



FALL 2009



Out Of This World Data Retrieval

With assistance and equipment from Campbell Scientific, Inc. and Iridium Satellite, LLC, a new method for retrieving data from environmental monitoring platforms, such as weather stations, is now available. Satellite telephone communications can now be used to gather data from remote monitoring sites where other types of communications such as two-way radio, land-line telephone or regular cellular telephone are not available.

Satellite data retrieval has been available for many years but the high cost of the equipment, limits to the amount of data transmitted and fixed time slots for data transmission, have generally limited this type of data collection to government agencies. The advent of digital modems that will work on private satellite networks have opened up a new avenue for data collection from very remote locations.

The first such satellite system that WWG will be involved with is one being installed by San Diego Gas and Electric Company. Utilizing a satellite data collection system at our office in Chico, CA, data will be collected from a remote monitoring system located on Mt. Palomar in Southern California.

Even though this method of data collection is still expensive compared to other available methods, data collection from very remote locations has become much

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Q & A



QUESTION: Recently, a forecast subscriber inquired as to whether the South Wind listed on the forecast was **coming from** or **going to** the South.

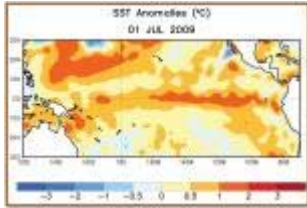
ANSWER: Wind direction is measured by a wind vane and a wind vane will point in the direction the wind is **coming from**. For example, an easterly wind is blowing **from** the east, not **toward** the east. The instruments used and deployed by Western Weather Group typically measure wind direction (vane) as well as wind speed (anemometer). So, in answer to the question, the forecast will list where the wind is

more flexible and available to many more users.

from.

Got a weather or weather station question?
Send your question to info@westernwx.com
Attn: Newsletter and we'll try to answer it in
the next newsletter.

El Nino



An El Niño pattern has returned across the Equatorial Pacific which means warmer than normal waters have shifted east, near the Peruvian coast.

The last few years the Pacific has been in a La Niña and/or neutral state. The big questions with El Niño returning will be what impacts it will bring to your area, as it typically lasts for several months.

Climate models have been working overtime for the government trying to make this winter's forecast more accurate than others in the past. Overall, models have been mixed on how strong the El Niño event will be, but a moderate pattern looks to be in store.

During El Niño winters, California typically sees wetter and milder conditions, with the greatest impact existing across Southern California. However, some yearly rainfall records for Northern California have also been set during past El Niño years. Therefore, more rainy days are likely this winter which should help to replenish most reservoirs across the state. Affects will most likely be felt from December to March, but past winters have shown these periods can last longer. With that said, Western Weather Group recommends you to keep your umbrella handy this coming winter!

How Healthy Is Your Weather Station?

Our goal with regards to your weather stations and your purchase of a calibration contract to cover those stations is to make sure your stations and all the various sensors are up and running as efficiently as possible. This is a group effort between you and Western Weather Group's team of experienced meteorologists (who review your data as often as possible) and expert technicians who calibrate all of your sensors. We also want to make sure you utilize the data from the stations to its fullest capacity, which means unlimited telephone consultation support with software experts dealing with data collection and display.

During one of our calibration visits, we test all the sensors and compare them to traceable National Institute for Standards & Testing reference sensors, that we have factory calibrated once a year. If a sensor is found not to meet the manufacturer's specifications for accuracy, it is either calibrated or replaced. We also check the datalogger and communications device for errors and latest operating systems. The power supply, solar panel and battery are checked, with a load test run on the battery to insure it will be able to power your station for the next year. General cleanliness is addressed and new desiccant packs (to keep the inside of the datalogger enclosure dry) are installed every year.



If during the course of the year we discover any problems with your station(s) (i.e. not communicating or a sensor is reading suspect values), we will call you and discuss what needs to be done to get it fixed ASAP. We hope that you would do the same if you notice suspect data. Working together, we can minimize any down time with your station(s).

WWG Spotlight



In the spotlight for this issue is **Don Schukraft**, CEO and owner of Western Weather Group. Much could be said about this individual, but due to space, here's the short version.

Don is a native born Californian from the Monterey Bay area and was a surfer growing up. His parents' telling him to decide what career he wanted in order for him to be employable was the start of his interest in weather. He received his B.Sci. Degree from San Jose State University and later obtained his CCM (Certified Consulting Meteorologist) certificate for establishing high standards of technical competence, character, and experience for advice and consultation in meteorology.

In his 30+ years of dealing with weather, the weather event that he will never forget was filling sand bags on Butte Creek on New Year's Day morning when a "Pineapple Express" brought heavy rain to the area and snow melting in the Sierra Nevada which caused a breach in the levee on Butte Creek near the town of Durham close to his house.

After a busy week of work, Don enjoys officiating high school football games, watching college football (*yes, he is a USC fan*), reading, outdoor activities, and traveling. This year he's attempting to play fantasy football.

Don established Western Weather Group in September of 2005. When asked what he believed was the definition of success, he thoughtfully replied *"when one has achieved personal integrity, sincerity, courtesy and honesty at work as well as in their personal life."*

Don—we welcome you to achieving success!



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