

The Catch

COCORAHS - HAPPY NEW (WATER) YEAR

FORT COLLINS, CO — Friday, October 1, 2010

Good evening fellow rain-gaugers:

With this morning's rainfall reports (Thursday, Sept 30) the 2010 CoCoRaHS Water Year came to an end. With tomorrow (Friday, October 1, 2010) morning's reports, we mark the first day of the new water year. I doubt if there are many parties going on today or tonight celebrating this event. But I must say I was really impressed when several dozen of you already completed your year-end summary and sent me your water year summary reports today. So far, I've seen totals as low as 8" from observers near Albuquerque, NM to sums as high as 65" in Florida and North Carolina. As more reports come in, I'm sure we'll see totals that span an even greater range. The variability and extremes of our U.S. climate are forever amazing.

If you're new to CoCoRaHS this year you are likely wondering what in the world we are talking about. But if you're a long time CoCoRaHS participant, you are familiar with our tradition of taking time now to go back over the past 12 months, filling in any missing or incorrect daily data reports, and then compiling monthly and annual precipitation and snowfall totals. An explanation of what we mean by "Water Year" can be found at:

<http://www.cocorahs.org/wateryearsummary/>

It's been a long time coming, but this year we are pleased to provide "Water Year Summaries" for every station in the entire country. Here is the plan. We will wait until about midnight tomorrow (Friday) night. By then, more of us will have finished sending in our daily reports for September. Julian will then add links to the above webpage so that we can search by state, by county, and by station. Summary reports will be prepared for every station that has participated in the past 12 months, even if they have only very incomplete data. Summary reports will be

compiled and available for viewing in HTML or you can download the summary report as an Excel spreadsheet.. We were still working out a few minor bugs today but I think the summaries look great and will be ready to go tomorrow night. The Excel spreadsheet will be composed of several different sheets and will even compile all your hail reports for the past year. One table will show all your daily precipitation reports and highlight the days with missing data and with multiday accumulations. We hope this makes it easier for everyone to check over their data.

By Saturday morning (October 2) we hope to have these summaries compiled and available. We will post instructions on the daily "Message of the Day". If you've been participating in data collection this year, please do take a look at the summary report for your station. You can also compare with other stations. Check over the sums and totals. If anything doesn't look right, please check your daily reports and fill in any missing data and check for any errors. If you do make changes, you won't see any changes to the summaries for several weeks. We plan to wait one month and then rerun the whole batch on November 1. That way you'll have a month, if you feel like it, to review data and go back and fill in or correct any reports. The batch of summaries we run on November 1 will be considered as final, so if you plan to fill in or correct any past data please make sure you've done it by then. Zach from our staff will then summarize the results from the whole country. We'll post a national CoCoRaHS Water Year summary report soon thereafter.

For my station here in northwest Fort Collins, the water year delivered 17.03" of precipitation (rain plus the melted water content of snow). We had 93" of snow and over 100 days when the ground was covered by at least 1" of snow. That's nothing compared to many parts of the Rockies, but for here that was a lot of snow. While the water year precipitation total was about 1.50" above average, the year has ended up terribly dry with only 1.87" total for the past 3 1/2 months. That's why I filed my first drought impact report last week as our horse pasture is pretty much shot and we're having to buy hay early this fall. The corrals are nothing but soft powdery dust at least 2" deep. Every time the winds picks up to 20 mph or higher, we've got clouds of dust to contend with.

There had been dust in the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey as well, but this recent storm sure has changed that. I just ran a "Total Precipitation Report" for the past 5 days and there are quite a few stations from the Florida Keys up the east side of FL, SC and NC into SE VA where rainfall totals have exceeded one foot with upwards of 20" in a few places. That's more rain than I saw here the entire year.

Thanks so very much for being a part of CoCoRaHS this past year. We're looking forward to a great new year and have plans for several new features for the website that some of you have suggested.

Finally, a suggestion for a CoCoRaHS New Year's resolution :-)
Recruit at least one new volunteer for CoCoRaHS in WY2011. Help fill in the gaps on the CoCoRaHS maps.

Best regards, and thanks again.

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