



## JANUARY 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

### Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

Taryn Finessey, CWCB  
303.866.3441 ext. 3231

[Taryn.Finessey@state.co.us](mailto:Taryn.Finessey@state.co.us)

Tracy Kosloff, DWR  
303-866-3581 ext. 8211

[Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us](mailto:Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us)

### ***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.***

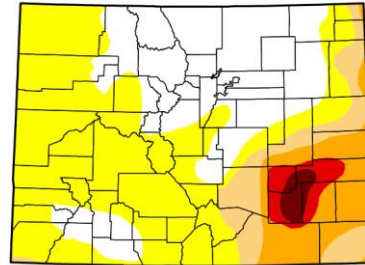
Continued precipitation across the northern half of the state has resulted in a decent start to the snow accumulation season. However, accumulation in the southern portion of the state has slowed over the last two months, with the Rio Grande and Southwest basins seeing only 26 and 23% of normal precipitation for January to date. Moderate to exceptional drought conditions remain on the eastern plains, with 15 counties recently receiving a USDA secretarial disaster designation for drought. Storage levels in all basins are better than they were this time last year; however the northern half of the state is doing better than the southern basins. Water providers are closely monitoring conditions to determine if additional actions need to be taken.

- The 2013 calendar year ended at exactly average (44.9°F) for annual average temperature, placing it as the 64<sup>th</sup> coolest on record. Records date back to 1895. January to-date has been near average for most of the state.
- Currently, 68% of the state is in some level of classification according to the US drought monitor. 46% of that is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 9% is experiencing D1 or moderate drought conditions. 10% is classified as severe, 2.5% as extreme and only 1.47% of the state remains in exceptional drought. In comparison, this time last year 100% of the state was classified as experiencing severe to exceptional drought conditions.
- Fifteen counties in eastern Colorado were granted a USDA secretarial disaster designation for drought in mid-January (Sedgwick, Phillips, Yuma, Kit Carson, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Prowers, Bent, Baca, Las Animas, Otero, Crowley, Pueblo, El Paso, and Lincoln). An additional 15 counties were also given contiguous or secondary designations. While many of these contiguous counties are on the eastern plains, five counties are on the western slope along the Utah border.
- Precipitation across the state has been inconsistent since the start of the water year, October 1, 2013. All basins have seen at least one month with above average precipitation, however with the exception of the Yampa/ White, all have also seen at least one month of below average precipitation. Currently, water year to-date precipitation is 98% of average with the northern part of the state near average to above average (90-120%) and the Rio Grande, southwest basins and Arkansas ranging from 79-89%.
- The Climate Prediction Center seasonal drought outlook released January 16, 2014 and valid for January 16- April 30, 2014 illustrates persistent or intensifying drought across southeastern Colorado and the eastern plains along the Kansas and Nebraska border; and likely drought development in the Rio Grande and across the southern state line. Temperature forecasts for the same period show a probability for above average temperatures in Southern Colorado.
- ENSO conditions remain neutral, which offers less guidance for long range climate outlooks. However, the early season forecast was fairly accurate for January 1st snowpack. The statistical precipitation forecast for January- March 2014 shows dryness across much of the state, especially in the northern mountains.
- The April 1<sup>st</sup> long term snowpack forecast indicates near normal conditions for the northern and eastern basins, but below-normal for the San Juan Mountains. A switch to El Niño appears possible this spring which could result in improved odds for precipitation.

# JANUARY 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently the majority of the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions while 23%, primarily on the eastern plains, is classified as experiencing moderate through exceptional drought conditions. It is likely that D0 conditions will be introduced in the coming weeks to portions of the SW and around Washington County where currently no classification is indicated the coming weeks.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado



January 21, 2014  
(Released Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)	None					D0-D4				
	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	31.96	68.04	22.52	13.56	4.01	1.47				
Last Week 1/14/2014	31.96	68.04	22.52	13.56	4.01	1.47				
3 Months Ago 10/22/13	24.82	75.18	26.62	12.01	4.01	1.47				
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2013	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47				
Start of Water Year 10/1/13	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	98.64	13.50				

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

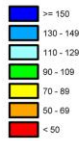
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:  
Richard Tanker  
CPC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP

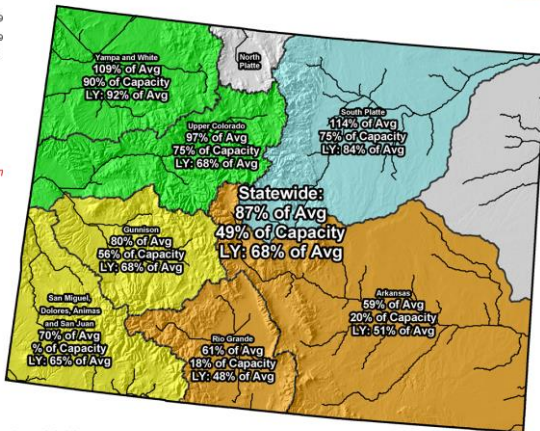
USDA  
  
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

## Colorado Reservoir Storage Map

Percent of Average



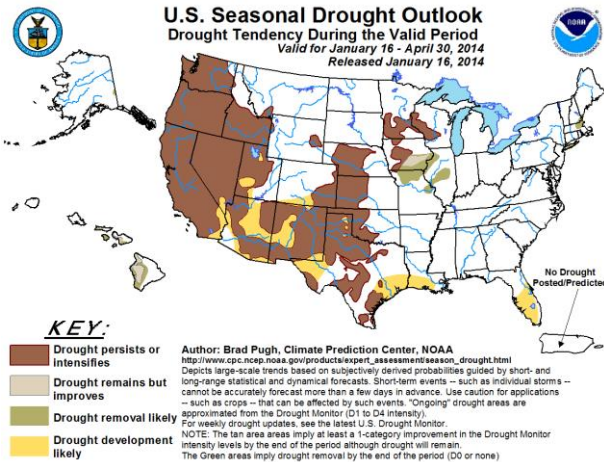
Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision



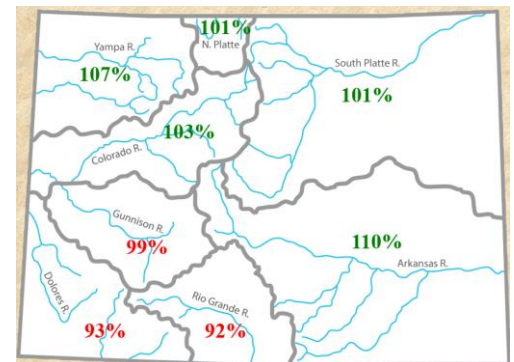
End of December 2013



Statewide reservoir storage ranges from a low of 59% of average in the Arkansas to 114% in the South Platte. As a whole the state storage levels sit at 87% of average.



The Climate Prediction Center indicates that drought is likely to persist or intensify in southeastern Colorado (left), while the long term forecast (right) from CU/CIRES shows near average April 1<sup>st</sup> snow water equivalent (SWE).



## Median SWE forecast for 1 April 2014

NOTE: The next WATF meeting will be held February 13, 2014 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)