

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE CLIMATOLOGISTS
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
TIMBERLINE, OREGON
AUGUST 2-4, 1988

The 13th annual meeting of the American Association of State Climatologists was called to order by President Pat Michaels (VA) at 0800. Approximately 60 attendees were present, including 29 state climatologists or assistants.

After a few words of welcome to the slopes of Mount Hood by Kelly Redmond (OR), Ken Kunkel (MRCC, IL) began the presentations, discussing issues relating to the use of "normals" and the best ways of communicating measures of central tendency and dispersion of climate data to users.

Peter Robinson (NC) spoke on approaches to strengthen state climate programs. Peter advocated a strategy somewhat like the development of a business plan. Ideally, in each state, mention of "climate" should automatically inspire an image of the state climate office. The usual spirited discussion engendered by both the speaker and the topic ensued, and a wide variety of viewpoints propagated through the air.

Howard Hill reviewed events of the past year at NCPO, noting in passing that "climate is on a lot of lips this year." Four regional centers covering 30 states have been funded, a fifth is in the works, and efforts are being expended to create a sixth and final center in the south central states. Alaska and Hawaii are not included in any of the present or prospective RCC's. Howard outlined the broad funding picture as well.

Dave Miller (CT) told about what's new in the Northeast. Bernie Dethier has retired from New York and is attempting to acquire a Maine accent as that state's new SC. Other topics included CLICOM and quality control, a way to disseminate climate data and information via an ARCINFO GIS, a new program to help community planners and local government officials, and a new Senate bill to establish Regional Marine Research Centers. Dave suggested that the AASC urge that existing climate units provide the climatological services these centers will need.

In his customary energetic manner, John Purvis (the SC SC), pointed out that coastal issues are a common thread of concern in the southeast region. The budding southeast center is assessing needs to guide future growth of the center. He stressed that the RCC's should act as conduits both from the local level up and from the top down.

Ken Kunkel discussed the Midwest RCC from a month's perspective. All states in the region are expected to have CLICOM by the end of the year. Ken spoke of the demand for fresh data brought on by the year's unprecedented drought. The

development of a computerized climate dissemination service directed primarily toward agriculture ("Agriclims") was his final subject.

Ken Hubbard (NE) talked about 1) AGNET, the realtime data acquisition system 2) AGRIPOD, a near-real time weather information system 3) AWDN, the Automated Weather Data Network 4) CLICOM 5) the use of optical disks, sold by US West and 6) UNIDATA. A set of slides drawn from the AWDN showed how the drought evolved in this state.

Bob Muller (LA) noted the trials and tribulations involved with obtaining the funding to establish the remaining regional center. Bob then reminded the audience, with a set of slides, of the intermingling of comedy and tragedy that characterizes certain data measurements.

Dick Reinhardt (WRCC) covered several goals of the Western RCC, among them 1) improved dissemination of climatic data, 2) interaction with federal agencies, 3) acquisition of other data sets and 4) development of climatic products. A Climatic Data Service Facility has been established to help access data validated by the states, as well as data from other observing programs.

Kelly Redmond (OR) described the procedure, currently operational in the 11 westernmost states, for injecting local expertise into the NCDC quality control path for temperatures. The philosophy, motivation and need for the approach taken were also covered. The minimal attention paid on the national scale to the vital area of quality control of climate data, and the importance of renewed commitment in this area, were stressed.

Myron Molnau (ID) followed with a discussion of the more difficult topic of quality control of cooperative precipitation data.

Grant Goodge (NCDC) described the frustrations of attempting to maintain a quality national database in the face of severe budgetary and manpower cutbacks. Grant conveyed a sense that these chronic problems will not improve without the influence of AASC and other users of climatic information.

Steve Doty (NCDC), substituting for director Ken Hadeen, continued by describing the dismal financial circumstances besetting NCDC. A budget shortfall of 15 percent of a \$10 million budget was projected, and a staffing level of 230 one year ago was now reduced to 180-190. Busy signals for incoming callers have become much more frequent. Steve mentioned several other topics: the frost/freeze publications, CLIMAIL, the need to use the on-line data bases, the Historical Climatology Network, and the state climatologist exchange program.

Steve noted that nine states have new state climatologists, and that Wyoming had finally appointed someone to this position.

Only Pennsylvania remains without.

Howard Hill spoke for the audience in expressing thanks for the efforts of those operating within the difficult situation at NCDC.

As distant Mount Jefferson absorbed the remaining red rays of a setting sun, Allan Murphy spoke on "Climate Services in the 1990's". Thoughts occasionally drifted back to a dinner featuring what must have been the World's Best Chicken Ever.

The next day featured several invited speakers from other agencies. Harry Lins (USGS-Reston) spoke about new initiatives within the Survey pertaining to climate, the wish for stronger ties with state climatologists, and the "105" grants program. Roger Tucker (USFS-Washington (DC)) described the expanding appreciation of the role of weather and climate in Forest Service activities. Bruce Parks (USGS-Reston) talked about the National Water Data Exchange and the Master Water Data Index, among other subjects. Stan Fox (SCS Snow Survey-Oregon) described the SNOTEL system, an nearby example of which was later visited by many attendees. Ben Domenico (UCAR) reviewed the Unidata Program and demonstrated PC-McIDAS with a remote hookup to Boulder. US West displayed the operation of its optically based hydrologic and climatic data systems.

Pat Michaels (VA) spoke on climate variability and impacts, sharing his perspective on current climate anomalies and their interpretation.

Steve Doty (NCDC) emphasized that the Climatological Information Retrieval System at NCDC needs more use by SC's to remain in operation. Steve also asked for input regarding whether to institute a formal program to honor observers and stations with century-long records. Many (over 500) are near or beyond this point at the present time.

Claude Duchon (OK) talked about a network of 107 automated stations to be deployed in that state, and invited applications to fill the vacant position of OSC director.

Joe Caprio (MT) showed examples of his recently developed MAPS system for the state of Montana.

Tom Blackburn (NWS-Washington DC), in a superb display of comedic talent, told the assembly what he'd like to say, and followed that with what he had to say. A number of significant problems plague the MMTS program, the long-awaited observer handbook, and the recording raianguage network. The outlook for rapid resolution of these problems is not promising.



Jim Laver (CAC) reviewed activities at the Climate Analysis Center, with emphasis on the spring drought.

At 1430 the business meeting was called to order.

President Pat Michaels (VA) quit.

President Wayne Wendland (IL) began.

Wayne acknowledged the presence of several former SC's, including Joe Moyer, Jim Goodridge, Bernie Dethier (both a present and a former), Howard Critchfield, and Arnold Court.

The minutes of the 1987 meeting, printed in the Fall 1987 edition of The State Climatologist, were approved.

Kelly Redmond (OR), treasurer, reported a balance of \$6485.73 on July 31 in the organization's account.

Dave Miller (CT) proposed a motion to the effect that the AASC take steps to prevent the further deterioration of quality control of the nation's cooperative climate database. An animated discussion followed. The general tone of the comments was quite sympathetic to NCDC, as the subject has been of longstanding and widespread interest to the membership.

After further discussion, the motion was amended to read as follows: The AASC executive board exercise pressure to reestablish quality control measures to the cooperative data at NCDC, including the possibility of legal action against NCDC.

President Wayne took pains to assure NCDC representatives that the AASC is taking these actions as a supportive measure, not as an adversary.

The motion passed unanimously.

Dave Miller (CT) offered a second motion:

The AASC executive board carry out whatever steps are necessary to insure that the Senate bill on establishment of regional marine centers include wording to insure that regional climate centers and state climate centers be funded to provide climate services for these marine centers.

The motion passed unanimously.

Peter Robinson (NC) moved that: The AASC appoint a task force to support and encourage festivities to mark the occasion of the centennial of the cooperative climate observer program.

Bernie Dethier (ME) offered an amendment that we support and encourage NC-94's efforts in this regard. The amendment passed with two nays.

The motion was then passed.

President Wayne then moved that: The statement on normals presented at the meeting (by Ken Kunkel) be re-drafted in the light of comments made here today and be given for publication in The State Climatologist, that comments be invited until the 1st of February, and that we seek dissemination in an AMS publication.

The motion passed unanimously after a short discussion.

Pat Michaels (VA) proposed a constitutional amendment to expand the definition of a voting member, as underlined:

IV. Membership

2. Any person who is currently recognized by the Director of the National Climatic Data Center and a state agency as an official State Climatologist, or director of a Regional Climate Center, shall become a Voting Member upon voluntary registration of his or her name and address with the Secretary of the Association, and payment of dues.

Of the 23 state climatologists in the room, 21 voted yes, and the amendment passed.

Jim Zandlo (MN) moved that: The Data Availability and Quality Committee be charged with preparation of a statement giving measures to insure that the quality of climate data be maintained and improved.

The motion passed. Nolan Doesken (CO) volunteered to participate in this endeavor.

Dave Miller and Bernie Dethier each boasted of their state's glories to woo the AASC for the next annual meeting. 16 voters swooned over Maine, 3 liked Connecticut, and the rest watched with bated breath.

The following associate members were nominated:

Mark Janzaruk	NV	Mork/Molnau
Sandra Brazel	AZ	Muller/ Miller
Townsend, Tom	MO	Wendland/Doesken
Vernon Meentemeyer	GA	Brazel/Michaels
Philip Suckling	GA	Brazel/Michaels
Caryl Silberman	NY	Eggleston/Hubbard
Charles Feris	OR	Redmond/Michaels
Phil Buffinton	IL	Redmond/Wendland
Thomas Schwein	MO	Redmond/Wendland
Paul W. Dailey	MO	Redmond/Wendland

The slate passed.

Nominations for next year's officers were presented:

Kelly Redmond (OR) - President
James Zandlo (MN) - Secretary/Treasurer

Both were approved unanimously. The room remained quiet.

A note of appreciation was sounded for the organizational efforts.

The meeting was adjourned, and members trooped off to reflect on the handiwork of both man and Nature, or catch a plane.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: State Climatologists
FROM: Ken Kunkel, Chairman, Instrumentation and
Data Standards Committee
SUBJECT: Draft Statement on "Climatic Means and Normals"

Based on our discussion at the annual meeting at Mt. Hood, Arnold Court and I have revised the draft statement on "Climatic Means and Normals". Please review this revised draft and send me any comments by February 15, 1988. I will attempt to incorporate all suggested changes. I will then submit the draft for publication to the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society.