



SnowNews

Fall 2017

Volume 6, Issue 3

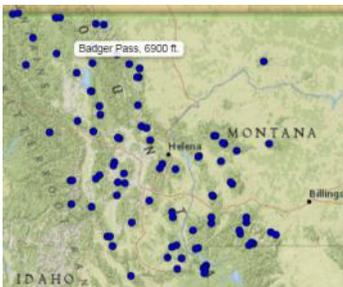
Wildfires impact SNOTEL sites in Montana, Utah, Washington

The 2017 wildfire season in the West has been severe, with the U.S. Forest Service spending a record [\\$2 billion](#) dollars on fire suppression.

Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) sites in many states were threatened by wildfire this year; unfortunately, three sites were directly impacted.

Montana: Badger Pass

Located near the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, the Badger Pass SNOTEL site in northwest Montana was installed in 1978. Badger Pass is a very important site for forecasting and is used to predict eight water supply points.



Wildfire destroyed the Badger Pass site in September. The photo at right shows the destruction at the site.

According to Montana Water Supply Specialist Lucas Zukiewicz, early-season snow in the area may prevent reinstallation of the site components this season.

If that is the case, members of the Montana Data Collection



The Badger Pass SNOTEL site suffered significant damage from wildfire this year. Early-season snowfall may prevent reinstallation of the site for this water year.

Office (DCO) helicopter crew will fly in to the site and make ground truth measurements for snow water equivalent from January to May of 2018.

Utah: Yankee Reservoir

The Yankee Reservoir SNOTEL site in southern Utah was damaged earlier this summer in the 75,000-acre Brianhead fire.

continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

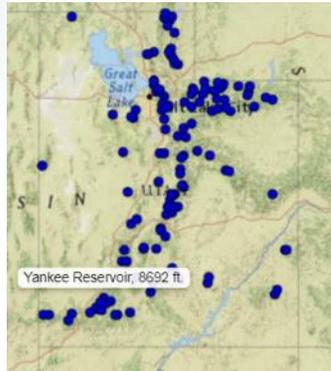
Riding into the Wilderness	3-6
SnowPAC work group status	7-8
New look U.S. Drought Monitor website	9
Airborne Snow Observatory workshop highlights	9
Spotlight on...NWCC Staffing news	10
NRCS Staff visits IBM	10
Summer maintenance: Alaska style	11
Featured photo	12
Resource Locator	13
Upcoming Events	13
Director's Corner	14



Wildfires impact SNOTEL sites

continued from page 1

The Brianhead fire in Utah was started by an individual burning weeds around his cabin.



The Yankee Reservoir SNOTEL site has been re-installed and is fully operational for the October 1 beginning of the 2018 Water Year.

Washington: Sasse Ridge

Wildfire came very close to the Sasse Ridge SNOTEL site in central Washington this year.



Owing to the firefighters who protected this site, only the soil moisture sensors and some surrounding vegetation were lost in the fire.

The soil moisture sensors have been replaced and the Sasse Ridge site is fully functional.



Wildfire damage at the Yankee Reservoir SNOTEL site in southern Utah. This site has been reinstalled.



Firefighters' efforts likely prevented further damage at the Sasse Ridge SNOTEL site in Washington.

From January 1 to September 11, 2017, there were 48,082 wildfires, compared to 42,369 wildfires in the same period in 2016, according to the [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

Riding into the Wilderness

Mike Strobel
NWCC Director,
SSWSF Program Manager

There are times when my job is stressful and tedious, where I feel like all I do is try to meet deadlines and am chained to my desk. Then, there are other times when this is, by far, the coolest job in the world.

Going on the horse trip to the Younts Peak SNOTEL site in the Washakie Wilderness of the Shoshone National Forest is one of those times. I'm summarizing the trip more as a travelogue rather than a science article so that folks can just enjoy the beautiful scenery.

The SNOTEL station is in a wilderness area, so access is by foot or horse. It is a 21.5-mile ride on rugged trail from the trailhead to the station. The actual Younts Peak station is about 5 miles from Younts Peak, but in the South Fork Shoshone River drainage.

Accessing the SNOTEL station is a five-day investment, with Monday and Friday as travel and packing days, Tuesday and Thursday as trail days on horseback and Wednesday as

the station maintenance day.

Trip preparation

The trip began in Cody, Wyoming on Monday, where Chad Gibson and I met up with the crew from Sheep Mesa Outfitters to weigh gear and pack boxes.

At 5 AM on Tuesday, we met everyone for breakfast, then headed out of town to the trailhead up past Buffalo Bill Reservoir and at the edge of the wilderness area in the East Fork Shoshone River valley. The outfitters haul up all the horses and mules and gear in trailers to this point.

Ride in

The ride in took about 9 hours, stopping only to eat a quick lunch at one meadow for 20 minutes. The only other stops occurred when the mules would break their string and had to be tied in again. That long in the saddle (for a guy who rides a desk chair all day) can be tough.



Make camp

Camp was set along the stream near our SNOTEL site. We got into camp about 7 PM and set up our tents and made a fire.

It had been a very warm and dusty ride on the trail, and when riding near the back of the pack and the wind is blowing down the valley, it gets even dustier. It felt like our eyes and throats were full of dust when we got there and I couldn't wait to wash my face and neck off.

continued on page 4





In late August of 2013, a forest fire burned much of the area we rode through, including the Younts Peak SNOTEL station. In the photo above, you can see the standing dead trees that remain after the fire. The site was re-installed late in 2015 and the area is slowly recovering.

Below is the dining fly that also served as the sleeping quarters for the outfitters. After a hot and dry ride Tuesday, thunderstorms moved in Wednesday evening and dumped huge amounts of rain on us for an hour or so. You could literally watch Marston Creek rise significantly as the rain caused washouts in some of the drainages in the basin. We found out the next day that some of our trail was even washed out by the storm and we needed to dismount and walk the horses and mules across different sections to cross newly-formed ravines.

[continued on page 5](#)



Riding into the Wilderness...

continued from page 4



In the photo at right, Chad Gipson and I are getting ready for the ride out Thursday. The day was crystal clear and the rains both settled the dust and cleared the air of smoke from the many active fires in the west.

Thursday's ride took us along the South Fork Shoshone River. The trail crossed the river in a number of places but also rose high on the slopes where the canyon walls and scree slopes required traversing up hundreds of feet.

As seen in the photo below, the trail out was difficult in places, especially along the catwalk. A day earlier (Wednesday), an outfitter lost 6 horses down the slope. I don't believe any died, but they were certainly injured terribly.



We passed by packs and gear along the trail that had blood stains and broken parts. Although these trips are an adventure, there are the real dangers of steep cliffs, river crossing, grizzly bears and other risks.

continued on page 6





Riding into the Wilderness...

continued from page 5



This photo was taken near the catwalk and looking at the South Fork Shoshone River. It shows how much climbing was involved in the ride, as we ended up crossing the river in a number of places.

It is obvious why the trail had to be routed over the ridges, as the river was confined by steep walls on both sides.

Crossing the South Fork Shoshone River one last time, we rode into the trailhead and loaded the horses, mules, and gear into the trailers for the ride back to Cody.

The trip, although difficult, is always an adventure. And the photos and experience highlight why some of our SNOTEL sites are a challenge to maintain. However, the data from this one site are critical for our water supply forecasting and play a key role in our snow survey program.



SnowPAC Work Group Status Report



In December of each year, representatives from the 12 western states gather for a week-long Snow Program Advisory Committee (SnowPAC) workshop. During the 2016 workshop, four working groups were formed to address issues or special topics of interest to the entire Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program. Here's an update from each of the working groups on their activities and plans moving forward.

Forecast Verification Group

Members: Jeff Anderson (Lead, NV), Amy Burke (OR), Karl Wetlaufer (CO), Christina Andry (ID), Gus Goodbody (NWCC)

The goal of the Forecast Verification Work Group is to develop visual tools to more easily compare how streamflow forecasts relate to actual runoff.

The visual tools fall into two groups – one which compares multiple forecasts across an area, and the other which looks at one forecast through time, either across a water year or across multiple years.

In May 2017, an online survey was used to gather input across the Snow Survey Program to determine which tools would be most useful.

New products are being developed, such as the chart at right. This chart compares multiple streamflow forecasts for specific basins and includes an option to display observed flows for past years.

In 2018, the group hopes to move forward with refining the products that are already in motion and also investigate ways to develop new products.

Air Temperature Group – New Sensor/Shield Testing

Members: Lucas Zukiewicz (Lead, MT), Troy Brosten (UT), Daniel Fisher (AK), Karl Wetlaufer (CO), Lauren Austin (OR), Chris Romero (NM), Deb Harms (NWCC Liaison)

The Air Temperature Working Group was tasked with evaluating new sensors and radiation shields to replace the existing temperature measurement set-ups at SNOTEL sites across the West. The group began work on January 23rd, 2017.

The goal for the working group was to identify new methods of air temperature measurement for the Snow Survey Program to consider before implementing a change from our current sensor.

The preliminary workflow is:

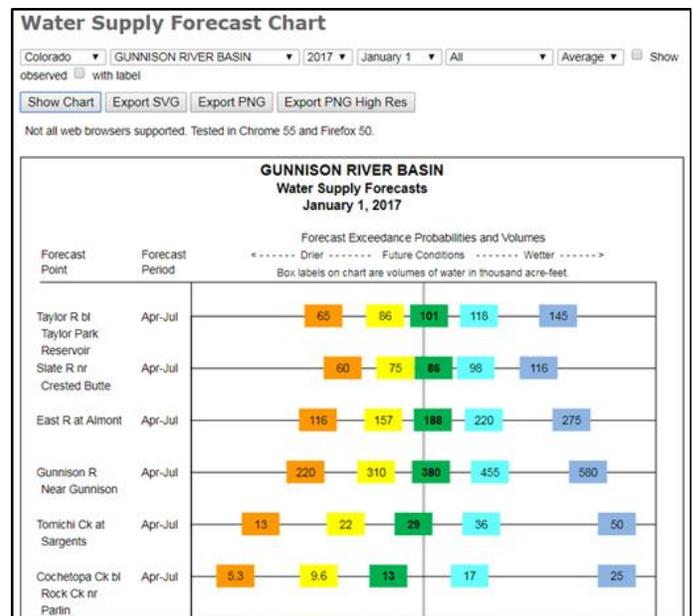
1. Review current NRCS standards and specifications for air temperature measurement and compare them to international standards (WMO).
2. Identify specifications for a new sensor, and potentially a new radiation shield.
3. Develop a list of suitable sensors and shields that fall within the criteria.
4. Develop a research plan for testing new measurements including a testing and analysis timeline.
5. Present information to the SnowPAC group for a decision on what sensors to test across the network.

After a thorough literature review to identify the issues with making an accurate air temperature

measurement in mountainous environments (variable snow depth, solar radiation, wind, etc.) the group set to identify standards for a new sensor and shield combination, sampling rate, averaging algorithms, and mounting height. After these standards were set, the group evaluated possible sensors and shields that would meet these standards. The group selected two air temperature sensors to test in the field at SNOTEL sites, as well as two different radiation shield combinations.

All Data Collection Offices (DCOs) agreed to deploy 2-3 test configurations during the summer field work season of 2017, and many have been installed as of this date. The test sites will collect data through the winter of 2017/2018 and into the summer/fall of 2018.

continued on page 8



New Water Supply Forecast Chart



SnowPAC Work Group Status Report

continued from page 7

Data from the sites will then be analyzed and presented to the SnowPAC group for a decision at the winter workshop in December 2018.

All dialogue, discussion, and decisions by the group have been documented on the NWCC **USDA Connect** website and can be viewed at any time by others in the Snow Survey Program. This information can be found [here](#).

Historical Temperature Data Bias Correction Work Group

Members: Brian Domonkos (Lead, CO), Troy Brosten (UT), Anthony DeMarco (AK), Joshua Roach (OR), Chris Brown (NWCC)

Highlights from the Historical Temperature Data Bias Correction Work Group:

- An environmental chamber has been received. The vendor initially indicated the chamber and software were appropriate for the job, however, we discovered that the software is, in fact, unsuitable. Chris Brown and the EMF staff are working to return or exchange the current software for a suitable product.
- The effort to obtain sample sensors for testing Extended Range YSI thermistors has yielded sensors from several DCOs, while additional sensors are still needed from other DCOs.
- Historical temperature metadata have been provided by the Utah DCO. Historical metadata is needed from all other DCOs. This will allow the work group to know how far back it would

be possible to correct historical temperature and how to treat all historical data.

- Once the work group obtains the appropriate software and has become familiar with the environmental chamber we will devise a testing method with the objective of providing a lookup table or equation to edit all qualifying data from sensor output values to true temperature.

The team is currently working on a summary report that will be presented at the December SnowPAC annual workshop.

Telemetry Work Group

Members: Melissa Webb (Lead, OR), Daniel Fisher (AK), Eric Larson (MT), Beau Uriona (UT), Mike Ardison (CO), Tom Beers (ID), Deb Harms (NWCC), John Weeks (NWCC)

The Telemetry Work Group has been working since spring to summarize the current status of the four, main telemetry methods for sending real-time SNOTEL and SCAN data: cellular, meteor burst, GOES, and Iridium.

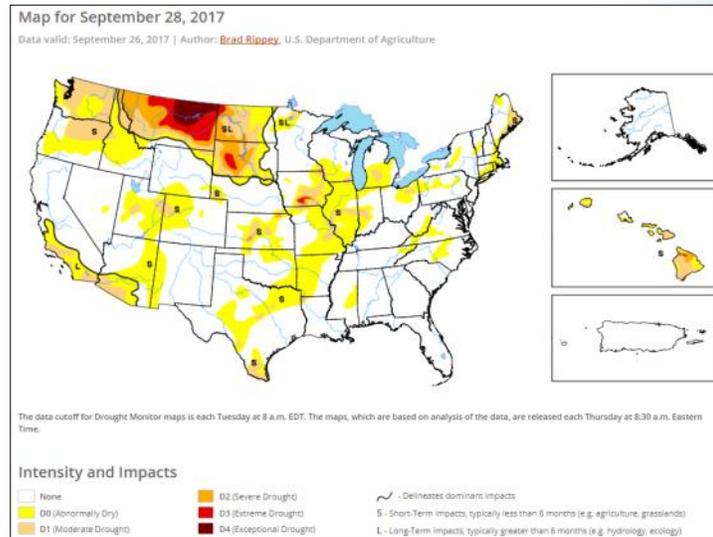
This includes comparing current costs, reliability, and long-term viability for each telemetry method.



New look for U.S. Drought Monitor website

The National Drought Mitigation Center recently launched an updated [U.S. Drought Monitor website](#) that improves usability and readability for its nearly 7 million-a-year viewers. The mobile-friendly site contains a new, larger drought monitor map, revised navigation, and more data and information download options.

“The new site allows us to better serve our clients by offering more options and using the latest website technology available,” said Brian Fuchs, monitoring coordinator for the drought center. “Gathering information to help prepare for and mitigate drought should be easier than ever.”



Users with URL bookmarks to the older site may want to

[Update Bookmarks](#) to the newer site.

The updated U.S. Drought Monitor website is optimized for mobile devices and features a larger-format drought monitor map.

Airborne Snow Observatory workshop highlights

**[Gus Goodbody](#)
NWCC Forecast Hydrologist**

I recently attended a workshop to help develop and operationalize an exciting new technology. NASA's Airborne Snow Observatory (ASO) offers a revolutionary approach for collecting snowpack information in mountainous watersheds of the western United States.

From a plane-mounted scanning LIDAR and imaging spectrometer, it is now possible to collect high resolution, watershed-wide, distributed snow depth and snow surface reflectance (albedo) data.

Why is this important? Snow depth is critical for understanding the extent of the snow reservoir, ultimately determining the magnitude of water available for runoff from mountain snowpacks. The albedo of the snow surface controls the amount of solar energy that is available for melting the snowpack.

Clean, new snow has a very high albedo, reflecting a majority (>90%) of solar energy back into the atmosphere. Older snow or snow that has been contaminated by dust or soot has a significantly reduced albedo, resulting in more energy reaching the snowpack and faster snowmelt rates.

Understanding the distribution of snow depth (magnitude of the snow resource) and snow surface albedo (timing of snowmelt) are key components for improving seasonal and short term water supply forecasts that are broadly used by western water managers and the public that relies on water sourced from mountain snowpacks.

Historically, water managers have relied on point measurements from a limited number of SNOTEL and snow course sites to characterize mountain snowpack. While these ground based measurements will continue to be critical for years to come, the

data collected by ASO has the potential to further improve water supply forecasting skill. This is achieved by having a fully distributed view of snowpack conditions rather than relying on a limited number of point measurements.

With canopy and climate changes across western watersheds, the relationships between watershed snowpack distribution and ground-based point measurements is becoming increasingly variable, reducing the skill of models that rely on the stability of these relationships.

The ASO program still faces many challenges, including cost of data collection, and development of techniques for using the information in statistical and hydrologic models, but NRCS involvement in this project means that we will be well positioned to harness the benefits as they develop.



Spotlight on... NWCC staffing news

The National Water and Climate Center (NWCC) recently filled two key staff positions.

Deb Harms is the new Water and Climate Monitoring (WCM) Team Lead for the NWCC.

The WCM Team that Deb leads is responsible for supplying and maintaining much

of the equipment used by both the Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting (SSWSF) Program and the Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN).

In addition to operating the Electronics Maintenance Facility (EMF) in Portland, OR, the hydrologists, technicians, and statistical assistant on the WCM Team support all the

data collection offices, help maintain hardware and software at the meteor burst Master Stations, and conduct the annual Westwide Snow School.

Rashawn Tama is the new Management Analyst at the NWCC.

Rashawn's position oversees IT functions at the NWCC and serves as the technical liaison between the NWCC and the National Information Technical Center (NITC) as we continue to move into and operate in a hosting environment.

The position also serves as the business lead for contracts and agreements awarded by the NWCC and handles budgets, interactions with contract staff, and information requests.

Congratulations to both Deb and Rashawn in their new positions.



NWCC leadership team: Deb Harms, Rashawn Tama, Cara McCarthy, Mike Strobel.

NRCS staff visit IBM Yorktown research facility

NRCS staff from the National Water and Climate Center (NWCC) and Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) recently visited the IBM Yorktown research facility near White Plains, New York.

The focus of the visit was to learn more about IBM platforms for data ingestion, processing, and analytics that could be used to improve operations for Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL), Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN), and related monitoring networks operated and maintained by the NRCS as part of the Water and Climate Information System (WCIS).

The visit highlighted the capabilities of the IBM [Bluemix](#) and [Watson](#) technologies and

emphasized innovative data telemetry hardware and machine-learning as key attributes of more flexible and efficient network operations.

NWCC staff are looking forward to collaborating with OCIO and IBM to bring innovative solutions into proof-of-concept demonstration projects.

National Geospatial Center for Excellence team in Portland

The National Geospatial Center for Excellence (NGCE) in Fort Worth, TX, visited the National Water and Climate Center (NWCC) in Portland, OR, in late August.

Javier Ruiz, Paul Fukuhara, and Jennifer Sweet from the NGCE brought a wealth of information about available GIS and IT resources.

ESRI representative Anne Taylor, based in Colorado, joined for a day. Geoffrey Duh, from Portland State University and GIS collaborator with the NWCC, also attended.

The NWCC greatly appreciated the NGCE's attention and is looking forward to a stronger partnership.

Summer maintenance: Alaska style

Daniel Fisher, Alaska Data Collection Office (DCO) Supervisor, reports that the summer season in Alaska has been pretty typical, with routine annual maintenance being the general task at hand.

In addition to maintenance, the crew installed a new Flower Mountain Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) site near Haines.

They also relocated two sites: Monahan Flat SNOTEL due to an encroaching stream and the Tok Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) site due to repeated vandalism.

The team from Alaska also installed a new test site adjacent to their warehouse in Palmer.

Here are a few photos from the Alaska DCO.



Above: A helicopter sling load relocating the precipitation gage at the Monahan Flat SNOTEL site.



At left: The newly-installed Flower Mountain SNOTEL site.



Featured Photo



Jordan Clayton, Utah Data Collection Office, recently took this photo at the Lakefork Basin SNOTEL site (ID: 513, GPS coordinates: 40.737, -110.620, elevation: 10,890 ft.). It's a remote, approximate 16-mile hike in to the site, which is located in the High Uintas Wilderness of northern Utah. The photo is of the precipitation gage reflected in a tiny creek that runs next to the site.



Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program Resource Locator

Here's a handy reference for finding resources in the Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program.

Where	What	Who	How
Alaska	Forecast Hydrologist Data Collection Office Supervisor	Jolyne Lea Daniel Fisher	503-414-3040 jolyne.lea@por.usda.gov 907-671-7746 daniel.fisher@ak.usda.gov
Arizona	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Jolyne Lea Dino De Simone	503-414-3040 jolyne.lea@por.usda.gov 602-280-8786 dino.desimone@az.usda.gov
California	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Jolyne Lea Greg Norris	503-414-3040 jolyne.lea@por.usda.gov 530-792-5609 greg.norris@ca.usda.gov
Colorado	Forecast Hydrologist Hydrologist Data Collection Office Supervisor	Cara McCarthy Karl Wetlaufer Brian Domonkos	503-414-3088 cara.s.mccarthy@por.usda.gov 720-544-2853 karl.wetlaufer@co.usda.gov 720-544-2852 brian.domonkos@co.usda.gov
Idaho	Data Collection Officer (acting) Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Dan Tappa Rashawn Tama Ron Abramovich	208-378-5740 daniel.tappa@id.usda.gov 503-414-3010 rashawn.tama@por.usda.gov 208-378-5741 ron.abramovich@id.usda.gov
Montana	Data Collection Office Supervisor Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Mage Hultstrand Cara McCarthy Lucas Zukiewicz	406-587-6844 mage.hultstrand@mt.usda.gov 503-414-3088 cara.s.mccarthy@por.usda.gov 406-587-6843 lucas.zukiewicz@mt.usda.gov
Nevada	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Jolyne Lea Jeff Anderson	503-414-3040 jolyne.lea@por.usda.gov 775-857-8500 x152 jeff.anderson@nv.usda.gov
New Mexico	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Gus Goodbody Chris Romero	503-414-3033 angus.goodbody@por.usda.gov 520-292-2999 x107 chris.romero@nm.usda.gov
Oregon	Forecast Hydrologist Hydrologist Data Collection Office Supervisor	David Garen Melissa Webb Scott Oviatt	503-414-3021 david.garen@por.usda.gov 503-414-3270 melissa.webb@or.usda.gov 503-414-3271 scott.oviatt@or.usda.gov
Utah	Forecast Hydrologist Snow Survey Supervisor	Gus Goodbody Randy Julander	503-414-3033 angus.goodbody@por.usda.gov 801-524-5213 randy.julander@ut.usda.gov
Washington	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Gus Goodbody Scott Pattee	503-414-3033 angus.goodbody@por.usda.gov 360-428-7684 scott.pattee@wa.usda.gov
Wyoming	Forecast Hydrologist Water Supply Specialist	Cara McCarthy Ken Von Buettner	503-414-3088 cara.s.mccarthy@por.usda.gov 307-233-6743 ken.vonbuettner@wy.usda.gov
All States	Center Director/Program Manager Management Analyst Water & Climate Monitoring Team Lead Water & Climate Services Team Lead Administrative Assistant Database Manager Database Manager Development Hydrologist Electronics Technician Lead (EMF) Electronics Technician (EMF) Hydrologist (Water & Climate Monitoring) Operations Specialist (SNOTEL/SCAN) Resource Conservationist Statistical Assistant/SCAN QC	Mike Strobel Rashawn Tama Deb Harms Cara McCarthy Jo Huelshoff Maggie Dunklee Vacant David Garen John Weeks Alex Rebentisch Chris Brown Vacant Vacant Peter Briggs	503-414-3055 michael.strobel@por.usda.gov 503-414-3010 rashawn.tama@por.usda.gov 503-414-3050 deb.harms@por.usda.gov 503-414-3088 cara.s.mccarthy@por.usda.gov 503-414-3031 jo.huelshoff@por.usda.gov 503-414-3049 maggie.dunklee@por.usda.gov Vacant 503-414-3021 david.garen@por.usda.gov john.weeks@por.usda.gov alexander.rebentisch@por.usda.gov 503-414-3090 chris.r.brown@por.usda.gov Vacant Vacant 503-414-3061 peter.briggs@por.usda.gov

Contact Help Center

There's an online tool to help locate resources within the Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program.

Click [here](#) to open the **Contact Help Center**. Don't forget to bookmark the url.

Upcoming events

Events of interest in the coming months.



What: 4th World Conference on Climate Change

When: October 19-21, 2017

Where: Rome, Italy

More information: [Conference Overview](#)

What: American Meteorological Society 98th Annual Meeting

When: January 7-11, 2018

Where: Austin, TX

More information: [Meeting Overview](#)

What: Westwide Snow Survey Training School

When: January 22-26, 2018

Where: West Yellowstone, WY

More information: [Deb Harms](#), 503-414-3050.

What: 86th Annual Western Snow Conference

When: April 17-20, 2018

Where: Albuquerque, NM

More information: [Conference Overview](#)



Helping People Help the Land.

National Water & Climate Center
Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov

1201 NE Lloyd Blvd.
Suite 802
Portland, OR 97232

Editor: Jacquie Workman
Phone: 503-414-3038
E-mail:
jacquie.workman@por.usda.gov

For issues of **SnowNews** go to:
www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/SnowNews/SnowNews_landing.htm

Director's Corner: Change



If there is one thing inevitable in life, it is change.

Sometimes change happens with things we control, like choosing to diet, moving to a new house or switching jobs. But most often, change occurs in our lives by processes out of our control.

How we deal with those changes is entirely up to each individual. Either you accept the change, determine to battle the change, or make a change in your own life.

For example, when my father died, my mom's whole life changed with it. She had to learn how to pay bills, handle household tasks he had done, and live alone for the first time in over 50 years. She didn't choose this change, but rather it was thrust upon her. Wishing it were different and back to the way it was before didn't change it. She learned to deal with the situation and move forward in life.

The same is true for many communities that thrived on a single industry, such as whaling, steel production or mining. When economies and technology changed, these places either died off as ghost towns or found ways to adapt and thrive in new areas.

Sometimes we don't accept change, like when a new law or political decision goes against our values or beliefs. In these cases, the change may prompt action of some individuals to protest, become politically active, or disobey the ruling.

And sometimes a change can be an encouragement to change our own lives, such as when someone finds out they have a medical condition and need to alter their lifestyle, when a person cannot get along with a boss and decides to switch jobs, or when a natural disaster encourages someone to move from their present town to a new location.

In general, we all get exposed to change all the time. In most cases, these changes are beyond our control and we have a choice to adapt/evolve or, as with the dinosaurs, cease to exist as before. Bringing back the term that was so overused in the 1990s, it's a new paradigm, a new way of thinking about things if we want to adapt and evolve.

Relating this directly to our present environment within the agency and the department, we see many changes that have impacted our daily lives. Reduced staffing numbers certainly is one of these changes. We just need to determine how we can still meet our mission and serve the public, but with fewer staff. We need to explore different ways to get the work done and to decide what tasks we can no longer accomplish. This is a tough change for all of us, but a reality we need to accept.

We need to learn how to work under new structures, such as changes within the department and changes in our own processes like administrative transformation. I often hear people say that they wish we would just go back to how it was before, but that is not the reality of the present direction and we need to learn to work under these changes.

Probably the biggest obstacle with any change is how it impacts morale. It's said that the only thing certain about change is opposition to it. Maybe so, but a measure of a person is how they handle it. Your attitude impacts everyone around you, and your attitude can make the workplace either one of enjoyment or one of depression. And although we can't always control change, we can control our attitudes. Misery may love company, but often results in loneliness as others migrate away from it.

So, accept that change does happen and is often far beyond our control or choosing. Decide either how to evolve with it and remain positive or make a change in your own life that makes you happy. We all deal with this in our own way, and that is up to you. Wishing it away accomplishes nothing. Learning to work with change is a strategy that makes sense.

Mike



USDA NRCS is an equal opportunity employer and provider