



1st Annual WA vs. OR CoCoRaHS Challenge

For Immediate Release: October 1, 2012

The Pacific Northwest is heading towards the wet season, and the Office of the Washington State Climatologist (OWSC) at the University of Washington (UW) is requesting more volunteer rainfall observers.

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow (CoCoRaHS) Network enlists volunteers to take daily rainfall measurements in their backyards and report them to the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org). CoCoRaHS is a national program that came to WA in 2008, with currently about 350 volunteers reporting across the state. “Their reports are useful for weather forecasters, climatologists, city utilities, hydrologists, and researchers, among others,” said Karin Bumbaco, the WA State CoCoRaHS coordinator at the Office of the WA State Climatologist at UW. “The ability of observers to send Significant Weather Reports directly to meteorologists at the National Weather Service during heavy rain episodes is especially important,” added Jeff Michalski, the Western WA Regional CoCoRaHS coordinator at the National Weather Service Forecasting Office in Seattle.

To participate in the program, new observers must purchase a standard 4-inch diameter rain gauge for about \$30 and either attend an in-person training session or view online training material.

WA and OR are competing in a contest to get the most new volunteers beginning on October 1 and culminating on October 27, the day UW plays Oregon State University (OSU) in college football. Both CoCoRaHS state coordinators are located at UW and OSU, respectively, so the football game is a fitting final day of the friendly CoCoRaHS competition.

Besides state pride as motivation for new observers to join, the new WA observers will be entered into a drawing for an OWSC coffee mug, and 3 will win. Contest results will be posted every Friday on the WA State CoCoRaHS and the OWSC webpages (<http://www.cocorahs.org/state.aspx?state=wa>; <http://www.climate.washington.edu/>).

“Though primarily a wind storm, the 50th anniversary of the Columbus Day Storm this month reminds us how intense Pacific Northwest weather can be and how important high density precipitation measurements are to characterizing the nature of these types of storms,” said Bumbaco.

Contact:

Karin Bumbaco, University of Washington, 206 543 3145

Jeff Michalski or Ted Buehner, National Weather Service Seattle, 206 526 6857 (media line)

Robin Fox or Ellie Kelch, National Weather Service Spokane, 509 224 0537 (media line)