

NWSEO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet NWSEO Member Paula Cognito

(March 30, 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 **Paula Cognito**, NWSEO Vice Steward and Senior Hydrologist at the Southeast River Forecast Center, Peachtree City, GA.

Paula, briefly tell us your work title and how you became an employee (and in that role) of the National Weather Service?

I am a Senior Hydrologist at the Southeast River Forecast Center. After volunteering at NWS OKX during the summer of '93 I was selected for a COMET project with PSU and the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center during my Senior Year in the PSU Meteorology Program. This is when I was exposed to the hydrology program within the National Weather Service. After graduation I worked as a consulting meteorologist in the private sector before being selected as a hydrologist at the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center in 2001.

Describe the most unusual/interesting experience in your work.

I think the most interesting thing about being an operational hydrologist is the fact that our job is pretty unique and you can't go to many places outside of the NWS to perform it.

Why did you join NWSEO? Or, what is your experience working with NWSEO Southern Region, members, teams, etc?

I have been a member of NWSEO for my entire career and in the beginning I really had no intention of being an "active" member. When I arrived at SERFC in 2010 there was no vice-steward so I stepped into the position and have been the steward or vice since that point. Over the past decade I have represented NWSEO on numerous national and regional teams related to hydrology. The most recent team I was on, was the National Water Center Concept of Operations Team (Aug 2016 - Dec 2017).

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

There are two events that I can recall from school. Although the computer had been around for some time, I remember when a single desktop computer was placed in my second grade classroom and my best friend and I would race to complete our assignments so we could play games.

The second was during high school and the first computer was connected to something called the "World Wide Web." The fact that today we can walk around with a computer, in our pocket, connected to the internet with no wires still kinda baffles me.

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

Whether it is hiking the mountains or napping on the beach, I love being outdoors.

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

My husband I never thought we were the type of people to travel to the same place more than once never mind a half a dozen times, but this is what Hanalei Hawaii did to us. Every few years we return and it never gets old to spend the morning hiking or kayaking and then the afternoon with a cold one (or two) along the bay.



Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

I was a competitive baton twirler for ten years.

We are so grateful for Paula's time and dedication to the work she and the members and employees of SE RFC and Southern 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.**

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