

# Peak to Valley Weather

The Official Newsletter of the  
National Weather Service Grand Junction

Volume 2, Issue 12  
Spring/Summer 2015



## 2015 Severe Weather Awareness

Jim Pringle, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

The National Weather Service (NWS) [mission statement](#) is primarily focused on the protection of lives and property. To accomplish this mission, the NWS continues to promote weather safety information for everyone in an effort to build a [Weather-Ready Nation](#). This effort includes weather safety awareness and preparedness weeks, with the next one in Colorado the week of April 12-18 that will



promote severe weather safety mostly related to thunderstorm-related hazards.

All thunderstorms produce lightning which is the greatest direct-weather threat to people in this region. You can minimize your chances of being struck by lightning if you follow some basic guidelines which can be found on our [NWS Lightning Safety](#) website.



Top photo: Jerry McBride/  
Durango Herald  
Bottom: Lorraine Laws

Other weather-related threats experienced in the intermountain region during the warm season include floods and flash floods, straight-line thunderstorm winds, wildfires, hail, and sometimes even tornadoes. In addition to lightning, flash floods also pose a significant direct-weather threat to many people in Utah and Colorado, especially during the mid to late summer period. More information on protecting yourself and your property from floods and flash floods can be found at the [NWS Flood Safety](#) website.



Photo: Dawn Morrow

### Inside this Issue

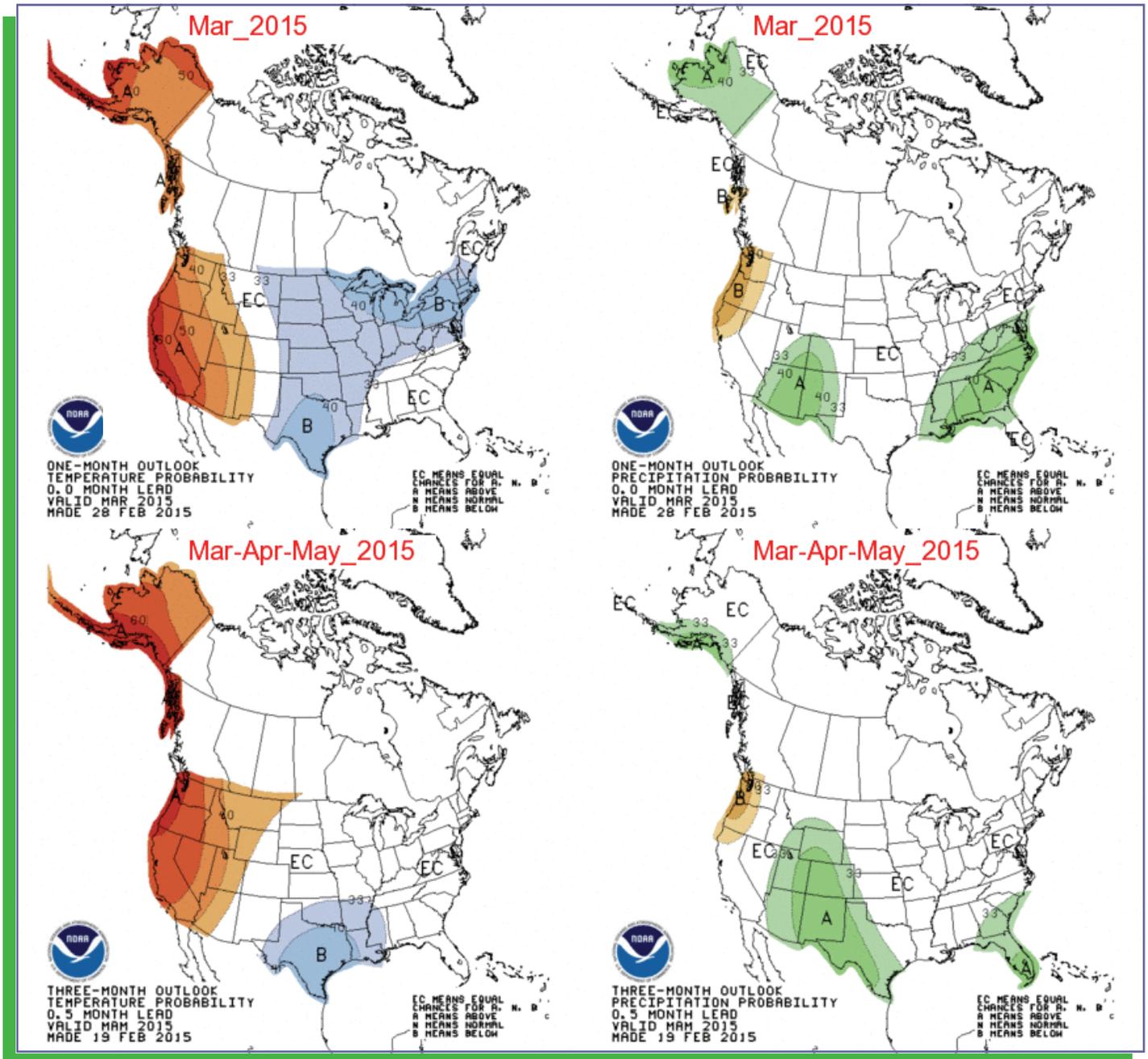
- ~ Multi-media Presentation:
  - ~ Climate Overview
  - ~ Calling All Weather Buffs!
  - ~ Latest Skywarn Activity
  - ~ Annual NWA Meeting Representation
  - ~ Seasonal Rain Gauge Tips
  - ~ Mesa County Safety Fair

# Winter Roundup and Spring Outlook

Joe Ramey, Journey Forecaster

THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS ARE SHARED IN THIS 5-MINUTE [YouTube MULTI-MEDIA WEATHER BRIEFING](#). You may want to refer to the maps below during the presentation.

- Regional look at the climate for December-January-February
- Weak El Niño and the impacts on eastern Utah and western Colorado
- Outlook for March-April-May 2015
- Extended outlook into the fall season of 2015



## WANTED! Volunteers of All Ages to Measure and Report Rain/Snowfall

Jim Pringle, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

**CoCoRaHS**, also known as the **Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network**, is a unique, non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow). <http://www.cocorahs.org/>

CoCoRaHS observers provide precipitation reports on a daily basis, with volunteers in all fifty states, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The precipitation data is used by meteorologists, hydrologists, climatologists, emergency managers, city utility personnel, insurance adjusters, the USDA, engineers, mosquito control personnel, ranchers and farmers, outdoor & recreation interests, teachers, students, and many others.



It's easy to become a volunteer CoCoRaHS observer. All you need to do is [register](#) on the CoCoRaHS website and obtain a 4 inch cylindrical rain gauge. [User friendly training](#) on how to accurately measure rain, snow, and hail can also be found on the CoCoRaHS website. ***It usually only takes a few minutes each day to take the precipitation measurements and post the readings online.***

One of the goals of CoCoRaHS is to have as dense of an observation network as possible. This helps people who use the precipitation reports to better understand the spatial variability of rainfall, snowfall and hail accumulations.

### School Participation in CoCoRaHS

Teachers who participate in CoCoRaHS provide an ideal educational experience for their students to better understand how precipitation is measured and reported. The online training presentations are an excellent classroom resource. [http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=CoCoRaHS\\_Schools](http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=CoCoRaHS_Schools)



Photo: [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org)

## Western Colorado-Eastern Utah SKYWARN® Spotters

Jim Pringle, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

Skywarn® spotters are the mobile version of the trained volunteer storm spotters for the National Weather Service. Additionally, the Skywarn® spotters use amateur radio for communications among themselves and also with the National Weather Service (NWS) forecasters, occasionally reporting from areas where amateur radio is the only form of communication. The Grand Junction NWS office coordinates a number of county-based Skywarn units in eastern Utah and western Colorado.

In appreciation of the great volunteer service provided by these essential Skywarn® spotters, the National Weather Service hosts Skywarn Recognition Day (SRD) each year on the first Saturday of December. During the most recent SRD, about 20 Skywarn® spotters from Mesa, Delta, and Montrose Counties came to the Grand Junction NWS office to participate.

SRD allows Skywarn® participants an opportunity to communicate with other amateur radio operators throughout the world. At the end of the event, the number of states, number of forecast offices, and total contacts (QSOs) are tallied. Results of those communication contacts are quality controlled for accurate counts. The final [SRD results](#) are then posted on the [SRD website](#). For the latest SRD event, the Skywarn® spotters representing the Grand Junction NWS forecast office took 3<sup>rd</sup> place for total number of forecast offices contacted.



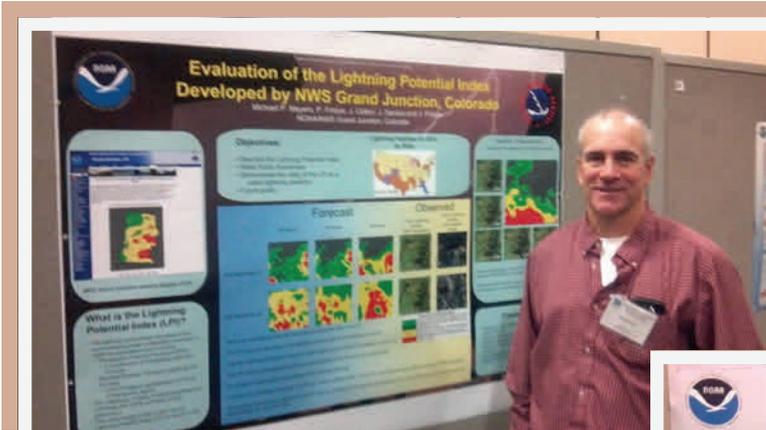
**Clockwise from left: David Riley (N5WNE), Bill Eads (K0SSI), Larry Bullard (N0WRK), Dick Schultz (K0ESZ), and Lew French (K0CUE).**

*Photo: Jim Pringle*

## NWS Grand Junction Representation at Annual NWA Meeting

Paul Frisbie, Senior Meteorologist

Last October, the Grand Junction National Weather Service (NWS) office participated at the **39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the National Weather Association** in Salt Lake City, Utah. The **Science and Operations Officer, Dr. Michael P. Meyers** and **Senior Forecaster, Paul Frisbie**, presented two posters that focused on lightning. Meyers presented “Evaluation of the Lightning Prediction Index Developed by NWS Grand Junction, Colorado”. This poster examined two events during the 2014 summer season and compared the forecast with actual lightning strikes. Verifying the lightning potential index is essential to boosting user confidence in this forecast product. Frisbie concentrated on the forecasting methodology with his poster entitled “Essential Parameters that Improve Lightning Forecasting Skills across the West”.



**Dr. Michael Meyers, SOO**

*Photo: Paul Frisbie*

The goal of these presentations fits readily into the Weather Ready Nation concept. This example of Enhanced **Decision Support Services (DSS)** provides better temporal and spatial forecast information with respect to lightning. The online [lightning potential index](#), is available in 3 hour increments out to 60 hours, and updated every 3 hours.



**Paul Frisbie, Sr. Forecaster**

*Photo: Mike Meyers*

## Rain Gauge Time!

Jim Pringle, Warning Coordination Meteorologist



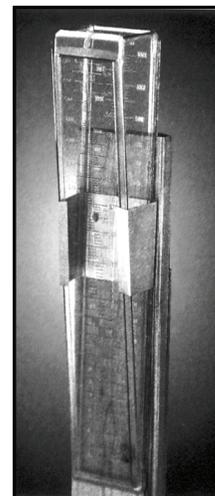
Precipitation reports are an integral part of NWS records. They help verify warnings, advisories and forecasts issued by meteorologists and serve as a comparison tool for analyzing radar data.

As soon as it looks like the chance for freezing temperatures will no longer occur, please set your **wedge rain gauge** back outside.

If you have a **4-inch cylindrical rain gauge**, insert the inner tube back inside the 4-inch cylinder and place the funnel back on the top.



***Thank you for your reports!***



## Weather Office Staff Promotes Weather Safety

Jim Pringle, Warning Coordination Meteorologist

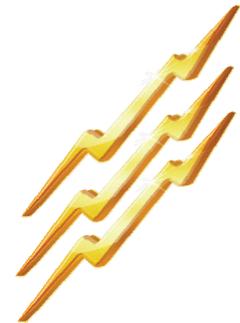
On February 5th and 6th Grand Junction WFO personnel staffed a weather safety booth at the annual Mesa County Safety Fair which caters to grade school children, but also provides a wide array of weather safety information applicable to all ages.

Emphasis at the NWS booth was on lightning safety and flood safety, since lightning and flash floods are the most common life-threatening weather events to people within western Colorado and eastern Utah. Over 2000 people visited the safety fair, which included at least 1400 children.



NWS Grand Junction staff, from left: Tom Renwick, Dennis Phillips, Paul Frisbie, and Aldis Strautins share weather science information with local students.

Photo: Jim Pringle



NWS Grand Junction staff, from left: Dennis Phillips, Tom Renwick, and Aldis Strautins

Photo: Jim Pringle



Left to right: Jim Pringle and Aldis Strautins

Photo: Ben Moyer