NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Western Region Notes

July 27, 2006

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Leadership Corner: Made-to-Order
By Don Britton, WFO Great Falls ITO

The modern world has become highly customized. Our vehicles come with the options we want. Computers are shipped pre-configured with the options and software we want. We order our sandwiches and pizzas the way we want. Cable TV brings 150 channels into our homes so we can watch what we want. TIVO allows us to time shift programming to suit our schedules. We carry cell phones with text-messaging and web access so we can communicate with whom we want, when we want, and how we want. Local radio stations not to your liking? Grab an IPOD and fill it with music you want. Don't like the choices at your local store? Go on-line and order exactly what you want from a vendor in Sri Lanka. Blogs and discussion boards even offer the socio-political viewpoints and "facts" we want.

Historically, however, getting what we wanted has been the exception not the rule. Human history is replete with stories of mankind adapting to circumstances it could not change. I wonder how a made-to-order world has affected our ability to adapt to circumstances we cannot customize. As a society, we seem to be becoming angrier and less tolerant of others and their viewpoints. We demand, instead, that everyone else come around to our own way of thinking, and we condemn those who refuse to accept our worldview.

People, though, do not come customized and pre-configured according to our wishes, and we cannot expect them to simply change to suit us. I *can* change *me*, however. By listening to others' viewpoints, by humanizing rather than dehumanizing their behavior, by changing my approach to suit the circumstances, I can gain some insight into what makes them tick. An understanding of "otherness," and a willingness to accept it, is fundamental to true leadership. Without such understanding and an ability to adapt, leaders cannot build trust and will never find willing followers.

Disneyland is StormReady: On July 24, Disneyland Resort in Ahaneim, California was recognized as a StormReady community. NWS Western Region Director Vickie Nadolski joined WFO San Diego staff members, Mickey Mouse, and other Disneyland officials for a brief ceremony at the resort. The Disneyland Resort opened in 1955 and has become a multifaceted, world-class family resort with three hotels, two theme parks and the shopping and dining complex known as Downtown Disney. The resort has its own emergency operations center with 24-hour warning capabilities.

(L to R) Mickey Mouse, Vickie Nadolski, Greg Emmer (Disneyland senior vice president), and Jerry Schoenfeld (Disneyland emergency preparedness program manager)

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Service of the Week: On July 4, WFO Spokane Lead Forecaster Matt Fugazzi; Forecasters Todd Lericos, Jeremy Wolf, and Laurie Koch; Service Hydrologist Charles Ross; and HMT Milt Maas teamed up to work an extended severe weather event. Several severe thunderstorm warnings were issued for rural counties in Washington. Jeremy started on radar on the day shift and passed the duties to Laurie in the evening. They both did a great job issuing timely and accurate warnings. Outside of the warning areas, Charles issued several NOWcasts alerting to the possibility of wind gusts, blowing dust, and considerable cloud-to-ground lightning. He was also able to make a creative spotter call to a business in a spotter sparse area to verify the severity of a storm early in the event.

As the storms approached Spokane, Matt initiated the idea of notifying the person in charge of the Spokane fireworks display of the thunderstorm forecast. Milt proactively made the necessary calls to find the person, and Matt consulted him on the timing of the thunderstorm arrival. As a result of this, the fireworks were moved up one half hour to allow the display to go on before the arrival of the thunderstorms. Events transpired as forecast and briefed and the thunderstorms arrived in downtown Spokane around 20 minutes after the fireworks ended.

Weather/Ocean Public Meeting in Oregon: On June 23, WFO Medford Meteorologist Sven Nelaimischkies and Warning Coordination Meteorologist Ryan Sandler gave a weather and ocean presentation to 30 members of the public at the historic Bandon Port in Bandon, Oregon. Due to gusty winds from the strong summer sea breezes, the presentation took place in a glass enclosed picnic shelter. Topics covered included weather patterns and climate affecting Bandon, ocean tides, waves and tsunamis.

WFO Medford Meteorologist Sven Nelaimischkies describes the role the upper air program plays in preparing local forecasts to Bandon residents.

WFO Las Vegas Meets with Media: WFO Las Vegas held a media workshop in late June to discuss the upcoming monsoon season and some new collaboration tools with Las Vegas TV weathercasters. After providing an overview of the Severe Weather Operations Plan to the broadcasters, WCM Andy Bailey demonstrated the Go-To Meeting software package, and how it might be used to communicate with broadcasters during severe weather operations. Media representatives agreed that this tool could have a positive impact on the amount and type of information flowing between the NWS and broadcasters during severe weather.

WFO Las Vegas WCM Andy Bailey (right) meets with television weather broadcasters about improving severe weather communications methods.

Weather Radios Presented to Arizona Residents: A devastating fire burned through portions of scenic Oak Creek Canyon north of Sedona, Arizona late in June. As a result of the fire, there is an elevated threat of excessive runoff and landslides over a four-mile corridor near the mouth of Oak Creek Canyon. WFO Flagstaff MIC Brian Klimowski, in conjunction with fire, forest, and emergency management officials, developed a plan to optimize the warning distribution process in the Canyon. One key feature of the plan was to distribute NOAA Weather Radios to residents living in the threatened area. The radios were purchased and distributed in mid-July by the Coconino County Department of Emergency Services.

First Nuclear Plant Declared StormReady/TsunamiReady: On July 17, the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in Los Angeles County was recognized as the first nuclear power plant in the nation to be a StormReady/TsunamiReady Supporter. Plant management and emergency officials worked with Ed Clark, WFO San Diego WCM, over the past four months to achieve this status.

Officials from the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station are presented with StormReady/TsunamiReady Supporter plaque. Pictured (from left) Rick Garcia, Technical Specialist for Offsite Emergency Planning; Jim Reilly, Vice President of Engineering and Technical Services; Ed Clark, WCM; and Barbara Culverhouse, manager, Offsite Emergency Planning.

Victorville, California is StormReady: On July 18, WFO San Diego recognized Victorville, California as a StormReady community. WFO San Diego MIC Jim Purpura presented StormReady signs to Mike Rothschild, Victorville Mayor, and Phil Dupree, Victorville emergency services officer, during a ceremony at city hall.

WFO San Diego MIC Jim Purpura (left) presents a StormReady sign to Victorville, CA officials.

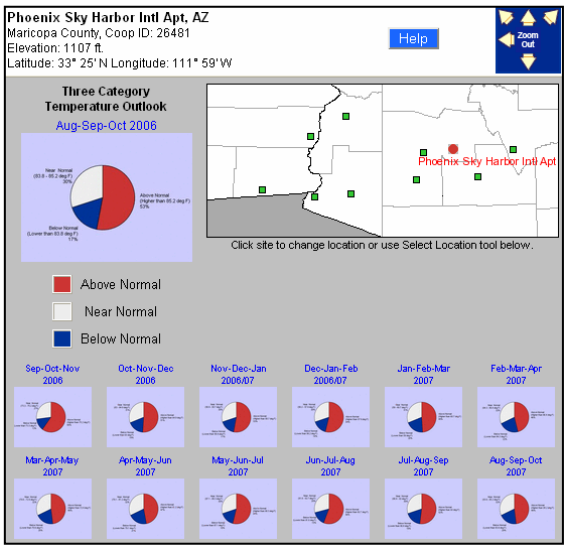
IMETs Support Fires Across the West: More than a dozen IMETs from Western Region are currently deployed during this very active fire season. One of the highly publicized fire locations was in San Bernardino County, CA. Veteran IMET Rob Balfour, from WFO San Diego, and trainee Phillip Manuel, from WFO Blacksburg, VA, conducted more than a dozen national media interviews while on location for the Sawtooth, Millard and Heart wildfires July 13-22. The IMETs split shifts to provide 24-hour support for the firefighters at the Sawtooth and Millard fires, which combined and became the Heart fire. The combined fires burned more than 84,000 acres and 200 structures and claimed one life.

IMET trainee Phillip Manuel (left) and Rob Balfour set up a fire RAWS station to support their forecasts at Sawtooth and Millard-Heart wildfires.

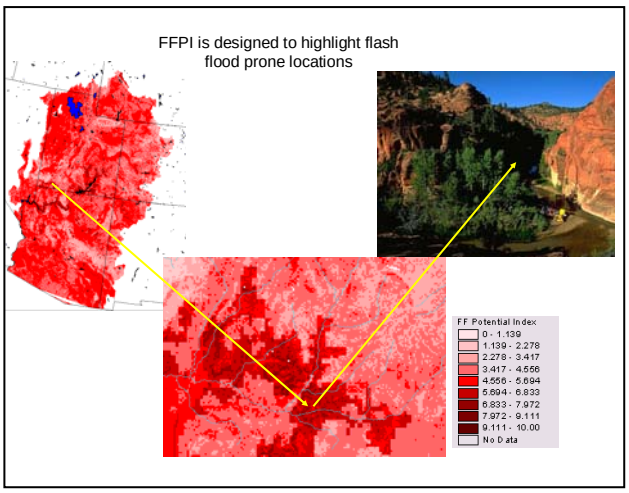
California Weather Spotter Talk: California forecasters Curt Kaplan (WFO Oxnard) and Jim Dudley (WFO Hanford) recently teamed up for a weather spotter talk at Frazier Park, near the border of Ventura and Kern counties in southern California. The community borders each of their WFO county warning areas and has few spotters to report weather events. The meeting was well advertised, and Curt and Jim were successful in recruiting several new spotters. During the presentations, Curt highlighted ways to communicate storm reports, while Jim touched on the local mesonet as well as the use of the NOAA Weather Radio.

(L to R) Jim Dudley (WFO Hanford) and Curt Kaplan (WFO Oxnard) speak to residents from Frazier Park about the NWS spotter program.

HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION



Local 3-Month Temperature Outlook is Available: The Local 3-Month Temperature Outlook (L3MTO), is now available on all WFO Climate websites nationwide. This new product is the first choice under the "Climate Prediction" tab. The L3MTO is a localized outlook that is downscaled or translated from CPC's 3-month temperature outlook, which means the content of the local product is similar to the national product. The difference between the two products is the L3MTO provides outlook information in several different presentation formats, and includes several different supporting text products to help with interpretation. Detailed directions providing information on the WFOs' role in the new product were sent to all WFOs prior to the implementation. Fact sheets are forthcoming (early August), one to assist the WFO Climate Services Focal Points with training the WFO staff, and a second to assist the WFO with outreach. The WFO staff is highly encouraged to complete a short webcast, which introduces the product, available at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/csd/pds/pcu4/L3MTO_Interpretation/player.html



FFPI OHD Seminar: Greg Smith from the CBRFC traveled to Silver Springs on July 18 to give an OHD seminar on FFPI (Flash Flood Potential Index). FFPI is a new tool developed by Greg to help WFOs in the decision making process for issuing flash flood warnings. It is a GIS based tool, which provides qualitative flash flood information based on physiographic features of a river basin. WFO Salt Lake City has been using FFPI operationally and has found it extremely valuable to their Flash Flood warning program. Many staff from OHD and OCWWS/HSD attended the seminar. The seminar was a go-to meeting that many offices around the country dialed into as well. Through AHPS funding, FFPI will be deployed to a handful of offices nationwide for evaluation. Greg gave the seminar again later that day to a group from NWS International Affairs who showed interest in this tool for potential future collaborations with other countries. Greg's presentation can be found at http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov/present/2006/DC_seminar.pdf

Korean Delegation Visits the CBRFC and WFO Salt Lake City: A delegation from the Republic of (South) Korea's Department of Construction and Transportation visited the Salt Lake City Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC) and Weather Forecast Office (WFO-SLC) on July 24. The group of 5 included hydrologists and communication specialists. They were particularly interested in how the NWS gathers hydrometeorologic data and how flood information was delivered to customers. Michelle Schmidt, Hydrologist In Charge of the CBRFC, and Randy Graham, Science Operations Officer, at the WFO-SLC gave made a presentation on RFC/WFO service operations along with a tour of the facility.

Ultrasonic Snow Depth Sensor Evaluation: Three Western Region WFOs (Flagstaff, Salt Lake City, and Great Falls) have been selected to participate in testing an ultrasonic snow depth sensor made by Campbell Scientific (Model SR50). This is part of a larger group of 15 WFOs across the country that will participate in the evaluation. The testing and evaluation is under the guidance of the Colorado Climate Center, Colorado State University in conjunction with National Weather Service Headquarters. A two day technical workshop focused

on implementation and installation will be held in Salt Lake City, August 15-16. One representative from each participating Weather Forecast Office, as well as a regional representative from each NWS region will be present at this meeting to ensure consistency in installation, sitting and manual measurements.

Hydrology Coordination Visit: NWRFC HIC Harold Opitz paid a coordination visit to WFO Spokane on July 18. Harold gave a briefing on RFC operations to the staff in the morning. He discussed the complex procedures for issuing forecasts on the Columbia River and new initiatives from the RFC like gridded flash flood guidance for FFMP and gridded QPF. The recent flood on the Kootenai River in northwest Montana and north Idaho was also discussed.

Harold, along with Spokane MIC John Livingston, WCM Kerry Jones, and SH Charles Ross paid an afternoon visit to Albeni Falls Dam on the Pend Oreille River in North Idaho. They were hosted by US Army Corps of Engineers Flood Fight Specialist Craig Brengle who discussed local forecasts and flood issues and gave the group a tour of the facility. Craig praised the NWS web sites for their timely and useful information.

WFO Spokane WCM Kerry Jones and SH Charles Ross discuss flood forecasts and local issues with NWRFC HIC Harold Opitz and US Army Corps of Engineers Flood Fight Specialist Craig Brengle at Albeni Falls Dam

Holm Award Recipient Recognized: On July 8, WFO Portland recognized Cascadia, Oregon resident Sandra J. Lennon as a 2005 recipient of the John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service to the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. Steve Todd, WFO Portland MIC presented the award to Ms. Lennon at her home, with her neighbors and family in attendance. Ms. Lennon took over the Cascadia station in the spring of 1977 and has maintained accurate and timely records for nearly 30 years. Dan Keirns, WFO Portland OPL, nominated Ms. Lennon for the award, noting, "Sandra has been a superb cooperative observer to work with. Sandy's data is always provided on time, and her genuine interest in weather has been reflected in her report's accuracy and detail."

Ms. Sandra Lennon receives the John Campanius Holm Award. Pictured with her is WFO Portland OPL Dan Keirns.

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

GS-13 Vacancy in SSD: SSD has issued a vacancy announcement for a Digital Services Program Leader Meteorologist. The Vacancy is closes Friday, July 28, 2006. Note: be careful, there are two announcements - refer to previous AMD emails on proper category to apply for!!

- The MAP vacancy announcement number is NWS-WR-2006-0274.
- The DEU vacancy announcement number is NWS-WR-2006-0279.

Precipitable Water Web Page: Stan Kidder (CIRA) and John Forsythe CIRA) have developed an experimental web page to track moisture plumes: http://amsu.cira.colostate.edu/gpstpw/. The page can be useful to track monsoon surges this summer and eastern Pacific tropical plumes this winter. The page is a combination of:

- Top image

- **Ocean** -- Blended TPW from the SSMI and AMSU sensors. The CIRA blended TPW is the same as the Pacific Ocean TPW we used during last winter's SOO/DOH calls. http://amsu.cira.colostate.edu/tpw/global.htm
- **Land** -- TPW from the land based GPS sensors. The GPS values are assigned to an area around the sensor, so fields sometimes look circular in areas where only a few GPS sensors exists.

- Lower image
  - **Percent of Normal** -- the lower page compares the current TPW values with a running weekly average TPW from 1988-1999. Helps quickly identify areas that are abnormally wet or dry.

Climo Mod Note Released Last week: Aaron Sutula (SSD) worked with the Climate Team to issue the Climate mod note this week. Please report the completion of mod note in EMRS.

Verification Project:

- **QC Software Update Mod-Note**: Aaron Sutula (SSD)has been working with Larry Greiss (Hanford SOO) to prepare a new upgrade of the Obs-QC tool. The mod-note will be released by the early next week.
- **Next Verification Call:** The next call is scheduled for August 16.
- **Next Assignment due:** The next office assignment is due August 10

USGS MMS/PRMS Modeling effort: The workshop has been targeted for August 28-30 to provide an opportunity for selected WR service hydrologist to become more familiar with the USGS hydro modeling system. For more information, contact Kevin Werner.

NSTEP/CONOPS Meeting: MSD/SSD and CONOPS will meet on Monday, August 14 to discuss the CONOPS proposal. The NSTEP meeting will follow on August 15-16 to plan how to evolve training resources to better support CONOPS and Service Evolution.

Upcoming Science Workshops:

NAME Workshop – August 17-18: Last year, NAME successfully conducted a field study to gather more information about how the monsoon affected the southwestern U.S. A workshop will be held August 17-18 in Tucson to share results to date. A few of the goals for the workshop are:

1. Synthesize scientific findings from recent and ongoing NAME research
2. Identify and prioritize NAME modeling issues to improve NAM forecasting from diurnal to seasonal time scales;
3. Outline content for a North American Monsoon COMET module.

More information can be found at: http://www.joss.ucar.edu/joss_psg/meetings/name_swg8/

10th Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop – October 3-5, 2006: The 10th Annual Great Divide Workshop will be held October 3-5, 2006 in Billings, Montana. National Weather Service Offices in Billings and Glasgow are sponsoring this workshop focusing on the exchange of weather and hydrologic forecasting information unique to the Northern Rockies and High Plains. The workshop will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Billings. Please submit abstracts or topics to Wr.Great.Divide.Workshop@noaa.gov by August 15, 2006. More information can be found on the Internet at weather.gov/Billings or weather.gov/Glasgow or by contacting NOAA's National Weather Service Forecast Offices in Billings at (406) 652-0851 or Glasgow at (406) 228-4042**.**

Thirteenth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West: November 16, 2006: The Thirteenth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West will be held Thursday, November 16 on the University of Utah campus. The Workshop will be hosted by the

Mountain Meteorology Group in the Department of Meteorology. This year's workshop is focused on the lessons learned from field programs and operational deployments of surface meteorological equipment in the West. The Workshop is intended to be a forum to discuss the impacts of the practical limitations associated with surface instrumentation in the mountainous West on environmental records, data assimilation systems, and weather forecasts**.** To submit an abstract or register, please access the on-line registration form at: http://www.met.utah.edu/jhorel/workshop2006/workshop_reg.html. The deadline for abstract submission is October 1. The registration deadline is November 1.

Training Update:

COMET: WRF Training Modules: COMET continues to add modules to the marine and hydrology series. The latest hydrology module is titled Runoff Processes, and latest marine module is titled the Marine Wave Model Matrix, http://www.meted.ucar.edu/hydro/basic/Runoff/.

Warning Decision Branch – AWOC: AWOC Winter Weather training is now available through the LMS. Please see http://www.wdtb.noaa.gov/courses/winterawoc/index.html for more details on the AWWT.

Teletraining Sessions for August: The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for August is now available. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to visit@comet.ucar.edu. The teletraining calendar is now at: http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/ecal.asp.

The teletraining planning calendar with other sessions is at:
http://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/visit/planning.html

The current sessions planned for August are:

- NEW - The GOES 3.9 micron Channel (Basic Aug 1,15,18)
- Cyclogenesis: Analysis utilizing Geostationary Satellite Imagery (Basic, Aug 29)
- Use of GOES/RSO imagery with other Remote Sensor Data for Diagnosing Severe Weather across CONUS (RSO 3) (Intermediate, Aug 16,17)
- Enhanced-V: A Satellite Severe Storm Signature (Basic, Aug 4,28)
- GOES Sounder Data and Products (Basic, Aug 11)
- GOES High Density Winds (Basic, Aug 21)
- Mesoscale Convective Vortices (Basic, Aug 22)
- Forecasting Convective Downburst Potential Using GOES Sounder Derived Products (Basic, Aug 22)

Several recorded VISIT session are available via LMS: http://e-learning.doc.gov/coursecatalog/index.cfm. Then, go to National Weather Service Courses and search on VISIT.

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

New Phone/Voice Mail Status: To date, the following sites have been upgraded: Western Region Headquarters, Salt Lake City, Pocatello, Boise, Elko, Phoenix, Flagstaff, Tucson, Glasgow, and Billings. The WFO/RFC Sacramento office phone system has been upgraded, and the voice mail system will be upgraded during the WFO Reno upgrade. We will upgrade three more sites this fiscal year: Missoula (Aug 10-15), Pendleton (Aug 24-29), and Great Falls (Sep 21-26). All of the remaining offices will be scheduled for upgrades in FY07.

AWIPS FRT: Sean Wink and Dwight Williams traveled to the NWSTC to attend the AWIPS Field Requirements Team meeting. The team will review current provided AWIPS training, review requirements for training, and propose recommendations for improvements/updates.

SOD Program Review: Joe Lachacz traveled to WFO Oxnard to conduct an SOD office program review. The WSR-88D, several ASOS sites, NWR sites, and the office were visited. This was the first in a new focus for the SOD program reviews where we key in on the equipment (condition, maintenance practices, and management of the programs).