

"THE CATCH"

COCORAHS RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

FORT COLLINS, CO — Wednesday, December 21, 2005

It's a quiet day for CoCoRaHS. As of noon today, only 523 precipitation reports have been submitted of which only 8 of those 523 received measureable (at least 0.01") of melted snow or rain. Our winner for the day is Breckenridge 3.4 SSE with 0.07" of water from 1.5" of new snow. Six stations, including the Breckenridge volunteers, show at least 2 feet of snow on the ground this morning with our Gothic observer (just north of Crested Butte) on top of the list with a depth of 40.5". Breckenridge 3.4 SSE (CO-SU-19) has enjoyed 17 days with measureable snowfall since November 26 with a total of 44.7" of fresh snow.

(Remember, you can tabulate precipitation and snowfall totals for any station if you know their station number. Just click "view data" on the top menu bar. Then select "Station Snow Summary Report" from the list of data reports that we provide. Type in the station numbers for up to 3 stations of interest. Finally, select the begin date and end date of the period you are interested in and hit "Submit". It's a great way to keep track of what's been going on for your favorite CoCoRaHS stations.)

If you've never looked at any of the CoCoRaHS data reports, give it a try. For us climatologists, that's what it's all about!!

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY -- COLORADO AND MAYBE SOUTHERN WYOMING

The National Park Service, in collaboration with Colorado State University, is trying to figure out why so much nitrogen is showing up in the soils and water of Rocky Mountain National Park. To study this, scientists are going to set up a network of observation points surrounding the Park and take some measurements and do some chemical analysis of the air and of the precipitation.

It turns out that we have CoCoRaHS volunteers in many of the areas where measurements need to be taken.

If you live in the right place (see list of desired observing points below) and are interested in helping in this study please let me know right away. It will entail changing air filters once a week for a period of a few weeks in spring and again for a few weeks later in the summer on samplers that the scientists will set up for you. Also, it will involve capturing samples of rain water and mailing them back to Fort Collins for laboratory analysis.

Here are the locations where we are especially interested in. All but two are in Colorado.

Carr (NW Weld County) or SE of Cheyenne, in Laramie County, Wyoming would also work.

A few miles east of Greeley (Weld County)

Weld County in the vicinity of Milliken.

Morgan County in the vicinity of Fort Morgan

Near Sterling, CO (Logan County)

Sedgwick County, CO in the vicinity of Julesburg

Yuma County in the vicinity of Wray

Near Arlington, CO (western Kiowa County or SE Crowley County or NE Otero County)

Elbert County in the vicinity of Kiowa

Boulder County in the vicinity of Niwot

Boulder County in the vicinity of Hygiene

Boulder County in a very exposed area in the vicinity of the Eldora Ski area.

In the vicinity of Baggs, Wyoming in either Colorado or Wyoming

Near the Eagle County airport in western Eagle County.

Near Leadville (Lake County)

Near Drake in or near the Big Thompson Canyon (Larimer County)

West of Loveland near the hogback or near the base of the first foothills.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Because of the nature of this research, we are looking for sites that are not greatly affected by local sources of ammonia or sulfur. For example, sites:

Must be at least 2 miles away from an active feedlot or other large confined animal operation

Should have an open site so the samplers can be at least 100 feet away from buildings, tall vegetation (trees) and roads

Should not be near (within about 100 feet) of active or recently active pastures where fresh manure may still be lying around).

Should avoid recently fertilized ground such as agricultural fields, lawns or gardens.

We need to find at least one willing volunteer with access to a decent observing site (on or off your own property) in the general vicinity of the above mentioned locations.

If you are interested, please let me know. I can send some attached files with more details if you are interested. We would like to select candidate site soon, so the scientists can get the equipment set up in time to test everything before the experiment begins in the spring.

Thanks very much for considering this. We're estimating it will be about a one hour per week commitment for two 6-week periods. I look forward to hearing from a few of you.

Best wishes,

Nolan

P.S. I will also be writing individually to some of you who live close to the desired study areas