Sample CoCoRaHS Press Releases

Below we have listed some sample press releases that have been used in several of our CoCoRaHS states. Please feel free to use these as examples when writing a press release in your state.

The CoCoRaHS Headquarters Team

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*NEWS RELEASE Thursday/26 July 2007
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*Contact:
* Troy Kimmel, Texas CoCoRaHS State Coordinator
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WANTED - WEATHER OBSERVERS IN TEXAS !!

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, better known as CoCoRaHS, has recently expanded into Texas and is looking for volunteer weather observers here in the Lone Star State.

CoCoRaHS, based at Colorado State University and started in 1998, is a unique, non-profit, community based network of volunteer weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and report precipitation amounts (rain, hail and snow). By using low-cost and self-provided measurement tools and stressing training and education and utilizing an interactive website, the aim of CoCoRaHS is to provide the maximum amount of data for natural resource education as well as research applications, because, as we say “every drop counts”. This effort in Texas is especially important given the importance of water in our everyday lives. Our state sees a great variation in our precipitation with 55 to 60 inches of rain on an annual average basis in our southeastern most counties to only 8 inches of rain on an annual average basis in the most arid areas of extreme southwest and west Texas!

CoCoRaHS, in addition to Texas, is currently up and operating in Alaska, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia,

Wisconsin as well as Wyoming.

This is truly a fun, educational community-based project. Everyone can help - young and old and in between. Here are the basic requirements for being a CoCoRaHS weather observer...

(1) Have access to the internet and the ability to browse the CoCoRaHS web site, (which is where you will

enter your daily precipitation data) although reports by mail are perfectly welcome.

(2) Have an official-type CoCoRaHS rain gauge (you can buy one inexpensively on our website)

(3) Have a good site on your property with good exposure (as tree and obstruction free as possible) where you

can place the rain gauge about five feet off the ground

(4) Be willing to enter your precipitation data on a daily basis between 6-9AM through our internet web site.

What are the benefits of being a CoCoRaHS observer? Well, we don't offer a pay check, but one of the neat things about participating in the CoCoRaHS network is walking away with the feeling that you are making an important contribution that helps others. By providing your daily precipitation data, you truly help in filling in a Apiece of the puzzle@ that affects many in your part of Texas in one way or another - whether it's farmers and ranchers, emergency management personnel or the National Weather Service as they study the long term climate record. CoCoRaHS also provides a great way to learn more about weather and water by participating collaboratively with many local scientists.

How do you become a CoCoRaHS observer? You can go to our website (www.cocorahs.org) and click on the "Join CoCoRaHS" emblem on the upper right side of the main website. If you have questions, you may drop a note to Troy Kimmel, the Texas State Coordinator for CoCoRaHS (tkimmel@mail.utexas.edu).

CoCoRaHS, through Colorado State University, is supported nationally through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) . Partners in Texas include the Office of the State Climatologist (Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon) at Texas A & M University, the Lower Colorado River Authority and Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of Texas at Austin. CoCoRaHS in Texas has received an official letter of welcome from Texas Governor Rick Perry.

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Chief Meteorologist, KVET/KASE/KFMK Radio (Clear Channel Austin)
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news release April 3, 2007

news media advisory

Contact: Heather Emmons, DRI PIO, heather.emmons@dri.edu, Reno (775) 673-7313 (w), (702) 743-3435 (c)
Laura Edwards, CoCoRaHS Nevada State Coordinator and DRI Asst. Research Climatologist, cocorahs@dri.edu, (775) 674-7010
All DRI news releases available at http://news.dri.edu/
For more information about CoCoRaHS, visit: www.cocorahs.org

VOLUNTEER WEATHER OBSERVERS NEEDED FOR NEW NEVADA RAIN, HAIL AND SNOW NETWORK

Reporters and Editors, Please Note

WHO: Anyone with an interest in and enthusiasm for watching and reporting weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather can affect and impact lives. Volunteers do not need to be a CoCoRaHS registered observer to attend.

WHAT: Volunteers are needed a few minutes a day to measure precipitation in their area using a rain gauge and report it on the website. The first training class is scheduled for THIS SATURDAY.

WHERE: Spanish Springs Library meeting room, 7100 Pyramid Highway, Sparks, Nev.

WHEN: THIS SATURDAY, April 7 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

WHY: Members of the community with an interest in weather can help their community, as well as scientists and others interested in precipitation, by doing hands-on science. Members will benefit from becoming more aware of the weather that impacts them and their community.

ABOUT COCORAHS: CoCoRaHS is an acronym for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. It 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, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive Web-site, the aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications. CoCoRaHS currently operates in 18 states: Colorado, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The network originated with the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University in 1998 thanks in part to the Fort Collins flood a year prior. In the years since, CoCoRaHS has expanded rapidly with over 3,500 observers in 18 states.

ABOUT DRI: A nonprofit, statewide division of the Nevada System of High Education, DRI pursues a full-time program of basic and applied environmental research on a local, national and international scale. More than 500 full- and part-time scientists, technicians, and support staff conduct more than 300 research projects at DRI annually. DRI generates almost $50 million in total revenue consisting predominately of competitively won research contracts and grants. The State of Nevada provides critical funding in support of DRI's administration, operations and maintenance through the Nevada System of Higher education budget. While DRI's portion of the NSHE budget is approximately 1 percent, the institute leverages these funds to enhance its competitiveness.

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CoCoRaHS

What's the Weather in Your Backyard

(or in your Schoolyard)?

When you hear what the rainfall amount is from the official gage, have you ever said;

"That's not what I got!"

Now you can let the National Weather Service know how much rain, hail, or snow you measured in your backyard by joining the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network - CoCoRaHS. This new program will help meteorologists and researchers study the variability of precipitation across the Volunteer State. The accumulated data will be available to anyone with a use or interest in precipitation data. Also, the USDA Farm Service Agency is partnering with CoCoRaHS to collect data from and for agricultural producers in Tennessee.

CoCoRaHS started in Ft. Collins, Colorado in 1998 after a devastating flood. Researchers went back to look at the precipitation data that led to the flood and found that the rainfall had missed all the official gages! The Colorado state climatologist, Nolan Doeskin, developed a new volunteer observing network to fill the gaps between official gages called CoCoRaHS. The network has spread across the country and was introduced in Tennessee April 1st, 2007. The plan is to eventually have an observer every square mile across the state.

A great benefit of CoCoRaHS is that it provides real science activities for the classroom. Over the last several years CoCoRaHS staff have worked with science teachers in the Poudre, Colorado school district as well as a science teacher from Texas to develop lesson plans that are fun for the kids, teach basics concepts of meteorology and meet national science education standards. These lesson plans are developed for a variety of grade levels and are built around CoCoRaHS's emphasis on measuring precipitation.

Please visit the CoCoRaHS web site at: http://www.cocorahs.org to learn more about the program and register your backyard or schoolyard as an official reporting site. Once you register and begin to report, your rainfall observations will become part of the record as well as being plotted on maps of your county and Tennessee. You can view the maps and see how your observation fits in with your neighbors involved in CoCoRaHS across the country.

If you have any questions you can get in touch with the CoCoRaHS coordinators through the web site by clicking on Tennessee on the U.S. map and scrolling down past training opportunities to the state coordinators. State and local coordinators are also listed under the State Coordinators link on the Tennessee homepage.

"CoCoRaHS – Because Every Drop Counts!"

Ralph Troutman
Observing Program Leader
National Weather Service
State CoCoRaHS Coordinator
615-754-4633 x225
Ralph.troutman@noaa.gov

For Immediate Release
January 14, 2007

Contact for Reporters:
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CoCoRaHS, COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY'S VOLUNTEER WEATHER WATCHING NETWORK, EXPANDING NATIONALLY

FORT COLLINS – Colorado State University's popular precipitation monitoring program, CoCoRaHS (the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network), is making its first formal push to expand nationally thanks to a recent educational grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Through CoCoRaHS, thousands of volunteers, young and old, document the size, intensity, duration and patterns of rain, hail and snow by taking simple measurements in their own backyards.

The process takes only five minutes a day, but the impact to the community is tenfold: Data gathered by volunteers provides important daily decision-making information on drought and water supply for agricultural and insurance industries, utility providers, resource managers, teachers, scientists and homeowners.

"With all the advances we've had in the science of weather observation systems over the past several decades, there still is nothing that can compare to the human observer, who can report things that an automated system just can't," said Bruce Sullivan, the CoCoRaHS coordinator in Maryland and a NOAA scientist. "Where I work at the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center in Camp Springs, we have come to rely on CoCoRaHS data for our National Storm Summaries that highlight where significant amounts of snow or rain have occurred with a particular storm. While most of these reports have traditionally come from the National Weather Service Cooperative or

Skywarn-trained observers, we are finding more and more of our extreme precipitation reports coming from CoCoRaHS observers."

CoCoRaHS has more than 2,000 volunteers in 14 states including Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Montana, Maryland and Virginia.

The list will grow over the next three years with NOAA's recent funding, said Henry Reges, national coordinator for CoCoRaHS.

"There are even a few volunteers in the District of Columbia," Reges said. "Montana is the most recent state to join our network."

In Indiana, timely reports of hail from CoCoRaHS observers regularly assist forecasters in issuing and verifying warnings for severe thunderstorms, said Logan Johnson, CoCoRaHS coordinator in Indiana.

"Its greatest benefit is how the large group of new observers really enhances the existing networks and programs already in place," said Johnson, who works for the National Weather Service. "It has also helped our agency as a whole with the idea of fostering community education in science and has allowed us to become better in touch with the communities that make up the Indianapolis Forecast Area."

Nolan Doesken, state climatologist and senior research associate at Colorado State University, started CoCoRaHS as a small local project in Fort Collins soon after an extreme localized storm in 1997. The storm was not well detected by traditional weather observing networks and caused devastating flooding. Since then, volunteer participation has increased with several new states coming on board every year.

The NOAA grant provides the program with resources to expand and develop local leadership teams in several new states each year for the next three years, Doesken said.

"Weather matters to everybody – meteorologists, car and crop insurance companies, outdoor enthusiasts and homeowners," Doesken said. "Precipitation is perhaps the most important, but also the most highly variable element of our climate.

"Rainfall amounts vary from one street to the next. It is wonderful having large numbers of enthusiastic volunteers and literally thousands of rain gauges to help track

storms. We learn something new every day, and every volunteer makes a significant scientific contribution."

With the NOAA grant, CoCoRaHS will work closely with the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension program.

"Cooperative Extension has very successful national 4-H and Master Gardener programs. We will be working with them to develop and share important local weather and climate information," Doesken added.

NOAA's National Weather Service is also helping with this effort, as well as Conservation Districts, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other state and federal natural resources organizations.

"Variations in rain and snow really make a big difference for agriculture, wildlife and water supplies," Reges said. "Getting involved as a volunteer CoCoRaHS observer is a great way to give something back to your community by helping it monitor its natural resources. It's a lot of fun as well."

Andy Pineda, who works for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, has been a CoCoRaHS volunteer since the program began in 1998. The district serves the Front Range counties of Boulder, Larimer, Weld, Morgan, Phillips and Sedgwick.

"It has always been a longtime interest of mine," Pineda said. "I occasionally use the information in some studies here at the district, particularly from observers in the mountains and on the Western Slope. That's where our water supply comes from, so I'm always interested in knowing what other parts of the state are receiving moisture."

To volunteer as a CoCoRaHS volunteer observer or for more information, go to www.cocorahs.org or contact Henry Reges at hreges@atmos.colostate.edu.

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