



July 2014 Drought Update

Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

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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 in Southern Colorado.

Despite the warm temperatures of the past week, temperatures for the summer, and the water year as a whole, have been very close to average. Mild temperatures have helped to moderate impacts from a very dry June statewide, where only 29% of normal precipitation fell and some portions of the state (Southwest) saw only 9% of normal precipitation for the month. By comparison, July has been quite wet (92% of average to-date) and has resulted in large improvements to drought designations along the eastern plains, including southeastern Colorado where they have been dealing with extreme and exceptional drought conditions for nearly 4 years. Weak El Nino conditions have developed but are unlikely to result in short term significant moisture. Water providers indicated that storage levels remain strong, with many reservoirs near or at capacity.

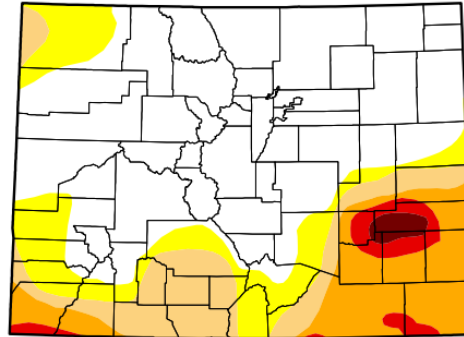
- Currently, 40% of the state is in some level of drought classification according to the US drought monitor. 13% is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 11% is experiencing D1, moderate drought conditions. 12% is classified as severe, 3% as extreme and less than 1% of the state remains in exceptional drought (D4). These conditions are an improvement over last month.
- Year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites is 101% of average, with the northern half of the state seeing more moisture than the southern half.
- Current streamflow forecasts statewide range from greater than 150% of average in the South Platte and Colorado to a low of 36% of average in parts of the Rio Grande basin. The northern portion of the state has forecasts that are near to above normal, while the southern portion of the state has forecasts below normal.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 94% of average at the end of June 2014. The lowest reservoir storage statewide is in the Upper Rio Grande & Arkansas basins, with 58% and 66% of average storage, respectively. The Yampa/White and the South Platte have the highest storage level at 115% and 113% of average.
- 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, and Colorado. The lowest values in the state are in the Southwest and indicate moderate to severe drought.
- El-Nino ENSO conditions continue, but remain weak. The next few months are not likely to see major changes in that condition, but above average moisture is more likely by fall.
- The short term forecast projects continued warm conditions west of the divide with cooler temperatures east of the continental divide over the next 14 days; coupled with above average probability of moisture in the southern half of the state.
- August is typically the month with the most monsoon activity in Colorado, and a strong monsoon may help to further alleviate drought conditions.

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The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently, more than half the state is free of drought while 40% is experiencing drought ranging from abnormally dry to exceptional. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its fourth year, but recent rains have brought some relief. It will likely take years for rangelands and producers to fully recover.

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

July 22, 2014
(Released Thursday, Jul. 24, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	59.92	13.42	11.10	11.82	2.82	0.92
Last Week 7/15/2014	58.79	13.13	11.41	11.24	4.51	0.92
3 Months Ago 4/22/2014	39.35	36.56	7.95	8.76	5.49	1.89
Start of Calendar Year 12/31/2013	32.04	45.64	8.76	9.56	2.53	1.47
Start of Water Year 10/1/2013	24.91	37.21	25.87	8.00	2.53	1.47
One Year Ago 7/23/2013	0.00	4.51	12.37	51.95	14.45	16.72

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

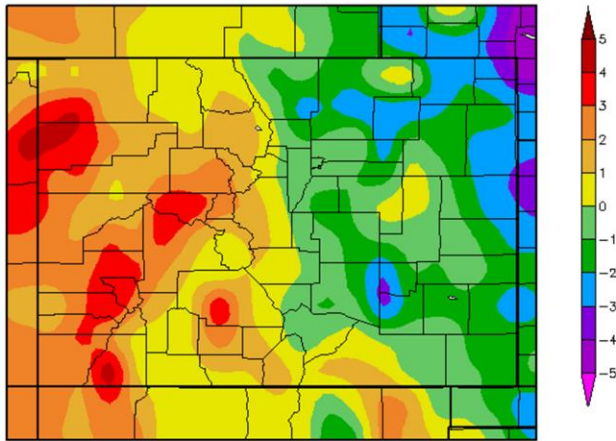
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
7/1/2014 - 7/20/2014



July temperatures have been split across the state with warmer conditions west of the divide and cooler conditions on the Front Range and eastern plains. Cooler conditions in Southeastern Colorado have helped to abate drought conditions in that region.

Generated 7/21/2014 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

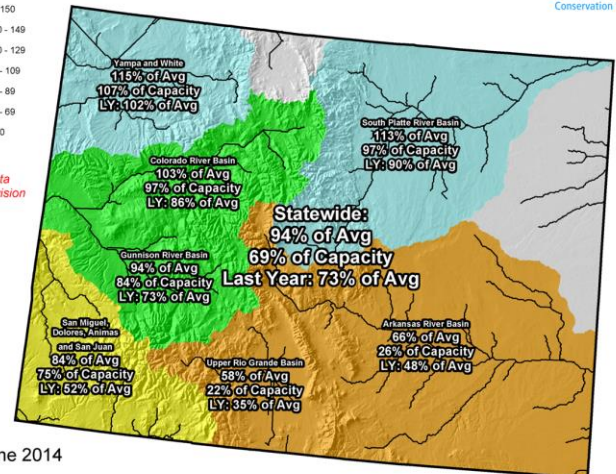
Colorado Reservoir Storage Map



Percent of Average



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision



End of June 2014

Statewide reservoir storage is strong, with some providers reporting their strongest yields since 2001. The northern portion of the state is seeing higher storage levels than the southern half. Drought conditions are also more prominent in the southern portion of the State.

NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on August 13, 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