



August 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 remain in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions in Southern Colorado.

Mild temperatures and above average precipitation across much of the state has brought continued drought relief to the eastern plains. The four corners region is experiencing less precipitation and deteriorating conditions. Monsoon rains could potentially help alleviate the drying. Water providers indicated that storage levels remain strong, with many reservoirs near or at capacity and demands slightly below normal.

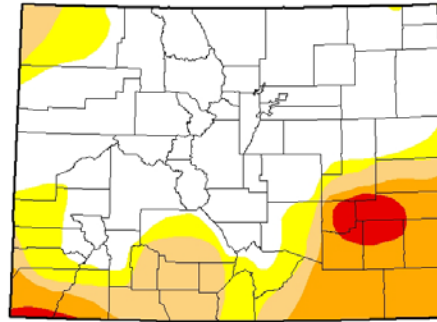
- Currently, 40% of the state is in some level of drought classification according to the US drought monitor. 13% is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 11% is experiencing D1, moderate drought conditions. 13% is classified as severe, 3% as extreme and for the first time in 110 weeks none of the state is in exceptional drought (D4).
- Year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites is 103% of average, this is in part due to strong July precipitation of 122% of average. August to-date is already 90% of average.
- Eads, which has been in drought for nearly 4 years, received seven inches of rain in just a few hours and for the first time in 110 weeks the southeastern portion of the state is out of exceptional drought conditions, although extreme and severe conditions persist.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 97% of average at the end of July 2014, 26% ahead of where we were for storage this time last year. The lowest reservoir storage statewide is in the Upper Rio Grande, with 62% of average storage. The South Platte has the highest storage level at 125% of average.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) for the state is near normal across much of the state, with an “abundant” index in a few northern basins of the South Platte, Yampa/White, and Colorado. The lowest values in the state are in the Southwest and reflect very low reservoir and streamflow levels. This area of the state has not received the same moisture as the rest of the state.
- The chance of El Niño has decreased to about 65% during the Northern Hemisphere fall and early winter, but it is still expected that El Niño will emerge in the next several months and persist through Northern Hemisphere winter; a weak event is most likely.

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U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

August 12, 2014
(Released Thursday, Aug. 14, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

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 extreme. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its fourth year, but recent rains have brought relief. It will likely take years for rangelands and producers to fully recover.



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

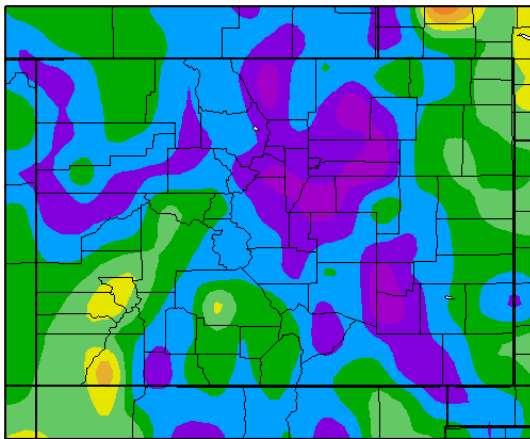
	None	D0-D1	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	59.90	40.10	26.95	15.58	2.67	0.00
Last Week 8/5/2014	59.92	40.08	26.96	15.52	2.67	0.52
3 Months Ago 6/12/2014	44.71	55.29	32.79	18.86	12.49	1.91
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Water Year 10/1/2013	24.91	75.09	37.88	12.01	4.01	1.47
One Year Ago 8/12/2013	1.53	98.47	82.82	60.72	26.33	3.04

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)
8/1/2014 – 8/11/2014



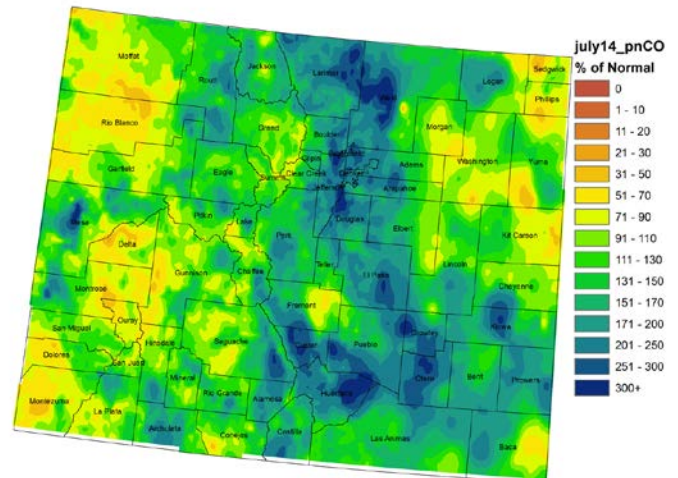
August temperatures have been below average across much of the state. With some areas in the foothills and Front Range 3-4 degrees below normal. Cooler conditions have helped to abate drought conditions along the eastern plains and have resulted in decreased municipal demand on the Front Range.

Generated 8/12/2014 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Colorado July 2014 Precipitation as a Percentage of Average

Statewide July precipitation was 122% of average, with the heaviest rain falling east of the divide. This helped to alleviate dry conditions on the eastern plains. The southwest and northwest corners of the state received below normal precipitation, monitoring of these areas for further deterioration will continue.



NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on September 17, 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