

In Memoriam: Dr. Ken Mooney



Dr. Ken Mooney (NOAA) passed away suddenly in August 2020. Dr. Mooney was a beloved member, colleague and friend of the U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Program and Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG).

CCIWG Memories and comments



October 2019, CCIWG Annual Retreat - Ken Mooney (second from left) with CCIWG members at the USGCRP

Gyami Shrestha, U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Program Director & UCAR:

I first spoke with Ken 9 years ago, in August 2011, when he called me for a job interview with the Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG). The rest is history. As a core team member of the CCIWG and U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Program, he continuously impressed me with his fierce candor, convictions and encouragement of young scientists and colleagues. In addition to tri-weekly to monthly CCIWG meetings in which he actively participated to advance interagency collaboration and coordination via the U.S. Carbon Cycle Science Program, we worked closely on our annual interagency funding actions to keep our activities running. It was an honor to know him, and to work with him. With much appreciation and respect for everything that Ken was and did.

Kathy Tedesco, NOAA & UCAR Program Manager, Global Ocean Monitoring and Observing Program:

All who knew Ken commented on how passionate he was about identifying and nurturing the next generation of managers. I was one who benefitted from his mission. I arrived at NOAA's Office of Global Programs (now the Climate Program Office) as a John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow in February 2002. Within a few months, I was approached by Ken, following the resignation of Lisa Dilling, and asked to serve as manager of the Global Carbon Cycle Program (*after* I first received my Ph.D. that May!). I accepted and the trajectory of my career completely changed. Thank you, Ken, for trusting me with that amazing opportunity.

Diane Wickland, Retired, NASA

I remember Ken Mooney as a faithful and stalwart member of the Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group (CCIWG) and as a creative and reliable partner in co-funding many carbon cycle science activities and research awards. Interagency transfers of funds can be a little complicated and tend to be fraught with difficulties -- Ken was totally unflappable and had mastered NOAA's processes -- he always came through in resolving difficulties (and coping with NASA's idiosyncracies) in an acceptable and timely manner. He was always helpful in driving the CCIWG to resolve scientific and practical implementation issues. I also recall he was instrumental in finding and recruiting Gyami Shrestha to our team. I have missed everyone of the CCIWG members since my retirement, but I feel that even more acutely in realizing that Ken is no longer there fighting the good fight to the benefit of this nation's scientific endeavors.

James Whetstone and Anna Karion, Greenhouse Gas Measurements Program, NIST:

Ken Mooney was a wonderful colleague and friend. He was a friendly face at many meetings where we did not know anyone else in the room, greeting everyone with a smile and positive attitude. He was there to welcome NIST as a member of the CCIWG and involve us in the community. His presence and positive attitude will be sorely missed not only in the CCIWG but also the various scientific meetings in which he actively participated. Anna & James

James Butler, NOAA Global Monitoring Laboratory Director and CCIWG co-chair

I've known Ken since I came to NOAA in 1986. Ken was a great colleague, friend, and promoter of our work. He had a keen eye on what was needed to advance climate science and was always a source of stability amid the swirling hurricane of changing Administrations and leadership. We could always count on Ken to keep his hand on the rudder. He was a rock for NOAA, but also for the USGCRP Carbon Cycle Interagency Working Group, of which he was a member from its inception in the mid 1990s. In all these years, he never let go of the importance of research to NOAA's and the nation's Climate Enterprise and to the stability and functioning of global networks. He has stood up for us in every possible way over the past several decades. We will sorely miss Ken and I, for one, am deeply saddened over this loss of a friend and colleague.

Nancy Cavallaro, retired, USGS volunteer, former CCIWG co-chair

I've known Ken since he first joined the CCIWG where he was a very active member, and friend and colleague to me.. I remember riding the metro with him several times and having long discussions about the climate change program and strategies to move things forward under less than sympathetic congress and executive branch. As other have noted, I observed that he was generous in his promotion and mentoring of younger colleagues within NOAA. He always actively promoted research and consistently tried to keep balance within the CCIWG in terms of the different ecosystems and energy and atmospheric issues. He spoke his mind with conviction and honesty--no spin. He also was helpful in supporting interagency efforts and joint solicitations. Apart from his purely professional role, he was a good friend and fun to get together with. I remember a fun adventure during one of the NACP All Investigator meetings in search of a small venue where a jazz singer was performing. It was a very cold winter night, and before everyone had smart phones and google maps, but we found it and had a lovely evening. I bought a record there--so now I think of Ken whenever I play it.

Monika Kopacz, NOAA AC4 Program manager

I met Ken in 2010 as a fellow program manager in CPO. By the time we formed our AC4 program two short years later, I knew Ken well enough to know that he was hardworking and dedicated to his work. He was passionate about science research of the best quality, the type he has supported over his long career at NOAA across several disciplines. Starting as an oceanographer, then engaging in coupled ocean-atmosphere studies (the famous TOGA program), then climate, he arrived at the carbon cycle late in his career, but embraced it fully, and picked up atmospheric chemistry even later. Through it all, he was a big presence in meetings and in all work engagements, yet always left room for and promoted others. Probably his biggest legacy is the long list of grateful mentees. Ken took quiet pride in developing many careers and never quitting his. Very fitting, he worked until his very last day.



Nov 2019 - NOAA ESM Workshop - Ken Mooney with Monika Kopacz



April 2019, after NOAA AC4 Panel - Ken Mooney with Monika Kopacz and Gyami Shrestha



Feb 2019, CCIWG meeting, Ken Mooney with James Whetstone and doughnuts



April 2013 - Ken Mooney (rightmost, second row) first and last joint meeting of the U.S. Carbon Program CCSSG and NACP SSG with CCIWG



Ken Mooney (far left) with CCIWG during 2013 CCIWG retreat at NASA



Ken at Kathy Tedesco's Goodbye Party in 2007, Mi Rancho, Silver Spring, MD



Ken's speech making Kathy cry at Mi Rancho, 2007