

Messages of the Day **February 2014**

Monday, February 3, 2014

Have you visited the CoCoRaHS Blog? It's one of our coolest features with great graphics!

The CoCoRaHS blog administered by Illinois state coordinator Steve Hilberg, covers a wide range of topics on weather and climate. Steve, the former director of the Midwest Regional Climate Center, brings his expertise and passion for the earth's atmosphere to the blog by highlighting interesting current events.

Some of the topics addressed early this winter have been "*Deep Chill in the Deep South*", "*The Clippers Keep On Coming*", "*It Never Rains in Southern California*", "*Buckets of Rain in Florida*", "*Winter's Onslaught Continues into 2-14*" and "*Snow to Water Ratios*" just to name a few. These are well written pieces with fantastic graphics. If you haven't had a chance to view them, please take the time to. Steve usually posts a new topic mid-week

The blog is also interactive, meaning you can leave comments or messages for Steve and all our CoCoRaHS blog readers by clicking on comments below each post. This is located after the time stamp for each posting.

Please check out the blog and don't be shy if you want to talk weather and climate! To visit the blog please click here: ["CoCoRaHS Blog"](#).

We hope you'll visit the blog this week!

Friday, February 7, 2014

CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar for February 2014: "Life as a climatologist – what the heck does a climatologist do?"

The life of a climatologist will be the focus of our next ["WxTalk Webinar"](#) on February 20th. "*Life as a climatologist – what the heck does a climatologist do?*" will be presented by North Carolina State Climatologist Ryan Boyles. Ryan oversees the North Carolina Climate Center located in Raleigh, NC.

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 #27 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Life as a climatologist – what the heck does a climatologist do?"

Date: Thursday, February 20, 2014

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

"Keep hearing the rants of these so-called "climatologists"? Ever wondered what they really do? Ryan Boyles will talk about the life of a climatologist, including the topics that gets him excited, and the ones that make him roll his eyes. Come listen and ask the questions you never knew you had. Ryan welcomes any mud you want to throw at him, but only if you can precisely measure how much rainfall was used to make the mud."

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

Our March CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar: *"Keeping an eye on the Blue Marble: How NASA studies Earth's weather, climate and hydrology from space"* by Dalia Kirschbaum of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland will take place on March 27th. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

The CoCoRaHS "State Climates" Series

A few year's ago CoCoRaHS got together with the state climatologists across the country and created a series featuring each state's climate. It was a fascinating series and informative look at the diverse climate of our country. Since we have so many new CoCoRaHS observers who have most likely not seen it, we thought we'd feature it again on our message of the day. You can access the series by clicking here:

[STATE CLIMATE SERIES](#)

We hope that you enjoy this resource and learn more about the climate of your state!

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

Plants and Valentines . . . Project BudBurst

[Project BudBurst](#) is another great way for our volunteers to get involved with a very popular sister citizen science project and report on plants in their backyards. BudBurst is a network of people across the United States who monitor plants as the seasons change. They are a national field campaign designed to engage the public in the collection of important ecological data based on the timing of leafing, flowering, and fruiting of plants (plant phenophases).

With Valentine's Day coming up on Friday, they asked us to pass along a link on their website where you can "Send a Valentine to share the love of plants with the people in your life!" They have some downloadable plant valentines that you can send. Click here: [Share a valentine](#)

For more information on Project BudBurst click here: [more about BudBurst](#) or email them at: budburstinfo@neoninc.org

Thursday, February 13, 2014

"Field Photo Weekend" February 15-17th . . . Celebrate President's Day Weekend by taking a photo or two!

What does your landscape look like in mid-winter? Have you participated in the CoCoRaHS Field Photos Weekends before? If not, here's your chance to join hundreds of other CoCoRaHS users to see what our landscapes looks like. If you have participated before, this is a great chance to go back to your favorite spots and see what has changed. During February 15-17th, you can help by participating in our fifth "Field Photo Weekend".

All you have to do is take your camera, find a landscape in your community (streams, lakes, rivers, reservoirs, a forest, a crop field, a pasture, etc.) and take a single photo or a panorama in four different directions (N, E, S, W) from where you are standing. After that you can either email your photos with your location to: fieldphotos@southernclimate.org, or upload them directly to the Earth Observation and Modeling Facility's photo archive website: "<http://www.eomf.ou.edu/photos>". For detailed instructions, click here: "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)"

If you have an iPhone, you can use the "Field Photo" iPhone app, which is now freely available in the Apple Store: "[FIELD PHOTO APP](#)". You can use your iPhone to take a photo in the field, enter metadata to describe the landscape, and then upload the photo and metadata into the EOMF photo archive website directly from your iPhone when you have access to WI-FI. When you enter metadata, you may add "#CoCoRaHSFeb14" keyword.

If you want to see what others have submitted before, go to "<http://www.eomf.ou.edu/photos/cocorahssep13/>" and click on any of the dots (these photos were from Labor Day weekend last September). We are working on going back to the earlier events and tagging all those photos so you will be able to easily find all the ones from our past weekends. If you upload photos directly to the EOMF website, you can help us by adding a tag #CoCoRaHSFeb14 in the Field Notes section. Then your photos will pop up on the link: "<http://www.eomf.ou.edu/photos/cocorahsfeb14/>" along with any that we receive by e-mail.

Field Photo Weekend is a partnership between CoCoRaHS, the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program (SCIPP) and the Earth Observation and Modeling Facility (EOMF) to help ground truth through photos, what is going on with our landscapes throughout the country. It's not just drought we are looking for either, it could be flooding, or whatever state the landscape is now in. There is the possibility that we may hold additional "Field Photo Weekends" during the year to show how conditions to your landscape may have changed over time. This should be fun!

In a few weeks this weekend's photos will be posted and you'll be able to see your photos and those taken by other volunteers. Reference the "[FIELD PHOTO WEEKENDS](#)" page to see how to view the photos.

Remember you don't have to email your photos this weekend, just take them, but we do encourage you to email them soon afterward. That address again is: fieldphotos@southernclimate.org. When uploading your photos please include the words #CoCoRaHSFeb14 in the notes field.

Just think if all 19,000+ CoCoRaHS volunteers take photos! Wow!

Thanks in advance for participating and have a great President's Day weekend!

Thursday, February 20, 2014

Prepare for Severe Weather Ahead . . . NWS Severe Weather Training Classes for 2014

It's that time of year when severe weather starts to show up in many sections of the country. Please be ready to report hail and intense rainfall using our appropriate reports:

To report hail: [Hail Report](#)

To report Significant Weather (Intense precipitation): [Significant Weather Report](#)

This month and throughout the spring many National Weather Service offices are holding local in-depth training classes on severe weather spotting and If you are interested in attending one of these please visit: www.weather.gov and click on your local area on the national map. The local NWS forecast office home page will appear and most likely have a schedule of upcoming severe weather spotter training classes held in your area. These are free and well worth your time.

Saturday, February 22, 2014

The "*Total SWE Monday*" Habit

The National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center <http://www.nohrsc.noaa.gov/> 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](#).

Monday, February 24, 2014

"2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendar" Winter-Spring Photos Wanted!

As winter heads into spring we are asking our CoCoRaHS volunteers to e-mail us photos of their rain gauges with winter or spring backgrounds for our possible "2015 CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Calendar". We

hope to publish the calendar during the summer of 2014. We are currently looking into the feasibility of doing this. Our last calendar in 2011 was very popular: ["photo of calendar"](#).

What we are looking for are artistic high-quality, high-resolution photos (jpeg format) of your rain gauge with winter backgrounds and in winter conditions. These should be of "the gauge" only and should not include people in them. Close-up shots of the gauge are best. Also make sure that they are well lit, better in the sunlight than in a shadow. They can be artistic and creative. We will narrow down our final photos in the late spring of 2014.

Please e-mail your photo to Henry Reges at: hreges@atmos.colostate.edu with the words "Rain Gauge 2015 Calendar Photo - Winter-Spring" in the subject line. Please include the name of the photographer for credit purposes, as well as the location - city, state - of the gauge (ex- John Smith: Columbus, Ohio). Finally include in the text of your message that "you give CoCoRaHS permission to publish the photo and use it for other possible CoCoRaHS promotions".

We will ask for additional gauge photos through the spring, so if you have the opportunity, keep your camera handy and keep shooting! . . . dusty gauges, full gauges, dew on the gauge, animals in the gauge, special lighting circumstances, rainbows in the background, lightning bolts in the background, etc. -- be creative, all photos should be natural, no photo-shopping please.

Thanks. The CoCoRaHS team.

Friday, February 28, 2014

CoCoRaHS March Madness 2014 Begins! Please recruit someone in your state!

"CoCoRaHS March Madness", is our friendly annual recruiting competition between all of our CoCoRaHS states to see how many new volunteer observers we can recruit during the month of March.

We have a simple challenge to everyone out there during March: "Would you please take a moment to recommend the program to at least one friend or relative and encourage them to sign up to be a volunteer observer?" That's it just one (OK, two or three if you are really ambitious). If just half of our 19,500 current volunteers gave this a shot, we could really see the density of our coverage improve. Let the madness begin!

To help you with recruiting a downloadable CoCoRaHS Brochure is available by clicking here:

[CoCoRaHS Brochure](#)

We will post an ongoing tally of results by state once a week (most likely on Fridays) on our "Message of the Day" with the final results posted on April 1st. The winning states will get to hold onto and display one of the two "CoCoRaHS Cup" trophies until next March.

Like last year, states will be competing for two national trophies. The first will be awarded in the "*Traditional Count*" category. This is pretty straight forward. The state with the most new volunteers recruited in March 2014 wins. The second category will be "*Population Weighted*" . . . the state that recruits the greatest number of new observers per one million of it's total population wins. This second category is a little trickier. For each new volunteer who signs-up, the state will be given a percentage of "one point" based on the state's total population (potential volunteer pool). This will give those states with sparser populations an equal chance. States with smaller populations will receive a larger point value for a new volunteer compared to those with larger populations (For each new volunteer Wyoming will receive

1.77 points based on their population of 563,626 residents, whereas California who will receive 0.03 points with their population of 37,253,956 residents). These point values are based on "new stations per million residents" which is derived from the 2010 estimated population information (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_population). Please see: "[Population based scoring](#)" for a breakdown of each states point value per new volunteer.

Keep track of and learn about the tournament on our CoCoRaHS March Madness page: [COCO MARCH MADNESS HEADQUARTERS](#)

Good luck to your state! Don't forget to tell someone about CoCoRaHS, especially this month!