



## APRIL 2014 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 remains in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions throughout Colorado. The Municipal Impact Task Force was deactivated by Governor Hickenlooper on April 14, 2014.***

Drought conditions are very different in northern and southern Colorado. The winter resulted in above normal snowpack and precipitation in most of northern Colorado. Moderate to exceptional drought (D1 to D4) conditions remain in the Lower Arkansas River basin. Severe drought (D2) has expanded in the four corners region of the state. The southeastern part of the state is currently classified as above normal for significant wild land fire potential. The Ag sector continues to struggle in southeast Colorado as the area has seen little moisture and dry winds. Relief may come later this spring as ENSO conditions favor the return of El Nino conditions, which typically provide moisture on the eastern plains.

- March statewide temperatures were about 2°F above normal and ranked as the 23<sup>rd</sup> warmest on record since 1895. Temperatures so far in April are near normal with a few pockets in the South Platte and central mountains 4-5 degrees below normal.
- Currently, 61% of the state is in some level of drought classification according to the US drought monitor. 39% of that is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 8% is experiencing D1 or moderate drought conditions. 9% is classified as severe, 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 moderate to exceptional drought conditions.
- Snowpack statewide is at 110% of median and 144% of last year. As of April 19, the highest snowpack was in the South Platte Basin at 134% of median. On April 14, the Rio Grande had the lowest snowpack in the state at 72% of median. The snowpack in the San Miguel/Dolores/San Juan Basin is also well below average at 76% of median and took the brunt of a recent dust event that could potentially accelerate runoff.
- According to the Significant Wild Land Fire Potential Outlook for April, the southeastern part of Colorado is categorized as above normal for significant wild land fire potential. The outlook for May improves slightly with the southeastern part of the state downgraded to a normal level of wildfire risk.
- As of April 1, the streamflow forecasts statewide range from 39-155% percent of average. The highest streamflow forecasts are in the Yampa/White & North Platte, Colorado & South Platte basins. Streamflow forecasts have decreased this month in the southwest part of the state. The lowest streamflow forecast is in the Upper Rio Grande basin for Sangre de Cristo Creek at 39% of average. Many of the forecasts are well below average in the Upper Rio Grande Basin.
- Reservoir Storage is at 89% of average at the end of March 2014. At this same time last year, reservoir storage was at 69% of average. The lowest reservoir storage statewide is in the Arkansas & Upper Rio Grande basins, with 60% and 70% of average storage, respectively.
- ENSO conditions will likely transition to El-Nino in May or June. The El-Nino conditions are likely to bring moisture to the lower elevations during the growing season. The forecast through June shows the mountains are less likely to benefit from wet conditions except for the western San Juan Mountains.
- The water providers in attendance reported their respective systems and storage levels are in good shape and they continue to closely monitor conditions.

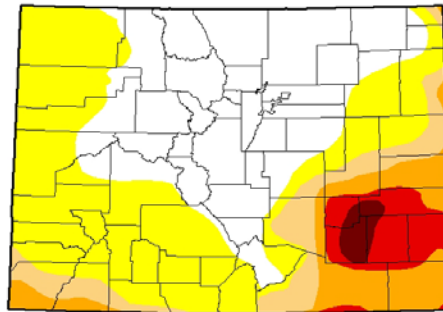
NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on May 16, 2014 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office; additional information can be found at [www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) or by contacting Ben Wade at [Ben.Wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.Wade@state.co.us)

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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. The southeastern plains continue to experience severe to exceptional drought conditions. D1 conditions have expanded further north in southwestern part of the state and the four corners part of the state has been downgraded to D2, or moderate drought.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

April 15, 2014  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 17, 2014)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	38.49	61.51	24.29	16.14	6.07	1.47
Last Week 4/6/2014	38.38	61.62	23.40	15.06	6.90	1.47
3 Month Ago 1/14/2014	31.95	68.04	22.52	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	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 4/15/2013	0.00	100.00	100.00	84.78	38.37	13.63

**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.

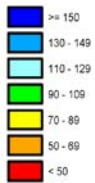
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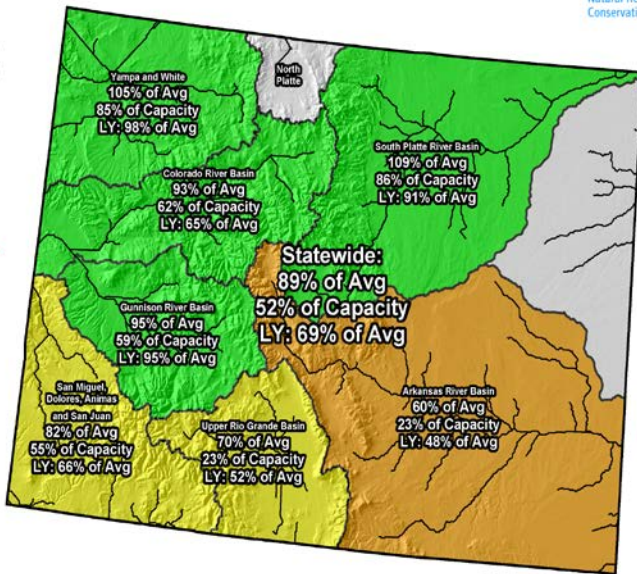
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

## Colorado Reservoir Storage Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision



Statewide reservoir storage is 89% of average slightly down from last month. The Arkansas basin has the lowest reservoir storage at 60% of average. The South Platte has the highest reservoir storage in the state at 109% of average.

End of March 2014

The Significant Wild Land Fire Potential Outlook for June & July predicts a normal fire potential for the state. If the transition to El-Nino occurs in the next month or two, increased moisture is likely on the eastern plains, which would reduce the risk of having an above normal potential for significant fires.

