

## Nancy Carpenter - The Fires of 2012

We live full time in Indiana and have a vacation home off Cherokee Park Road in Phantom Canyon Ranch. We learned on the news that a large fire started on June 9. On June 13 as we flew into the Denver airport for a previously planned get-away, we were shocked with our first glimpse of the smoke from the High Park fire. Throughout the week of our visit the plume of smoke grew larger each day as it migrated westward. It was like watching a train wreck - we couldn't take our eyes off it. Somehow the wind was in our favor and fortunately the air here at our place was clear, but it was so unsettling to actually be able to see the flames at night from our windows.

One day when Glacier View was under pre-evacuation alert, we decided to drive in that direction to get a closer look. It was shocking to experience the heavy smoke and eerie quiet since most people had already left. One evening we had a few neighbors over for dinner. The strain and hardship everyone had been experiencing was evident. It was like everyone was in a sort of prolonged state of shock and anxiety not knowing when or if the fire would be controlled.

When we arrived home in Indiana after our week long visit we could not think of much else but what was happening in our Colorado community. We checked the Larimer Country Sheriff reports almost hourly for weeks on end. We watched the news, made calls to friends and studied the online fire maps and drew our own fire lines on our map at home. We wanted to be there with our Colorado friends who were going through it first hand although of course we could do nothing to help. We found out that several friends had been evacuated, lost homes and property. There was such a feeling of loss. It was all so surreal.

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