

The Catch

GREELEY FARM SHOW AND UPCOMING TRAINING SESSIONS

FORT COLLINS, CO — Tuesday, January 25, 2005

Weather update

About the time we thought the storm track had us nailed, the jet stream migrated, the big Pacific low pressure trough turned into a ridge, and warm, dry weather has taken over. Here in Fort Collins we've been in the 60s now 7 out of the last 8 days. Snowpack seems to be melting (it's really not in the high country, but snowpack as a percent of average always goes down when it doesn't snow because the average keeps going up) and folks in NE Colorado are talking about drought again (did we ever stop?) I just looked back at all of our data reports for the past year, and this past 7 days has been our driest stretch of weather in Colorado-Wyoming since mid March of 2004.

CoCoRaHS Training Sessions

Tomorrow (Wednesday, January 26) I'll be at the Colorado Farm Show all day. From 3-5 PM we'll be holding a training session for anyone interested in learning about CoCoRaHS—new recruits or old-timers wanting a refresher class. We will have rain gauges, extra outer cylinders, snow rulers, snow books, training packets, hail pads, etc. available if you need any supplies.

I understand quite a few folks stopped by our booth today and talked to Henry and the wonderful folks with the National Weather Service. Thanks. Sorry I missed you. We're pretty "small potatoes" there compared to the incredible new farm implements on display.

I had hoped to have the dates and times set for all the other training sessions for NE Colorado this spring but I didn't quite get them finalized. Here is an outline of what to expect.

—Fort Collins sometime in the next few weeks

—Loveland sometime in March,

—Fort Morgan time unknown

—Greeley, Sunday Feb 27th as a part of the Greeley Conservation Fair.

—Sterling, Tuesday May 17th following the Northeast Colorado Water Festival

—Grover!!! This one I'm really excited about. The Grover FFA (Future Farmers of America) Chapter is helping to sponsor this one.

In case you don't know where Grover is, it is in north-central Weld County—in hail country. In fact, 30 years ago, Grover was the headquarters for a portion of the National Hail Research Experiment. This was one of the largest hail storm research projects of all time. It seems fitting that we return there 30 years later.

—We would also like to do something down in the Keenesburg area of southern Weld and eastern Adams county before the next severe weather season begins. That is a fascinating area, very prone to small tornadoes. Unfortunately, we have very few volunteers in that area.

Expect to hear more about training sessions in other parts of the state too including the Denver area.

New Mexico

We are going, at the invitation of the New Mexico State Climatologist, to spend 3 days in New Mexico recruiting, training and raising the general awareness about the importance of weather data. In fact, the Albuquerque Office of the National Weather Service will be celebrating—probably for the first time in U.S. history—“Weather Data Awareness Week” March 7-11. I will be doing a training program in Albuquerque on March 9th and a couple of presentations in Las Cruces on March 10th. They will take over from there with the help of their statewide Cooperative Extension program and Master Gardener’s program. As varied and scattered as our precipitation is in Colorado and Wyoming, I think it's even more localized in New Mexico. So this should be fun.

Rain gauges for CoCoRaHS

We are likely to add more new volunteers in 2005 than ever before. Many of you have been kind enough to donate \$ when you received your gauge. This really helps our project since it means that we can buy more gauges to provide for more volunteers. Some agencies have been particularly generous. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation gets the biggest gold star.

They have now donated close to 400 gauges to help the expansion of CoCoRaHS in Colorado and Wyoming.

I don't mean to sound like a beggar. We have already been very blessed with generous support and assistance. However :-) if you find nothing better to do with your 2004 income tax refund, consider a small donation to CoCoRaHS to help put rain gauges in the hands of folks that really don't have the money. In particular we would like to get more students involved. We have well over 100 kids collecting data already, and a few hundred other students have participated in the past.

Back to winter

So the "Unseasonably" warm weather is now behind us again and we'll be returning to near average temperatures and maybe a little snow. That's probably good for our winter wheat crop and definitely for our snowpack. Folks in SW Colorado are all dug out now, so winter can proceed.

Best wishes,

Nolan Doesken