

The Catch

COCORAHS - UPDATE

FORT COLLINS, CO — Friday, July 30, 2010

The hailstone

Within the past hour, the largest fully documented hailstone in terms of weight (1.94 pounds) and diameter (8.0 inches) has just reached its final resting place at the cold lab at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. Henry Reges of the CoCoRaHS team had the honors of driving the 3rd leg of the relay that carried this stone successfully (carefully packaged and packed in dry ice) from the freezer of its finder in Vivian, South Dakota to the hail research facility in Boulder. The stone is now in the hands of Dr. Charles Knight who, interestingly, was already well established as a hail specialist back in 1970 when the Coffeyville, Kansas record hail stone was collected and documented.

The plans are to make a casting (mold) of this stone so that replicas can be displayed at the Historical Museum in Lyman County, South Dakota and at the Aberdeen, SD National Weather Service Office. We'll also be posting some photos of the stone and its unveiling this AM in Boulder,CO.

Is this really the biggest hail stone ever to hit the U.S. -- well, probably not. Chances are a bigger stone fell sometime and somewhere. But the odds of capturing a stone this large and securing it intact are very low. So if you ever have giant hail (and please know "giant" is relative. In parts of the country anything over 2-3" is huge, up and down the Great Plains those size stones occur fairly often and you have to be in the 4-5" range to be really unusual. But anywhere in the country, stones over 5" in diameter are rare and well worth documenting.

By the way, it was 31 years ago today (I may be off a day or two) that Fort Collins was pummeled by large hail. I left town that day for a camping trip in Wyoming and didn't find out about it for over a week.

Back then, the Denver Broncos had summer training camp here in Fort Collins so the big news story was all the fancy football player cars damaged by the hail. But the tragic part of the story was a local fatality where a baby was struck and killed while their panicked mother ran carrying the child to shelter. There were also several injuries -- some broken arms with people covering their heads. So please remember, large hail is scary dangerous and deserves the greatest of respect.

Five for CoCoRaHS -- Home stretch

We have a good chance of reaching our goal With just 36 hours left in our summer "Five for CoCoRaHS" campaign, over \$17,500 have been donated to help keep CoCoRaHS going. At the current pace, we will just reach the \$20,000 goal. Over 1100 of us have sent in donations in the last 9 days. This is great!

If you have not yet donated but would like to help, here is the link for donating online through the Colorado State University Foundation

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

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

Please know, we realize very well that you already donate your time to help CoCoRaHS. That is a huge help. Financial donations are not expected. But if you do enjoy helping out financially, these donations are helping sustain CoCoRaHS through the year.

Thanks and have a good weekend.

Nolan Doesken
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado

P.S. The Aurora, NE hailstone of a few years ago held on to the place in the record books for greatest circumference -- just slightly larger than the more spherical Vivian SD stone.