

THE ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR

Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

CoCoRaHS Comes to North Dakota

By Darin Langerud

Few things are more important to an agricultural economy than weather and climate. After all, you can plant the best seed in the most fertile ground at the optimum time, but without the right growing conditions a dismal harvest is sure to follow.

Here in North Dakota, we are fortunate to have a number of weather and climate networks monitoring those conditions. They include the National Weather Service Coop network (NWS Coop), the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN), and the Atmospheric Resource Board Cooperative Observer Network (ARBCON). These networks involve human observers, paid and volunteer, and automated weather stations located in all corners of the state providing valuable data about our varied and interesting weather.

Despite all of this information, however, there is always room for improvement. Enter CoCoRaHS, the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow network. CoCoRaHS is a group of volunteers measuring precipitation in their own neighborhoods, but collectively tracking precipitation across the nation. The network was founded in Colorado in 1998 and has rapidly expanded to

over 11,000 observers in thirty-seven states. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a major sponsor of CoCoRaHS, while numerous other organizations have contributed either funds or equipment to support its operations.

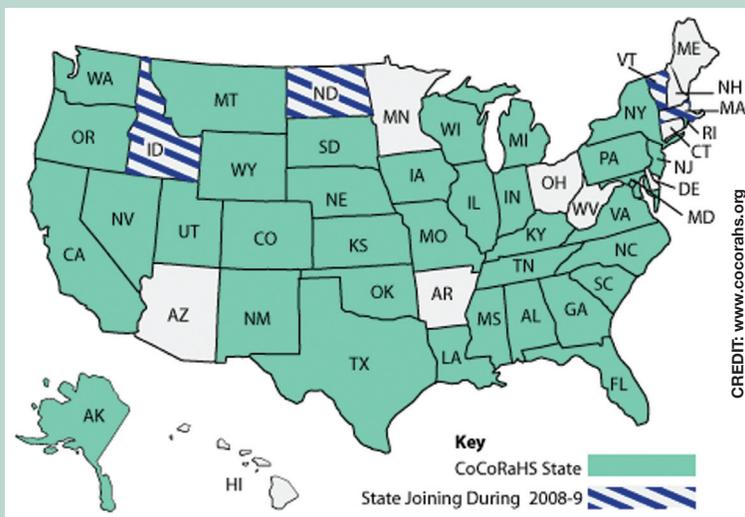
precipitation data collected will allow scientists to better understand the areal distribution of precipitation across the state and assist meteorologists in the forecast process.” Akyuz is the state coordinator for CoCoRaHS in North Dakota, a

cooperative venture that also involves the Atmospheric Resource Board and the National Weather Service offices in Bismarck, Grand Forks, and Williston.

Reporting in the Flickertail State will begin November 1st. Through cooperation and funding from the North Dakota State University Extension Service, initial participation will include extension agents from all North Dakota coun-

ties. Reporting will include rainfall, snow and hail events and will be a year-round venture. Additional volunteers are sought to help improve network coverage across the state. To participate, volunteers must acquire a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge and attend a training session, either in-person or online. If you’re “Cookoo for CoCoRaHS” you can sign up and get started by visiting the website.

Atmospheric Resource Board
North Dakota State Water Commission
900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505
(701) 328-2788
<http://swc.nd.gov>
ND Weather Modification Association
PO Box 2599, Bismarck, ND 58502
(701) 223-4232



The Internet website (www.cocorahs.org) is where everything comes together. Through the website, users can search and download a variety of precipitation data reports for their own use, while observers can use the site to submit reports or engage in training. One of the many advantages to Internet-based reporting is that the data are available in near real-time.

“There is a compelling need for precipitation measurement, especially during the period from November through April, when NDAWN does not record precipitation,” said Adnan Akyuz, State Climatologist and NDAWN director at North Dakota State University. “The additional