

Messages of the Day
October 2012

Monday, October 1, 2012

Happy New Year 2013 . . . Water New Year that is!

October 1st is a special day on the CoCoRaHS calendar. It is the first day of the 2013 Water Year!

What is the water year?

The water year is an approximation for the best consecutive 12 months that span the "water storage/water usage" hydrologic cycle. The water year cycle is particularly obvious in the Rocky Mountains and western U.S. where snow begins to accumulate at high elevations in October and doesn't melt and run off until next spring and summer. But this same important annual cycle takes different forms across the entire country.

Another way to think of the Water Year is the resting/replenishing season followed by the water consuming season where vegetation grows, crops are grown and then harvested. For much of the country, the months of October through March are months where precipitation from the sky exceeds evaporation from the ground. This means that soil moisture and ground water can recharge. The next spring temperatures will warm again, plants will come back from dormancy and once again evapotranspiration will surge.

Water Year Summaries

To celebrate the new year, we will once again generate Water Year Summary reports for every CoCoRaHS station. These summaries will be provided in October in HTML and Excel formats to give all observers the chance to review their observations for the year and make any corrections if necessary. (We'll send out another message when they are ready.) Then we will make some improvements to the reports based on the feedback we get, and will regenerate the reports at the end of October once everyone has had a chance to review their observations.

Thanks again for helping CoCoRaHS track precipitation across the country. Happy New Year!

Friday, October 5, 2012

Observation Notes . . . Daily Comments - the many reasons why CoCoRaHS comments are important

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 Missouri, Sept 2012: *"It rained so hard between 7:00pm and 10:00pm Wednesday night it put about 2 feet of water back in our pond."*

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."*

Finally, an observer from Kentucky recently wrote us and mentions another great reason to include comments with your observation: *"Just went over my records looking to see if missed posting anything. I really try to write a comment every day. I just read a few from 2010 and 2011 and were given some awesome memories of the day. Like my grandson wanting me to push the cart he was hanging on as fast as Santa's sleigh would go... thanks for making these records available - those are precious memories."*

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

Sunday, October 7, 2012

Preparing your gauge for colder weather as we move into autumn

It's early October and several portions of the country have already seen snow. Many others will see frost, freezes and wintery precipitation beginning to show up in the weeks ahead. 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 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, October 9, 2012

CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar for October 2012: "When Howling Wolves Greet the Northern Lights" . . . register today!

An overview of the northern lights (aurora borealis) will be the focus for our next ["WxTalk Webinar"](#) on October 18th, *"When Howling Wolves Greet the Northern Lights "* presented by Jan Curtis of the USDA/NRCS in Portland, Oregon.

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 #11 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: When Howling Wolves Greet the Northern Lights"

Date: Thursday, October 18, 2012

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

"This webinar will provide an overview of the northern lights (aurora borealis). You will learn: Where do they come from? Where can they be seen? Can they be predicted? How high are they? Can you hear them? What is the most common color? Aurora come in various forms and their evolution follow a typical pattern. Examples of the best northern lights will be shown (taken by Jan over an eight year period from Fairbanks, Alaska).."

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

Our November CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar: Weather Optics - "There are more 'bows' in the sky than just rainbows" by Grant Goodge of the Earth Resources Technology, Inc. will take place on November 8th . Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.

Tuesday, October 16, 2012

It's Gauge Clean-up Time!

It's autumn and after a summer of dust, rain and other objects falling from the sky, we bet that your rain gauge inner-cylinder is starting to look a little grungy these days. It's that time of year! For most of us dirt will eventually build up on the bottom of your CoCoRaHS rain gauge inner-cylinder. In humid climates, algae growth can also be a bother.

If you want to keep your gauge clean and looking like new, put some warm water with a little gentle liquid hand soap in the tube and let it soak for a few minutes. Then twist a thin soft towel and spin it into the cylinder until it reaches the bottom. This will wipe out most of the dirt. It is not recommended to use a firm bottle brush to clean the gauge, nor is using your automatic dishwasher (This will gradually scuff and haze the inside of the gauge).

Another method is to take a newspaper, roll it to make a tight cylinder, and then rotate the paper on the inside of the tube all the way to the bottom. It will usually clean out the dirt.

A clean inner-tube will keep your raindrops happy and make the gauge easier to read.

Friday, October 19, 2012

Have you looked at the CoCoRaHS Blog lately?

The CoCoRaHS blog, redesigned and revived by Illinois state coordinator Steve Hilberg this summer, covers a wide range of topics on weather and climate. Steve, the former director of the Midwest Regional Climate Center, brings his expertise and passion for the earth's atmosphere to the blog by highlighting interesting current events.

The blog is interactive, meaning you can leave comments or messages for Steve and all our CoCoRaHS blog readers by clicking on comments below each post. This is located after the time stamp for each posting.

Please check out the blog and don't be shy if you wanna talk weather and climate! To visit the blog please click here: ["CoCoRaHS Blog"](#).

We hope you'll visit the blog this week!

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

How is CoCoRaHS correctly pronounced?

We get this question a lot, since this is not your ordinary run of the mill acronym. It stands for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, which started out as the Colorado Rain and Hail Study back in 1998.

The correct pronunciation is: "CoCo" . . . that's easy, like in coconut. The second part "RaHS" is just about like it looks. When the doctor checks your tonsils he says "say ah!" and that's the same sound only with an "R" and an "S" on it. Like he's saying "say rahs!" Put the two together and there you have it "CoCoRaHS".

Saturday, October 27, 2012

CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar for November 2012: Weather Optics - "There are more 'bows' in the sky than just rainbows" . . . register today!

An overview of the weather optics will be the focus for our next ["WxTalk Webinar"](#) on November 8th, *Weather Optics - "There are more 'bows' in the sky than just rainbows"* presented by Grant Godge of Earth Resources Technology, Inc., Laurel, Maryland.

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 #12 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Weather Optics - "There are more 'bows' in the sky than just rainbows"

Date: Thursday, November 8, 2012

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

This webinar will provide an overview of weather optics and will show many examples of these wonderful phenomena. "If one takes time to look there are many beautiful displays of light that are formed by the light bent as it passes through or reflected from both rain drops and ice crystals. Most of these are seen during the day, but some are also seen at night when the moon is more than half full. Even though the Northern Lights are not produced from sunlight or moonlight, they can also bring great pleasure to the observer."

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

Monday, October 29, 2012

SANDY and the Northeast

For those of our CoCoRaHS observers in the northeastern part of the county, by the time you read this message Sandy's widespread effects may already be upon your area. This is destined to be a devastating storm. Without question, our first concern is with your safety and that of your loved ones. Please follow all evacuation orders. Do not venture to your gauge unless you determine it is safe to do so. Your observations can wait to be gathered and entered until conditions calm down. If you lose power, please write down your observations and enter them at a later date. All observations are valuable, not just reported during the storm (for flood forecasting) but we encourage you to enter missing ones afterward to assist with post-storm evaluations.

We encourage you to enter remarks regarding how your home, neighborhood and community have fared from the storm. Also, if you are so inclined, special reports ("[CoCoRaHS Significant Weather Reports](#)") can be made at any time during the storm. They are immediately relayed to the National Weather Service offices. Remember, if you submit periodic precipitation reports as Significant Weather Reports, you still need to submit your daily total at your normal observing time.

For the latest on Sandy visit the "[National Hurricane Center's webpage](#)"

As always, thanks for your citizen science efforts and please stay safe.

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Water year summary report!!!

"Water Year Summary Reports and graphs" are now available for every CoCoRaHS rain gauge observer who submitted measurements during the 2012 water year (October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012).

To view the summary for your station, click on "My Account" at the top of the CoCoRaHS homepage: "<http://www.cocorahs.org>". You'll need to be logged in for this to work. You will find all your data reports compiled into monthly and annual totals. There are also graphs of daily and monthly totals and accumulations. Please take a look.

If you find any missing data or incorrect reports for your station, please correct them. Your report will not correct itself immediately, but we will recompile all of these reports in early November.

You will also be able to compare 2012 data with the previous two years if you have been long-time CoCoRaHS participants. This year we are adding another new feature. In collaboration with the PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University we will be providing monthly estimates for your normal (30-year 1981-2010 average) precipitation. We'll be explaining this new feature soon.

To view data for any station in the USA or in Manitoba, Canada, click here:
["http://www.cocorahs.org/WaterYearSummary/"](http://www.cocorahs.org/WaterYearSummary/)

Enjoy, and thanks for participating.



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