

THE COOPERATIVE WEATHER OBSERVER

Cooperative weather observers are selected to take observations at predetermined locations in order to define the climate of an area. While cooperative observers may take several different kinds of observations, they usually make daily readings of maximum and minimum temperatures and precipitation.

Observers are usually selected from permanent residents in a community who have an interest in observing weather, so that a long record can be assured. Observations must be taken seven days a week throughout the year. The value of data is enhanced to a great extent by the records extending over a number of years. Most cooperative observers have served from 25 to 50 years.

A cooperative station represents an area of approximately 600 miles. This distribution of stations varies somewhat in accordance with the topographic features of the country.

Where a cooperative station is needed, the Weather Service provides the shelter, thermometers, and raingage. The observer takes on observation daily, preferably near sunset, and records the data on forms provided for this purpose. These records are forwarded to a processing center at the end of each month where the data are verified and published in a Climatological Data bulletin for each state or area.

This network of cooperative stations has become rather stable in recent years and practically no new installations are being made at the present time.

While the age has not been stressed, observers must be able to assume the responsibility of recording official observations.

Editor's Note: This is a "special" article.