Weather and Society * Integrated Studies (WAS*IS)

What is WAS*IS?
      Weather and Society * Integrated Studies (WAS*IS) is a grassroots movement to effect change within the weather enterprise by fully integrating social science into meteorological research and practice in a comprehensive and sustained way. The WAS*IS mission is to empower practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders to forge new relationships and to use new tools and concepts for more effective socio-economic applications and evaluations of weather information and products. WAS*IS is doing this by:

• Building an interdisciplinary community of practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders who are dedicated to the integration of meteorology and social science;
• Teaching basic tools and social science concepts fundamental for integrated research;
• Using real-world examples to learn about effective integrated research and applications;
• Acknowledging and addressing typical roadblocks and challenges of interdisciplinary work, especially those relevant to integrating social science into weather research and applications;
• Identifying and pursuing research, application, and educational opportunities for integrated weather and social science work; and
• Improving and further facilitating the ongoing relationships among practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders in meteorology and the social sciences.

WAS*IS is working to achieve its goals through several workshops. Between July 2005 and August 2006, WAS*IS held three workshops—two in Boulder, CO, and one in Norman, OK—with a total of over 85 invited participants. By emphasizing the importance of developing a life-long cohort as well as learning social-science tools and concepts, WAS*IS can address societal impacts in real and sustained ways to change the culture from what WAS to what IS the future of integrated weather studies.

The Creation of WAS*IS
      Eve Gruntfest, a geographer from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, envisioned the WAS*IS concept. Eve was inspired by the number of people she met throughout her career who realized the value of an integrated weather and social science enterprise and who were dedicated to making social science an integral part of meteorological research and applications throughout their careers. Eve came to NCAR as a visiting scientist and Julie Demuth—an atmospheric scientist who had long been interested in integrating meteorology and societal impacts—joined Eve also as a visiting scientist. Together they spent a year at NCAR initiating and nurturing the WAS*IS movement.

Future WAS*IS Plans
      WAS*IS initially was slated to be a one-year, single-workshop venture, but due to the incredible support it has received, WAS*IS is living on and evolving! Currently, an Australia WAS*IS workshop is scheduled for January 29–February 2, 2007, outside of Melbourne, and another Summer WAS*IS workshop is planned for July 2007 in Boulder, CO. WAS*IS also is working to expand in other ways. Potential ideas include developing a textbook or compendium of integrated research to be used in courses or by scientists and practitioners, supporting WAS*IS-type research, and more!

Funding Sources
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