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NOLAN DOESKEN'S MONTHLY COCORAHS E-MAIL MESSAGE

CoCoRaHS -- Huge Rains, Fantastic Reports!

Fort Collins, Colorado -- November 4rd, 2015

Greetings from Colorado.

We have some news to share, but first I want to thank you all for your small but important efforts each day (now and in the past) to check your rain gauge, see what you find, and then send in that data via the www.cocorahs.org website or our [iPhone](#) or [Android](#) app. I also want to welcome the ~350 new "rain gauge recruits" who have joined CoCoRaHS since our last newsletter in late September. Welcome aboard!

And if you are one of the many who signed up for this rain gauge project but have never quite gotten started, this might be a great time to give it a try. If you have any questions or need some help getting started, please contact your local volunteer leader. From the home page, click on '[Volunteer Coordinators](#)' from the left hand menu. We have a team of over 250 state, regional and local volunteers helping recruit, train, and support volunteers all across the country. You can also e-mail us at info@cocorahs.org and we'll do our best to help you.

Even though we've been doing this volunteer rainfall reporting now for several years, I am still amazed each morning as your reports stream in from across the country -- starting on the East Coast and spreading westward as the sun rises. Each day your rain gauge reports paint another unique picture. It was fantastic to see much of California covered by rain earlier this week. Yesterday, the Carolina's once again -- and a few days ago, crazy intense rains in Texas. We all take our turns to be wet or dry as storms develop, strengthen and then retreat. Every day is different, and your observations make that beautifully apparent.

Thank you so much for your help!

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Terribly Heavy Rains -- But Excellent Rainfall Reports!

It's been over a month since I last wrote in late September including an onslaught of exceptionally heavy rains. Four separate surges in the past 5 weeks dropped daily totals in excess of 10" on a total of 8 days. South Carolina (Oct. 3-5) and Texas (Oct. 23-26 and Oct. 30-31) took the brunt of the attacks. Several of you [took to heart our advice](#) to empty rain gauges more than once during the day during episodes of torrential rain to avoid over topping and losing valuable information. Many also remembered to submit "Significant Weather Reports" (found in the left hand panel of your data entry page) as a way of keeping the National Weather Service informed of storm totals and intense rainfall rates at multiple times during the storms. This is more valuable than many of you realize. [You can view Significant Weather Reports here.](#)

The most frighteningly impressive totals provided by CoCoRaHS rain gauge volunteers were:

- 3-day totals in South Carolina Oct 3-5 (try viewing the ['Total Precipitation Summary' report](#) - select 'SC' and the dates, and re-sort the data by clicking on the column heading "Total Precip (in.)").
- Two reports from Navarro County, TX (south of Dallas) on 10/24/2015 with nearly 19" in 24 hours. That same day we saw images on the news of vast flooding including a freight train off the track. [Click here to see their data.](#)
- 6-hour totals in Hays County, Texas on Oct 30th of over 12" of rain, much of that falling in just 2-3 hours.

So thanks very, very much to all of you who withstood these storms and still managed to take careful, accurate measurements of these huge storms.

Important -- Water Year Summary Reports are Ready

This is an annual tradition of CoCoRaHS and is our way of thanking our rain gauge volunteers for excellent work this past year. "Water Year Summary Reports and graphs" are generated for every CoCoRaHS rain gauge observer who submitted measurements during the 2015 water year (October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015).

The summary information is compiled to serve as our "2015 Water Year Journal". To view the summary for your station, click on ["My Account"](#) (at the top of the "CoCoRaHS homepage"). You'll need to be logged in for this to work. You will find all your data reports compiled into monthly and annual totals. Graphs of daily and monthly totals and accumulations are provided. "Comments" from each daily report are also tabulated.

Please take this opportunity to review your data and spot any gaps or typos. For my station, I quickly noticed that I still haven't typed in the daily measurements that our house sitter recorded on our calendar while we were on vacation. So go ahead and fill in or correct gaps or errors.. **Changes in your "summary report" will not show up immediately, but will be recompiled and updated in mid November when all changes have been completed.**

To correct missing reports, you can do so in the "[My Data](#)" area by clicking the links under the "List/Edit My Reports" section of the menu on the left side. You can enter missing reports the same way you enter your daily reports, just change the date on the report form. You can also quickly fill in zero values for dry days by using the "[Monthly Zeroes](#)" [entry form](#).

Water Year summary reports and graphs have also been updated and are available for 2010 - 2014. With help from the [PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University](#) we provide monthly estimates for your "normal" (30-year 1981-2010 average) precipitation. We can all see if our monthly and water year totals were wetter or drier than average. Here at my house thanks to a very wet May, we ended our year about two inches above average -- which for our climate is pretty good.

To view water year reports for any CoCoRaHS station in the USA, Canada, Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands, [click here](#).

Results of the CoCoRaHS Theme Song

Yes, some of you think we're just crazy to want to associate music with rain gauges, but with a project name like CoCoRaHS and a focus on rain (with its' long history of inspiring all sorts of emotions) it has been pulling at me for years to come up with a CoCoRaHS "theme song". A number of you went along with my idea and submitted entries. You've been waiting for weeks/months for the winners to be announced.

We had a few dozen entries, but I've been slow to share the results. I think we've finally come up with a plan. One of our staff, Henry (the CoCoRaHS National Coordinator) is a good "disc jockey" and is willing to host a "Show". This will be conducted just like one of our "WxTalk Webinar" online seminars and will be open for all to attend. We haven't scheduled the date yet, but we'll announce it as soon as we do. I expect it to be sometime in January or early February. Sorry for the long delay, but it will be fun!

Preparing for the Inevitable -- Winter

We have had an incredibly mild autumn. Many of our trees still have leaves. The grass is still green. Many flowers are still in bloom as we've only had a couple of light frosts. We've kept a high-quality weather station here at Colorado State University since the 1880s and this was our latest "first fall freeze" in our history. But the days are short and getting shorter with only 7 weeks to winter solstice. Cold temperatures are inevitable -- and soon.

Last week I got a thorough taste of winter while driving from here (Fort Collins) to a water conference in Grand Junction, CO. Two mountain passes (Vail Pass and the Eisenhower/Johnson Tunnel) must be traversed to make this trip. The weather forecast

said "chance of snow showers in the mountains" but I got much more than that. After two hours of torturous mountain driving with stranded tracks and cars who could not climb the grades littering I-70, I was back on dry pavement. But it was a quick reminder that winter is not all fun and games. Today, I'm headed to a conference in Wyoming. Again, snow is forecast. Wish me luck.

A few of us have measured our first snow already. Historically, in the next 4-6 weeks much of the northern half of the country will have had their first snow. Please don't be caught off guard. For those of us who are not as young, agile and well balanced as we once were, the first snow may be a good time to take a break from CoCoRaHS for midwinter. We LOVE getting all your snowfall reports as CoCoRaHS is the largest source of snowfall and snowdepth data in the country now to track winter storms. But please, please be careful. If you qualify as a "Senior" this may be a good time to turn over your CoCoRaHS observations to your younger family members or neighbors until spring.

As many of us have learned, measuring snow accumulation, water content, total depth and SWE (the Snow Water Equivalent of the total depth of snow on ground) can be a bit tricky. But with training and practice we can do a great job. We have a full array of training materials to help get you ready. Before your first (or next) snow, please take time to review our training materials in your preferred format:

- [23 minute \(classic\) Video](#)
- [Recorded Webinar \(1hour\)](#)
- [Power Point Slide Shows](#)
- [Written Instructions](#)
- [Animations](#)

Webinar: Sign up to Attend the WxTalk Webinar: "Lake Effect Snow" on Thursday, Nov. 12th *Special time 11:00 AM EST*

We are very pleased to announce that our next educational webinar will be presented by Tom Niziol, The Weather Channel's "Winter Weather Expert" and National Weather Service retired Meteorologist in Charge of the Buffalo, NY NWS office. He will be talking about his passion "Lake Effect Snow" It is now coming up on the one-year anniversary of a truly amazing storm that buried parts of Buffalo under 4-7 feet of snow while leaving areas just a couple miles away with only a few inches. Learn about this remarkable phenomenon from one of the world's top experts. [Click here to register.](#)

We Will Have a Fundraiser!

I wanted to give you a heads up. We will have a year-end fundraiser in December. This is not new, but this year it is particularly important. We have enjoyed several years of support from NOAA's Office of Education but this has recently come to an end. Much of our other outside support is also ending or diminished. So it's time for CoCoRaHS to stand up on our own. We'll have some suggestions next time on how you might choose to help. I'll give one quick hint. We have a very handsome new CoCoRaHS t-shirt this year that might interest you and your wardrobe. :)

News From the Farm

We got nearly 1.50" of rain over a 3-day period in mid October and that washed and settled the late-summer dust (I don't like dust!), gave the pasture a much needed late

watering, and motivated us to get ready for winter. My wife does tons (literally) of composting, and each year in the fall we stock up on leaves. That's not hard since we live on a main road and many folks drive by. We must have gotten 3000 lawn and leaf bags stuffed with leaves dropped off by neighbors and passersby last year. That was TOO MUCH, so this year we didn't put up our "leaves wanted" sign. Interestingly, about 500 bags of leaves have still showed up, many delivered (tossed over our gate) late at night. Are people well meaning or desperate? I'm not sure. If we wanted their leaves, we'd ask for them. It's the occasional bags of trash and sticks that people leave that really annoy us. What are they thinking? But we're used to this and have probably composted 20,000 bags of leaves in the last 15 years -- mixed neatly with our horses' precious byproducts.

Even though it's been mild, the horses are wisely "putting on" their winter coats. Our chickens, on the other hand, have chosen November as their month to go naked. Why they molt this time of year, I'll never know. Seems like September would make more sense. So egg laying is minimal and hopefully by the cold of December they'll have fresh new feathers. It's both a wonderful and a terrible time of year for our dogs. Temperatures are perfect, but the burrs and goat heads manage to find their way into their coats and their pads. And then there are the busy barn cats successfully mousing all day. So far we've seen none (mice, that is) in the house. We're down to just 4 cats now so we weren't sure that they could keep up, but apparently they have. Good job!

It's great to work with all of you. Enjoy the long, dark nights of late autumn. Catch up on your indoor work, and prepare for snow (those who live in snowy places, that is). I'll be in touch again soon.

Sincerely,

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

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