



NATIONAL
WEATHER SERVICE
CENTRAL REGION



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Diversity Central

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Message from the Director's Desk

By: John Ogren



(Source: AMS/NWA)

Welcome to the first edition of the NWS Central Region Diversity Newsletter! The goal of the newsletter is to be your source for diversity information

as well as a place to share success stories and cultural experiences. We also hope to educate our readers about diversity and how it relates to all of us on a daily basis.

Research has shown there are great advantages to having a diverse workforce. These advantages include increased productivity, increased creativity, and improved problem solving. Having a diverse workforce also increases our ability to attract and retain talent and helps

build synergy within teams. Finally, diversity can be much more than gender, ethnicity, race, etc. Diversity is about respect. Through this mutual respect we can better serve those who rely on NWS services every day.

People are the backbone of how we are successful as a National Weather Service. I hope this newsletter provides a way where we can all share success stories and ways to benefit from having a diverse workforce.

NWS Riverton - Native American Heritage Month Celebration

By: Peggy Peterson

In 1990 President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as 'National American Indian Heritage Month'. Similar proclamations, under variants on the name have been issued each year since 1994.

On Monday, November 19, 2012, the Weather Forecast Office in Riverton, Wyoming, hosted a one-hour EEO presentation to recognize National American Indian Heritage Month and Veteran's Day. We invited a local Shoshone Indian and United States Veteran, Scott Ratliff, to visit with us about

his culture and his experience in the Viet Nam War. Mr. Ratliff works for United States Senator Mike Enzi's office as the Special Assistant for Native American Issues. He explained the governmental operations of the Shoshone and Arapahoe Nations, both of which reside on the Wind River Indian Reservation near Riverton and Lander, Wyoming. He outlined the various branches and how they interact to make decisions and implement policies. Informing each of us of his military experience was also enlightening for everyone.

There was a brief question and answer session following his presentation. Staff from the Riverton office enjoyed visiting with Mr. Ratliff and would enjoy inviting him back for future presentations.



Scott Ratliff explaining the governmental operations of the Shoshone and Arapahoe Nations.

(Source: Peggy Peterson)



(Source: Wikipedia)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar Day started within the NWS in the mid-1980s at the Topeka, KS weather forecast office. The La Crosse NWS office participates every year by inviting area high schools to nominate students to spend a day in our office.



NWS La Crosse Holds Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar Day

By: Rod Swerman

On Thursday January 17th, 2013, WFO La Crosse held its 17th annual, and again very successful, Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar Day. We hosted 3 students from 3 area high schools. All 3 were young women with an interest in science, 2 particularly in meteorology.

During their day with us, the students were introduced to the various mission-supporting functions of the NWS. They experienced much of what we do through discussion, video, hands-on and demonstration. They received exposure to the NWS data acquisition (including Coop and WSR-88D) and electronics programs.

They learned about our public interface (including NWR) and how we work with our partners. They got a good look at our primary forecasting technologies via AWIPS. A discussion session on science careers was also held toward the end of their visit, including information on college course programs, women in science, and time for questions. We received very good feedback from the students on their day with us. We believe our staff benefits as well from having these young people with us for the day. A party-sub lunch with cookies and sodas was held in their honor, providing time for them to relax, visit, and socialize with the staff.



NWS La Crosse 2013 MLK scholars. From L to R: Glenn Lussky (MIC), Zoe (Viroqua Laurel HS), Dana (La Crosse Aquinas HS), Elizabeth (Onalaska Luther HS), Rod Swerman (Forecaster, EEO FP) (Source: Rod Swerman)



SOO Dan Baumgardt discusses science and AWIPS (Source: Rod Swerman)



DAPM Randy Breeser covers weather observing equipment. (Source: Rod Swerman)



ITO Matt Davis discusses CRS and NWR (Source: Rod Swerman)

Women's Rights National Historic Park Visit

By: Jim Lee

Last year my wife and I had the genuine pleasure of visiting the Women's Rights National Historic Park in Seneca Falls, New York. The Park preserves and celebrates the site of the first Women's Rights Convention in history, held in a Wesleyan Chapel in 1848. The convention was organized by suffrage pioneers including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, despite considerable opposition from the public and within their own families. The event was attended by more

than 200 people, including Frederick Douglass.

During the two-day convention, the attendees drafted the "Declaration of Sentiments", which was modeled after the Declaration of Independence as a statement of rights that should be granted as equally to women as they were to men. The convention launched the women's rights movement in America and throughout the world, eventually leading to passage of the 19th Amendment giving women

the right to vote in 1920.

Visitors to the National Historic Park can visit a museum displaying artifacts, films, and interpretive exhibits about the 1848 convention and ensuing suffrage movement. Visitors can also take a guided tour of the restored Wesleyan Chapel and stand in the very room where Elizabeth Cady Stanton spurred women across America to fight for their rights. The Park is open year-round and is free to the public.



Restored Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, NY, the site of the First Women's Rights Convention (Source: Jim Lee)



Statue replicas of Women's Rights Convention attendees (Source: Jim Lee)

The Declaration of Sentiments was signed by 68 women and 32 men in 1848. According to Frederick Douglass, the document was the grand movement for attaining civil rights for women.



(Source: <http://www.womensrightsfriends.org/1848.php>)

A Unique Cultural Experience in Peru

By: John Kwiatkowski

Recently I had an exceptional cultural experience on a trip to Peru—I was able to observe a shaman performing one of his rituals.

Shamans have been part of Peruvian culture for centuries. Their function is to provide physical, psychological, and spiritual healing by restoring the proper balance of nature. The motivation for becoming a shaman is a desire to provide such healing to others. Training consists of several years of apprenticeship under a more senior member of the profession.

The pictures show a shaman from the city of Cusco performing a purification ceremony.

In the first picture (right), he is using a sea shell as a horn. The horn symbolizes wind, one of the four primary elements of the earth, the others being fire, water, and soil.

In the second photo (bottom right), our shaman is holding a condor feather. Condors are one of the most important animals in the Inca belief system. Others include the jaguar and the snake.

By appealing to the elements of earth and sacred animals, the purification ceremony establishes a right relationship between an individual and all elements of the universe.



(Source: John Kwiatkowski)



(Source: John Kwiatkowski)



Sani guide Javier Hualinga and his aunt at the Sani Community Center
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)



Ellen drinking chicha, mildly alcoholic, fermented drink made from yuca
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)



Joe drinking chicha
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)

Trip to Ecuador's Amazon Basin

By: Ellen Heffernan

In January, my husband Joe Ramey and I traveled to Ecuador's Amazon Basin. Joe is also a forecaster at WFO Grand Junction. We stayed at Sani Lodge, a remote eco-tourism-lodge that offers guided jungle treks, bird watching from a tree-top tower and a visit to the Sani Isla community. The only access to the lodge is by an approximate 2 hour boat ride down the Rio Napo eastward from the small frontier city of Coca.

The lodge property covers over 150 square miles of pristine Amazonian jungle, supporting thousands of species of plants and animals. It sits on the north side of the Rio Napo, south of the Cuyabeno Reserve. On the south side of the river, the Yasuni National Park extends southward to the Curaray River. The Yasuni is possibly "the most biodiverse spot on Earth" (as noted by National Geographic in its January, 2013, article, "Rain Forest for Sale"). The lodge itself is located on the shore of a lagoon called Challuacocha which supports Black Caiman, Hoatzin, Piranha, and Giant Otter, just to name a few.

The Sani Lodge is owned and operated by the members of the Sani Isla *Comuna*. The approximate 400 members of this indigenous community, along with other Kichwa speaking groups make up the larger Kichwa ethnic group. Each extended fami-

ly of the Sani commune has been allocated a plot of land for housing and small farms. The family plots are along both banks of the Rio Napo. Fruits and vegetables grown include bananas, yuca (cassava), coffee, cacao, melons, squash, hot chile, pineapples, ginger, and many more crops. They also raise chickens and farm fish. The women make jewelry and handicrafts for the Sani Isla Artisan Project, which supplements the income provided to the community from the lodge. They have also pledged to fund the higher education of one girl per year from their artisan crafts. The "beads" for the jewelry are actually seeds that are grown in their "women's garden."

The Sani Lodge and the Artisan Project are part of the community's attempt to mix their traditional way of life with a modern world. These economic endeavors are an alternative to oil development as a means to support their community, and to help preserve the rain forest ecosystem in the upper Amazon basin. Governing decisions for the Sani Isla are openly discussed and voted upon during 5-7 hour long, monthly community meetings, and are usually decided on by consensus. Each adult has the right to voice his/her opinion and has a vote. Education is highly regarded and is considered the future of the community.

Here are websites for more information:

Sani Lodge: <http://www.sanilodge.com/index.html>

National Geographic: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/01/yasuni-national-park/wallace-text>

Sani Isla Artisan Project: <http://www.rainforestpartnership.org/projects/sani-isla-artisan/34-sani-isla-artisan>



Boat ride down the Rio Napo
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)



Sani Lodge
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)



Lunch: Banana, plantain, cacao nuts, grubs
(Source: Ellen Heffernan)

Diversity Focal Point Spotlight

By: Jenifer Bowen



My name is Jenifer Bowen and I am currently a Meteorologist Intern and Diversity Focal Point at WFO Topeka. In addition to my passion for weather phenomena, I also am interested in the social and leadership aspects of not only our local office itself, but also how we interact and understand our customers.

Within the past year, it has become increasingly important to be aware of our customer's way of receiving

weather information. Whether the information is shared consistently on our website or on Facebook, we have realized it is imperative that we acknowledge and discover the similarities and differences of the customer's needs and how they are continuing to change.

To assist in developing these skills, I have become actively involved in pursuing activities and projects to enhance the office team's knowledge of different cultural groups as well as themselves. Through research and collaboration with the WCM from WFO Duluth, I presented topics such as understanding stereotypes, recognizing similarities and differences with office employees, performing the Myers-Briggs evaluation, and learning about different cultures. We also hosted luncheons where each employee brought dishes related to

their family's lineage. Future projects include: working with young women in the community on finding careers in science, math, and engineering, performing team building activities as part of a presentation, and hosting an open house to learn more about the community we serve.

I am originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma and spent much of my time through high school and college studying the varying weather phenomena the central plains has to offer. I attended the University of Oklahoma where I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Meteorology. From there, I volunteered at the forecast office in Norman, Oklahoma where I eventually became a SCEP through 2010. Afterwards, I was honored to be offered an Intern position at the forecast office in Topeka where I currently reside.

Diversity Focal Point Spotlight

By: Marie Hoffpauer



Hello! I am Marie Hoffpauer, the Central Region's Workforce Program Coordinator. I handle all personnel

actions for Central Region that includes many programs such as EEO/Diversity and Student Volunteers.

Throughout my career, I have worked in Human Resources for the Department of Defense and now for the National Weather Service. I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota into a large family of 7 children. I spent my childhood and early adulthood traveling the world as an Army Brat and enjoying countries such as Germany, Iran, Panama, and Japan.

In 1984, I enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard and then received a commission in 1986 through the ROTC program at the University of Texas. I served in the U.S. Army Reserves until I retired in 2005 after

21 years of service. I have a B.S. Degree in Home Economics from Texas State University located in San Marcos, Texas.

I am the mother of two wonderful daughters, Kristin and Katherine, and a Rat Terrier Dog named Kaylie, who is undoubtedly the best dog ever! In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, quilting, fishing, camping, and cooking.





NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CENTRAL REGION



Spring 2013 Diversity Central Team

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Weather-Ready Nation!
Saving Lives and Livelihoods

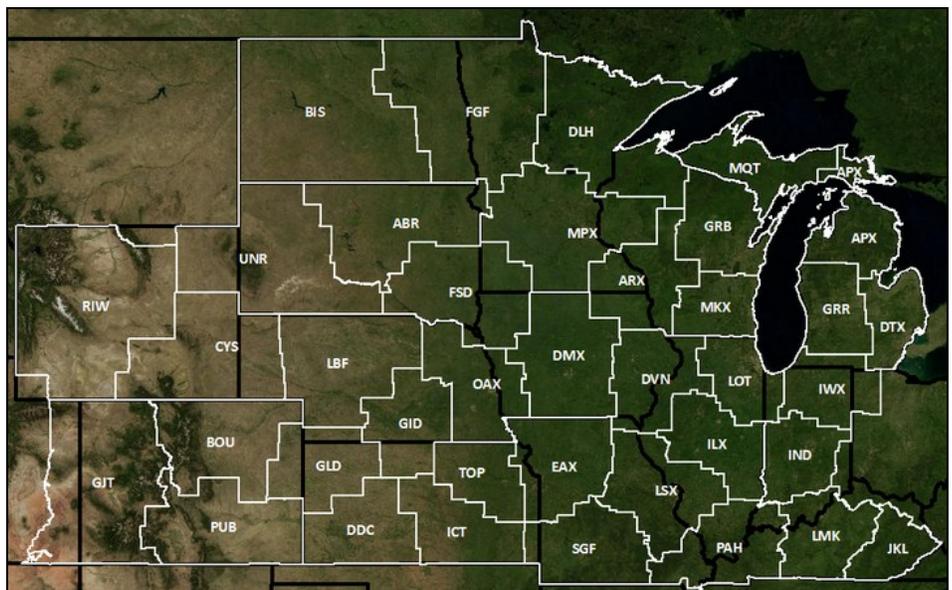
Building a Weather-Ready Nation

National Weather Service Mission Statement:

The National Weather Service (NWS) provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

Brief National Weather Service History:

The National Weather Service has its beginnings in the early history of the United States. Weather has always been important to the citizenry of this country, and this was especially true during the 17th and 18th centuries. The beginning of the National Weather Service we know today started on February 9th, 1870, when President Ulysses S. Grant signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a national weather service.



Sharepoint URL: <http://sharepoint.crh.noaa.gov/programs/lead/Pages/Diverstiy.aspx>

Google Sites URL: Coming Soon!