

A Drop of News

The Maple City Stormwater Toolbox

October 2023

The Water Year and Why it is Important



In the world of water, the switch between September 30 and October 1 is special because it signifies the end of the current water year and the beginning of the next water year. To you and yours, we wish you a very happy **New Water Year!**



What is the "water year" you ask? It is the amount of rain and snow that falls from the beginning of the wet season in one year to the beginning of the wet season in the next year. This time frame is from October 1 to September 30. In our area, we receive rain and snow during the entire year but out west, there are distinct wet



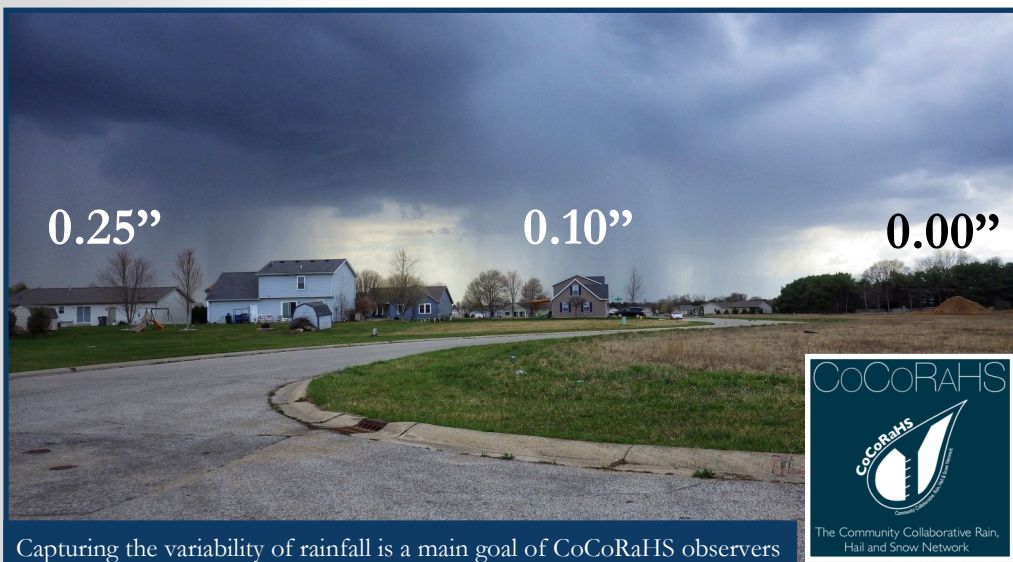
Changing seasons along the Elkhart River at the Goshen Dam.

and dry seasons. Urban areas and farms rely upon the water that accumulates during the wet season for use during the dry season, therefore, no matter where we live it is important to allow stormwater runoff to soak into the soil instead of just flowing to a creek, ditch, stream, river, or lake.

It is also important to understand how much precipitation has fallen in a specific area because it tells us how wet or dry it is. Additionally, the amount of precipitation that falls can vary greatly across short distances as shown below. Knowing how much precipitation has fallen helps the Goshen Stormwater

Department and others anticipate if there will be flooding or drought, which can lead to impacts on stormwater and the health of our local waterways.

The Goshen Stormwater Department monitors precipitation via two different networks of rain gauges: rain gauges located at public sanitary sewer lift stations and via the CoCoRaHS Network, which stands for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network and is an international volunteer organization that records rainfall daily. (www.cocorahs.org)



Capturing the variability of rainfall is a main goal of CoCoRaHS observers

During the 2023 Water Year, CoCoRaHS observers recorded a range of rainfall from 30.91 inches to 37.13 inches across the City of Goshen, with the most rain falling in the northwest quadrant of the city. These daily observations played a key role in decisions the Stormwater Department made throughout the year.

The Stormwater Department invites you to join us as we monitor precipitation by becoming a CoCoRaHS volunteer. (bit.ly/RainVolunteer)

Why are there so many words for waterways?



As we explore the words used to describe waterways based on size and location, we focus this month on the word “Hydrology”. Credit for this idea goes to Graham Waugh, Water Resources Engineer at CBCL Limited (www.instagram.com/waterresourcesguy), and additional etymology information from www.etymologeek.com.

“Hydrology” — “From Ancient Greek, **hydro** meaning water and **ology** [meaning] the study of. Nice and simple. And of course, who doesn’t associate **Hydro** with water. The Latin word for water, “**Aqua**”, gets used for Aquatics in biological science.

Oddly, other Ancient Greek words have not gained popularity in this area. The Greek word for river “**Potomos**” is never used, despite even having a field of study associated with it: “Potomology”, the study of rivers.”



The \$58 Trillion Value of Water



“What is the value of a river? Or a healthy wetland that purifies water, impedes floods, and traps carbon?”

High Cost of Cheap Water, a provocative report commissioned by the conservation heavyweight WWF, attempts to answer that question in dollars. The conclusion: freshwater ecosystems have an economic use value of \$58 trillion, or roughly 60 percent of global GDP.

The staggering figure accounts for direct uses (the water used by households, farms, and industries) and services provided indirectly (flood protection, water storage, animal habitat), **which are seven times more valuable than direct uses.**”

For the full Circle of Blue article by Brett Walton, quoted above, visit: bit.ly/COBWWFwater.

For the full World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) report on the High Cost of Cheap Water, visit: bit.ly/WWF_cheapwater.

The Great Stormwater Hunt Continues...

Thanks to all who have joined “The Hunt” by calling or emailing the Stormwater Department about illicit discharges or other stormwater issues. So far in 2023, we have received 15 reports about stormwater problems. We greatly appreciate your help and have added your name to the prize drawing for the end of the year!

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