



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

## Drought Update: January 2022

Current statewide drought conditions for Colorado have improved since October 2021. The first quarter of water year 2022 was above normal in terms of temperature. As of mid-January a rough divide appeared in Colorado with regard to precipitation, with western slope generally experiencing wetter conditions, while the eastern slope generally continues in drought conditions. La Niña is currently in effect and projections show somewhat equal chances for above or below average precipitation moving into the spring. La Niña years in Colorado tend to result in smaller, drier storms overall.

Statewide snowpack as of January 16 is 119% of median, setting the state up well going into the spring. A significant and much-needed increase in snowpack occurred from Dec 1 - Jan 6, which translated to a 7.1 inch increase in water. Precipitation in December was 193% of average. Statewide, year-to-date (Jan 16) precipitation is currently at 112% of average. Overall, conditions are some of the best we have seen at this point in the year, especially when compared to the last few years. All major river basins show above normal snow water equivalent, with the exception of the Arkansas (89% of normal) and the Upper Rio Grande (90% of normal).

State drought response remains in [Phase 3 activation](#) though both agricultural and municipal water provider task forces have reduced their meeting frequency to monitor conditions through the winter season. Learn more about these coordination groups, outlined in the Colorado Drought Plan at [cwcb.colorado.gov/drought](http://cwcb.colorado.gov/drought).

The January 18 [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) recorded extreme (D3) drought conditions across 19.7% of the state, primarily on the eastern slope and Rio Grande Basin. Severe (D2) drought covers about 46% of the state, while moderate (D1) drought holds in 22% of the state. About 11% of the state is experiencing abnormally dry (D0) conditions.

The 90-day [Standardized Precipitation Index](#) (SPI) values from Oct 23 to Jan 20 highlight dry conditions in the southeastern and eastern parts of the state.

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center [three month outlook](#) maps indicate increased chances for above average temperatures into February, March, and April with below average precipitation probabilities.

Statewide reservoir storage is currently at 74% of normal. Streamflow forecasts are generally near to or slightly above normal come spring and summer. East of the divide, streamflow forecasts are projecting about 100% of average and the forecasts improve to the west.

### Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting:

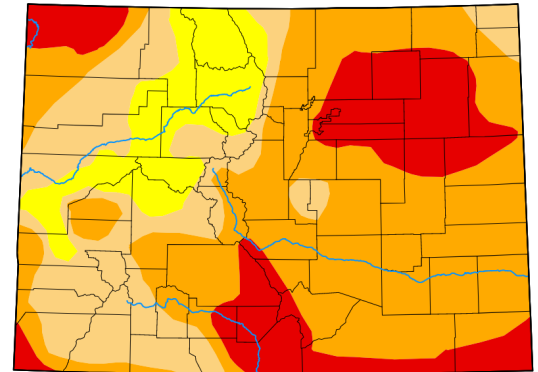
**FEB 17, 2022 9:30a - 11:30a**

### [Webinar](#)

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

Questions? Contact [ben.wade@state.co.us](mailto:ben.wade@state.co.us)

Additional info at [cwcb.colorado.gov](http://cwcb.colorado.gov)



90-day Standardized Precipitation Index: 2021/10/23 - 2022/01/20

