

# April Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

April was our second warm month in a row, as temperatures averaged more than 5 degrees warmer than normal. This came directly on the heels of one of the warmest Marches on record. At least we did manage to get wet and white a few times, unlike in March. Unfortunately, for the

month as a whole, we were again below average for rain and snow.

April has started off about how you would expect around here, record highs one day and a blizzard the next. After almost no active weather in March, the first few days of the month have made up for things a little bit. April 1 saw record highs—no fooling—as temperatures soared to the mid- and upper 70s that afternoon. But it sure was short-lived, as a strong front roared through the region. Winds gusted out of the north behind this initial surge of cold air and clouds filled in quickly. A few flurries flew around from that morning through the evening, but no organized areas of moisture were available just yet.

Instead, the bigger shock was the change in temperatures, as we were stuck in the 30s all day, a good 40 degrees colder than 24 hours earlier. At the same time, a powerful storm was setting up over the Four Corners and central New Mexico. It was a prime location for a major spring storm for us. Snow and blowing snow quickly developed during the early morning hours of the 3rd. This made for some treacherous driving conditions that morning, as snow accumulated quickly and was drifted around with the gusty winds. Let's hope for a few more of these this month, as we could really use the moisture.

After a snowy and wet first few days of April, drier conditions moved in from the 5th through the 9th. With clear to mostly clear skies and seasonal temperatures to start off the period, highs hit the upper 60s and low 70s by the 8th and 9th. A good batch of moisture began to affect the region on the 10th, with morning low clouds and fog. This signified deeper layers of moisture in the region, as south/southeasterly winds advected moisture from the southern plains into the Front Range. By late that afternoon, the stronger April sunshine had sufficiently destabilized the atmosphere to produce our first round of spring time thunderstorms. These were even accompanied by some pea-size hail at times.

Another organized area of moisture moved in later that evening, producing heavy rain and more thunderstorms around midnight. The two episodes totaled a half inch to an inch of much needed moisture. We did dry out the next day on the 13th, but some rumbles of thunder were heard at times. This was a brief dry spell however, as a strong storm system was pushing onshore along the West Coast and heading for Colorado. This time the storm contained some cold air as well as moisture, and, as is common in April, resulted in heavy wet snow for us. Signifying how dynamic this storm was, the event started off with thunder snow and graupel during the mid- to late evening hours of the 14th.

Snow continued to fall heavy that night and into the next morning, with 5 to 10 inches accumulating and blowing around. Cold air aloft stuck around to the 15th. Morning sunshine warmed the atmosphere just enough to destabilize the air mass once again. This led to numerous rounds of heavy snow showers and snow squalls, which dropped quick accumulations of snow that afternoon. Most areas picked up another inch or so and, for the weekend as a whole, another inch of moisture accumulated—just what we need after the dry and warm March. The overall pattern was just about what you'd expect for the middle of April, typically one of our most active weather periods during the year.

Seasonably cool and mainly dry weather moved in

for the week of the 16th, with high temperatures hovering in the 50s and 60s. We did have one brief intrusion of cool, moist air on the morning of the 19th, but the areas of low clouds, fog, and flurries quickly moved out by that afternoon. This occurred as a ridge of high pressure began to overtake the region. This area of high pressure allowed dry air and mostly sunny skies to take hold. Temperatures warmed nicely, reaching a good 10 to 20 degrees warmer than normal from the 23rd through the 25th. We even managed to touch 80° F on the afternoon of the 24th, resulting in daily record highs over much of the Front Range.

Moisture began to work back into the region on the 25th, and by the next afternoon, thunderstorms developed. Some of these became strong to severe during the evening and overnight hours from the 26th through the 27th. Several areas received small hail and frequent lightning as the storm rolled through the region. Quiet weather conditions returned to end the month, with temperatures about normal on the 28th, then slowly increasing through the 60s and into the low 70s by the 30th.

### A look ahead

May often brings a wide variety of weather conditions to the region, from warm, sunny days to severe thunderstorms and hail, and even some snow. May 2007 was a snowy May, with over 20 inches accumulating for the month, although the last couple of years have seen about average with just a few inches.

### April 2012 Weather Statistics

Average High	62.0° (+5.5°)
Average Low	30.7° (+3.5°)
Highest Temperature	80° on the 24th
Lowest Temperature	25° on the 14th and 17th
Monthly Precipitation	2.83"
	(-0.50", 15% below normal)
Monthly Snowfall	17.8"
	(-12.4", 41% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	106.2"
	(-17.6", 14% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	17.95"
	(+0.39", 2% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	544 (-146)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at [billkappel@ocn.me](mailto:billkappel@ocn.me).



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