

The Catch

NEWS FROM COCORAHHS

FORT COLLINS, CO — Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Good morning!

This message is long and a bit rushed. Please forgive my typos. I hope you "CoCoRaisins" find time to skim through this now— or later.

Morning Rain

I awoke yesterday to the infrequent but lovely sound of rain drumming on our roof. Then I headed up to a conference of county road maintenance supervisors (now that's a group that knows weather!) and got to drive through mountain fog, drizzle, and showers with a temperature on the top of Hoosier Pass of 38F with large piles of snow still on the ground. (All you folks from Indiana may need to take a trip out here during your next Midwest heat wave to visit "your pass".) So far this month my monthly precipitation total is just over 0.20" and the hot and thirsty weather of summer will inevitably set in soon. So we can use all the moisture we can get. Meanwhile, many other areas got that much rain in a matter of minutes yesterday and the day before from other parts of Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Dakota. Eventually I'll get my turn.

By the way, if you like tracking storms remotely; the National Weather Service provides great links to their weather RADAR products. Some of the storms recently have been amazing to watch.

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/radar_tab.php

Long Silence

As most of you know, I try to keep up with all of you via occasional e-mail messages. I am sorry for the long delay since my last CoCoRaHS e-mail (early May??). It's our busiest time of year at work and at home, and we also squeezed in a trip to our first-ever family reunion from my mother's mother's side of the family—back in Ohio. We absolutely have to try to get CoCoRaHS started there

in Ohio! I learned that our family roots in Ohio go back to the early 1800s and I have enough relatives there to start our own rain gauge network.

Are you new to CoCoRaHS?

Since I last wrote, hundreds of new volunteers have signed up for CoCoRaHS. South Dakota has marvelously launched a statewide network in just two weeks. Hats off to Dr. Dennis Todey, their State Climatologist at South Dakota State University, for helping get things started along with a great team of coordinators from the National Weather Service and Extension. As of this morning, 165 South Dakotans have signed up already and over half have already reported at least once. Furthermore there has been plenty of rain to report -- compared to the big drought they had last year. Many locations have had over 2.0" of rain so far this month, with a few places over 4-5" already.

No gauge? No station ID?

If you signed up for CoCoRaHS but are not yet set up to begin reporting, please contact your state or county coordinator or send me a message. We don't have many complimentary gauges, but you can easily order them online for a very reasonable price. Also, if you did not get your station name, username and password, it probably means your SPAM blocker snagged them when we sent them to you. Please check your SPAM mail the day you applied, or you can just go to "Login" and click "Find my login" and it will be sent again.

Big storms! Big need for your data!!

I just took a quick look at our reports since the first day of spring. In 64 out of the past 85 days, rains of 2" or more in 24 hours have fallen in one or more (usually more) of our CoCoRaHS gauges. There have been about 20 days with local rainfall amounts exceeding 5" and several up over 7". The biggest one-day rain so far this season came from one of our NeRAIN volunteers in southwest Nebraska (they have an extraordinary network with over 700 people reporting regularly from all parts of Nebraska. They gave their program a different name, but they are very much a part of the CoCoRaHS network. Just click on the State of Nebraska on the CoCoRaHS homepage and you'll see what I mean.) 8.73" of rain fell west of Champion in Chase county (just across the extreme NE Colorado border) Monday night and Tuesday morning in only 10 hours. Flood damage, as you might expect, was extreme.

The norm for rainfall this time of year is EXTREME VARIABILITY. Yesterday when nearly 9" fell in western Chase County, NE, the southeastern part of that relatively small county was DRY! That is why we so covet your reports and

EVERY CoCoRaHS report matters. Tell your friends and neighbors. We have a long way to go to reach our goal of 1 station per square mile over urban and suburban areas and one per 36 square miles over rural areas—but I'm not giving up!

Yesterday, quite a few of you made the special effort to send in an "Intense Rain" or "Hail" report. Those reports are so very important since they immediately notify the local National Weather Service office of the storms that are in your area. That special extra effort that some of you have made is GREATLY APPRECIATED! If you don't know how or when to submit one of these reports, please review your instructional materials or ask your local coordinator. Here is the current listing of state and local volunteer coordinators who can help.

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

Dry Weather Also Important

Maybe it's not as interesting or as exciting, but your reports of 0.00" of precipitation are also VERY important. While some of us have been pounded by heavy storms, many of us (like me) have not. When Tennessee joined CoCoRaHS in April, we expected to see frequent and sometimes heavy rains. That has not been the case. Major drought continues to grip that area, and some of you from Indiana, Virginia, Western Colorado and other areas have put in your requests for rain! The fact of the matter is, precipitation matters a lot, and your reports help us and many others understand our climate variations better.

1,013 Hail Reports so far

Many of you from the Midwest and eastern states told us "it doesn't hail here much. We probably don't need to bother with that." Well, from what we've seen so far, that's not totally true. As of this morning, we've received 1,013 reports of hail so far in 2007 from CoCoRaHS volunteers across the country and that doesn't count the hundreds of additional hail comments that we've noticed in your daily precipitation report "Comments" that were not entered as "Hail Reports". The majority of hail reports have come from Colorado and the Great Plains, but hundreds have come from farther east. In fact, the largest hail reported so far this year to CoCoRaHS came from Wisconsin, Illinois and Tennessee. Just last week, near LaCrosse, WI 3 inch diameter stones were reported.

More states joining soon!

During the past month four additional states have talked with us and plan to join the CoCoRaHS network this year. North Carolina and Florida are first in the cue, and Iowa and Kentucky are right behind.

Local coordinators and assistants needed

Some of you have been kind enough to mark the "I would like to help" box on our CoCoRaHS application forms. Of course, when you first sign up you have no idea what that may mean. In fact, we could use your help. We need people like you to help recruit, train and stay in touch with the volunteers in your own counties and let organizations who need climate information know about CoCoRaHS as an information resources for the public. If you would like to help, please contact your state coordinator and let them know.

Much more news

I will have to send out some more messages soon, but there are some good stories and some useful research and education outcomes from our project that I would like to share soon. It will have to wait for another time.

Thanks!

As always, your interest in weather and your desire to help is appreciated by our entire weather and water community. Keep up the good work, and let us know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken
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Colorado State University