

The Catch

COCORAHS ON THE MARCH

FORT COLLINS, CO — Friday, March 18, 2005

Dear Rain, Hail and Snow folks:

Wow, time is flying. The first day of March is here. Weather had been getting boring, but that changed this last weekend. We hit the cold front somewhere around Alamosa on Sunday on the way back from an amazing week in New Mexico (at least 150 folks have already joined CoCoRaHS from as far south as the Texas border near El Paso to as far north as Taos.) Then it started snowing near Buena Vista and we had to pick our way slowly across South Park (Fairplay) and then on into Denver on U.S. 285. By the time we got home to Fort Collins late Sunday evening we found 7-8" of water-laden snow decorating our yard—beautiful and much needed. Then in the next three days we had the joy of watching dozens of new observers in New Mexico do battle with snow and dot the new maps with data. I'm glad we didn't decide to omit the snow training in New Mexico—we thought about that to save time. One station NE of Albuquerque got off to a grand CoCoRaHS start totaling 31" of snow and 2.94" of water content in their first 3 days on the job. Good job—NM-BR-4 Tijeras 4.2 NE !!

Also, we now have a growing number of observers in Kansas. They held a very successful "First" training session in Goodland March 3. Officials from other parts of the state attended, including the State Climatologist from Kansas State University. A few Texans are also signing up now. Is this amazing or what!! To see the data from our new states, you must go to the new website: <http://new.cocorahs.org> or click the link from our regular homepage www.cocorahs.org Then click "Maps" and away you go.

New Website — Thanks for the Help!

Dozens of you have taken the time to review the new site in detail and offer comments and suggestions. Julian, our CoCoRaHS web developer, is trying to incorporate as many of your suggestions as possible. Now that 6 states and potentially thousands of volunteers are involved, things are a bit more complex

than they used to be. So please bear with us. In the meantime, we continue to rely on and utilize the old site. Marty Osecky has faithfully maintained that site as our Webmaster now for 6 full years. Wow, and thanks, Marty!!

We continue to run the two sites in parallel as we put the finishing touches on the new site. Again, we encourage you to try the new site and get your username and password if you don't have it already. You can get that yourself just by clicking "Login" in the upper menu bar and then click "Find your Login" right under the username and password box. I know this all seems complicated for those of us who have become so accustomed to the old site, but you'll find it's really quite easy. Once you have been e-mailed your username and password and successfully logged onto the system, you can change your user name and password to something easier to remember by going to "My Account" (top menu) and clicking "Change Username" or "Change Password" on the upper left-hand menu. Good luck.

And for those of us who wish to resist change (I fall into that category), please know it will still be several weeks before we turn off the old system.

Help Needed!!

I always bury requests like this way down in our CoCoRaHS messages.

CoCoRaHS runs best where we have local citizens helping the project in their own communities. We have several counties in need of "volunteer coordinators" to help us recruit new volunteers, hand out supplies, etc. If this sounds interesting, please let me know. We like to have at least one person per county, but more can be helpful. So if you're interested, let me know—even if there is already someone listed for your county.

New Mexico!!

With so many folks joining CoCoRaHS in New Mexico at the same time, we sure could use one or two folks who really love this stuff and know and love New Mexico. The first few weeks and months are really critical for new volunteers, so it would sure help if we could find someone who would like to:

- 1) help monitor daily data reports
- 2) stay in touch (via e-mail, mostly) with new volunteers and help encourage them to get started and to provide feedback to begin collecting good data.

If this sounds like fun, please let me know. It would likely involve about 1 hour per day for the next few weeks. This can be done from the comfort of your home, but you could make new friends all across New Mexico. Eventually, we

will need folks to do the same in Kansas and Texas. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

Springtime —Fire up!

Tis the season now when anything can happen—snow, rain, thunder, hail, graupel, high winds, and pretty much anything else. Please know that each and every report you send in helps tell the story of each day's weather and will, piece by piece, help us all learn a bit more about our weather patterns, water supplies, and vegetation response. If you're one of the many that brings your gauge inside for winter, this is the time of year to clean it up and get it ready for measuring our spring and summer rains.

Find your hail pads

This is also the time of year to get ready for hail. Do you have at least 2 hail pads —one ready to put out and one ready to replace it after the first storm? Do you know the nearest hail pad distribution center where you can drop off your damaged hail pads and pick up new ones? Check the old website (left menu) or contact your CoCoRaHS coordinator to find out.

We have already made 700 new hail pads this spring but they're going fast. We could receive as many as 3000 damaged hail pads this summer if you all do your job. By the way, a local Fraternity here at CSU is planning to help analyze and photograph our hail pads as a community service project so you can all see them on the Web.

Anniversary!!

Does anyone remember what was happening exactly 2 years ago today? I'll give you a hint —Wet Snow along the Colorado Front Range. Think back to March 17-20, 2003 and you will recall one of the largest snowstorms in recorded history for Colorado and a few parts of S. Wyoming. A few hundred CoCoRaHS volunteers, marginally equipped for a storm of several feet of snow, did an incredible job of documenting that storm. You never know when and where that might occur again, so BE READY.

Help fill gaps!!

CoCoRaHS works best and we all learn the most when our volunteers are scattered far and wide. As you look at the rainfall maps this spring and summer, take note of the gaps where we have no volunteers. If you know of anyone that lives in those areas that may be interested in weather, encourage them to sign

up. For example, one of our Wyoming ranchers recently helped recruit a volunteer in New Mexico—all very amazing!!

Training Sessions

Lots of training sessions will be held in the coming months—especially in Colorado. In New Mexico, the recent classes we offered were recorded and can be played back via the Web. This is a real break through. We will post training schedules and info on the website and will update frequently.

National Weather Service Severe Weather Spotter Training

Each and every NWS office are finalizing their spring training schedules for new "Severe Weather Spotters" We will post some of the training schedules as we hear about them, but I strongly recommend you contact your NWS office, website, or local Emergency Management agency to find out when and where training opportunities will be held. This is a great volunteer program that can help save lives.

Finally, the conclusion—

Best wishes to each and every one of you. It is really a pleasure to work together with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken
Colorado State University