

The Catch



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

CoCoRaHS -- Happy Thanksgiving!

Fort Collins, Colorado -- November 26, 2014

Dear rain (and snow) gaugers, young and old:

As we celebrate Thanksgiving in our many and varied ways, I just wanted to let all of you know how thankful I am to have this chance to work with all of you as we try our best to track and map rain, hail and snow across the country. Sometimes it's fun. Sometimes it's boring (extended droughts). And sometimes it's hard (especially as we get older) -- as evidenced by the long, harsh cold weather some of you experienced last winter and the Buffalo, NY snowstorm last week.

This year we've added close to 4000 new volunteers who have signed up (and nearly 2/3 have started reporting). Yeah!! But we've also had our largest decrease offsetting our growth. The harsh winter last year in parts of the country didn't help. Nearly every week I hear from one or more of you that ill health, immobility, moves to places with no spot for a rain gauge or other life circumstances are causing you to drop out. This is the way of life, and we all understand. At the same time, we've been adding more schools and younger volunteers than ever before. So life goes on, and hopefully CoCoRaHS will go on, too. Those of you who continue to trudge out to your gauge each morning, even in the winter darkness, have my greatest respect.

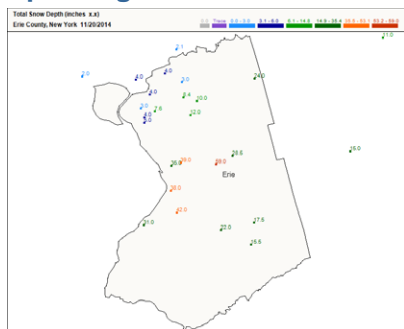
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Speaking of Buffalo



With some areas near Buffalo getting several feet of moisture-laden snow and others getting only inches, each and every CoCoRaHS snow and water content report was crucial -- helping document this incredible storm. About 30 of you managed to send in reports while a few dozen others just threw up your hands in dismay (understandably). Historically there would have only been a couple of official reports from Erie County plus snow spotters, but now there are many.

The same is true in other parts of the country. Thank you, thank you, and thank you for making it possible to track something that matters to the whole country.

Ready for Snow and Ice



Thanksgiving is the traditional start of the snow season for many parts of the country, and on cue, a winter storm is taking shape over the Appalachians and New England today.

If you are new to measuring snow or just need a refresher, we have tons of resources to help. Click on

your preferred link below:

- [Written Instructions](#)
- Videos: [23 minute 'classic'](#) featuring 'a younger Nolan'; [Three-Minute Quick version](#) by Tony Merriman (NWS in North Dakota).
- [Slide Shows](#) (including the 'weighing method')
- [Recorded Webinar](#)
- [Animations](#)

Remember, in addition to measuring snowfall (the 24-hour accumulation of new snow at your scheduled time of observation) we also need the water content (precipitation) and the total depth of snow (old and/or new) remaining on the ground at your observation time. Measurements of the water content of new snow and total depth are also of great value (as those of you who attended our [Webinar two weeks ago](#) learned). Reports of freezing rain and the accumulation of ice are also greatly appreciated.

Significant Weather Reports - They are for Snow and Ice Too!

Remember, if heavy snow begins or ends, or changes from one form of precipitation to another -- or is just plain raising a ruckus in your community, please use the "Significant Weather Report" (left hand menu from your data entry page) to let your NWS forecasters know. When you hit "submit" that report goes straight to the computer consoles of your weather forecasters. Help them out. You can send in one or more, as you see fit during any storm.

Significant weather reports do not replace the need to still submit your regular daily report. They serve different purposes.

Farm Story

Dozens of kids (mostly under the age of 8) and their parents descended on our place to film a Christmas pageant Sunday afternoon. It was cold, the winds were gusting to about 40 mph and periods of snow squalls made filming -- well, challenging. I fear there won't be that many beaming smiling faces in the final product as parents and grandparents might hope, but everyone survived as best we could tell. And somehow at least 70 people all squeezed inside our house to put on various costumes, sip hot chocolate, apple cider or coffee, and warm up before staging the next scenes. It was crazy.

I was conveniently unaware of these plans for our farm until the previous afternoon. We moved hay bales, gathered firewood, cleared paths, polished the red wagon, put up decorations and even tried to set up a big tent outside with a heater. Thanks to some extra stakes, the tent did not blow away. But it was so cold and scary in the flapping tent that no one used it. Despite the inclement weather, the director, her teenage helpers and the many children and parents persevered, and quite liked cramming into our house just for the pleasure of staying warm.

Our oldest barn cat took advantage of the opportunity (dogs were shut in the kennel and house doors were frequently left open) to make her first appearance in 17 years -- in the house. Now she will keep trying to get in as she liked what she found (affectionate children). We managed to find a protected spot in a bend in the irrigation ditch for a marshmallow roast out of the wind. That was a big hit. The horses stood their ground in the face of sword-wielding 7-year olds. And the old front porch withstood the weight of dozens of children for the grande finale. I was a little worried about that. At least they decided to do without candles which would have almost certainly burned someone or something. And then, as quickly as it started, parents whisked away their children and they disappeared to the warmth of their own homes.

All in all, it was one of the wildest and yet fulfilling afternoons. At the end of the day, we counted our animals and they were still all here. We only found 3 spare mittens, a pacifier, a \$20 dollar bill and surprisingly little mud manure on the floor.

And then on Monday morning, it was off to the oral surgeon to have 3 old and previously faithful teeth removed. Hence, I am home recovering from whence I send you this greeting.

Happy Thanksgiving, to you and those you choose to (or not to) celebrate with. Travel safely. And if the opportunity comes in a moment of slow conversation during of after dinner -- please invite a friend or family member to sign up for CoCoRaHS. You can even demo your CoCoRaHS app ([iPhone](#) or [Android](#)) to enter data write there at the dinner table.

Sincerely and thankfully,

Nolan Doesken and the CoCoRaHS team,
Colorado State University

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