



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

## February 2022 Drought Update

**DROUGHT** // The February 15 [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) indicates continued moderate and severe drought extending across the entirety of the state. In the last month, drought intensity has improved primarily on the front range and northeast plains. In the last two months, drought intensity has improved in much of the northern half of the state ([see change maps](#)). The current monitor, pictured right, shows 0% of the state in exceptional (D4) conditions; 9% in extreme drought (D3); 51% severe drought (D2); 31% moderate (D1); and 10% of the state in abnormally dry (D0) conditions.

**TEMPERATURE** // While November 2021 was the 3rd warmest November on the full 127 year record and December 2021 was the 2nd warmest December, January temperatures mellowed out, leaving Jan. 2022 as the 39th warmest on record. Only one water year thus far (Oct. 2017 to Jan. 2018) outranks the current water year's extreme temperatures ([CCC maps](#)). The NOAA Climate Prediction Center [three month outlook](#) indicates above average temperatures and drier than average conditions for all of Colorado.

**PRECIPITATION** // [Standardized Precipitation Index](#) (SPI) values are best reviewed over multiple timescales to reveal the variation between short-term precipitation gains versus longer-term deficits. Recent snow along the Front Range has been welcome, however the mountains have received little snow since late Dec. and early Jan. Snowpack is back to near or below normal in most basins. Along with continued La Nina conditions which point toward a warm, dry spring, a good runoff year is less likely.

**STORAGE & STREAMS** // Statewide [reservoir storage](#) is currently 78% of average and 43% of total capacity as of February 1st. There is a large amount of variation in storage across the state with the lowest values being in southwest Colorado and the highest in the South Platte. Blue Mesa, the largest reservoir in the state, currently has the least storage since it was first filled. Streamflow forecasts are for near normal volumes in most major basins. Rivers flowing out of the southern San Juan mountains and in the Rio Grande currently have the lowest forecasted volumes.

**DROUGHT PLAN ACTIVATION** // [State drought response](#) remains in Phase 3 activation with reduced meeting frequency to monitor conditions throughout the winter season. The next Municipal Water Task Force meets March 2nd and the next Agricultural Task Force meets April 21st. A yearly spring conditions (drought and flood) update will be presented at the next Colorado Water Conservation Board meeting March 15-16.

**OTHER** // Please note the CDSS tools website was updated with a [new URL](#). See WWA's recent fact sheets on the "[Impacts of Wildland Fire on Municipal Water Supply](#)" and "[Ecological Drought in the Intermountain West](#)"

**Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: MARCH 22, 2022 9:30am**  
Co-Chairs: Megan Holcomb, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR  
Additional info at [cwc.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces](http://cwc.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces)

