

# The Catch

## **COCORAHS CATCH – NE DRIES OUT, CA GETS WET**

FORT COLLINS, CO — Friday, October 31, 2008

### **Greetings CoCoRaHS volunteers**

Since I last wrote in early October, Two hundred more people have signed up for CoCoRaHS -- with many of the new recruits from California, North Dakota (officially starting Nov 1), Georgia and Kansas.

If you are new to CoCoRaHS, welcome aboard! If you have questions about how to get started, please contact your local volunteer coordinator.

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

### **Amazingly dry today**

The snows ended in the Northeast yesterday just as the first large Pacific storm system of the new water year began splashing California today. Today (24-hours ending at 7 AM Thursday) was the driest day across the U.S. since we've had rain gauge watchers from coast to coast. Out of 5,000 reports received so far today (Thursday), only 214 reported measurable precipitation (0.01" or more), and only 8 stations received more than 0.20" of precipitation (and they had snow). Compared to anything we have seen in many months, that is a DRY DAY. Tomorrow morning it will be fun to see California light up with many precipitation reports -- the first significant rain for most of our new volunteers there. Take advantage of this wet western weather to encourage your California friends and relatives to get signed up soon.

### **Good job with snow!**

This week the eastern states got their first taste of snow -- and earlier than "normal" for many areas. We were immediately swept with a wave of

"How do we measure this stuff?" questions from as far south as western North Carolina. Overall, we did a good job. Keep in mind that we have instructions for measuring snow posted in several places on the web site. Also, if you go back to some messages I sent out last year and the year before, you can read some abbreviated instructions.

[http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=catch\\_archive](http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=catch_archive)

### **Don't slip and fall**

We're all a year older than we were last fall and for some of us maybe we're not quite as steady on our feet. Winter measurements can be cold and icy. While we greatly appreciate your efforts and your data, please don't sacrifice your bodies and bones for CoCoRaHS. Find a younger friend to help with icy winter measurements, or take a break from CoCoRaHS until it warms up again. It's just not worth breaking a hip for CoCoRaHS. (BTW, we have received more than a couple of amazing adventure stories of CoCoRaHS volunteers slipping, sliding, shoveling, sinking and splashing out to your gauges to gather good data in inclement weather. Do what you must to satisfy your egos, but don't say I didn't warn you :-)

### **7000**

We now have nearly 12,000 active rainfall reporters across the country sending in at least occasional rain reports. In September, we surpassed the 7,000 reports per day mark for the first time. We still have a chance to hit our goal of 8,000 daily reports in 2008.

### **Help fill the gaps**

Even with thousands of rain gauge watchers, our state and national maps still has large gaps between weather stations. We have learned our lessons well that interpolation only works for rainfall patterns when our gauges are close together. So where you see gaps on our maps, please help fill them. If you know people that live in those data voids, please encourage them to join the CoCoRaHS network. <http://www.cocorahs.org/Application.aspx> Or if you signed up but have never quite gotten started, this would be a good time.

### **Zeros Count -- Don't forget**

Please remember to send in reports even on dry days. The only way we know for sure that your neighborhood was dry is if you send in your ZERO report. There is little satisfaction in getting up early just to report 0.00" – especially since it's almost dark at 7 AM in some parts of the country. But when you can get around to it, please try to fill in those zeros.

### **Your comments -- precious**

Your data reports are great, but they are even greater when you add a few words to describe what happened. There is great disappointment on our end whenever we see reports of large rainfall or snowfall amounts only to find nothing written in the "Observation Notes". Just a sentence or phrase will add historic value to your reports and help us scientists better interpret your data. Go hear to see examples of the type of notes observers are writing.

<http://www.cocorahs.org/ViewData/ListDailyComments.aspx>

### **Water year summary**

Several hundred of us checked our data for the past year and compiled our 2008 Water Year totals (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008). Thanks so much! We are working up a nationwide summary of these reports and will have this ready to share in about two weeks. This year, we hope to post a map. Totals for the year have ranged from less than 10" in some spots in the West to over 100" (I'll let you know where that happened in my next report).

### **Midnight tomatoes**

Well, it's been 10 days now since our killer frost. The garden has been put to rest now -- a relief. We picked the pumpkins and the spaghetti squash. We found about 40 more green peppers hiding in the bushes (tasty). The broccoli and chard survived and are still producing. Potatoes and onions still need to be dug. And then there's the tomatoes. What were we thinking when we planted so many? I went out one last time to pick last week as the temperature were dipping below freezing. There I was, at midnight, with freezing cold fingers, hauling in bucket after bucket. Our living room is still covered with tomatoes. So is the spare bedroom and the corner of the basement. There are red ones, pink ones,

green ones, and rotten ones. Never in our lives have we had so many tomatoes -- and so tasty.

## **Life**

Many of us have lost dear friends or family in recent months. Thanks for all of your kind words since Odie's death two months ago. We push ahead -- not always cheerfully and still missing her. Many of you are sharing similar experiences. The shorter, darker days of autumn don't help much, do they. But there is still a sunrise, a high noon, a sunset and a night moon -- and they can still be beautiful. Enjoy life, family, and friends, and thanks for being a part of CoCoRaHS.

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