



## WEST VIRGINIA IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER RAINFALL OBSERVERS

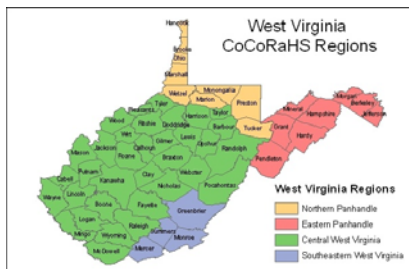
West Virginia will become the latest state to join the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS). Effective May 1, 2009, West Virginia will join 42 other states that now include approximately 13,000 volunteers nationwide. The goal of the program, which is now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, is to provide a more dense precipitation network that will supplement existing observations.

Henry Reges, national CoCoRaHS coordinator from Colorado State University, says that this program will act as the “farm team” for the more established Cooperative Observer Program run by the National Weather Service. The National Weather Service also sponsors CoCoRaHS. Reges also says, “Volunteers can include anyone who can devote five minutes a day to take rain gauge measurements and then post their readings online.” Volunteers must purchase a standard rain gauge, which costs about \$25. The rain gauge can be purchased from distributors online, which are posted on the CoCoRaHS website.

“This is a perfect opportunity for weather enthusiasts to help collect weather and climate data across the state,” says Dr. Kevin Law, assistant professor of meteorology at Marshall University and state climatologist of West Virginia. “CoCoRaHS will be especially useful during winter when we observe snowfall amounts,” Law said. “Snowfall patterns vary greatly across West Virginia especially in the mountains. The National Weather Service is particular interested in this data as it will help them better forecast snowfall totals in those counties.”

CoCoRaHS aims to have 20,000 observers by 2010. For more information about how to join CoCoRaHS, log on to [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org). The West Virginia site can then be found by clicking the state on the homepage. Online tutorials explaining where to properly place your rain gauge and how to precisely read your gauge can also be found on this website.

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