



# NOAA's NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Western Region Notes

October 20, 2005

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



**WFO Tucson Receives NOAA Unit Citation:** On September 29, WFO Tucson was awarded a NOAA Unit Citation. This Unit Citation resulted from the North American Monsoon Experiment (NAME) Forecast Operations Center (FOC) activities based at WFO Tucson during the summer of 2004.

The staff was critical to the success of this project. Thanks to over two years of planning, the office provided intricate logistical and telecommunication support to the project. The office library was converted to a separate forecast center within the WFO. Administrative staff coordinated

travel for 10 of the 32 forecasters rotating through the FOC. The office hosted several other planning meetings with NAME principal scientists and NCAR's Joint Office of Scientific Support (JOSS) in both 2003 and 2004. During the field campaign itself, WFO Tucson forecasters participated in daily conference calls between the NAME FOC, HPC, SPC, TPC, and CPC. The outstanding team work and accomplishments by the Tucson staff during NAME are well recognized in this NOAA Unit Citation.

## METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

**Statement of the Week:** This edition of Western Region's Statement of the Week goes to WFO Monterey/San Francisco Bay Area. Monterey forecaster Shawn Weagle produced this Marine Weather Statement, which called attention to an approaching Pacific storm system and its associated large waves and strong winds. This is the time of year residents and visitors are still visiting the coast in large numbers, but also a time when marine-related hazards begin to become especially dangerous. Good job to Shawn and WFO Monterey!

FZUS76 KMTR 142231 CCA  
MWSMTR  
PZZ530-535-550-555-570-575-151100-

MARINE WEATHER STATEMENT  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAN FRANCISCO CA  
315 PM PDT FRI OCT 14 2005

PZZ535-550-555-570-575-151100-  
COASTAL WATERS FROM PIGEON PT. TO PT. PIEDRAS BLANCAS CA OUT 20 NM-  
COASTAL WATERS FROM PT. ARENA TO PIGEON PT. CA OUT 20 NM-  
MONTEREY BAY-

WATERS FROM PIGEON PT. TO PT. PIEDRAS BLANCAS CA FROM 20 TO 60 NM-WATERS FROM PT. ARENA TO PIGEON PT. CA FROM 20 TO 60 NM-  
315 PM PDT FRI OCT 14 2005

...LARGE NORTHWEST SWELLS AND STRONG WINDS TO IMPACT THE CALIFORNIA COAST THIS WEEKEND...

A STRONG LOW PRESSURE SYSTEM PRESENTLY CENTERED APPROXIMATELY 300 MILES WEST OF THE WASHINGTON COAST HAS GENERATED A LARGE NORTHWESTERLY SWELL THAT WILL IMPACT THE CALIFORNIA COAST BEGINNING TONIGHT. SWELLS ARE EXPECTED TO PEAK SATURDAY INTO SUNDAY WITH HEIGHTS REACHING 14 TO 16 FEET...PRODUCING BREAKERS OF UP TO 19 FEET ALONG THE COAST. SWELLS WILL BE STEEP DUE TO THE RELATIVELY SHORT PERIODS BETWEEN SWELLS. THE NORTHWESTERLY SWELL WILL CONTINUE THROUGH SUNDAY THEN TAPER OFF SUNDAY NIGHT AND MONDAY. A HIGH SURF ADVISORY IS IN EFFECT ALONG THE COAST FROM 11 AM SATURDAY UNTIL SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

IN ADDITION TO THE SWELLS...WINDS WILL STRENGTHEN SATURDAY WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE ASSOCIATED COLD FRONT. GALE WARNINGS ARE IN EFFECT FOR THE COASTAL WATERS FROM POINT ARENA TO POINT PIEDRAS BLANCAS...AS SUSTAINED WINDS ARE EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 25 TO 35 KT WITH GUSTS AS HIGH AS 45 KNOTS POSSIBLE SATURDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH SATURDAY NIGHT. MARINERS TRANSITING NEAR FOURFATHOM BANK AND OTHER SECTIONS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAR ARE ADVISED TO USE EXTRA CAUTION THIS WEEKEND...AS THE LARGE SWELLS MAY PRODUCE DANGEROUS BREAKERS OF UP TO 20 FEET OVER THE BAR. IN ADDITION...SWELLS AND BREAKERS MAY BLOCK CHANNEL SAND MAKE ACCESS IN AND OUT OF PORTS DIFFICULT. SMALL CRAFT SHOULD REMAIN IN PORT.

MARINERS PLEASE STAY TUNED TO THE LATEST MARINE FORECASTS BY TUNING INTO NOAA WEATHER RADIO OR YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL MEDIA OUTLET.

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WEAGLE



*Medford forecasters Connie Clarstrom and Jay Stockton, just before departure (photo: Sven Nelaimischkies)*

**WFO Medford Participates In Familiarization Float:** On September 8, three fearless meteorologists from WFO Medford (Connie Clarstrom, Jay Stockton, and Sven Nelaimischkies) went out on a three hour cruise. A member of the Chetco Yacht Club invited the forecasters on a “familiarization float.”

The boat left Brookings harbor and went far enough out to sea to experience the rough swell generated by frequent northerly winds associated with the Pacific High at this time of year. It was a great learning experience for the forecasters to experience first-hand the rough seas after leaving the protection of the cove.

**WFO Medford Participates in First Earthquake and Tsunami Workshop on the Southern Oregon coast:** WFO Medford partnered with federal, state, and local agencies to sponsor an earthquake/tsunami workshop for the public and local officials. The workshop was titled "The Earthquake Tsunami Connection - A Matter of Life or Death," and was held at Southwestern Oregon Community College in Coos Bay, OR on October 8. The workshop focused on preparedness and provided citizens with education and training to help survive an earthquake and tsunami. The one-day workshop consisted of four expert speakers and a panel of local officials to answer questions from the public. Some classrooms were set up for special demonstrations. Medford's WCM hosted a booth in one of the classrooms (known as the "early warning room"), focusing on NOAA Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Information booklets were handed out to approximately 400 people.



*Joe Sirard and Don Whitlow welcome visitors to the NOAA-NWS display booth.*

**Southern California International Sail and Powerboat Show:**

WFOs Los Angeles/Oxnard and San Diego participated in the International Sail and Powerboat Show, held October 6-9 in Long Beach. This event is the largest recreational boat show on the west coast. Representatives from each office staffed a booth and provided information on NOAA/NWS products and services, with a heavy emphasis on recreational marine customers. Information included NOAA Weather Radio, marine forecasts and observations, and web-based products for the mariner and general public.



*Fire Weather Forecaster Andy Haner talks with a customer during the safety fair.*

**2nd Annual Sammamish Safety Fair:** WFO Seattle staffed a booth for the 2nd annual Sammamish Safety Fair at Eastlake High School on October 8. Sammamish is a suburb community just east of Seattle. The number of people attending this year's event more than doubled last year, with over 500 in attendance.

Fire Weather Forecaster Andy Haner and WCM Ted Buehner staffed the booth. They addressed a variety of questions, including the weather spotter program, tsunamis, all-hazards weather radio, and weather and flood preparedness. The booth, which included the Washington Weather Hazards video, drew many visitors.



**Washington State Emergency Management Assn**

**Conference:** The annual Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) conference was held in Chelan, Washington. Seattle WCM Ted Buehner had a booth and answered questions from the 110 attendees throughout the event. He also gave a certification of accomplishment presentation to a Skagit county emergency management staff member for their recent StormReady recognition. Questions Ted addressed included the

StormReady and TsunamiReady program, NDFD and all-hazards weather radio.



*Cindy Matthews, Cammye Sims, and Holly Snell staffed the booth.*

**Women in Non-Traditional Roles:** WFO Sacramento joined St Francis High School for a Career Fair promoting women in nontraditional roles. Meteorologists Cammye Sims and Holly Snell, along with Senior Service Hydrologist Cindy Matthews hosted a booth, offering 900 high school girls the opportunity to discuss education requirements and career opportunities in the NWS and the Department of Commerce. The booth offered two computer slide shows. One show focused on NWS women at work (collected by Cindy Matthews), and the other show was on wildfires and life as an incident meteorologist (provided by IMET Mike Smith).



**Huntington Beach Declared StormReady:** Huntington Beach, in the heavily populated coastal region of Southern California, is Western Region's newest StormReady Community. A recognition ceremony was held October 3. Congratulations to WFO San Diego and the city of Huntington Beach!

*Photo: (L to R) Ed Clark (WCM, WFO San Diego), Steve Sellers (California State Office of Emergency Services, South Operations), Glorria Morrison (Emergency Manager, Huntington Beach), Duane Olson (Fire Chief), Jill Hardy (Mayor), and Jim Purpura (MIC, WFO San Diego).*



*More than 100 people watch Met Intern Robert Bohlin launch a radiosonde during the Flagstaff Open House*

**Annual Festival of Science Event:** WFO Flagstaff hosted an open house at the NWS facility on October 1 as a part of their annual participation in the week long "Festival of Science" celebration in Flagstaff.

The event was held from noon to 5 p.m. and included continuous presentations in the conference room, interactive displays and presentations of D2D and IFPS, as well as several innovative experiments demonstrating weather phenomena and technology. The event ended with a radiosonde launch that was observed by more than 100 visitors.

## **HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION**

**Colorado River Symposium:** On September 28, Greg Smith (Hydrologist at the CBRFC) gave a presentation to over 200 high level Colorado River Stakeholders at the Bi-annual Colorado River Symposium in Santa Fe New Mexico. Among the notables present was Bruce Babbitt, previous Secretary of Interior. Greg discussed the recent period of drought in the Colorado River Basin, presented several hydrologic facts relating to the drought, and discussed some of the 2005 recovery. He

also presented the NWSRFS ensemble forecast method, the short term Colorado River supply outlook, and significance of long term climate indices. The theme of the meeting was "Sharing the Risks: Shortage, Surplus, and Beyond". Several panels were formed throughout the symposium to discuss a wide variety of Colorado River water issues.



*Alan Haynes provides a hands-on science experience involving the hydrologic cycle.*

**Explorit's Groundbreaking Festival:** Meteorologists and hydrologists from the NWS and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) presented concepts related to the hydrologic cycle to children at "From the Ground Up: Explorit's Groundbreaking Festival" on October 8. Explorit is a non-profit science exploration center geared primarily for children and located in Davis, California. It serves about 49,000 people a year in Central California.

About 250 people attended the festival, which focused on earth and atmospheric science experiences for children. Meteorologists Kathy Hoxsie and Robert Baruffaldi from WFO Sacramento presented general weather information, while meteorologist Alan Haynes from the California-Nevada River Forecast Center in Sacramento and

hydrologist Cindy Matthews from WFO Sacramento demonstrated hydrology concepts. Hydrologists Cathy Ruhl and Clint Nagel from the USGS explained how stream gaging equipment is used to measure river flow.

## SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

**Ninth Annual Great Divide Weather Workshop:** The Great Divide Workshop will be held at the Hampton Inn in Great Falls on October 25-27, 2005. The focus of the workshop will be on the forecast challenges faced in the Intermountain West and the Western High Plains. The scheduled key note speaker for the banquet will be David C. Whiteman from the University of Utah.

Workshop contacts are Gene Petrescu, Michelle Mead, and Mike. W. Johnson  
voice: 406-329-4715 fax: 406-329-4842  
e-mail: [wr.great.divide.workshop@noaa.gov](mailto:wr.great.divide.workshop@noaa.gov)

**Ridge Radar Update:** Due to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, the implementation of the ridge radar has been delayed. While no new implementation date is available, the new implementation will likely occur in early 2006.

**Winter Weather Program at HPC:** The NCEP HPC Winter Weather Desk (WWD) will begin operations for the 2005-2006 winter season. *An email with more information was distributed to all offices.* Some of the new WWD changes:

- Staggered deadlines for internal accumulation graphics
- Larger model diagnostic images
- Public version of Low tracks graphic
- Snow ratio algorithms

- New SREF derived Winter Weather Impact Graphics
- Experimental intermountain region hi-res (4km) 6h snow grids and graphics through 72h using Mountain Mapper via HPC QPF and snow ratio.

The WWD schedule will be:

- *The WWD is staffed 8 hours twice daily starting 0130Z/1330Z from Sept 15 through May 15*
- 0445/1645Z – *Winter Weather model diagnostic web graphics available (SREF by 0320/1520Z, NAM by 0330/1530Z, GFS by 0445/1645Z)*
- 0500/1700Z - *Day 1 S/IP, ZR accumulation web graphic available (internal page) HPC will announce internal graphic availability via 12 Planet*
- 0545/1745Z - *Day 2 S/IP, ZR accumulation web graphic available (internal page)*
- 0615/1815Z - *Day 3 S/IP, ZR accumulation web graphic available (internal page)*
- 0815/2015Z - *Collaboration window closed (opens formally at 0615/1815Z)*
- 0900/2100Z - *External products issued*

The WWD points of contact are:

Robert Kelly (HPC Forecast Operations Branch Chief) – [robert.kelly@noaa.gov](mailto:robert.kelly@noaa.gov),

Dan Petersen (HPC WWD Focal Point) – [dan.petersen@noaa.gov](mailto:dan.petersen@noaa.gov),

Peter Manousos (HPC SOO and WWD coordinator) – [peter.manousos@noaa.gov](mailto:peter.manousos@noaa.gov)

### **Upcoming Science Workshops**

**Twelfth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West:** The Twelfth Annual Workshop on Weather Prediction in the Intermountain West will be held on November 3, 2005 at the Desert Research Institute (DRI) in Reno, Nevada. The objectives of these annual workshops are to discuss major issues related to operational meteorology over the western United States and to foster interaction between applied meteorologists, research scientists, and others who rely on operational weather forecasts or data.

This year's workshop agenda has two primary focus areas: Transportation Weather and Air Quality Forecasting and Impacts, with emphasis on the operational prediction methods, monitoring networks, and management challenges specific to the Intermountain West. Abstracts can be submitted for either poster or oral presentations.

For a more complete workshop description and registration instructions, please visit the workshop web page at: <http://conferences.dri.edu/WxPrediction/>

### **Training Update**

**NWSTC Management and Supervision Course Postponement:** The NWSTC Management and Supervision Course scheduled for December 5-16, 2005 has been postponed due to 1st Quarter OCWWS budget constraints. NWSTC is currently working on rescheduling the course and will provide the new dates as soon as possible.

**NWSTC AWIPS Postgres Training Materials:** The Introduction to Postgres on-line course and the Integrating Postgres into AWIPS on-line course have been merged into one course,

consisting of 12 modules. The Postgres training CD, which also serves as a Postgres Emulator, will be mailed to each WFO/RFC.

**WDTB AWOC Update:** According to Ed Mahoney (WDTB), the upcoming AWOC winter weather training modules will be ready by the April/May 2006 time period. The current plan will be to require AWOC winter training next summer/fall in preparation for the following winter. More information will be coming as we receive updates.

**Recently Released COMET Module:** The COMET® Program released a new interactive learning module, "NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies." Threats such as terrorist incidents and accidental hazardous releases have made atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling an increasingly prominent area of service and support for NOAA's National Weather Service. The new National Response Plan has redefined the National Weather Service role as part of an evolving and increasingly coordinated emergency response system. In addition to providing weather information and meteorological expertise, WFOs are now called upon to support atmospheric transport and dispersion modeling efforts, both within the National Weather Service and in coordinating agencies.

"NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies" will help forecasters develop operational competence with atmospheric dispersion support by teaching the types of weather data inputs required for the short-range dispersion models typically used by emergency managers:

1. What types of weather data inputs are required for the medium- and long-range dispersion models run by outside agencies (that is, not by the emergency managers themselves)
2. What required and supplemental data inputs should or can be supplied to NCEP Central Operations for special HYSPLIT runs
3. The types and scales of events that are appropriate and inappropriate for modeling by NCEP's HYSPLIT model
4. What key uncertainties can cause misleading dispersion model forecasts
5. The processes and limitations of CAMEO/ALOHA and HYSPLIT, the main two dispersion models NWS forecasters will likely have contact with on the job
6. How to read and interpret CAMEO/ALOHA and HYSPLIT output

The module takes 2-3 hours to complete.

The URL for "NWS Support During Hazardous Materials Emergencies" is [http://www.meted.ucar.edu/dispersion/disp\\_ops/](http://www.meted.ucar.edu/dispersion/disp_ops/). For NOAA employees, it is also available through the NOAA E-Learning system at <http://e-learning.doc.gov/noaa/>.

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Tim Spangler ([tspang@ucar.edu](mailto:tspang@ucar.edu)), Dr. Greg Byrd ([byrd@comet.ucar.edu](mailto:byrd@comet.ucar.edu)), or Dwight Owens ([dowens@ucar.edu](mailto:dowens@ucar.edu)).

**Teletraining Sessions for November:** The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) calendar for November is now available. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: [visit@comet.ucar.edu](mailto: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 November are:

- Using GOES to Forecast Winter Storms Part 1 (Nov 1,14)
- Using GOES to Forecast Winter Storms Part 2 (Basic, Nov 2,15)
- GOES High Density Winds (Nov 7, 17,21)
- Convective Downbursts (Nov 8)
- Cyclogenesis (Nov 9)
- Lake-Effect Snow II (Nov 12)

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**

**Accident Investigation Training Class:** Sean Wink and Harold Knocke, WR SOD, attended an Accident Investigation Training class taught by Joe Duran from the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office. Many reported incidents in FY05 contained vague or no corrective actions. A proper investigation with timely corrective actions is critical to accident prevention. WR will be thoroughly reviewing all FY06 incidents and stands ready to assist in all aspects of your office safety program.

**New AWIPS Firewall:** Gar Nelson, AWIPS RMS, assisted Dwight Williams, WFO Spokane ESA, in the first Western Region LDAD firewall replacement.

**Medford 88D Support:** Son Nguyen traveled to Medford to provide WSR-88D support and work with Matt Wymore (Electronic Technician) in replacing a Klystron.

**New E-Mail Server:** The migration over to the new e-mail server is well underway. Approximately 75% of the Regional Office e-mail accounts have been moved over to the new server. WFO Eureka will be the first field site to migrate over to the new server. We will develop an instruction set, lessons learned in migrating WFO Eureka, and utilize these instructions to schedule and complete the migration of all WR field sites. Development of the instruction set and the beginning of the migration to the new e-mail server for Eureka will commence week of October 24. Coordination with the rest of the field offices will follow.