Aware

Aware is published by NOAA's National Weather Service to enhance communications between NWS and the Emergency Management Community and other government and Private Sector Partners.

April 2018

NOAA Names New National Hurricane Center Director

*By **Chris Vaccaro**, Senior Media Relations Specialist, NOAA Communications*

NOAA has selected Kenneth Graham to serve as the new director of the NWS National Hurricane Center in Miami, FL, ahead of the 2018 hurricane season, which begins on June 1. He assumed this new role on April 1.

"The forecasts in last hurricane season were 25 percent more accurate than average, and with new satellites and other measures NOAA is undertaking, we are very hopeful to keep improving the timeliness and accuracy of our forecasts," said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. "Ken will be a great leader of the Department's efforts in this regard."

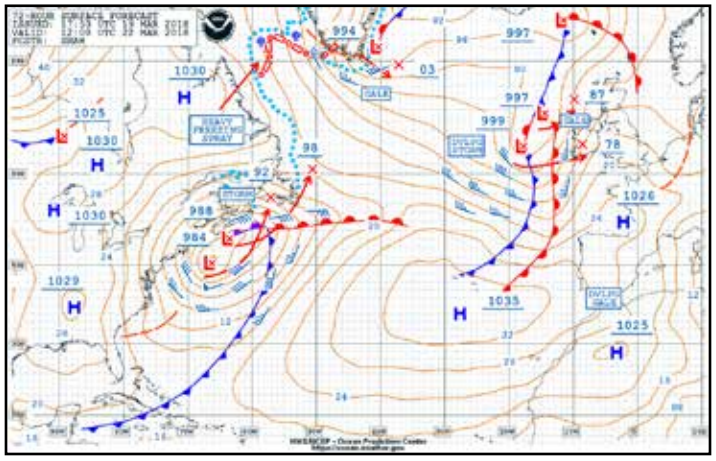
"Ken will undoubtedly build on the center's history of improving forecasts while serving as a vital link to effectively communicate that information to the public and core partners in the emergency management community," said Neil Jacobs, Ph.D., assistant secretary of commerce for environmental observation and prediction, at the recent meeting of the National Emergency Management Association forum.

Ken most recently served as the Meteorologist in Charge at NWS New Orleans, LA, but has a long and impressive career serving in many NWS offices including its headquarters.

Ken Graham, the new National Hurricane Center Director

Ocean Prediction Center Rolls Out Upgraded Forecast Products

By NWS Ocean Prediction Center Staff, Silver Spring, MD



Pacific Ocean forecast product

In March, NOAA's Ocean Prediction Center rolled out a new forecast product suite to provide mariners with comprehensive weather forecasts every 24 hours out to Day 4. These new forecaster produced 72-hour surface weather and wind/wave forecast charts provide improved decision support services to enable this economically vital community to better prepare for severe weather at sea.

The new product fills a gap in OPC's 24-, 48-, and 96-hour products, ensuring an even more robust forecast timeline while identifying areas of maritime weather hazards.

Before implementing these new charts, OPC reviewed existing products and services to ensure quality, consistency and user needs. This review included the ever-changing landscape of mariners'

forecast information needs, along with the higher resolution of forecast tools. Following a public comment period, OPC made small changes to legacy products allowing the agency to deliver this critically important new forecast tool to improve safety of life and property at sea. To view the new 72-hour products in real time, visit the Ocean Prediction Center website.

Grant Helped Make New Automated Flood Gage Reality

*By **Tanja Fransen**, MIC, NWS Glasgow, MT*

Valley County DES Coordinator Rick Seiler watches as NWS Senior Service Hydrologist Arin Peters programs the satellite communications from an app on his phone. Photo by Tanja Fransen

For more than 20 years, staff at NWS Glasgow has had to manually read a wire weight gage on the Milk River several times a day during flood season. As of March 12, 2018, this is no longer an issue.

Through a partnership with the NWS and Valley County, a radar gage was installed on the U.S. Highway 24 bridge. The old wire gage was not only inconvenient, it posed a safety issue. NWS employees had to walk out on the bridge with traffic coming by. In addition, NWS staff devoted hundreds of hours to reading the gage. The Milk River in Glasgow has a frequent flood history: since 2000 the river has crested 17 times, 11 of them above flood stage!

After the record flooding in 2011, NWS Glasgow and Valley County Disaster and Emergency Services determined operations couldn't continue with a wire weight gage. Through a long, rigorous process, and after several more significant floods, the county used extensive NWS records to apply for and receive a FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant to fund a radar gage. NWS Senior Service Hydrologist Arin Peters served as the final link needed to bring the project to completion. His prior experience with the US Geological Survey was critical as the team worked with the Valley County Road Department to assemble the satellite communications platform and mount the radar gage on the bridge.

The newer technology of this system allowed communications to be linked through a wifi connection from the communications unit to a phone app, making the final steps of getting the data to the satellite even easier. The project was completed just as a major snow pack across the plains to the Rocky Mountain Front was ready to melt and cause more flooding. The Missouri Basin River Forecast Center is responsible for monitoring the lower end of the Milk River and had forecast moderate to major flooding.

NWS Decision Support for Emergency Managers Supporting Rattlesnake Roundup

*By **Katie Dedeaux**, Service Hydrologist, NWS San Angelo, TX*

In March, NWS San Angelo, TX, provided decision support to the Nolan County Emergency Management during the 60th annual Rattlesnake Roundup in Sweetwater, TX. This event is the world's largest rattlesnake round up, where thousands of pounds of rattlesnake are sold. The event attracts up to 30,000 visitors from across the United States and the world.

NWS San Angelo meteorologists traveled to Sweetwater 2 days before the event to provide an onsite briefing for emergency management officials The briefing outlined the weather hazards for the weekend of the event. Although no storms were expected, temperatures were expected to reach near 90 degrees on Saturday, which would pose concerns for hydration issues for all attendees, human and animal.

In addition, strong winds ahead of an approaching cold front provided concerns for all the vendor's tents and also the carnival area. There were fire weather concerns, especially for the outdoor cook-off event on Saturday, given the extremely dry and windy conditions.

More than 30,000 visitors attend the annual Rattlesnake Roundup in Sweetwater, TX.

Although onsite support was only provided for 1 day, forecasters at the NWS office were ready to brief whenever needed. The Rattlesnake Roundup started back in 1957 to help local law enforcement with the rattlesnake population. This important community event has grown over the years, drawing a growing crowd of visitors.

CoCoRaHS Network Expanded to include Navaho Nation

From left, NWS Flagstaff WCM Tony Merriman and Jenna Lee at the new Bodaway-Gap Chapter House rain gauge site.

*By **Tony Merriman**, NWS Flagstaff, AZ*

NWS Flagstaff, AZ, has forged innovative partnerships with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow network (CoCoRaHS), and the Navajo Nation.

As part of the National Drought Resilience Partnership, NWS Flagstaff has been actively recruiting rainfall observers on the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners region in the Southwest. Expanding observation networks to the under served areas of the southwestern United States will allow for better assessment of drought conditions and other hydrology impacts.

USDA funded 4" plastic rain gauges for NWS use. NWS Flagstaff Warning Coordination Meteorologist Tony Merriman then actively recruited volunteers from Navajo Nation Chapter Houses to observe and report precipitation data. One of the first success stories was engaging the Black Mesa and Bodaway-Gap Navaho Chapter Houses to observe and report precipitation. NWS Meteorologists Ben Peterson, Jon Suk, and Tony Merriman installed a rain gauge at each chapter house and provided training.NWS Flagstaff continues to strive to build a Weather-Ready Navajo

Nation. Through expansion of the CoCoRaHS network further in the Four Corners Region and establishing new relationships, we can better provide decision support services that improve resiliency for those at risk of drought and other hydrologic impacts..

NWS–U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Coordinate Flood Products

*By **NWS Communications Staff,** Silver Spring, MD*

A large snowpack and prolonged flooding in 2017 highlighted the importance of deep core partnerships when messaging flood risk and providing the best water management tools and decisions possible to protect our communities.

To help enhance this coordination, NWS took part in a coordination meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the Walla Walla, WA, District Office. Hydrologists and WCMs from WFOs Boise and Pocatello, ID; Pendleton, OR; Spokane, WA; and Missoula, MT, and the Service Coordination Hydrologist from Northwest River Forecast Center (NWRFC) met with USACE engineers responsible for reservoir and flood control operations in the Snake River and Clear Water River Basins.

Marty Whitmore and Ray Nickless, NW Missoula, MT; Katherine Rowden, NWS Spokane, WA; Steve King, NWRFC Portland, OR; Jay Breidenbach and Troy Lindquist, NWS Boise, ID; Marilyn Lohmann, NWS Pendleton, OR, and Travis Wyatt, NWS Pocatello, ID

One of the most valuable parts of the meeting included a full overview of the Walla Walla District's water management functions and how it uses NWS forecasts. The meeting also offered an excellent discussion about NWS and USACE volume forecast methodologies, the NWRFC's Community Hydrologic Prediction System, federal regulations, International Agreements with Canada, and detailed water regulation information about specific Dams which impact NWS river forecast points.

In addition to the partner meeting with the USACE, NWS colleagues held a mini-summit to discuss hydrology related topics such as drought, WFO and RFC coordination, the National Water Model, and flood safety outreach.

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