

THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

Hooked on Cloud Seeding

Mark D. Schneider

Each spring, college graduates from all across the country make a trek to North Dakota to participate in the North Dakota Cloud Modification Project (NDCMP) from June 1 through August 31.

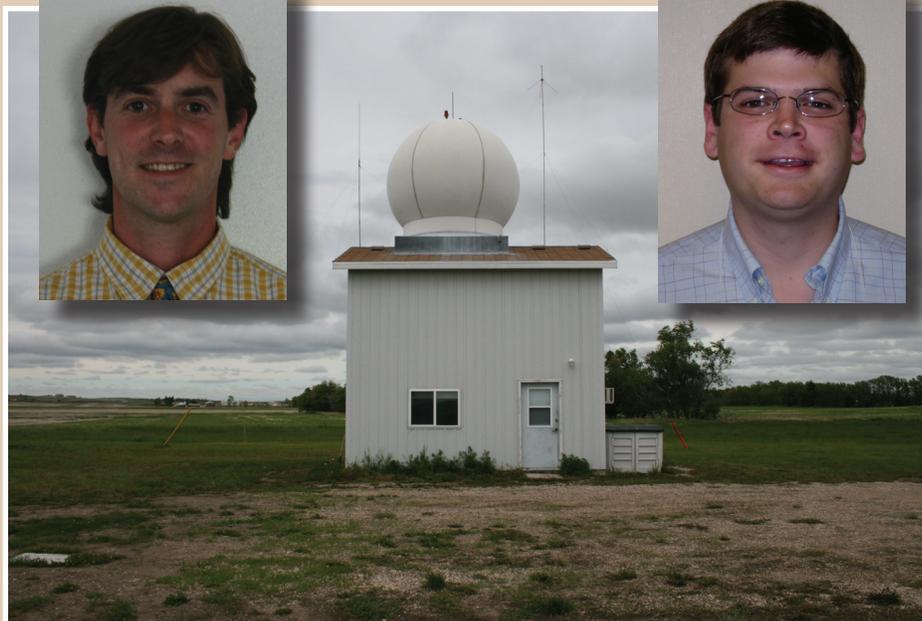
This year, the North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board (NDARB) is fortunate enough to have three returning meteorologists running the Bowman and Stanley radar sites for cloud seeding operations. Dan Gilbert (Bowman), Matt Becker and David Keith (Stanley) have more in common than just their meteorology degrees. They are all from out-of-state and are willing to pick up and move to North Dakota each spring for a three-month cloud seeding project.

So, what is it that keeps them coming back year after year?

Dan Gilbert is the Bowman radar meteorologist this season and this is his sixth year participating in the NDCMP. Dan is an Iowa native and is used to the small town lifestyle found here in North Dakota. When asked about the NDCMP, Dan stated, "It's a very rewarding job. I feel like I make a difference." Dan is making a difference by helping farmers, ranchers, and county citizens by reducing hail and enhancing rainfall over their cloud seeding districts. Emergency managers and the National Weather Service also benefit greatly from the radar information, pilot reports, and spotter information Dan provides them.



Dan Gilbert is the meteorologist this season at the Bowman radar.



Matt Becker (left) and David Keith are the Stanley radar meteorologists.

2008 NDCMP STAFF:

PILOTS:

Seed 1 (Bowman, cloud-base):
Eric Strohacker, Pilot-in-Command;
Ben Duke, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 2 (Bowman, hybrid):
Ryan Guthridge, Pilot-in-Command;
Cristina Watson, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 4 (Stanley, cloud-base):
Melanie Nieuwsma, Pilot-in-Command;
Kristen Steuver, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 5 (Watford City, cloud-base):
Ben Burgeson, Pilot-in-Command;
Mike Larson, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 6 (Watford City, cloud-base):
Eric Miller, Pilot-in-Command;
Aaron Guffey, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 7 (Williston, cloud-top):
Nick Peacock, Pilot-in-Command;
Ryan Perrin, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 8 (Kenmare, cloud-base):
Keith VanLierop, Pilot-in-Command;
Brent Shibe, Intern Co-Pilot

Seed 9 (Minot, cloud-top):
Tom Kovac, Pilot-in-Command;
Kurt Dixon, Intern Co-Pilot

Intern Co-Pilot Rover: Matt Rabe

METEOROLOGY STAFF:

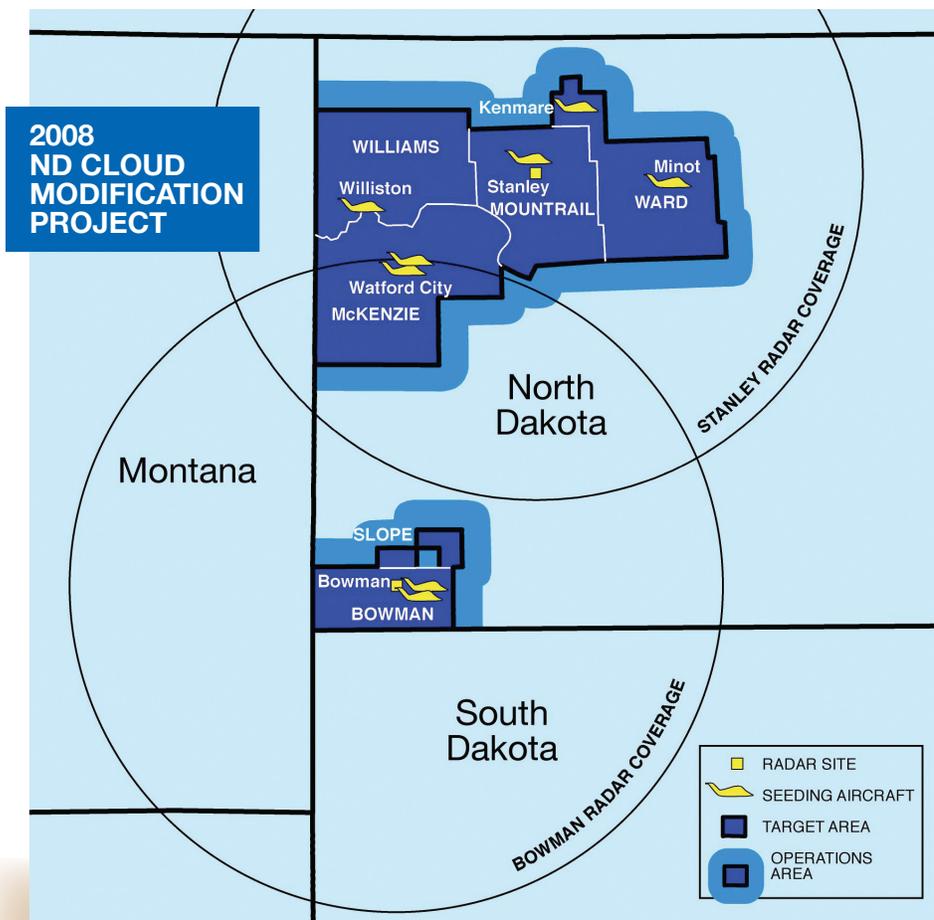
Bowman Radar:
Dan Gilbert, Radar Meteorologist;
Nikolay Damyanov, Intern Meteorologist

Stanley Radar:
Matt Becker and David Keith, Radar Meteorologists;
Annie Nelson, Intern Meteorologist

Bismarck Forecast Office:
Phillip Genskow, Intern Meteorologist

Atmospheric Resource Board
North Dakota State Water Commission
900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505
(701) 328-2788
<http://swc.nd.gov>

ND Weather Modification Association
PO Box 2599, Bismarck, ND 58502
(701) 223-4232



Other reasons why Dan returns to the NDCMP year after year include mention that, “It’s a well-equipped, organized, and well-run program with a solid support staff.” The support staff he is referring to consists of NDARB and State Water Commission staff and independent contractor personnel who support the project.

Matt Becker and David Keith are the Stanley radar meteorologists this season and are both Illinois natives. This is Matt’s third year working on the NDCMP, and he says, “Every year when I leave (home) to work with the NDCMP or just bring it up in conversation, my wife notices a distinct grin of enthusiasm and excitement on my face.”

David Keith was an intern meteorologist with the NDCMP last year and has returned this year as a degreed meteorologist. David com-

mented, “There’s something unique about having the opportunity to run your own radar.” David will be attending graduate school at UND this fall.

In addition to Dan, Matt, and David, there are three intern meteorologists and nine intern pilots working for the NDARB this season. Weather Modification, Inc., a NDCMP contractor, employs eight pilots-in-command (PICs); most of whom were intern pilots either last year or the year before. These PICs are experienced and maintain effective communication and coordination making the NDCMP a success year after year.

As you can see, North Dakota attracts people from all across the country and the NDCMP continues to interest and excite young people looking ahead to their future careers.