boise Fire, and several other small private enterprises in the Boise area. The meeting began with an overview of why NIFC exists and what its mission is. At the conclusion of the meeting, attendees were given a tour of the WFO.



*Met Intern Danny Harty and park ranger Jim Tucker participate in a storm survey after the river crested.*

**WFO Supports Yosemite NP During Snow Melt Flooding:** Rapid warming over an above normal snow pack resulted in a significant snow melt across the southern Sierra Nevada during the last weeks of May. A late-season rain event exacerbated the problem, causing flooding of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley.

WFO San Joaquin Valley and the California-Nevada RFC worked closely with park officials as they made decisions about evacuating some of the most popular campgrounds in the national park system.

**Billings WCM Works With Utility Company on Lightning Safety Awareness Article:** To promote lightning safety awareness, Jim Scarlett (WCM, Billings) worked with Northwest Energy, a power company serving the north central U.S., to get an article on lightning safety awareness published in the company's newsletter, "Energy Connections." The article follows below. Great job, Jim!

### ***June Marks Lightning Safety Awareness Week:***

We've all heard the story about Ben Franklin's experiments with electricity while flying a kite in a thunderstorm. And those of us in the business know that like electricity, lightning is nothing to play around with. According to the National Weather Service, lightning strikes about 400 adults and children per year, and up to 75 are killed while the rest may suffer permanent or debilitating injuries. That's why we're joining with the National Weather Service to promote Lightning Safety Awareness Week, June 19-25. We want our customers to remain safe around electricity – even when it comes from the sky. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind the next time you see storm clouds on the horizon:

- All thunderstorms produce lightning and should be considered dangerous.
- Lightning often strikes as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall. Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of the storm because people wait until the last minute before seeking shelter.
- If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough that it could strike your location at any moment.
- Look for dark cloud bases and increasing wind. Every flash of lightning is dangerous, even the first. Head to safety before that first flash. If you hear thunder, head to safety!
- Lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles. Even when the sky looks blue and clear, be cautious. If you hear thunder, take cover. At least 10 percent of lightning occurs without visible clouds overhead in the sky.

For more information on weather facts, figures, watches and warnings in your area, check out one of these Web sites:

Montana: [www.weather.gov/Billings](http://www.weather.gov/Billings); [www.weather.gov/Glasgow](http://www.weather.gov/Glasgow); [www.weather.gov/GreatFalls](http://www.weather.gov/GreatFalls); and [www.weather.gov/Missoula](http://www.weather.gov/Missoula), South Dakota: [www.weather.gov/Aberdeen](http://www.weather.gov/Aberdeen); and [www.weather.gov/SiouxFalls](http://www.weather.gov/SiouxFalls), Nebraska: [www.weather.gov/Omaha](http://www.weather.gov/Omaha) and [www.weather.gov/NorthPlatte](http://www.weather.gov/NorthPlatte)

National Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 19-25. For more information, see <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>.



**WFO Assists Siting New RAWS:** The U.S. Forest Service recently requested the assistance of WFO San Joaquin Valley in siting two new RAWS stations in Sierra National Forest. One of the new locations was at the Miami Mountain Lookout.

Pictured is Stu Harris instructing Met Intern Jeff Myers on how to use a fire finder. Mr. Harris is one of 30 such volunteers who help staff the station throughout fire season.

**Southwestern WCMs Team Up to Teach Preparedness Course:** The Arizona Emergency Services Association (AESAs) held its annual statewide “All Hazards, All Responsible” conference in Chandler, Arizona, May 24-26. Western Region field WCMs Andy Bailey (Las Vegas), George Howard (Flagstaff), David Runyan (Phoenix), and Tom Evans (Tucson) teamed up to teach a special evening course, “Hazardous Weather and Flooding Preparedness.” The evening scheduling allowed conference



attendees to both attend the class and participate in the day-time conference activities. AESA sponsored the training room facility at the San Marcos Hotel, and the Arizona Government University provided logistical support, course registration and instructor/subject evaluations.



**Rip Current Awareness Week:** As part of Rip Current Awareness week, Ed Clark, WCM, San Diego distributed hundreds of Rip Current brochures (in both English and Spanish) to Life Guard stations in extreme southern California. Included in the distribution were Newport and Huntington Beaches, Encinitas, City of San Diego and Solana Beach.

In the picture, Ed is giving several packages of the brochures to a Life Guard from Solana Beach.

## HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

**New River Forecast Points in Southern Arizona:** Beginning July 1, 2005, two new River Forecast Points will be added to the Tucson Hydrologic Service Area. WFO Tucson has worked with various county and federal agencies to ensure their communities will be served in times of flooding. The Colorado Basin River Forecast Center is assisting WFO Tucson implement these two new River Forecast Points.

## SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

**WR IFPS Mod-Note WR05-003 Report of Completion Due:** The first WR IFPS Mod-Note was scheduled to be installed by June 1 at all WR offices. As a reminder, once the installation is completed, please update EMRS. WR will be tracking all Mod-Note completions through EMRS.

As a reminder, Mod-Note 05-003 was titled “Configuration changes for the GFE Formatter to allow standardization on UTC time at all WR WFOs.”

**Call for University Assignment Proposals:** OCWWS recently announced the University Assignment Program (UAP) call for applications for 2005-2006. The deadline for completed applications is July 1. If you wish to apply, please note that transcripts are not required, but can be submitted if more convenient for you to do so. Further details can be found in NWS Instruction 20-104, University Assignment Program, located at: <http://www.weather.gov/directives/020/pd02001004a.pdf>

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Joe Banas (UAP National Program Coordinator). Email: [Joe.Banas@noaa.gov](mailto:Joe.Banas@noaa.gov), phone: (301) 713-0463, x168. You may also contact Andy Edman (regional coordinator) at WR/SSD.

**HMT Update:** NOAA scientists from the Environmental Technologies Lab (ETL) are conducting their first siting survey in the American River Basin for the Hydrometeorology Testbed (HMT) this week. This is part of the spin-up effort for a 4-year field campaign geared toward improving precipitation estimates over the American River basin. WR staffs from CNRFC, WRHQ, and WFOs Sacramento,

Reno, and Monterey are part of the HMT advisory team responsible for organizing this effort. When HMT is in fully deployed, WFO and RFC forecasters will have access to state-of-the-art remote and in situ sensors throughout the study basin.



*Several panel discussions were held at the Seattle THORPEX meeting. This one was moderated by Roland Stull (University of British Columbia).*

**WFO Seattle Hosts International Meeting:** WFO Seattle recently hosted a THORPEX Pacific Predictability Experiment workshop. THORPEX is a WMO international *Global Atmospheric Research Programme* that works to accelerate improvements in the accuracy of 1 to 14 day weather forecasts. The program builds upon ongoing advances within the basic-research and operational-forecasting communities and makes progress by enhancing international collaboration between these communities and users of forecast products. Attendees to the workshop included representatives from the WMO, UK Met Office, the European Centre, Met Services of Canada, Japan, Australia, and Taiwan, NCAR, NASA, NRL/NPS, NOAA ETL, NOAA EMC, Universities of Washington, Arizona, Wisconsin, Florida State, Georgia Tech, British Columbia, Hawaii, and North Carolina, the National Science Foundation, private

sector, and the NWS. NWS representatives included the MIC and SOO from WFO Seattle and the MIC from WFO Monterey, California. A time line was established to prepare a proposal to NSF by January 2006 for a Pacific experiment to possibly coincide with the International Polar Year (IPY) in 2007-2008.

**New IFPS Training:** The first Digital Services course, “IFPS/GFE Text Formatters for Forecasters,” is available through the NOAA E-learning Learning Management System (LMS). Since the inception of the National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD), text products have been generated using formatters to “unload” or “read” the forecasts from the grids. The process involves the use of various statistics and code to determine what values or words are important for including in the text. The training is designed to provide the office with an understanding of the IFPS text formatter processing. Mathew Belk, senior forecaster at Taunton, MA is the instructor for this lesson. You can access the course via <http://e-learning.doc.gov/noaa/>.

Search the "entire catalog" for IFPS/GFE and select the course title.

**New Radar Web Page:** The next generation radar display, Radar Integrated Display with Geospatial Elements (RIDGE), <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ridge/>, is the result of a partnership with the North Texas Council of Governments and Southern Region. The RIDGE radar will combine radar images with geospatial elements such as topography maps, highways, and county boundaries. This provides additional reference information for users to understand where the storms are located. RIDGE also adds the ability to overlay polygon warnings issued by the National Weather Service Forecast Offices.

The RIDGE radar will eventually replace the current radar display on the web. Southern region is currently running a prototype version of the software. A brief summary of the implementation process was sent to the offices

**GOES-10 Outage Planned for June 21:** NESDIS is planning to correct the north-south drift of the satellite on June 23. The primary impacts to operations are:

June 21	2023 UTC - 2229 UTC	No GOES-10 Imagery or Soundings*
June 21	Full Disk imagery only	1 hour before, 6 hours following data outage

Note: The satellite imagery may appear to drift on AWIPS for several hours after the maneuver until the navigation corrections take full affect.

**New COMET Training Module:** The COMET Program has released a new training module entitled “The Impact of Weather on Air Traffic Management.” This module is geared primarily to CWSU and other aviation meteorologists. It can be found at: <http://www.meted.ucar.edu/nas/>.

The module was developed at the request of NOAA's Assistant Administrator for Weather Services, David L. Johnson, and is designed to help staff at the CWSUs and WFOs better understand the National Airspace System (NAS) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The module describes the various components of the FAA, how that organization manages air traffic, and how CWSU and WFO forecasts help the FAA's decision-making process.

**Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC):** It is important that offices keep up with the training schedule. In WR, we have broken the two track deadlines up into first and second half of FY05. Completion will be tracked by LMS and reported in the WR Professional Development and Training plan.

**March 31, 2005:** Complete Core Track (WFO and CWSUs)

**August 31, 2005:** Complete Severe Weather Track (WFOs and highly recommended for CWSUs)

**TBD (probably March, 2006):** Winter Weather Track (WFOs)

For more info on AWOC and LMS go to: <http://wdtb.noaa.gov/courses/awoc/index.html>.

## **SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION**

**NWR:** Merri Richmond, WFO Salt Lake City ET staff and the facilities team of Randy Miller and Tom Page upgraded the Salt Lake City NOAA Weather Radio. The 20 plus year old transmitter was replaced with a state of the art Armstrong G300. This transmitter covers the Salt Lake City and surrounding areas.

**Point Piedras Blancas:** Jim Maclellan and the Oxnard Electronics staff removed the Point Piedras Blancas (87Q) ASOS equipment. The site was moved for environmental reasons. The new data collection platform equipment will be installed by the electronics staff at Oxnard.

**AC Problem:** Grant Garner responded to an air conditioning problem at the Page ASOS. The AC unit was replaced.





### **New Cellwatch Battery Monitoring System Install at Boise:**

Facilities Engineering Technicians Randy Miller and Lee Jenson with support of Mike Pereira, Electronics Systems Analyst, and his Electronics staff completed the install of the new Cell watch battery monitoring system. The new system has already picked up suspect batteries that need to be changed-out to prevent a electrical power system failure. The ET staff installed the Cellwatch system to the LAN for constant monitoring capability. The Cellwatch system is to be installed at Oxnard and Seattle in the coming months.