

Messages of the Day
October 2011

Saturday, October 1, 2011

Happy New Year . . . Water New Year that is!

October 1st is a special day on the CoCoRaHS calendar. It is the first day of the 2012 Water Year!

What is the water year?

The water year is an approximation for the best consecutive 12 months that span the "water storage/water usage" hydrologic cycle. The water year cycle is particularly obvious in the Rocky Mountains and western U.S. where snow begins to accumulate at high elevations in October and doesn't melt and run off until next spring and summer. But this same important annual cycle takes different forms across the entire country.

Another way to think of the Water Year is the resting/replenishing season followed by the water consuming season where vegetation grows, crops are grown and then harvested. For much of the country, the months of October through March are months where precipitation from the sky exceeds evaporation from the ground. This means that soil moisture and ground water can recharge. The next spring temperatures will warm again, plants will come back from dormancy and once again evapotranspiration will surge.

Water Year Summaries

To celebrate the new year, we will once again generate Water Year Summary reports for every CoCoRaHS station. These summaries will be provided in a few days in HTML and Excel formats to give all observers the chance to review their observations for the year and make any corrections if necessary. (We'll send out another message when they are ready.) Then we will make some improvements to the reports based on the feedback we get, and will regenerate the reports at the end of October once everyone has had a chance to review their observations.

Thanks again for helping CoCoRaHS track precipitation across the country. Happy New Year!

Monday, October 3, 2011

CoCoRaHS launches official "CoCoRaHS YouTube Channel"

With the turn of the calendar to October on Saturday morning, CoCoRaHS launched the "CoCoRaHS YouTube Channel" (<http://www.youtube.com/cocorahs>). This is the location where you will find official CoCoRaHS videos. Additional videos will be added on a fairly regular basis. For those of you not familiar with YouTube, the site is free and easy to access with your computer.

With this announcement, we have released a "new animated introduction video" describing the network in an animated, easy to watch style. Our goal is to have something that appeals to all ages, is attention grabbing, funny and still educational. We hope you like it. Let us know what you think. If this video

becomes popular we will work with our artist to create additional training materials and other items of interest.

We hope that you'll take a moment to watch this new intro video and share it with others.

Thanks as always for your daily reports and keeping an eye on the sky!

Saturday, October 8, 2011

Preparing your gauge for colder weather as we move into autumn

It's early October and several portions of the country have already seen snow the past couple of days. Many others will see frost, freezes and wintery precipitation beginning to show up in the weeks ahead. As you think about the seasons, keep in mind that water left in the inner cylinder of our gauge will freeze and crack the gauge if left outside in prolonged subfreezing weather. For those if you in colder parts of the country, the time will come soon to bring the funnel and inner tube inside and catch frozen precipitation in the large outer cylinder. So keep an eye on your temperatures and preserve your inner-gauge parts for another season.