

Seventh International Conference on School and Popular Meteorological and Oceanographic Education

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The Seventh International Conference on School and Popular Meteorological and Oceanographic Education (EWOC 2006) (EWOC = Education: Weather, Oceans, Climate), held 3-7 July 2006 in Boulder, CO, was the latest in a series of meetings bringing together educators and scientists from around the world to share recent advances in teaching about the atmosphere and hydrosphere. The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) hosted this year's conference, which was co-sponsored by the American Meteorological Society, the Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, the European Meteorological Society, the Royal Meteorological Society, the World Meteorological Organization and other meteorological and oceanographic societies from around the globe.

Beginning with a meeting in Oxford, England, in 1984, these conferences have been showcases for exchanging examples of classroom programs, university research, government outreach efforts, and special programs to foster understanding of weather, ocean, and climate. Although your correspondent was unable to attend the past two meetings in Spain and Australia, he did participate in the 1996 Edinburgh meeting ("Fourth International Conference on School and Popular Meteorological and Oceanographic Education" on pp. 8-9 of the Fall 1996 issue of this *Newsletter*), as well as the previous Toronto and Crystal City, VA, programs.

Tim Killeen, Director of UCAR's National Center for Atmospheric Research and current president of the American Geophysical Union, provided the keynote address to open the sessions by describing the "Role of a National Center in Weather, Ocean and Climate Education." Themed sessions included Education And Outreach for the Coastal And Marine Environment; Informal Education; The Role Of Learned Societies In Educational Outreach; Promoting Diversity and Enhancing the Involvement of Under-Represented Groups; International Education Programs And Collaborations; and Student-Centered Educational Programs.

Interspersed with large-group presentations were sessions that fostered small-group and one-on-one interactions among participants. Several of these featured presentations by members of the American Meteorological Society network of master teachers leading DataStreme courses (<http://www.ametsoc.org/amsedu>). One session provided hands-on experiences with selected AMS training modules, such as coastal upwelling and El Niño, wind-driven ocean circulation, and atmospheric highs and lows. Another featured some of the activities used in the "WeatherFest" programs held at the annual AMS national meetings. Poster sessions enabled conference attendees to engage in detailed discussions about programs of particular interest. Session details and access to online versions of many of the presentations are available at http://ams.confex.com/ams/EWOC/techprogram/meeting_EWOC.htm.

One afternoon included special field trips to some of the world-renowned research facilities in the Boulder area, including the U.S. Geological Survey's National Ice Core Laboratory (<http://nicl.usgs.gov/>); the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (<http://www.nrel.gov/>); and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth Systems Research Laboratory (<http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/>). Throughout the conference, participants were able to enjoy the amazing views of the Flatirons and other parts of the Rocky Mountain foothills making up Boulder's backdrop.

Although representatives from about twenty nations attended, international participation was held down by fears of traveling to the US, transportation and housing costs, and other factors. The vast majority of the hundred and thirty-some attendees came from this country. Most of the classroom teachers were long-time members of the AMS teacher leadership network. Nonetheless, conference organizers have begun plans to build on this year's program with an 8th International Conference in about three or years, possibly in central Europe or South America!