

**Messages of the Day**  
**January 2015**

Thursday, January 1, 2015

**Happy New Year to all from your CoCoRaHS Family!**

As we start the new year may the months ahead be good ones for each and everyone of you . . . may just enough rain fall on your gardens, in your gauges and just the right amount of sun brighten each of your days!

Happy 2015 !!

Your friends at CoCoRaHS

**The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser . . . the final stretch!!**

To all who have given to our year-end fundraiser, thanks so much! Your gifts have been very generous. To those who have yet to participate, please consider giving within the next two weeks by January 15th.

To find out more about the fundraiser and how to donate click here: ["DONATE"](#)

Thank you for being a part of CoCoRaHS!

**2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendars now on sale! Order one today**

Our popular 2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge calendars are now on sale! They make great holiday gifts for that weather enthusiast in your family. Each calendar features over fifty photos by fellow precipitation observers displaying their gauges in a variety of settings. It truly is a work of art that you won't find anywhere else. Click here for a closer look: [VIEW THE CALENDAR](#)

The calendars sell at a reasonable price with a portion of each purchase going toward the CoCoRaHS Network. Just click on the banner at the top of the page or click [ORDER A CALENDAR](#) to place your order today. We hope you'll enjoy the calendar throughout the year ahead.

Sunday, January 4, 2015

## Blizzard

During the winter months, several parts of the country will experience blizzard conditions at one time or another. If your area falls into that category, please read the following message before you consider venturing outside for any length of time.

Here's the definition straight out of the American Meteorological Society's Glossary of Meteorology:

*"Blizzard -- A severe weather condition characterized by high winds and reduced visibilities due to falling or blowing snow. The U. S. National Weather Service specifies a wind of 30 knots (35 miles per hour) or greater, sufficient snow in the air to reduce visibility to less than 400m (0.25 miles). Earlier definitions also included a condition of low temperatures, on the order of -7 degrees C (20F) or lower, or -12C (10F) or lower (severe blizzard). The name originated in the United States but it is also used in other countries. In the Antarctic the name is given to violent autumnal winds off the ice cap. In southeast France, the cold north wind with snow is termed blizzard. Similar storms in Russian Asia are the 'buran' and 'purga'. In popular usage in the United States and in England, the term is often used for an heavy snowstorm accompanied by strong winds."*

Coming straight from the NWS web site they define **Blizzard** as: "A blizzard means that the following conditions are expected to prevail for a period of 3 hours or longer:

- Sustained wind or frequent gusts to 35 miles an hour or greater; and
- Considerable falling and/or blowing snow (i.e., reducing visibility frequently to less than ¼ mile)."

The National Weather Service issues blizzard warnings and is a great place to go for up the to minute forecasts for your local area. ( <http://www.weather.gov/> )

Here is a sample of a blizzard warning that was issued in the past for southeastern Colorado:

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PUEBLO CO

320 PM MST MON DEC 19 2011

EASTERN LAS ANIMAS COUNTY-WESTERN KIOWA COUNTY- EASTERN KIOWA COUNTY-  
LAS ANIMAS VICINITY/BENT COUNTY- LAMAR VICINITY/PROWERS COUNTY-SPRINGFIELD  
VICINITY/BACA COUNTY- INCLUDING...BRANSON...KIM...EADS...SHERIDAN LAKE...LAS  
ANIMAS... LAMAR...SPRINGFIELD...WALSH

320 PM MST MON DEC 19 2011 ...BLIZZARD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 9 AM MST  
TUESDAY...

A BLIZZARD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 9 AM MST TUESDAY.

\* LOCATION...KIOWA COUNTY...EASTERN LAS ANIMAS COUNTY...BENT  
COUNTY...PROWERS COUNTY AND BACA COUNTY.

\* CAUSE AND TIMING...A POWERFUL WINTER STORM WILL MOVE FROM EAST CENTRAL  
INTO THE OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE BY TUESDAY MORNING.

\* SNOW ACCUMULATION... FOR KIOWA COUNTY...6 TO 10 INCHES WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS POSSIBLE. ELSEWHERE...10 TO 20 INCHES WITH LOCALLY HIGHER AMOUNTS POSSIBLE.

\* WIND...NORTH WINDS 15 TO 30 MPH WITH GUSTS TO AROUND 50 MPH.

\* IMPACT...TRAVEL MAY BECOME HAZARDOUS IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE AT TIMES DUE TO A COMBINATION OF HEAVY SNOW...BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW...WHITEOUT CONDITIONS AND ICY...SNOW COVERED ROADS. DRIFTING SNOW COULD LEAD TO ROAD CLOSURES AT TIMES. PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS... LIFE THREATENING WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED. SUSTAINED WIND SPEEDS OR FREQUENT GUSTS OVER 35 MPH AND VISIBILITY REDUCED TO BELOW 1/4 MILE BY FALLING AND BLOWING SNOW ARE EXPECTED. AVOID TRAVELING IN THE WARNING AREA. IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO TRAVEL IN THE WARNING AREA DURING THE TIME OF THE WARNING... LISTEN TO THE LATEST WEATHER FORECAST AND CONSIDER TRAVELING AT ANOTHER TIME OR BY ANOTHER ROUTE. IF YOU MUST TRAVEL IN THE WARNING AREA DURING THE TIME OF THE WARNING...TAKE ALONG A WINTER SURVIVAL KIT. IF YOU BECOME STRANDED IN A RURAL AREA...STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL HELP ARRIVES. IN SIMILAR CONDITIONS DURING PAST BLIZZARDS...PEOPLE HAVE DIED OF EXPOSURE WHILE TRYING TO WALK TO SHELTER. TO KEEP WARM IN YOUR VEHICLE...RUN YOUR ENGINE 10 MINUTES EACH HOUR...AND MAKE SURE THE EXHAUST PIPE IS CLEAR OF SNOW TO AVOID CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING.

So if a blizzard is forecast for your area, please be careful and think it through before venturing out. Staying put is usually the best policy.

Wednesday, January 7, 2015

## **Windchill . . . “It feels colder than you think!”**

When the wind blows it often feels much colder than what the thermometer says. Just ask those folks at the Green Bay Packer football games! One way to quantify what you are experiencing is known as the "wind chill factor". The AMS Glossary of Meteorology defines it as: "*a means of quantifying the threat of rapid cooling during breezy or windy conditions that may result in hypothermia in cold conditions.*"

The National Weather Service provides a great “windchill chart” on their “Winter Safety” page. To find out more about windchill click here: [“NWS Windchill Chart”](#).

And one last thing . . . don’t forget to wear a hat!

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

**THE FINAL DAY . . . The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser . . . Please consider giving a small donation!**

To all who have given to our year-end fundraiser, thanks so much! Your gifts have been very generous and we have raised close to \$32,000. To those who have yet to participate, please consider giving before the end of the day on January 15th.

To find out more about the fundraiser and how to donate click here: ["DONATE"](#)

Thank you for being a part of CoCoRaHS!

**2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendars now on sale for \$7.50! Please order one today**

Our popular 2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge calendars are now on sale at the discounted price of **\$7.50** plus shipping (a portion of each purchase goes toward the CoCoRaHS Network)! Each calendar features over fifty photos by fellow precipitation observers displaying their gauges in a variety of settings. It truly is a work of art that you won't find anywhere else. Click here for a closer look: [VIEW THE CALENDAR](#)

Just click on the banner at the top of the page or click [ORDER A CALENDAR](#) to place your order today.

Friday, January 16, 2015

**THANKS!! . . . The "Five For CoCoRaHS" Year-End Fundraiser has ended!**

Another successful year-end fundraiser is now in the books, raising over \$33,000 from your generous gifts. To all who have given to this effort we thank you very much!

We'll keep the donation site open a few more days in case you still want to get a last minute sandstorm t-shirt premium (in fact it's open year round on our main webpage). Here's the site: ["DONATE"](#)

Thank you for your partnership with CoCoRaHS!

Sunday, January 18, 2015

## **THIS THURSDAY — CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar for January 2015: "Avalanches in the US ... In a Nutshell"**

Avalanches will be the focus of our next ["WxTalk Webinar"](#) on Thursday, January 22nd. "*Avalanches in the US ... In a Nutshell*" will be presented by Simon Trautman, a National Avalanche Specialist with the Forest Service National Avalanche Center in Bozeman, MT.

*Space is limited to the first 500 registrants*, so register today! We will notify the first 500 who register of their acceptance to the Webinar. Those who aren't able to attend will be able to watch this episode on-line the following day.

### **REGISTRATION INFO**

**Title: Webinar #38 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Avalanches in the US ... In a Nutshell**

Date: Thursday, January 22, 2015

Time: 1:00 PM Eastern, Noon Central, 11:00 AM Mountain, 10:00 AM Pacific

*"Avalanches impact public safety within backcountry recreation areas, along roadways, and at many ski areas. In addition, avalanches kill more people annually on National Forests than any other natural hazard (each winter, approximately 30 people die in avalanches in the United States). Nearly all of these deaths involve recreation on NFS lands. The Forest Service believes in providing reasonably safe recreational opportunities for the public. As such, our goal is to provide information, education, and planning tools designed to reduce avalanche risk and improve backcountry and ski area safety.*

*Avalanche centers publish daily avalanche advisories and other public safety products that are accessed more than six million times each winter. These centers also provide avalanche related education to tens of thousands of people annually. The USFS operates a network of 14 backcountry avalanche centers that are supported in large part by public donations and other partnerships (often 50% of the costs). We also work closely with the Colorado Avalanche Information Center and various ski resorts and highway departments that actively manage avalanche hazards.*

*This presentation will give an overview of avalanche phenomena, describe the impact avalanches have on public safety and commerce, and describe the measures taken in the US to reduce the risk avalanches pose to the public."*

Reserve your seat now by registering here: [AVALANCHE](#)

Our next CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar: "*Agricultural Meteorology: Layer Upon Layer*", will feature Brad Rippey and Mark Brusberg from the USDA's Office of the Chief Economist in Washington DC. It will take place on Thursday, February 26th. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.

Thursday, January 22, 2015

### **The "Total SWE Monday" Habit**

The [National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center](#) utilizes CoCoRaHS reports of precipitation, snowfall, snow depth and the water equivalent of the snow on the ground every day. CoCoRaHS data provide critical "Ground Truth" information that can improve the skill of their products and models. This will improve the accuracy of flood forecasts in the weeks and months ahead.

Their guidance to us has been:

*"The analysts at NOHRSC prefer a Total Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) observation taken once a week on Monday. The simple reason is that digging cores every day ruins your sample snowfield area (unless you have a big yard or open fields nearby).*

*A flood of Monday morning SWE reports gives us a better picture of the overall snowpack instead of a few scattered results trickling in throughout the week. Daily total SWE would be great, but let's make "Total SWE Monday" a habit.*

(Note: If you have the room, more frequent observations are appreciated, especially when conditions are changing. For areas that only infrequently get snow, there is no need to wait for Monday -- report SWE whenever you have the chance). For instructions on how to take core samples and report the snowpack SWE, please view our on-line training materials on snow: [Training Slide Shows](#) or watch the YouTube short animation on: [SWE](#).

Thursday, January 29, 2015

## **Have You Moved? Have You Changed Your E-mail?**

Have you moved? Are you moving soon? Have you changed your e-mail address? CoCoRaHS only works if we can stay in touch and if we can accurately plot your measurements on our maps. Please let us know by contacting us at: [info@cocorahs.org](mailto:info@cocorahs.org)