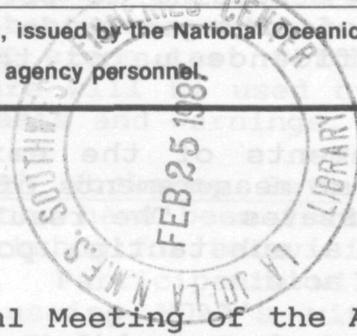




NOAA REPORT

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February 18, 1987

COMING UP

153rd National Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago, Ill., Feb. 14-18.

NOAA Science Seminar Series: "Sea Level Time Series in the Equatorial Pacific from the GEOSAT Radar Altimeter:" Robert Cheney, NOS, WSC-5, Room 926, 10:30 a.m., Feb. 20.

GOES-H launch from Cape Canaveral, Fla., Feb. 24.

Symposium on 180th anniversary of the founding of the "Survey of the Coast" in Rockville, Md., Feb. 26.

Nitric Acid Estimates Now More Certain:--NOAA scientists have confirmed the validity of a simple technique for measuring nitrogen oxide emissions from soil. This opens the way to estimating with confidence for the first time how much nitric acid - a major component of acid rain - comes from natural sources, and accordingly, how much is man-made.

Scientists believe one of the principal natural sources of nitric acid is the emission of nitrogen oxides from soil. Until now, however, techniques to measure the emissions have been subject to question, and as a result no measurements have been made for the North American continent.

This past summer, Dr. Fred C. Fehsenfeld of NOAA's Boulder Aeronomy Laboratory and colleagues from the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) utilized two different approaches to measure the emissions, and compared results. CIRES is jointly funded by NOAA and the University of Colorado.

In one approach, emissions were collected within an enclosure, and the rate of emissions was deduced from the amount accumulated. In the other approach, the concentration of the emitted compounds was measured as a function of height above the ground, and the emission of the compounds was determined from the decline in these compounds with height.

"There was good agreement between the emissions determined by the two procedures," according to Dr. Fehsenfeld. "Consequently the measurement of nitrogen oxide emission from the soil can be made with confidence using the simpler enclosure technique."

Subsequent measurements of the emissions by NOAA have provided some of the first measurements of nitrogen oxide fluxes obtained in the United States. The results indicate that soil emission accounts for a substantial portion of the natural component of atmospheric acid.

NWS To Drop Direct Commercial Radio Broadcasts:--The National Weather Service has announced a plan to phase out remaining direct, routinely scheduled commercial radio broadcasts originating in NWS offices by Jan, 1, 1990. A moratorium has also been placed on beginning any new direct commercial broadcasts from NWS sites. Non-routine broadcasts, taped or live interviews, etc., during hazardous or unusual weather situations will still be permitted, as will the rebroadcast of NOAA Weather Radio programming.

Fish and Seafood Promotional Council Formed: A National Fish and Seafood Promotional Council that would help market fishery products and foster their sales nationwide is expected to go into operation later this year. The Council, authorized in the closing days of the last Congress, will consist of 15 voting members serving four-year terms. The members, who will receive no salary, will be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The council will have three members at large and three members from each of the major fishing regions of the country: the Northeast, the Southeast, and the Pacific and Alaska regions. Harvesters, processors, and marketers will be equally represented by each of the regional groups. Appointments, which have not yet been made, will be based on general fishery knowledge as well as other specialized experience such as familiarity with marketing, product development, public relations, or consumer education.

Marine Warning and Forecast Verification:--How good are NWS marine weather predictions? The Weather Service currently is testing a method for evaluating the quality of its marine forecasts and warnings as part of its National Verification Program.

According to Paul Jacobs of the Marine and Applied Services Branch, wind and wave measurements for 6 of NOAA's 44 operational data buoys are transmitted to the National Meteorological Center (NMC) where they are compared with the official marine forecasts made earlier from two Weather Service offices. Comparisons also are made with NMC's numerical guidance forecasts for the buoy locations.

In an effort to test newly developed software for the project, forecast offices in San Francisco, Calif., and Washington, D.C., have been transmitting coded versions of their marine forecasts to NMC since last October. If the tests are successful, the procedure will be used by other coastal weather offices to verify forecasts and warnings.

TV Weathercasters' Workshop Set:--The agenda has been completed, and invitations have been issued, for Public Affairs' annual severe storms workshop for television weathercasters March 6-7 in Kansas City, Mo. Participants will include Dr. Fernando Caracena of ERL, discussing NOAA's windshear research; Fred Ostby, Director of the National Severe Storms Forecast Center (and workshop host); Kenneth Crawford, meteorologist-in-charge, and Don Devore, warning preparedness specialist, at the Oklahoma City Weather Service Forecast Office; and a senior regional representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The event is being planned and conducted by Bill Brennan and Don Witten, public affairs officers for ERL and NWS, respectively.

Radiosonde Campaign Continues:--The magazine Highlights for Children has run an article, "The National Weather Service Needs Your Help," appealing to youngsters to return found radiosondes (balloon-borne sensors which parachute to earth after gathering data in the upper atmosphere) for reconditioning and reuse. TV weathercasters attending NOAA's workshops (see above), also are being encouraged to broadcast appeals. Recovery of the instruments makes possible substantial savings for the Weather Service.

How About This Award?--The sponsors of the Mr. Wizard Studio science program, "How About...", seen over more than 150 U.S. television stations, has honored the Environmental Research Laboratories and the Office of Public Affairs for numerous contributions, with a citation for "commitment to excellence in communicating science and technology to the public." For the past four years "How About..." has included news-feature clips on various ERL scientific programs on its syndicated show.

NWS Gears Up For Spring Floods:--Along with flowers, spring brings flooding from melting snow to many areas of the nation. The National Weather Service is ready. NWS will begin issuing 1987 Spring Flood Outlooks on Feb. 27, covering river systems across the country where snowmelt or antecedent conditions could lead to flood problems in the spring. Subsequent outlooks are scheduled for March 13 and 27. Based on meteorological data and extensive monitoring of the water content of the snowpack, the outlooks provide valuable information to those involved in flood control activities. Special forecasts of river stages will be prepared by NWS River Forecast Centers. These forecasts will include timely and specific information on expected water levels.

Service For The Hearing Impaired:--NOAA television public service announcements on weather safety now are closed captioned for the hearing impaired. Beginning with safety messages scheduled to appear in late March on tornado and flood safety, all such announcements produced by the Public Affairs office will carry written material which may be seen only by persons with special television adapters designed to aid those with hearing problems.

Great Lakes Storm Forecast Training:--The National Ocean Service has compiled a list of Great Lakes storms, categorized by type (wind, wave, snow, surge, seiche, etc.), date, location, and damage for use in a training program for Great Lakes marine forecasters. From this list, 15 of the most serious storms will be selected for developing case studies for the program. Case studies will include surface and upper air weather charts, satellite imagery, and official forecasts.

NCDC Answers A Variety of Data Requests:--As might be expected, the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., receives requests for information from a wide variety of sources. Some questions reveal surprisingly "weather sensitive" areas of the nation's economy. For example, weather data for the entire United States recently went to a manufacturer of insect lures. The firm plans to study the effectiveness of its product in luring and trapping insects under varying climatic conditions. The Piano Tuners Guild in New York has requested long-term month humidity data for their area. It seems that the moisture content of the air during different seasons of the year must be noted when fine tuning pianos. Audi of America recently was furnished temperature and relative humidity averages for typical hot and cold spots to be used to determine the climatic extremes vehicles can experience in this country, allowing the auto maker to adjust its manufacturing specifications. And, for really serious students, Rolling Stone magazine has been put in touch with NOAA climate specialists to help identify U.S. colleges situated in major cities with the most sunny days.

NOAA Weather Radio At Highway Rest Stops:--NOAA's Weather Service Forecast Office in Boise, Idaho, is working with the Idaho Department of Transportation on the installation of NOAA Weather Radio receivers at all new highway rest stops in the state. The first installation will be this spring at a rest stop across the border from Ontario, Oreg., on Interstate Highway 84. Washington State has installed a number of NOAA Weather Radio receivers at rest stops over the past years and has cooperated in furnishing technical information to Idaho on this project. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts information, forecasts, and warnings 24 hours a day on VHF-FM frequencies. Rest stop installations are limited-range transmitters which carry local weather conditions designed for travelers.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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