

Messages of the Day
May 2016

Thursday, May 5, 2016

Day of the Last Spring Freeze?

Here is a very helpful message from the Midwestern Regional Climate Center:

Just when you think winter is over ...

Every spring, we are teased with intermittent warm periods that motivate us to plant flowers, plant our vegetable garden, or sit back and watch our local farms, orchards, and communities green up. If we are lucky, once we take that action, a freeze event will avoid us for many months - long after farms have been harvested and flowers have lost their luster. If we're unlucky, at least one more freeze event will make an appearance and damage our positive planting efforts.

So, how long to do we have to wait before we know it's safe? Every year is different, and weather forecasts can certainly help. However, climatology of past spring freeze can help remind us when there's still a chance. NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) has recently updated their map of the "[Day of the Last Spring Freeze](#)" based upon the 1981-2010 US Climate Normals. This product shows when the average last spring freeze occurred over that 30-year period.

If you're interested in when the _latest_ last spring freeze occurred during that period, the _earliest_ last spring freeze occurred, or multiple other combinations, check out the "[Midwestern Regional Climate Center's \(MRCC's\) Vegetation Impact Program's \(VIP's\) Frost/Freeze Guidance website](#)". This website provided various climatological products including not only a freeze event defined as $\leq 32\text{F}$, but also "hard freeze" events defined as $\leq 28\text{F}$. There are also a variety of climate monitoring tools on this site that provide daily, updated information such as:

- Date of the most recent freeze event
- Days since the most recent freeze event
- Number of freezing days over the past 2 weeks
- Lowest minimum temperature this past season
- Accumulated growing degree-days since the most recent freeze event

All of these products are designed for the public, gardeners, forecasters, and other stakeholders to understand the potential for spring (and fall) freeze events given what has happened in the past - both recent and over the past 30 years.

For more information about the MRCC's VIP Frost/Freeze program, please send an email to: vip-info@illinois.edu.

Tuesday, May 10, 2016

Measuring Reference ET . . . learn how you can be part of this national effort!

In 2012 CoCoRaHS launched a new opportunity for our observers to track the water cycle -- the literal "ups and downs" of water so to speak (over 100 observers participated). We are at it again for our fourth consecutive year. Since our observers already measure precipitation as it arrives at their locations (the down), we thought many would be interested to see how much of this water returns to the atmosphere? This is called evapotranspiration (going back up). For certain CoCoRaHS observers participating in 2016 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 around \$233 at www.weatheryourway.com, plus tax and shipping).

Some of you have already signed up, we thank you for your interest. If you have yet to do so and are up for this challenge, please contact Noah 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: ["ETo"](#)

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Are you familiar with the U.S. Drought Portal?

Is drought lurking about in your part of the country?

"Drought is one of the most costly natural disasters affecting the U.S. The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) was established in 2006 (NIDIS Act) to help begin to move society from a reactive response to drought to a proactive stance. NIDIS was envisioned to be a dynamic and accessible drought information system that provides users with the ability to determine the potential impacts of drought and the associated risks they bring, and the decision support tools needed to better prepare for and mitigate the effects of drought. In this, NIDIS forms the backbone of a national Drought Early Warning System and the U.S. Drought Portal is the public face of NIDIS on the Web."

You may not realize it, but CoCoRaHS precipitation observations play an important role along with other factors in helping our friends at NIDIS determine where drought conditions exist. Especially important are those zeros when nothing falls from the sky and your comments on how the conditions are impacting you.

To visit the NIDIS Website and learn more about the portal click here: [NIDIS](#).

Please take a few moments and share the NIDIS Portal website with others and keep up the good work by sending in your precipitation reports -- rain or shine!

Thursday, May 19, 2016

The CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar! June 2016: Weather, climate and extremes in the western U.S.

The West will be the focus of our third installment of our mini-series looking at the climate and weather of six regions of the United States. Our June "[WxTalk Webinar](#)" will take place on Thursday, June 23rd. Join us as *Weather, climate and extremes in the western U.S.* is presented by Nina Oakley of the Western Regional Climate Center located in Reno, NV.

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 #49 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Weather, climate and extremes in the western U.S.

Date: Thursday, June 23, 2016

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

The Western Regional Climate Center services 11 western states including Alaska, Hawaii, and the US API. Our region boasts a diversity of climates including both hot and cold deserts, temperate and tropical rainforests, and alpine tundra. The main drivers of climate in much of the West are its latitudinal range, proximity to the vast Pacific Ocean, cool coastal currents, and abundance of mountainous terrain.

The West is also home to a variety of extreme weather phenomena that are often distinct from the tornados, hurricanes, and blizzards observed in the central and eastern parts of the country. Narrow corridors of high water vapor transport called atmospheric rivers produce intense rainfall and flooding when they encounter the rugged terrain of the West Coast. Extreme terrain-enhanced winds are also a common hazard during the passage of frontal systems. Wintertime inversions that induce hazardous air quality are commonplace in populated basins of the Intermountain West. Dangerous flash flooding occurs frequently in the Southwest and Great Basin during the summer when the North American Monsoon kicks in, and dying tropical storms have been known to brush the Southwest inducing heavy rainfall.

This presentation will explain the drivers of weather and climate of WRCC's region within the conterminous US as well as explore some of its exciting extreme events!

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

Be sure to attend our upcoming July CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar:

- Thursday, July 14, 2016 - 1PM EDT: " *The Climate of the Southeast U.S.: Geographic Patterns and Trends in Extreme Weather Events* ", presented by Chip Conrad of the Southeast Regional Climate Center, located in Chapel Hill, NC

Sunday, May 22, 2016

Weatherwise Magazine's 2016 Photo Contest

"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. CoCoRaHS regards this magazine as one in which everyone interested in weather would benefit from having on their coffee table

Now thru June 1st, Weatherwise Magazine is accepting submissions for its "2016 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!

Thursday, May 26, 2016

"Field Photo Weekend" May 28-30th . . . Celebrate Memorial Day Weekend by taking a photo or two!

Here's your chance to join hundreds of other CoCoRaHS observers to see what our landscapes look like mid-spring. If you have participated before, this is a great chance to go back to your favorite spots and see what has changed. All you have to do is:

- Take your camera or smartphone
- Find a landscape in your community (streams, lakes, rivers, reservoirs, a forest, a crop field, a pasture, etc.)
- Take a single photo or a panorama in four different directions (N, E, S, W) from where you are standing. And then take one looking down.

There are four ways to post your photos

- Use the "Field Photo" App on your phone, which can be downloaded from the "Apple Store" and "Google Play Store". Enter metadata to describe the landscape and add #CoCoRaHSMay16" as a keyword.
- Email your photos with your location to: fieldphotos@southernclimate.org. When uploading your photos please include the words #CoCoRaHSMay16 in the notes field. Remember you don't have to email your photos this weekend, just take them, but we do encourage you to email them soon afterward.

- Upload photos directly to the (EOMF) Earth Observation and Modeling Facility's photo archive website: "<http://www.eomf.ou.edu/photos>".
- Or post your photos on your phone or online to our new partners at iSeeChange.org, a climate and weather journal that collects stories about change.

Field Photo Weekend is a partnership between CoCoRaHS, the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program (SCIPP) and the Earth Observation and Modeling Facility (EOMF) to help ground truth through photos, what is going on with our landscapes throughout the country. It's not just drought we are looking for either, it could be flooding, fire, or whatever state the landscape is now in. For detailed instructions, click here: "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)"

This year - Field Photo Weekend has a new partnership with ISeeChange, to help tell stories about the photos you're taking. If you have an interesting observation about the landscape you are photographing ISeeChange would like to hear from you. They take observations and questions from citizens about the changes citizens are seeing in the environment and then write stories about the underlying science. Plus you can send photos and stories anytime. Check it out at "[ISEECHANGE.ORG](#)"

In a few weeks this weekend's photos will be posted and you'll be able to see your photos and those taken by other volunteers. Reference the "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)" page to see how to view the photos.

Remember you don't have to email your photos this weekend, just take them, but we do encourage you to email them soon afterward. That address again is: fieldphotos@southernclimate.org. When uploading your photos please include the words #CoCoRaHSMay16 in the notes field.

Thanks in advance for participating during the long Memorial Day weekend-Have fun snapping!

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

Our Memorial Day "Field Photo Weekend" has come and gone. Thanks for participating. Please remember to upload your photos or email your photos in!

Thanks to all of you who took the time to take photos this past weekend. Your efforts helped our eighth collaborative "Field Photo Weekend" take a look how drought or lack of drought has affected the landscape of our local communities.

Field Photo Weekend is a partnership between CoCoRaHS, the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program (SCIPP), I See Change (<https://www.iseechange.org/>) and the Earth Observation and Modeling Facility (EOMF) to help ground truth through photos, what is going on with our landscapes throughout the country. It's not just drought we are looking for either, it could be flooding, or whatever state the landscape is now in.

In a few weeks this weekend's photos will be posted and you'll be able to see your photos and those taken by other volunteers. Reference the "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)" page to see how to view the photos.

Please don't forget send us your photos of this past "Field Photo Weekend". You can either email your photos with your location and the words (#CoCoRaHSMay16) to: fieldphotos@southernclimate.org, or upload them directly to the Earth Observation and Modeling Facility's photo archive website: "<http://www.eomf.ou.edu/photos>". When uploading your photos please include the words

#CoCoRaHSMay16 in the notes field. For detailed instructions, click here: [“FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS”](#)

Thanks again for participating!