



MAY 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

Water Availability Task Force Co-Chairs

Taryn Finnessey, CWCB

303.866.3441 ext. 3231

Taryn.Finnessey@state.co.us

Tracy Kosloff, DWR

303-866-3581 ext. 8211

Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us

Activation 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.

Drought conditions remain in southern Colorado, but have abated in much of the northern portion of the state. While April was slightly warmer than normal, May to date has been cool and wet helping to slow melt off, and in some instances improve, snowpack. Reservoir storage is high in the north but well below average in the southern half of Colorado. Agriculture in this region is also struggling to establish a good crop due to lack of soil moisture. Relief is possible as ENSO conditions favor the return of El Nino conditions, which historically has meant increased moisture for Colorado. Water providers indicated that storage levels are decent, and they are not imposing above normal watering restrictions, yet they will continue to closely monitor conditions.

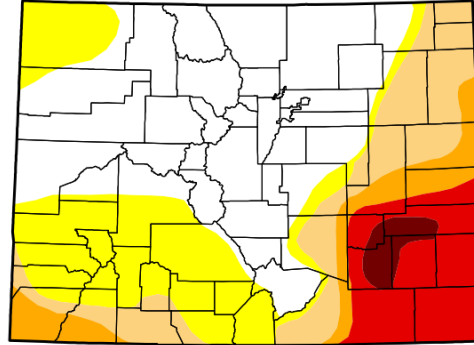
- Currently, 55% of the state is in some level of drought classification according to the US drought monitor. 22% of that is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 14% is experiencing D1, moderate drought conditions. 6% is classified as severe, 11% as extreme and 2% of the state remains in exceptional drought (D4). In comparison, this time last year 100% of the state was experiencing some level of classification (D0-D4).
- Snowpack statewide is at 105% of median. All basins saw some decline in April due to seasonal melt off and below average precipitation. As of May 15, the basin with the highest snowpack is in the North Platte Basin at 126% of median. The Rio Grande has the lowest snowpack in the state at 84% of normal. The snowpack in the San Miguel/Dolores/San Juan Basin is also below average at 88%. The South Platte, Colorado, Yampa/ White, Gunnison and Arkansas are near or above normal at 120, 112, 113, 102 and 97 % respectively.
- Current streamflow forecasts statewide range from well below to well above average, with the northern portion of the state showing higher forecasts than the south.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 93% of average at the end of April 2014. The lowest reservoir storage statewide is in the Arkansas & Upper Rio Grande basins, with 59% and 67% of average storage, respectively. The South Platte has the highest storage level at 110%.
- ENSO conditions are likely to transition El-Nino in the coming weeks and are forecast to bring more moisture to the lower elevations during the growing season. The forecast through June indicates that the mountains are less likely to benefit from wet conditions, with the exception of the western San Juan Mountains.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) for the state, which takes into account both reservoir storage and streamflow forecasts, is near normal across much of the state, with an “abundant” index in the northern basins of the South Platte, North Platte, Yampa/ White and Colorado. The lowest values in the state are in the Arkansas and are the result of poor reservoir and streamflow conditions for the Cucharas and Huerfano rivers.
- Southern portions of the state continue to deal with the effects of a multi-year drought, including low soil moisture and blowing dust. Producers in southeastern Colorado are concerned about how another year of below average precipitation may impact their operations.

NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on June 18, 2014 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

MAY 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently, nearly half the state is not dealing with any drought conditions while the other half is experiencing drought ranging from abnormally dry to exceptional. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its third year. Dry soils, blowing dust and a continued lack of moisture are slowing agricultural production in the region.



May 13, 2014
(Released Thursday, May 15, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	44.71	55.29	32.79	18.86	12.49	1.91
Last Week 5/6/2014	36.40	63.60	31.93	18.85	8.38	1.89
3 Months Ago 2/11/2014	25.06	74.94	22.62	13.82	4.06	1.47
Start of Calendar Year 12/31/2013	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 5/14/2013	0.00	100.00	93.18	71.71	24.53	15.84

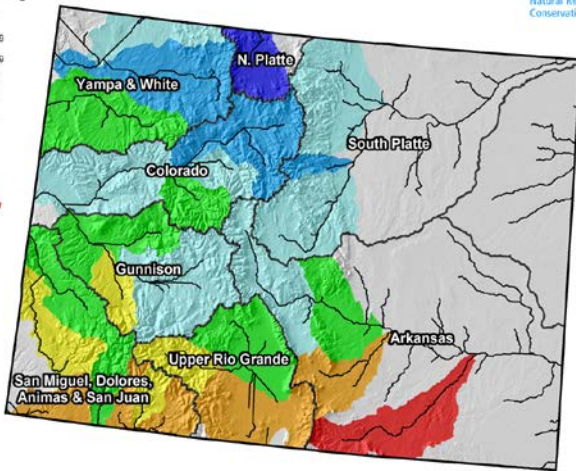
Intensity:
■ D0 Abnormally Dry ■ D3 Extreme Drought
■ D1 Moderate Drought ■ D4 Exceptional Drought
■ D2 Severe Drought

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

Author:
Mark Svoboda
National Drought Mitigation Center

Colorado Streamflow Forecast Map

Percent of Average



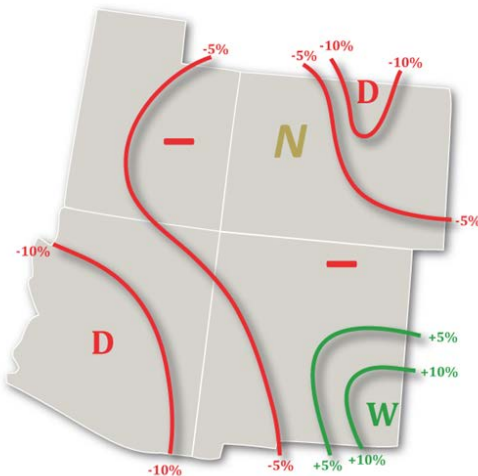
Current as of April 1, 2014



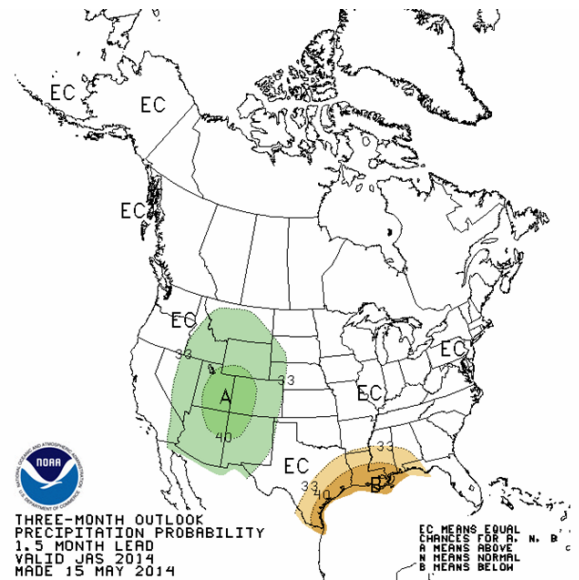
Streamflow forecasts vary widely across the state, with the north expected to have more abundant flows than the south. The Arkansas Basin continues to be the driest basin in the state with a streamflow forecast below 50% of average.

Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance

JUL – SEP 2014 (May 15, 2014)



July through September forecasts differ with the experimental forecast (left) indicating dry conditions, and the Climate Prediction Center (right) indicating wet conditions. ENSO conditions will affect the amount of moisture that materializes during the monsoon season.



NOAA
THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
1.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID JAS 2014
MADE 15 MAY 2014

EC MEANS EQUAL CHANCE FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW