

The Catch



NOLAN DOESKEN'S MONTHLY COCORAHS E-MAIL MESSAGE

CoCoRaHS -- "CoCo-Zilla"

Fort Collins, Colorado -- August 19th, 2015

[Summer's Home Stretch](#)

[Speaking of El Niño](#)

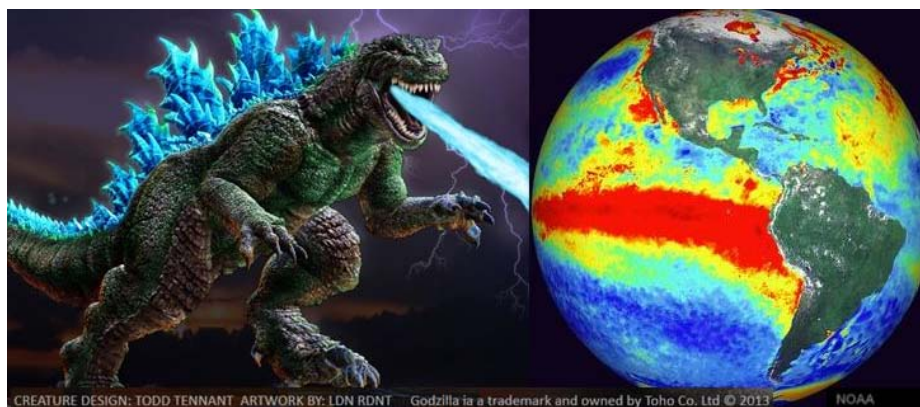
[Big Storm? Tell Us About It!](#)

[Snow? -- No, but Maybe](#)

["CoCoRaHS Theme Song" Competition - Rules](#)

[The Return of WxTalk Webinars](#)

[Farm Stories](#)



Summer's Home Stretch

It's been a dry and hot stretch of weather for much of the country - typical of some mid-Augusts. But the winds have been a-changing lately. A lively late summer cold front has been sweeping across the country triggering storms along the way. Over the weekend, Washington State had its wettest day since March -- and scarcely anyone minded at all. In the Dakotas, temperatures soared to triple digits on Friday, but the northern states are now dropping back into the 60s and 70s. Fall isn't quite in the air yet, but it's close.

This is a rarity, but the heaviest rain reported anywhere in the entire U.S. so far this month (in a CoCoRaHS gauge, that is) fell in the wee hours of the morning of August 10 in a rural short grass prairie location southeast of Colorado Springs. 7.29" of rain fell there in a rare nocturnal thunderstorm followed by another 2.02" later that evening. That's about 70% of their annual average -- all within 24 hours.

Our team of CoCoRaHS volunteers in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have been suffering through a spring and summer of drought. They finally got their heaviest rains of the year so far with an island average of 1.40" and locally closer to 4" in spots on August 17. After weeks of quiet in the tropical Atlantic, there is finally some signs of some tropical disturbances forming in the coming days. The next several weeks are the heart of hurricane season, so be ready. Just because it's an El Niño year doesn't mean you don't need to worry about Atlantic Hurricanes.

Speaking of El Niño -- Notable Quote Draws Attention to Upcoming Weather

There was already a lot of attention focusing on the strengthening El Niño in the Pacific Ocean. [Then along came this article with a comment](#) a few days ago by Bill Patzert with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

"This definitely has the potential of being the Godzilla El Niño,"

Now El Niño has surged to headline status again all over the world.

Based on past strong El Niño's, there is a general sense of what to expect this fall and winter -- dry and mild in the northern Rockies and parts of western Canada, dry in the Ohio River Valley, and cooler and wetter than average across the southern states up to the mid Atlantic region. California, our first line of defense against incoming Pacific storms with the proverbial "Pineapple Express" connection with the tropics would seem to be poised to take it on the chin. While that's certainly possible and worth getting ready for, past El Niño weather has been fickle for California. Most any combination of stormy, dry or wet weather is possible, but if ever there would be joy over stormy wet weather, it would be California this winter.

Whether or not we have a "Godzilla El Niño", let's have a CoCoZilla welcoming party! Thousands of eager rain gauges (and rain gaugers ;)) would be great to measure and report whatever the coming season has to offer. All eyes will be on the Pacific and the subtropical jet stream as we move into fall. For all of you who live in CA who have suffered through four consecutive years of drought, and months of precipitation measurement boredom, please gear up and be ready. Exactly what our fall and winter will be like will reveal itself one day at a time. Our measurements will help tell and show the story. Recruit friends and family to join CoCoRaHS as we get ready for "Water Year 2016!"

Big Storm? Tell Us About It!

The first thing I (and many weather professionals) do when there's been a big storm is click on the CoCoRaHS daily precipitation report, sort them from highest to lowest ([click here](#), make sure the location is set to "select state" to see the entire country, and then sort the data by clicking on "Total Precip. in.") and then click "view" on the heaviest

totals to see what the observer said about the storm. For some reason, very few folks have been writing comments lately, even after whopper storms. I, on the other hand, probably write way too much ([just check on the comments](#) for Station CO-LR-273). I use CoCoRaHS as my weather journal to refer back to.

I strongly encourage you to add comments to your daily precipitation reports. A few words to go with our rain gauge report is worth meteorological gold. Thanks very much.

Snow -- No, but Maybe

Believe it or not (and it seems so distant now), the first snow of the year for some of us may be only a few weeks away. Sudden weather changes are possible in September and October. [Will you \(and your gauge\) be ready?](#)

Rules (Or Lack Thereof) for the "CoCoRaHS Theme Song" Competition

As you probably noticed, I didn't spell out the rules for this "contest" very clearly. I guess I wasn't sure that anyone would actually participate -- and I certainly didn't have any cash prizes to award. Nevertheless, we've had about 40 entries and I'm getting questioned about how we'll pick and award winners. Hmmmm, tough choice. So far, our entries fall into three basic categories

- 1) Well known and well loved "oldies" that are about rain. (It's actually amazing how many great songs have been written and sung.)
- 2) Original lyrics written to go with previously written and performed music.
- 3) Original original -- both the lyrics and the music

So now that you've asked, I still don't have a good set of rules prepared. I think every entry is a winner. The oldies are great and bring back many music memories for me. But the ones that have original lyrics are awesome, and the ones with both original lyrics and music are amazing (not many of them, though.) And the ones that have been preformed and recorded swept me off my feet.

For now I'm leaving the so-called "competition" open through the month of September. I realize that musical creativity doesn't just happen on command, so I'll give you another 6 weeks in hopes of even more inspiration. Then, later this fall (unknown date) we'll give credit where credit is due and try to organize some sort of "performance" or online concert. I have no idea how we'll do this, but with technology at our fingertips it should all be possible.

If you haven't submitted an entry yet, it's not too late. Just send it straight to me at nolan@atmos.colostate.edu

The Return of the WxTalk Webinars!

If you get the CoCoRaHS "Message of the day" you probably have seen that we're starting up the webinar series again next month. I'll be the first speaker on Sept 17 describing the fascinating history of volunteer weather observations in the U.S. The October Webinar will dig deep into the North American Monsoon by expert Christopher Castro from the Univ. of Arizona. November will feature Tom Niziol, the Weather

Channel's winter weather expert to tell us about Lake Effect Snow. And it just get's better from there.

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

Check out the schedule and register early.

Farm Stories

All is quiet on the farm, for the most part. It's never been the same since dear Angel (the Great Pyrenees) past on and since we found a new home for our flock of geese. But it's been much more peaceful here and that counts for something. We finally got a rain this week to settle the two inches of dust in the horse corral after a month without rain. You can tell it's been dry when a heavy rain kicks up dust. We've kept the raccoons away now for a few weeks, but last night they were back checking out our grape vines. They seem to know that any day now they'll be getting ripe. They wait for the day before I plan to pick -- whatever that day happens to be. If they take so many as 8 of our delicious grapes, those raccoons are toast.

If only the raccoons liked zucchini. We carefully limited ourselves to just two zucchini plants this year. Even so, they are spewing out at least 4 plump zucchini a day -- which is about 3 more than our family can eat. So if you're in the area and have an appetite for zucchini, stop by.

Please enjoy what's left of your summer. Thanks for all your help.

Sincerely,

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

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