

ing home when sick, washing hands, and getting tested for COVID-19 if they display symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19.

"For the health, safety, and vibrancy of our community, we strongly urge everyone to continue to take the disease seriously and make the best personal decisions regarding the vaccine as we reopen," said El Paso Board of County Commissioners Chair Stan VanderWerf.

"The best and quickest way to recover from this pandemic and return to our 'normal' lives is for as many people as possible to get vaccinated," said Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers. "We have the supplies and we have the medical professionals at the ready to administer vaccines to all residents 16 and older. It is incumbent upon individuals and businesses to operate and behave at a level that is appropriate for their level

of personal risk. We urge vigilance as we relax restrictions, knowing that if hospitalizations or deaths increase, we may have to re-implement these restrictions, which would hurt both our culture and our economy."

Lisa Hatfield can be contacted at lisahatfield@ocn.me

April Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Typical weather patterns affected the region during April, with one day feeling like winter and the next more like summer. April is usually one of our snowiest months of the season, with beneficial moisture accumulating as we start the growing season. Unfortunately, this month received below-normal precipitation, which doesn't help the ongoing drought conditions in the region. Fortunately, temperatures were below normal for the month and this helped to slow the melt of the snow we did get and lowered evaporation overall.

After a very snowy March, April started off dry and mild. Temperatures reached into the 60s and low 70s during the first week of the month, with no precipitation from the 1st through the afternoon of the 6th. The warmest days occurred from the 3rd to the 5th, when several daily record highs were set around the region.

This warm spell was interrupted briefly by a quick-moving cold front during the mid-afternoon hours of the 6th. Clouds increased that afternoon, with a few sprinkles developing that quickly turned into snow, heavy at times, that afternoon. This produced a couple inches of accumulation, with light snow continuing off and on through the evening.

Quiet conditions returned over the next few days, with seasonable cool temperatures on the 7th, then above-normal temperatures on the 8th. Cooler air moved in on the 9th, with areas of low clouds that morning holding high temperatures in the mid-40s. This back and forth

between cool, upslope conditions and highs in the 40s and mild westerly breezes with highs in the upper 50s to low 60s continued over the next several days.

This was occurring as the overall weather pattern was changing in the western United States. During the middle of the month, an area of unsettled weather was dropping into the Intermountain West region to our west and setting the stage for several rounds of moisture and cooler temperatures to affect the region from the 13th through the 23rd. Unfortunately, this pattern was a little unorganized with no well-developed areas of low pressure drawing in cold air and moisture in a good combination that would result in heavy snow for us. Instead, we had rounds of snow showers, fog, and low clouds each day.

The most organized portion of the overall unsettled pattern came through during the afternoon and evening of the 15th, when areas of heavy snow and blowing snow caused travel problems in the region. Most areas along and west of the Palmer Divide picked up 4-8 inches of much needed snow. Overall, during this unsettled period, most areas received around 10 inches of snow and around an inch of moisture.

As this system departed the region, high pressure built in from the west and brought with it dry and mild conditions. Highs jumped into the 60s on the 24th, then well into the 70s on the 25th and 26th, along with gusty winds and high fire danger. The final storm of the month moved into the region on the 27th, bringing some much-needed snow to the mountains and a mix of rain

and snow for use through the 28th. Temperatures were below normal during that time as well, before quiet and seasonal conditions returned over the last two days of the month.

A look ahead

May often means a wide variety of weather conditions in the region, from warm, sunny days to severe thunderstorms and hail, and even some snowfall. Just last year we had a major snowstorm toward the end of the month, with nearly 2 feet of snow accumulating. But other times very little snow falls during the month and temperatures can reach well into the 80s.

April 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	54.2° (-2.3°)
Average Low	26.3° (-1.3°)
Highest Temperature	74° on the 25th
Lowest Temperature	10° on the 20th
Monthly Precipitation	1.45"
	(-1.51", 50% below normal)
Monthly Snowfall	14.2"
	(-12.5", 47% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	123.9"
	(+6.3", 5% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	9.90"
	(+0.60", 6% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	742 (+53)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order based on the letter-writer's last name.

Keep wearing your mask

In our state, the COVID-19 disease is nowhere close to having ended.

Here is an April 20, 2021 quote from The Denver Post: "Colorado's 'fourth wave' of COVID-19 isn't among the absolute worst spikes in the country, but it's difficult to tell where it might go in the second half of April. Hospitalizations in Colorado from confirmed or suspected COVID-19 increased 33% from March 18 through Sunday, which was the 14th-highest rate of increase in the country."

Denver's Westword website says, "Colorado is now in its fourth day since COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. And once again, the state metrics tracked by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment have gotten worse by almost every major measure." (COVID-19 Colorado Data Worsens April 2021 Update | Westword)

Yes, the Colorado COVID-19 dial framework has ended, and Colorado Springs and El Paso County leaders have said they will not implement a local dial or any additional restrictions beyond what the state has implemented. Nonetheless, Gov. Polis has continued the order on social distancing and masks but has eased restric-

tions on most indoor business capacities.

National health experts, the ones who know what they're talking about, continue to urge us to continue wearing masks while in public settings. (See www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html). I agree, masks are a nuisance and uncomfortable, but they work. For those who don't want to cover their mouths and noses, please consider the rest of us.

Ross Meyer

Liberate the face

It is time to liberate the face, especially in our schools. Our children, as well as our society, need to end this unscientific ritual, which creates anxiety, stress, and fear. Overwhelming scientific research shows that masking is ineffective in decreasing viral infections. The COVID-19 virus is 1,000 times smaller than the tiniest mask thread. Viruses flow through the masks like water through a sieve.

Facial masks are like clouds blocking out the sun and create a gloomy atmosphere. Masks deprive us of essential facial communication. We no longer see individual faces. We are denied smiles, grimaces, and frowns. Isn't a smiling child one of the great joys in life?

Do you really want your children to live in fear of their neighbors? Masking reinforces the idea that our neighbors are infectious. Our legal system is founded on the principle of innocent until proven guilty. But with COVID, we are told to assume that everyone is infectious, even if you have been vaccinated or recovered from the disease. Schools require students, who are the least

susceptible to the virus, to mask up all day inside and outside. Such protocols are irrational as well as harmful.

Are we following the science or the edicts of egotistical politicians? Science tells us that taking Vitamin D and zinc are much more effective than masking. But the politicians never mention anything about supplements, diet, and exercise.

Will Gov. Polis lift the mask mandate? Why aren't we free to choose? If you feel better and safer wearing a mask, then please wear one. That is your right. For the rest of us who do not want to wear masks, that should be our choice. Please respect us and give us back our smiles.

Michael O'Hare

Masks are ineffective and harmful: Free the face

With COVID-19 deaths declining significantly, vaccines readily available, successful therapeutics and the pandemic over, the vast majority in Monument is not at risk and should stop wearing ineffective masks. Simply put, a mask is a tax on breathing. Just as excessive taxes hurt families and seniors financially, the "mask breathing tax" is more harmful. How did "two weeks to flatten

Val Ross-Coy
Broker Associate

(719) 237-8787
val.erashields.com
vcoy@erashields.com



Shields