



COLORADO

Department of
Natural Resources

August 16, 2022

Water Availability Task Force Summary

Observed temperature

Notably, July was the warmest month on record for Colorado in terms of average low temperatures due to consistent warm nights. While warm nights indicate more humidity and less evaporative demand, they put stress on people and livestock. For the water year to date, the period was the 8th warmest for Colorado on record. July alone was the 5th warmest in the last 11 years.

Observed precipitation and drought conditions

July precipitation has been above normal due to the early onset of the monsoon, particularly in southern Colorado. At mountain SNOTEL stations, all basins have received above normal precipitation over the last 30 days, with the highest precipitation over the last two weeks in the South Platte and Colorado basins. It was the 18th wettest July on record for Colorado, though pockets of dryness remain in Delta/Montrose, east of the Denver Metro area, and northeast Colorado. Some parts of southern Colorado reached almost 200% of average precipitation in July, as seen in the figure at right.

According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), much of Colorado has experienced drought condition improvement with parts of central Colorado moving out of drought altogether. About 92% of the state remains abnormally dry or worse, with pockets of more persistent drought conditions in the northeast, southeast and western slope. Water year to date precipitation statewide is just above the median, picking up in mid-June after a dry spring. Most basins are near to the long term average for the water year, though the northeast corner and Baca county remain dry. Portions of Phillips and Sedgwick Counties are now in exceptional drought.

July 2022 has been warm and wet, however across the entire water year the state is 1.75" below the long term average for precipitation. Several cities including Fort Collins, Greeley and Montrose experienced their hottest 10-day periods on record during a recent July 14th to July 23rd heatwave. The first half of August was very hot, but conditions have cooled and are expected to remain near seasonal averages for the rest of the month.

Observed streamflows

Well below normal streamflows were observed across most of the state for the April-July time period. Half of the streamflow forecast points in the state were in the bottom 25th percentile of observed streamflow volume.

Snowpack and reservoir storage

Reservoir storage remains below normal as result of lower than expected stream flows attributable to dry soils, as well as warm, dry conditions over several years. The Colorado and South Platte basins have the most plentiful storage at 95 and 99 percent respectively. Reservoir storage is especially low in the Gunnison basin and in the southwest part of the state.

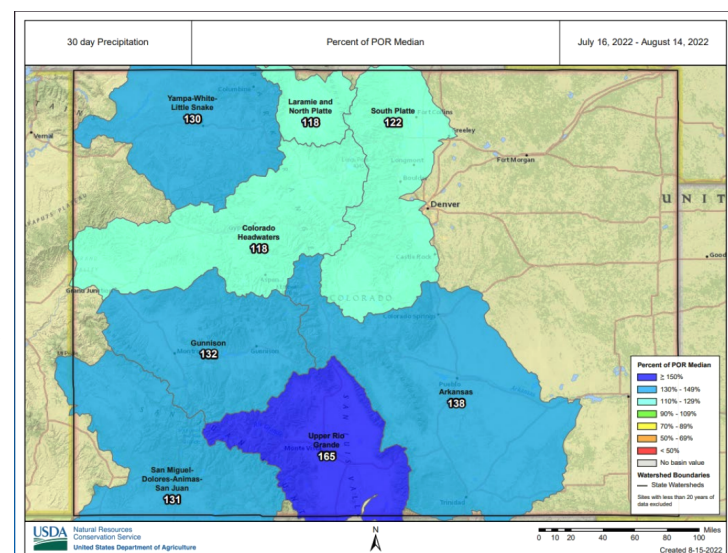
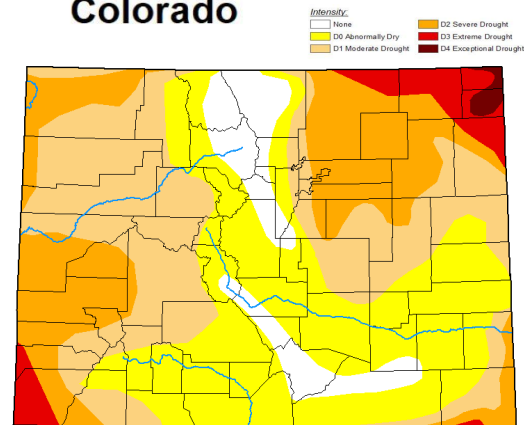
Seasonal outlook

The "triple dip" La Niña looks likely to continue through fall, potentially leading to dry conditions. ENSO models show that La Niña will likely continue into early next year.

U.S. Drought Monitor

August 9, 2022

Colorado



Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: September 27 , 2022 9:30am

Co-Chairs: Kathryn Weismiller, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR

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

Special thanks to Russ Schumacher, Colorado Climate Center; Karl Wetlaufer, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services