

The Catch

COCORAHS -- MORE ABOUT WATER YEAR SUMMARY REPORTS

FORT COLLINS, CO — Tuesday, October 4, 2011

Rain (snow) watchers:

I have received many e-mails about the 2011 Water Year Summary Reports. I was not clear enough with my explanation, so let me try again.

In the next few days, Julian will run a computer program that will generate a complete water year summary for every CoCoRaHS station in the country. The first round of these summaries should be ready by next Monday (October 10).

To see what these will look like, go to:

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

For the most part, we will use this same exact format. If you were a CoCoRaHS observer last year, then your own water year summary report can be accessed by clicking "My Account" at the top of the CoCoRaHS webpage. <http://www.cocorahs.org>

Some of you have been producing your own Water Year Summary Reports for many years. You may have your own favorite formats and spreadsheets. Dozens of you have already sent me your 2011 summaries, and I appreciate that very much. But we'll go ahead and generate consistent summaries for every station using our updated summary program.

After the 2011 Water Year Summary Reports are posted, then we encourage you to check them over to make sure your data (if you were taking observations this past year) are accurate and complete. You can go back in and enter or correct data from any time during the year. Then, around the end of October after we've all had a chance to review our summaries, we will rerun the program and post "final" results.

If you are currently not taking observations, that's fine too. Feel free to examine the summary reports from anywhere in the country. There will be fascinating patterns and variations including a lot of very small precipitation totals from places in TX and NM and some very large totals in other parts of the country.

The Water Year Summary tradition is a special part of CoCoRaHS -- and a chance to reflect on the weather and water of the past year and what might lie ahead for 2012.

Snow Coming?

Yikes, did I say the word "snow"? A handful of CoCoRaHS volunteers at the highest elevations in the Rockies and the Appalachians have already had their first snow. Today, Winter Storm Watches and Warnings have been posted by the National Weather Service for parts of CA, NV, UT and CO. Yes, it is that time of year.

In the next 6 - 8 weeks, we will begin reviewing how to measure and report snow. We have a few thousand new volunteers since last year who may have little or experience. Practice makes perfect, but until you've had practice measuring in the dark, cold, windy and wet winter mornings, measuring snow can be a little troubling.

Many organizations look to CoCoRaHS as a source of reliable and accurate snowfall measurements, so we will do our best to live up to that reputation. Stand by for updates.

The National Weather Service Cooperative Observer (COOP) Network

As best I can count, about 150 of us CoCoRaHS volunteers (me included) also maintain official weather stations for the National Weather Service Cooperative Observer Network (affectionately called the COOP Program). This absolutely amazing network has been in place for nearly 125 years and is responsible for much of what we know about our nation's climate. I will spare the details for now, but in the near future I want to tell you more about this national treasure and climate information resource. <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/coop/>

Talk to you again, soon.

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CoCoRaHS