

The Catch

COCORAHS—MORE NEWS

FORT COLLINS, CO — Wednesday, March 23, 2005

Much to share with you today. I will try to be brief (not an easy thing for me).

Training Sessions

Keep an eye on the "Calendar" for many upcoming CoCoRaHS training sessions in Colorado. We have two meetings scheduled next week in western Colorado.

Tuesday, March 29 7-9 PM at the Eagle County Building, 500 Broadway in the town of Eagle. This will be our first Eagle County training although we have a good group of active volunteers already. All of you from Eagle County already participating are invited to come and get acquainted. Also bring your friends to fill in some of the gaps between Gypsum and East Vail.

Wednesday, March 30 4-6 PM at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies at 100 Puppy Smith Street in Aspen. From Main Street in Aspen turn north on Mill Street and go two blocks. Turn left (west) on Puppy Smith Street just before you reach the bridge over the Roaring Fork River.

This is our first-ever Pitkin County CoCoRaHS informational and training session so we have high hopes for starting a new county.

Wednesday, April 6. Louisville, CO (Boulder County)

And many more to come!

National Weather Service Severe Weather Spotter Training

CoCoRaHS is now formally or informally collaborating with nearly a dozen National Weather Service Forecast Offices from Riverton, WY to El Paso, TX and from Grand Junction, CO to Goodland and Dodge City, KS.

This is a very important time of year. The severe weather season is beginning on the southern Great Plains and will spread westward and northward this spring. Volunteers play a huge role for the NWS in spotting and reporting severe weather events. In the next few weeks, each NWS office is scheduling many classes in their respective "County Warning Areas" to train volunteers to be skillful severe weather reporters. Spotter reports are a very important component of NWS's severe weather warning programs. If this interests you, try to attend one of the many programs coming up. I cannot list them all here, but most are posted on each office's website.

The easiest way to find out is to either call your local NWS office, or go to www.weather.gov

Click your area on the national map, and you will go to your local NWS website. Usually, you can find information on how to become a severe weather spotter and when and where training sessions will be held.

Helpers for New Mexico

I am very pleased to report that 4 people volunteered to help assist new volunteers in New Mexico. This is really going to make a difference. Thanks so much.

Big storms in KS and NE

Wow, we no more than hit the first day of spring and the weather immediately turned wild. Hail reports were streaming in on Sunday afternoon (Please remember to report all occurrences of hail using "Data Entry" and then select the appropriate "Hail Data" entry form—or "Intense Rain" form if you are having heavy rain. By Monday, several stations in Kansas reported over 2 inches of rain. More large rains were reported Tuesday AM. CoCoRaHS in Kansas is off to a good start. I see that nearly 400 volunteers from Nebraska reported rain from this recent storm.

Confusion over Websites

It is too confusing running both the old and new websites at the same time. Therefore, we have decided to switch over to the new site as soon as possible—hopefully within two weeks.

The address will remain the same www.cocorahs.org

We will provide a link from the new site back to the old so that us holdouts can still enter data via the old system for a few more weeks. But beginning April 1 we strongly encourage you to use the new system for entering and viewing data. While change is hard for some of us, I think you will like many features of the new site.

FEATURES OF THE NEW SITE

Some features of the new site that you should know about:

You may click on any state map to see an enlarged precipitation map for any county in any of our 6-state area.

Many data reports and tabulations work faster on the new site. Also you can easily sort and tabulate data by state, by county, by station and in all sorts of ways. Just click the blue heading label at the top of any data table and it will automatically sort the whole table of data. Feel free to experiment. You can't break anything (I think :-)).

We are still testing click and zoom capabilities where you will be able to look at station data on the new maps as well as roads, rivers, streets and even aerial photography. That will not be working right away, but within a few weeks we will add that feature. We've been testing it, and it looks very promising.

Data editing and entering zeroes for dry days will become much easier on the new site.

Finally we will have a secure site where folks can't come in and enter bogus data like they could on our old site.

DISADVANTAGE: The one disadvantage and we've found no perfect solution to deal with it yet, is the site will be slower for people using low-speed phone connections. A lot of us fit into that category. We continue to cut and speed up every process that we can, but to achieve the higher resolution and greater flexibility, we loose some speed. The old site was absolutely super efficient for serving low-speed internet users

New website confusion

My last message confused a lot of you and many of you reverted back to using the old site. Fear not, the new site is ready for you and you are welcome and encouraged to use it. If you don't know how to access it, just scroll down on the old homepage www.cocorahs.org and you will see the big raindrop CoCoRaHS logo. Beneath the drop, it says "Check out the preview site at

new.cocorahs.org" All you have to do is click that link and it will take you to the new site.

Again, when we change over to the new site next week, the address will continue to be the same as the old site www.cocorahs.org Other addresses that we have used in the past such as www.cocorahs.com and ccc.atmos.colostate.edu/~hail should also continue to work —I hope.

Verify your location on the maps

Many new volunteers from New Mexico have been asking "where are our reports showing up? Where are New Mexico Maps? Turns out that Kansas, Texas and New Mexico only can see maps on the new website although data can be entered in either the new or old site.

No one knows better than yourself where you live and where your data point should appear on our maps. Since we are processing hundreds of new applications, every now and then we goof one up. So PLEASE check our maps to make sure your data are appearing and in the correct location. When we add the new street and aerial photography features, that will really help you figure out if we have your correct coordinates.

Failed again

Well, once again I have failed to be brief. Hopefully you have stuck with me, though. Thanks so much for all of your interest and your help.

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken