

Messages of the Day
May 2012

Wednesday, May 2, 2012

"Lightning Webinar . . . Thursday (May 3rd) . . . there's still room!"
"Lightning and Its Impacts" . . . last chance to register!

Lightning will be the focus of Thursday's "[WxTalk Webinar](#)". "*Lightning and Its Impacts*" will be presented by Ron Holle of Holle Meteorology & Photography, Oro Valley, Arizona.

REGISTRATION INFO

Title: "Webinar #5 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Lightning and Its Impacts"

Date: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Time: 1:00 PM Eastern, 12:00 Noon Central, 11:00 AM Mountain, 10:00 AM Pacific

Reserve your seat now by registering here: [LIGHTNING](#)

Thursday, May 3, 2012

Weatherwise Magazine's 2012 Photo Contest and Discount for CoCoRaHS Members

“Some people are weatherwise, but most are otherwise” -- Ben Franklin

Weatherwise Magazine is an exciting bi-monthly magazine that provides the weather enthusiast with fascinating articles regarding all aspects of weather and climate. With our full endorsement, CoCoRaHS regards this magazine as one “which everyone interested in weather would benefit from having on their coffee table”. Thanks to a special arrangement CoCoRaHS volunteers can subscribe to the magazine at a 27% discount: [CoCoRaHS discount](#).

Now thru June 2nd, Weatherwise Magazine is accepting submissions for its “2012 Photo Contest”. There are great prizes awaiting the winners. This annual event provides an opportunity for you to share your potential prize winning photos with a nationwide audience. Click here to find out more about the magazine and photo contest: [Photo Contest](#).

Check it out today, you'll be glad you did!

Monday, May 7, 2012

Observation Notes . . . Daily Comments - Lots of good information!

One of the great things about the CoCoRaHS web site is that you can include comments about your daily observation when you enter your daily precipitation report each morning under observation notes. These comments are extremely useful in supplementing your data and greatly help others get a more detailed picture of what has taken place during the past 24 hours.

Here are some examples:

From Alabama, May 2012: *"Flash flooding in local streams and creeks. Largest amount of rainfall recorded at this location in one 24 hour period since I joined CoCoRaHS!"*

From Indiana, March 2012: *"Very severe weather, golf ball size hail and a very large tornado about 2 to 3 miles south."*

From Colorado, June 2009: *"Intense cloud-to-cloud lightning every second on average. Very little thunder from above. Occasional cloud-to-ground maybe once per minute, with much louder thunder."*

From Florida, December 2008: *"Just a spit, but better than nothing. It is getting awfully dry here in Florida."*

From Oklahoma, November 2011: *"Felt the 5.6 earthquake here in Edmond around 10:45 PM. Rattled windows and vibrated the floor. Second time in less than 24 hours. A weird sensation I'm not use to."*

You can view a summary of each days reports by clicking on "View Data" from the homepage's top menu bar and then chose "Daily Comments Reports" for a given location and date. Please give this a try with your next observation.

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

The 'ups and downs' of the water cycle - Reference Evapotranspiration (ET) . . . 'the up side'

This month CoCoRaHS launches a new opportunity for our observers to track the water cycle -- the literal "ups and downs" of water so to speak. We already measure precipitation as it arrives at our locations (the down), but what about water as it returns to the atmosphere? This is called evapotranspiration (going back up). And for certain CoCoRaHS observers this will be a great opportunity to provide data for a whole new set of applications used in drought monitoring, irrigation and yard watering, remote sensing (satellite) and weather forecasting to name just a few.

There are several qualifications needed to become a CoCoRaHS observer for Reference ET, so don't feel bad if you are unable to participate. There will also be several things to consider on your part as you apply:

- 1) We are looking for "ideal" locations (open exposures with surrounding vegetation that is representative of your area) and highly motivated observers (you have reported on a consistent daily basis for CoCoRaHS over time).
- 2) You are up to the challenge of taking on a more complex daily observation.

- 3) You, or a sponsoring organization are willing to make the substantial investment in purchasing this delicate instrument, the ETgage (which sells for \$212 at www.weatheryourway.com, plus tax and shipping).

If this sounds like something of interest and you are up for this challenge, please contact Zach at Info@cocorahs.org with a photo of the site where you will place your gauge and he will follow up with you.

For those of you who want to learn more about Evapotranspiration and the "up side" of the water cycle, please check out the CoCoRaHS ET page at: ["ETr"](#)

Sunday, May 13, 2012

"CoCoRaHS Hail Week" -- May 14-19, 2012

Join us in creating '*Hail Awareness*' during our annual "CoCoRaHS Hail Week". Most of us see hail in our backyards from time to time and many of us will even experience a hailstorm this month. Learn more about hail, including how to observe and report it, as we explore this icy phenomena all week long.

- **Tuesday:** "*Five things you always wanted to know about hail, but were afraid to ask*" We will feature some interesting facts about those falling balls of ice.
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To find out more about hail, visit our CoCoRaHS Hail Page by clicking here: [Hail Information](#)

Thanks again for your reports and be on the lookout for hail in your neighborhood.

Monday, May 14, 2012

TUESDAY: "Five Interesting Facts about Those Frozen Balls of Ice"

Over the years CoCoRaHS has become one of few repositories of hail information in the nation. Thanks to your observations, we are able to catalogue hail reports from all fifty states. As we strive to become more 'hail aware' here are five things you may or may not know about hail.

1) Hail comes in many shapes and sizes, ranging from rice sized pellets (1/8") to giant softballs (4 1/2"). Hail can be clear or white or a combination of the two. Hail can be hard or soft. Wind patterns usually form hailstones into balls, but they can also appear in other shapes, such as cones, discs, stars, pyramids, or just strange looking pointy blobs. We've even had reports of donut shaped stones!

2) On July 23, 2010, the largest hailstone ever recorded in the United States in terms of diameter and weight fell in Vivian, South Dakota. The stone had a diameter of 8.0 inches with a circumference of 18.625 inches and weighed 1.9 pounds. No one was injured. This hailstone broke the previous United States hail size record for diameter (7.0 inches - 22 June 2003 in Aurora, NE) and weight (1.67 pounds - 3 September 1970 in Coffeyville, KS). The Aurora, Nebraska hailstone will retain the record for circumference (18.75 inches). For more info on the Vivian, South Dakota hailstone click here: [Hailstone](#).

3) In North America, hail is most common on the High Plains just east of the Rocky Mountains. For example where Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming's borders meet just east of Cheyenne, WY there are an average of 9 to 10 hailstorms each year. Hail in this region occurs between the months of March and October mostly during the afternoon and evening hours, with the bulk of the occurrences from May through September.

4) Hail suppression has been tried by many over the years including silver iodide cloud seeding and types of rockets. "Hail cannons" whose "LOUD" acoustic burst is believed to break-up hail while it is just forming, are still being used in some areas where fruit and vegetables are grown extensively.

5) Hail is found in many countries around the world, such as China. In June 1932 a hailstorm killed an estimated 200 people, and injured thousands more there. Other countries with frequent hailstorms include southern and western Germany, northern Italy, northern India and Croatia.

Thanks again for your reports and be on the lookout for hail in your neighborhood.

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Tuesday, May 15, 2012

WEDNESDAY:CoCoRaHS Hail Reports . . . What are they, how can I access them?

Thanks so much for your CoCoRaHS hail reports. You may not realize it, but there are very few sources for accurate data about hail. Most weather stations don't even measure or report hail. Scientists have great

difficulty finding good data to help analyze hail storm patterns, frequencies, probabilities, etc. Therefore, our CoCoRaHS hail reports are especially important.

If you experience hail at your location (even the small stuff) please use the CoCoRaHS hail report form to submit a report. Even if you don't have much information about the hail or weren't home to know exactly when it happened, still send in a report: [Hail Report](#)

Hail pads help us document the size and number of stones. If hail pads are not provided in your area, you can make your own: [Making Hail Pads](#). More on this subject tomorrow!

Please report hail even if you don't have a CoCoRaHS hail pad: [Measure Hail](#)

"Days with Hail" reports are viewable to the public and include a list of all days during a calendar year with one or more hail reports entered into the CoCoRaHS database. This is a great way to see where hail fell across the country on any given day as well as the size of the hailstones. Those reports with a camera icon next to them indicate that a photo of a hail pad associated with that specific report is available for viewing on-line.

To access the "Days with Hail" report click "View Data" on the CoCoRaHS homepage's top menu bar. Under "Summary Reports" click "Days with Hail Reports". That's all there is to it.

You can also see a map of hail reports for any given day by clicking here: [Hail Maps](#)

Thanks again for your reports and be on the lookout for hail in your neighborhood.

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Thursday, May 16, 2012

THURSDAY: "CoCoRaHS Hail Pads" -- How to make a hail pad . . . make your own at home!

Hail pads are essential to CoCoRaHS's mission to measure, map and study hail. They are fairly easy to construct with the right materials. If you can wrap a present, you can most likely make a hail pad.

A hail pad consists of a 12" by 12" square of Styrofoam covered in heavy duty aluminum foil. A little tape and you're set to go. To learn more on how to construct one visit: [Making Hail Pads](#).

For those of you who would like to order hail pads without going through the process of making your own, they are available from www.Weatheryourway.com for a modest fee.

Thanks again for your reports and be on the lookout for hail in your neighborhood.

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Friday, May 18, 2012

SATURDAY: CoCoRaHS National "Put out your Hail Pad Day"

Have a hail pad? . . . join thousands around the country who will put out their hail pads today. It is that time of year!

We have a saying in CoCoRaHS and that is "*A hail pad does no good unless it's outside to capture the footprint of a hail storm as it passes overhead*". This is so true! Many of us from time to time will learn of a hail event hitting our neighborhood while we are at work, out shopping, etc. and say to ourselves, "*Great! Guess where my hail pad is . . . it's in the garage!*" When our pads are out and deployed it is really fun to

see the actual craters hail has left on the pad after the storm. Many pads often look like the surface of the moon. So don't miss out, put your hail pad out on this special "*Put out your Hail Pad Day*".

Some have asked, "*Gee, these pads are light, how do we keep them from blowing away?*" Great question! A simple way would be to cut two "L" shaped wires from a metal coat hanger and secure the pad to the ground in that fashion. Others have attached them to their snow measuring boards or made a special 18" x 18" plywood board to attach them to. Still others have mounted them to old tree stumps. As long as you have an open area with an exposure to the sky and not too close to a building you will be fine. Some have chosen to elevate their pads to prevent their pets from stepping on them. Many have sprayed a dull coat of spray paint on the pad to keep birds from peeling them and using the foil for nest material (somehow many birds are attracted to the shine of the metal). It is also important to mark an "N" on the back of your pad to tell which direction is north. Finally, make sure to include your station ID number on the back of the pad and the date the hail event occurred. We get many amazing looking pads dented with craters, but unfortunately with no information on them.

We often are asked the question, "*Can the foam be reused or recycled?*" The answer is yes . . . when we make hail pads here in Colorado, we are careful to reuse the foam (after the pad is photographed and analyzed) if it is still intact by turning it over to make a new pad. You can do this too if you decide to photograph and not send the pad in to us. If the pad is too far gone, please check locally to see if you can recycle the foam.

Also, please remember that you do not need to have a hail pad to report hail that falls in your yard. You can report it by clicking here: [Hail Report](#).

Thanks again for joining us for "CoCoRaHS Hail Week". We will rerun some of this week's messages from time to time. We'd love to have your feedback as to whether this series was helpful in making you more "*hail aware*". Send your thoughts to: henry.reges@colostate.edu .

Have a great weekend and thanks for putting out your pad!

Monday, May 21, 2012

**CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar for June 2012:
"Hurricane Analysis and Prediction at the National Hurricane Center" . . .
register today!**

Hurricanes will be the focus for our next ["WxTalk Webinar"](#) on June 14th, "*Hurricane Analysis and Prediction at the National Hurricane Center*" presented by Chris Landsea of the National Hurricane Center, Miami, Florida.

Space is limited to the first 500 registrants, so register today! We will notify the first 500 who register of their acceptance to the Webinar. Those who aren't able to attend will be able to watch this episode on-line the following day.

REGISTRATION INFO

Title: "Webinar #7 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Hurricane Analysis and Prediction at the National Hurricane Center"

Date: Thursday, June 14, 2012

Time: 8:00 PM Eastern, 7:00 PM Central, 6:00 PM Mountain, 5:00 PM Pacific

"The National Hurricane Center issues analyses, forecasts, and warnings over large parts of the North Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and in support of many nearby countries. Advances in observational capabilities, operational numerical weather prediction, and forecaster tools and support systems over the past 15–20 yr have enabled the center to make more accurate forecasts, extend forecast lead times, and provide new products and services. Important limitations, however, persist. This presentation discusses the current workings and state of the nation's hurricane warning program, and highlights recent improvements and the enabling science and technology. It concludes with a look ahead at opportunities to address challenges."

Reserve your seat now by registering here: [HURRICANES](#)

Our July CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar "Wind and Wildfire - A Dangerous Combination" by Liz Page of UCAR/COMET will take place on July 19th . Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement in June on how to register.

Monday, May 28, 2012

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Thursday, May 31, 2012

This is National Hurricane Preparedness Week!
May 27 - June 2, 2012

History teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster.

The goal of this Hurricane Preparedness Web site is to inform the public about the hurricane hazards and provide knowledge which can be used to take ACTION. This information can be used to save lives at work, home, while on the road, or on the water.

To find out more visit: [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#)