

The Catch

COCORAHS—THERE WILL BE RAIN AND RUMORS OF RAIN

FORT COLLINS, CO — Monday, August 7, 2006

Greetings:

I've heard that some of you have been getting some rain. That's nice -- except at this time of year when it does rain it sometimes rains so hard that much of the water just runs off. We've had 175 "Intense Rain Reports" since July 1, 52 of which have come in during the last 6 days. THANKS for making this special effort to inform us and the National Weather Service about heavy rain in your area. We even had a Colorado observer send in an intense rain report from Houston, TX. (P.S. Make sure you enter the time correctly when you submit an intense rain report—we've gotten a lot of 5 AMish reports when you probably meant 5 PM. We've also had hail reports sent in with the wrong date on them—so please double check before you hit the "Submit" button—and let me know if you have any questions.)

Here in Fort Collins, despite our best efforts, the rain just goes somewhere else. We've only gotten a trace so far this month on the Colorado State University campus and 0.01" here at my house. Since getting back from vacation in mid July, we've gotten less than 0.30"—and this is normally a stormy time of year here. We just can't buy a decent rain. We're still just a little over 4" of total precipitation since January 1, less than 40% of what we usually get for this time period. Yuck!! Our pasture is just dust except for where we've been able to apply some irrigation water. We're also having our 6th hot summer out of the past 7, so what moisture we do get evaporates so quickly.

Will we reach 2000??

We've now had at least 2 days with more than 1700 daily precipitation reports (a CoCoRaHS record), and our daily average is up over 1500 reports per day now. If everyone who has a CoCoRaHS rain gauge and station number sent in a report on the same day, we could go way past 2000—maybe even 3000!! I'm looking forward to that day—hint, hint. (NOTE: If you have been unable to send in your rain reports, please let us know and we can help get you back on the computer again. Or if you are still waiting for your supplies, please make some noise so we can help get you set up.)

200 in MO

Missouri and Indiana continue to compete for new volunteers. They are running neck and neck in terms of number of new applicants—280. But Missouri may be the first to reach 200 reports in a single day. And keep an eye on Oklahoma. They've already signed up 39 volunteers and they have big recruiting plans for this fall.

On a roll in New Mexico

The long dry spell seems to have ended in New Mexico. Since June 21 rain has fallen somewhere in the state every day, and the statewide average precipitation for the past 7 weeks has been 5.4" (a good bit for that area). Two stations near Cloudcroft (in the mountains east of Alamogordo in southern New Mexico) have reported over 12" of rain in this period. By comparison, for that same period Missouri has only totaled a statewide average of about 4.3"

Too much rain in El Paso, TX

Drought also had a strong grip on west Texas, but that has been changing fast. Less than 1" of precipitation fell in El Paso from 10/16/05 through 7/3/06. Starting July 4, rains have become more frequent, and an average of 1.70" accumulated for the period 7/4 - 7/27/06. Then things went crazy. Starting with the 7/28 reports, it has rained every day. Several days have had torrential downpours. We only have 3-4 stations that report regularly, but two of these stations have reported in excess of 10" of rain for the last 10 days. There has been considerable flooding throughout the area. We could sure use more data from El Paso, so if you know anyone there, let them know.

Tough Times in Ten Sleep, Wyoming.

I was thinking we had it bad here in Fort Collins, but then I got a message from a faithful observer up near Ten Sleep, Wyoming, and then I didn't feel so bad. Grass fires are racing out of control, and houses are being threatened. Of the 3 CoCoRaHS stations in operation in Washakie County, WY, precipitation totals since June 1 range from 0.13" up to a whopping 0.26" This is pitiful. Rangeland had been looking OK up there after a fairly wet spring, but . . .

Check out Nebraska

We don't talk much about Nebraska in our reports, but we should. Just over 2 years ago CoCoRaHS helped launch a sister project called the Nebraska Rainfall Assessment and Information Network (affectionately called NeRAIN and pronounced "Any Rain"). This summer, they have been expanding the network to northern and eastern Nebraska and are trying to be statewide very soon. They have signed up close to 1000 volunteers in just over 2 years, and have reached 650 reports per day in July of this year. If you are interested in the Cornhusker state, then look at their Web site -- good stuff. Unfortunately, Nebraska is also suffering from drought in many areas.

<http://dnrdata.dnr.ne.gov/NeRAIN/>

Less than 6 weeks to SNOW

It's that time of year when it feels like it's been too hot for too long, and we're wondering if summer will ever end. I want you to know that it will, and out West that end will be coming very soon. It is not uncommon to see the first snow of the season in the Rockies by early September. Even here in Fort Collins, we've seen snow on September 12. It is just a matter of time until our nights will begin to get chilly, and by early September the first aspen trees will be changing color. And you know what that means? It won't be long until you begin to get "Snow measurement reminders" from you know who ☺

Update on El Salvador

Several rain gauges will be set up in El Salvador later this month, and the first CoCoRaHS applications from a foreign country will appear. Thanks to those of you who sent donations to help this effort. I will share those fund raising results shortly.

Some picnics being planned

We will be posting the dates and locations of our CoCoRaHS volunteer appreciation picnics. The country is too big and we're spread too far apart, but at least in a few areas we will be celebrating.

Hang in there

Thanks for staying with CoCoRaHS, even if you are no longer able to measure and report the rainfall. Remember, if you still have unanswered questions or

have not received your rain gauge or training, please contact me or, better yet, your local or state coordinator.

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

Best wishes,

Nolan Doesken

P.S. - Tell someone about CoCoRaHS. There are many businesses and organizations that benefit from a better knowledge of rainfall patterns. CoCoRaHS may help them.