

Messages of the Day
October 2013

Tuesday, October 1, 2013

Happy New Year 2014 . . . Water New Year that is!

October 1st is a special day on the CoCoRaHS calendar. It is the first day of the 2014 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 cultivated 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. When next spring arrives, 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. The first draft of these summaries will be provided in early October 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!

Tuesday, October 3, 2013

Preparing your gauge for colder weather as we move into autumn

It's late September and some portions of the country have already seen snow. 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 of 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.

Saturday, October 5, 2013

Autumn Leaves . . . time for a change of color!

It's that time of year again when the leaves in many parts of the country begin to change color. Have you ever wondered "Why do the leaves change color?"

The US Forest Service has put together a nice web site explaining just that at: ["Forest Service Leaves"](#).

Or have you ever wondered "Does precipitation play a role in leaf color?"

"The amount and brilliance of the colors that develop in any particular autumn season are related to weather conditions that occur before and during the time the chlorophyll in the leaves is dwindling," says University of Kentucky agricultural meteorologist Tom Priddy. "Temperature and moisture are the main influences. . . .The countless combinations of these two highly variable factors assure that no two autumns can be exactly alike."

And if you are just trying to find out where the leaves are turning during a certain week or in a certain place in the country, the Foliage Report Network: ["The Foliage Network"](#) keeps track of leaf colors in the midwestern and eastern half of the country and the US Forest Service keeps you advised on fall colors throughout the US at: ["Fall Colors"](#).

More info the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events that are influenced by environmental changes, especially seasonal variations in temperature and precipitation driven by weather and climate visit the National Phenology Network Web site at: ["National Phenology Network"](#).

Saturday, October 12, 2013

A Second Outer Cylinder for Winter Weather? Great Idea!

One of our volunteer observers states that "Even though we don't get a lot of snow in Western North Carolina we do have a lot of occasions at my elevation that we wake up to frozen precipitation in our outer gauge. Rather than making several, sometimes dangerous, trips back and from the gauge site I have purchased a second outer sleeve and just swap them out at the morning reading. I can then leave the frozen precipitation to melt on its own in the warmth of the house or help it along with artificial means. Much, much easier on my old bones."

That is an excellent idea. Many of us have an extra one for just that purpose. The outer cylinder can be purchased at a cheaper price than the whole gauge for around \$12.50 and is available from those distributors listed on our web site.

Friday, October 18, 2013

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR)

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NWR broadcasts official Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Working with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System, NWR is an "All Hazards" radio network, making it your single source for comprehensive weather and emergency information. In conjunction with Federal, State, and Local Emergency Managers and other public officials, NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards including natural (such as earthquakes or avalanches), environmental (such as chemical releases or oil spills), and public safety (such as AMBER alerts or 911 Telephone outages).

Known as the "Voice of NOAA's National Weather Service," NWR is provided as a public service by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the Department of Commerce. NWR includes more than 985 transmitters, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal.

Click on the following link to find out more about where to listen to NOAA Weather Radio in your area:
[NOAA RADIO](#)

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

The PRISM-CoCoRaHS Climate Portal!

The PRISM-CoCoRaHS Climate Portal. What is that you might ask? The PRISM portal is a CoCoRaHS data analysis tool developed in collaboration with the PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University. This is an exclusive feature available only to CoCoRaHS participants. It helps connect our daily precipitation measurements (weather) to seasonal patterns, long term averages and year to year precipitation variations (climate). This portal provides access to estimates of "normal" precipitation for any location in the contiguous United States. PRISM also provides estimates of total precipitation for each month and year since 1895. View the ["PRISM Portal Reference page"](#)

You can access the portal by going to the CoCoRaHS home page and clicking on "My Account" at the top of the page. From there you have two choices. One is to select the PRISM Portal section and click on the "blue" words PRISM PORTAL to get access to the Continental United States or under the My Station heading click on the "blue" words PRISM DATA to get access to your specific station's PRISM estimates.

Once there you'll be able to find the estimated precipitation for any location in the continental United States or create a historical time series for monthly and annual precipitation.

We recommend watching the PRISM Portal Guide YouTube instructional video on how to use the portal by clicking here: ["PRISM PORTAL VIDEO"](#)

Please enjoy and use this great feature to explore the climate of the U.S.

Wednesday, October 30, 2013

Water year summary report!!!

"Water Year Summary Reports and graphs" are now available for every CoCoRaHS rain gauge observer who submitted measurements during the 2013 water year (October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013).

To view the summary for your station, click on "My Account" at the top of the CoCoRaHS homepage: "<http://www.cocorahs.org>". You'll need to be logged in for this to work. You will find all your data reports compiled into monthly and annual totals. Graphs of daily and monthly totals and accumulations are provided. "Comments" from each daily report are also tabulated, so consider this your personal "2013 Water Year Journal".

If you find any missing data or incorrect reports for your station, please take this opportunity to fill in or correct them. Changes in your "summary report" will not show up immediately, but will be recompiled and updated after November 10th.

Water Year summary reports and graphs are also available for 2010, 2011 and 2012. With help from the PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University we also provide monthly estimates for your "normal" (30-year 1981-2010 average) precipitation. We can all see if our monthly and water year totals were wetter or drier than average.

To view data for any CoCoRaHS station in the USA or Canada, click here: [WATER YEAR SUMMARY](#)

Enjoy, and thanks for participating.

Two CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinars in November! — "Weather Modification: Does the seeding of clouds enhance precipitation? An old question revisited" and a special "Review of Significant Weather Events Occurring in 2013"

This month we will hold our regular monthly WxTalk Webinar . . . which will focus on weather modification: "[WxTalk Webinar](#)" on Wednesday, November 5th. "*Weather Modification: Does the seeding of clouds enhance precipitation? An old question revisited*" will be presented by Bart Geerts of the University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

In addition, Greg Carbin from NOAA's Storm Prediction Center will be presenting a special Webinar entitled "A Review of Significant Weather Events Occurring in 2013". You won't want to miss this one!

Space is limited to the first 500 registrants for each webinar, 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 #24 - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: "Weather Modification"

Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2013

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

"Back in the 1960's through 1980's, much research was conducted into advertent modification of weather. The Weather Channel's recent documentary series "Hacking the Planet" gives a good survey of the ideas that were tested back then. Federal support for this work essentially ceased some 25 years ago in the US, not because of environmental or ethical concerns, but rather because of the difficulty of signal detection in the "noise" of natural variability. Amidst this state of uncertainty, commercial interests in the United States and across the world have continued to invest in cloud seeding, mainly to increase precipitation.

In recent years the State of Wyoming has embarked on an ambitious project, the Wyoming Weather Modification Pilot Project. This is the most rigorous effort to date to determine the impact of ground-based glaciogenic cloud seeding on snowfall over Wyoming's mountains. New observational tools and high-performance computing power now exist to revisit this old question. This talk will explain the basic physics behind weather modification, and it will survey cloud seeding efforts from the early days to the recent revival."

Reserve your seat now for the **Weather Modification Webinar** by registering here: [CLOUD SEED](#)

Title: SPECIAL WEBINAR - CoCoRaHS WxTalk: "A Review of Significant Weather Events Occurring in 2013"

Date: Thursday, November 14, 2013

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

"Greg will present an overview of hazardous weather episodes impacting life and property within the United States during 2013. Selected events will be presented in quasi-chronological order and described with photos, maps, and loops of satellite and radar data. While many of the events selected for this talk captured the attention of the media and public, some of these "meteorological memories" may have been forgotten as more substantial weather events occurred throughout the year. This review will highlight some of the "big stories", as well as smaller short-term events. The presentation will include descriptions of significant and deadly weather events of the past year including winter storms, tornadoes and floods. Along with the meteorological set-up for each event, an impact summary will also be provided.

Given the national scope and varied responsibilities of the Storm Prediction Center, high impact weather events, ranging from severe thunderstorm and tornado outbreaks to wildfires and winter storms, are analyzed and forecast regularly. These responsibilities provide the SPC forecaster with a unique opportunity to interpret data related to extreme weather across the nation. This diversified experience, and the availability of large, high-resolution, archived datasets, provide for this type of informative presentation."

Reserve your seat now for the **Weather Modification Webinar** by registering here: [2013 REVIEW](#)

Our December CoCoRaHS WxTalk Webinar will focus on Climate Change and Health and be presented by Ben Beard, Chief, Bacterial Diseases Branch, Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, NCEZID Centers for Disease Control, Fort Collins, CO. It will take place on December 5th. Stay tuned for an upcoming announcement on how to register.