

Messages of the Day **September 2014**

Tuesday, Sept 2, 2014

Our Labor Day "Field Photo Weekend" was a great success . . . 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 seventh 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) 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. There is the possibility that we may hold additional "Field Photos Weekends" during the year to show how conditions to your landscape may have changed over time.

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 "Viewing Photos" on 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 (#CoCoRaHSSep14) 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 #CoCoRaHSSep14 in the notes field. For detailed instructions, click here: "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)"

Thanks again for participating!

Friday, Sept 12, 2014

Preparing your gauge for colder weather as we move into autumn . . . but it's still summer!

It's early September and believe it or not, some states are already seeing snowfall! Why last week many of us were still swimming in the town lake. Although this early September cold spell should be short lived, colder weather is inevitable, as many will see frost, freezes and perhaps some sort of wintery precipitation during next two months. As you think about the seasons, keep in mind that water left in the inner cylinder of our gauge will freeze and crack the gauge if left outside in prolonged subfreezing weather. For those if you in colder parts of the country, the time will come all too soon to bring the funnel and inner tube inside and catch frozen precipitation in the large outer cylinder. So keep an eye on your temperatures and preserve your inner-gauge parts for another season.

Tuesday, Sept 16, 2014

Missing Observation Days? . . . How to Catch up

An observer writes: *"There are a few times a year when I am away for a day or two. My husband will read the rain gauge for me but he is not familiar with my computer and can't put in the readings. Is there any way to catch up on the days with data missing if we have readings for that date?"*

Great Question! Here's our answer:

"Yes, you can always go back and enter data from previous days -- or even previous months or years. On the daily precipitation observation form the first entry is "Observation Date". That date is automatically shown as today's date. However, you will see two little arrows just on the right hand side of the data box. You can move your cursor there and then click to move the date back one day. You can click and hold to move the data many days at a time. Or you can just move the cursor over the date and click. Then you can type in the date you wish (using the same format: mm/dd/year).

Do you know how to go back to view your reports to see if a day is missing? Click "View Data" and then select "[Station Precipitation Summary Report](#)". Type in your station number and select the range of dates that you want to check. Then click "Get Summary" and in a couple of seconds you'll have a whole listing of your daily precipitation reports."

Thursday, Sept 18, 2014

2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendars now on sale! Order one today

The long awaited 2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge calendars are now on sale! We hope that you will consider purchasing one today. Our artistic, bookstore quality calendar features over fifty photos by fellow precipitation observers displaying their gauges in a variety of settings. It truly is a work of art that you won't find anywhere else. Click here for a closer look: [VIEW THE CALENDAR](#)

The last time we offered our calendar in 2011 an observer wrote: *"Thank you so much for the CoCoRaHS calendar. It arrived well packed. It is superb! Better than I expected. The company you all chose to print this up did a fabulous job. I know that once my family sees it, they will all want a copy!"* Believe it or not, the 2015 version is our best yet!

The calendars sell at a reasonable price with a portion of each purchase going toward the CoCoRaHS Network. Just click on the banner at the top of the page or click [ORDER A CALENDAR](#) to place your order today. We hope you'll enjoy the calendar throughout the year ahead.

Thanks for supporting the CoCoRaHS Network!

Saturday, Sept 20, 2014

Autumn Leaves . . . time for a change of color!

Autumn officially begins this weekend and it's that time of year again when the leaves in many parts of the country begin to change color. Have you ever wondered "Why do the leaves change color?"

The US Forest Service has put together a nice web site explaining just that at: ["Forest Service Leaves"](#).

Or have you ever wondered "Does precipitation play a role in leaf color?"

"The amount and brilliance of the colors that develop in any particular autumn season are related to weather conditions that occur before and during the time the chlorophyll in the leaves is dwindling," says University of Kentucky agricultural meteorologist Tom Priddy. "Temperature and moisture are the main influences. . . . The countless combinations of these two highly variable factors assure that no two autumns can be exactly alike."

And if you are just trying to find out where the leaves are turning during a certain week or in a certain place in the country, the Foliage Report Network: ["The Foliage Network"](#) keeps track of leaf colors in the midwestern and eastern half of the country and the US Forest Service keeps you advised on fall colors throughout the US at: ["Fall Colors"](#).

More info the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events that are influenced by environmental changes, especially seasonal variations in temperature and precipitation driven by weather and climate visit the National Phenology Network Web site at: ["National Phenology Network"](#).

Wednesday, Sept 24, 2014

Autumn photos of your gauge for potential "2016 and beyond CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendars" . . . Keep shooting!

Just because the [2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendar](#) is now on sale (see below) doesn't mean that you should put your camera away. As we look ahead to 2016 and beyond, we are in need of a good selection of autumn shots of your gauges to choose from. We are looking for artistic close-ups of your gauge in natural autumnal settings (colored leaves if possible), such as beach-coastal backgrounds, farm backgrounds, mountain backgrounds, lake and pond backgrounds, interesting cloud backgrounds, animals near the gauge, close-ups of droplets on the gauge, etc. All natural photos (no photo shopping please).

These artistic photos should be high-resolution (greater than 1MB and jpeg format). Too many great shots were of low resolution, which we could not use this year. The photos should be of "the gauge" only and should not include people in them. Close-up shots of the gauge are best. Also make sure that they are well lit . . . better in sunlight than in a shadow. They can be creative. You may email in more than one set of photos. We will archive your shots and put them into the pool for our next calendar. We'll let you know if your photo is chosen.

Please e-mail your photos to Henry Reges at: hreges@atmos.colostate.edu with the words "Autumn Rain Gauge Photos" in the subject line. Please include the name of the photographer for credit purposes, as well as the location - city, state - of the gauge (ex- Sam Johnson: Fryeburg, ME). Finally be sure to include in

the text of your message that "I give CoCoRaHS permission to publish the photo and use it for other possible CoCoRaHS promotions".

Don't forget to keep your camera handy and continue shooting throughout the year! Our volunteers take some amazing shots! One last thing, if you are so inclined, [order](#) your 2015 calendar today. Thanks . . . the CoCoRaHS headquarters team.

Saturday, Sept 27, 2014

Who Uses CoCoRaHS Observations? YES, IT REALLY IS TRUE! Your observations are used every day!

Almost daily someone asks the question, "*who cares about and who uses the observations from CoCoRaHS volunteers?*" It must be hard to fathom that precipitation data is so useful and that backyard rain gauges have a place of importance in national and global climate monitoring in the 21st Century. But the fact is, it's true. Your rainfall reports -- including your reports of zero precipitation -- are very valuable and are being used EVERY DAY. Every morning many organizations pull data from the CoCoRaHS database at least every hour to get all the latest reports as they come in. They wish all CoCoRaHS observers submitted their reports right away.

When you see forecasts of river stages and flood levels on the Missouri, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Colorado River or most anywhere else in the country -- guess what data are helping the forecasters make these forecasts? Yes, timely CoCoRaHS data!

Your reports of hail or heavy rain may trigger the NWS to issue severe thunderstorm or flash flood warnings. In cases of extreme localized storms, your local report could help save lives.

Don't let all this "importance" frighten you. The weight is not all on observers shoulders. The real value comes from having thousands of volunteers reporting from all over. So keep up the good work, and go out and find more weather enthusiasts to help measure, map and track the amazingly variable patterns of precipitation.

A key reason that CoCoRaHS data are so useful is because the rain gauge used by CoCoRaHS volunteers -- the 4-inch diameter, 11.30" capacity clear plastic rain gauge is very good. Under most circumstances, this type of gauge performs as well as the official National Weather Service Standard Rain Gauge that has been used for over 120 years documenting our nation's climate. Most CoCoRaHS volunteers have found representative locations to mount their gauge to get very high quality readings. The CoCoRaHS gauge, if installed and used properly, provides very accurate readings. CoCoRaHS volunteers tend to be very interested and very committed to careful and high-quality observations. As a result, the data are usually excellent for a wide range of uses.

Over the next ten weeks, we will look at some of the major users of your observations. Stay tuned as we begin to highlight our ten most obvious (or perhaps not so obvious) categories. Please visit our [WHO USES COCORAHHS OBSERVATIONS?](#) page, where we will continue to update a summary of this series. Thanks for your very, very useful observations!