



COLORADO

Department of Natural Resources

May 19, 2022

Water Availability Task Force Summary

Observed temperature

Statewide temperatures for the water year-to-date (Oct-Apr) tied for the 13th warmest on record; April was within the average percentile for most of the state.

Observed precipitation

Precipitation for the water year-to-date is only slightly below average, but April was an especially dry month coming in statewide as the 5th driest month on record. Parts of NE Colorado had the driest April on record. All of Colorado is still in at least abnormally dry conditions, according to the latest [drought monitor](#).

Observed wind, evaporative demand, and soil moisture

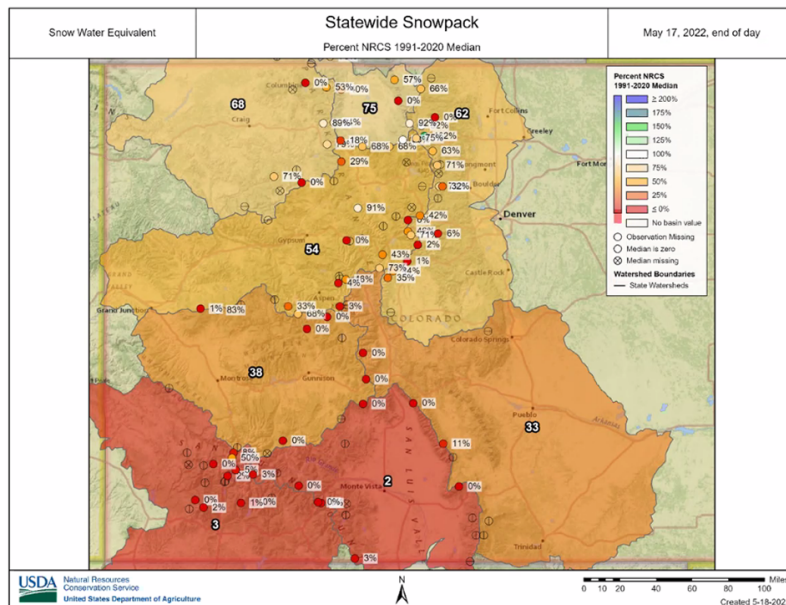
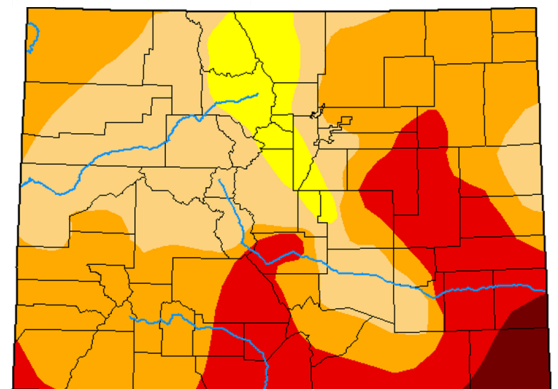
April was also one of the windiest Aprils on record. The wind contributed to increased evaporation rates evidenced by extreme [Evaporative Demand Drought Index \(EDDI\)](#) measurements. Soil moisture in the state is extremely dry as well with some basins such as the Rio Grande experiencing record dry conditions.

Runoff and streamflow

The biggest concern for April was the melt rates and timing of runoff. Snowpack peaked below normal throughout the state, peaking earlier in southern basins and later in the north. Snowpack melted faster than usual throughout the state, especially in the south. Some of this, especially in the Southwest, may have been due to extreme rates of dust-on-snow.

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

May 17, 2022
(Released Thursday, May 19, 2022)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Seasonal outlook

Although early May brought precipitation to much of the state, the places that needed it the most, such as the South, did not get much. We are likely to see warmer than average temperatures this summer. La Niña continues to be strong and will likely stick around through the fall and potentially into the winter. La Niña conditions tend to be drier than usual, so this is not good news. Wildfire threat is above normal for most of the state.

Water Supply Forecasting

Reservoir storage statewide is at 77% of median with reservoirs in the Gunnison; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan; and Yampa, White, and Little Snake basins experiencing the lowest storage. Streamflow forecasts for much of the state are expected to be below normal for the spring and summer.

Colorado Airborne Snow Measurement Program

The CASM team presented their work using airborne lidar data to supplement snowpack measurements throughout the state. Learn more on their website: coloradosnow.org.

Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: June 28, 2022 9:30am @ CPW 6060 Broadway, Denver or [virtual](#)

Co-Chairs: Megan O'Grady, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR

Additional info at cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces

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