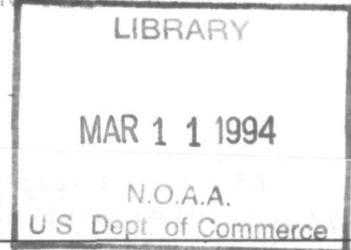




NOAA REPORT

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NOAA-E/A12
WSC4...RM.2A



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November 23, 1987

COMING UP

Interagency Data Management Working Group for Global Change meeting in Washington, D.C., Nov. 24.

NOAA/USGS Interagency Commission for Program Coordination meeting in Reston, Va., Nov. 24.

24th Annual NOAA/NWS Hurricane Conference in Miami, Fla., Nov. 30 - Dec. 4.

National Conference for Warning Preparedness in Norman, Okla., Dec. 2-8.

Susquehanna River Basin Project meeting in Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 3.

Ozone Data "Crash Effort":--NESDIS scientists and contractors have successfully completed the first phase of a "crash effort" to reprocess data to help assess the validity of perceived global ozone trends.

Data from a NASA satellite have indicated a global decrease in ozone. However, due to possible instrument calibrations, scientists believe that an independent measurement of global ozone is essential before drawing conclusions.

NOAA has an ozone-sensing instrument on one of its polar-orbiting satellites, NOAA-9. NASA has provided NOAA with a new algorithm for calculating more accurate global ozone levels based on data previously acquired by this NOAA satellite and the reprocessing of these data is under way.

The results of this reprocessing will be made available to an international panel, which will then evaluate all available information to determine if there is an adequate scientific basis for concluding that global ozone levels are decreasing.

Alaskan Earthquake Tests Warning System:--A major earthquake Nov. 17, centered about 280 miles southeast of Anchorage, put the National Weather Service's Alaska tsunami warning system to a test. It passed with flying colors. Tsunamis are the earthquake-generated sea waves which can cause death and destruction where they come ashore. Based on a 6.9 reading on the Richter scale for the Nov. 17 quake, the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center immediately issued a tsunami warning for the Alaskan coast from Sand Point to Dixon Entrance. A tsunami watch extended through British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California. It took only 11 minutes after the earthquake occurred for the watch and warning to be issued. This rapid response is the result of recent automation efforts by the Alaska facility. While a very minor tsunami was recorded, reports from local communities near the earthquake epicenter indicated effective and organized evacuation procedures, the result of an active disaster preparedness program conducted by the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center.

NEXRAD Site Procurement:--The National Weather Service reports it has completed site surveys and has begun to acquire land for NEXRAD (Next Generation Weather Radar), a network of new Doppler radars slated to be in place by the mid-1990s. The first sites being acquired are in the central United States and will be ready to receive NEXRAD equipment scheduled for delivery in FY89 and FY90.

Ocean Storms Experiment Becalmed:--The unusual weather pattern that brought drought to the Pacific Northwest also resulted in postponement of the Ocean Storms field experiment. Researchers from NOAA and other institutions had planned to use the NOAA P-3 aircraft between October 21 and Nov. 24 to study storms and their effects on the ocean at a site roughly 600 miles west of Seattle. (See NOAA Report, Nov. 2.)

Because of the lack of storm activity in the Ocean Storms experimental area, activities related to the P-3 aircraft were cancelled and the flight crew returned to Miami on Nov. 5. The experiment was rescheduled to resume late this month and run through Dec. 9. The break will allow more normal weather patterns to be established over the northern Pacific Ocean and a parched Pacific Northwest. The length of the postponement was based on statistics of previous droughts in Washington State. It is uncertain what might have caused the unusual atmospheric conditions responsible for drought in Seattle, but Environmental Research Laboratory scientists say El Nino is a candidate.

The Pacific Northwest drought also affected research in Alaska, ERL reports. Storms are following a more northerly track than usual and southerly winds and warm temperatures have retarded the southward advance of the ice edge by at least 3 weeks, an extreme case. This warm spell has made more difficult

the PMEL study of how the Arctic ice edge moves south in the fall. (See NOAA Report, Sept. 2.) Also, the presence of open water north of the North Slope has contributed to "lake-effect" type snow storms, resulting in greater precipitation in the Prudhoe Bay region this fall than in the entire previous winter season. Weather has postponed a Norton Sound observation program and curtailed flight observations on the North Slope.

High Altitude Charts Redesigned:--New four-color Conterminous U.S. Enroute High Altitude Charts have been printed and distributed for the first time, effective Nov. 19. These charts, previously produced in two colors, are at a larger scale with one additional chart, H5/6, that covers the Gulf Coast and the entire high-traffic east coast corridor. The redesigned charts have reduced clutter and improved readability.

NOAA Weather Radio Stations Open:--NOAA Weather Radio stations recently went on the air at Towanda and Wellsboro, Pa., becoming numbers 379 and 380 in the National Weather Service's nationwide network of these 24-hour-a-day VHF-FM stations dedicated to broadcasting weather information.

NCDC Helps Cold Water Diving Suit Developers:--Water temperature information as well as sea-air temperature differences are factors that the U.S. Coast Guard are studying in its attempt to design a special diving suit to be used in search and rescue operations in the Great Lakes region during the cold weather months. The Coast Guard knew just where to go for such special information, and NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., is providing the data.

Media Briefed on New Tsunami Warning System:--The international press was briefed by Dr. Eddie Bernard, Director of the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, Nov. 20, in Washington, D.C., on NOAA's development of the high-tech, inexpensive tsunami warning system capable of protecting millions of persons in susceptible areas, notably the Pacific Basin. (See NOAA Report, Oct. 7.)

Bundle Up!--A joint NOAA-FEMA press release issued Nov. 16 urges elderly people to take special care to protect themselves from the often-fatal effects of hypothermia this winter. Weather Service experts said the greatest risk facing the elderly is prolonged exposure to low temperatures in their homes, and offered survival tips.

Hallgren On USIA Telecast:--Dr. Richard E. Hallgren, Director of the National Weather Service, will participate in a live, two-way television broadcast between Washington and Zimbabwe on Nov. 23, in an hour-long United States Information Agency program on modernization of U.S. weather services.

Constitutional Vignette:--This item is based on an article by the Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, entitled "Why Three Branches of Government?"

The men who gathered in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 weren't there to write a new Constitution. But what those 55 men did 200 years ago lives today. Our Constitution has the distinction of being the oldest written instrument of national government in history.

Writing such a document did not come easily, of course. There were many bitter disagreements over virtually every portion of the new Constitution. Having just fought a war to establish they would not be ruled by London, the last thing most Americans wanted in 1787 was a strong central government. And yet, only four days after the Convention convened, the idea of a strong national government was presented.

While James Madison wrote most of the proposal, Governor Edmund Randolph of Virginia, because of his position, presented the "Virginia" plan to the Constitutional Convention. The idea was staggering in its scope, especially when one considers the mood of the nation at the time of the presentation.

Governor Randolph's plan called for the establishment of a central government with three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. The plan called for a two-house legislative branch, with the executive chosen by the legislature. Governor Randolph himself called the new concept "a more energetic government."

What some of his colleagues called it is probably best left unprinted here. Suffice it to say that there was considerable surprise when Randolph announced the plan. That surprise quickly gave way to, in some cases, outright opposition. Such a government was not possible under the Articles of Confederation which had ruled the new nation since independence. States with small populations were convinced they would be swallowed up by the likes of Virginia or Pennsylvania, the most populous states at the time, since population would be used to determine representation in the legislature.

Of course there were revisions to the "Virginia" plan. But its concept of separation of powers, with a chief executive (President), a two-house legislature (Congress), and an independent judiciary (Supreme Court) remained as a foundation. The concept of each state recognizing laws, records, and debts of other states, and the law making powers not delegated to Congress being reserved for the states were unique, and vastly improved relations between states and the national government.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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July 23, 2010