

The Catch



NOLAN DOESKEN'S BI-MONTHLY COCORAHS E-MAIL MESSAGE

COCORAHS -- Some Words of Thanks

FORT COLLINS, CO -- November 30, 2013

- [A Touching Note of Thanks](#)
- [Dry, Wet, and a Cold Wave Coming](#)
- [Water Year Summaries](#)
- [Climate and Our Health](#)
- [Webinar Invitation](#)
- [Ideas for Frozen Mounting Brackets](#)
- [CoCoRaHS in Canada](#)
- [Stories From the Farm](#)
- [Thanks Again](#)

Dear CoCoRaHS rain/snow measurers, friends and family:

I just wanted to wish everyone a very thankful Thanksgiving. I didn't have a chance to write ahead of time, but when I got this personal note yesterday from one of our dedicated volunteers in northern Kentucky, I realized it is never too late to express thanks. Here was the message:

Nolan,

First of all I want to wish you, your family and everyone there at Colorado State a Very Happy Thanksgiving. I am very thankful this year because I finally was released from rehab to come home for good yesterday. It will be great to be able to spend the holidays with family and friends.

I had a stroke in January and have been in the hospital and rehab since then. I was able to come home for a couple of days here and there, but now I can finally get around and care for myself. I am almost at 100% except for a limp and slow speech at times. I hope to be able to get back in the swing of things with reports shortly as my sons are moving my gauge where it will be more accessible to me. It's good to be back on MY computer so I can get to all my old friends.

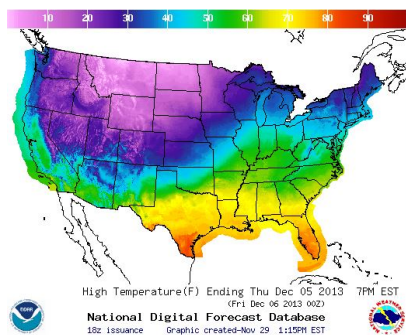
I will be in touch soon.

*Don
Boone County, Kentucky*

This really hit me. (Don, thanks so much for writing.) Our rain gauge reports are perhaps trivial compared to the greater daily challenges we encounter as we live out our lives. But as we see day after day, through floods, drought, winter and summer -- our collective efforts make a difference in many ways.

So Happy Thanksgiving, and thanks for being a part of CoCoRaHS.

Cold Wave Coming



We had fine weather here in Colorado for Thanksgiving -- sunshine, beautiful "mares tails" cirrus clouds, light winds and temperatures in the 40s. Almost the entire country is enjoying dry, sunny, cool tranquil weather for the rest of the Thanksgiving weekend. That's uncommon this time of year as there are usually storms trekking across the continent. Those storms didn't miss the

Miami, Florida area, however. Just for November, Station FL-MD-33 has recorded a total of 14.78 to date! By using the CoCoRaHS PRISM Portal, we can see that the "normal" (1981-2010 average) amount of precipitation for this location in November is only 3.01 inches. The dry weather elsewhere is greatly appreciated after the storm earlier in the week where snow, freezing rain, and sleet coated many areas from New Mexico and Texas to New England. Most certainly this will all change next week as [the next Arctic outbreak takes aim on the Great Plains.](#)

Memorable "Blockade of 1913"



This next week marks the 100th anniversary of one of Colorado's greatest winter storms of the recorded past. When heavy, wet snow started falling on Dec 1-2, 1913, it was celebrated as precious water to aid farmers the following year. But after a short break on Dec 3, the storm came back as a blizzard fury that

blockaded every train in and out of Denver and brought commerce to a stop. Prisoners were released and thousands of able-bodied individuals were hired to dig out trolley cars

and train stations from the nearly 4 feet of heavy, wet and windblown snow.

Colorado's new history museum, the History Colorado Center, is sponsoring [special programs next week](#) to commemorate and recall this remarkable event.

By the way, history was one of my least favorite subjects back in school. It took me a few years as a climatologist to realize that I had become, without even realizing it, a "weather historian". I've loved history ever since.

Water Year Summaries

Just a reminder that we have reprocessed and recompiled all the Water Year Summaries for 2013 and the previous three years. There is tremendous information contained in these summaries and graphs. [Click here to view any station in the network](#) and enjoy the fruits of our rain gauge labors!

Climate and Our Health

Connections between climate and human health have been considered for many years. Many of the early weather observers in the mid 1880s were "Fort Surgeons" here in our country. Later in the 1880s, Colorado founded the Colorado Weather Service (similar activities were occurring then in other states). Many of the early members of the Colorado Weather Service were medical doctors. Here, the connection between climate and tuberculosis was of particular interest then.

Webinar Opportunity on Climate and Health



I would like to invite you to attend our next and very unique webinar Thursday, December 5, at 1 PM Eastern time, noon Central, 11 AM Mountain and 10 AM Pacific. Ben Beard of the Centers for Disease Control will be presenting "Climate Change, Ecology, and Disease Emergence – A Public Health Perspective". Please join us if you can by [clicking](#)

[here to register.](#)

Most of our WeatherTalk Webinar series are [archived on our YouTube Channel](#) for viewing at your convenience.

Freezing Bracket Ideas

If you get snow, sleet or freezing rain (or cold temperatures following a rain), your gauge might stick to the bracket. There are a few ways to avoid or deal with this inconvenience. Some of you go out with some warm water and pour it over the bracket to thaw any ice. That seems to work but is wet and sloppy. A few others have been using a vegetable oil spray to keep the bracket and gauge from sticking. I've never tried that. Some just mount their gauge differently during cold weather to avoid the bracket sticking problem. I, for example, keep one gauge in an adjustable (and portable) Christmas tree stand and that works great most of the time.



Most recently a CoCoRaHS volunteer (VA-CR-3) sent a suggestion: By hanging a plastic grocery bag in between the gauge and the mounting bracket, "I can just lift the top of the bag and the ice falls away!"

One more thing about snow. As we head into December, snow will begin to linger and stay on the ground for days after a fresh snow. It may linger for weeks or even months in some parts of the country. Remember, the "Depth of Snow on the Ground" is a very important and useful measurement. Snow cover has a huge impact on weather conditions -- affecting soil temperatures, air temperatures and much more. Many of us are good about reporting accumulations of new snow but skip over reporting the overall depth -- especially on days when no new snow has fallen.

It may not always be easy to measure or estimate the average depth of snow remaining on the ground. It can be very uneven due to wind and differential melting. But do try to measure it if you can.

[Click here to view a quick training animation to help make it easier.](#)

CoCoRaHS Canada

The numbers of Canadian volunteers continue to increase -- with now over 400 registered volunteers and more than 150 reports per day. Folks in New Brunswick got a good workout recently as well, with over 4" of wind-driven rain earlier this week. I just noticed a new station this week up in Labrador -- north of the Gulf of St. Lawrence along the Trans Labrador Highway. CoCoRaHS not only teaches a lot about weather and climate, but a whole lot about geography. I love it.

Peaceful on the Farm

I'm happy to report all is well with our animals. No racoons, no fox, no coyotes. There are some Great Horned Owls hooting at night, but our cats are smart enough to take cover. We're working to have everything ready for next week's possible cold blast. I was delighted to get a text message from my son earlier this week while I was attending an

agricultural meeting in NE Colorado. The message said "The hay is all up." He had gathered some of his buddies together on their Thanksgiving break and got all the hay

stored up in our hay loft. That saves my back for one more year. :-)

Thankful For All of You

Just wanted to let you all know how much I appreciate this opportunity to work with all of you. We have an incredible community of rain gauge volunteers, and together we're making a difference. Once again, a belated Happy Thanksgiving and thanks for helping out. I'll be writing again in two weeks to launch our year-end fundraiser. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken
Colorado State University

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