



January 2015 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 remain in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions in Southern Colorado.

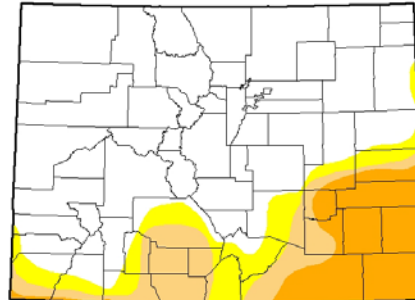
Globally, calendar year 2014 was the warmest on record. In Colorado the year ended with above average temperatures, making it the state's 18th warmest calendar year and the warmest since 2012. Following a wet month of precipitation in December, January 1st snow accumulation was above average for the northern half of the state. 2014 was the wettest calendar year in Colorado in 15 years. However, temperatures and precipitation have been warm and dry this month, with many basins receiving less than 50% of average January precipitation, and short term forecasts do not indicate any major storms in the last week of the month. Along the Front Range, water providers continue to indicate that storage levels are at, or near, record levels.

- Year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites, as of January 20, was 87% of normal statewide. The South Platte basin has the highest snowpack at 103% of normal, while the Upper Rio Grande basin had the lowest at 64% of normal. We have reached the mid-way point towards peak snowpack in most basins, so it will be increasingly harder to make up for the biggest deficits.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 105% of average as of January 1st. The lowest reservoir storage statewide continues to be the Upper Rio Grande, with 67% of average storage. The South Platte has the highest storage level at 124% of average.
- Reservoir Storage in the Upper Rio Grande has been below normal for most of the last 14 years.
- South Platte Reservoir storage levels are at the highest levels in Natural Resource Conservation Service records; and Northern Water is reporting that Carter Lake, Lake Granby and Horsetooth Reservoir have the highest combined levels in the history of the project.
- January 1st streamflow forecasts are near normal for most of the northern half of the state and below normal for the basins in the southwest and Rio Grande. However, the lack of precipitation in January will likely result in decreased forecasts for February 1st statewide.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) for the state is near normal across much of the state. The lowest value in the state reflects low reservoir levels in Platoro reservoir.
- Both the Climate Prediction Center and the Long-term Experimental forecast predict above average precipitation for the next three months. However, this year has been unique and there are no good analog years that can provide insight on how reliable these forecasts are.

January 2015 Drought Update

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently, the majority of the state is free of drought while the southern portion is experiencing drought ranging from abnormally dry to severe. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its fourth year, the City of Pueblo has lost the equivalent of a full year of moisture since this event began.

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado



January 20, 2015
(Released Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4
Current	69.87	30.13	21.43	12.26	0.00	0.00
Last Week 05/05/15	69.87	30.13	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 10/10/14	69.97	30.03	21.28	12.26	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01/01/15	69.87	30.13	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09/01/14	69.96	31.04	22.94	13.62	2.31	0.00
One Year Ago 01/20/14	31.96	68.04	22.52	13.56	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.

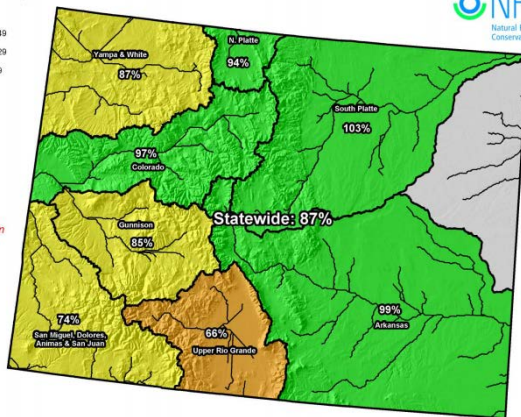
Author:
Richard Tinker
CPC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP



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

Colorado SNOTEL Water Year-to-Date Precipitation Update Map

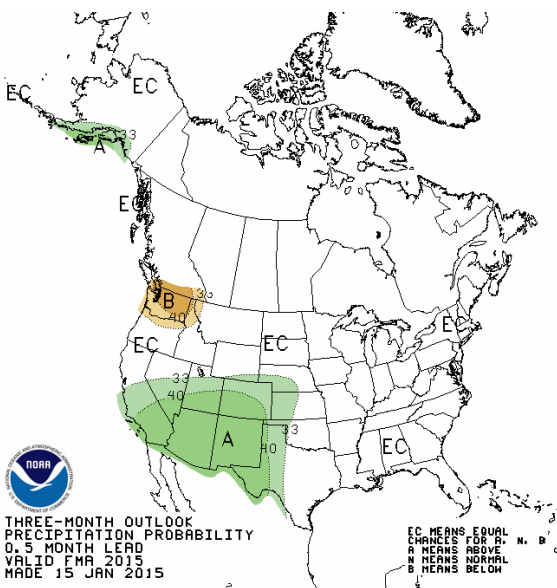
Percent of Average



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision

Current as of 01/20/2015

Statewide snowpack levels are at 87% of average. The South Platte has the highest levels at 103%, while the Rio Grande is the lowest at 66% of average.



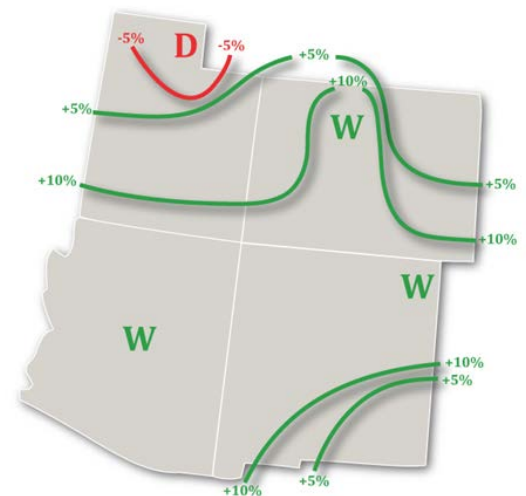
THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID FMA 2015
MADE 15 JAN 2015

EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR P, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW

Long term forecasts for Colorado show an optimistic forecast for the next three months. Both the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) (left) and the Experimental Forecast (right) indicate above average precipitation through March.

Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance

JAN - MAR 2015 (Issued January 15, 2015) - Skill Masked



NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on February 18, 2015 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