

FEBRUARY 2008 DROUGHT UPDATE

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Executive Summary

As predicted, La Niña* conditions continue throughout Colorado. Colder than normal temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean shows La Niña will continue through the spring. Forecasters predict March through May will be warmer than normal for spring while April through June will see an increase of precipitation. Before conditions across the State become drier, wet conditions will add to the snowpack in the near future.

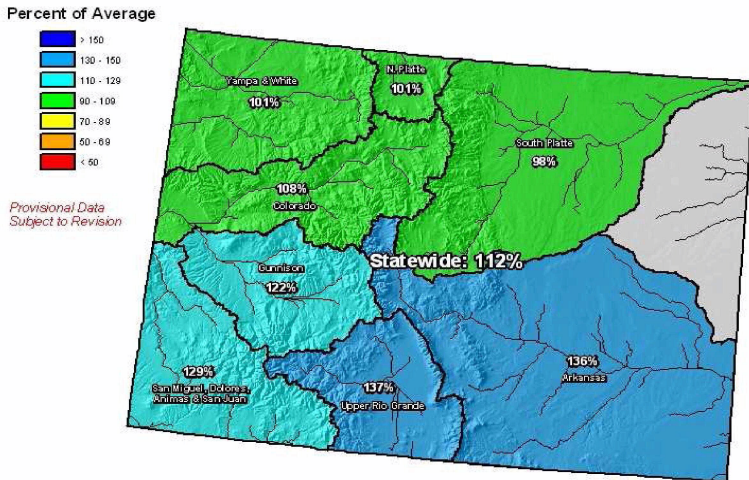
- Statewide, Colorado's snowpack is 133% of average. Most basins are well above average snowpack. The San Miguel/Dolores and Upper Rio Grande basins have recorded their highest snow pack levels as of February 1st since 1968. Only the South Platte basin recorded a below average snowpack at 97% of average.
- With median precipitation conditions, the snowpack statewide is projected to be 124% of average by April 1st. The snowpack for the northern half of the state is projected to range from 104-118%. The snowpack for the southern half of the state is projected to be well above average ranging from 135-149% of average.
- Statewide, reservoir storage is at 99% of average and 105% of last year. Reservoir storage statewide is at 56% capacity. Reservoirs in the Gunnison basin have fully recovered from 2002 drought.
- Cumulative storage in the major South Platte basin agricultural reservoirs is at 75% capacity. Major upper-basin municipal reservoir storage is at 92% capacity. The expectation is that most major municipal and irrigation reservoirs will fill this year. The Poudre basin is the only exception where a very good runoff will be necessary to come close to filling all of the major reservoirs.
- According to the Colorado Water Supply Index (SWSI)**, all of the river basins have experienced a gain in their values from last month. The South Platte basin's SWSI value is the lowest at 0.5, which is near normal. The Rio Grande basin had the highest SWSI value 3.5.
- Colorado's streamflow forecast statewide ranges from 70-150% of average. Most basins are expected to have normal or near normal runoff. Forecasts for the Rio Grande, Gunnison & San Miguel Basins range from 110-150% of average, while the northwestern half of Colorado ranges from 70-109% of average. *Although it is early, local officials in the Rio Grande basin are concerned about the possibility of flooding.*
- Ranchers in mountain valleys of southern and western Colorado have contended with a difficult winter of feeding livestock due to heavy snows. Lambing and calving is presently underway - no reports of unusually high death rates at this time.
- Dry conditions on Eastern Plains in early 2008 combined with very windy conditions have dried topsoil and this has begun impacting wheat crop due to blowing soil. There are reports that some farmers in Baca County have resorted to chisel plowing wheat fields to reduce blowing damage.

* *Sea surface temperatures at the Equator in the Pacific Ocean impact global climate patterns. Depending on these patterns, Colorado could be experiencing El Niño or La Niña conditions.*

** *SWSI values are based on snowpack, reservoir storage and precipitation for the winter period (Nov-Jan).*

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Colorado SNOTEL April 1 Snowpack Projection Map*

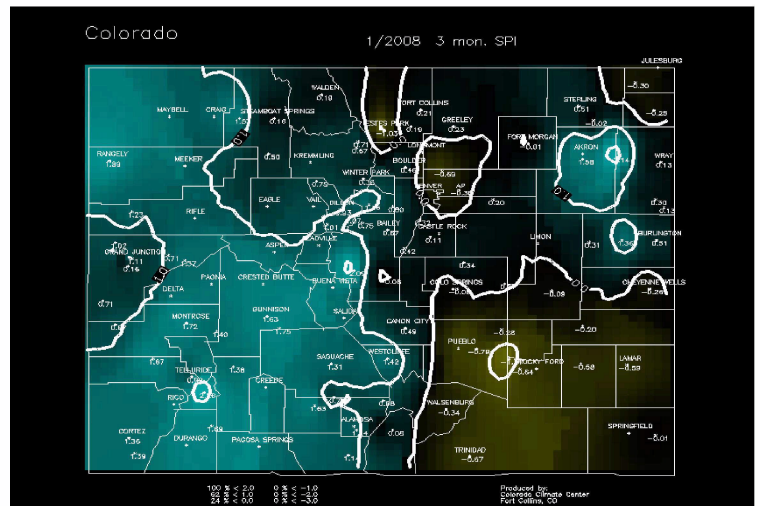


As of February 20th, statewide SNOTEL snowpack is 112% of average. The Upper Rio Grande basin recorded the second highest snowpack, 173% of average, since 1968 & has exceeded or set new SNOTEL data marks. The Upper Rio, Arkansas, San Miguel, Gunnison has already reached their average peak of snowfall. The Yampa/White basin has a 30% chance or better to reach peak. The Colorado basin has a 10% chance they will not reach peak and the South Platte has a 30-50% chance to have an average year in terms of snowfall.

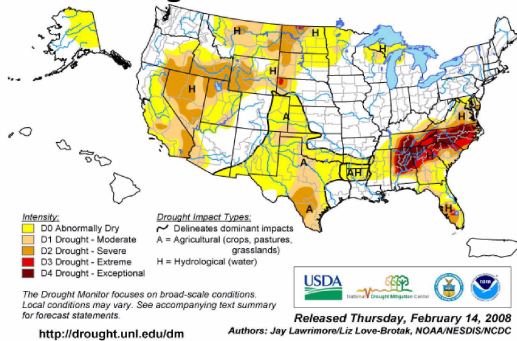
Current as of Jan 18, 2008

*Based on 70% Non-Exceedence Projections

The adjacent map illustrates the three month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) and shows, overall, less than 2% of the State is experiencing drought conditions. The yellow shading in the southeastern part of the State illustrates continuing moderate drought conditions. According to forecasts, the pattern will likely continue, as the mountains will experience wet conditions and the plains will remain dry.



U.S. Drought Monitor February 12, 2008



The U.S. Drought Monitor continues to show the eastern part of Colorado to be abnormally dry. Due to La Niña predictions, it is expected to be a dry spring and summer and drought concerns will be high. The Southwest and eastern regions of the country are also experiencing drought conditions. Conditions have remained the same as they were a month ago.

Long Term Forecast Summary

Forecasters predict the month of March will begin with increased chances for drier than normal conditions over all of Colorado. In the recent past, moderate La Niña's have resulted in warmer than normal spring temperatures in Colorado and near normal precipitation over much of the State. Forecasters predict increased odds in wetter than normal conditions for eastern Colorado from April through June. Reliability in this forecast for eastern Colorado plains is high based on previous predictions but the forecast for western Colorado remains unclear.

NOTE: The maps and graphics depicted in this report were those presented at the February 20, 2008 meeting and may have been updated since the meeting.