



# November 2014 Drought Update

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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.***

Warm and dry conditions persisted throughout October and early November, with October 2014 the sixth warmest on record. However, recent precipitation and below average temperatures have resulted in improved snow accumulation across the state. The Arkansas basin, which has been the hardest hit by the drought, has received significant beneficial moisture this fall, and is no longer classified as experiencing extreme drought conditions; however severe conditions remain. Along the Front Range, water providers indicated that storage levels are at, or near, record levels, the South Platte basin is experiencing the largest positive departure from average in storage since records began in 1992.

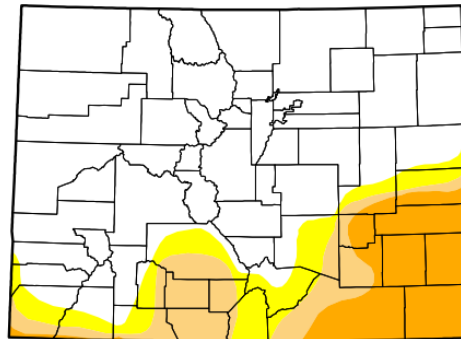
- Year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites, as of November 18<sup>th</sup>, was 82% of normal statewide. The Arkansas basin had the highest snowpack at 99% of normal, while the Yampa/White basin had the lowest at 73% of normal. This time of year it does not take much to increase snowpack levels and below average numbers are not of great concern.
- The short term forecast calls for the mountains to get a good snowstorm this weekend into early next week. The plains will remain mainly dry, with a chance of snow on Thanksgiving.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 105% of average at the end of October 2014. The lowest reservoir storage statewide continues to be the Upper Rio Grande, with 59% of average storage. The South Platte has the highest storage level at 147% of average.
- In the South Platte Basin, Halligan Reservoir is spilling, which is unprecedented. While Carter Lake, Lake Granby and Horsetooth Reservoir have the highest combined November 1 levels that Northern Water has ever seen. Flows along some portions of the Poudre River are forty times higher than average.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) for the state is near normal or abundant across much of the state. The lowest values in the state reflect very low reservoir levels in Green Mountain and Platoro reservoirs.
- A weak El Nino is expected to continue into early next year. If the event continues into spring, more widespread moisture is possible, starting in March. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center forecasts slightly favor a wet late winter for Colorado.
- For Colorado River runoff, the end-of-season snowpack on the ground in the Gunnison basin will be the best indicator for the runoff next spring.

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## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

November 18, 2014  
(Released Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently, 70% of the state is free of drought while 30% is experiencing drought ranging from abnormally dry to severe. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its fourth year, but recent rains have some brought relief and extreme drought has been eliminated.



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	70.00	30.00	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
Last Week 11/15/2014	70.00	30.00	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 8/19/2014	59.90	40.10	26.79	15.58	2.67	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12/31/2013	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Water Year 9/30/2014	68.96	31.04	22.94	13.82	2.31	0.00
One Year Ago 11/19/2013	26.04	73.96	21.01	12.01	4.01	1.47

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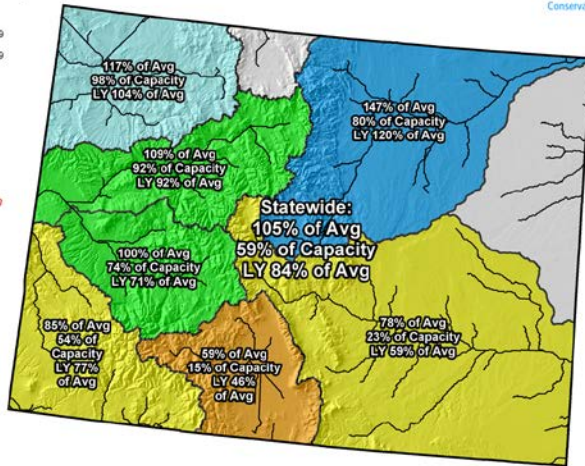
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

## Colorado Reservoir Storage Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision



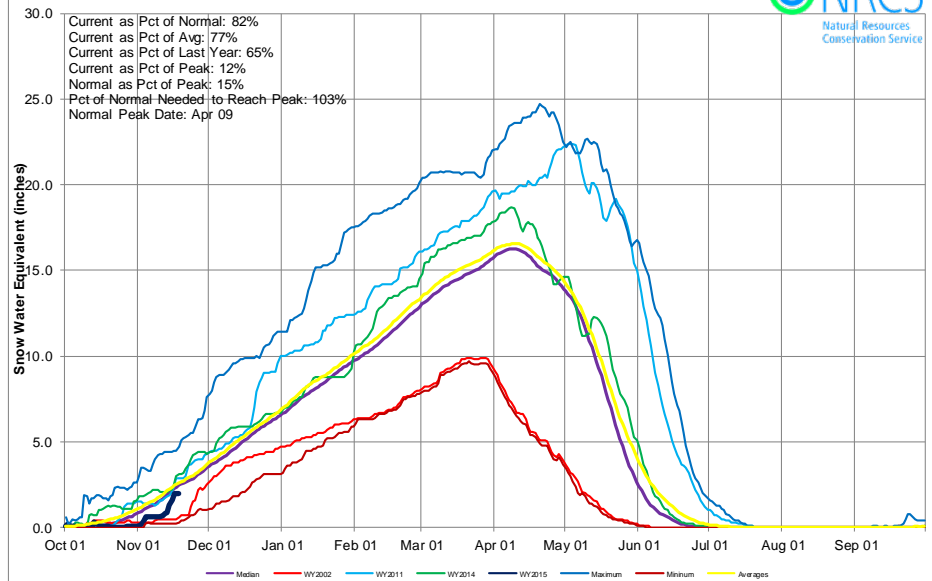
Statewide reservoir levels are 105% of average, with better storage levels in the north than the south. However, storage levels in the Arkansas, Upper Rio Grande and Southwest basins have improved significantly over the past year.

End of October 2014

Current snowpack is 82% of normal for this time of year, with significant gains seen in the most recent storms. With snow forecasted for the next 6-10 days and the fact that it is still early in the snow accumulation season, the below normal value is not overly concerning.

## Colorado Statewide High/Low Snowpack Summary

Based on Provisional SNOTEL data as of Nov 18, 2014



**NOTE:** The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on January 20, 2015 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)