

## APRIL 2013 DROUGHT UPDATE

### Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

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### ***Activation of Phase 2 &3 of the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan, and the activation of the Agricultural Impact Task Force remain in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions throughout Colorado.***

Recent weeks have brought increased precipitation in the northern portion of the state and cooler temperatures have helped to maintain snowpack; levels in the northwest corner have reached near normal conditions and statewide snowpack has increased to 90% of normal. However, the southern portions of the state is experiencing rapid deterioration of conditions and the eastern plains have seen devastating dust storms. Storage remains below average and water providers are preparing for continued drought conditions throughout the spring and summer. CWCB is maintaining a new drought response portal, [www.COH2O.co](http://www.COH2O.co), with additional information on restrictions that have been implemented in specific communities.

- As of the April 16, 2013 US Drought Monitor, 100% of Colorado is experiencing some level of drought classification. D1 (moderate) and D2 (severe) cover 69% of the state, while D3 (extreme) accounts for an additional 25%. 14% of the state is now experiencing exceptional drought (D4), a decrease from last month.
- Spring snow storms have brought significant gains in the snowpack of the northern portions of the state; with the Yampa/ White, North Platte and Colorado basins all near normal at 98, 102 and 103% respectively. The lowest snowpack in the state is in the Upper Rio Grande basin (70%) while the Southwest basins is experiencing 71% and the Arkansas is at 79% of normal for the water year. The Gunnison and the South Platte have also seen increases and are now both at 88 % of average. \*
- Despite recent gains in snowpack municipalities and water providers are still responding to drought conditions with both mandatory and voluntary watering restrictions throughout the spring and summer demand season. The CWCB drought response portal [www.COH2O.co](http://www.COH2O.co) continues to help individuals determine the restrictions in their specific community.
- As of the first of April statewide reservoir storage is at 71% of average. The highest storage levels are in the Yampa/ White River Basin, at 105% of average while the lowest storage in the state is the Rio Grande River basin at 54% of average. All other basins range from 55% to 84% of average. Last year this time the state was at 108% of average reservoir storage.\*
- Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) values have largely decreased across the state over the last month and all values remain negative. Below average reservoir storage and streamflow forecasts contribute to these values and data reflect conditions on April 1, 2013. Recent storms have helped to increase streamflow forecasts by as much as 10% in portions of northern and central Colorado, a component of the SWSI, however despite the increase they remain well below average.
- The long term experimental forecast for April through June of this year is projecting above normal moisture for the eastern plains of the state. Additionally, the Climate Prediction Center at NOAA is forecasting above average temperatures statewide and persistent drought conditions across western portions of the state, with some relief possible on the eastern plains.
- The National Interagency Fire Center Predictive services outlook indicates normal wildland fire potential is expected across most of Colorado from May into July.
- A report from the USFS on Bark Beetles in the Rocky Mountain Region indicates that 4.2 Million acres of land in Colorado and adjacent lands in southern Wyoming have been affected by Mountain Pine Beetle, but the outbreak of the last decade is largely on the decline. However, Spruce beetle is on the rise and is expanding from southern Colorado north toward the Gunnison region.

\* The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) uses a 30 year running average that is updated every ten years. The transition to the new "normal" period of 1981-2010 began in early 2013. NRCS is also transitioning to the use of median rather than average to define normal. Please keep in mind that this transition will affect the data when presented as a percent of normal.

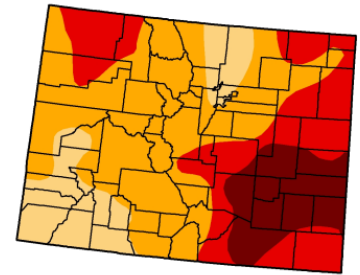
# APRIL 2013 DROUGHT UPDATE

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

April 16, 2013  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Most of the state continues to experience severe to exceptional drought conditions. Although improvements have been made along the northern Front Range as well as in the northern and central mountains. The eastern plains remain the driest region of the state.

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	84.78	38.37	13.63
Last Week (04/09/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	88.97	45.92	13.63
3 Months Ago (01/15/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	58.64	13.50
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	95.06	53.47	13.48
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	61.75	16.89
One Year Ago (04/16/2012 map)	5.17	94.83	55.94	17.09	0.00	0.00



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

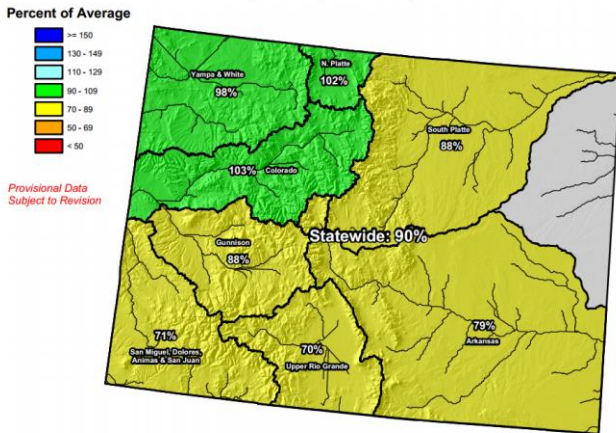
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Released Thursday, April 18, 2013  
David Miskus, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Climate Prediction Center

### Colorado SNOTEL Snowpack Update Map



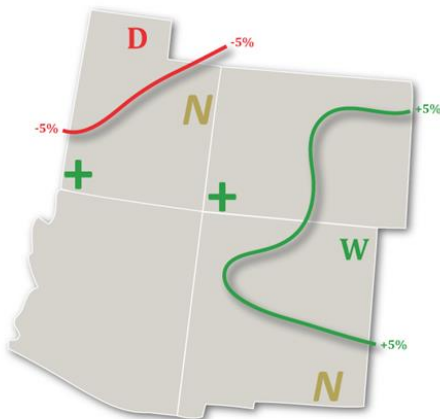
Current as of Apr 22, 2013

\*Data may not provide a valid measure of conditions

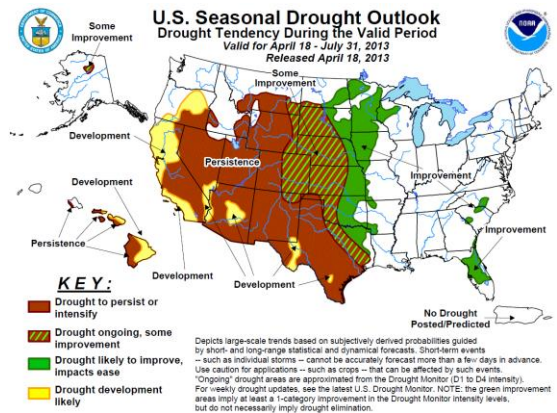
Recent precipitation has helped to boost snowpack levels to near normal conditions in some portions of the state. While the southern portion of the state remains well below average. Statewide snowpack as of April 22<sup>nd</sup> is 90%.

### Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance

APR - JUN 2013 (Issued April 12, 2013)



The long term experimental forecast (left) is projecting above average precipitation during the April - June time period for the eastern plains. The NOAA climate prediction center is also forecasting some improvement in conditions over the eastern plains through July (right). Western Colorado is forecast to see persistent drought conditions over the same period.



**NOTE:** The next WATF meeting will be held May 16, 2013 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Headquarters, additional information can be found at [www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) or by contacting Ben Wade at [Ben.Wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.Wade@state.co.us)