

The Catch

COCORAHS – WINTER IS OVER, NOT!!

FORT COLLINS, CO — Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Good Morning from CoCoRaHS!

I am feeling -- well, not so good this AM. I just wrote a long e-mail greeting (we call it "The Catch") with all sorts of interesting (maybe) information including the results of our annual March Madness CoCoRaHS recruiting contest. Then, in haste to get it sent, I accidentally and stupidly deleted the whole thing! Humbug!!

I don't have time to start over, but here were the topics and highlights

1) I described the workshop about trying to measure falling snow from satellites. I am currently in Steamboat Springs attending this workshop, and I'm the only one here that focuses on simple surface measurements. Bottom line: It is really hard to measure snowfall from space. Our jobs are secure. :-) The attendees, some from other countries, are amused by CoCoRaHS -- but in a positive way.

2) I described the drive over two mountain passes in near blizzard conditions Monday afternoon to get here -- and the deep snow that still persists. Bottom line: I survived, and it was beautiful in many ways.

3) I provided a current assessment of the maximum snow depth on April 1st from CoCoRaHS stations in each state. Bottom line: Snow is still deep in some areas -- and gone in most. The greatest depth is still 80 inches just north of Crested Butte, Colorado and 57" south of Afton in NW Wyoming -- and there is deeper snow in places where we don't live. Snows in Illinois and Indiana have finally melted, but some remains in Iowa, PA and lots in parts of Wisconsin and New York State.

4) I mentioned the killing freeze last year in April in the Midwest and South -- and that it probably wouldn't happen again. I also mentioned a resource for those who like to get expert briefings on climatic conditions that could affect us. Here was the link

http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/

5) We welcomed Rhode Island as our newest CoCoRaHS state and first state from New England to join our team -- also mentioned that Georgia is coming on soon -- 30th state, as I recall.

6) I talked about the 90 or more hail reports that have been submitted in the past week, including two from Oklahoma where stones were 2" or greater in diameter.

7) We encouraged everyone to report hail this year -- big hail, small hail, hard hail, soft hail. CoCoRaHS is a unique source of hail data for many purposes. Please report!

8) Hail pads are nice and very helpful, but you don't have to have a hail pad to be able to provide useful hail information. Since hail usually only occurs a few times per year -- or less, and when it does hail it is often only for a few minutes. So please prepare ahead of time and get familiar with the data entry form

<http://www.cocorahs.org/Admin/MyDataEntry/HailReport.aspx>

If you are not home, but you do know that hail fell, please submit any information you do know and leave the other lines blank.

9) When I got clumsy and typed something that deleted the message in an unrecoverable way (because I'm in a motel room not connected to my normal e-mail system) I was in the midst of reminding all Colorado volunteers to make sure they have their hail pads. Also, in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, we want all CoCoRaHS volunteers to get and put out hail pads. Contact your local county coordinator. We are also receiving help from Haag Engineering in Irving, Texas and they will have hail pads to distribute there as well.

10) Instructions for making your own hail pad are available on our website.

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

There is also a limited supply being sold by WeatherYourWay.com

Finally -- Help us make hail pads!

If you are in the Fort Collins area next week and want to lend a hand, we really need help making more hail pads. Our supplies are low and the hail season is arriving. We will be having a 3-day hail pad extravaganza here at CoCoRaHS headquarters in Solar House 3 on the Foothills Campus of Colorado State University April 8 - 10th. We will begin with a lunch-time hail pad party on Tuesday, April 8th. Then each day, Tues, Weds and Thursday, we're having a hail pad open house from 3 - 6 PM.

If you have an hour or two to spare, please come help. RSVP to me so we can schedule people appropriately and have enough snacks available. Also, a new construction project for our Department is beginning. I'll need to give you parking instructions. If you've never been to a hail pad party, this is your chance!

OK, time to go sweep the snow off the car so I can get back to satellite snowfall workshop -- appropriate.

Have a great day!

Nolan

P.S. South Carolina won the March Madness Competition this year. Illinois and Texas tied for second. You can see the results at:

<http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=mod&mod=1>

If you are one of the hundreds of new folks to sign up for CoCoRaHS, welcome aboard. Get your gauges set up, review training materials, and join the fun as soon as you can!