



## SEPTEMBER 2013 DROUGHT UPDATE

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

Extraordinary precipitation along the Front Range of the state in early September has eliminated drought conditions in some areas. However, not all of the state received drenching rains and drought still remains in some regions. While flooding was still severe, water providers were able to capture significant amounts of water in reservoirs during the event which will likely increase overall statewide storage levels. Water providers are also reporting reduced demands, which will further maintain storage going into the winter months.

- Exceptional precipitation events in Early September coupled with a persistent monsoon season has resulted in significant improvements to drought conditions throughout the state. Currently, 84% of the state is in some level of classification on the US drought monitor. 20% is currently characterized as “abnormally dry” while the majority of the state (67%) is in a D1 or moderate drought conditions. An additional 13% is severe, 2.5% is extreme and only 1.47% of the state remains in exceptional drought.
- A late month heat wave in August brought temperatures for the month above average, a trend that has continued into the first half of September, with some areas seeing temperatures 8-10 degrees above average.
- August precipitation was above average statewide at 111% of normal, while September to-date has been incredibly wet at 283% of normal statewide. This ranges from a low of 150% of average in the Gunnison to an extraordinary 536% of average in the South Platte. With these record breaking rains, some areas of Colorado have gone from well below average to near and above average for the water year, which ends September 30, 2013.
- Reservoir storage as of September 1<sup>st</sup> remained below average, however it is likely that the recent rains will increase this value on the October 1<sup>st</sup> reporting date. There are reports of Halligan Reservoir in the South Platte rising 30 feet in roughly 36 hours during the most recent heavy rain event. Not only is this welcome for water providers, but also likely played a role in decreasing flows downstream of the reservoir in the City of Fort Collins. Many providers were able to store substantial amounts of water during this event, still other reported infrastructure breaches.
- The Climate Prediction Center drought outlook released September 19, 2013 and valid for September 19-December 31, 2013 illustrates persistent drought across most of Colorado with the exception of the Front Range and a portion of the eastern plains where drought conditions have been largely eliminated. Temperatures are also forecasted to remain above average through October.
- ENSO conditions remain neutral. However, the preliminary snowpack forecast for January 1st indicates the chance of early season snow in the mountains as above average and is better than in the previous two years. The exceptions being in the Yampa and Rio Grande Basins which both show a slightly lower than average forecast.

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## U.S. Drought Monitor

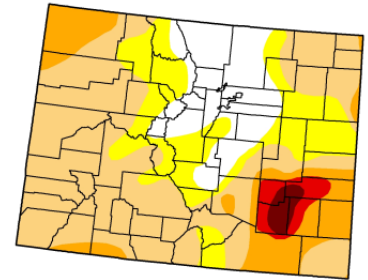
September 17, 2013

Valid 7 a.m. EST

### Colorado

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Significant improvements have been made over the last month as a result of monsoonal rains. However 65% of Colorado remains classified as experiencing some level of drought, with an additional 20% of the state classified as abnormally dry.

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	15.79	84.21	64.59	16.99	4.01	1.47
Last Week (09/10/2013 map)	1.97	98.03	93.08	58.30	18.65	3.01
3 Months Ago (06/18/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	75.28	35.50	17.54
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 (09/11/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	61.95	16.13



**Intensity:**

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

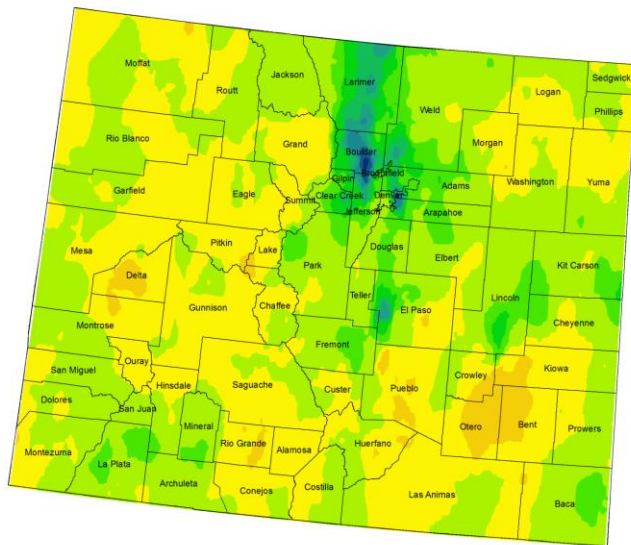
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, September 19, 2013  
National Drought Mitigation Center.

Preliminary Precipitation Accumulation for Colorado (inches)  
8 - 15 September 2013



**Precip**

- 0.00
- 0.01 - 0.10
- 0.11 - 0.25
- 0.26 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.00
- 1.01 - 2.00
- 2.01 - 4.00
- 4.01 - 6.00
- 6.01 - 8.00
- 8.01 - 10.00
- 10.01 - 12.00
- 12.01 - 14.00
- 14.01 - 16.00
- 16.01 - 17.50

Monsoonal moisture brought much needed drought relief to Colorado. One storm lasting from September 8-15<sup>th</sup> brought significant and heavy rain to Colorado's Front Ranges dropping as much as a years' worth of precipitation over some areas and resulting in massive and serious flooding. The map to the left shows preliminary precipitation totals from the storm. While much of the state received some moisture the greatest precipitation was in Northern Colorado.

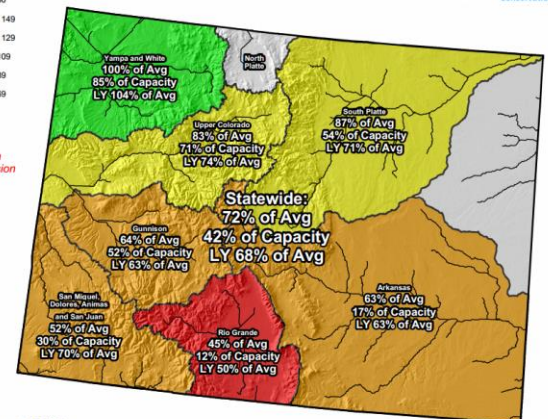
Statewide reservoir storage ranges widely from 45% of average in the Rio Grande to 100% in the Yampa/White. As a whole the state storage levels sit at 72% of average, a slight increase from last month. These values may increase as moisture from rains of the last 10 days are captured. These values are current for September 1, 2013.

### Colorado Reservoir Storage Map

**Percent of Average**

- >= 150
- 130 - 149
- 110 - 129
- 90 - 109
- 70 - 89
- 50 - 69
- < 50

Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision



End of August 2013



**NOTE:** The next WATF meeting will be held November 21, 2013 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office, 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)