

## June 2011 DROUGHT UPDATE

### Water Availability Task Force Co-Chairs

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### Executive Summary

*Activation of Phase 2 of the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan, and the activation of the Agricultural Impact Task Force remain in effect to respond to serious drought conditions in southeastern and south central Colorado.*

Exceptional and extreme drought conditions continue to advance across south central and southeast Colorado with May temperatures above average and precipitation well below average for these regions. Governor Hickenlooper is requesting federal drought declaration for three counties, Bent, Crowley and Otero, from the Secretary of Agriculture; additional requests for declarations are anticipated. Impacts, including failed acres, inability to plant and culling of herds are currently being reported. In contrast, drought conditions have improved considerably across the northern Front Range urban corridor and northeast Colorado due in part to below average temperatures and significant precipitation in May.

In the mountains, despite neutralized La Niña conditions, the region continues to experience above average moisture and below average temperatures which have led to a later than normal spring runoff. Statewide, reservoir storage is near average, with some reservoirs currently drawn down for flood control purposes. The Rio Grande and the Arkansas River basins have the lowest reservoir storage levels in the state at 70 and 72% respectively.

- Extremely dry conditions continue to plague southeastern and south central Colorado. The Agricultural Impact Task Force, activated by Governor Hickenlooper on May 18, 2011, has been meeting weekly to monitor and respond to the situation.
- May precipitation alleviated, and in some areas eliminated, drought conditions across much of the northeastern plains and Front Range corridor of the state.
- According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 41% of the State is now experiencing D0, D1, D2, D3 or D4 status, which represents abnormally dry, moderate, severe, extreme and exceptional drought conditions respectively. 27% of the state is experiencing D2 through D4 conditions. D4 conditions have been introduced in far southeast corner of the State in Baca County, while D3 conditions have been expanded into the San Luis Valley and north into Pueblo and El Paso Counties.
- Governor Hickenlooper is seeking primary federal drought declarations for Baca, Crowley counties. Should the Secretary of Agriculture approve the request, farmers and ranchers will be eligible to seek additional federal natural disaster assistance.
- Conditions in the San Luis Valley as well as El Paso and Pueblo counties have deteriorated to D3 on the US Drought Monitor, triggering eligibility for the USDA Livestock Forage Disaster Program. This program provides cash payments to eligible producers who suffered grazing losses for eligible livestock because of drought on federally-managed grazing land.
- Emergency grazing will be allowed in eight counties (Baca, Otero, Crowley, Kiowa, Prowers, Bent, Pueblo and Las Animas) on Conservation Reserve Program lands.
- Reference Evapotranspiration (ET) at the Avondale weather station (east of Pueblo, in the Arkansas Basin) has exceeded 2002 maximum ET levels for the season April 1- Sept 30th.
- As of June 18, 2011 the Farm Service Agency (FSA) reports over 90,000 of insurance-eligible cropland acres has failed and the agency has received prevented-planting claims on nearly 46,500 acres. It should be noted that these figures do not reflect the full extent of crop damage in the region.
- La Nina conditions have weakened and it is unclear if conditions will remain neutral or return to La Nina later this year.

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## U.S. Drought Monitor

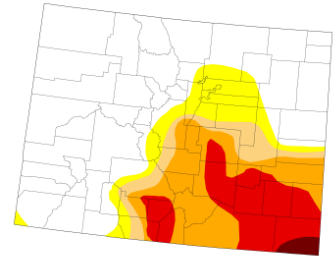
June 14, 2011  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

### Colorado

The adjacent map shows the U.S. Drought Monitor for Colorado as of June 14, 2011. The northern plains have seen some relief from drought conditions; while the southeastern and south central regions of the state have deteriorated to D2, D3 and in the Baca County area D4 - exceptional drought conditions. For this reason, **the State Drought Plan remains activated for southeastern and south central Colorado**

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	58.84	41.16	31.89	26.50	13.01	0.91
Last Week (06/07/2011 map)	59.67	40.33	31.89	25.19	9.62	0.91
3 Months Ago (03/15/2011 map)	41.65	58.35	51.50	35.33	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/28/2010 map)	40.40	59.60	49.57	10.13	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/28/2010 map)	28.86	71.14	10.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (06/08/2010 map)	81.04	18.96	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:  
■ D0 Abnormally Dry    ■ D3 Drought - Extreme  
■ D1 Drought - Moderate    ■ D4 Drought - Exceptional  
■ D2 Drought - Severe



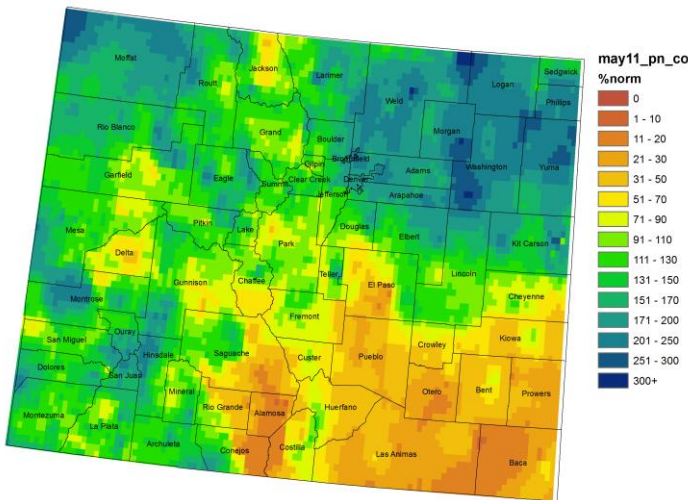
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, June 16, 2011  
Brian Fuchs, National Drought Mitigation Center

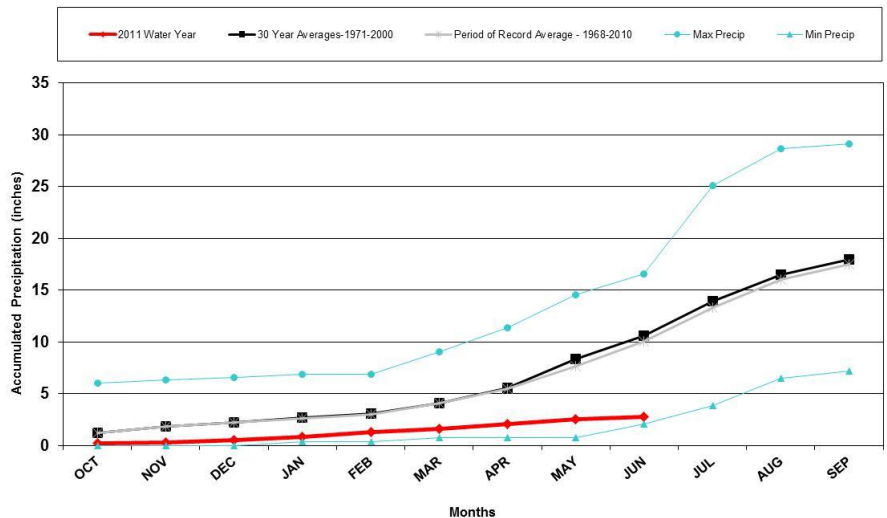
### Colorado May 2011 Precipitation as Percentage of Normal



The adjacent map shows precipitation for the month of May 2011. As illustrated by the orange and yellow colors, the southeast and south central portions of the state did not receive the beneficial precipitation that the northern plains, mountains and areas of the southwest received in May. The southeast and the San Luis Valley remain well below average for precipitation for the water year (October 2010- present)

The adjacent line graph shows that 2011 is currently tracking along with the minimum precipitation levels for each month and well below the 30 year average at Walsh, in southeastern Colorado.

### Walsh 2011 Water Year



### NOTE:

The next WATF meetings are scheduled for July 14 and August 17, 2011, at the Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO. Should you wish to participate via Webinar please contact Ben Wade at [Ben.wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.wade@state.co.us)