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## **MRCC Climatologist Appointed to World Meteorological Organization Expert Task Team**

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Nancy Westcott, research climatologist at the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (MRCC), was recently appointed as the North American representative to the Task Team on Climate Data Rescue, initiated by the World Meteorological Organization's Commission for Climatology.

The mission of the Commission for Climatology (CC1) is to provide world leadership in promoting expertise and international cooperation in climatology. The eight-member CC1 Task Team on Data Rescue focuses on the rescue, preservation, and digitization of climate records.

Westcott's expertise on the topic of data rescue stems from her involvement in the Climate Database Modernization Program (CDMP), a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She leads the MRCC's involvement in CDMP, the Forts and Voluntary Observers Database Build Project, which aims to digitize and quality control U.S. daily weather observations from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More than 450 stations across the continental United States and Alaska have been digitized and data from more than 300 of these stations have been quality controlled as part of this project.

As part of her appointment, Westcott attended the CC1 Task Team meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from December 5 to 7, 2011. At the meeting in Geneva, Westcott gave a presentation on the accomplishments of the CDMP in the United States, as well as the efforts of the CDMP-Forts Project at the MRCC for the past few years.

Climate data rescue is very important to scientific research. Climate data from other parts of the world with fewer 20<sup>th</sup> century stations are being rescued to better depict the climate in those regions. Rescued data also are being used to reconstruct a global atmospheric circulation dataset spanning the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 2013, this reanalysis will be available from 1845 to the present.

The importance of climate data rescue remains significant; there are still millions of records that remain undigitized, dating back many decades and into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It is only by having the tools to define and understand past climate that we can better predict future climate.

*The Midwestern Regional Climate Center is a cooperative program of the Illinois State Water Survey and the National Climatic Data Center (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce).*