

## **WES INITIATIVES IN NORTH CAROLINA**

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In the spring of 2003, North Carolina concluded another successful year with Datastreme "Water and Earth Systems" Course. The Lit team consisted of John White, employee with the Air Force Combat Climatology Center, Fanette Entziminger, teacher with Pitt County Schools, and myself, teacher with Sampson County Schools.

During both semesters, fall 2002 and spring 2003, we had a very diverse group of teachers taking the WES Course. Of the 8 participants, geographically, they ranged from Elizabeth City to the foothills of North Carolina. Another factor in this group we had to consider was the variety of levels in their teaching experience, ranging from elementary to high school. In addition to this, we had representatives from private school as well as public schools. These differences added to the interest level of the group as the participants exchanged ideas at meetings.

As with most of our previous WES meetings, the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Raleigh, North Carolina agreed to host Our contacts at the office, Phil Badgett and Rod Gonski, have worked faithfully over the years, helping us make needed arrangements by reserving the conference room and scheduling tours with forecasters on duty.

Using the NWS Office has proved to be very educational for the teachers attending the Saturday morning sessions. There have been times during the past two semesters, as in all areas of the country, traveling to the meetings has been a challenge for some of the participants due to weather events. Having guests in the NWS Office on these days could be a problem for the forecasters. However, at no time has our group been made feel our being there has been an imposition. During our first fall 2003 meeting, with Hurricane Isabel in the Atlantic, the teachers were able to listen to a conference call from the National Hurricane Center. This has allowed our participants to develop a better understanding of the uncertainty of forecasting.

One way we have been able to find new participants for the upcoming semesters has been by promoting the course through presentations at the North Carolina Science Teachers Conference held each November. Another emphasis that we have been working on during the past semester has been making continued contact with minority universities through email and mailings with information about WES. We are excited about our future possibilities in working with these universities.