



# Weather lore

I have lived most of my life doing everything outdoor related that I possibly could. Weather has done its very best to wreak havoc on my activities as often as possible. I am sure that Murphy has shoved Old Ma Nature to the side, and jumped on the weather controls.

It amazes me, that as far as we have come, we still have weather. If we can't control the weather, but maybe we can at least predict it. Not bloody likely. Weather by itself is unpredictable, but add mountains, changing jet streams, and a dose of Murphy, and we are all at the mercy of the weather gods.

These forecast flaws were most evident during my years in Florida. The forecasters would see a thunderstorm out in the open Atlantic and provide a 14-day forecast, calling it a category 4 hurricane that will land in my own backyard. When the storm is 100 miles off the coast, they have no clue and shrug their shoulders, pointing to the "cone of uncertainty."

Yes, Murph lived in Florida with me for a while. For many years I was restricted to fishing only on Saturdays. Work was interfering with my playtime. My personal weather dictum was, "What follows five days of beautiful weather? Saturday."

On a more serious note, weather is one of the flies in the ointment for a planned activity and must be respected. It is guaranteed that if you encounter a problem outdoors, the weather will turn sour as icing on the cake. Keeping a situational awareness about you when outdoors, could give you an advance warning on upcoming weather changes.

As long as man has been on this earth, he has been trying to predict the weather. Weather lore is the folklore related to these feeble attempts related to the prediction of weather. This lore has evolved into a bunch of cute sayings, some of which actually have scientific merit.

The old one everyone knows, "Red sky in morning, sailors take warning, and red sky at night is a sailor's delight."

A red sky at dawn and dusk is caused by high pressure in the atmosphere trapping particles of dust and soot. Particles of dust and soot scatter the longer red wavelengths of sunlight. When the sun is

lowest in the sky, more sunlight travels through more of the atmosphere, scattering more of this light. High-level clouds further enhance the reddish light, and reflect it back to the ground.

In Colorado, weather systems move generally west to east. A red sky at night indicates high pressure (fair weather) is west of us, and better weather. Red sky in the morning indicates the high pressure has already passed, and an area of low pressure is forthcoming.

During the late fall and winter months, look westward over the mountains at dawn. If you see those long, slender, gray clouds over the mountains, a cold front is approaching.

The same can be said about clouds called mariner's tails or a mackerel scales. Tails are cirrus clouds and mackerel scales are altocumulus clouds. Seeing these types of clouds indicates an approaching storm front in the next 24 to 48 hours.

A circle around the moon means it will



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

rain or snow soon. The circle that forms around the moon (called a halo) is formed by light from the moon refracting as it passes through ice crystals. These ice crystals are high-level leading edges of cirrus clouds that often precede an advancing low-pressure system that may bring bad weather.

When the smoke hovers low to the ground, it is likely to rain or snow. Watch smoke from your campfire or a distant fire.

Smoke particles absorb moisture from the air. The more moisture in the air, the more the smoke absorbs and the heavier it gets. This heavy, moisture-laden smoke does not disperse as easily as dry smoke and hangs low to the ground.

Sounds seem to hang low to the ground when storms are approaching. A sound will travel farther and sound hollow when rain or snow is approaching. This is because sound travels better through thick, moist air than through dry air.

If clouds move against the wind, rain will follow. Clouds that are moving in a direction different than the wind indicate a condition known as wind shear. Wind shear

can signal the upcoming arrival of a weather front. Cold fronts mean rain or snow in many cases.

You have all heard about people who get arthritic aches and pains in their joints before a storm front. There have been actual medical studies that lend some reliability to the folks who experience this.

Most likely, these aches are caused by a fall in atmospheric pressure (which precedes a front). This fall dilates blood vessels and can further aggravate already irritated nerves near corns, cavities or arthritic joints. If Aunt Martha complains her knees ache, keep an eye on the weather.

"In the Morning's Mountains, in the afternoon fountains." Especially in the mountains, clouds building in the mornings often indicates afternoon thunderstorms. As the sun heats the air and ground, small cumulus clouds build in the sky.

These clouds can continue to grow into mountainous clouds throughout the day. When the clouds grow high enough and the tops anvil out, batten the hatches because you now have cumulonimbus clouds. Cumulonimbus's are the famous-lightning making, fire-starting, wind-blowing rain clouds we affectionately know as "the thunderhead."

When you are outdoors, keep an eye on the clouds. Weather changes quickly in Colorado, sometimes in minutes. Temperatures can drop 30 degrees, winds can come out of nowhere, and rain changes to snow. All can bring a halt to the festive day you were once enjoying.

All this weather lore is probably about as accurate as the forecast from a meteorologist; meaning it is fraught with inaccuracies and potential peril. Ignoring the weather can leave you deader than the free lunch, so stay alert whenever you are outdoors. Murphy could be playing with the weather controls, waiting for the right moment to ruin your day.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)



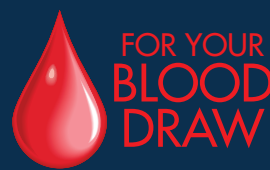
(Top) Pay attention to the sunrise and sunset while outdoors as it may signal what type of weather day to expect. (Above) When summer clouds begin to thicken and lower like this, it might be a good idea to get the rain gear ready. (Photos by Mark Rackay)

## 2019 DELTA COUNTY HEALTH FAIR



### REGISTER ONLINE

Find the Health Fair logo at [deltahospital.org](http://deltahospital.org) and click the "ONLINE REGISTRATION" link



### HEALTH FAIR LOCATIONS

**03.13.2019**  
Technical College of the Rockies,  
Paonia Campus, Paonia, CO  
6:30 am - 10:00 am

**03.14.2019**  
Bill Heddles Recreation Center  
Delta, CO  
6:30 am - 11:00 am

**03.15.2019**  
Cedaredge Civic Center  
Cedaredge, CO  
6:30 am - 10:00 am



The Delta County Health Fair Events are jointly sponsored by Lions Club of Delta, Surface Creek, Paonia, and Hotchkiss, the Cedaredge Civic Center, Technical College of the Rockies - Paonia campus, the City of Delta, Bill Heddles Recreation Center, Town of Cedaredge, and by the staff and volunteers of Delta County Memorial Hospital.

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### NO CALL-IN DATES THIS YEAR

If you are having trouble registering online call  
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**1.800.410.3225**  
9 am - 4 pm Monday - Friday