



# CISA

A NOAA RISA TEAM

January 2017

## CISA & CoCoRaHS Condition Monitoring Newsletter

Dear CoCoRaHS Observer,

This month's newsletter includes tips on caring for your rain gauge, an update on climate in the Southeast, information on submitting pictures, a reminder for the upcoming observer conference call, and the Condition Monitoring Star of the Month.

- The rain gauge care guide provides you with some helpful tips to prevent cracking and dirty gauges in the winter months.
- The Southeast climate article discusses drought, wildfire and weather trends over the winter. It also includes some interesting 2016 weather facts.
- The upcoming CoCoRaHS observer conference call and webinar will be on **January 25<sup>th</sup>**. This section will help you figure out how to access the call.
- Finally, we highlight our Condition Monitoring Star of the Month: Susan Garriques from Yancey County, NC.

We hope you're all having a great start to the new year! As always, do not hesitate to reach out to us at [cisa@sc.edu](mailto:cisa@sc.edu) if you have any other questions or comments.

The CISA Team - Amanda, David, Ellie, Kirsten,  
Kirstin and Meghan

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## Rain Gauge Winter Care Guide

With temperatures below freezing this month, caring for your rain gauge is more important than ever. In warm weather you can leave the gauge outside; however, cold weather calls for a little bit more attention. When temperatures drop below freezing, the funnel and inner calibrated tube should be kept indoors to prevent cracking due to the cycle of precipitation melting and freezing (You know that process that creates cracks in our roads? It will also crack your gauge).

Winter weather might leave your gauge looking hazy or dirty. To clean your gauge, soak the gauge in warm water with gentle liquid hand soap. Then dry with a soft towel. Do not use a firm bottlebrush or an automatic dishwasher, as these methods will gradually scuff the inside of the gauge.

Don't let winter weather keep you from submitting condition monitoring reports, [remember snow is still precipitation!](#)

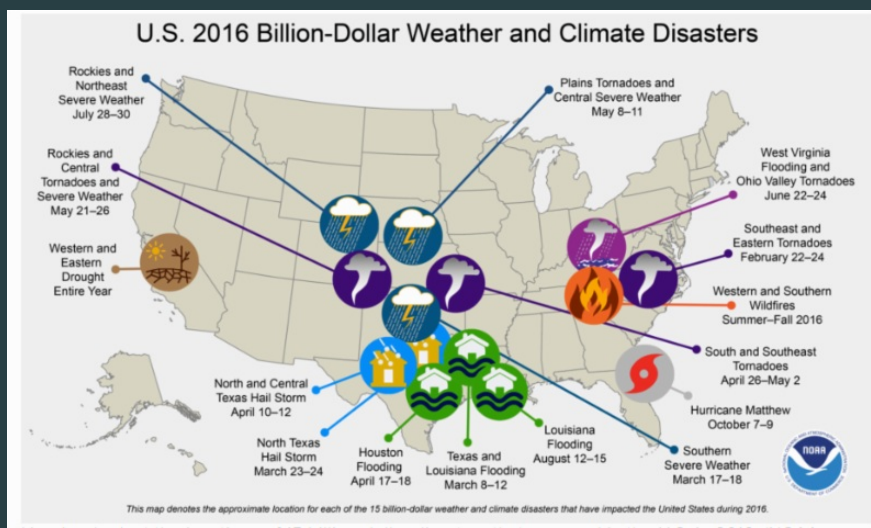
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## Southeast Regional Climate Report

The [Southeast Regional Climate Center](#) released a [report on winter conditions](#) in the area. During December, the Southeast had mean temperatures that were near to above average. Snowfall was recorded in small amounts, and areas from North Carolina to northern Virginia received freezing rain.

In regards to drought recovery, the western areas in the Southeast region had significantly better conditions in December than in previous months. Wildfires in the region were mainly suppressed with the precipitation, but streamflow and lake levels are still recovering from the long-lasting drought. Pasture conditions improved in areas that were hit hard by the drought. Because many areas had insufficient soil moisture during the planting period and were not able to grow small grains and forage, livestock farmers are continuing to use supplemental feeding and are forecasting a hay shortage later this winter.

[NOAA](#) released an [article on weather](#) in the United States in 2016, highlighting some national weather information as well as the extreme events experiences by different regions of the country:



A map released by NOAA illustrating the 15 billion-dollar disasters that occurred in the U.S. in 2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.noaa.gov/news/2016-was-2nd-warmest-year-on-record-for-us>

- The average temperature across the U.S. was 2.9 degrees F above average. This resulted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> warmest year on record, and the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year with an annual average temperature that exceeded the average
- By December 2016, the national drought footprint expanded to about 23 percent of the continental U.S. The average year-long precipitation for the continental U.S. was 31.70 inches

## Submitting Pictures

As we begin to enter the thick of winter, be sure to keep an eye out for various dry conditions or possibly any recovery that you see. Any information you share with us in your condition monitoring reports or via photos you send will provide useful information to local officials trying to monitor drought and manage water resources effectively. Unfortunately, there is currently no option to upload photos to the CoCoRaHS website. However, the CISA team is happy to accept your photos and forward them on to folks in the state climate offices who read your reports regularly. Photos along with the date, location, and a brief description can be emailed to [cisa@sc.edu](mailto:cisa@sc.edu).

## Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming CoCoRaHS Observer Conference Call

The CISA team will host an observer webinar and conference call on **Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.** to provide an opportunity for Carolina CoCoRaHS observers to ask questions and provide feedback about the condition monitoring project and to give you a chance to chat with one another.

Conference call topics will include:

- A summary of the number of Carolinas condition monitoring reports since October, and a comparison with other parts of the country
- A demonstration of the condition monitoring web map
- A refresher on the types of information you might include in your reports

You can access the webinar at:

[https://breeze.sc.edu/cocorahs\\_january2017](https://breeze.sc.edu/cocorahs_january2017).

All audio for the call will be through the CISA conference call line. Dial 641-715-0861, then enter the passcode 736549# when prompted. Please note that this is NOT a toll free number.

We look forward to hearing from all of you!

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## Condition Monitoring Star of the Month: Susan Garriques

Our January Condition Monitoring Star of the Month is Susan Garriques. Susan has been submitting great reports from Yancey County, North Carolina since her involvement in the Condition Monitoring project. She began observing for CoCoRaHS back in 2002, started submitting condition monitoring reports in 2016, and enjoys knowing that her reports are beneficial. Susan is also an artist and musician in a very rural area of North Carolina.

Susan has some great advice for fellow observers in regards to reporting during the winter.

*"My favorite tip for recording precipitation is to have 2 cylinders for winter time. When we have snow, I can take the extra cylinder with me and switch it with the one full of snow. Saves me that extra trip to the gauge on those frigid mornings. Also, I move the cylinder location in the winter time...the hole in a small cinderblock works great to keep it upright."*

According to Susan, the most memorable observations she had were during the recent wildfires in her area.

*"There were fires all around us, none very close, but our air was thick with smoke. And of course, there was the horrible fire in Gatlinburg, which is only two hours away from us."*

The following are a couple examples of Susan's reports:

Report	Scale Bar	Categories	Description

12/4/2016	Severely Dry	General Awareness Fire Society and Public Health	We got 1.30 inches of rain last week, but it is still very dry...our wild birds drink from the bird bath as much as they eat from the feeder. The squirrels also drink from a water bowl on ground level. It's raining as I type this with more rain on the way. Hopefully this will help with the fires that still burn around us.
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Report Date	Scale Bar	Categories	Description
1/8/2016	Moderately Dry	General Awareness	We are still considered to be in moderate drought. The burn ban has been lifted. We've had nearly an inch of rain this month, and more than a half inch of moisture from the 6" of snow on the ground now. The snow is keeping most of us home now. Schools let our early on Friday and most all church services were cancelled today.

A big thank you to Susan for her participation with CoCoRaHS and condition monitoring. If you're interested in reading more condition monitoring reports, go to the [List of Drought Impacts Reports](#) or the [condition monitoring webmap](#).

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Feel free to contact us with any questions.

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