

# The Catch

## COCORAHS – RAISING FUNDS, DEALING WITH SUMMER

FORT COLLINS, CO — Monday, July 26, 2010

CoCoRaHS Rain Gaugers:

Here is an update on CoCoRaHS fund raising efforts. We are half way through our first mid-summer ten-day fund raiser and we are on track to reach our goal of \$20,000. We have received 648 individual donations so far totaling \$10,445 since last Wednesday night. We have five days to go, so if we can keep up this pace, we have a very good shot. Donations are helping to sustain the CoCoRaHS effort through the summer of 2010. They really help.

For all of those who have made a donation, thanks very, very much. And if you were considering helping out, it's easy and you can contribute online through a secure website hosted by the Colorado State University Foundation.

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

We are an official non-profit organization through our university, so donations are usually tax-deductible (check with a tax consultant to be sure). You will receive a receipt from the CSU Foundation.

If you prefer to send your donation by mail please make out your check to "CoCoRaHS" and send it to:

Colorado State University Foundation | P.O. Box 1870 | Fort Collins, CO  
80522-1870

Several of you have expressed concern that you might end up on a mailing list and start getting year round solicitations. We made sure that our list of donors is kept private and not added to the CSU Foundation mailing list. The one exception is that if you are an alumni of Colorado State University, you are likely already on their master list.

We have five more days, so let's push for the goal. \$5 at a time, we can get there.

### **More big rains**

When I wrote last week (Wednesday) I was recalling some of the large storms and catastrophic flash floods that have occurred at this time of year in past years. We wondered where the next big storms would occur. It didn't take long. Much of the eastern 2/3 of the country has been sweltering with miserably hot and humid weather conditions. Where cooler air approached this oppressive airmass, wild weather ensued. That very night 6-7" rains fell over northern Holt County in northeast Nebraska with slightly less in nearby portions of South Dakota. The very next night (Thursday July 22) parts of NE Iowa, extreme NW Illinois and the Milwaukee area in southeast Wisconsin got pounded. Some locations got more than 8" of rain in one night. The next night (Friday night into Saturday morning) the Chicago area took the fire hose with many areas reporting 6-8" of rain. If you've never had 8" of rain in a day, it's quite an experience and one you will remember.

Storms shifted eastward Saturday and Sunday with plenty of fanfare but not quite as much rain. Saturday northern Indiana took the worst of it with upwards of 4" of rain in some spots. Sunday it was the mid Atlantic that saw the fury of severe weather. Interestingly the wettest place in the country last night was Las Cruces in southern New Mexico on the banks of the Rio Grande. Some parts of town measured over 3.50" of rain and they are getting more rain today. If you've never been to the desert, a rain like that makes a real mess. With hard soils and sparse vegetation, the water runs off really fast carrying plenty of mud with it.

### **More dry spots**

Other areas have "enjoyed" the heat but missed the storms. Arkansas, parts of Tennessee and some parts of the Southeast haven't had much to measure this past week. Likewise, the West Coast from Mexico to Canada has gone without rain for weeks. But it is their dry season so it's not that unusual.

### **Huge Hail -- July 23 in South Dakota**

Hail reports from CoCoRaHS volunteers in Lyman County in south central South Dakota caught our attention Friday evening (July 23rd). One

observer noted stones up to 3" in diameter. But that's not the half of it. Starting this morning, I began getting messages from officials in South Dakota and at the National Climatic Data Center in North Carolina. It turns out that stones larger than 8" in diameter hit near the tiny town of Vivian in that same county. Stones were measured and saved, and a team will soon be working to verify if this is the largest hailstone (based on diameter) ever measured and officially documented in the U.S. It may break the record set just a few years ago in Aurora, Nebraska. I'll keep you posted on this.

If you do happen to experience extreme hail, do your best to safely document it in case it may be considered for a state or national record. If it is not fully documented, it can't be considered. Full documentation involves retrieving stones safely without putting yourself at risk, measuring the diameter of the stone, photographing the stone so that its size and shape can be evaluated accurately by others, weighing the stone if possible, and then promptly storing it in a freezer in an air tight freezer bag with extra air removed -- only one stone in a bag if possible. Those of you who have tried to freeze hail realize that the stones and the characteristics of the ice change over time. When you take them out of the freezer a few weeks later, they won't look or measure exactly the same. But you'll need to keep the stones in case they need to be analyzed later on by scientists. NOAA has a document describing the process of verifying state hail extremes -- in case you're interested.

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/extremes/scec/reports/SCEC-Hail-Guide.pdf>

Regardless of stone size, always submit a "Hail Report" any time you observe hail.

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

Your hail reports help us map and track hail and its characteristics across the country.

### **Bonnie wasn't bad**

Well, fortunately the tropical storm mostly dissipated while crossing the Gulf of Mexico. That situation could have been much worse. Bonnie did bring some rain to Florida and enough moisture along with it to drop some local heavy downpours in Louisiana over the weekend. Now it's contributing extra humidity to fuel scattered storms over the South (as if the air needed any more humidity). But it's still very early in the

hurricane season, so be ready for more threats. The worst is usually yet to come.

### **The First Snow**

No, not yet. It will be a few weeks (usually September) until our high elevation or high latitude stations have their first chances of snow. But I did want to bring to your attention that we have a solid and growing group of CoCoRaHS volunteers in up in Alaska. They've had many days of rain to report this month – fairly typical summer weather. We just added our first volunteer from Kivalina in "Northwest Arctic" up on the west coast north of Nome. We also have a group of dedicated volunteers in Hawaii. We don't give those parts of the country nearly as much attention as they deserve in our messages, but we appreciate them very much.

Best wishes, and thanks for being a part of CoCoRaHS.

Nolan Doesken  
Colorado State University