



National Weather Service



Inside this issue:

Welcome Message 1

Race in America: Responding to Racial Identity Questions 1

Women in Meteorology 2

Fitting In 3

Newsflash: Diversity DPA Study Ended Nursing Mothers Program Community Outreach 4

Diversity Matters to Veteran's: Call for Photographs 4

Diversity Behaviors 5

National Hispanic Heritage Month Poster Contest 6

Meet Diversity Council Vice Chair Delyne Kirkham 6

La Crosse Leadership and Diversity Conference 7

Forecaster connects with Montana Deaf & Hard of Hearing Group 8

Call for Weather and Diversity Photographs 9

Diversity Matters

Summer 2015

Volume 1, Issue 3

Welcome Message

Welcome to summer and the summer issue of Diversity Matters. Summer is about fun and family. It's about feeling relaxed with people whom we care about. In a way so to is diversity. Our co-workers are our friends, and in a sense, our family. But like friends and family members we do at times have our differences. Likewise we understand that difference is a tenet of diversity. Yet despite our differences work can be approached optimistically. We possess a tremendous capacity to make the best of any situation – when we choose to do so. Have a good read, embrace the positive, have a good summer, and may sunny skies be the norm.

Race in America: Responding to Racial Identity Questions

By: Aaron Sorensen

I believe that race is a social construct, and one that is constantly evolving. I do not wish to invalidate culture or heritage, but I would like to discuss the little neat boxes that people use to racially categorize or classify themselves and other people.

To illustrate that race is an ever changing and evolving socially established identifier, I would like to use data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 1850 the census only recorded 3 racial categories including only White, Black and Mulatto.

In 1910 there were 7 categories for race including White, Black, Mulatto, Chinese, Japanese, American Indian and other.

In 1930 the census dropped Mulatto as one of the categories and added Mexican, Filipino, Hindu and Korean.

It is interesting to note in the 1930 census that Hindu was listed as a racial category, when Hindu is actually a religion and not a race at all.

Currently, the U.S. Census has 16 different racial categories listed. Many of the categories include multiple groups. For an overview of the Census racial categories, follow this link: <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>

I use this example to show how racial categories have changed over time. The information collected for the census was collected based only on how people self-identified.

So I ask you - Does *race* really indicate who we are, or is it just how we *choose* to identify? Are we really belonging to 16 different categories of people or all we all just Americans? I would like to live in a nation where we are all American and not differentiated by the color of our skin or the physical characteristics visible to others.

Celebrate diversity, love and embrace our differences. Stop using race as a qualifier for exclusion. Acknowledge that we are all belonging to the *we* group and leave concepts of *us vs. them* and *other* in the history books where we can learn from our mistakes moving forward.



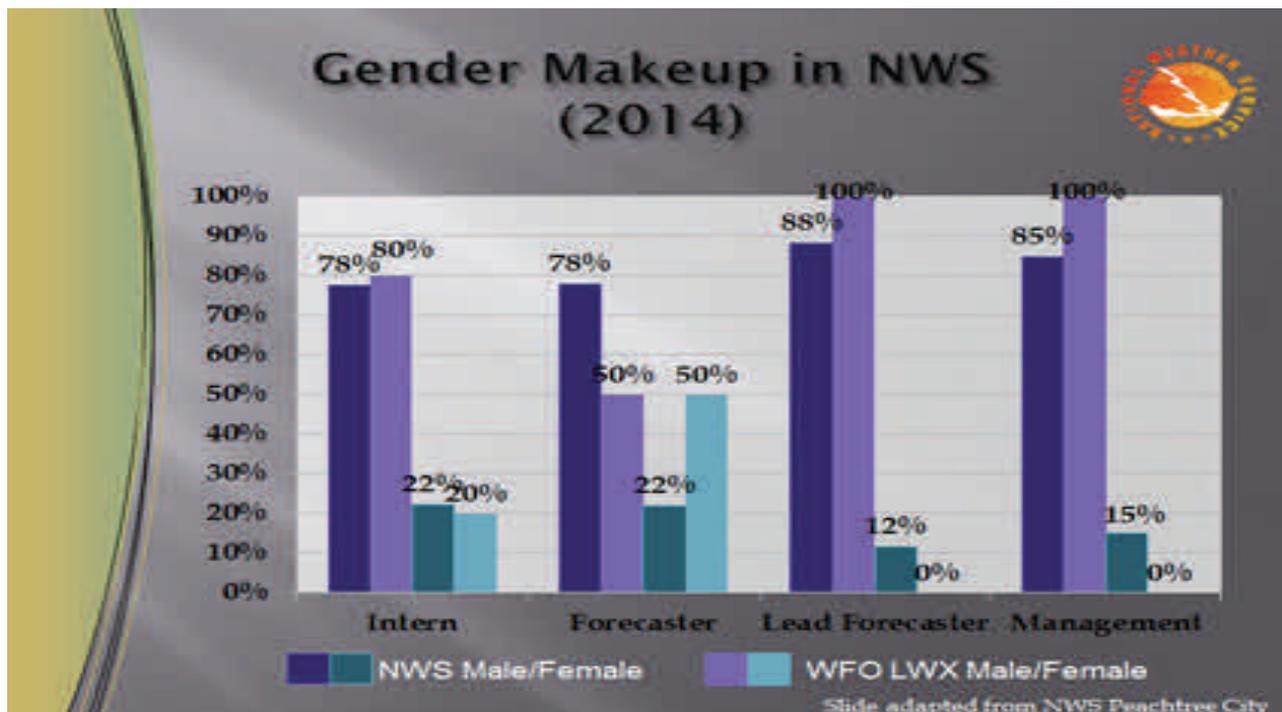
Women in Meteorology

By: Heather Sheffield

On May 27, 2015, The National Weather Service Baltimore/Washington Forecast Office hosted a Weather Camp for college meteorology students who resided in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The day was filled with short presentations from members of the NWS staff, Air force and past student volunteers. The presentations ranged from resume building to hydrology, becoming a Weather Officer in the United States Air Force to working at the Washington DC CWSU, “Tying the NWS into the community” and the meteorological job market. Each presentation started with a brief biography slide of the speaker. This gave the college students a feel for the different routes people have taken to become successful in the meteorology field.

One presentation, titled “Women in Meteorology,” by Heather Sheffield talked about the gender make-up of the agency. As of 2014, 15% of employed meteorologists in the National Weather Service were female. This statistic closely matched (16%) the amount of women at the NWS Baltimore/Washington Office. It’s not surprising, as most males dominate STEM fields but the question exists - why? Sheffield went over possible reasons including a direct link between females in science featured in the media and the low rate of girls pursuing science, technology, engineering and math careers. Statistics show that the numbers of females entering the agency drops off as women move to lead forecaster and management where 22% of meteorologist interns are female and only 12% of lead forecasters are females. The dialog needs to continue to improve the work/life balance and hence the careers of women in meteorology.

The group of college meteorology students listened through a lot of presentations that day and hopefully this talk motivated both men and women to continue the dialog of the under-represented women in meteorology. The “Women in Meteorology” talk ended with a list of a small sample of successful women in meteorology including Barbara Watson, Meteorologist in Charge, State College, PA, Laura Furgione, NWS Deputy Director and Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, NOAA Administrator. These women continue to show motivation and strength in their careers. We thank you.



Percentages of male and female meteorologists in the National Weather Service and specifically at the National Weather Service Baltimore/Washington DC (LWX) Forecast Office.

Fitting In

By: Dave Rowell

Principles of diversity and inclusion tell us that without question diversity is a plus. Studies have shown that when managed correctly a diverse workgroup will outperform a homogenous workgroup by a factor of 6. In short, greater diversity yields a larger talent pool from which to draw ideas, methodologies, etc. . . .

Unfortunately, too many of our people have to walk into their offices each morning and check themselves at the door, and keep tamped down elements of themselves. Generally, a non-inclusive environment causes the person to change, rather than the organization to adapt. Often, there is an overt effort to bring “outsiders” in line.

There is a negative cost to this. At a minimum, it is uncomfortable to folks, but at its worst it is utterly detrimental to production, devastates retention, and has any number of other insidious outcomes. And in fitting in people hide, shield, and/or shed personal attributes - unbecoming that which they are, and becoming that which they are not. They give up authenticity - their very nature. This is what some might call “flying under the radar” or even being in a *closet*. Now that may not seem so important in a professional workplace. But imagine not only how that feels but how it affects giving one’s self to their work. Hiding part of one’s self causes hiding much of one’s self – including things directly connected to job perfor-

mance and team relationships. In fitting in, people hide or shed the very things that they could uniquely bring to the talent pool – the very things that would increase a group’s performance. These include: ideas, perspectives, knowledge, connective behaviors, and even energy.

Why does this happen? Often it is simply people being uncomfortable with a person’s uniqueness. We tend to gravitate toward and embrace those like us. Over time what the group or leadership is comfortable with becomes the office culture, and outsiders are asked to assimilate. In the culture there are norms (unwritten rules) to be adhered to. These are enforced in ways subtle and less so. Non-conformity is attended to – the ‘problem’ fixed. Truthfully, this is more stringent in some offices and much less so in others. But where suppression does occur it can often be at its core a matter of awareness, or more correctly, lack thereof. It is lack of awareness that causes us to miss ‘hidden’ talents and attributes and thereby miss opportunities to leverage such. And its lack of awareness that causes misunderstandings and/or assumptions of personal characteristics, which in turn, promulgates discomfort of unfamiliarity.

Most people are very self-referential, meaning that the way they experience the world is the assumed way that all do; and most also fail to self-educate.

But all employees have a responsibility to understand their fellow employee and embrace all that they bring to the table. Training and awareness activities, supported by management, and attended by as much staff as possible, go far in achieving a more inclusive environment. These might include brown bag lunch-and-learns, team building exercises, inclusive outings, posted readings, etc. Awareness aside, organizationally, we fail to set up the environment to actively leverage differences. But managers have a responsibility to make room for *unique*. Avoiding tamping down the very things that make diversity a positive is key to making the organization excel. Again understanding of staff’s unique gifts is the starting point. But the environment must be such that the diversity among staff is seen as an asset, and applied as such. This can be done with real assessment of all that an employee can offer and then tasking such appropriately. And finally, and most importantly, celebrating those gifts and the personal and professional accomplishments arising from them, which in turn celebrates the individual as a valued team member and person.



Newsflash

Diversity DPA Survey Ended By Hope Hasberry

The Survey conducted by the NOAA Diversity and Professional Advancement (DPA) Working Group ended. The survey opened on May 4, 2015 and ended on June 1, 2015. Over 1600 NOAA employees responded. The mission of the DPA Working Group is to, "Identify and promote opportunities for the professional advancement of underrepresented minorities in NOAA; and support NOAA leadership in expanding and strengthening the diversity of NOAA's workforce." By gathering information derived from the survey, the working group will identify issues that can be addressed by the Working Group as it attempts to inform strategies for attracting and sustaining a diverse workforce.

Nursing Mothers Program Update By Hope Hasberry

Wonderful News!!!! The NOAA Nursing Mothers Pilot Program has been a permanent program here at NOAA. What began as a grassroots effort by a small group of women to provide additional lactation space in a single NOAA building many years ago, is now a NOAA-wide program to support all new parents across the agency as they return to work. On June 4, 2015 the NOAA Executive Panel voted to make the program permanent. Many on the NOAA Nursing Mothers Program (NNMP) Steering committee can't believe that this day has arrived. More details to follow. To learn more about the program, you can visit the programs website at: <http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/workplace/NursingMothersProgram.html>

Community Outreach By Roger Erickson

NWS Lake Charles WCM Roger Erickson taught 11 weather safety and education seminars to over 550 students at minority elementary schools in the Lake Charles area between March 5th and May 4th. Students were between Kindergarten and 5th Grade. The schools were chosen due to historically low testing scores in science. Future work will include partnering with the Science Coordinators at these schools and provide mentorship to students interested in science careers.

Diversity Matters to Veterans ~ Call for Photographs

If you are a veteran, or if you would like to honor a special veteran in your life, send us a photograph! We will create a veteran display page in the next newsletter. Please include the person's name, the branch of U.S. military, and dates of service, if available, and it will be displayed with each photo.

Send to the Diversity Matters newsletter editor
aaron.sorensen@noaa.gov.



Diversity Behaviors

By: Dave Rowell

How do you do diversity? Diversity is practiced, and reflective of one's beliefs, through behaviors ...

Celebrate Diversity - openly exult and praise differences.

Leverage Differences - make full use of differing personal components/attributes in positive ways.

Mutual Adaptation - foster mutual adaptation in which everyone *adjusts* somewhat for the sake of achieving common objectives.

Build Relationships - foster quality relationships characterized by acceptance and understanding among everyone.

Illuminate – discuss and educate differences and working relationships.

Accommodate - adopt practices that allow individuals to participate who might not otherwise, or in ways they otherwise would not.

Include – Expand the number and variety persons in all activities.

Acknowledge - establish an environment that allows for awareness without avoiding or dismissing differences.

Tolerate - foster a room-for-all attitude, albeit with limited/superficial interactions among the mixture components.

Avoid - avoid differences as an issue, and/or avoid certain individuals because of difference. Rely on platitudes, assumptions, ...

Assimilate - insist that the “minority” components conform to the norms of the dominant factor.

Suppress and Deny - removing differences from your consciousness by assigning it to subconscious; explain differences away or ignoring them altogether.

Marginalize - limiting the influence or devaluing differences and any merit thereof.

Isolate and/or Exclude- including and setting “different” mixture components off to the side; Exclude differences, and persons of difference, all together.

Obviously the behaviors are not all are equal .You will note that not all of these are doing diversity right – that is doing diversity advantageously and humanely. Those at the top are more powerful and more just. Those nearer the bottom fail at both leveraging the advantageous of diversity, not to mention harming relationships and individuals alike. The more the higher behaviors are practice the more the principles of diversity are instilled as a positive throughout the organization and in individual lives.

Have a Great Diversity Tip or Idea?

By: Delyne Kirkham

We love receiving information from you. It's not just about keeping up with diversity news from other offices; it's about participating in it! You help shape the National Weather Service's diversity program by sharing what matters to and works for you and your office. Your contributions can help create a better agency. Simply put... Diversity Matters! Our work is all about you. Send any diversity tips or ideas to hope.hasberry@noaa.gov.



National Hispanic Heritage Month Poster Contest

By: Patricia Taylor

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated September 15 – October 15, 2015, and in recognition of this special emphasis month, the National Weather Service's (NWS) Diversity Council would like to continue its series of diversity management poster design contests. The purpose is to increase consciousness and knowledge of notable Hispanics and their contributions to the Nation, in hopes that the day will soon come when it's impossible to embrace history without remembering their contributions.

The NWS Diversity Management Council invites all NWS employees to enter our poster design contest. The National Theme: "Hispanic Americans: Energizing Our Nation's Diversity."

You have until August 14, 2015, to design this year's NWS National Hispanic's Heritage Month poster. The attachment contains contest entry details.

Why are we conducting these contests? Women, minorities, and people with disabilities are under-represented in the NWS workforce. Special Emphasis Programs were established to promote awareness, fairness, and equity in employment. This initiative is an effort to help educate NWS's workforce concerning diversity among race, gender, ethnic, and cultural groups so everyone has a better understanding and appreciation of differences.

Meet the NWS Diversity Management Council Vice Chair: Delyne Kirkham

By: Delyne Kirkham

Delyne Kirkham is the Vice Chair of the National Weather Service (NWS) Diversity Management Council. She is excited about assisting the Diversity Management Council in advancing an inclusive, dynamic workplace for the National Weather Service. Delyne strongly believes that our commitment to diversity enhances the National Weather Service's responsiveness to a progressively diverse world of customers. An emphasis on diversity increases the NWS ability to cope with change and expands the creativity of our organization.

Delyne's career with the federal government began in 2001 in Elko, Nevada with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). While at the BLM, she worked closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs program to train local Native Americans in fire-fighting and served on the BLM Special Emphasis Committee. She joined the National Weather Service in 2005 and served as Diversity Focal Point in Elko WFO for five years.

Delyne received a National Cline Award in 2010 for her outstanding contributions to NWS Western Region (WR) Diversity Management Program through strong initiative and teamwork. She also served on the WR Diversity Action Committee and on the Commerce Learning Center Diversity Curriculum Team for the NWS Diversity Certification program. She acted as a facilitator at the first NWS/Interagency Diversity Workshop at the NWSTC offered in 2013. Prior to her federal service, Delyne supervised a local program, where she taught job skills to individuals with disabilities.

The NWS Diversity Ambassadors were formed to be a communications mechanism of diversity management principles and a national support for NWS Diversity Focal Points as well as all NWS employees. As one of those ten NWS Diversity Ambassadors, Delyne chooses to focus on issues related to those with disabilities and gender inequality, with an emphasis on the inclusion and teamwork of all NWS employees.

All of the NWS Diversity Ambassadors actively keep abreast of diversity trends, and thus, in addition to Diversity Council members, and the NWS Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management Office, they are a national contact resource for diversity questions, guidance, and resources to all NWS employees. Not only will they have subject matter expertise, which could be called upon by Focal Points, but the Ambassadors may be called upon to add their knowledge in participation on panels, or in workshops, etc. Go to <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/index.php> for more information and tools for NWS Diversity management!

2015 NWS La Crosse Leadership & Diversity Conference

By: Delyne Kirkham

We all have biases; we are all challenged to grow. To communicate in a rapidly transitioning culture, we each need to bridge those differences with understanding. We must create strategies designed to serve the people we may not be reaching. So... what do car salesmen, social workers and a grocery store owner have to tell us about “Building a Weather Ready Nation?” A lot! Each of them presented riveting ideas, skills and knowledge to meet the needs of, to reach, serve and communicate with, an ever-increasing diverse group of people. And each of them (and more) presented these ideas at the 2015 National Weather Service (NWS) Weather Forecast Office (WFO) La Crosse, Wisconsin Leadership and Diversity Conference on May 12th and 13th, 2015. People from every NWS region in the contiguous U.S. attended. La Crosse WFO has made the recorded presentations available online to anyone within the National Weather Service! Check out the following link to view them and the conference agenda <http://www.weather.gov/arx/2015lldcagenda>.



From L to R: Hope Hasberry, Delyne Kirkham & Jason Wright

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/ambassadors.php>

Hope Hasberry, from NWSHQ, Acting Director of the National Weather Service’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management (OEODM), discussed Diversity in the NWS. She clarified the connection, and the differences, between Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Management. She went over the composition of the workforce and OEODM actions. She talked about Social Science indicators being rolled into programs such as Weather Ready Nation, StormReady, SkyWarn, and Impact-Based DSS programs and initiatives.

Jason Wright, from NWS Southern Region, Chair of the National Weather Service Employee’s Organization (NWSEO) Diversity Team, presented “Something to Think About” a NWS/NWSEO Mental Health Awareness Initiative. He wants NWS employees to ensure that we are taking the best *overall* care of ourselves, physically and mentally, so we can provide the best products and services for the wide range of customers we serve.

Delyne Kirkham, from NWS Western Region, NWS Diversity Management Council Vice-Chair, assisted Renee Wise, NWS Aberdeen, SD Lead Forecaster in identifying ways to “Optimize Workplace Environments Against Bullying and Harassment.” Not only do we as leaders want to focus on external customers, we can serve our internal customers by increasing awareness of the impacts of bullying.



The NWS Strategic Plan has six prominent objectives to enable us to achieve our vision of a Weather-Ready Nation. In all of those goals communication is key. Mediums like the La Crosse WFO Leadership and Diversity Conference provide tools and strategies to positively affect the NWS culture and enable us to communicate our messages to an increasingly diverse audience.

Three of the NWS Diversity Ambassadors presented at the conference, Hope Hasberry, Jason Wright and Delyne Kirkham. The NWS Diversity Ambassador program was formed to be a communication mechanism of diversity management principles and a national support for Diversity Focal Points and all NWS employees. For information on that program:

Forecaster Luke Robinson Connects with Montana Deaf and Hard Hearing Group

By: Luke Robinson

On May 8, WFO Missoula held a second meeting with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing group from western Montana. WFO Missoula was able to do this with the help from the University of Montana and the Disability Services for Students. The university offered a location on campus for the meeting, as well as an Interpreter (sign language) and a real-time captionist, cost free to the NWS. The main goal of the meeting was to further link with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing local group and let them know more about the NWS. Another goal was to get input from them on better ways that the NWS can get the important weather/water/climate information to them. Luke Robinson gave both presentations (this meeting, and in October 2014). Luke show-cased our website, where to get the forecast for a particular area, and where they can go on the website to see any hazards that may currently be out for their area of interest. He also indicated that there are several apps out that they can search for, and download on their smartphones, that would alert them when a warning or watch has been issued for their current location.

Given that some areas in western Montana do not have cell service, Luke also used this meeting to show how to observe current weather and indications that potential hazardous weather is on its way (kind of a mini spotter training session). At the May 8th meeting, a local news crew from KPAX TV also attended and recorded portions of the presentation. Afterwards, KPAX did an interview with Luke, which was aired on their evening news.

Luke is also a part of a national team (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach Team), that consist of several other forecasters from various NWS offices around the country.



Luke Robinson (Left) and Brandy Reinhardt (Right), University of Montana, Department of Disability Services for Students.



National Weather Service



Summer 2015
Diversity Matters Team

Article Contributors:

Hope Hasberry - Equal Opportunity/
Diversity Management
Specialist, NWS HQ

Dave Rowell - Diversity Council Chair,
NWS Training Center,

Delyne Kirkham - Diversity Council
Vice Chair,
WFO Elko, NV

Aaron Sorensen - Diversity Newsletter
Editor,
Western Region HQ

Patricia Taylor - Management Analyst
EEO, NWS HQ

Heather Sheffield - Gen. Forecaster
WFO Sterling, VA

Luke Robinson - Gen. Forecaster
WFO Missoula, MT

Newsletter Design/Layout/Chief Editor:

Aaron Sorensen - Editor,
Western Region HQ

Maria Krug - Newsletter Team
WFMO HQ

Jenifer Bowen - Newsletter Team,
WFO Topeka, KS

Lynn Maple - Newsletter Team,
WFO Elko, NV



Building a Weather Ready Nation

The National Weather Service (NWS) fosters an inclusive work force, building an environment that respects the individual, and offering opportunities for all employees to develop to their full potential. Diversity is the mixture of differences and similarities each employee brings to the workplace to accomplish the goals of the NWS.

Diversity management is a long-term change strategy enabling the NWS to improve its culture to ensure all employees are making maximum contributions to the mission of the NWS. We will foster an inclusive, supportive, open, challenging and innovative work environment to enable employees to be positive, creative and reach their full potential.

Other Diversity Newsletters: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/diversity_material_field/commnewsletter.php

Call for Weather and Diversity Photos By Delyne Kirkham

We are looking for interesting weather and diversity pictures from around the National Weather Service (NWS) to enhance the NWS “Diversity Matters” newsletter. We may be including these pictures in the one of the NWS Diversity Matters newsletters, published quarterly, or potentially on any NOAA/NWS website. We will give credit for each photo. By submitting photos, you automatically grant to NOAA NWS the right to publish and use the photos. You further warrant that you own the rights to the photo. You agree that your submission does not, and will not, violate any applicable U.S. or state laws or regulations, or cause a breach of any agreement with any third parties; and that none of the submissions will infringe any copyright, invade any right of privacy, right of publicity, or infringe or violate any rights of any other person or entity. Please share your weather and diversity photos with us, send photos to the editor: aaron.sorensen@noaa.gov



Photo of Spring Creek, NV courtesy of Heather Tierney

