



FEBRUARY 2014 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.

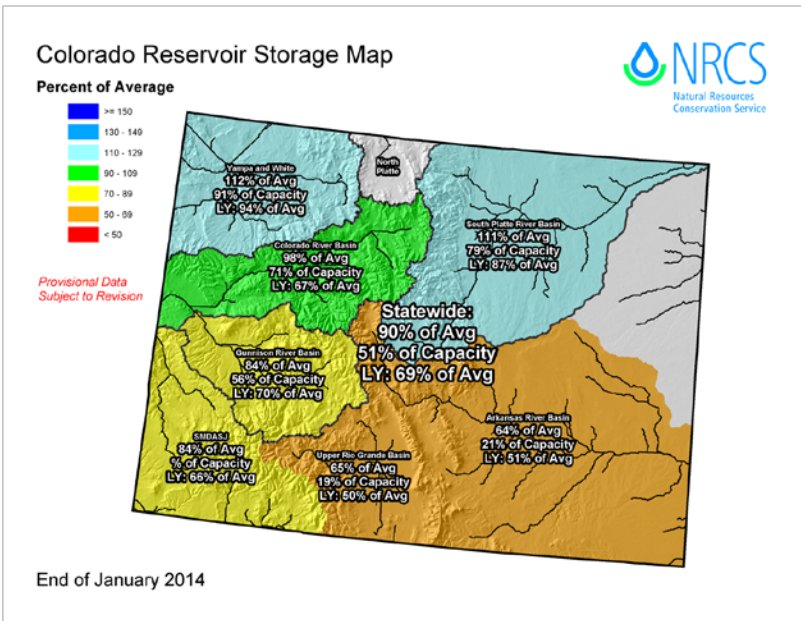
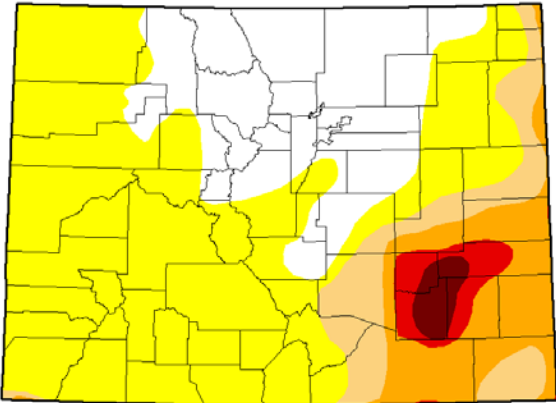
Late January and early February precipitation across the state improved the statewide snowpack from 107% on February 1 to 117% as of February 12. The snowpack in every basin in the northern portion of the state is well above average with the highest being the South Platte basin at 141% of average. The southern portion of the state continues to see below average precipitation overall for the current water year. Moderate to exceptional drought conditions remain on the eastern plains, with D0 reintroduced in the southwest portion of the state where no classification was indicated in the January report. 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.

- January statewide temperatures were near normal with the foothills slightly above normal for the month. Temperatures statewide from February 1-11 are near normal to 10 degrees below however, the Eastern Slope has experienced temperatures varying from 10 to 25 degrees below normal.
- Currently, 74% of the state is in some level of classification according to the US drought monitor slightly up from January. 52% of that is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 9% is experiencing D1 or moderate drought conditions. 9% 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.
- Snowpack has risen statewide due to storms in late January and early February. As of February 12, the highest snowpack was in the South Platte Basin at 141% of average. The Rio Grande, has the lowest snowpack at 79% of average, a decrease from 82% as of February 1. NRCS is ground-truthing snotel stations in the Rio Grande basin as there are indications they may be providing erroneously low readings due to snow pillow bridging and rain gage capping.
- For the current water year, starting on Oct 1, 2013, precipitation statewide is at 108% of average as of February 12. The Rio Grande and San Juan/Dolores basins are the lowest at 85% and 90% respectively, although so far in the current month both basins are receiving above average precipitation.
- The streamflow forecasts statewide range from 67-125% percent of average. The highest streamflow averages are in the Yampa/White and Colorado basins. Streamflow forecasts have decreased in the southwest part of the state since January 1.
- Reservoir Storage is at 90% of average which is an increase from 87% at the end of December 2013. At this same time last year, reservoir storage was at 69% of average. The lowest reservoir storage is in the Arkansas & Rio Grande basins, with 64% and 65% of average respectively.
- Parts of Crowley County have experienced problems with an abundance of tumbleweeds due to the extensive drought in the southeastern part of the state. The tumbleweeds have clogged ditches and roads and some citizens have been rescued from their homes due to massive pile ups of tumbleweeds. Financial assistance is being sought after to deal with the ongoing issue.
- The water providers in attendance reported their respective systems and storage levels are in good shape and they continue to closely monitor conditions to determine if additional actions need to be taken.

NOTE: The next meeting on March 20, 2014 will be a Joint Flood & Water Availability Task Force Meeting at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office; additional information can be found at www.cwcb.state.co.us or by contacting Ben Wade at Ben.Wade@state.co.us

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The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently the majority of the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions while 22%, primarily on the eastern plains, is classified as experiencing moderate through exceptional drought conditions. D0 conditions have been reintroduced in the southwest since the January Drought Update.



Statewide reservoir storage ranges from a low of 64% of average in the Arkansas to 112% in the Yampa/White. As a whole the state storage levels sit at 90% of average.

As of February 12, year to date statewide precipitation is at 108% of average. Late January and early February storms have helped to increase snowpack for most of the basins especially in the northern portion of the state.

