



## MARCH 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

### Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

Taryn Finnessey, CWCB

303.866.3441 ext. 3231

[Taryn.Finnessey@state.co.us](mailto:Taryn.Finnessey@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.***

As of March 19, statewide snowpack is at 114% of average and is 149% of levels at this time last year. The snowpack in the northern basins continues to have a higher percentage of average than the southern portion of the state. The lowest snowpack is in the Rio Grande Basin at 83% of average. Moderate to exceptional drought conditions remain on the eastern plains, with D3 expanded in the southeast portion of the state to connect with the D3 classification in western Kansas. Compared to last month, D1 has expanded from the four corners along the southern portion of La Plata, Archuleta and of Conejos counties. Storage levels in all basins are better than they were at this time last year; however the Rio Grande and Arkansas basins continue to have the lowest reservoir storage.

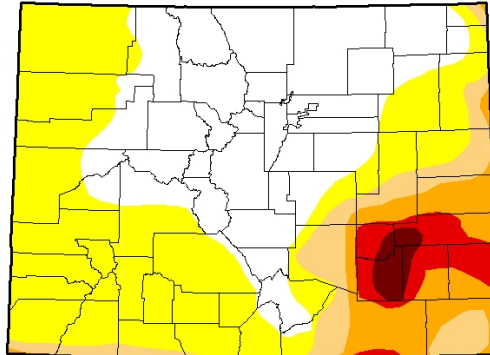
- February statewide temperatures were mixed statewide with the foothills slightly below normal for the month and the eastern plains six degrees below normal. Temperatures in the mountains and the western valleys averaged two degrees above normal.
- Currently, 61% of the state is in some level of classification according to the US drought monitor which has improved since February's report. 39% of that is characterized as "abnormally dry" or D0, while an additional 8% is experiencing D1 or moderate drought conditions. 8% is classified as severe, 4% 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 moderate to exceptional drought conditions.
- Snowpack statewide is at 114% of average and 149% of last year. As of March 19, the highest snowpack was in the South Platte Basin at 140% of average. On March 19, the Rio Grande had the lowest snowpack in the state at 83% of average, a slight improvement from 79% of average on March 1.
- For the current water year, beginning Oct 1, 2013, cumulative precipitation statewide is at 108% of average. The Rio Grande and San Juan/Dolores basins are the lowest at 83% and 90% of average respectively.
- As of March 1, the streamflow forecasts statewide range from 40-138% percent of average. The highest streamflow averages are in the Yampa/White, Colorado & South Platte basins. Streamflow forecasts have decreased in the southwest part of the state. The lowest streamflow forecast is in the Rio Grande basin in the Sangre de Cristo Creek at 40% of average.
- Reservoir Storage is at 90% of average at the end of February 2014. At this same time last year, reservoir storage was at 68% of average. The lowest reservoir storage is in the Arkansas & Rio Grande basins, with 60% and 68% of average, respectively.
- ENSO conditions will likely transition to El-Nino in the next few months. Historically, El-Nino results in wet conditions on the eastern plains, which would be a welcome change in the Arkansas valley. The mountains are less likely to benefit from wet conditions, which could be detrimental in the San Juan Mountains especially as that area is behind the rest of the state in overall precipitation.
- The water providers in attendance reported their respective systems and storage levels are in good shape and they continue to closely monitor conditions.

# MARCH 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

March 18, 2014  
(Released Thursday, Mar. 20, 2014)  
Valid 7 a.m. EDT

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently the majority of the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions while 14%, primarily on the eastern plains, is classified as experiencing moderate to exceptional drought conditions. D1 conditions has expanded from the four corners part of the state along the southern portion of La Plata, Archuleta and of Conejos counties



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	38.90	61.10	21.62	13.69	5.58	1.47
Last Week 3/11/2014	38.90	61.10	21.36	13.54	4.23	1.47
3 Months Ago 12/17/2013	32.04	67.96	20.95	12.50	4.01	1.47
Start of Calendar Year 1/22/2014	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Water Year 10/1/2013	24.91	75.09	37.88	12.01	4.01	1.47
One Year Ago 3/19/2013	0.00	100.00	100.00	88.97	48.06	21.22

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

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

**Author:**  
Eric Luebbehusen  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



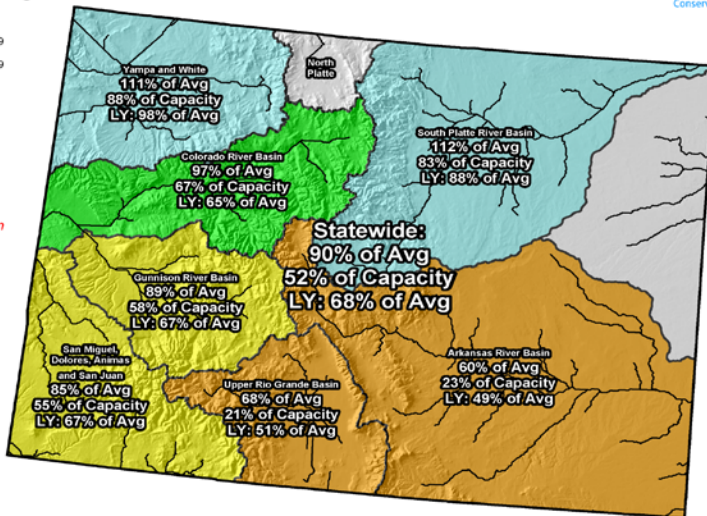
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

## Colorado Reservoir Storage Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision



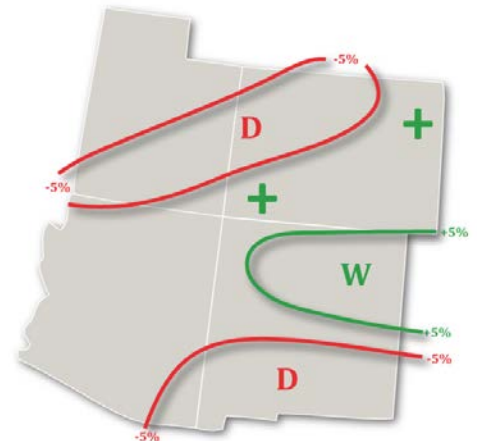
Statewide reservoir storage remains at 90% of average. The Arkansas basin has the lowest reservoir storage at 60% of average. The South Platte has the highest reservoir storage in the state at 112% of average.

End of February 2014

The experimental precipitation forecast from April through June predicts increased chances for southeastern Colorado and less moisture in the northwestern portion of the state.

## Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance

APR – JUN 2014 (March 14, 2014)



**NOTE:** The next meeting on April 16, 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](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) or by contacting Ben Wade at [Ben.Wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.Wade@state.co.us)