

# The Catch

## COCORAHS -- IT'S FEBRUARY 2011

Nashville, TN — Tuesday, February 1, 2011

Dear CoCoRaHS Friends,

Greetings past, present and future rain/snow/hail gaugers. If you are new to CoCoRaHS and need some help getting started, just let us know.

As this arctic surge and developing winter storm grip so much of the country, I just wanted to send words of CoCoRaHS thanks and encouragement. The number of daily precipitation reports have been dropping off of late. Many of us may be growing weary of winter or are just plain having trouble measuring the icy snow that has been piling up in some areas.

Don't give up and please know that:

- 1) Your precipitation reports are really, really important and are being used every day by weather, water, agricultural and educational professionals across the country
- 2) This "might" be the last severe cold blast of the winter -- so hold on. You can make it!
- 3) The days are getting longer and in a couple more weeks the increased day length and warmer temperatures will become obvious. (There are a few exceptions such as near the Great Lakes where pre-spring warm up usually lags by a few weeks)
- 4) But don't forget that old adage . . . "As the days grow longer, the storms grow stronger" since that is often the case as we move towards spring.
- 5) We are rapidly approaching severe storm season -- starting first in the South and then shifting northward into the Central Plains and Mississippi

Valley as we head toward March, April and May. Take the appropriate precautions to be ready. Your National Weather Service office may be holding severe weather spotter training sessions in your area, so check their website for dates and locations.

6) As the sun gets higher in the sky and the temperatures warm, then the risk of drought impacts will also be increasing for those of you in areas that have been missing the recent storms. In the event that drought creeps into your area, please let us know by filing a "Drought Impact Report"

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

So keep on reporting your measurements -- if it's appropriate. And get ready to start again once winter weather passes, if you've been staying warm, dry and safe inside this winter. Remember that "Significant Weather Reports" are welcome any hour of the day if you are experiencing heavy rain, heavy snow or anything else you think your local weather experts should know about.

### **Seattle, Greeley, Denver, Nashville**

My job as climatologist for Colorado has carried me to several cities in the last 10 days. Each was a totally different meeting (American Meteorological Society Annual Meeting, Colorado Farm Show, Colorado Water Congress, National Association of Conservation Districts). Yet, at each and every meeting I ran into enthusiastic CoCoRaHS volunteers. There was even a Virginia volunteer at the Colorado Farm Show, and there were Wyoming and New York volunteers here at the National Association of Conservation Districts in Nashville.

I can't tell you what a warm and wonderful feeling it is to find fellow faithful CoCoRaHS participants all across the country. It's like finding an old friend. By being here in Tennessee this week I am missing the -10°F temperatures back home in Colorado. Instead I'll get to see winter rain, hear some thunder, and feel a Tennessee cold front rip through on Tuesday night.

### **Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) -- a huge thanks.**

Our rain gauges are great for rain and modest snows, but they aren't the best for measuring the water content of deep snow. Nevertheless, I was amazed that over 1000 of us measured and reported the SWE (water content of the snowpack on the ground) when we started our SWE

Monday campaign a few weeks ago. That was awesome! Thank you so much. We are looking for tougher tubes and affordable scales that might make this measurement easier. The National Weather Service sent us a design to use automotive tail pipes to take measurements of snow water equivalent. I will share that with you soon when I get back home.

### **The 2010 Water Year Summary**

I've been heading in so many directions that I failed to tell you that Zack completed a comprehensive summary of the 2010 water year across the country and has posted this on our website. Here's a link to it.

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

The driest parts of the country had less than 5" of total precipitation for the year while a few of you measured over 100" for the year. Snow totals ranged from zero to over 500" for the year. Take a look. These data are fascinating. Next year, we'll have even more complete data to work with so the report will be even better.

### **Facebook and Twitter**

In case you haven't noticed, popular demand and knocking opportunity got the best of us. CoCoRaHS is blogging, booking and twittering. If this is something you want to participate in, just go to the homepage at [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org) and you will see the appropriate symbols to click on.

### **The CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Photo Calendar**

Yes, we are having a sale. \$7.75 each plus shipping until they are gone. There will never be another CoCoRaHS calendar quite like this one, so please pick up a couple. Thanks for making this shared effort a success.

<http://www.weatheryourway.com/cocorahs/cal2011coco.htm>

### **Conclusion**

Be careful during this raging cold wave, blizzard, snow and ice storm. Keep the rain and snow reports coming, and hang in there for a few more weeks of winter. Oh yes -- and Happy Groundhog Day!

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken  
Colorado State University

P.S. Called home this evening. The animals are hanging in there against the cold. Our chickens are tough, but they've shut down egg laying again for a few days. The horses can't wait until there is fresh green grass again -- the old hay is getting a little stale.