

# The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

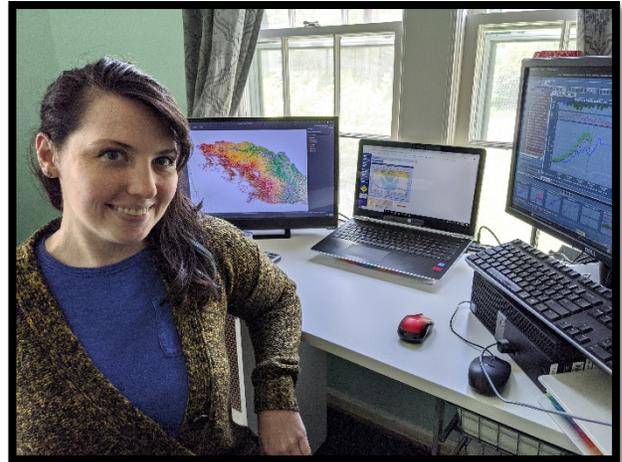
## NWSEO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Meet NWSEO Steward Leah Pope

(May 29, 2020) Please meet NWSEO Steward Leah Pope, Hydrologist at Missouri Basin River Forecast Center (MBRFC) in Pleasant Hill, MO.

#### What brought you to the NWS and NWSEO?

My background is in civil engineering / water resources. I have a master's degree in water management and hydro-informatics. I am fascinated in the math and science behind water and how it applies to the real world to help save lives. After earning my master's degree, I got a job as a consultant to help calibrate the Community Hydrologic Prediction System (CHPS) model that RFCs use today. I enjoyed working on it and wanted a more "hands on approach", so I applied and was selected for my current position at MBRFC. About 6 months later, I went to the NWS New Hires course and joined NWSEO because my office had no local representation.



NWSEO Steward Leah Pope shown working on river forecasting and development from telework.

#### How long have you been working with NWS? What do you do specifically?

I came to the NWS about 2 years ago. I forecast rivers in the Missouri Basin and do development work for the RFC including calibration and IDSS. That means I do lots of work with the CHPS model for forecasting floods, GIS to understand the physical components of the basin, and a suite of products to help portray the message.

#### What do you enjoy about your job? -about supporting NWSEO?

I am very happy with the work that we do on a daily basis because I enjoy the variety of tasks. I can be deep into coding one hour and then be coordinating with partners the next. I also enjoy that I can mix the technical with the creative sides of the brain.

It is truly amazing to be a part of an effort to help save lives, like during the historic flooding of 2019. That was a tiring and unforgettable experience that happened within my first 6 months of forecasting.

When I joined NWSEO, I also became the local steward. I didn't mind because I thought it would be a good idea to help represent hydrologists and RFCs to NWSEO, but also to help my local office should issues arise. I feel that transparency and being open to different ideas are very important to not only solve issues but to find creative solutions. I try to involve my whole office in Local Office Team (LOT) decisions. I like that NWSEO, Central Region Chair Jim Lee in particular, is there whenever I have questions. I am also glad that 2 more people have since joined in my office!

### **Would you recommend joining NWSEO to others?**

Yes! I think it is a good way to understand how decisions are made and what is going on around the NWS outside of your local office.

### **Any favorite hobbies, extracurricular activities or something we don't know about you?**

I enjoy cooking, going to concerts, and travelling. I try to get to a new country every year, so I am excited for travelling to start back up after this corona virus "lock-down".

We are so appreciative for Leah's time and dedication to the work she and the members and employees of MBRFC 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](mailto:mediarelations@nwseo.org).

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**No one works harder for NOAA employees than NOAA employees.**

**We are NOAA employees. We are NWSEO.**