

EDITORIAL


Broadening the Scope and Impact of *Weather and Forecasting*

Weather and Forecasting (WAF) is now in its fourth decade and is going strong, thanks to a steady supply of valuable contributions from talented authors and the tireless efforts of many volunteers and American Meteorological Society (AMS) staff members. In the first issue of *WAF* in 1986, an editorial by then Co-Chief Editors Robert Burpee and Leonard Snellman stated that they hoped the journal would “prove to be a medium for useful and productive dialogue” among operational forecasters and researchers. The need for interaction between the research and operational prediction communities is as strong as ever, and *WAF* remains uniquely positioned to facilitate this dialog. However, the realm of predictability problems has broadened in recent years, as have the toolsets used by forecasters and researchers alike. The need for the general public to understand and appreciate scientific research also remains acute, yet most technical journal articles are inaccessible to nonspecialists. To address these issues, we have made the following changes at *WAF* that we expect will place this journal in an even stronger position for the coming decade and beyond:

- 1) Subseasonal-to-seasonal (S2S) prediction has become an important focus of the atmospheric and oceanic science community; some related research questions are similar to those encountered in shorter-term prediction. There appeared to be a gap in coverage of this topic in AMS journals, as the previous *WAF* terms of reference did not clarify that S2S studies were welcomed. In early 2019, we modified the *WAF* terms of reference to clarify that such studies *are* welcomed, with predictive horizons extending out to a few years. To accommodate such submissions, a leading researcher in this area, Prof. Ben Kirtman (University of Miami), joined the editorial board in January 2019.
- 2) Machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI), and deep learning (DL) have experienced rapid growth in many areas, including in forecasting applications. Professor Amy McGovern (University of Oklahoma), a leading expert in ML/AI applications in physical science, joined the *WAF* editorial board in May 2019 to handle the recent influx of papers in these areas.
- 3) Previously, *WAF* had a submission type titled “NCEP Notes.” These submissions were intended to provide information about changes to operational NWP systems, such as those at the National Centers of Environmental Prediction (NCEP). However, not all operational prediction systems run at NCEP, and the scope of *WAF* has broadened to include submissions from many international researchers. Accordingly, we have changed the name of this type of submission to “Operational Prediction System Notes” in an effort to increase overall submissions of this type and to clarify that the scope is not restricted to NCEP operational systems.
- 4) Beginning in 2020, *WAF* authors will have the option of providing plain-language “significance statements” with their papers. The objective of adding significance statements is to make the science contained within journal articles more accessible to the educated layperson and to highlight its societal importance. These short statements will be peer reviewed and will appear on the first page of articles.

We are optimistic that these changes will serve to strengthen *WAF*, allowing it to grow in stature and utility in a rapidly evolving scientific landscape.

Gary Lackmann
Chief Editor

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