

In 1961, I packed up my saddle and skis, jumped on the train and headed for Colorado. Two months later on Labor Day, I was snowed in on a ranch on Lookout Mountain. That Winter, I remember driving my 1951 Chevrolet to work after a snowstorm and finding the company closed. It was a snow day. I grew up and learned to drive in Northern Wisconsin and considered driving in snow, part of normal.

I love the powder as much as anyone, for 20 years I taught skiers to ski and ski instructors how to teach skiing. I remember the days the roads were full of snow and ice and trying to get to the ski areas from Denver in order to meet my classes.

When I moved to the Evergreen area, the windows in my kitchen and office looked at the Arapahoe Peaks, and Corona Pass. I soon learned that when I saw a wall of clouds coming over those peaks, I needed to drop everything, head for the feed store for the horses and grocery store for us. Unload everything at the house and get the truck back out on the highway. Many trips were made in the kid's sled down our hill in my business attire and briefcase and then hiked out to the highway where the truck was parked to get the kids off to school and then to the office.

I finally bought a Loudermilk truck with a plow. I used it for two or three years and the snow stopped and the truck was parked. I never used it again. I could see the wall of clouds, but it was lower in the horizon, stuck behind the peaks.

Our forest fires began about that time. In 1996, Buffalo Creek, the Hayman, Hi Meadow, Snaking Gulch fires burned, while the firefighters could only stand and watch because of the fast pace of the fires, 57,000 acres burned in 6 hours. We have lost hundreds of thousands of acres of forest. Our forest trees will not burn if they have had enough moisture during the winter months to tide them over during the summer months. They also can fight the beetles, if they have enough pitch, to push the beetles back out of the tree before they do their damage.

About that same time, I learned of the cloudseeding being done around the ski areas. In 2002, I testified at a hearing in Silverthorne, that I thought there was a relationship. The fish were dying in our mountain creeks because of no water. And Wisconsin farmers were hauling their hay out to Colorado ranchers to feed their cattle. Union Pacific was shipping that hay free of charge.

And for the past 10 or so years, I have been asking questions from every source I could find. From the farmers and ranchers east of Denver, to government entities, ski areas, the cloudseeders, and our oldtimers. Whoever would take the time to talk to me. Recently I learned that homeowner associations, now send out letters to homeowners that don't water their lawns in the Winter. We used to have snow for that. A major portion of our moisture comes in the winter months as snow.

One of the objections to my arguments have been that we are on the leeward side of the mountains. This is true. But it isn't a solid wall of mountains, We have peaks and valleys that the weather moves thru. I have sold real estate for over 30 years in the mountain area. We have what is known as the "banana belts" and the "snow corridors" The banana belts are the most affected by the cloudseeding and are where the major fires have been.

In talking to one of our vegetable growers, I was told that they needed the snow cover to kill the parasites and diseases that were in the soil. Do you suppose that listeria and those that ate cantaloupe and died this summer, is one of those diseases that proliferate when there is no snow cover. Should our farmers be liable for something like this and lose their farms because of the inability to have any snow cover for their fields. We have ranchers that are selling their cattle because they no longer have a decent hay crop. They need that snow cover as well. There is a beautiful family ranch along Hwy 285, near Salida, that I drive by every 6 weeks. The cattle are gone and the grass is all brown. No hay was cut this year. And there is nobody home.

The water districts have a collection system of reservoirs on the west side of the divide to collect the Spring runoff. These reservoirs also collect the snowpack from the ski areas. They have built tunnels to transfer that water from the reservoirs on the west side, to the east side of the divide to provide water for the metro areas, all along the Continental Divide.

Last winter, while the ski areas were reporting a snow pack of 500% above normal, we had three snow storms on the front range for a total of 6". The weather men would report about the big storms that were headed our way. The county trucks would go out and mag the roads. We could see the wall of clouds sitting on the backside of the divide, only to decimate and not a cloud would come over our metro area.

Our wildfires were burning by March in the foothills just west of the School of Mines in Golden, then Left Hand Canyon, Four Mile Canyon from Ft Collins, Evergreen and Conifer down to the southern border of Colorado. We have lost hundreds of homes in Colorado. Others were lost to the flooding that occurred following these fires. Reservoirs holding water for the metro areas were filled with ash washed down from the areas that had previously burned. Instead of enjoying our mountains, we have spent our summers replanting trees and doing erosion control. We have a reverse 911 system to notify us that we have 1 minute to leave our homes when the fires are in our area. We keep our special items packed by the door to grab as we leave. And we haul water to keep our cisterns filled. Our wells can no longer provide enough water for household use only. And that is just in our little area.

This scenario, cloudseeding is going on not only in Colorado, but in Wyoming, New Mexico and Arizona all along the continental divide. The areas east of the cloudseeding in those states, along with Texas and Oklahoma have lost hundreds of thousands of acres to wildfires. For months they also, watched their homes and ranches burn.

The ash from these fires went up into the atmosphere. Years ago, ashes were used instead of silver iodide for cloudseeding. And East of our fires in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas, is where all the record setting rains, hail, tornadoes, and dust storms occurred a few weeks later. Heat records were broken all Summer. \$35 billion in damages this year, were reported by the National Weather Service. 6.1 Billion acres burned in the Western states. 9 disasters, each topping \$1 billion dollars, the flooding of the Missouri, and Souris rivers in Montana, the Dakotas and all the way down the Mississippi, farmers lost their crops their homes and expensive equipment to flooding. NOAA said recently, that we need to adjust to a new normal.

Climate change happens when we mess with Mother Nature. 500% above normal snow pack. And to the west of the cloudseeding areas, there was not one record setting fire, torrential rains, hail, floods, or tornadoes. It was climate as usual.

Our Farmers and Ranchers cannot survive cloudseeding. Insurance companies have paid billions to replace homes. Mitigation and replanting in the burn areas are paid by taxpayers. Our fire departments have depleted their reserves. The National Forest Service is in need of a higher budget to add more airplanes, air support and fire suppressants. That is taxpayer's money. And the people of Denver and our metro areas are now having to pay for water to water their lawns in the Winter. USGS reported in June of this year that "the snowpack in the Rocky Mountains have declined 30 to 60 percent over the past three decades, bucking a century long trend." That is about the time that the cloudseeding began.

All the states along the continental divide have Divisions of Weather Modification. What do you think that means. And what are they are suppose to do? When the mountains receive 100% of normal and the reservoirs are full by December, do they have the authority to stop the cloudseeding and let the rest of us have a little snow too? What else do we need to prove that there is a downwind effect of cloudseeding.

If we are to continue with the cloudseeding, could we at least have improved record keeping, tamper proof monitors on all cloudseeding generators to determine when these generators are running. And access to all record keeping showing when, where and how much silver iodide was used from these generators and the results thereof, in order to determine whether this is a natural phenomenon and/ or a cloudseeding result. Let's get a dialog going with the ranchers and farmers that have a 100 year history of the weather on their ranches. And this winter, watch that wall of clouds that now sit behind our high peaks and no longer come over the top of those peaks.

And let's add one more thing to our Colorado statutes, "That no one has the water right to take water out of our atmosphere before it ends up in our rivers and streams".

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