

Press Kit



Mission

Mount Washington Observatory (MW OBS) is a private, nonprofit, member-supported institution with a mission to advance understanding of the natural systems that create Earth's weather and climate. It serves this mission by maintaining a weather station on the summit of Mount Washington, performing weather and climate research, conducting innovative science education programs, and interpreting the heritage of the Mount Washington region.



Media Contacts

Ellen Estabrook, Communications Manager
eestabrook@mountwashington.org
(603) 356- 2137 x223

Charlie Buterbaugh, Director of External Affairs
cbuterbaugh@mountwashington.org
(603) 356- 2137 x211

Please contact us if you would like to receive our latest story tip sheets.

About Us

Located on the summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire at Mount Washington State Park, Mount Washington Observatory (MWOBS)'s mountaintop weather station is the core of the institution. Staffed continuously since the organization's founding in 1932, it is operated by two alternating crews who live on the summit for a week at a time, taking hourly weather observations, performing research, and conducting educational programs.

Weather observations are reported to the National Weather Service for use in nationwide forecasting models and regional reports, and MWOBS scientists produce specialized forecasts for the higher summits of the White Mountains and greater White Mountains region. Mount Washington Observatory maintains what is now one of North America's longest continuous alpine climate records.

Through all of its efforts, Mount Washington Observatory connects the public with the awe and wonder of the natural world, igniting a passion for science, the mountains, and the outdoors. Serving not only as experts in the field of extreme weather, MWOBS has also emerged as the voice of Mount Washington. Through our website, daily weather forecasts, frequent high-level exposure in national news media, strategic partnerships with leaders in the outdoor industry, and far-reaching educational outreach efforts, Mount Washington Observatory's mission and work reaches millions of individuals each year.

Mount Washington Observatory is a 501(c)(3) U.S. nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization.



Key Impact Areas

Scientific Research and Technology: As the only active station above 2,300 feet in the mountainous regions of New England, the long-term dataset collected on Mount Washington supplies a vital link to research and understanding weather in complex terrain, making MWOBS a partner of choice for mountain meteorology and climate science.

Education and Outreach: Through educational programs and outreach, we are committed to increasing science and data literacy, helping our audiences better understand how weather and climate affect the natural world. Partnerships stewarded by MWOBS ensure Mount Washington is increasingly accessible while continuing a legacy of outreach through both virtual and in-person programs.

Recreation and Safety: The White Mountains are renowned for adventure and extreme weather. Our specialized forecasts and services help search and rescue teams, avalanche experts, aviators, and the outdoor community anticipate weather and make safe decisions. Every month, over 100,000 people read our online mountain forecasts, and as of 2025, thousands of New Hampshire residents hear

statewide forecasts from our summit weather station in partnership with New Hampshire Public Radio (NHPR) and Radio Vermont Group (RVG).

History

Mount Washington's infamous weather has captivated visitors and scientists alike for hundreds of years. The Mount Washington Observatory was founded in 1932, but the history of weather observation on Mount Washington goes back to the winter of 1870-1871. You can learn more about the history of MWOBS at <https://mountwashington.org/about-us/our-history/>.



The founding crew, 1932-1933 (left to right): McKenzie, Monahan, Dodge, Pagliuca.

Media Assets & Logo Use

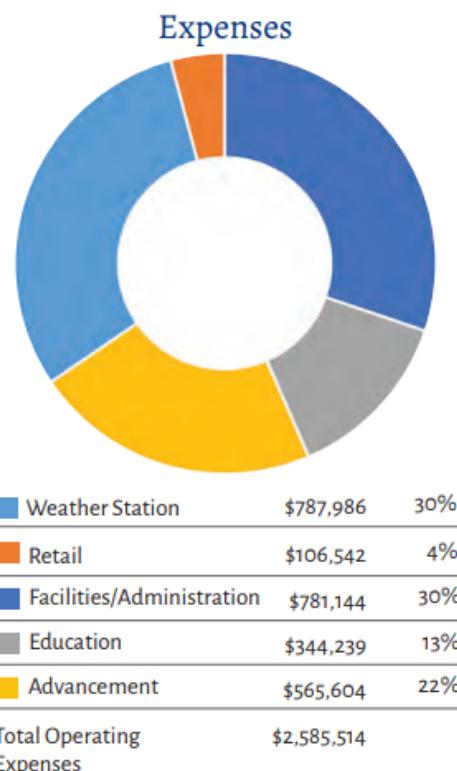
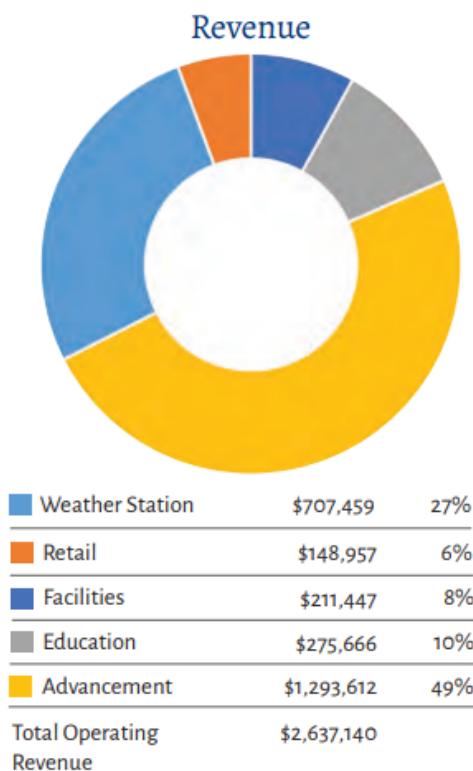


The logomark can be represented in a stacked or a horizontal format, in color or in black and white. Please do not alter layout in any way; contact us for alternative versions or file types.

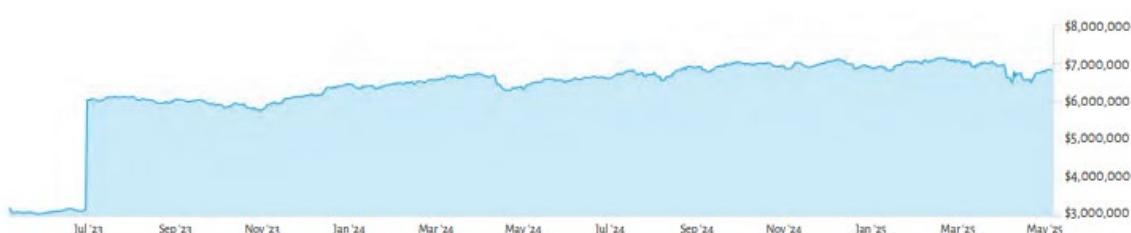
[Click here](#) for logos and media assets, including hi-res images and video b-roll for use with attribution to Mount Washington Observatory, crediting photographer as noted. Other shareable assets include [webcam footage](#) and [social media posts](#).

Fiscal Year 2024 Reporting

Our 2025 Annual Report can be found [here](#).



Endowments



Note: In July 2023, we invested a large portion of the bequest received from the Sheldon Family Estate into our endowment.

Administrative Mailing Address:

Mount Washington Observatory
PO Box 2310
North Conway, NH 03860

Phone: (603) 356-2137
Fax: (603) 356-0307

FAQS

Where can you find us at the Mount Washington Observatory?

- MWOBS's Administrative Office is located in downtown North Conway, New Hampshire (2779 White Mountain Highway) on the second floor. Hours are generally 9am-5pm Monday – Friday. This is also the location of the Gladys Brooks Memorial Library, which houses a large collection of materials related to Mount Washington, the White Mountains, the Arctic, and the Antarctic. The collection includes books, maps, prints, photographs, and artifactual material. To schedule a visit to the library, contact curator Dr. Peter Crane at (603) 356-2137 x203.
- The weather observatory, the *Extreme Mount Washington* museum, and the museum store are located on the summit of Mount Washington in the Sherman Adams Visitor Center. The museum delivers the science and excitement of a Mount Washington winter to summer visitors of all ages through high-tech, hands on exhibits, and weather station tours are available to the public with registration on mountwashington.org/education. The weather station, including the observation tower, is on the western end of the Sherman Adams Summit Building. This is on the opposite side of the building where the public entrance is located.

How is the Observatory funded?

Mount Washington Observatory receives funding from memberships, donations, grants, services provided (educational programs, museums, research), fundraising events, our contract with the National Weather Service, and other sources.

How long are the weather observer shifts?

Observer shifts are 8 days in length, from Wednesday to Wednesday. While on shift, day observers will work for 12 hours through the day, with the night observer covering the other 12 hours through the night. Between shifts, observers get a 6-day “rest” period from living at the summit.

How often are the Observatory's mountain forecasts published?

Our forecasts are published twice each day by 5:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at mountwashington.org.

Where can I get the Higher Summits Forecast and valley forecast?

The Higher Summits Forecast and the Mount Washington Valley forecasts can be found on our website at mountwashington.org. Local forecasts can also be found at the National Weather Services Website at <http://weather.gov>.

Where does the weather station data go?

Data is sent to the National Weather Service and stored in MWOBS' long-term database. Data and other media from the MWOBS are also frequently used in local and national newscasts. There are several outlets in which current and past conditions from the Mount Washington Summit can be seen, one of which being our own site's current conditions page. Researchers also very frequently use the data obtained from the summit weather station.

What is the highest wind speed recorded at the summit?

The highest wind speed ever recorded on the summit of Mount Washington was 231 miles per hour on April 12, 1934. This stood as the fastest wind speed on Earth until 1996, when an unmanned instrument in Australia

recorded a wind gust of 253 mph, associated with typhoon Olivia. The 231 mph speed recorded at the summit weather station still holds the record for the highest wind speed ever recorded by a human.

What is the hottest it has ever been at the summit? What is the coldest?

The warmest it has ever been on the summit of Mount Washington was 72 degrees Fahrenheit, which occurred twice, on August 1975 and June 2003. The coldest temperature to occur at the summit was -47 degrees Fahrenheit, which occurred in January 1934 and again during the powerful Arctic front in early February 2023.

Why does Mount Washington have such extreme weather? Especially for a small peak compared to other mountains in North America?

- **Elevation:** Mount Washington is the highest peak in the northeastern United States, with the next tallest mountains more than 1,000 miles in every direction. Therefore, Mount Washington will experience higher, unobstructed winds. It is generally colder on the summit, as temperature drops 3-5 degrees/1,000 ft gained. Generally, it's 20-30 degrees colder on the summit than down at the base of the mountain.
- **Topography:** The shape of the mountain, and the surrounding mountains help to funnel winds into the mountain notches and up and over Mount Washington itself. As winds are forced up and over the mountain, they are squeezed between the top of the mountain and the tropopause (the upper lid to the troposphere). When winds are forced through this smaller space they accelerate, much like putting your thumb over the end of a garden hose.
- **Location:** Located in New England, a new storm system moves through the region every three days. This frequency of storms, combined with cold and wind makes for extremely challenging weather conditions.

Is the Cog Railway or Mount Washington Auto Road a part of MW OBS?

No, although we are partners with both of these businesses, both are private organizations, and we all operate independently of each other. MW OBS is a private member-supported non-profit organization.

Why are there cats on the summit?

There have been cats at the summit of Mount Washington ever since the 1930s, used primarily for keeping the mouse population in check at the summit building. Although still used for occasional hunters, the cats at the summit, including the current cat Nimbus, are used primarily to keep the tradition alive as well as for companionship.

Who owns the summit?

The State of New Hampshire owns the 60+ acres of the Mount Washington summit cone. The state bought the land in 1964 to use as a park, and has used the land for the Mount Washington State Park ever since. The MW OBS does not own any land on the summit and rents space in the Sherman Adams Summit Building for the weather station.