



May 2015 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.

April and early May weather conditions improved compared to March. Temperatures in April were slightly above normal statewide. April precipitation was much greater than normal in northeastern Colorado, the upper Arkansas River Basin and the Grand Junction area. The wet pattern continued for the first half of May throughout the state with a great deal of moisture concentrated over Morgan County.

- Water year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites, as of May 13, is at 86% of normal, an improvement compared to the last drought update, due to a relatively wet late April and early May. Most basins had lower than normal peak snow pack (the exception was the South Platte Basin), but the melt off has been at a slower rate than normal. This means that comparisons of day of the year snowpack to the normal for that day may show near normal snowpack levels, however, the total amount of snow available for water supply purposes, is lower than normal in most basins this year.
- May 1st streamflow forecasts are near normal only in a few South Platte subbasins and the Blue River. Streamflow forecasts in the southwest and northwest are less than 70 percent of normal with several subbasins forecasted to be less than 50 percent of normal.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 108% of average as of May 1st. Storage in the northern half of the state is well above average with multiple basins seeing storage levels in excess of 120% of average. The Upper Rio Grande and the Arkansas have the lowest storage at 75% and 79% of average, respectively.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) is near normal in much of the South Platte, Colorado River, and Lower Arkansas, but showing moderate to severe drought in the northwest and southwest. The lowest SWSI value in the state is in the North-Fork Gunnison where stream flow forecasts range from 31 to 43% of average, the highest value is in the northern South Platte River basin.
- Water providers in attendance reported their systems are in good shape, largely due to plentiful storage. While demand is low due to the cool and wet spring conditions.
- Some areas of Weld and Morgan County are cleaning up and will need to repair roads after a slow moving storm over Mother's Day weekend resulted in flooding.

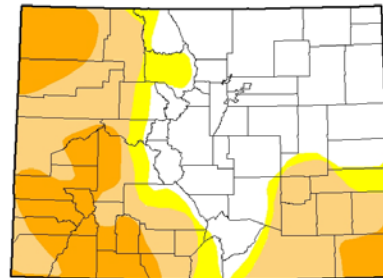
NOTE: There will be a Joint Water Availability & Flood Task Force Meeting on June 17, 2015 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office; Additional information can be found at www.cwcb.state.co.us or by contacting Ben Wade at Ben.Wade@state.co.us

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Drought conditions have improved compared to last month. 8% of the state is experiencing D0 or abnormally dry conditions, while 29% is experiencing D1, moderate drought conditions. 20% of the state is currently classified as D2, severe drought conditions. 42% of the state is drought free (an improvement compared to 25% drought free last month).

**U.S. Drought Monitor
Colorado**

May 12, 2015
(Released Thursday, May 14, 2015)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	42.49	57.51	48.14	20.25	0.00	0.00
Last Week	42.17	57.83	50.50	31.78	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago	36.97	63.03	21.43	12.20	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year	69.87	30.13	21.28	12.26	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year	68.98	31.04	22.94	13.82	2.31	0.00
One Year Ago	44.71	55.29	32.79	18.88	12.49	1.91

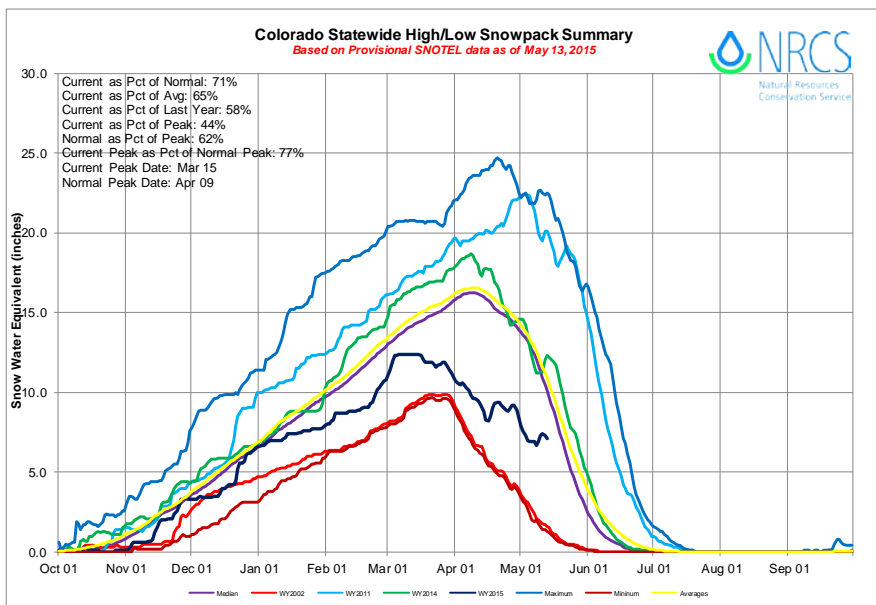


Intensity:
 D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought
 D2 Severe Drought

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

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USDA
 National Drought Mitigation Center
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>



Snowpack reached less than the normal peak on a statewide basis, but has been melting at a slower than normal rate due to cool and wet conditions. Although the year to date statistics are approaching the normal curve, there is less snow available for water supply overall this year.

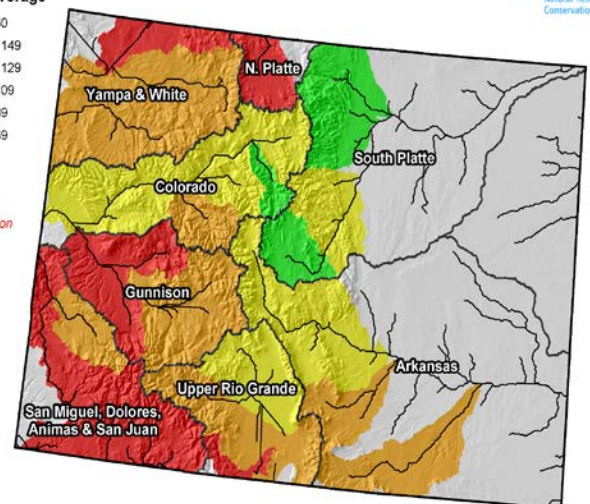
Streamflow forecasts are strong in the Blue River subbasin and several South Platte River subbasins. Forecasts are well below normal in much of the state, particularly in the northwest and southwest corners of Colorado.

Colorado Streamflow Forecast Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision



Current as of May 1, 2015

