



April 2016 Drought Update

Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

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Recent precipitation delivered 103 percent of average April precipitation to-date, helping to boost overall snowpack and alleviate drought conditions across parts of Colorado. Regions of the central mountains and Front Range saw as much as 3 inches of precipitation, Monte Vista received a quarter of their average annual precipitation in just one storm. With short and long term forecasts favoring continued precipitation, and good reservoir storage, water providers have no immediate concerns. Agricultural producers are also in good shape with many looking to increase production this season to compensate for low commodity prices.

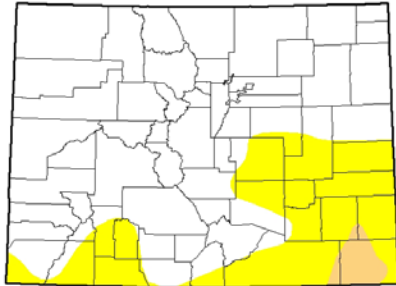
- Statewide water year to-date precipitation as reported from NRCS is at 98% of average, with the southern portion of the state experiencing drier conditions than the northern half.
- Despite recent precipitation, much of the state has seen above normal temperatures in March and April. Forecasts indicate that warmer temperatures are likely to continue into the spring.
- Statewide NRCS SNOTEL water year-to-date precipitation is 98 percent of normal. The Upper Rio Grande has the lowest year-to-date precipitation at 87 percent of average, while the South Platte has the highest at 112 percent of average.
- Reservoir storage statewide remains above normal at 111 percent. The Arkansas and Yampa/White basins have the highest storage levels in the state at 120 percent of average; the Upper Rio Grande has the lowest storage levels at 94 percent, just slightly below normal.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as of April 1st is near or above average across the majority of the state. At this time of year the index reflects reservoir storage and streamflow forecasts. The lower Arkansas has seen large increases in storage over the last year and has some of the highest SWSI values in the state.
- Streamflow forecasts are slightly below normal across many regions of the state with most forecasts ranging between 70-89 percent of average. The North Platte has the highest forecast in the state at 111 percent of average while the Purgatoire has the lower at just 69 percent of average.
- The long term experimental forecast favors above average probability of precipitation through spring, with eastern Colorado favored more than the rest of the state. The strong El Nino event is likely to dissipate over the coming months but it is unclear if persistent La Nina conditions will develop. La Nina events tend to result in drier conditions across Colorado, but more so during later years of long-lived events.
- The Pacific Decadal Oscillation tied its record high in March after more than two years above normal, which would tend to inhibit the development of a strong La Nina event or lessen its impacts.

NOTE: There will be a Joint Water Availability & Flood Task Force Meeting on May 25, 2016 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

April 2016 Drought Update

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

April 19, 2016
(Released Thursday, Apr. 21, 2016)
Valid 6 a.m. EDT



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	74.62	25.38	2.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 4/12/2016	70.41	29.59	7.75	0.35	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 1/19/2016	90.01	9.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2016	90.02	9.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 10/1/2015	71.49	28.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 4/19/2015	40.41	59.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

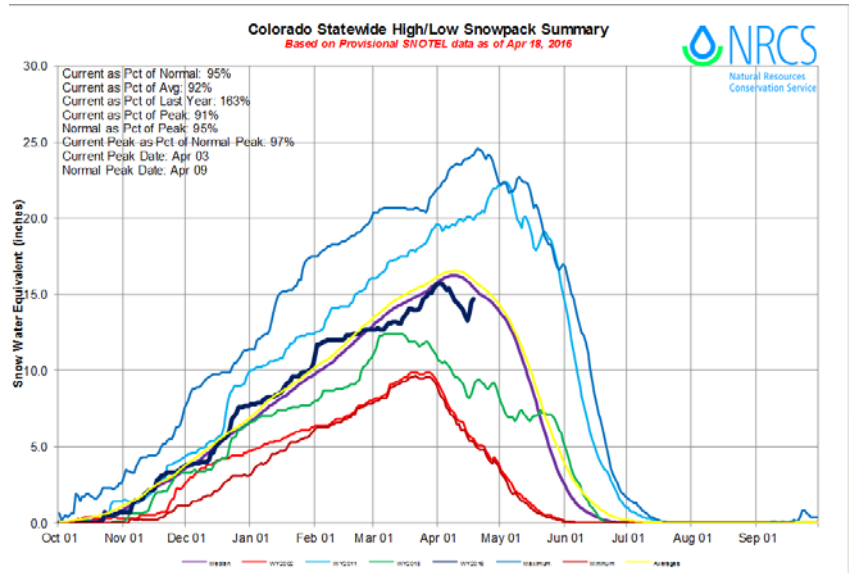
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for local statements.

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

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. D0, abnormally dry conditions remain in southeastern portion of the state, as does a small area of D1, moderate drought conditions. Currently 2 percent of the state is classified as experiencing moderate drought, while 25 percent is classified as D0.

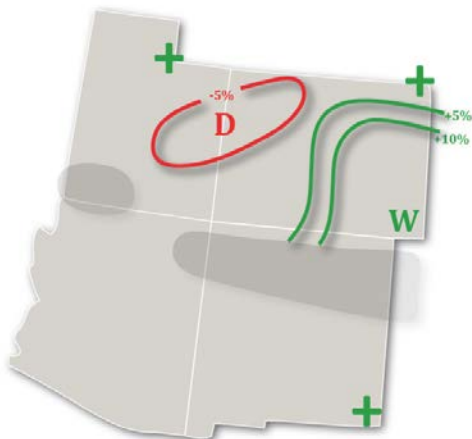
The graph to the right is the SNOTEL statewide snowpack summary as of April 18. The most recent storm increased statewide snowpack that was previously declining. The state as a whole remains near normal at 95 percent for the snow accumulation season.



The map below and to the left shows the long term experimental forecast that favors spring precipitation throughout the eastern half of the state through June; the Climate Prediction Center forecast map for May through July, below and to the right, is consistent with this, but favors the entire state.

Exp:

APR -JUN 2016 (Issued April 14, 2016) - Skill Masked



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID MJJ 2016
MADE 21 APR 2016

