



COLORADO

Department of
Natural Resources

February 2020 Drought Update

2020 is off to an average start. But how? Globally, January was the warmest January on record and 4th warmest month ever on record with respect to global averages. In Colorado, January was warm throughout the entire state except for South Park and the San Luis Valley. After a few early warm days in February, the temperature flipped for Colorado, with most of the state colder than average. Thus far, the Colorado water year (Oct to Feb) shows business as usual, with statewide snowpack at 114% of record median and reservoir storage at 105% of average. The Intermountain West region is similarly experiencing typical winter patterns. This February, Colorado precipitation has been heaviest in the central and north mountain ranges.

- The 90-day Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) (from Nov 18 - Feb 5) shows geographically distributed average precipitation statewide. The eastern plains are exceptions with SPI values slightly below average.
- The U.S. Drought Monitor, released February 18, shows similar drought distributions to last month. D0 (abnormally dry) and D1 (moderate) conditions cover 68% of Colorado. D2 (severe) drought covers 3% of the south east and west state corners and 29% of the state (north-central) remains drought free.
- While equatorial sea surface temperatures were warmer than average over the Pacific the last few months, ENSO forecasts still suggest conditions will revert back to neutral conditions for spring and summer 2020. This could mean reduced odds of SW Colorado spring moisture.
- NOAA's Climate Prediction Center maps continue to show warmer than average temperature outlooks March through May for the SW half of the state, and equal chances of near, above, or below average precipitation outlooks.
- Reservoir storage remains near to above normal: 85% to 127% of average in all major basins and 105% of average statewide.
- SNOTEL Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) sites show statewide snowpack at 114% of record median (as of Feb 14).
- Water providers and water users did not report any unusual impacts or concerns at this time.

Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting:

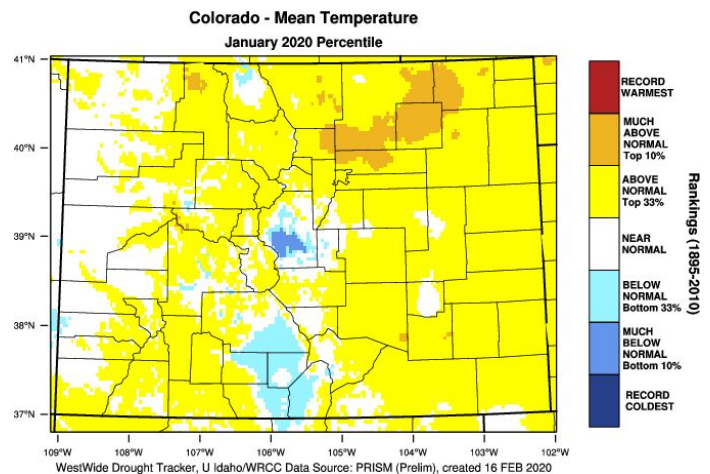
MARCH 17, 2020 9:00a - 12:00a

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Big Horn Room)

Co-Chairs: Megan Holcomb, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR

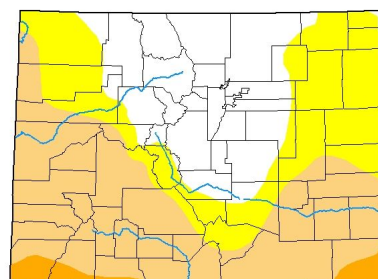
Questions? Contact ben.wade@state.co.us

Additional info at cwcb.colorado.gov



U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

February 18, 2020
(Released Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020)
Valid 7 a.m. EST



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	28.74	71.26	43.82	3.30	0.00	0.00
Last Week (2/11-2020)	27.72	72.28	43.82	3.30	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago (1/18-2020)	25.19	74.81	59.95	32.23	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (2/1-2020)	31.72	68.28	51.19	20.11	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (10/1-2019)	30.14	69.86	27.53	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (2/18-2019)	8.15	91.85	57.16	39.69	10.21	0.11

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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