

73rd Annual Meeting

Western Snow Conference

April 11-13, 2005
Great Falls, Montana





PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
WESTERN SNOW CONFERENCE

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA
APRIL 11-14, 2005

SEVENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

Bob Whaley (General Chair)
USDA-NRCS, Retired

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Cover Photos:

Front: Pacific Gas and Electric Snow Surveyors on Lassen Peak, CA, May 2003

Photo by Duncan Nosworthy, Pilot

Back: Upper Mokelumne River Basin, CA

Photo by Bruce McGurk

IN MEMORIAM

The 73rd Annual Proceedings of the Western Snow Conference
is dedicated to the memory and contributions of

Morley Nelson, 1917-2005

a true pioneer who helped establish the art and science
of snow measurement and basin forecasting.



Farewell to a Snow Surveyor and True Conservationist

The Idaho conservation community lost one of its heroes when **Morley Nelson** died February 21, 2005 at the age of 88. Nelson served as the Columbia Basin Snow Survey Supervisor in Boise, Idaho from 1948 to 1971. Almost immediately after arriving on the job, Nelson started forecasting streams in Idaho. In 1948, 13 forecasts were published and increased to 30 the following year. In his first year, Nelson predicted streamflows for the Columbia River, and achieved an astounding 96 percent accuracy. This helped set the standard and showed how predicting streamflows from the winter snowpack could be performed. He located and installed many of the snow measuring stations used today and helped develop the first telemetry to automate these mountainous snow sites. When selecting sites, Nelson would look for the highest point on a mountain where the wind did not blow, so the snow would settle naturally and accumulate during the winter. On his travels to snow sites, he learned where the raptor nests were and was instrumental in establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey Conservation Area.

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2005 WESTERN SNOW CONFERENCE

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Minutes of the Western Snow Conference Executive Committee Meeting

April 11, 2005

Great Falls, Montana, USA

In attendance:

Abramovich, Ron	Julander, Randy	Rango, Albert
Beard, Jerry	Lea, Jolyne	Snow, Phyllis
Carcoana, Radu	Martinez, Larry	Swanson, Bob
Farnes, Phil	McGurk, Bruce	Toupin, Jerry
Gilbert, Ted	Osterhuber, Randall	Whaley, Bob
Hannaford, Jack	Palmer, Peter	
Huffman, Don	Pattee, Scott	

General Chair Bob Whaley called the meeting to order at 1400.

Minutes of the 2004 Executive Committee Meeting

- ❖ No changes were made to the minutes of the 2004 Executive Committee Meeting as presented by Osterhuber. They will be printed in the 2004 WSC Proceedings as submitted.

WSC Technical Papers

- ❖ McGurk received no paper (for publication in the Proceedings) from the recipients of the “Best Poster Paper” award at WSC 2004. The awards have already been printed and sent to the authors. Pattee will contact the authors’ professor (both were students) and try to remedy.
- ❖ Rango emphasized that awards for best papers be presented to the paper presenter only. That is, only *one* author. The plaques could still include all co-author’s names, though plaque engraving is charged by the letter, so this could be both expensive and space-restrictive for papers with many co-authors.
- ❖ Palmer will make sure that the WSC author guidelines are on the WSC website and updated. Each Area Chair should do so likewise each year. All agreed that the author guidelines cannot be too detailed.
- ❖ McGurk said that once again he received a couple papers (from WSC 2004) that were difficult—if not impossible—to properly format for publication. This greatly slows down the editing process. McGurk has submitted all edited material to Kelly Elder for WSC 2004 Proceedings printing.

Treasurer’s Report

- ❖ Osterhuber submitted a WSC financial summary for the past calendar year and Fiscal Year 2004. The current WSC bank account stands at \$ 22,353.04. Account balance one year ago was \$ 22,392.64. Major annual expenses not yet incurred include costs of WSC 2005 and the printing of the WSC 2004 Proceedings. The WSC books are open and can be audited by anyone, anytime. Julander made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report. Motion passed.

Proceedings Content

- ❖ Discussion about whether to post Proceedings on the WSC website. The income the WSC gains from Proceedings sales might be affected if the website offered the content for free. No definitive action was taken at this time.
- ❖ Osterhuber reported that OmniPress, the current printer of the WSC Proceedings, can produce CD-based copies of the Proceedings for roughly the cost of the printed book. No action was taken to offer digital versions of the Proceedings to the WSC membership.

WSC Refund Policy

- ❖ After much discussion, it was decided that no conference refunds be given after the start of the conference, and that no refunds be given for “number-sensitive” conference items, specifically the conference banquet and technical tour. This will be indicated on future WSC registration forms. Swanson made a motion to make this gospel, and so it is.

WSC Proceedings Bibliography

- ❖ Swanson reported that the WSC Proceedings bibliography is now on the WSC website. He will be updating it annually or as needed.

Snow Survey Anniversary

- ❖ Pattee reported that 2010 will most likely be the centennial of snow surveys in the western United States. This will coincide with the 78th annual meeting of the WSC which will be held somewhere in the south continental area. The WSC may wish, and probably will, choose to honor this anniversary at the time.

Communication

- ❖ Abramovich recommended that each area chair compile and maintain email contact lists to supplement the conference announcement and “call for papers” letters. This will help save time and mailing costs, especially when contacting WSC members that remain engaged with the WSC every year.

WSC 2006 and 2007

- ❖ Rango reported on proposed costs for the WSC 2006 in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The conference will be held April 17-20. After “doing” the numbers, Rango recommends having the WSC attendees lodge at the Las Cruces Hilton while holding the conference on the campus of NMSU. They are just a few miles apart, and shuttle buses or vans will be provided to move everyone. This arrangement will save a substantial amount of money for the WSC.
- ❖ Rango and McGurk have done some more preliminary investigations into holding the 2007 WSC in Hawaii, most likely about the week of April 16. Hotel rates that meet the federal per diem rate are available both on Oahu and the big island of Hawaii. The current WSC Executive Committee is in unanimous agreement to continue to pursue Hawaii as a location for WSC 2007, the Conference’s 75th anniversary.

Milestone

- ❖ Abramovich reported that WSC member and long-time Columbia Basin snow survey supervisor Morlan W. Nelson passed away February 21, 2005. The 2005 WSC Proceedings will be dedicated to his memory.

Meeting adjourned at 1625.

Attendees of the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Western Snow Conference
April 11-14, 2005

Great Falls, Montana

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