



Wisconsin State Climatology Office
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2027

In Partnership with
Nelson Institute
for Environmental Studies

Division of Extension

Department of Atmospheric
and Oceanic Sciences



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Overview:

The Wisconsin State Climatology Office (SCO) was established in 1953 within the United States Weather Bureau – now the National Weather Service. Between 1973 and 2000, the SCO was housed jointly between the State of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin—Madison, but thereafter until 2023 the office operated on a volunteer basis. Today, the SCO is part of UW—Madison's Rural Partnerships Institute (RPI), a campuswide organization supporting Wisconsin's rural and Tribal communities that is funded by an award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The SCO is housed within the Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, the Division of Extension's Natural Resources Institute, and the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at UW—Madison.

The office contributes timely summaries, analyses of significant weather events, and expertise for public and media inquiries, while engaging with partners across the state, region, and nation. With its foundation in strong collaborations and outreach, the SCO is working to expand its visibility, strengthen trust, and become Wisconsin's go-to source for climate information and insight.

Our Mission

Provide climate services that help Wisconsinites use weather and climate information most effectively.

These services are centered around three elements:

Information

Provide users with reliable weather and climate information.

Interpretation

Assist users in how to understand and apply this information.

Investigation

Conduct *basic* and *applied* research on Wisconsin's climate.

Our Vision: To be Wisconsin's indispensable source of climate information and insight to benefit all communities.



Goal #1

Communicate vetted weather and climate information to Wisconsinites by addressing current conditions and placing them into historical context.

Strategy

- Monitor and assess current weather conditions in collaboration with partners.
- Identify the societal impacts of current and historic weather conditions.
- Develop and communicate timely, accessible climate informational products.
- Grow the reputation of the office by being a trusted source for climate information statewide.



Goal #2

Translate weather and climate data and offer expert insight to assist Wisconsin communities with their weather and climate needs.

Strategy

- Provide accessible resources that translate data and research into relevant information for the general public.
- Tailor resources to target audiences and decision-making sectors.
- Conduct public-facing outreach through activities such as presentations, workshops, and festivals.
- Develop student opportunities to engage in outreach under the SCO's mentorship.
- Engage in "inreach" by partnering with the UW—Madison Division of Extension to enhance statewide climate programming.

Conducting
Investigations



Goal #3

Conduct basic and applied research to advance our understanding of Wisconsin's climate and address stakeholder needs.

Strategy

- Share research findings in peer-reviewed journals and conference presentations.
- Disseminate research findings through SCO outreach.
- Anticipate and conduct short-order (ad hoc) research.
- Create and maintain decision-support tools that translate data and research findings into understandable, actionable resources in collaboration with partners.
- Provide student research opportunities through assistantships, internships, and hourly employment.



Supporting the
SCO's Mission



Goal #4

Ensure the State Climatology Office's long-term sustainability.

Strategy

- Pursue multiple funding sources to ensure financial stability beyond 2027.
- Cultivate relationships with intrastate, Tribal, regional, and national partners to support shared goals and expand funding opportunities.
- Form and maintain an Advisory Board to provide guidance on office priorities, funding strategies, and enhancing the SCO's value to stakeholders.
- Adapt SCO services to meet the evolving weather and climate needs of Wisconsinites.
- Quantify and communicate the value of the SCO by collaborating with economists and business analysts.