

The Catch

COCORAHS -- 2011 WATER YEAR SUMMARIES + TEXAS RAINS

FORT COLLINS, CO — Monday, October 10, 2011

CoCoRaHS Precipitation Data Gatherers and Data Analyzers

Your 2011 Water Year Summaries (covering the period October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011) are now posted. You can view your individual station summaries by clicking "My Account" (you have to be logged in to see this). Then follow the links that appear on the "Notification" message on top of your station account. The summaries are available both in HTML and also as Excel spreadsheet files. Last year's 2010 water year summaries also appear there.

New this year are charts that show your monthly totals, daily totals and water year accumulations. Thanks to Julian from our staff for adding this appealing new feature. You can view these charts separately or we also have them embedded in the Excel files for each station. Don't forget the tabs at the bottom of the Excel spreadsheet that take you to different sheets within the file. This is essentially a complete tabulation of all your entries for the year all in one place and easy for you to save on your computer. More graphic features are planned for next year.

We have summary reports for 15,000+ stations that entered reports in the past 12 months. A special "hats off" to all of you who had complete or nearly complete data for the whole year. That is a great accomplishment.

You can also view summary reports and charts for any state and county in the country just by clicking "View Data" from the top menu bar on the CoCoRaHS website: <http://www.cocorahs.org> . Scroll down about half way and you'll see "Water Year Summary Reports" on the menu <http://www.cocorahs.org/WaterYearSummary/> Feel free to go exploring and compare your location to other parts of the country.

A chance to correct errors and fill in missing data

Consider these summaries a "first draft". Look them over and see if you have any missing data that you might have forgotten to enter -- or any data that was typed in wrong. You can go back in and add or correct daily observations as needed. This is also a chance to fill in days when no precipitation fell at your station using the "Monthly Zeros" data entry report form. We will give everyone about 3 weeks to review and verify your 2011 Water Year observations. Around Halloween we will rerun the program and post final results and graphs.

These water year summary reports are the culmination of another excellent year of CoCoRaHS data gathering. We appreciate your volunteer efforts very much.

What? Rain in Texas and Oklahoma??

I am very pleased to report that heavy rain fell over much of Texas and Oklahoma this weekend for the first time in ages. Out of 794 Texas rain gauge reports received for today (as of 11 PM this evening) more than 90% of the stations reported measurable precipitation. Furthermore, 70 CoCoRaHS volunteers in Texas reported over 4.00" of rain in the past 24 hours with a few stations up over 6". While these downpours caused some flooding, they also caused celebration with rumors of dancing in the streets in some areas. We hear that the cattle were also dancing.

But if you really wanted to see some big rainfall totals, look at Florida. We had a couple of full rain gauges this morning (Sunday). Remember, the CoCoRaHS gauge holds just over 11.00" when both the inner tube and outer cylinder are full to the top. A dozen stations, mostly near Vero Beach on the east coast of Florida, received over 10" of rain in the past 3 days with over 15" in a couple of spots. That's a lot even by Florida standards.

Snow too!

While the rains were coming down in some areas, the Rockies were getting snow. Cheyenne, Wyoming, well known for fall and spring snowstorms, got into the act with 6" to as much as 12" of snow in the vicinity by Sunday morning.

Reporting reminders

Don't forget the value and importance of sending in Significant Weather Reports, Hail Reports and Drought Impact Reports. Drought Impact Reports are useful for reporting improvements in drought conditions as well as deterioration (hint, hint -- for those of you in TX, OK and southern KS). Also remember to type in "Comments" in your daily precipitation reports to help describe your local conditions. That really adds to the daily weather story. Here are a just a few examples from the nearly 200 comments submitted this morning from Texas volunteers:

TX-WM-12

"5 times more rain fell in 40 minutes this morning then had fallen in the 107 days between June 23rd and October 8th when I measured 0.22 inches of rain"

TX-TV-27

"1st measurable rain since July, 2011"

TX-BND-1

"1.09 inches of great rain on top of rye grass seed put out yesterday morning!!"

TX-BST-44

"HALLELUIA!" (note from Nolan -- this is a county where some of our volunteers lost their homes to the wildfires just a few weeks ago)

TX-CML-2

"Elm creek is flowing again after months of being dry."

TX-JN-3

"Yes, you are seeing it correctly...3.60" of rain and it is still raining this Sunday morning."

So join the fun and add some descriptive value to your precipitation reports. To enter Comments just click your cursor inside the box labeled "Observation Notes" beneath the precipitation box and start typing.

Thanks to all of you for your interest in rainfall and your desire to share information from your community to help others in your area and across the country. Enjoy the 2011 Water Year Summaries.

One short animal story before bedtime

I haven't mentioned Angel much lately (our 100+ pound Great Pyrenees). She no longer chases and kills our geese and chickens (or our neighbors chickens) like she did a couple years back. In fact, she has begun to guard and protect them instead. Part of her change in attitude has been her change in age, additional weight, and decreased mobility. But after a near disaster a month ago when she got down in the irrigation ditch (hoping to escape under the bridge to freedom downstream), got soaked and couldn't climb back out, and ended up with a mighty close call with hypothermia (took three of us to lift her up out of the water and roll her home in a two-wheeled cart), she has somehow had a miraculous recovery and now has a new lease on life. She's lost a few pounds and gained a bunch of energy. Today she came joyously running across the bridge from the pasture when it was time to put the chickens back in the coop. Part of the change is also the weather. She hated the 90 degree weather this summer and loves the 50s that we enjoyed today.

A word about CoCoRaHS Calendars

We've been getting questions about 2012 CoCoRaHS rain gauge calendars. The 2011 calendar was a big hit last year and will surely be a collector's item. Henry (our CoCoRaHS National Coordinator) did a fantastic job collecting photos, selecting the calendar-quality images, designing the final product and working with the printer and distributor. We were all thrilled with how it turned out. But that being said, it was a lot of work and we just barely broke even. We decided not to do a calendar for 2012. Most likely we will do another one some day (especially if we could find a sponsor to cover the printing costs). So if you happen on a photo opportunity with your rain gauge that you just can't resist (fall colors, for example), please take a few photos (high resolution, please). Send your best images to Henry at <hreges@atmos.colostate.edu> and we'll start getting ready for the 201? CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendar.

Best wishes,

Nolan Doesken
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