

# CoCoRaHS

Autumn 2009

# OBSERVER

*Tell the National Weather Service How Much Rain **You** Got!*



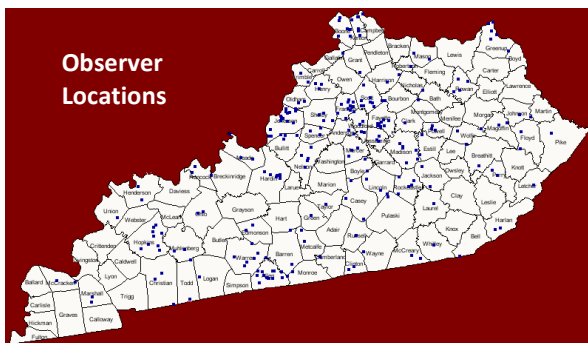
Turbulent skies over Lexington on June 25. Photo by KY-FY-2

CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network) is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow). By using low-cost measurement tools and utilizing an interactive website, the goal is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education, and research applications.

The network has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, but we still need many more observers — especially in Kentucky. While Indiana and Tennessee have over 1,000 observers apiece, Kentucky had only 257 as of September 1.

It's easy to join CoCoRaHS — simply sign up at the website ([www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org)). All you need to participate is a rain gauge (the website tells you how to get one) and a connection to the Internet either through your own computer or a friend's.

Check out the CoCoRaHS website or contact your local National Weather Service office for more information on this useful and fun program today! We look forward to your reports!



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## How to Report More Than One Day's Worth of Precipitation

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The Multi-day Precipitation Report Form

We at CoCoRaHS understand that there will be times when you cannot read your rain gauge on a daily basis. Be it due to a vacation, an illness, or for whatever reason, there will be times when 7am comes and goes without an observation.

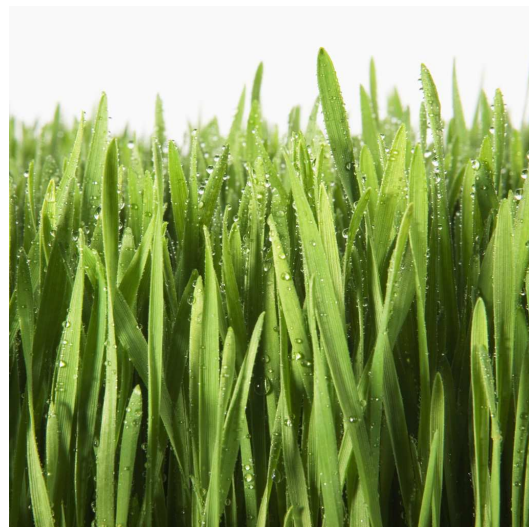
When you are ready to send in reports again, you can still send us the amount that has collected in your rain gauge since your last measurement. However, it is very important to not use the Daily Precipitation Report Form when sending more than one day's worth of rainfall. That form is for 24-hour precipitation only.

To submit a precipitation amount that fell over more than one day, use the Multi-Day Precipitation Report Form at <http://www.cocorahs.org/Admin/MyDataEntry/MultiDayPrecipReport.aspx>. That way, your report won't get stored as a 24-hour amount, which can be very important to users of the data, especially when constructing 24-hour precipitation maps as we often do here at the National Weather Service (NWS).

## What Do I Do About Dew?

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Sometimes there will be enough dew in the morning that as much as one or two hundredths of an inch of liquid will appear in the bottom of the rain gauge. Should that be reported as precipitation? The answer is no — it should not. If you are reasonably certain that no rain fell at your location and that the water in your gauge is the result of dew, then report 0.00" of precipitation. Even though dew is a vital source of moisture for plants, it is not precipitation (it forms directly on surfaces), and thus is not recorded as such. Oh, and the same goes for frost — it is not reported as precipitation.

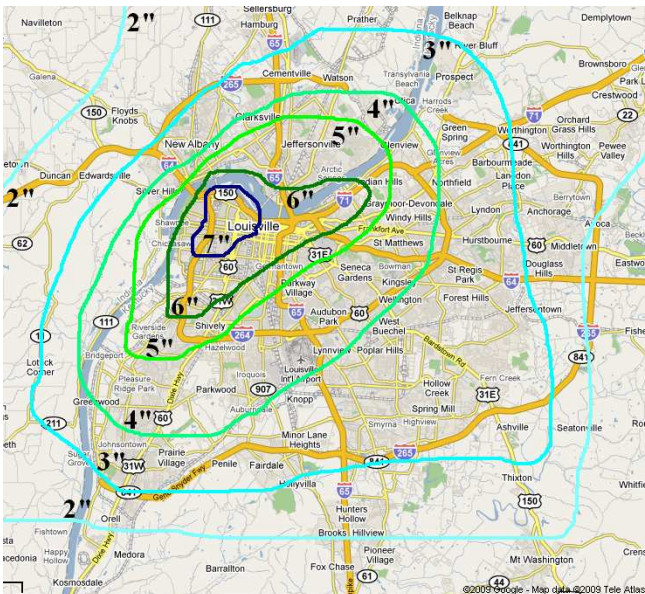


## Are You Sending in Your Intense Precipitation Reports?

Most of us in Kentucky have received locally heavy rainfall this summer at one time or another. Louisville in particular was visited by an especially heavy storm on August 4 that dumped seven inches of rain right on the city...with three of those inches coming in just 60 minutes! Rain that heavy can cause deadly flash flooding problems. It is at those times that Co-CoRaHS is vital to the NWS's mission of saving lives and property. If you get very heavy rain at your location and can safely measure the rainfall, please send in an Intense Precipitation Report. You will be able to pass along critical information to the NWS and will be instrumental in our decision-making regarding flood warnings and statements.

"Intense precipitation" is generally defined as at least a third of an inch in 20 minutes, but that should be taken with a grain of salt. If it's raining hard enough to really catch your attention, and is reducing visibility significantly or causing flooding issues, by all means feel free to send in your amount. Please do not wait until your regular morning report to mention that you had extremely heavy rainfall — by then it's too late to be of assistance to the NWS meteorologists responsible for issuing flood warnings and statements. You need not dump your gauge when you measure for an intense precipitation report, but if you do, be sure to write the amount down somewhere so you remember to include it in your 7am daily 24-hour report the next morning.

The screenshot shows the Co-CoRaHS website interface. At the top is the header with the logo and navigation links. Below the header is a sidebar with 'Enter My New Reports' and 'List/Edit My Reports' sections. The main content area is titled 'My Data Entry : Daily Precipitation Report Form' and contains a 'Precipitation Report Form' with fields for Station Number, Station Name, Observation Date, Observation Time, Rain and Melted Snow, and a checkbox for 'Report was taken at registered location?'. There is also a text area for 'Observation Notes'.



Rainfall amounts in Louisville on August 4.

## Precipitation Facts for Summer 2009

Most rainfall\*: 26.01" at Prospect 1S, KY-JF-5

Least rainfall\*: 9.71" at Fountain Run 5.7NW, KY-BR-1

Wettest day: 4.63" August 4-5 at Pleasure Ridge Park 0.6NNW, KY-JF-10

\*at stations that missed no more than 3 days



Remember to Tell Everyone You Know About CoCoRaHS!

Over the summer we received an average of about 85 reports per day, which sounds like a lot. However, considering that there are 120 counties in Kentucky, that means many counties still go without daily rainfall data. Also, though we're up to 257 observers in the Commonwealth, the neighboring states of Indiana and Tennessee have over 1,000 each. So be sure to pass the word about CoCoRaHS on to anyone you think would be interested. Perhaps take this newsletter to a friend, or leave it on a community bulletin board or on a table at a local business or extension office. Together we can put together the pieces of Kentucky's precipitation puzzle!



**"Skies now darkening, and serious rain impending. Am currently building a large boat and gathering up two of each animal species."  
— KY-AL-11 (Scottsville 4.9NE) on July 30**

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