

NWS Summer 2018 Partners Meeting Summary

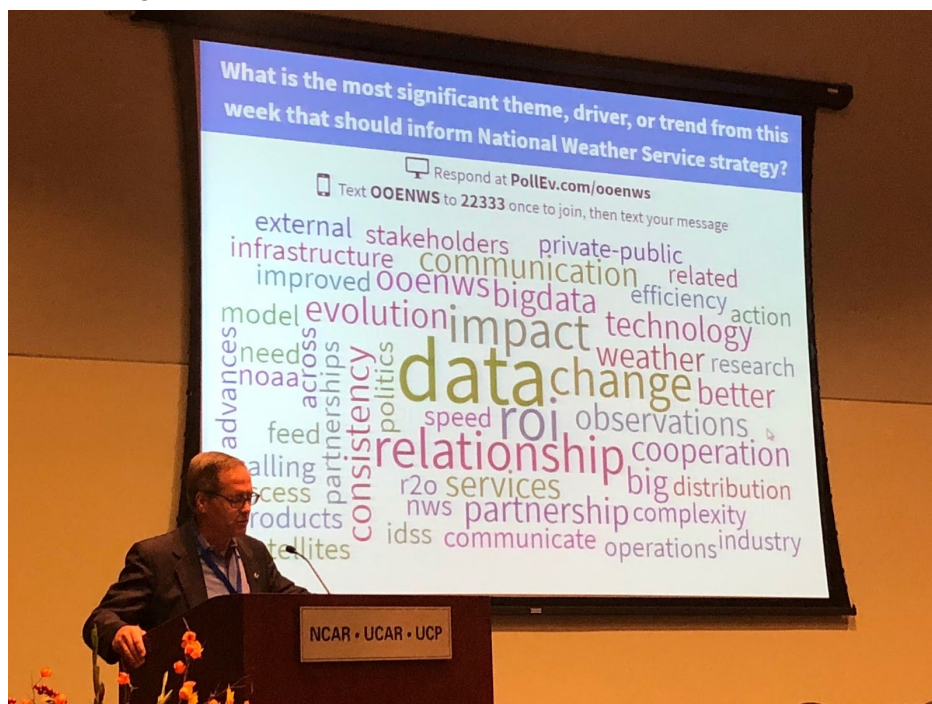
On August 9, 2018, the National Weather Service conducted a one-day Partners Meeting following the American Meteorological Society's Annual Summer Meeting. This meeting was held at the University Center for Atmospheric Research Center Green Facility in Boulder, CO. The full agenda is available [here](#).

The meeting provided a means for participants to engage on specific activities of the NWS, including a discussion of our Dissemination program and the agency's draft NWS Strategic Plan.

The overall objectives for the meeting were as follows:

- NWS continues to collaborate with the Weather Enterprise to achieve the NWS mission to protect life and property and grow the U.S. economy.
- NWS illustrates how partner feedback from AMS in Austin is reflected in the new NWS Strategic Plan.
- NWS Partners share information and perspectives on how the Weather, Water and Climate Enterprise continues to change, including new weather industry developments and insights.
- NWS meaningfully engages partners on NWS implementation of the new NWS Strategic Plan.

The participants began by answering a live polling question which asked: What is the most significant theme, driver, or trend from this week that should inform National Weather Service strategy? The following word cloud was the result:



Summary of Meeting Sessions and Activities

NWS Leadership Remarks - Louis Uccellini, NWS Director

Louis Uccellini provided opening remarks and highlighted the NWS effort to draft a new Strategic Plan and briefly covered implications and major developments across the NWS Portfolios. More specifically, Louis emphasized the themes he heard from the AMS Summer Community Meeting held earlier in the week such as the fast pace of future research, the need for partnerships and the acknowledgement that the vision for a Weather-Ready Nation is a community endeavor. Louis also discussed the improvements the NWS is making regarding dissemination and his engagement with the World Meteorological Organization and the importance of the role of private industry at the international level.

Panel Discussion: Dissemination Update, Status and Looking Ahead - Kevin Cooley, NWS OPPSD Director; Michelle Mainelli, NWS DIS Director; and Ben Kyger, NWS NCO Director

Michelle, Ben and Kevin provided an overview of the NWS Dissemination portfolio, specifically highlighting the Integrated Dissemination Program (IDP) and the weather dissemination chain that is key for the NWS and its Partners. The panelists addressed specific outages that recently occurred and illustrated how the NWS has addressed those and continues to improve upon its reliability for all stakeholders. The panelists also emphasized their priority in being transparent with partners on the NWS dissemination systems and partners expressed gratitude for the openness and frankness of disclosing the technical challenges the NWS has faced.

Partners Panel Discussion: Mary Erickson, NWS Deputy Director - Opening remarks and moderator; Kevin Petty, Vaisala; Ian Miller, IBM; and Robert McCormick, Verizon

Mary Erickson provided opening remarks for this panel by highlighting the 3 goals of the draft NWS Strategic Plan and the recently released NWS [Impact-based Decision Support Services Service Description Document](#) (IDSS SDD). She emphasized the need to continue to build relationships and offered Partners time for one on one conversations if they desired. Mary also noted some key areas around communication for partners to consider for working more closely with the NWS, specifically for vulnerable populations, building empathy into messaging, engaging with media and television producers, and improving flood inundation messaging.

Mary then introduced the panelists, Kevin, Ian and Robert, who each provided their perspectives on how the weather industry and broader technology and communication industry is changing and trending.

- Kevin noted that unless all of us in the weather enterprise continue to innovate, that we would become irrelevant. Kevin also highlighted the diversity that exists across the weather enterprise.
- Ian discussed a recent study released by [IBM's Institute for Business Value](#) which interviewed CEOs across all business sectors. One of the major findings is that an overwhelming majority of executives believe better weather related insights can reduce costs and increase revenues and they believe the potential impact can be material to their bottom line.

- Finally, Robert discussed Verizon's emphasis on ensuring their assets are reliable for the emergency response and weather enterprise community and showed a short video illustrating how they are protecting their equipment to be ready for severe weather and continue to have reliable service for their customers.

The panelist perspectives led to a much broader dialogue among the meeting participants. Partners expressed their desire for NOAA to better understand the diversity of the private industry and even suggested the private industry partners possibly run a future NWS partners meeting. In addition, NGO/non-profit partners expressed their interest in being considered as a neutral broker for government and private industry as the role of technology changes for both sectors.

NWS Strategic Plan Activity: Partner Input and Reflection - Peyton Robertson, NWS OOE Director

Peyton Robertson kicked off the afternoon session by providing a short overview of the NWS Strategic Plan development efforts since the Partners last met in January 2018 in Austin, TX. Peyton illustrated how partner feedback from January 2018 was incorporated into the draft strategic plan and shared a subset of objectives that incorporate the role of the weather enterprise.

The participants were then instructed to take a closer look at 6 specific objectives and provide feedback on post-it notes for each objective noting any *general observations*, *what they see as most important*, *concerns*, and *ideas or additional information* for the NWS to consider going forward in its implementation of the Strategic Plan. The 6 objectives that were displayed for partner input were the following:

- **Objective 1.4:** Leverage Enterprise capabilities through a collaborative approach that minimizes impacts and maximizes public safety and economic resilience.
- **Objective 1.13:** Leverage Enterprise capabilities to extend the reach and amplify NWS forecasts, warnings, and hazards to improve individualized decision-making.
- **Objective 2.5:** Utilize the broad observational capabilities of the Enterprise to establish the best possible analysis of the atmosphere, land surface, oceans, and cryosphere to ensure situational awareness, enable enhanced data assimilation, and meet growing user demands.
- **Objective 2.8:** Leverage Enterprise expertise to advance analytics, visualization, collaboration, information technology, and social science.
- **Objective 3.8:** Clarify and leverage the unique roles and capabilities of Enterprise partners to respond to the increasing demand for actionable weather, water, and climate information.
- **Objective 3.9:** Expand public-private partnerships that fast-track private Enterprise innovations, strengthen relationships, eliminate barriers, and share best practices to focus continuous improvements.

Strategy Activity and Overall Meeting Takeaways - Peyton Robertson, NWS OOE Director

In summary, the feedback received from the partners on each of the 6 objectives was extremely thoughtful and informative. Partners relayed the following feedback for each objective:

- Objective 1.4:
 - Partners asked about metrics and for a clearer definition of collaboration.
 - Partners also suggested that the NWS focus on a few service areas for focused improvement and requested that the NWS showcase the value of weather industry IDSS.
- Objective 1.13:
 - Partners confirmed that this objective is the only way to be successful and recommended that the NWS involve the enterprise from the beginning for consistent messaging.
 - Partners also suggested that the NWS think beyond the weather industry and also balance high tech versus not high tech solutions.
- Objective 2.5:
 - Partners are very supportive of this objective but noted some concerns around national and cyber security and data policy and quality issues.
- Objective 2.8:
 - Partners provided feedback suggesting that more testbeds and “sandboxes” of various sizes would be helpful.
 - Partners also noted concerns regarding the lagging speed for procurement and innovation within the federal government and intellectual property considerations.
- Objective 3.8:
 - Partners validated this objective as important and suggested that the NWS continue to engage with industry and academia to better understand their capabilities and contributions.
 - Partners suggested continued work is needed on what is inherently governmental and noted the need to reach vulnerable populations.
- Objective 3.9:
 - Partners questioned who could convene such partnerships and also suggested using smaller “sandboxes”.
 - Some Partners also proposed ideas recommending NOAA consider looking at the CENSUS Innovation lab, SBIR or CRADA opportunities as well as suggesting that industry and government might consider a personnel exchange for learning and understanding each other.

The National Weather Service will use this feedback as we make final tweaks to the draft plan and move forward with execution in the coming years.

Conclusion

Participants provided feedback at the end of the meeting that the meeting structure and topics covered were extremely beneficial and allowed for engagement not only with NWS leadership but also among partners. Participants also suggested that they would like to be solicited for input ahead of Partners meetings and continued to express interest in meetings similar to these in the future.