

Fall 2025 FPAW Meeting

Biographies of the Hosts, Speakers, Session Leads, and Moderators, Panelists and Presenters (MPP)



Key: **FPAW Steering Committee Member**

Student

[r] = Remote Participant

MPP = Moderator/Presenter/Panelist

Note: Leads and Co-Leads may also be Moderators, Panelists and Presenters (MPP) in their sessions

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Christian Amaral (ALPA)



Captain Christian Amaral represents the Air Traffic Services Group within the Air Line Pilots Association, where he focuses on aviation weather. An Airbus 320 captain at United Airlines, Christian also sits on the RTCA SC-206 Turbulence Working Group.

In 10+ years with United, he’s flown the A320, 757, and 767 in domestic and transoceanic theaters. Before that, he flew all variants of the CRJ at ExpressJet / Atlantic Southeast Airlines for eight years and has logged nearly 14,000 total flying hours. Prior to flying full time, he represented Flight Operations at Delta Air Lines and performed in-service evaluations of automatic turbulence reporting technologies, working with NASA and the FAA. That work followed a career change and flight training, having worked in politics for three years after college.

Christian holds a bachelor’s degree in history from the College of the Holy Cross, and lives near Boston with his wife and two daughters.

Gus de Azevedo (Oklahoma State University)



Dr. Gustavo de Azevedo is an Assistant Research Professor at Oklahoma State University. Although his degrees are in Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), his terminal degree was equally divided between ECE, Aerospace Engineering, and Meteorology. This diverse education gives Gus a multifaceted perspective to tackle atmospheric observational challenges in support of NextGen Aviation Weather.

Besides the development of patented UAS-based atmospheric sensing technologies, Gus's research exploits also led him to write a chapter in the book *Fundamentals of Capturing and Processing Drone Imagery and Data* (CRC Press, 2021) to help educate the next generation of atmospheric scientists and engineers.

Apoorva Bajaj (Climavision)



Apoorva Bajaj is a Senior Manager at Climavision, responsible for Public Sector Weather Radar Programs. He manages accounts across all levels of government – local, regional, state and national - and identifies opportunities to partner with non-profit organizations looking to demonstrate and operationalize weather observing and warning systems infrastructure for improved public safety, mobility and economic development.

Before joining Climavision, Apoorva was Innovation Manager at the Center for Collaborative Adaptive Sensing of the Atmosphere (CASA) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He helped establish the CASA Dallas Fort Worth Living Lab for Severe Weather Warning Systems, a first-of-its-kind weather radar network and early warning system used by local emergency managers, the National Weather Services and aviation stakeholders for preparedness and response to tornadoes, flash floods and other severe weather events.

Apoorva volunteers as a Board Member of the AUVSI New England chapter. He holds a master's degree in electrical and computer engineering and a master's degree in business administration (M.B.A.) from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Randy Bass (Bass Weather Services)



Randy Bass has over 35 years of weather experience spanning the military, private and commercial industry, and government. He started Bass Weather Services in 2015, specializing in business consulting, expert witness testimony, and forecasting support. He provides advice, subject matter expertise, and research on current and planned activities to businesses in all aspects of the commercial and government weather enterprise. Randy has also assisted in over 50 legal cases, determining if weather was a factor in such incidents as accidents, structural damage, and even criminal investigations.

Randy began his career as an Air Force weather officer, retiring in 2008. He provided weather support to bases and military aircraft throughout the US, including three deployments overseas in support of contingency operations, and spent almost half his career supporting the Intelligence Community and satellite operations. From 2008 until 2012, Randy was a Senior Meteorologist for ITT Exelis (now L3Harris) in Herndon, VA, where he researched prospective opportunities and developed business case analyses for weather, aviation, and space programs and pursuits.

In 2012, Randy joined the Federal Aviation Administration. There, he oversaw the Convective Weather Research Program and managed the Weather Research Branch before being named the manager of the Aviation Weather Division in 2022. He retired in November 2024.

Randy earned his BS in Meteorology from North Carolina State University and his MS in Meteorology from Texas A&M University. He lives in Waynesboro, VA with his wife Amy.

Bryan Beck (Turbulent Aerospace LLC)



Bryan Beck is the Director of Air Traffic Management with Turbulent Aerospace. His 37-year career in Air Traffic Control began at the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) and has included stops at FAA Headquarters and the ATC Systems Command Center before retiring as the Traffic Management Officer for the DFW and North Texas. His background focused on Traffic Management and the efficiency of the National Airspace System. He has served as the National Efficiency Lead and managed the FAA Aviation System Performance Metrics (ASPM) and OPSNET leading a team utilizing advanced analytics to find innovative ways to improve NAS performance across the country.

Rob Campbell (Campbell Scientific)



Rob Campbell is Chairman and CEO of Campbell Group and CEO of Campbell Scientific, where he leads with a long-term vision rooted in service, innovation, and integrity. With a B.S. in Operations Management from Utah State University, Rob brings over two decades of executive leadership experience, including 15 years as President & CEO of Juniper Systems before joining Campbell Scientific as President in 2015. His career reflects a deep commitment to building enduring business relationships and pushing the boundaries of technology to better serve customers, employees, shareholders, and communities.

Rob's leadership philosophy centers on honesty, respect, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. He believes that the most successful organizations are those that take a long-term perspective

and prioritize meaningful service. Under his guidance, Campbell Scientific continues to evolve as a trusted global leader in measurement and data solutions, driven by a culture of innovation and collaborative growth. Outside of work, Rob enjoys reading, skiing, traveling with family, and spending time outdoors.

Bruce Carmichael (NCAR [ret.])



Dr. Bruce Carmichael was a founding member of the Friends and Partners in Aviation Weather. He coordinated the movement with several other aviation weather luminaries from 1997-2007, served as FPAW Chairman from 2007-2018, and is considered by many to be the “Father” of FPAW. His professional life spanned 43 years of experience and included university teaching, commercial research, government service, consulting, and academic research. Prior to his retirement in 2017, Bruce was the Director of the Aviation Applications Program at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). This program worked to improve weather information for pilots, dispatchers, and controllers, particularly related to the hazards of thunderstorms, turbulence, icing, winter weather, and ceiling/visibility. For 32 years, he was also involved in system engineering of improved FAA automation and weather systems, and with the aviation industry in automation of maintenance processes, air traffic control, and weather information.

Bruce served on the JPDO Weather IPT as the Co-lead of the Forecasting Group, the FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Advisory Committee ATM/Weather Integration Study Group, chairman of the NBAA Weather Committee and a member of the RTCA Task Force on Midterm NextGen Implementation. He holds a B.S. from the University of New Mexico in Mathematics, an M.S. from Northwestern University in Applied Mathematics and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in Computer Science. Bruce is also a commercial instrument-rated pilot with over 34 years of flight experience.

Greg Dyer (Woolpert)



Greg Dyer has been an aviation consultant for Woolpert for 8 years. He retired from the FAA after 35 years in air traffic control. During his FAA tenure Greg began as an en route controller and held a variety of specialized roles in staff and managerial positions including District Manager of the Rocky Mountain District (ATCT’s in CO-UT-WY-MT). Greg’s specialties include airspace & procedures, airport capacity and traffic management, and airport infrastructure. Greg lives in Denver, CO.

Nick Demetriades (Campbell Scientific)



Nick Demetriades is the Environmental Market Director at Campbell Scientific. With over 25 years of experience in the private weather industry, Nick has led global product development, sales, marketing, and support teams focused on providing clients with Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS), Automatic Weather Station (AWS), and decision support software solutions. Currently, he leads strategy, product management, and product development teams serving Campbell Scientific’s global Aviation Weather, Meteorology, and Hydrology clients. Nick holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Meteorology from State University of New York (SUNY) Oswego and a Master of Science Degree in Meteorology from Texas A&M University.

Matt Fronzak (MITRE)



Matt Fronzak is a Principal Aviation Systems Engineer in MITRE’s Center for Integrated Transportation (CIT). His primary focus is on foundational applied weather and Air Traffic Management (ATM)-Weather Integration research and analysis. He is also involved in a variety of projects revolving around weather uncertainty and ATM decision-making. He is the past chairman of the AMS Aviation, Range and Aerospace Meteorology (ARAM) committee and current co-chairman of the Friends and Partners in Aviation Weather (FPAW) group.

Prior to joining MITRE, Matt spent 34 years at Delta Air Lines working in a variety of operational and management roles, primarily in the Flight Control department at Delta’s Operations Customer Center (OCC). In between Delta and MITRE, he had a short stint with Rockwell Collins (now Collins Aerospace) as a marketing manager supporting that company’s airborne weather radar products. Matt holds a B.S. in Meteorology from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell and a Master of Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with specialties in Operations and System Safety. He is an operationally experienced aviation meteorologist, an FAA-licensed and experienced aircraft dispatcher, and an experienced Part 121 operations manager and ATC coordinator.

Tom George (AOPA Alaska Region)



Tom George serves as the Alaska Regional Manager for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, working with government agencies and industry groups to promote general aviation in Alaska. He advocates for airports, improvements to weather reporting and other aviation infrastructure. Mr. George earned a bachelor’s degree in science from Oregon State University, and a masters in Geology and Land Resources from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Prior to joining AOPA, he worked at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks specializing in the acquisition and use of satellite imagery. Based in Fairbanks, he is a commercial, multi-engine rated pilot, holds a CFI certificate and flies a Cessna 185.

Robert Gillies (Utah State University)



Dr. Robert R. Gillies is the Director of the Utah Climate Center at Utah State University (USU) and State Climatologist for the State of Utah. He is a full professor in meteorology in the Department of Plants, Soils and Climate (PSC), College of Agricultural Sciences at USU. Prior to the position of Director, he held a joint position in PSC and the Department of Watershed Sciences in the College of Natural Resources at USU.

Robert came to USU from The Pennsylvania State University. After completing his PhD in meteorology and remote sensing, he continued his research as a research associate in the Department of Meteorology and the Earth System Science Center at Penn State. Robert was a member of Gov. Jon Huntsman’s scientific panel that compiled a report on climate change as it pertains to Utah for the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel.

Jesse Heers (Campbell Scientific)



Jesse Heers is Director of Business Development at Campbell Scientific, where he leads strategy and partnerships with the FAA and National Weather Service, including work on the ASOS and AWOS programs. With over 15 years of experience in environmental monitoring and aviation weather systems, he has driven growth across the Americas by securing key program awards, building high-performance teams, and guiding cross-functional initiatives.

Jesse holds a B.S. in Biology from the University of Utah and an M.B.A. from Utah State University and serves as a Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador with the National Weather Service, bringing both technical and market expertise to advancing aviation weather solutions. Outside of work, he's often outdoors—skiing, hiking, or trail running in the Utah mountains.

Kent Jensen (Campbell Scientific)



Kent Jensen has been with Campbell Scientific for six years and has been the program manager primarily responsible for NOAA contacts. His background includes working for Hughes Aircraft Company, Bourns Electronics, Inovar Inc, and now Campbell Scientific. His work history includes manufacturing engineering for 25 years and program management for 15 years.

Kent received his B.S. in manufacturing engineering from Weber State University. He has been a presenter at trade shows discussing electronics manufacturing processes. In his current position at Campbell Scientific, he has dealt primarily with weather instrumentation with a focus on aviation weather.

Bhogendra Kathayat [r] (Nepal Airlines)



Capt. Bhogendra Kathayat is a senior airline pilot with more than 18 years of professional flying experience at Nepal Airlines, where he currently serves as Commander of the Airbus A330. Throughout his career, he has operated a range of aircraft including the Airbus A320 and the DHC-6/300 Twin Otter. During his years flying the DHC-6/300, he gained thousands of hours of first-hand experience navigating complex weather patterns and challenging Himalayan terrain, developing an intimate understanding of the atmospheric conditions unique to Nepal.

Alongside his aviation career, Capt. Kathayat earned a PhD in Atmospheric Physics. His research focuses on the interplay of meteorological factors and aerosols that influence atmospheric visibility, with a particular emphasis on mountainous regions. He has also investigated the operational impacts of reduced visibility on flight safety and decision-making. By bridging practical cockpit experience with scientific inquiry, he brings a rare and valuable perspective to both aviation operations and atmospheric science, contributing to improved understanding of weather-related aviation challenges in complex environments.

Ethan Krimins [r] (Flight Profiler)



Ethan is president of FlightProfiler; an Ohio-based, veteran-owned, aviation technology company. Ethan has undergraduate and master's degrees in mathematics & statistics and has been a private pilot for nearly 40 years. Since 2006, FlightProfiler has been developing innovative meteorological technologies that improve flight safety.

Andrew Kuchel (Mesotech International)



Andrew Kuchel serves as the head of strategic initiatives and business development at Mesotech International, an ICAO/FAA compliant Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) provider. In this role, Andrew is modernizing the traditionally stagnant non-Federal AWOS market by introducing cutting-edge technology, innovative service programs, and customer-centric solutions.

With over 30 years of aviation experience, Andrew brings deep expertise across airport security, safety systems, and operational innovation. At Mesotech, he leverages the company's distinguished military heritage—serving as the trusted prime contractor for the US Department of Defense aviation weather program for over 20 years, with 300+ installations across USAF and Army facilities globally—to transform the civilian aviation weather observation market.

Andrew focuses on expanding Mesotech's market presence beyond traditional airports into new verticals including air medical services and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), while developing strategic partnerships and service offerings such as the Rapid Ship Parts Exchange Program and AWOS Live Premium Remote Support. His work centers on delivering modern, reliable weather observation solutions that prioritize customer success and operational continuity.

Vijay Lama [r] (Nepal Airlines)



Capt. Vijay Lama is a veteran airline pilot at Nepal Airlines, where he has served with distinction since 1988. With more than 30,000 hours of flying experience, he is one of the most accomplished aviators in the country. He currently serves as a Designated Check Pilot (DCP) on the Airbus A330, where he is responsible for training and examining prospective pilots on the fleet. In the past, he also held the role of DCP on the Airbus A320, playing a central role in shaping and mentoring the next generation

of airline pilots.

Most notably, Capt. Lama is among the most experienced pilots to have flown the DHC-6/300 Twin Otter aircraft in the challenging Himalayan terrain of Nepal. Logging more than 17,000 hours in the Twin Otter, he has acquired unparalleled expertise in navigating some of the most complex mountain weather conditions and operating in some of the world's most difficult and remote airports. In addition to his operational experience, he also served as an instructor pilot on the Twin Otter, training and mentoring many pilots who went on to become successful airline commanders themselves. His extraordinary experience in these demanding environments has made him a recognized authority in mountain aviation.

Beyond his distinguished aviation career, Capt. Lama is also one of Nepal's most celebrated public figures. He has acted in numerous films and is regarded as one of the country's finest actors, with a notable role in the Hollywood movie Everest. His talents extend far beyond flying and acting: he has been actively engaged in sports, writing, hosting, singing, directing, motivational speaking, philanthropy, and a wide range of social initiatives. In recognition of his diverse contributions, Capt. Lama has received dozens of prestigious awards and honors from national and international institutions. His career exemplifies excellence, versatility, and service—both in aviation and far beyond.

Scott Landolt (NCAR)



Dr. Scott Landolt is the Director of the Transportation Meteorology Applications Programs in the Research Applications Laboratory at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado. He has nearly 30 years of experience advancing aviation safety and winter weather research.

Scott has led numerous field campaigns, manages the NCAR Marshall Field Instrument Testbed, and oversees research related to aircraft icing and ground deicing. He has a strong interest in improving surface-weather observations with an emphasis on snowfall measurements, and his passion for winter weather has led him to Antarctica several times as part of an NSF-funded project studying snowfall measurements in the polar regions.

In his free time, Scott has taught various meteorology classes at local universities in the Denver/Boulder area for over 15 years, including a storm chasing class between spring and summer semesters.

Nate Leishman (Campbell Scientific)



Nathan Leishman is the Director of Fabrication and Automation at Campbell Scientific, where he oversees fabrication and board manufacturing operations. Over his 20-year career with the company, he has held roles including Engineering Drafter, Shop Manager, and Manufacturing Engineering Manager, consistently driving improvements in efficiency, workflow, and cost reduction across manufacturing processes. He earned a B.S. in Operations Management from Utah State University and an MBA from Western Governors University. Outside of work, he enjoys fishing and cheering on the Utah State Aggies.

Starr McGettigan [r] (FAA)



Ms. McGettigan over 30 years of experience in aviation weather; specifically, designing weather products for NAS users to improve user decision-making and understanding of weather. Ms. McGettigan has worked for the Federal Aviation Administration since 1999 where she currently manages NextGen's Weather Engineering & Evaluation Branch at the William J. Hughes Technical Center for Advanced Aerospace. Ms. McGettigan leads a team of engineers, meteorologists, computer scientists, and engineering research psychologists who advance the integration of weather information into National Air Space systems by performing cross-cutting concept maturity, technology development, and evaluation efforts. Her branch manages or supports programs including the Aviation Weather Demonstration & Evaluation (AWDE) Services, Weather Observation Research (WOR), Cloud Services for Aviation Weather (CSAW), and Runway Visual Range (RVR).

Richard McKay (Campbell Scientific)



Richard McKay, a Canadian meteorologist and product manager at Campbell Scientific, has worked over 37 years in the public and private meteorological sectors internationally. Richard's background has mainly been in aviation meteorology, first as an observer on an active airfield, also involving aircrew briefings and short-term forecasting on the public sector side, then moving to the private sector and product management of AWOS related instrumentation to help improve measurements of challenging parameters such as present weather and cloud state.

Bryce Moore (Campbell Scientific)



Bryce Moore serves as the Chief Pilot for Campbell Scientific, where he manages the company's flight operations based in Logan, Utah, operating a Pilatus PC-12. In addition to overseeing flight operations, Bryce works closely with the Aviation Weather department to bridge the gap between airport managers, pilots, engineers, and sales teams ensuring that customer needs and operational realities align with technical solutions. With extensive experience in aviation weather, Bryce has a particular emphasis on mountain weather systems. His career has taken him across the Rocky Mountains, where he gained valuable expertise in high-altitude and terrain-intensive flying environments.

Prior to his current role, Bryce flew as a Captain for SkyWest Airlines, where he was recognized as a designated mountain pilot. His combined background in flight operations, commercial aviation, and applied weather knowledge provides him with a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing today's aviation community.

Doug Morris [r] (Air Canada / Florida Institute of Technology)



Captain Doug Morris is nearing retirement, having accumulated over 27,000 flight hours. He will finish his Air Canada career as a training captain on the Boeing 787 (Dreamliner). Doug, a certified meteorologist, worked as a forecaster for Atmospheric Environment Canada for four years and has taught aviation weather for over 35 years. He has written four aviation books, two on aviation meteorology, and teaches aviation meteorology at Florida Institute of Technology. Doug resides in both Toronto, Canada, and Melbourne, Florida.

Doug Murphy [r] (FAA)



Doug is a meteorologist in the NextGen Weather Systems Program Office within the Enterprise Services directorate of the FAA Program Management Organization. He received his B.S. and M.S. in Atmospheric Science from Purdue University and has 25 years of experience working on federal government information technology systems, from software development on the NWS AWIPS to independent verification and validation on the National Archives and Records Administration's Electronic Records Archive. The last 14 years have been focused on collaboration with aviation weather data providers to and consumers of the FAA's WARP, CSS-Wx, and NWP systems to ensure a successful transition from legacy WARP and CIWS to NextGen Weather.

Aspen Nielsen (Campbell Scientific)



Aspen Nielsen is a global marketing specialist at Campbell Scientific, where she focuses on developing data-driven campaigns and content for aviation weather and environmental research applications. Aspen has been with Campbell Scientific since 2022, and moved into her current role in 2025 after earning her MBA. Outside of work, Aspen is passionate about painting, the mountains, reading, and her beloved cat,

Nova.

Brian Pettegrew [r] (MITRE)



Dr. Brian Pettegrew lives in Parkville, MO, with his family. He enjoys being outside, playing golf, hiking or exploring new culinary adventures. Brian holds a BS in Chemistry and MS/PhD in Atmospheric Science. He formerly worked in global aviation forecast development and technology transfers at the NOAA NWS Aviation Weather Center.

Gary Pokodner [r] (FAA)



Gary Pokodner graduated from Lehigh University with a B.S. in electrical engineering. He came to the FAA in 2011 with 25 years of engineering experience in DOD avionics acquisitions. Gary is the FAA's Weather Technology in the Cockpit (WTIC) Program Manager, managing a portfolio of research with the objectives of identifying and resolving gaps in meteorological (MET) information and technology in commercial and General Aviation (GA) cockpits and in GA pilot weather training to enhance safety. Current WTIC research projects include weather aggregation and using the vertical rate information downlinked by ADS-B to produce turbulence observations.

Nathan Polderman (United Airlines)



Nathan Polderman is the Senior Manager of Meteorology at United Airlines where he oversees all of United's weather decision support systems and service contracts. He is also the Program Manager for United's FAA-approved Enhanced Weather Information System (EWINS) and serves as a business lead for all corporate-level turbulence injury mitigation initiatives.

Nathan has actively participated in and led numerous aviation weather industry groups since 2008, including as Chair of the Airlines For America (A4A) Meteorology Committee from 2019-2020. He was recently named FPAW Co-Chair and began serving in that role on October 1, 2025. Nathan is an FAA-licensed Aircraft Dispatcher, holds a Master's degree in Atmospheric Science from Indiana University and a Bachelor's degree in Geography from Calvin University.

Warren Qualley [r] (American Airlines, Harris, Southwest Airlines [ret.])



Warren Qualley is a retired aviation meteorologist. He most recently was the Senior Manager of Meteorology at Southwest Airlines in Dallas, TX. Prior to his work at Southwest, Warren was Senior Weather Expert in Harris Corporation's Environmental Solutions group in the Space and Intelligence Systems Division in Washington, D.C.

Warren has 40 years of aviation meteorology experience, including 25 years with American Airlines, the last 12 of those as Manager of Weather Services. These positions led him to leadership roles in numerous areas of aviation weather, including Chair of the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Flight Operations Support Task Force for 20 years, Co-Chair of the UCAR Community Advisory Committee for NCEP (UCACN) and liaison to the NWS Aviation Weather Center and Chair of the American Meteorological Society's Committee on Open Environmental Information Services. He was also a member of NOAA's Science Advisory Board's Environmental Information Services Working Group, the FAA's Collaborative Decision Making Weather Evaluation Team, the NBAA Weather Sub-committee, and several committees of the FAA's NextGen Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO).

Warren has been an invited speaker at national and international conferences and at university classes and community organizations. He was elected a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society in 2014.

Heather Reeves (Oklahoma University – CIWRO)



Dr. Heather Reeves is a Senior Research Scientist at the Cooperative Institute for Severe and High-Impact Weather Research and Operations (CIWRO) and the National Severe Storms Laboratory. Her areas of expertise include aviation weather, winter weather, and radar meteorology. Heather was a charter member of the FPAW Steering Committee.

Tom Ryan [r] (AvMet Applications, Inc. supporting FAA Flight Standards)



Tom “Pinch Hitter” Ryan spent most of the last three decades working as a federal employee or as support to them. As a Fed he’s worked in IT, construction, emergency preparedness, runway safety, and aviation weather. His most recent efforts have been working in aviation weather for the FAA’s NextGen program and for Flight Standards. He retired from the FAA in 2019 but has kept at it in support of the

Flight Standards weather program.

Tom was offered opportunities to manage projects and programs for the FAA. His success in bringing teams together to develop plans and bring them to fruition has been a source of great enjoyment to him and to his teams.

In working aviation weather, Tom has participated in FPAW for about 15 years. As FPAW participants we’re always searching for ways to provide value to this rather small community. This session on automated surface weather observation systems is a small contribution to that.

Wayne Sand [r] Big Sky Weather Consulting



Dr. Wayne Sand has been associated with weather and aviation for his entire adult life. As a graduate student, he flew a cloud seeding research project for Colorado State University. He went on to fly Navy all-weather attack bombers in Vietnam and returned to graduate school at the South Dakota School of Mines, where he completed an MS in Meteorology while flying the armored T-28 through

thunderstorms. Wayne then went to the University of Wyoming, where he flew their weather research airplanes for 12 years in various weather research programs, including studies of thunderstorms, aircraft icing, mountain snowstorms, lake-effect snow, turbulence, windshear, and microbursts. While there, he completed a PhD in Atmospheric Science.

Wayne went from the U. of Wyoming to NCAR as the Deputy Director of what was then known as the Research Applications Program during the period they developed LLWAS and TDWR. From NCAR, he started his own consulting business, investigating weather involved with aviation accidents and the weather’s impact on airplanes and pilots. Wayne finally stopped taking consulting jobs two years ago to write a book on what he learned about the relationship between airplanes, pilots, and weather, titled "Aviate Navigate Communicate: How Severe Weather Impacts Airplanes and Pilots."

Mike Splitt (Florida Institute of Technology)



Michael Splitt obtained a B.S. in Meteorology at Northern Illinois University in 1986. After working at the National Weather Service in Muskegon, Michigan, he headed to graduate school in Oklahoma and earned an M.S. in Meteorology (1991) and a certification in secondary science education (1992). As an assistant site scientist for the Atmospheric Radiation Measurements (ARM) Program Southern Great Plains Site in Oklahoma, he focused on quality control for an array of observing systems, including atmospheric soundings systems, surface radiometers, and surface flux systems. He also provided weather forecast guidance and briefings for intensive observation periods, which included aircraft operations.

Mike transitioned to the University of Utah in 1998, where he worked on what is now known as MesoWest and was part of the weather support team for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. He next landed at the Florida Institute of Technology and joined the College of Aeronautics in 2016, where he teaches courses in Aviation Meteorology. Mike has published in diverse areas, including atmospheric radiation, tropical cyclone wind probabilities, air-sea interaction, meteorological aspects of thunderstorms producing gigantic jets and terrestrial gamma ray flashes, and aviation meteorology. He is currently funded under projects with the Department of Energy and the FAA PEGASAS program with a focus on weather representativeness issues relevant to weather technology in the cockpit.

Nicole Starzec [r] (NOAA NWS AWC)



Nicole Starzec has been at the National Weather Service Aviation Weather Center (AWC) in Kansas City, MO since January 2020. She started as a web developer, working on the overhaul of AviationWeather.gov in 2023, and then transitioned into a more Research-to-Operations (R2O) focused role, utilizing her web development expertise to display new tools on the testbed website. Nicole is also involved in the communication of the products AWC provides to their end users, presenting data tools to fellow scientists as well as pilots, she then brings their feedback back to the office for additional Operations-to-Research (O2R).

Nicole holds her B.S. and M.S. in Atmospheric Science from the University of North Dakota, where she first got involved with aviation research.

Matthias Steiner (NCAR)



Dr. Matthias Steiner is a Senior Scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) who served as Director for the Aviation Applications Program of the Research Applications Laboratory (RAL) until recently. His interests are broadly focused on mitigation of avoidable weather impacts on various sectors, with a particular focus on aviation.

Matthias' vision, leadership, and substantial contributions toward mitigating weather impacts on the aviation industry have reached deeply across the traditional boundaries of developing more accurate weather forecasts to integrate weather guidance in the decision-making process to better serve aviation operators, including the rapidly growing efforts focused on urban air mobility and using unmanned aerial systems for wide-ranging applications and safe integration into the national airspace system. He has received multiple recognitions for excellent contributions to

field programs, scientific missions, and outstanding publications. Most notably, Matthias is a Fellow of both the Royal and American Meteorological Societies.

David Strand (MITRE)



David currently resides near Atlanta, GA with his wife Donna, where he has been a Lead Aviation Systems Engineer at The MITRE Corporation for the past six years. After completing an M.S. in Meteorology, David worked at Delta Air Lines for 8 years as a meteorologist and an aircraft dispatcher. During that time, he began flying in a variety of aircraft from Cessna 150s to Citations, flying on-demand charters and cargo flights as well as performing flight instruction.

Prior to coming to MITRE, David completed nearly 33 years as a pilot for American Airlines. During his tenure there, he was in a variety of roles including Captain and Management Technical Pilot. Aircraft experience at American included B-777, B-767, B-757, B-727, DC-10 and MD-80. As a Management Technical Pilot for 19 of those years, he was responsible for international flight operations, managing several aircraft programs, and representing American at numerous industry groups including those at RTCA, IATA and ICAO. For 13 years, he was chairman of the IATA NAT/NAM Regional Coordinating Group. David has also engaged in several aviation contracting and consulting activities including for GE Aviation, Panasonic Avionics, Mammoth Freighters, and RTCA.

Elizabeth Wilson [r] (Synoptic Data PBC)



Elizabeth Wilson is the Director of Weather Programs at Synoptic Data Public Benefit Corporation, an environmental data aggregator company. She oversees business development relationships from academia, industry, and government regarding use of meteorological data through management of the National Mesonet Program, a public-private partnership program with the National Weather Service that provides non-federal weather data to the federal government. She also manages the company's aircraft-based observation strategy.

Prior to rejoining Synoptic, Ms. Wilson was the Director of Product Success at Climavision, where she was responsible for facilitating inter-organizational collaboration and providing the Climavision team with the appropriate scientific knowledge and tools to both build and sell valuable products and feature sets. Prior to 2018, Ms. Wilson was a Senior Atmospheric Scientist during the development and deployment of a state-of-the-art global NWP system utilizing the TAMDAR sensor at Panasonic Weather Solutions, where she led a team in developing flight optimization and fuel savings programs used by major airlines and aerospace companies. Additionally, she managed customer relationships and business development for both domestic and international industry and government partners.

Elizabeth received bachelor's and master's degrees in Atmospheric Science from North Carolina State University. She has her Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and is a member of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) as well as a member of the AMS Board on Enterprise Communication, a member of the World Meteorological Organization's JET-ABO working group, and a charter member of the Friends and Partners in Aviation Weather Steering Committee.

Chris Zarzar (TruWeather Solutions)



Dr. Chris Zarzar is Director of Weather Strategy and Innovation at TruWeather Solutions. Chris joined TruWeather Solutions after a career in academia where he researched the impacts of urban areas on local weather conditions and natural hazard risk communication. Through this research, Chris recognized that a lack of low-altitude weather observations was one of the biggest hurdles limiting advancement in local-scale weather predictions. As Director of Weather Strategy and Innovation at TruWeather, Chris builds partnerships and injects cutting-edge science into weather products to deliver state-of-the-art weather intelligence to support safe, reliable, and resilient AAM operations. He holds a Part 107 Certificate and a PhD in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences from Mississippi State University.

Chandler Zuck (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University)



Chandler Zuck is an undergraduate Meteorology student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, minoring in Systems Engineering, Applied Mathematics, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). He served as the elected Community Outreach Chair for the Embry-Riddle Student Chapter of the American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association from 2023 to 2024, and later was elected President in 2024 to serve until 2025.

Chandler's interests lie at the intersection of aviation and atmospheric/geological sciences. Having achieved his Private Pilot's License and high-performance endorsement in Alaska in 2021, Chandler is personally impacted by the weather and the role our changing climate has on aviation infrastructure. Serving the American public as an intern at the Federal Aviation Administration under the Office of NextGen in both the Aviation Weather Division (ANG-C) and the Systems Engineering and Integration Division (ANG-B), he hopes to continue learning and serving aviators and the flying public of the United States by advancing the industry of weather and climate in the aviation sphere.