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The Catch



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

CoCoRaHS -- Hang in There - Spring Will Come Soon!

Fort Collins, Colorado -- February 20th, 2015

Frigid cold, bone-chilling winds, ice and snow continue to grip much of the East. Most of our New England CoCoRaHS volunteers don't mind a little snow and are accustomed to prolonged periods of cold with fresh snow accumulation on top of layers of older snow (what we call "snow on snow"). But this last month or so is getting a bit ridiculous. Meanwhile, the Western U.S has had abnormal warmth and very little snow. The mountains on the spectacularly lush and beautiful Olympic Peninsula of northwest Washington State are normally buried in snow but as of yesterday measurements showed only 3% of the normal snow pack for this time of year. [Click here to see the NRCS SWE \(snow water equivalent\) map.](#)

As of today, Boston has received over 7 feet of snow in the past 4 weeks and temperatures have ended up nearly 12 deg. F colder than average. This morning I noticed that temperatures were still in the single digits and winds were blowing 30 mph. The forecast for the weekend is snow, sleet and freezing rain (just lovely :)). Many locations in the NE have now totaled over 50" of new snow, and none of it has melted. It's been interesting to watch the number of CoCoRaHS reports coming in. Some of you (OK, many of you) have given up trying to measure snow anymore. 25% or more of our normally faithful volunteers in Maine, Massachusetts and vicinity have "packed it in" after one too many storms and multiple feet of snow on the ground blocked your access or broke your spirits. The latest victim has been Kentucky and West Virginia where over a foot of snow (very unusual for western Kentucky) has been followed by subzero temperatures (locally as cold as -20F) and punishing winds.

All I can say is "hang in there". The calendar says "February 20" and with each day the sun gets higher in the sky. Warmer weather is just around the corner. And for the 75%

of CoCoRaHS observers that have stuck with it – Wow! Thanks so much!!

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Upcoming Webinar - Weather and Agriculture

All of us are connected directly or indirectly to farming and ranching, and all of us appreciate food. With this in mind, we've scheduled a webinar on February 26 (2:00 PM Eastern, 1:00 PM Central, 12:00 Mountain, 11:00 AM Pacific) where we can all meet and hear from the team of meteorologists at the U.S. Dept of Ag that track agricultural weather conditions across the U.S and around the world. The ag meteorologists there at the [USDA Office of the Chief Economist](#) are also big fans of CoCoRaHS and use our data regularly. [Click here to register](#) (and please note that it is one hour later than our 'normal' webinar time.)

Missed the Groundhog

I meant to wish everyone a happy Groundhog Day, but too much was going on that day. Hope you celebrated appropriately as we passed the midway point between winter solstice and the spring equinox. That point is also known as "cross quarter" day.

Welcome Minnesota Recruits (and others)

Our Minnesota CoCoRaHS leaders have been hard at work. With the help of some timely stories in the media, nearly 100 new recruits from all corners of Minnesota have signed on to help measure and report. If you're new to CoCoRaHS, welcome aboard and let us know if you have any questions or need any help getting started. [You can listen to \(or read\) the Minnesota Public Radio story here.](#)

Getting Ready for "March Madness"

Minnesota's recent success reminds me that in just one week we'll begin our annual volunteer recruiting competition to see how many new volunteers we can get during the month of March. This is something you can help with, too. We would love to add many new volunteers in every state. If you know anyone in any state – or in Canada, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands (the Virgin Islands join the team on March 15) who would like to be a part of our project and help make a difference measuring, mapping, tracking and exploring precipitation patterns, then PLEASE encourage them to [sign up](#).

This year we are especially interested in recruiting volunteers from data sparse rural areas. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Spread the word, and [click here](#) if you would like to see how the campaign progresses as well as results from prior years.

Ready, Set, Measure

At last count there are some 12,000 folks across the U.S. and Canada who made the effort to register and sign up for CoCoRaHS but have never submitted a single measurement. Another 12,000 have collected a little data now and then but then quickly dropped out. We know that hundreds others have just [forgotten their passwords](#) and

many others failed to notify us when they changed e-mail address (just let us know and we can get you set up again).

If any of this describes you, the next few weeks would be a great time to get your gauge set up again. If you're in the cold part of the country, let this harsh winter weather pass and then get started. Measuring rain is quite easy, and we really would love to get your reports. Please consider. Thanks.

Farm Story

I am pleased to report that we've enjoyed another month of peace and tranquility on the farm. We survived an early mud season as our snow melted quickly and abruptly a few weeks ago when we had our first ever back to back 70+F temperatures in January (in over 125 years of records). Since then it hasn't been too dry or wet and we've had good weather for making compost piles. The frost came out of the ground a full month earlier than usual. The worms (red wiggler composting worms) have been unusually active too so our fresh worm compost is in great condition. That will slow down this weekend, though, as we could get 6-12 inches of snow with high temperatures on Sunday only in the teens (yes, I know, that sounds warm to some of you).

Anyway, the chickens are happily increasing egg production and have stayed healthy all winter. I'm having second thoughts, though, about the second rooster. We took him as a favor to a friend -- sigh. Up until now he's been calm and gracious, but for the last few weeks he's started to dislike my visits to the hen house and this morning he made a run at me. Amazingly the smaller, older, and very gentle rooster came to my immediate defense and knocked down the new, young rooster.

Best Wishes

As we look past this winter towards spring and summer, many questions await. Will there be floods? Will the California drought expand or retract, and will other areas of the country experience drought? Will it be another gentle tornado and hurricane season or will there be any big storms and/or more numerous ones again? There is much speculation and plenty of uncertainty. But regardless, we'll hopefully be there to measure and report. Thanks for being a part of CoCoRaHS. It's great to work with you.

P.S. It looks like I'll be in Santa Fe, NM the first week of March for a Rio Grande basin water law conference. We're working to set up a little CoCoRaHS get together the evening of March 5. If you live in that area, expect to get an e-mail invitation soon. Hope to see some of you there!

Sincerely,

Nolan Doesken and the CoCoRaHS team
NOAA's Weather Ready Nation Ambassador Program
Colorado State University

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