

## **COCORAISINS (I.E. COCORAHS PARTICIPANTS)**

FORT COLLINS, CO — Saturday, March 4, 2006

### **March 4—a day of action**

March 4, a date associated with the beginning of wild spring weather (We're past "Deep Winter" now.). Already last week we had our first major hail storm with several stations in SE New Mexico reporting significant hail as well as their first major rainfall event since October. From here on, weather just gets livelier. The tornado season comes on quickly in Texas, Missouri and SE Kansas -- Indiana follows soon thereafter and the rest of us come along in April and May. Get ready -- we're about to hit some "rough air".

### **Polish up your gauge -- remember how to report your data**

A few hundred of us, for a variety of good reasons, take a vacation from CoCoRaHS reporting in winter. Let's face it, measuring (or guessing :-)) snowfall and water content at 7 AM in midwinter is only considered "fun" by the craziest of us. But from here on, it gets warmer, the morning light is already bright now by 7 AM, and precipitation is more likely to be rain instead of ice and snow. Also, the chances of having thunderstorms starts to increase quickly, and that means our rainfall patterns become more variable. Each and every one of our precipitation report becomes more important for understanding and mapping our precipitation.

### **Remember "Hail Reports" and "Intense Rain Reports"**

If you really want to help the National Weather Service and your city or county emergency managers, then please remember to send in special reports of hail and intense rain. Many of you have never clicked those buttons on the upper left hand side of the screen when you're logged in to "My Data". But when you do, those valuable reports go straight to the National Weather Service and help forecasters issue or verify severe weather. We report any size hail, even the tiny stuff. And what constitutes "Intense Rain"? That is a judgment call, but any time you have gotten at least 0.30" or rain in the past hour, that's significant. Even lesser amounts can be reported if they occur in a short time. And if you've gotten 2" or more in the past hour then PLEASE report that rain. Flash flooding could be imminent and your report could save lives.

### **Are you a National Weather Service severe weather spotter??**

If not, and if you think you might want to, this is the season of the year that NWS meteorologists are out in local communities all across the country training people how to identify and report dangerous weather conditions. If you would like to help, please go to your local NWS website -- [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) and click on your area. You most likely will see a link to their spring schedule of severe weather spotter training classes. And if you go, tell the other folks about CoCoRaHS!

## **Drought**

Many of our states are on "thin ice" in terms of drought. On March 14th, Colorado will be holding a statewide meeting to assess both the potential for spring floods from the deep snowpack in our northern mountains. At the same time, wildfires have been flaring up, and drought is a major concern over sizeable portions of the southern and eastern counties of the state as precipitation has been very sparse there for 18 consecutive weeks. It may seem strange at first glance, but it is very common for some parts of the Rocky Mountain states to be very dry while nearby areas are very wet. Mountains do that to us. Drought concern is even greater in New Mexico and parts of Missouri, Texas and Kansas (as well as not-yet-CoCoRaHS states such as AZ and OK).

At this time of year, we can expect opportunities for major storms to sweep across the country almost every week from now through May. Each time the storms skip over us we are one week closer to a drought crisis. Likewise, each storm offers an opportunity to get us out of the hole, and launch us towards a good growing season. And while I know many of you are eager for warm, sunny spring weather, remember what our ancestors taught us -- a cold wet spring fills the barn come fall, while a warm, dry spring leaves us lean and wanting (or at least that's the jist of the old folklore).

## **What's a CoCoRaisin?**

It started as a typo, but now we are humorously referring to our volunteers as CoCoRaisins. I hope you're not offended.

## **Hail to our CoCoRaHS volunteers!!**

Party a huge success:

I just wanted to say thanks to the 75+ people who swarmed the Science Discovery Center here in Fort Collins, Colorado on Saturday, February 25th for our first ever "1000 Hail Pad Party". Wow, what a party and what a success!! We exceeded all expectations and made over 1500 pads by 10:30 AM -- enough to get us well into the 2006 hail season. We could have made more but we ran

out of aluminum foil. We even had volunteers come from Kansas and Wyoming as well as western Colorado and several Front Range counties. Do you have any idea how amazing this is??!! I was so impressed.

Henry Reges did a great job of planning and orchestrating this unique event. We had super helpers in every position (folders, tapers, runners, boxers, shippers, etc. if you weren't there, just imagine). What a blast!!

Let's also give credit to our sponsors. Starbucks Coffee Company donated coffee and will later award CoCoRaHS \$1000 for our community effort. The Discovery Science Center was kind enough to provide a very "educational" atmosphere for our party -- dinosaur bones and everything. And then, of course, was the food. Thanks to Great Harvest Bread Company, Wild Oats Market, Alberstons, and King Soopers for sponsoring our breakfast.

To see pictures of this festive occasion:

<http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=hailpadparty>

### **"Message of the Day" Keeping up with the latest.**

If you are one of our many "retired volunteers" who are no longer taking daily observations or are waiting for warmer weather (Actually, it's nearly 70 degrees here again today.), then I want to let you know about the "Message of the Day". The CoCoRaHS "Message of the Day" (which, by the way, is usually updated every week or so, but hopefully we'll get better at that :-)) pops up on your computer screen each time you submit a data report.

In case you're interested, here is the current "Message of the day"

*Message of the Day:*

*One of the comments we often hear from CoCoRaHS volunteers is:*

*"It sure would be nice if there were more reports from my area so we could see how precipitation varies in my county."*

*We agree! We'd love to see at least 5 to 10 volunteers scattered across each county. To help make this happen, CoCoRaHS encourages you to invite a friend or relative to join our network during the month of March. Let's see how many folks each state can add to our ranks during the 31 days of March.*

*We'll post an ongoing tally by state each Friday on the .message of the day. for the next five weeks.*

Good Luck! "Let the March Madness begin" Click here to sign up:(<http://www.cocorahs.org/Application.aspx>)

Totals as of March 3rd:

1 Colorado  
0 District of Columbia  
4 Indiana  
1 Kansas  
1 Maryland  
0 Missouri  
0 New Mexico  
1 Pennsylvania  
1 Texas  
0 Virginia  
0 Wyoming

Well, this is quite enough for one message. We'll be in touch soon enough. Always remember to feel free to contact us or your state or county coordinator if you have any questions or are having problems entering data.

Best wishes to all of you, and if you read all the way from top to bottom in one sitting -- I'm pleasantly surprised.

*Nolan Doesken*  
CoCoRaHS