

The Catch

COCORAHS—HEADED TOWARDS FALL

FORT COLLINS, CO — Monday, September 3, 2007

Weather watchers!

I hope you're having some fun this Labor Day weekend. This is a weekend of labor at our house here in Fort Collins getting ready for autumn and making our last round of compost piles for the season. Tomatoes and peppers are ripening in the garden and the cucumbers are tasty. One of these years we'll actually get everything planted on time and keep those pesky weeds under control :-)

Snow warning!

Well, not really -- no snow in sight yet, but looking at the calendar it's already September 2. Twice in the past our earliest snow of the season here has come Sept 12. Snow becomes a possibility this month especially at our many higher elevation stations up in the Rockies. But so far, it remains hot and dry with billowing thunderheads each afternoon that always seem to miss us.

Depending on where you are in the country, the first snow could come in a few weeks or not for several months, but it will soon be time to remember how to measure and report that wonderful white stuff. Measuring snow can be tricky. Remember we do have online instructions and even a video to view

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

Flood watches for Texas

Parts of south central Texas have already had plenty of rain (30-40 inches in just the last 4 months). Now, with already saturated soils, it looks like they may get slammed again this week. This is the time of year when tropical storms are most likely to form and can deliver huge amounts of rain to parts of the U.S. Just a few days ago Tropical Storm Erin swamped a broad swath from Texas up into Oklahoma, Missouri and then east to Virginia and North Carolina. Thanks to many CoCoRaHS reports, we were able to supplement the official weather

networks to help the National Weather Service put a great map of that storm together.

<http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/tropical/rain/erin2007filledrainblk.gif>

Over the next few days this could happen again. If you are in the paths of the developing heavy rains over Texas, please be ready to submit intense rain reports via CoCoRaHS. If in the rare and extreme situation where your rain gauge may be filling to the top (11"+), then try to go out and do a quick measurement during a lull in the storm so you can empty the gauge and have room for more. DO NOT risk going out in flooding situations. Hopefully you have your gauge on high ground.

All parts of the country have been affected by rainfall from tropical storms in the past. This link shows the maximum observed rainfall, by state, from tropical cyclones affecting the U.S. during the past 30 years. Some of these rainfall amounts are downright scary.

<http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/tropical/rain/tcstatemaxima.gif>

Two new CoCoRaHS states

We are very pleased to announce that North Carolina and New York each became a part of the CoCoRaHS network on September 1. Already over 100 new volunteers from North Carolina have signed up thanks to some organized publicity through North Carolina State University, the media and the National Weather Service. So if you have friends and relatives in those states let them know that their rain gauge reading talents could be put to good use.

Next comes Florida

The next state to join our volunteer network will be Florida with a planned launch date of October 1. With their often numerous and intense thunderstorm downpours as well as tropical storms, many of us are looking forward to watching the rainfall patterns there. And since it hardly ever snows in Florida, training new observers will be easy.

10,000th CoCoRaisin

CoCoRaHS hit a milestone this past week. A student at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO who had just found out about the project became the 10,000th person to sign-up to help measure and report rain, hail and snow. With the surge of new applications from North Carolina, we were sure NC would claim the 10,000th, but then in snuck one application from MO. Congratulations, Shanon!!! Your prize is in the mail.

New T-shirt supply coming soon

Some of you have been asking about t-shirts. Yes, we do have a nice design with the CoCoRaHS logo and our motto, "Every drop counts". We are about to order a bunch more, so if you are interested in picking up a shirt or two this is a good time to think about it. Don't send a check or order in yet, though, as we are still figuring prices and quantities.

We are only ordering two colors (a blue and green, I believe) and it may take a few weeks to get them and be ready for shipping. We'll post an announcement as soon as they are available.

Thanks!!!

The number of daily reports continue to grow -- now exceeding 3,000/day most days. We've had nearly 1400 much-appreciated reports of intense rains sent in this past year and 1558 hail reports as of this morning. We really appreciate your help on this project, and it is amazing how useful your information becomes. Every report is helpful, but it is especially useful when we begin having several reports coming in from within each county so we can get a reasonable idea of the average precipitation and the spatial variations across a county. So if you are in a county with only one or two CoCoRaHS stations reporting, please spread the word and see if we can find a few more!

If you have signed up for CoCoRaHS but still haven't gotten started, this is as good a time as any. Rain gauges can be purchased online via several potential vendors at reduced rates for all CoCoRaHS volunteers. Instructions on setting up your gauge and taking accurate measurements of rain, hail and snow are available on our website. Training sessions are available in some parts of the country. (We are hosting a training session this Wednesday evening Sept 5 here in Fort Collins at 7 PM at the Public Library meeting room at the corner of Harmony and Shields).

If you lost or didn't get your username and password, you can look it up yourself by clicking "Login" and then "Find My Login" or if you are having other challenges, just drop us or your local coordinator a note and we'll try to help.

Enjoy the rest of your Labor Day Weekend!

Best wishes,

Nolan Doesken
Colorado State University

