



NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

June 7, 2007

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Retirements:

There have been several recent retirements that I would like to make special note of. These individuals have left their mark on the National Weather Service in different ways, but all have been an integral part of our overall mission.

Dennis Sturm, Meteorologist, WFO Phoenix, retired on June 1, 2007, after 38 years of federal service. Jim has worked at WFO Louisville, KY, Cheyenne, WY, and for over thirty years at WFO Phoenix.

Christopher Scott, Senior Forecaster, WFO Eureka, retired on May 29, 2007, with 36 years of federal service. Chris worked at WFO Louisville, KY, WFO Cheyenne, WY, and WFO Minneapolis/St. Paul before coming to WFO Eureka.

David Runyan, WCM, WFO Phoenix, retired on May 3, 2007. David has completed over 30 years of federal service. He started his career in the US Air Force, then worked for the NWS at WSMO Limon, CO, WSO Kansas City, MO, WSFO Ann Arbor, MI, Central Region Headquarters, then WFO Phoenix.

Patrick Johnson, Lead Forecaster, WFO Sacramento, leaves the NWS with over 37 years of federal service. His retirement date was April 11, 2007. Patrick has served the NWS as an agriculture forecaster, ocean services, forecaster, and as a lead forecaster in two offices.

Diversity Corner:

Questions that Open the Doors of Diversity in Celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month by Brooke Bingeman, WFO Monterey : In the summer of 2000, I had the unique opportunity to move to the Hawaiian Islands to study meteorology and lived there for 5 years. Submerged in a variety of Asian and Pacific Island cultures, it was the first time I got a taste of what it was like to be in the minority as a Caucasian. Fortunately, the feeling of "ohana" (family) made it an enriching experience where traditions from all the cultures permeated the island lifestyle. Though I don't claim to be an expert on all matters concerning Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, I did learn something simple, yet, invaluable when building relationships with people from other cultures.

One of the best tactics in approaching diversity issues is to ask questions. When I first lived in Hawaii, I'll admit that I couldn't immediately identify the various races (Hawaiian, Samoan, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, etc). Not wanting to seem like an ignorant "haole" (slang for Caucasian) who thinks all Asians and Islanders look the same, I began asking the same

question when I first met someone, “Do you mind if I ask about your ethnic background?” First of all, this avoids such embarrassment as calling someone Chinese when they are actually Korean – assumptions like this can be offensive. Secondly, it shows a genuine interest in learning about the person. If the person seemed comfortable, I’d follow up with more questions: how many generations of your family have been in the U.S., what are some of your family traditions, do you speak other languages and can you teach me a few words? I was amazed at how much I learned and how receptive people were when invited to share.

Outside of Pacific Region, Western Region has the highest percentage of Asian American/Pacific Islanders in its general population according to the 2005 US Census. To better understand our Asian Pacific American customers and co-workers it only takes a couple of minutes to ask a couple of questions. That small investment of time can lay the foundation of trust and acceptance as you open the door to diversity.

Updates in Diversity Management: The Western Region Headquarters Office of the National Weather Service is presently updating their Strategic Plan for Diversity Management and Diversity Action Council charter and by-laws for 2007-2008. The strategic plan lists the goals that WRH plans to carry out to address diversity issues that need improvement, such as improving diversity management, provide diversity education to Western Region employees, monitor Western Region diversity management performance metrics and goals. WRH expects to finalize this plan soon.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

“Weather Geek” Genes Sparked in Blaine County, Idaho: Hundreds of Idaho second, third and fourth graders had their “Weather Geek” genes ignited in April when Jack Messick, Pocatello General Forecaster, and Sherrie Hebert, Service Hydrologist, introduced them to the basics of weather. Over 400 children in Blaine County, Idaho elementary schools learned how the sun, the earth’s rotation and water cycle make for some exciting weather on the planet. The eager participants explored analogies between exploding soda pop cans and air pressure, sweaty trees and people and turbulent bathtubs and the atmosphere. Highlighting the talks, however, were Jack’s tornado demonstrations, which helped the children understand the necessary ingredients for severe weather. The programs were sponsored by the Environmental Resource Center of Ketchum, Idaho, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing environmental and conservation awareness for the Wood River Valley in Central Idaho.



Jack Messick, Pocatello General Forecaster, teaches the “Highs and Lows” of weather to Hailey, Idaho 2nd and 3rd graders.

Dr. Sampson Visit to NWS Offices in Sacramento: Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary, Dr. David A. Sampson visited WFO Sacramento and the California-Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) on May 22. WFO Sacramento briefed on the fire weather program and IMETs. The hydrology briefings included an overview of what the CNRFC does, the importance of water management and the groups involved. CNRFC briefings included discussion of new dams and retrofitting existing dams based on one of Dr. Sampson's questions. The visit also included tours of the joint State-Federal Flood Center and both offices. The COE, USBR, and DWR reps all spoke in glowing terms about the work the CNRFC does.

Dr. David Sampson and Steve Goldstein, Senior Meteorologist. The two are discussing California's Current Fire Weather Condition.



Fort Lewis Safety Day: Fort Lewis Emergency Management and Safety Office invited WFO Seattle to participate in their first Safety Day on May 24th. IMET Jim Prange and WCM Ted Buehner staffed a booth that offered information on NWS products and services, including a NWR demo display, digital forecasts, web page information, weather and flood safety information and a screening of the Washington Weather Hazards video. About 6000 Fort Lewis personnel and their families attended the event.

Redwood Environmental Education Fair: NWS WFO Eureka participated in this 2 day, annual event at the College of the Redwoods, just outside of Eureka, CA. This event gives local elementary and junior high school students a chance to learn about the environment from dozens of different local organizations. This year, Science and Operations Officer Mel Nordquist demonstrated how lightning and static electricity work. Senior Forecaster Mike Vojtesak taught the students how to create their own tornado in a bottle. General Forecaster Eric Lau showed the kids how to make a cloud in a bottle, while Meteorologist Intern Jeff Lewitsky demonstrated convection in a pan and also how high and low pressure work in the atmosphere.

WFO Missoula Open Houses: As part of NOAA's year-long 200 celebration, WFO Missoula held two Open House events; May 18 for local businesses and partners, and May 19 open to the public. Activities included facility tours, experiments for kids, slide show on the history of the National Weather Service, demonstrations of Missoula's web page, FLARE and weather forecast and warning procedures. Both events



were well attended with a good mix of spotters, media, ham radio operators, emergency managers, 911, USFS, and Fire Dept. personnel as well as a rep. from Congressman Jon Tester's office.

The WFO Flagstaff adopts a highway: WFO Flagstaff is participating in the 'Adopt a Highway' program, and have taken on a stretch of Interstate 17 south of Flagstaff to keep clean of litter for the next two years. On Saturday, May 19th, several members of the WFO Flagstaff spent the day picking up over 20 bags of litter along one mile of highway. Pictured are forecaster Daryl Onton, SOO Mike Staudenmaier, WCM George Howard, and a couple other participants who joined us for the event.



Pendleton Open House: WFO Pendleton held an Open House on May 19 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of NOAA. Visitors had the opportunity to view the new technology and equipment. The local newspapers in Pendleton and Walla Walla both provided in-depth coverage of the open house and had very favorable articles about the event. The Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Taskforce was on hand to talk with the public. The taskforce gave out information about maintaining a sustainable water supply. Umatilla County contains four of the seven Critical Groundwater Areas in Oregon.

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Climate Change in California: On May 23, 2007, Dave Reynolds, MIC at WFO Monterey, participated in a NOAA climate change media advisory in California. Representatives from NOS, NMFS, Sea Grant, NWS, and the NOAA Coastal Services Center all provided the media with information on climate change, specifically targeting the information to California and the San Francisco Bay Area. The event was well received by the media, and resulted in the generation of multiple stories throughout the California media. There were approximately 20 media representatives in attendance, including radio, TV, and print media. This was an excellent example of a successful "One NOAA" event.

Jefferson and Holm Awards: The WR received 2 Jefferson Awards and 7 Holm Awards to honor our Cooperative Observers. These are prestigious awards to honor those who observe, record, and report about weather at their locations. Their contributions are extremely valuable to the NWS. Western Region's award recipients are:

Thomas Jefferson Award recipients:

Erling Dohlen
Opheim, Montana

Arnold Finklin
Missoula, Montana

John Campanius Holm award recipients:

Jerald & Bonnie Bergman
Sidney, Montana

Tom Kellom
Dubois, Idaho

Willis Busenitz
Busby, Montana

Martin and Claudia Kux
Lindbergh Lake, Montana

John Duckworth
Wallowa, Oregon

Mike and Sherryl Whittle
Oakley, Idaho

Eugene S. Gates, Jr.
Mina, Nevada

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

Upcoming Science Workshops

- **June 19-21 WR Outreach Workshop** – Park City, UT
- **June 24-29 AMS Conference:** The AMS on Weather Analysis and Forecasting/18th Conference on Numerical Weather Prediction will be held 24-29 June 2007.
- **September 20-21 The Fourth Symposium on Southwest Hydrometeorology:** The Fourth Symposium on Southwest Hydrometeorology will be held Thursday and Friday, September 20-21, 2007, in Tucson AZ. Abstracts should be submitted electronically no later than 15 July 2007. If you will attend, please provide your information using the form at: <http://www.atmo.arizona.edu/swhs/SWHSFormSub.html>.
- **October 2-4 Great Divide Weather Workshop:** The Great Falls and Missoula offices are sponsoring the Eleventh Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop, October 2-4, 2007, in Great Falls, Montana. The deadline for Abstracts is September 1, 2007. For contact information, information on submitting abstracts, as well as registering for the workshop go to the following website: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tx/greatdivide.php>
- **October 13-18 NWS Annual Workshop: Reno, NV** This is just a reminder that the abstract submission deadline for this year's NWA Annual Meeting is June 1st. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.nwas.org/>

General

- **2007 Arizona Weather Workshop:** The Arizona Weather Workshop was held on May 22 in Phoenix, AZ. The focus of the workshop was: heat advisory/warning criteria,

flash flood warning vs urban and small stream flood advisory criteria, and monsoon onset/termination guidelines. The workshop was attended by several neighboring WFO's, plus local media, academia and partners from the Salt River Project (SRP).

- **WRF Issues:** Several WR SOOs continue to collect and send reports back to NCEP on the deteriorating performance of the WRF once the summer heat sets in the west. The WRF deteriorating performance seems to be related to low level moisture fields in complex terrain. This can lead to erroneous stability and precipitation forecasts. Geoff Dimegio (NCEP) and the NCEP WRF developers have been actively looking into the problem.
- **Final Winter Gridded Verification Reports on Web:** WR has been using BOver to examine the performance of the gridded forecasts to improve services and/or reduce workload. Each of the 24 WR offices conducted a series of case studies during last winter. The SOOs have been sharing their results with the other offices using GoToMeeting conference calls. David Myrick (WR/SSD) has broken up the final verification reports from each WFO and placed the recorded Articulate modules on the WR internal web site (http://ww2.wrh.noaa.gov/ssd/digital_services/)
- **WR Purchases GOTOMeeting to improve the Forecast Offices ability to conduct outreach:** GoToMeeting is an online, collaborative meeting software that allows all participants to view anything on the leaders's PC screen through the Internet. Offices can conduct remote training, outreach and weather briefings (using FX-Net) with partners/customers. The software has been used by WR/SSD and by 4 WR offices (PIH, VEF, BYZ, GGW) for the last year. It was listed as a best practice by a couple of WFO during the most recent "best practice" sharing. WR purchased licenses for the remaining 20 WFOs/RFCs to encourage more use of this technology.
- **GFE Send Script:** The WR ITO APP group, in coordination with SSD and SOD, has developed a new GFE send script. The MOD note was sent out on May 23. The script:
 - Provides more error checking to alert the forecaster when grids are corrupted
 - Alerts the forecaster when the grids do not make it to the NDFD and WEB farm
 - Provides the software to send grids to the new consolidated web farm
- **Instant Messaging Project:**
 - Began June 1, 2007
 - IM training articulate training module
 - Web site for help
 - Modnote to modify DNS
- **New LMS began June 1:** See Mark Mollner email for summary of phased capabilities
- **QPFHelper:** New GFE smartool to help forecasters more quickly edit QPF grids was sent to WR offices on June 1
- **Summer BOver Gridded Verification Project:** SOO/DOH call scheduled for June 6. Focus this summer on effectiveness of using Gridded MOS and bias correction.

- **WR Hydrology Verification Team Kickoff – June 27** - Project to improve WR RFC verification.
- **NSTEP** - Draft annual training plan for FY08 will be distributed by June 15.

Teletraining Sessions for June: The teletraining calendar is now at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp> Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: visit@comet.ucar.edu.

- NEW - Use of Ensembles in the Forecast Process (Warm Season Version) (Basic, June 13, 4,18,19,22,26,27,28)
- Satellite Interpretation of Orographic Clouds / Effects (June 20,27)
- CRAS Forecast Imagery in AWIPS (June 19)
- Water Vapor Channel Satellite Imagery (June 25)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products, (June 13)
- Enhanced-V: A Satellite Severe Storm Signature (June 15,21)
- MODerate resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) Products in AWIPS (June 15,29)
- Mesoscale Convective Vortices (June 28)

New - Use of Ensembles in the Forecast Process (Warm Season Version) by Bill Bua (UCAR/COMET)

- **Objective:** Help forecasters make use of newly available (in AWIPS) ensemble information from medium- and short-range ensemble forecasts (MREF and SREF, respectively) in the forecast process.
- Topics:
 - Review of science behind ensemble prediction systems (EPS), post-processing of EPS data, and structure of the NCEP SREF and MREF
 - Uses of MREF in the forecast process
 - Uses of the SREF in the forecast process

All previous sessions including those with recorded instructor audio and annotations are available at: <http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ts.html>

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

Boat and Water Safety: As warmer weather approaches, we head for the water for fun and relaxation. With this also comes the increased risk of drowning and injuries from swimming and boating. Remember the following boat and water safety tips to make your summer safer:

- * Swim with a buddy in a supervised area
- * Wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when in or around water
- * Leave the water immediately if you hear thunder or lightning