



Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

Photo courtesy of Karl Backus

## Monthly News & Updates

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### February 2022 Newsletter



## ***Everybody talks about the weather...***

**By Joe Clarkson,  
PMKCA President**

“Everybody Talks About the Weather, but nobody does anything about it.” This famous quotation (from Charles Dudley Warner) describes our fascination with the weather and, at the same time, how our lives are often significantly affected by something we can't control. Here in Hāmākua there are so many micro-climates over such short distances that our exposures to the variations of weather, and sometimes our frustrations with it, are enhanced more than ever. We can often go from sunshine and scattered clouds to overcast and driving rain within just a few miles.

Fascination with the weather is common everywhere, but I think there is more of it here than most places. Of course, there are differences in how much attention people pay to the weather. Some people just look out their window in the morning to see what's happening with the weather, while some people, perhaps most, regularly check weather forecasts so they know what to expect for the next few days. Others, like me, closely follow the satellite images of the weather patterns in our part of the Pacific, check radar imagery to see where it's raining, and may even monitor the amount of rain that has fallen in the neighborhood. The next greater level of interest is evidenced by those who go through the effort of installing a home weather station and report weather data in real time to internet websites. And then there are those whose professional life revolves around weather data collection and weather forecasts.

Our PMKCA board of directors may have more than its share of weather fanatics. Three members collect daily rainfall data and report it every day to CoCoRaHS (more on that organization later) and one board member has a sophisticated weather station that reports to the Weather Underground, an IBM-owned company that produces commercial weather reports from data acquired from the many sources, including 250,000 personal weather stations. (There are 27 stations from Hilo to Waimea.)

Denning Powell, who is also leading the Pa'auilo Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), is the board member who has installed a weather station that contributes to the Weather Underground system. Denning, who has degrees in math, meteorology and environmental engineering, has had a professional relationship to weather data for most of his adult life so it's no surprise that he has a deep interest in weather data collection and reporting. For those who are curious to see a typical Weather Underground reporting format, Denning's data is updated three times a minute at <https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KHIPAAUI6>.

Personal weather stations like Denning's cost from \$150 to \$500 dollars. These stations typically have sensors for wind, rain, temperature, humidity and barometric pressure, the data from which are communicated by radio to a central console and then on to the internet by wifi. Installing and maintaining a high-quality electronic weather station is just about as far as one can go as a weather monitoring hobbyist. To provide young people with the opportunity to become more involved in weather monitoring PMKCA has donated an electronic weather station to the Pa'auilo School and also to the Hamakua Youth Center (Honoka'a School already has a station).

Three other board members, including me, are members of CoCoRaHS, which stands for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network. There are about a dozen members of this group from Waimea to Hilo. CoCoRaHS started in Colorado in 1998 and has about 10,000 members from all fifty states. The first Hawai'i member joined in 2009.



CoCoRaHS members read their rain gauges every day and upload the daily rainfall measurements to the internet. Anyone can go to the CoCoRaHS main website and look at rainfall data all over the country <https://maps.cocorahs.org>.

*An official CoCoRaHS rain gauge installed in mauka Pa'auilo. (Credit Joe Clarkson)*

CoCoRaHS rainfall information is used by many organizations, including the US Weather Service. My daughter works for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and she told me they use CoCoRaHS rainfall data to augment government data when evaluating flood safety issues for hydroelectric dams. CoCoRaHS reports are considered to be nearly as accurate as official weather service rainfall data and numerous organizations make use of the CoCoRaHS database, downloading data many times a day.

Joining CoCoRaHS is easy and free. The only requirement is the purchase of their recommended, highly accurate, rain gauge and a commitment to reading and reporting rainfall data every day. The clear plastic gauge is usually mounted on a fence post in a location away from buildings and trees that can affect where rain falls, especially during windy weather. My gauge is shown in the accompanying photo.



## **Coming PMKCA Meetings**

**PMKCA Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, April 7, 2022, 7PM**

The meeting will likely be held via a ZOOM conference. If you have any interests or concerns and would like to attend, we encourage you to email any Board member for

details on joining the online meeting.

***Join PMKCA or renew your membership for 2022!***

*Membership in PMKCA is on a calendar year basis. Dues are only \$20 and support the activities of PMKCA and the contributions we make throughout the year.*

*If you were a member last year, now's the time to renew for 2022.*

You can find payment options, including an easy PayPal link, on our website, [www.PMKCA.org](http://www.PMKCA.org). Under "Home", click on "Membership/Dues".

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