

Messages of the Day
April 2012

Sunday, April 1, 2012

CoCoRaHS March Madness 2012 FINAL STANDINGS

Congratulations to our "CoCoRaHS March Madness 2012" CoCoRaHS Cup winners: NORTH CAROLINA and NORTH DAKOTA!!

In the "traditional count" category (sheer number of new observers), **North Carolina (138)** wins a close one over Texas (134) to take the cup for the second consecutive year. They are followed by Michigan (46), South Carolina (45) and Tennessee (41).

In the "population weighted-per capita" category, **North Dakota (55.01)** wins the CoCoRaHS Cup. The Peace Garden State is followed by South Dakota (31.93), North Carolina (14.47), South Carolina (9.73) and Oklahoma (9.33) in the standings.

To view the final standings for all the states and learn more about our contest, visit our March Madness webpage by clicking here: ["http://cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=marchmadness"](http://cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=marchmadness).

Thanks to all of you who have mentioned the network to a family member or friend! With your help we have recruited a new March Madness record 859 new volunteer observers in March!

Monday, April 2, 2012

**CoCoRaHS WeatherTalk Webinar for April 2012:
"Flash Floods: It's More Than a Bunch of Rain" . . . register today!**

CoCoRaHS offers a monthly one-hour Webinar series called CoCoRaHS WxTalk (wx is shorthand for weather). CoCoRaHS WxTalk interactive Webinar's feature engaging experts in the fields of atmospheric science, climatology and other pertinent disciplines. These easy to follow Webinars are presented live with an opportunity for the audience to submit questions for our experts to answer. CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinars are free.

Here's a link to our Webinar page: [WxTalk Webinars](#)

April features: "*Flash Floods: It's More Than a Bunch of Rain*" presented by Matt Kelsch of UCAR/COMET in Boulder, CO on April 12th. *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 at a later date.

REGISTRATION INFO

Title: "Webinar #4 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Flash Floods: It's More Than a Bunch of Rain "

Date: Thursday, April 12, 2012

Time: 1:00 PM Eastern, 12:00 Noon Central, 11:00 AM Mountain, 10:00 AM Pacific

The Webinar will examine the key characteristics of the rainfall and the hydrologic response that affects the locations, timing and severity of flash floods. We will talk about short-term bursts of intense rainfall and the importance of ground surface conditions, including conditions such as soil saturation, steep drainages, urban development, and forecast fires.

Reserve your seat now for the April 12th "Flash Floods" Webinar by registering here: [Flash Floods](#)

Our May CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar "Lightning and Its Impacts" will take place on May 3rd. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

USDA's new "Plant Hardiness Zone Map"

It's that time of year when many of us are thinking about or starting to work on our gardens. In fact many of our volunteers in our warmer climates probably have had plants in the ground for a while now. It's April . . . you know, "*April showers, bring May flowers!*"

A few months ago the USDA released it's new "Plant Hardiness Zone Map". The mapping was done by CoCoRaHS's good friends, the PRISM group at Oregon State University.

The 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree F zones.

For the first time, the map is available as an interactive GIS-based map, for which a broadband Internet connection is recommended, and as static images for those with slower Internet access. Users may also simply type in a ZIP Code and find the hardiness zone for that area.

To view the map and learn how these new zones relate to gardening in your area please click here:

[Hardiness Map](#).

Saturday, April 7, 2012

Crepuscular Rays, Heiligenschein, Iridescence? Do any of these terms ring a bell?

They all fall under the category of "Atmospheric Optics". When sunlight enters the atmosphere it is either scattered, absorbed, reflected or transmitted on through. How objects at the surface respond to this energy depends on their general nature and the wavelength that strikes them. Thus the world of Atmospheric Optics which you and I can enjoy.

To view and learn more about these phenomena visit ["Atmospheric Optics"](#)

Wednesday, April 11, 2012

Weatherwise Magazine's 2012 Photo Contest and Discount for CoCoRaHS Members

"Some people are weatherwise, but most are otherwise" -- Ben Franklin

Weatherwise Magazine is an exciting bi-monthly magazine that provides the weather enthusiast with fascinating articles regarding all aspects of weather and climate. With our full endorsement, CoCoRaHS regards this magazine as one "which everyone interested in weather would benefit from having on their coffee table". Thanks to a special arrangement CoCoRaHS volunteers can subscribe to the magazine at a 27% discount: [CoCoRaHS discount](#).

Now thru June 2nd, Weatherwise Magazine is accepting submissions for its "2012 Photo Contest". There are great prizes awaiting the winners. This annual event provides an opportunity for you to share your potential prize winning photos with a nationwide audience. Click here to find out more about the magazine and photo contest: [Photo Contest](#).

Check it out today, you'll be glad you did!

Thursday, April 12, 2012

"The CoCoRaHS Website 101 Basics" Webinar Monday evening, April 16th . . . register today!

Are you new to CoCoRaHS or have you wondered how to master some of the basic functions of the CoCoRaHS Website? Well you are in luck! If you are like most of us, we all have a few questions regarding how to use the website no matter how long we have been taking observations.

This Monday evening (8:30PM eastern, 7:30PM central, 6:30PM mountain and 5:30PM pacific) we will host a webinar on the basics of the CoCoRaHS Website . . . "101 Basics" we call it.

We will covers topics such as: how to log in, change your password, entering daily reports, multi-day reports, monthly zeros, significant weather reports, hail reports, drought impacts reports, how to view your reports, how to view your observations on the maps, viewing other reports, the current and archived messages of the day, old catches, etc.

Sign up today, as space is limited to the first 500 registrants and we expect a large audience! 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 at a later date.

REGISTRATION INFO

Title: "The CoCoRaHS Website 101 Basics" Webinar

Date: Monday, April 16, 2012

Time: 8:30 PM Eastern, 7:30 PM Central, 6:30 PM Mountain, 5:30 PM Pacific

Reserve your seat now for the Webinar by registering here: [Website Webinar](#)

Join us in the near future for an additional "Website Webinar" that will focus on advanced features of the CoCoRaHS website.

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

Hail and Preparing for Severe Weather This Spring

It's that time of year when severe weather beings to rumble through our states and as CoCoRaHS observers we need to be vigilant in reporting when it occurs in our neighborhoods. Your "real-time" observations will help many others in your community.

A good deal of us will see hail of various sizes over the upcoming months. If hail visits your backyard, send in a "CoCoRaHS hail report" during or soon after the event if possible.

Many observers mention hail in their daily precipitation report notes, but may forget to submit a hail report at the time of the storm. If you would like your hail information to appear on the map, you should submit a hail report: [Hail Report](#)

Your "hail reports" immediately go to your local National Weather Service Office where they provide them with timely information which can be used to alert folks in the path of the approaching storm. Thanks!!

If you are interested in some in-depth training on spotting and reporting severe weather for your National Weather Service office, then go to: www.weather.gov. Click on your area on the map. Your local NWS forecast office home page will appear and will have a schedule of upcoming severe weather spotter training classes that you can attend.

Thanks again for your reports and stay safe this Spring.

Thursday, April 19, 2012

"Without a doubt, there's plenty of drought lurking about!"

A recent article in USA Today stated: ["The USA hasn't been this dry in five years"](#). Many of you are experiencing that dryness firsthand and we'd love to hear how drought is impacting your community. Drought can impact us in many ways. Effects may be associated with agriculture, energy, public health, wildfire and recreation, just to name a few.

Please take a look around your community this week and think about how drought might be impacting it. Then, as a big favor to CoCoRaHS and the National Drought Mitigation Center, file a ["CoCoRaHS Drought Impact Report"](#). It should only take a minute or two. Report what you can, don't let the "monetary impacts" part scare you away. That part is highly desirable, but if you don't know a dollar amount, feel free to skip that part.

Your reports go directly to the National Drought Mitigation Center ([NDMC](#)) and they provide critical information on how drought is impacting the nation. Just like your precipitation reports, drought impact reports help fill in the gaps by providing important "eyewitness information" for your geographic area.

When you have some spare time, please re-visit our "[Drought Impacts Reporting Resource Page](#)" to get re-acquainted with drought impacts. In addition there is a short slideshow that everyone can benefit from reviewing.

Monday, April 23, 2012

**"Thunderbolts and Lightning . . . Very, Very Frightening!" CoCoRaHS
WxTalk Webinar for May 2012:
"Lightning and Its Impacts" . . . register today!**

Quoting a line from Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody", lightning can be a rather frightening thing for some people. It will be the focus for our next "[WxTalk Webinar](#)" on May 3rd, "*Lightning and Its Impacts*" presented by Ron Holle of Holle Meteorology & Photography, Oro Valley, Arizona.

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 #5 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: Lightning and Its Impacts"

Date: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Time: 1:00 PM Eastern, 12:00 Noon Central, 11:00 AM Mountain, 10:00 AM Pacific

"About 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes hit the surface of the United States every year. These flashes are well detected in the U.S. and many other countries by national lightning detection technology. In addition, other specialized regional networks detect many more cloud flashes that can extend over 100 km in length across the sky. Continuing advances in extremely long-range lightning detection are showing lightning over remote oceans and land masses around the globe.

Every cloud-to-ground lightning strike is fully capable of causing casualties and damages. For this reason, lightning data are used in forestry, utilities, aviation, weather services, military, industrial, recreation, media, and insurance applications. The activity, location, time trends, and medical issues of lightning casualties will be described. The talk will conclude with a set of updated lightning safety recommendations."

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

Our June CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar "Hurricane Analysis and Prediction at the National Hurricane Center" by Chris Landsea of the National Hurricane Center will take place on the evening of June 14th. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

The American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Associate Membership . . . a great opportunity for you!

As we mentioned before, CoCoRaHS tries to make our observers aware of great meteorological organizations out there. Here is a chance to become involved with some would say is the "grand-daddy" of them all -- the American Meteorological Society (AMS).

The American Meteorological Society, founded in 1919, is the largest U.S. membership organization devoted to advancing the atmospheric and related sciences. More than 14,000 members worldwide are currently enjoying the substantial benefits associated with AMS membership.

What can AMS membership offer YOU? How about:

A complimentary subscription to the Bulletin of the AMS (BAMS)!

BAMS, the flagship AMS publication, contains news on Society activities and programs, interdisciplinary peer-reviewed articles, membership news, conference information and summaries, book reviews, and more. Best of all, members have exclusive cover-to-cover ONLINE access to each issue! Visit the [Bulletin of the AMS](#) to view a sample issue and to learn more.

A great price on Weatherwise magazine!

By agreement with Taylor and Francis Group, the publishers of Weatherwise, AMS members can subscribe to this exciting magazine for just \$24.95, that's nearly 50% off the list price! Written for a general audience, Weatherwise offers a non-technical look at the latest discoveries in meteorology and climatology. Check out the [Weatherwise Web site](#) to view the latest table of contents.

Great benefits for weather enthusiasts!

AMS's Associate Member benefits package includes a subscription to either BAMS or Weatherwise, substantial discounts on journal subscriptions and meeting registration fees, access to information for members only, and much more. Annual dues are just \$62 per year. Learn more about the benefits of [Associate Membership](#).

We invite you to give AMS membership a try. The Associate Member category is open to any person regardless of educational or professional background and is an excellent way for weather enthusiasts to become involved with the Society. The full Member category is intended for individuals that have a science or related degree or have completed a minimum amount of coursework in a science (visit <http://www.ametsoc.org/MEMB/classif.html> for specific requirements). Members enjoy full voting privileges and the highest member discount on journal subscriptions and meeting registration rates.

To apply for membership, simply visit the [AMS Membership Web Site](#) to complete an application online or to download an application that you can fill out and return by fax or by mail. We hope that once you consider all that the AMS has to offer, you'll complete an application today!

If you have any questions regarding membership or the application process, please feel free to contact the AMS Member Services department at amsmem@ametsoc.org

Friday, April 27, 2012

"Dew Point" . . . When it starts to feel sticky outside, think about the Dew Point

"Dew point" is a term most of us have probably heard, but the meaning may not be clear unless you've had some meteorology background. Dew point is a good way of quantifying the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere. It is a more meaningful term in some respects than "Relative Humidity", which we have heard talked about often. Unlike relative humidity, dew point is a temperature. Specifically, it is the temperature that you would need to cool the air to for the air to reach saturation (100% humidity). At that temperature, cloud droplets may begin to form or dew will be deposited on surfaces in contact with the air. The higher the dew point the more moisture is in the air. Here in Colorado, when the dew point gets higher than about 52 degrees F, we think it's really humid. But in the South, Midwest and East, you would think that air is really dry. There you don't notice it feeling sticky until the dew point is over 65 or 70 degrees.

A good way to get an idea about how humid the air is, is to check for condensation on a glass of ice water. In the winter you hardly ever get water on the outside of a glass (unless you're down by the Gulf of Mexico), but when the dew point is high, condensation on our glasses forms easily.



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

Monday, April 30, 2012

Planting your garden? Check out the CoCoRaHS "Climate Resources Guide for Master Gardeners"!

Last summer, CoCoRaHS released an on-line guide for our [master gardeners](#) out there. The HTML version of this [guide](#), introduces elements of large scale and local climate important to gardeners. An overview of climate patterns and differences are shown. Links to local climate information are provided. Topics include: Climate & Gardening, Sunshine, Temperature, Humidity and Dew Point, Precipitation, Wind, Evapotranspiration, Climate Resources, Climate Change and CoCoRaHS.

We hope that you'll take a look at it, use it for your own gardening needs and pass along the URL link to other gardeners you know who may be interested in gaining a better understanding of climate and how climate might effect their local gardening efforts . . . and watch out putting out your tender plants in those areas where frost could still show up in May!



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