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# The Catch



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

## CoCoRaHS -- One Million Reports Since March!

Fort Collins, Colorado -- June 9th, 2015

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### Greetings from CoCoRaHS

Thanks for all of you who are keeping track of our rainfall. Since I last wrote, a million daily rainfall reports from a total of over 17,000 reporting stations have been received. The most reports received for any one day so far this year was on May 6 with 12,711 daily reports (and still increasing). More than half of CoCoRaHS volunteers reported measurable (0.01" or greater that day). Hopefully we'll be topping out over 13,000 reports per day soon, as more of you get your gauges installed. A lot of this information can be viewed by using our '[Rainy Days Report](#)' tool found in the '[View Data](#)' section of the website.

We've been in "big but wildly variable rainfall" mode ever since early May. Every day (up until TODAY), somewhere in the country has gotten at least 4" of rain. Yesterday, the "winner"/"loser" (depending on your point of view) was in Vermillion County, in east-central IL, with 5.65". That was only about 20 miles from where I grew up.

It's calmed down now in the last couple of weeks, but Texas and Oklahoma had a

remarkable spell of wet weather and flooding since I last wrote. More than 140 CoCoRaHS observers from TX and OK have received in excess of 25" of rain since April 1 with some totals topping out over 35 inches -- huge for a two-month total. Coincidentally, many of the huge storms occurred near Norman, OK (home of NOAA's [National Severe Storms Lab](#) and [Storm Prediction Center](#)). During May and June there were 6 separate days with daily rainfall totals exceeding 10" including two out of three days over the Memorial Day weekend in the Houston and Austin areas where we have hundreds of volunteers reporting.

But for all of this rain (over 30" since April 1 at two stations in TX), this was not the wettest part of the country. The big island of Hawaii, as is often the case, scored the heaviest rains of all including two stations (Honomu 2.8 SW and Mountain View 0.6 ESE) each totaled over 40".

As always there were plenty of dry spots to offset the wet. Parts of Canada have been very dry during this period as well as portions of the eastern US -- but these areas have been catching up recently. There was some cooler, wetter weather in CA in May -- but not enough to make a dent in their drought.

#### **New -- or just getting started?**

If you are new to CoCoRaHS or haven't gotten started yet, this is a great and important time to get started. Rainfall is incredibly variable and sometimes extreme this time of year (especially in the eastern 2/3 of the country, and each and every rain gauge helps. If you need help getting started, contact your [state or local CoCoRaHS coordinator](#) or contact us at [info@cocorahs.org](mailto:info@cocorahs.org).

Also, our Illinois State Coordinator and author of the CoCoRaHS blog, Steve Hilberg, wrote an excellent '[Back to Basics](#)' piece in his state newsletter - and it is so helpful that I would like to share it with everybody. Once you click on the archive link, you may need to click a button to acknowledge that you are not a robot. The newsletter is from April, 2015, number 4.

#### **Hail?? Heavy rain?? Big winds?? Dense fog?? Drought?? (Yes, you've probably heard me say this before...)**

While our number of rainfall reports are increasing, the number of special reports (hail, significant weather, drought impacts) have been decreasing. We're not sure why. Maybe it's too much trouble (hopefully not) or maybe most of you have become trained weather spotters for the National Weather Service and report directly to them (and that is GREAT!). Or, maybe many of us don't realize how important these reports are, or that they are even an option. Just look to the left hand panel from your [data entry page](#) to find these extra report forms. Did you know you can also report a variety of atmospheric optics such as rainbows, halos and sundogs? Or audible reports of thunderclaps? Don't hesitate to explore these other types of reports!

If you experience hail at your home location, please send in a [hail report](#). This information is very important, even if the hail is small and seemingly insignificant. Hail has a big impact on radar reflectivity, so meteorologists that use radar really need to know more about hail. Even if you don't deploy a hail pad, please still fill out the form as

best you can and leave any fields blank if you don't know.

Likewise, if you get heavy rain or other interesting weather, your "[Significant Weather Report](#)" is a huge help to the National Weather Service. Many ask "but how do I know if it's "significant"?" Simply said, any report of heavy rain, high winds, dense fog, etc. could make a difference. When in doubt, shout it out -- and report your local conditions. But remember, rainfall amounts contained in your special reports do not substitute for your regular daily reports. They serve different purposes and are handled separately. If you would like to see some examples, you can [view the reports here](#).

### **Field Photo Weekend**

Memorial Day is past but it's not too late to [send in your photos](#). Some of you have been doing this for three years now and we hope to gain more momentum in the next few years. Pictures really do tell the story of how variations in temperature and precipitation affect our landscapes and crops, and how much this can vary from year to year. You can [view past submitted photos](#) here. Our lilac hedge was still blooming for Memorial Day this year -- but it was way past it's prime. I pulled out the pictures I had taken in previous years and saw huge differences. Help out if you can. Thanks.

### **High time for a CoCoRaHS theme song**

Our curious name "CoCoRaHS" (Which is an acronym for "Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow network) is just begging for a theme song. In my college guitar-playing years back in the early 1970s I could sometimes write some half-way decent music and lyrics, so I've been hoping and waiting for some musical CoCoRaHS inspiration. But alas, 17 years later (our birthday when the CoCoRaHS data entry website was first launched was June 17,1998) nothing has happened. I fear any limited musical abilities I may have once had or imagined are now long gone.

So, maybe it's time to open this up. It's time we have a contest to come up with a great theme song or songs -- to capture the mood, the spirit, the sense, the nonsense, the joy and the importance of a bunch of people out measuring rain. I suppose it could be new lyrics to an old song, but I'd prefer that it be totally unique. I've been patiently waiting for 17 years, so I'm not going to impose a quick deadline. But let's see what we can come up with. I'm open to any style of music -- folk, rock, country, hip-hop -- you name it. To enter the "contest" just type out the lyrics and, if you can, record the music so we can capture the melody, rhythm, and any fine harmonies you have in mind. As for copyrighting, etc. I haven't thought that far. I don't know where this will take us, but who knows -- maybe our first CoCoRaHS album/CD will strike gold and finance the future of CoCoRaHS.

### **Farm Story -- Glorious but Terrible Mud**

I am pleased to report the standing water and deep mud in our corral which was with us for nearly 5 weeks has finally soaked in and dried out. I was dreading loading hay for our horses through the mud on Memorial Day, but alas the mud had dried and solidified enough that I could push a two-wheeled wheel barrow with no more than two bales of hay without getting stuck. Since then our rains have been lighter and the ground is now firm. The pasture has been growing luxuriously, too, so won't have to feed much hay now for awhile.

We've enjoyed a couple of years now with nearly no predator pressure on our chickens. A few of our birds have even taken overnight outings to outdoor roosting spots and survived. For the first time in 30 years there are even a few bunny rabbits showing up in the neighborhood -- a sure sign that the fox and coyote populations is minimal. But last week we forgot to close the chicken coop door and woke to a commotion. We ran out and found a fat raccoon with our plumpest young hen. It was a traumatic attack for all the hens as it took about 3 days after that for egg laying to begin again.

**Keep those rain gauge reports coming -- and help us fill gaps on the maps!**

If you don't know it already, your rainfall measurements are treasured and used by many meteorologists, hydrologists, agronomists, entomologists, and plenty more folks across the country. To maximize the usefulness of your reports, remember to enter your zeros for days without rain, and either do multi-day reports for when you're away, or have a friend or neighbor read your gauge when you're out of town. For National Weather Service applications, try to send in your report as soon as practical after you read your gauge each morning. Timing doesn't matter so much for climatological research like I do, but for weather forecasts and warnings, time is of the essence. Most of all, have a wonderful summer.

If you're headed to or through Colorado, come up to see us in Fort Collins. I'll be out of town until after the 4th of July as we're having a family gathering up in Upper Michigan. But Henry, Zach, Noah or Julian on our staff will be here to show you around. With any luck, I'll try to do some CoCoRaHS recruiting while in the UP since that is a part of the country which is still a data void.

Have a great summer. Let us know if you have any questions or need any help.

Sincerely,

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

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