

Chilly conditions prevailed during the first part of the week of the 13th as a shallow layer of cold air pushed into the Front Range. As this weak cold front moved through, a few showers of rain, snow, and graupel developed. Low clouds hung around for most of the 14th, keeping temperatures about 20 degrees below normal, as highs only managed to reach the mid-30s. All the moisture in the air and breezy conditions made things feel even colder. Temperatures stayed cooler than normal over the next few days as well, with high temperatures barely reaching 50° F on the 16th and 17th. Another cold front and quick-moving storm moved through during the morning hours of the 18th. This produced 2 to 4 inches of snow around the area and held temperatures down in the 30s that afternoon. Sunshine returned to end the weekend and temperatures rebounded to the mid-50s that afternoon.

Another quick shot of cold air and moisture moved through during the day of the 20th and produced around an inch of snow through early that evening. Quiet and sunny weather dominated until just before Halloween. Temperatures reached normal to slightly above normal

levels from the 21st through the 27th as highs rebounded from the low 50s to the low 60s.

The final storm of the month once again moved just to our north over the last few days of October. This allowed a shallow layer of cold air and upslope conditions to affect the region from the 28th through the 29th. Fog and low clouds were common, with heavy frost and rime ice on the 29th. Unsettled conditions developed on the 30th as the final piece of the storm moved through producing some areas of snow and rain/snow showers during the evening. After a chilly start, plenty of sunshine returned just in time for Halloween.

**A look ahead**

November is generally dry and cool around the region. We usually get several light snowfalls interspersed with sunny skies. Gusty winds commonly develop on a couple of days as the jet stream becomes more active and more directly affects Colorado. Our first sub-zero morning low temperatures occur during the month as well. High temperatures average in the upper 40s early in the month to

low 40s by the end, with overnight lows often dipping into the teens and single digits.

**October 2013 Weather Statistics**

Average High	55.9° (-3.5)
100-year return frequency value max	67.7° min 50.7°
Average Low	27.5° (-1.8)
100-year return frequency value max	36.8° min 26.4°
Monthly Precipitation	0.61" (-1.22")
100-year return frequency value max	4.63" min 0.18"
Monthly Snowfall	4.6 (-8.9")
Highest Temperature	71° on the 7th
Lowest Temperature	17° on the 5th, 31st
Season to Date Snow	4.6 (-9.6")
(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)	
Season to Date Precip.	12.49" (+3.16")
(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)	
Heating Degree Days	721 (+93)
Cooling Degree Days	0 (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 to the editor are on page 31.

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the view of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.



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**Let's be even more proactive**

I just read an online article about Gov. Hickenlooper's task force proposals regarding Wildland Urban Interface issues, insurance, audits, etc. (Search the web for "Wild-fire Insurance and Forest Health Task Force Report.") In the Tri-Lakes area, we've already done a lot of the legwork that's on the governor's to-do list, just by having in place our own Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP): ([http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/documents/PalmerLakeCWPP\\_000.pdf](http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/documents/PalmerLakeCWPP_000.pdf)) and by having available an Individual Home Owner FireWise Assessment audit (see [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org), or call the local fire department). However, at least in Palmer Lake, right now there's no clout. Before long, the state and insurance companies will require, not recommend, compliance.

A fireman recently told me that where road factors prohibit safe fire engine access, an entire neighborhood could be considered undefendable in the event of a wild-fire there. Could a wildfire in such a generally undefendable area, where numerous homes are situated close together, ignite the entire town? Yes, there are multiple fire hydrants strategically placed throughout Palmer Lake, but hydrant system water pressure would be questionable during extensive demand. Private property owners ought to find out exactly where evacuation plans only are being made by local police and firefighters.

Of course, there's more than one area of grave concern: The entire western edge of Palmer Lake abuts Pike National Forest. How much can the Forest Service help us if fire comes from that direction? I'm worried and I will do everything the FireWise audit recommends for our property up here on Viola Street. Fortunately, there are income tax credits for fire-fuel mitigation (up to \$2,500 of costs—see [www.taxcolorado.com](http://www.taxcolorado.com)). Plus, there are useful grants available. But grant writing takes time and grants are competitive.

In the meantime, wildfire knows no boundaries. We've been on evacuation alerts during Hayman, Waldo Canyon, and Black Forest fires; the Tri-Lakes area has been in the eye of the firestorm for years. How long can we expect to live charmed lives in our Wildland Urban Interface?

**Judith Harrington**

**We are partners**

Recent editions of OCN news coverage of the Tri-Lakes Monument FPD board meetings have mischaracterized my identification of an area for improvement within the district as a criticism of the management of the Black Forest Fire. The intention of my comments to the board have been to point out, as one area for improvement, how Fire Department resources are deployed and organized, mostly in the first hours of an incident, using the Black Forest Fire as an example. However, the OCN news has been characterizing these observations about a single element of the response as a criticism of how the El Paso County Sheriff's Office managed the incident as a whole.

The observation that we (TLMFPD) and the fire service can be better at resource management was recently affirmed when the Colorado Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA) created a taskforce (which I will be a member of and have a deep background in) to address this issue. By setting this as a multiyear goal, the CFCA recognizes the complexity of local, regional and statewide changes that

will need to be made.

While the improvements that I have identified locally and the options that the task force will consider will involve local communications centers, to represent this as a criticism of how the local fire chief, county sheriff, the state, or U.S. Forest Service managed the incident is an inaccurate portrayal.

The correct portrayal is the Tri-Lakes Monument FPD recognizes that the provision of public safety to its residents of northern El Paso County is a joint effort of multiple organizations and that there will always be ways that we can improve the quality of service and stewardship of tax dollars.

**Chris Truty, Fire Chief, Tri-Lakes Monument FPD**

**Editor's note:** The primary way Our Community News serves the Tri-Lakes area is by focusing on the deliberations of local governmental entities. While this differs from the approach of many community papers, this policy was adopted at the founding of OCN in 2001 to inform residents so they can better fulfill their role as citizens and aid them in participating in the democratic process of self-government. Articles in OCN are based upon our digital recordings of the meetings.

We are volunteers and do not do investigative research. Our goal is for those who couldn't attend a meeting to understand what happened there. We report on what was discussed and what was decided, and we do that as objectively as possible.

**Yes on 3A**

When voters approved TABOR some 20 years ago, there was an implied promise: People would be willing to vote themselves a tax increase if it was defensible, transparent, and served the public good. 3A is all of those things.

Thinking adults understand that costs generally increase over time. Groceries, utilities, fuel for your car, all are higher than they were 20 years ago. Today too many Americans have bought into the myth that they shouldn't have to pay taxes. Period.

This is unrealistic and short-sighted. D-38 produces students who are good, solid citizens that can and do make significant contributions to our community. Consistently voting against school issues (the new high school being an exception) sends a message to our young people that you don't value them. Many go off to college and don't come back. Who wants to live in a community that doesn't support something as fundamental as education?

Allow me to address the demands of the "no" voters. They say they "must know where our money goes." Well, it's all public record. You can look it up. If you care.

They say someone "must earn our trust." I've been hearing this same, sad song since I moved here nine years ago. If you don't trust your school officials, there's a simple solution: Run for a seat on the board. Roll your sleeves up, get in there and get to work. If you think you can do a better job, go for it.

"No" voters say "Taxes are too high already." Really? My property taxes are lower than when I moved here in 2004.

What confounds me is that so many people don't seem to understand that their property values are directly tied to the health and quality of our school system. Do the math.

**Bill Beagle**