



# Colorado CoCoRaHS

May 2013  
Volume 1, Issue 1

The "Colorado CoCoRaHS newsletter," has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? We want to welcome you to our initial newsletter.

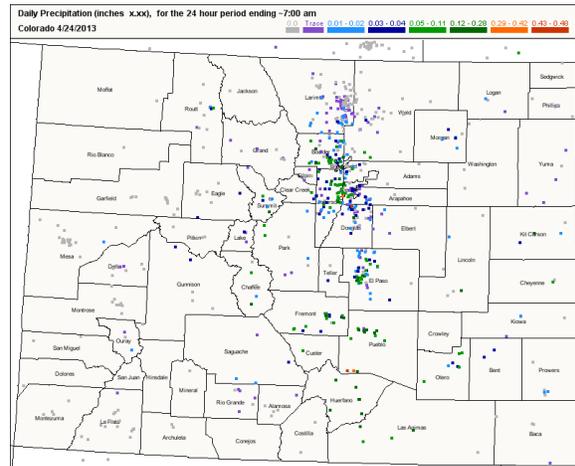
Colorado State University was the origin of CoCoRaHS back in 1998 and is still the home of the network today. Many things have changed over the years as we have grown from a handful of stations along the northern Front Range to almost 19,000 active volunteers nationwide.

But our goal is still the same -- to accurately track our local precipitation patterns and bring that "down home" local feeling to our observers.



Left: Nolan Doesken  
(CoCoRaHS Founder and  
Colorado State Climatologist)

Right: Henry Reges (National  
CoCoRaHS Coordinator)



Through this newsletter we hope to keep you in touch with what is happening with CoCoRaHS here in Colorado as we look to highlight our observers and coordinators as well as add some interesting features about precipitation in Colorado.

We are thankful to Chris Spears of the Denver Metro area who helped get CoCoRaHS started there 10 years ago. He is back again and taking the lead with this newsletter and helping to make it happen. What you see is his creation.

We also recognize the efforts of our regional and county coordinators who help keep the network humming around the state. And finally we thank you for your dedication in taking precipitation observations in your yards, schools and work places. Without you there would be no CoCoRaHS.

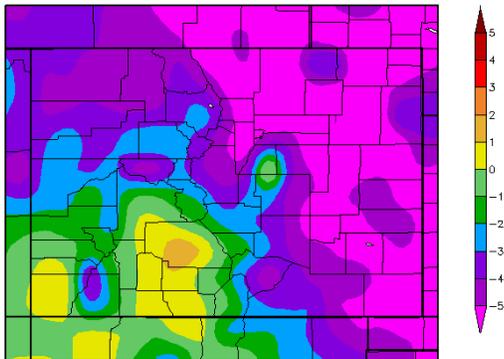
So as spring heads toward warmer days, we wish you a good season of measuring what falls in your gauge.

Sincerely,  
Nolan & Henry  
for the CoCoRaHS  
Headquarters Team

## A TALE OF TWO SEASONS

The calendar may have said April, but it felt more like mid to late winter across much of Colorado as northwest flow sent storm after storm tracking into the central Rockies. Just about the entire state was at or below normal for temperatures. Denver had its 5<sup>th</sup> coldest April on record.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
4/1/2013 – 4/30/2013



Generated 5/5/2013 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

## FUN APRIL FACTS

\*As of 5 pm on 5-01-13

- 1,040 stations in Colorado filed at least one daily report
- Over 700 stations reported for more than half of the month.
- 243 stations filed a report everyday during April, with station CO-LR-387 (Bellvue 2.4 SSW) the wettest with 5.80 inches of precipitation and station CO-AM-11 (Alamosa 6.9 NW) the driest with NO measurable precipitation for the month of April
- 33 stations filed a multi-day accumulation report

## HERE WE SNOW AGAIN!

If you didn't get enough practice measuring snow this past winter, then you probably enjoyed the month of April! (at least across the northern half of Colorado) Snow fell on 8 to 10 days at many locations, especially in the northern and central mountains, and in the I-25 Urban Corridor.

Here are the top 10 April snow totals from the Colorado CoCoRaHS network.

STATION	NAME	APRIL SNOW
<u>CO-BO-202</u>	Ward 4.6 NE	71.5
<u>CO-GN-18</u>	Crested Butte 6.2 N	63.5
<u>CO-SU-6</u>	Silverthorne 2.1 WSW	59.2
<u>CO-LR-672</u>	Virginia Dale 7.2 SSW	56.5
<u>CO-LR-767</u>	Estes Park 1.8 S	56.1
<u>CO-LR-858</u>	Estes Park 1.6 WNW	55.4
<u>CO-JK-23</u>	Walden 16.3 WSW	54.5
<u>CO-BO-22</u>	Allens Park 1.5 ESE	53.5
<u>CO-BO-296</u>	Nederland 3.7 ENE	52.7
<u>CO-BO-219</u>	Riverside 2.2 NE	52.6



One of several dust storms reported in southern and eastern Colorado during April. This was in Montezuma County on April 16. Photo Courtesy of Vandy Brinlee via KJCT-TV



## WHAT IS MY STATION “NORMAL?”

If you have ever wondered what the average annual precipitation is for your CoCoRaHS station then look no further. That information is available in the exclusive CoCoRaHS PRISM portal.

To access this information, just log into the CoCoRaHS website and then click on “My Account” in the top navigation bar. It will load a page that shows information about your station. Near the bottom of the page is a section called ‘My Station’ and that is where you will click on the ‘PRISM Data’ link.

Once you have done that, a line chart will load showing you the 30-year normal precipitation for your location. The data is obtained from over 100 years of modeled climate data in the United States.

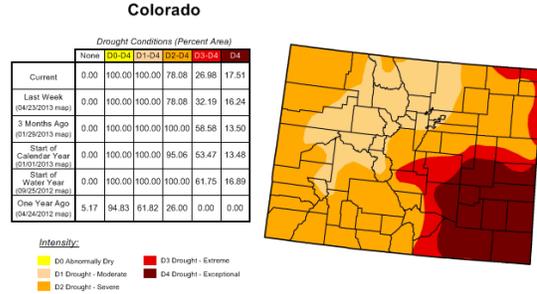
## CURRENT STATE OF THE DROUGHT AND THE MAY OUTLOOK

While April was very generous with precipitation to some parts of Colorado, other locations have not been so lucky. A large pocket of exceptional drought continues over southeast Colorado with extreme drought for many locations along and east of I-25 and south of I-70. While conditions improved somewhat during April in Denver and across the northern and central mountains, southwest Colorado has seen drought conditions decline.

The outlook for May is about as positive as we have seen of late, with no real trend toward any specific type of weather pattern. This brings hope for an “average” month.

## U.S. Drought Monitor

April 30, 2013  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

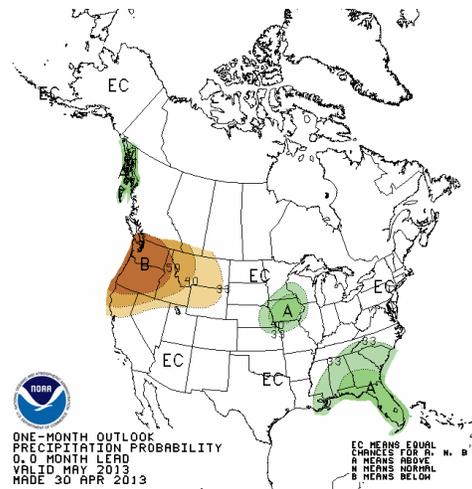
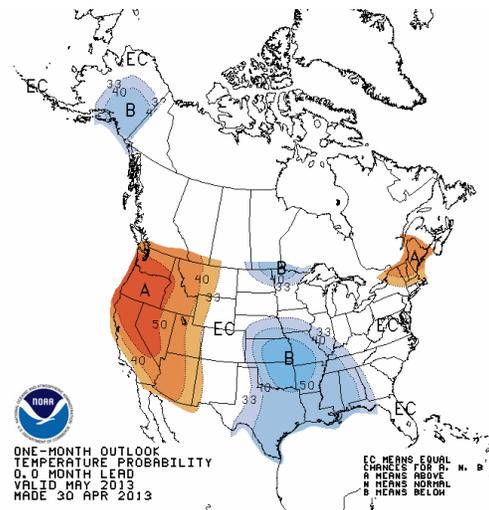


The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, May 2, 2013  
Eric Luebbers, U.S. Department of Agriculture





## 1,000 NEW STATIONS WANTED

Colorado CoCoRaHS hopes to add 1,000 new stations to the state network this spring and summer. Our goal is to have at least one station per every square mile where there is population and up to every 36 square miles in rural locations. Word of mouth is the best form of advertisement so if you can help us that would be excellent!

## COUNTIES WITH NO APRIL REPORTS

Conejos, Hinsdale and San Juan

If you know anyone in these counties that would enjoy being a part of CoCoRaHS, please invite them to join!

## CoCoRaHS FOR SCHOOLS

We have a program available for schools and kids of all ages to get involved with measuring precipitation and learning hands-on science. For more information about this program just click on the 'Education' link on the left side of the CoCoRaHS home page.



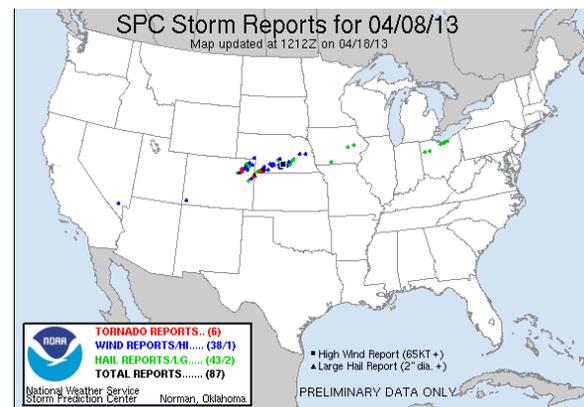
## SELECTED OBSERVER COMMENTS DURING APRIL

Colorado CoCoRaHS observers left over 4,000 comments on their reports last month. Here are a few selected ones...

“I was surprised to find so LITTLE in the gauge! It SOUNDED like we got more!”

“We were sad we did not get more snow! Stratus clouds, dark sky, only a little bit of wind.”

“Fog and dirt rolled in at 6:30 pm.”



## SEVERE WEATHER

April 8<sup>th</sup> brought the first reports of severe weather to the state this season.

Tornadoes were reported in both Kit Carson and Washington counties, causing some damage to trees, buildings, homes and power lines.

The severe weather was followed by rain changing to snow. It was a prime example of just how dramatic the spring weather can be in Colorado.



## BECAUSE EVERY DROP COUNTS

Did you know this is the tagline for CoCoRaHS?

The reason we say ‘every drop counts’ is because when you quantify water into gallons, it is amazing just how much water comes from the sky!

Check out the following facts about water:

- 1” of rain over 1 acre of land = 27,154 gallons of water
- 1 square mile = 640 acres
- 1” of rain over 1 square mile = 17.38 million gallons of water

Let’s take the town of La Junta (Otero County) in southeast Colorado and see how much rain would fall if the entire town received 0.10” of rain from an afternoon thunderstorm.

La Junta is 2.9 square miles.

Using the facts above, we can calculate that a thunderstorm dropping 0.10” of rain over the entire town would equal just a little over 5 million gallons of water.

This is why we say that “every drop counts!”

It’s also why we hope to have at least 1 rain gauge per square mile in populated areas so that we can accurately track storms and have a better idea of how much precipitation falls to better manage our water supplies.



## HELP TRACK DROUGHT WITH “DROUGHT IMPACT REPORTS”

When you are logged into your data entry screen on the CoCoRaHS website, have you ever noticed all of the other types of reports you can file? One of the options is called ‘Drought Impact Report.’

This is a report you can file anytime you notice changes in your community that could signal a drought forming, show a drought increasing or signs that it is decreasing. There is no set frequency on when to report other than when you notice something worth documenting.

Your reports go directly to the authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor at the National Drought Mitigation Center and can help with their weekly report.

Things you might make note of include changes in water levels on area lakes, rivers and streams, changes in wildlife behaviors or changes in vegetation.

There is a slideshow available with more information on how to report drought on the CoCoRaHS website; just look for ‘Drought Impacts’ in the menu on the left side of the home page.



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County	# Stations reporting in April
Adams	29
Alamosa	5
Arapahoe	42
Archuleta	3
Baca	8
Bent	2
Boulder	84
Broomfield	3
Chaffee	9
Cheyenne	3
Clear Creek	6
Conejos	0
Costilla	2
Crowley	1
Custer	2
Delta	14
Denver	30
Dolores	1
Douglas	47
Eagle	11
Elbert	12
El Paso	67
Fremont	22
Garfield	15
Gilpin	2
Grand	11
Gunnison	10
Hinsdale	0
Huerfano	9
Jackson	2
Jefferson	78
Kiowa	8
Kit Carson	9
Lake	5
La Plata	21
Larimer	181
Las Animas	7
Lincoln	9
Logan	4
Mesa	32
Mineral	2
Moffat	2
Montrose	15

Montezuma	14
Morgan	6
Otero	9
Ouray	5
Park	12
Phillips	10
Pitkin	5
Prowers	7
Pueblo	26
Rio Blanco	2
Rio Grande	8
Routt	15
Saguache	6
San Juan	0
San Miguel	3
Sedgwick	2
Summit	10
Teller	5
Washington	6
Weld	57
Yuma	7

## COLORADO CoCoRaHS CONTACTS

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Southeast Colorado Regional Coordinator:  
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Western Colorado Regional Coordinator: Jim Pringle ([james.pringle@noaa.gov](mailto:james.pringle@noaa.gov))

We welcome any feedback or ideas you may have for future newsletters! If you are on Facebook or Twitter, don't forget to follow [CoCoRaHS](#) and the [Colorado Climate Center](#)!