COOP Newletter: November 2008

Southeast Alaska

First Issue!

This is the first issue of the monthly COOP Newsletter for Southeast Alaska. Our goal is to produce a monthly newsletter that will provide both useful and interesting information to you, our COOP's. Although, the format will be fluid as the Team will take turns writing the newsletters, we plan on having a foundation topics: New news and Time for Training. As always, your feedback is welcome and encouraged. Maybe we could add and Q and A section?????

New News

We have a few new COOP volunteers to welcome in this year:

Hidden Inlet Resort: This station is located in Misty Fjord and is a great addition, as that forecast zone only had one data point, although a great one, Hyder. Caroline and Darrell, our Hyder observers did a great job with getting this site recruited. Darrell is the Caretaker for the Resort and so has become an observer at two different locations….Thanks Darrell!!!

Angoon Water Treatment: This site is also filling a huge gap in data, as there was not one data point for the western side of Admiralty Island.

Angoon Power: Has rejoined the COOP family. Even with a very busy schedule, they have agreed to start reporting again.

Juneau-Douglas Waste Water Treatment Plant: This site is a great location with 7 day a week staff and large area that can used as a snow field in the winter. It will be interesting to see how the data compares with COOP stations in the local Juneau area.

Weather Coder……AKA WXCoder

This summer our office changed over to the National electronic version of the B91. This was a bit of a hard sell, as our office for many years had provided a web-based data entry for our observers. All of the observers that were entering their data electronically have converted over to WXCoder, it was not an easy transmission as the National version is different, but you persevered and adjusted to the new format. There were even some stations that decided to do electronic entry for the first time, with much success. A very

big, THANK YOU! Anyone that is interested in entering their data via the web or even getting to see their data in electronic format, let us know.


Remember, you are our eyes and ears out there. Anything of interest that you observe or hear about in your area is something we want to hear about, too. Give us a call or send us a Spotter Report.

Acquiring Snow Measurements and Water Equivalent, along with other Helpful Tips.

Watch the VHS video or DVD provided by the NWS entitled “Measuring Snow”.

When measuring snow it is important to remember the weather conditions as they happened. If it was windy, estimation will be a must. If it warmed up after it snowed, a true reading of 24 hour snowfall will only be possible if a measurement was made before it started to melt.

Some Do’s and Don’ts

Do take a snow measurement and clear the snow board at your prescribed observations time.

Do take the funnel and inner tube out of outer cylinder when snow is expected.

Do not use hot water, only warm water, to melt the contents of the large cylinder.

Do take several samples of snow depth around your snow field.

Do not use a disturbed snow area for measurement.

Do fill in every box that is required, if no precipitation occurred enter "0", if it is missing enter "M". A TRACE is reported as a "T". Only during months when no snow has occurred is leaving the last two columns blank, acceptable.

Do not put snow board too close to trees or other obstructions.

Do try to measure the snowfall, when snow stops and before temperatures warm enough to cause melting.

Column for reporting **24-HOUR AMOUNTS and At Ob.**

1. *Rain, melted snow. Etc* is reported to the nearest hundredth of an inch (e.g. 2.57, 0.08).
   When melting snow or other frozen precipitation, add warm water to the frozen precipitation or submerge cylinder in warm water. The latter takes much longer. Your best bet is to measure out warm water in the small measuring cylinder (IMPORTANT: make sure you measure the warm water you are adding). Next add it to the snow in the large cylinder, stir until it has all turned to liquid. Depending on how much frozen precipitation has fallen, a second dose of measured warm water may be necessary. Using the funnel on the small measuring tube, carefully pour the liquid from the large cylinder (Having a person to hold onto the small cylinder is quite handy). Measure the liquid contents in the small measuring tube and subtract the warm liquid you added, e.g. You added .55 inches of warm water and then measured 1.32 inches after everything was melted: 1.32 – 0.55 = 0.77, 0.77 is your daily liquid equivalent.

2. *Snow, ice pellets* is reported to the nearest tenth of an inch, e.g. 5.5, 0.8, 1.0

3. *Snow, ice pellets, hail, ice on ground* is reported in whole inches, e.g. 3, 7, 12

Always round to the nearest whole inch. 1.4 = 1, 1.5=2. A trick to remembering the rounding is to count on your left hand starting with zero and then moved to your right hand all the way up to nine. Anything on your left hand rounds down, anything on your right hand rounds up.

Averaging may be necessary, for example, if half of your snow field is bare ground and the other half is 6 inches of standing snow, the snow on ground would be 3 inches. Unfortunately, nature is not always so uniform, average it all out is the best we can do.

Just for Good Measure

- The MAX, MIN and AT OBSN columns also need to be filled in. These are all reported to the nearest whole degree. If missing enter "M". If it is below zero enter a "–" before the number. The observed temperature will never be higher than your max or lower than your min.

- If you are gone and are unable to take your observation on any given day, make sure you make such remarks in the "remarks" column, for example, you leave town for 2 days and your neighbor who usually does the data collection for you has broken his leg and is unable to do so this time. Upon returning, enter the dates you were gone and when you returned and resumed collecting data. Some COOPs have the new Nimbus Temperature systems and won't lose the max's and min's during an absence. Our hopes are to replace all the old MMTS's (max min thermometer system) and CRS's (Cotton Region Shelter) with the new Nimbus Temperature system.

- Remarks are our friend. Anything that might help paint a clearer picture of the day's weather is always useful.

- Be as neat and legible as possible, a lot of eyes look at these sheets.

- If you know you are going to be missing days, try to find someone to collect the data while you are gone. If you are unable to do so, letting us know in advance what days you won't be reporting, is appreciated.

Filling in the columns on the B91 and on WXCoder

All columns need to be filled in that you report. For example, if you report temperature and precipitation than the max, min and at observation temperatures along with rain, snow and snow on ground columns need something to be entered. If something did not occur, than a 0 (zero) shall be entered. If it is missing, enter an "M" and a "T" for trace amount. This is VERY important when entering the data on WXCoder, as the system coverts a blank field to a "0", not missing. The other reason, is that any blank fields will be archived in our database as "M" missing data. By making an entry in every column that you report, it shows that the data was collect, even when there was no data to collect.

Team assignments:

For those that are new to the COOP family, let me tell you about "Team assignments". In an attempt to better serve you, we are providing you with a personal contact at the

weather office. This person will complete the monthly quality control of your B-91 and respond to your questions or needs. You are always welcome to contact any one of us, we are all here to serve you at any time. The purpose of having an assigned person is to help us get to know you better and provide more consistent service.

North: Kimberly Vaughan	**West: Cory**	**East: Nikki Becker**
Elfin Cove	Glacier Bay	Hoonah
Wrangell	Gustavus	Lena Point
Blashke Island	Haines Customs	JNU Mile 17
Meyers Chuck	Haines #2	Eaglecrest
Point Baker	Skagway Customs	JNU Outer Point
Coffman Cove	Skagway Power	Hidden Falls
Beaver Falls	Sitka Water	WFO Juneau
12.8N Ketchikan	Port Alexander	Auke Bay
Hyder	Little Port Walter	Craig
Snettisham	JNU Lemon Creek	Hollis
Annex Creek	JNU Downtown	Thorne Bay
Hidden Inlet	Pelican	Petersburg
	Angoon Power	J-D WWTP
	Angoon Water	

There is good news and bad news when it comes to our Team. Nathan transferred to Kentucky with his wife and new baby. I am happy to report that they are all doing well, but Nathan does say he misses us. The good news is that Cory VanPelt has joined the Team. Cory has been working for the Weather Service since 2002, working at the McGrath and Kotzebue Weather Offices before coming to Juneau. One of many interesting things about Cory is that he was a COOP in Texas for three years before heading north. His Mother took over the station when he left and next year will mark its tenth anniversary. Cory has been expanding his math and science knowledge by continually pursuing higher education.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about this or any other COOP matter, feel free to contact us.

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