

Messages of the Day
June 2015

Monday, June 1, 2015

Was that really 2.00" or actually 1.96"? Please avoid the temptation of rounding off to the nearest tenth or half-inch.

As we go about quality controlling the nation's CoCoRaHS Observations each day, we occasionally come across measurements which are to the nearest tenth, quarter or whole inch. The likelihood of actually measuring these exact amounts is rather rare, but they do occasionally occur (if they actually do please make a note that it's the actual amount in the comments field). As an observer in the CoCoRaHS network, we ask everyone to measure and report to the actual hundredth of an inch, as precisely as possible. Since the data are being used for scientific purposes it is important that we have the most accurate measurements possible. With the required 4" diameter CoCoRaHS rain gauge, measurements to the hundredth of an inch are very easy to observe.

For further review please take a look at our CoCoRaHS training slide show on the right hand side of our home page: www.cocorahs.org

It can be soooo tempting to round off, but please take those extra ten seconds to measure right to the actual amount. We greatly appreciate it.

Wednesday, June 3, 2015

Download a "CoCoRaHS Brochure" . . . in English or Spanish!

This week, download a CoCoRaHS brochure and give one to a friend or family member who might be interested in weather. Anyone can download it from his or her home as a pdf file. The brochure is an easy and concise way to share CoCoRaHS with others.

To download the brochure in English click here: [CoCoRaHS Brochure in English](#)

To download the brochure in Spanish click here: [CoCoRaHS Brochure in Spanish](#)

Your help in recruiting new volunteers helps bolster our network while filling in the precipitation reporting gaps across the country. It's a fun way to get your friends involved in "citizen science" as well. Thanks for passing the word along!

Saturday, June 6, 2015

Weather Preparedness 2015

As part of [NOAA's Weather Ready Nation](#), NOAA encourages you to “Be a Force of Nature” when it comes to extreme weather by learning about potential hazards. Help advance the Weather-Ready Nation by being prepared for the worst. NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) and its partners encourage individuals, families, businesses and communities to know their risk, take action, and be an example when it comes to dangerous weather.

Look for seasonal campaigns for spring, summer and fall in your state — all designed to keep the public safe. Preparedness event topics include:

- Severe Weather Awareness Week
- Flood Safety Awareness Week
- Tsunami Preparedness Week
- Safe Boating Week
- Rip Current Awareness Week
- Lightning Safety Awareness Week
- Tornado Drill
- Monsoon Awareness Week
- Hurricane Preparedness Week
- Heat Awareness Day
- Avalanche Safety
- Winter Weather Awareness Week

To find out more visit: [Weather Preparedness Events Calendar](#).

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Who Uses CoCoRaHS Observations? YES, IT REALLY IS TRUE! Your observations are used every day!

Almost daily someone asks the question, "*who cares about and who uses the observations from CoCoRaHS volunteers?*" It must be hard to fathom that precipitation data is so useful and that backyard rain gauges have a place of importance in national and global climate monitoring in the 21st Century. But the fact is, it's true. Your rainfall reports -- including your reports of zero precipitation -- are very valuable and are being used EVERY DAY. Every morning many organizations pull data from the CoCoRaHS database at least every hour to get all the latest reports as they come in. They wish all CoCoRaHS observers submitted their reports right away.

When you see forecasts of river stages and flood levels on the Missouri, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Colorado River or most anywhere else in the country -- guess what data are helping the forecasters make these forecasts? Yes, timely CoCoRaHS data!

Your reports of hail or heavy rain may trigger the NWS to issue severe thunderstorm or flash flood warnings. In cases of extreme localized storms, your local report could help save lives.

Don't let all this "importance" frighten you. The weight is not all on observers shoulders. The real value comes from having thousands of volunteers reporting from all over. So keep up the good work, and go out and find more weather enthusiasts to help measure, map and track the amazingly variable patterns of precipitation.

A key reason that CoCoRaHS data are so useful is because the rain gauge used by CoCoRaHS volunteers – the 4-inch diameter, 11.30" capacity clear plastic rain gauge is very good. Under most circumstances, this type of gauge performs as well as the official National Weather Service Standard Rain Gauge that has been used for over 120 years documenting our nation's climate. Most CoCoRaHS volunteers have found representative locations to mount their gauge to get very high quality readings. The CoCoRaHS gauge, if installed and used properly, provides very accurate readings. CoCoRaHS volunteers tend to be very interested and very committed to careful and high-quality observations. As a result, the data are usually excellent for a wide range of uses.

Please visit our [WHO USES COCORAHS OBSERVATIONS?](#) page to learn more about how your observations are used. Thanks for your very, very useful observations!

Saturday, June 13, 2015

The CoCoRaHS "State Climates" Series

A few years ago CoCoRaHS got together with 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!

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

June 17th -- CoCoRaHS Day! ... Happy Seventeenth Anniversary!

Wednesday is CoCoRaHS Day. The CoCoRaHS website was launched June 17, 1998 -- officially marking the beginning of this volunteer rain gauge network. One hundred beginner weather observers reported that day. We now have over 20,000 rain gauge observers who send in reports regularly or occasionally. Let's celebrate our 17th anniversary with everyone sending in their CoCoRaHS daily precipitation reports and setting a new all-time record for most CoCoRaHS reports in one day. Let's shoot for 13,000+ reports and break the record!

For those of you who did not know, the number of reports received each day is listed just above the national map on our home page.

Thanks very much!

Thursday, June 18, 2015

Have you changed your email address lately? Please let us know.

From time to time folks change their email addresses. If that's the case and you haven't been receiving email from CoCoRaHS (for example: Nolan's bi-monthly messages know as "The Catch") you can send us your new email address, along with your station number to: info@cocorahs.org .

Doing so will keep you up to date on the latest developments from CoCoRaHS.

Saturday, June 20, 2015

The Summer Solstice

The [Farmer's Almanac](#) has the following to say about summer solstice:

"The summer solstice heralds the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere. The timing of the summer solstice depends on when the Sun reaches its northernmost point of the equator.

In 2015, the summer begins with the solstice on June 21 at 12:38 P.M. EDT. This year, Father's Day is also celebrated on the 21st!

The word solstice is from the Latin solstitium, from sol (sun) and stitium (to stop), reflecting the fact that the Sun appears to stop at this time (and again at the winter solstice).

In temperate regions, we notice that the Sun is higher in the sky throughout the day, and its rays strike Earth at a more direct angle, causing the efficient warming we call summer."

[Wikipedia](#) has a helpful table showing the dates and times for the summer solstice thru 2020.

We hope that you'll spend sometime outdoors this week and enjoy this wonderful time of year.

Monday, June 22, 2015

The Heat Index . . . What's That?

The Heat index (HI) is sometimes referred to as the "apparent Temperature". The HI, given in degrees F, is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity (RH) is added to the actual air temperature.

So if the temperature was 85F and the Relative Humidity was 85% the Heat Index value would be 99F. Believe me, that's an uncomfortable value. Many parts of the country will see heat index values over 100F this summer. Thanks to the invention of air conditioning many are fortunate to keep cool during the heat of summer. For those who do not have air conditioning it's important to try to keep cool.

NOAA's Weather Prediction Center has created a great ["WPC Heat Index Forecast Page"](#) that you can use to determine the heat index forecasted at your particular location.

Here is a list of possible heat disorders that could result for people in high risk groups when the HI reaches a certain value:

Heat Index of 130F or higher = Heat stroke or sunstroke likely.

Heat Index between 105 - 129F = Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion likely. Heatstroke possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

Heat Index between 90 - 105F = Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

Heat Index between 80 - 90F = Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

For additional information on ["HEAT "](#) and ["HEAT STRESS"](#) click on those words.

On a final note, animals such as dogs are very susceptible to heat stroke. Don't forget to find a shady, cool spot for your pets, they will be thankful you did.

Monday, June 29, 2015

When is a sprinkle a trace "T"?

Many folks have asked this question. Our answer is that as long as you see or feel the drops, it is a trace and should be reported as a T. There are little traces and big traces (that actually put some moisture into the gauge) and this can be noted in the "Observation Notes". As long as precipitation falls from the sky and reaches the ground so that you can see or feel it -- it is worth reporting as a trace.

Thanks for participating in CoCoRaHS!