

June 2015 STAC Newsletter

STAC Membership: In July, STAC will begin its annual membership review and renewal. Beth Farley, the AMS Director of Member Services, provided a database of current STAC members for our review. Bruce Telfeyan analyzed the data and produced the tables which breakdown our membership according to weather enterprise sectors, gender, member categories, member roles on in STAC, country of residence, state of residence, and decade of birth. These tables can be viewed on the STAC web site under News and Reports or directly at: <http://www2.ametsoc.org/stac/index.cfm/news-reports/membership-breakdown-of-stac-boards-and-committees/>. Contact Bruce Telfeyan for additional information. rbt48@cox.net .

Fire and Forest Meteorology: The 11th Symposium on Fire and Forest Meteorology was held in Minneapolis, MN from 5-7 May 2015 followed by a local field trip on the 8th. Just over 60 oral and poster abstract presentations were accepted into the Symposium, including international papers from Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, and Russia. Session themes included Meteorological Information in Fire Management Planning, Fire Weather Index Development, Smoke, Field Studies of Fire-Atmosphere Interactions, Use of Weather and Climate Information, Model Studies, and Operational Forecasting of Fire Weather. The Symposium luncheon presentation featured Robert “Zeke” Ziel, currently working at the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, but previously in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. A field trip to Carleton College took place following the Symposium to learn about their prairie restoration efforts and how they use fire and fire weather information in those efforts. The Symposium falls under the auspices of the Agriculture and Forest Meteorology STAC Committee. Tim Brown, Tim.Brown@dri.edu .

Polar Meteorology and Oceanography: The 13th biennial AMS Conference on Polar Meteorology and Oceanography was held amidst the beauty of Whistler, British Columbia, May 31 – June 4, 2015. This year our conference joined with the 49th congress of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (CMOS). About 350 delegates presented talks and posters, and were treated to opening speech by The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia that left a lasting impression. She cited James Lovelock, albedo feedbacks and drew on her own farming background to note the agricultural challenges of a changing climate, drawing on the conference theme: “Tropics to Poles: Advancing Science in High Latitudes.” Plenary sessions included: David Battisti, on the impact of the tropical Pacific on the Antarctic and Arctic; Elizabeth Barnes, on the relationship between Arctic warming and midlatitude jetstreams; Mary-Louise Timmermans, on changes in heat and freshwater content of the Arctic Ocean; Marika Holland, on sea ice albedo feedbacks in coupled climate models; Nadja Steiner on biogeochemistry of the Arctic Ocean. These plenaries were followed by up to seven parallel sessions each day with 15 sessions focused on monitoring and modeling the polar atmosphere, oceans and the cryosphere, and their interconnections on daily to centennial timescales (see the program at <http://congress.cmos.ca>). Three prizes awarded each

for the best student poster in meteorology, oceanography and cryospheric sciences. In addition to these prizes, AMS awarded bursaries to students Kathleen Willmot (Vanderbilt University), Alexander Fuller (Johns Hopkins University) and Natalia Hryniw (University of Washington) to attend the conference. Our joint conference was fortunate to receive sponsorship from The Weather Network, Campbell Scientific, and the U.S. Office of Naval Research Global Division among a cluster of supporters, and there were eighteen exhibitors. In addition, the AMS Polar Meteorology and Oceanography committee hosted a short course on “A practical guide to using the Community Earth System Model and Regional Arctic System Model for polar climate research” by Edward Blanchard-Wrigglesworth and Andrew Roberts, afrobert@nps.edu.

Upcoming Meetings: <http://www.ametsoc.org/MEET/meetinfo.html> .

Congressional Actions: In June, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut funding for Earth system science and services. This is cause for serious concern for the weather, water, and climate community. The House bill cuts more than 16% from the total funding for NSF's Geoscience and Social, Behavioral, and Economics (SBE) directorates. The same bill cuts NASA's Earth Sciences and the total NOAA budget by roughly 5% each. In a separate bill, the House voted to cut Biological and Environmental Research (BER) in the Department of Energy's Office of Science more than 9% (though the name can be misleading to some, BER houses the research most relevant to our community). Both bills passed with overwhelming support among Republicans and opposition among Democrats. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate appear more predisposed to fund weather, water, and climate research and the President is pushing for increases in weather and climate research through his funding request. To become law, the Senate and the President would need to agree to these cuts. Nevertheless, it is a major concern that House Republicans view the Earth sciences negatively. The cuts passed by the House, if enacted, will weaken our capacity to provide observations, science, and services relating to weather and climate. Our community has a strong interest in helping Congress better understand the value of the Earth sciences to the nation and the world. AMS sent a letter to all members of Congress to raise awareness of our contribution (http://ametsoc.org/sss/letters_geosciences_support_may_2015.pdf) but similar efforts from individual scientists throughout the country will likely be needed if policy makers are to view the Earth sciences in a more favorable light. Strong positive messages, such as those in the AMS letter, are most likely to convey effectively the importance of our science and services to the nation. Paul Higgins, phiggins@ametsoc.org .

STAC Five Year Plans: Board and Committee Chairs are reminded that five year plans are due 1 July. Plans should update current plans for 2015-2018 and add the year, 2019. These plans not only inform the STAC leadership of Board and Committee objectives, but they serve as Board and Committee communication vehicles and inform new leadership as they take the reins. Please send your updated plans to Commissioner Dave Stensrud, david.stensrud@psu.edu .