

# The Catch

## COCORAHS -- UPDATE

Fort Collins, CO —Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Dear volunteers,

We are really sorry for the trouble this morning with the CoCoRaHS website down for at least 3 hours at a very critical time of day. The only information we received this morning from the company that hosts our website and database was *"we experienced an intermittent power issue. As a result, various segments in our data center became unavailable."*

Anyway, the site is up and running and no further problems are anticipated.

If you tried to enter your observations this morning and were unable to, please go ahead and type them in now. We got over 1200 e-mails this morning, some asking us to type in their data. We just can't keep up, so please type them in. We don't want to miss your information

## **CoCoRaHS Blog -- 60th anniversary of hook echo detection**

Those of you who live or have lived in tornado country have probably heard the term "hook echo." Well, today is a special day -- the 60th anniversary of the first hook echo observed on weather radar. Interestingly, I have many personal connections to this event, even though I don't remember any of it. I was only 15 months old at the time, but the tornado went very close to the house where I grew up in central Illinois. The man who took this tornado photograph lived just one block away from us, and the radar engineer and climatologist involved in this hook echo discovery were people I later worked for.

Steve Hilberg, CoCoRaHS state coordinator for Illinois and a long-time weather observer in his own right, posted this story on the CoCoRaHS Blog today and I highly recommend you take a look

<http://cocorahs.blogspot.com/2013/04/first-tornado-hook-echo-observed-60.html>.

Steve does a fantastic job with our Blog. If you want to keep learning about weather and climate, keep up with this great resource.

<http://cocorahs.blogspot.com/>

## **Hail -- Help with CoCoRaHS Hail observations**

We are already in prime hail season. That's why we've declared this week as "CoCoRaHS Hail Week".

Hail and hail damage is often very localized. It may hail ferociously at your house and two blocks away there is nothing. Hail causes hundreds of millions of dollars in crop and property damage each year. Yet, very few weather stations systematically report hail. Insurance companies have to rely on their own hail insurance claims in order to estimate hail risk. We simply need better hail data. That was one of the reasons we started CoCoRaHS.

Take a look at our hail maps:

<http://www.cocorahs.org/Maps/ViewMap.aspx?state=usa>

You can see the amazing potential that we have to track and study hail. But this only works if we have enough volunteers in enough places who are able to observe and report what they see -- large or small, soft or hard, clear or white. To look at detailed summaries of our hail reports, <http://www.cocorahs.org/ViewData/ListHailReports.aspx>

There are still many research questions, and as the National Weather Service completes the deployment of their dual polarization radar upgrades across the country, our hail reports become even more meaningful. This radar is well suited for estimating the type of precipitation -- hail or rain. Our reports will really help in this process. We had a special webinar on doppler and dual polarization radar just a few weeks ago. Here's a link.

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

So if you have hail, please click "Login" or "My Data" at the top of the CoCoRaHS website and then select "Hail" (third one down on the left hand menu under "Enter My New Reports". Fill in the information that you can and skip the parts that you might not know. Even if you weren't home at the time, it's still very useful information. Thank you!

## **Upcoming CoCoRaHS Webinar on tornadoes**

If you can spare an hour and are interested in tornadoes, join us at 11 AM MDT on Thursday, April 18th. Register here:

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/849947638>

And on May 9th for all you history buffs, we'll have Dr. James Fleming, lead us through some of the fascinating times in the history of Atmospheric Science.

## **Snow Training -- keeps getting better**

A lot of folks were measuring snow again this morning -- many in high winds, drifts and other uncomfortable situations. Lander, Wyoming, was the snow capital of the U.S. this morning with 20" or more.

It took us all winter, but we finally have a new training video to guide us through the tough situations we may face.

[http://youtu.be/q2Xq8\\_M25ys](http://youtu.be/q2Xq8_M25ys)

It doesn't answer every question, but it takes you through some of the slippery situations we observers may encounter when measuring snow.

And remember, we have many other training resources to help you get started and to answer your observing questions. If the answers are not there, please let us know

## **And finally,**

Hard to believe it's April 9th, but it's been snowing all day here in Colorado and the temperature barely reached 20F. Storms are popping on the Southern Plains and it hit 90F in southern Texas. These are interesting times. It must be spring.

Enjoy, and thanks very much for participating in CoCoRaHS. Keep those rain gauge reports coming -- and don't forget to report hail and heavy rain (Significant Weather Reports) too.

Sincerely,  
Nolan Doesken  
Colorado State University