

The Who, What, Why and How Behind "CoCoRaHS" The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network

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The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow (CoCoRaHS) network was born from disaster. In 1997, Fort Collins Colorado experienced one of the worst flooding disasters to date. The magnitude of rainfall from this event was not readily observed, with post storm analyses indicating that precipitation gradients were far too extreme for the existing monitoring network. The staff at the Colorado Climate Center recognized the need to increase the density of precipitation monitoring networks, and hence the CoCoRaHS project took off. Today, the CoCoRaHS network spans all 50 states with several thousand observers.

CoCoRaHS is a grass roots volunteer organization of precipitation (rain, snow, hail) observers of all ages and abilities. The only requirement for observers is to possess an enthusiasm for watching and reporting local weather conditions. Training on how to measure rainfall and snowfall is provided by local instructors, and also through web based presentations. Reports are submitted daily into the CoCoRaHS database via website and are archived for climate and research purposes. The data is also ingested into hydrologic and meteorological models used by the National Weather Service, other meteorologists and hydrologists. Emergency Managers, water resource engineers, insurance adjusters, ranchers, farmers, teachers, students and neighbors in the community are just some examples of the wide variety of those who need and use precipitation records.

The CoCoRaHS network was established to 1) provide accurate, high-quality precipitation data on a timely basis; 2) increase the density of precipitation data available throughout the Nation; 3) encourage fun and a heightened awareness about weather and natural sciences; 4) foster educational activities and resources for teachers using the water and weather data.

Pennsylvania joined CoCoRaHS in 2005 with New York following in September 2007. There are several hundred dedicated observers around central New York and northeast Pennsylvania. This presentation will discuss the CoCoRaHS network and it's benefits to

the climate network of the United States and also how end-users can access and utilize the data for their specific operations.