



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWSEO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet NWSEO Member Shawn Weagle

(February 16, 2018) NWSEO continues to collect nominations for our “NWSEO Member Spotlight,” showcasing the work, dedication and talent of our members, inspiring others and connecting all of our union members.

Meet Shawn Weagle, NWSEO Steward and Lead Forecaster of the National Weather Service Portland, Oregon.



Shawn, tell us about your work.

I've been a lead forecaster at WFO Portland since 2009. I consider myself very lucky to have been hired into the National Weather Service in the first place. I was a contractor for Raytheon and SAIC, testing ASOS sensors in Sterling, VA. After a few years in the Washington DC metro area, I wanted to move somewhere less busy and more scenic. I decided to look for jobs around upstate New York and Vermont, and sure enough

there was an intern slot open at WFO Burlington, Vermont. I didn't think I had a chance at getting that position, but I applied anyway...and got the position! Since then, I have climbed through the forecaster ranks, working in Monterey, California, and at the Northwest River Forecast Center in Portland, Oregon. I "crossed the aisle" back over to the WFO side as a journeyman forecaster in 2008, then got the promotion to lead forecaster in 2009.

Describe the most unusual/interesting experience in your work.

By far, the most foreign thing to my friends and family is the hours we keep as shift workers. As most of us know, our rotating shifts can make it difficult to spend time with those we care about. But there are opportunities; one of the greatest things about our schedule is our ability to go play on weekdays while many normal 9-to-5'ers are stuck in the office.

The most interesting part of the work I do, aside from the fact that no two days are exactly alike, is my role as an incident meteorologist (IMET). There are not many jobs out there where people can use their skills for the sole purpose of helping people overcome a natural disaster. It is incredibly rewarding, and each incident presents its own challenges.

Where is your favorite place to be or, just random, three of your favorite things?

Anywhere with my 6 year old son. Especially the beach.

What is the best place you've traveled to and why?

Alaska. Best road trip ever. In 1995 (yes, I'm dating myself), my high school friend and I took a month long drive from California to Fairbanks, taking the Alaska Highway one way and riding the ferry along the Inside Passage the other way. We met people from all over the world and got to see amazing things like Denali National Park and Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau.

What does true leadership mean to you?

True leadership earns respect, rather than demanding it. True leaders keep their moral compass close to them, and it shows in the decisions they make and how they treat people. True leaders listen to their followers and are honest with the information they provide. They lead by example, which encourages people to follow their actions. For true leaders, being in a leadership position is not an ego boost nor a status symbol; rather, it's a huge responsibility and an opportunity to help empower people to achieve their goals.

Why did you join NWSEO? Or, what is your experience with NWSEO members, etc?

I've actually never been a huge union person, but over the years I grow more and more glad that I joined NWSEO several years ago. There have been many times (including now) that I have felt NWSEO does a better job managing the National Weather Service than the agency's own senior management does. Honesty and transparency have been lacking from the top of this agency for several years now. Initially, I joined because I appreciated the information my then-steward provided the office, and wanted to contribute to the cause. These days, I appreciate NWSEO as an extremely necessary check against unethical behavior by some in the agency's top tier of management. NWSEO has never been more important than it is now.

What is the most important technology/ innovation you've seen in your lifetime?

The internet and social media. We are all so much more connected than we were back in my high school days.

Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

In 1988, I came in 5th place at the California state spelling bee!

We are so grateful for Shawn's time and dedication to the work he and the members and employees of WFO Portland and Western Region do every day and also, for participating in our *NWSEO Member Spotlight*!

We hope this will be a communication tool for NWSEO Members to get to know each other, from across the nation, connect even more and, together, support each other in our work and in building our membership. **Please submit your *Member Spotlight*, suggestions, and comments to Christy Fox at mediarelations@nwseo.org.**