



## **Evaluation of Raindrop Size Distributions to Improve Radar Rainfall Estimation during the Colorado Flood**

Paul Kucera (1) and Christian Klepp (2)

(1) National Center for Atmospheric Research, Research Applications Laboratory, Boulder, United States (pkucera@ucar.edu, 303 497 8401), (2) KlimaCampus, University of Hamburg, Max Planck Institute f.M., Hamburg, Germany

During the period of 9-16 September 2013, a large area of greater than 150 mm of rain, with local amounts of up to 450 mm, fell over a large part of the Colorado Front Range foothills and adjacent plains. This extreme rainfall event caused severe flooding of main river channels and some localized flash flooding which resulted in millions of dollars of damage to private and public properties. The rainfall regime associated with this extreme precipitation event was atypical of storms usually observed in this region. As a result, the radar rainfall algorithms tuned for this region significantly underestimated the total amount of rainfall. In order to quantify the underestimation and provide insight for improving the radar rainfall estimates for this unique precipitation regime, a comparison study has been conducted using data from several disdrometers that were operating throughout the event. Disdrometers observed over 5000 minutes of rainfall during the event. Analysis of the raindrop spectra indicated that most of the rainfall was comprised of a large number of small drops (< 2 mm in diameter). The raindrop spectra have been stratified by the precipitation regime. For these different regimes, new radar rainfall estimators are being derived from the raindrop spectra. The new estimators will be applied to the radar data to provide new rainfall estimates. These estimates will be evaluated using independent rain gauge data. The presentation will provide an overview of the Colorado Flood and a summary of results from the precipitation analysis.