



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

April 20, 2023

## Water Availability Summary - WY 2023

### Observed temperature

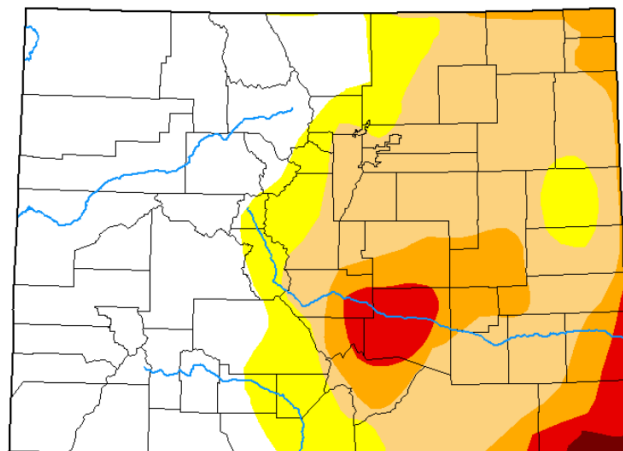
As a whole, this water year has been consistently cooler than our most recent 1991-2020 normals. Every month in the water year to date (October through March) has been cooler than average, and April looks to continue this trend. The far west has experienced much cooler conditions than average and the month of March was among the top 10 coolest on record. The east slope has been cooler than normal, but has been closer to average.

### Observed precipitation and drought conditions

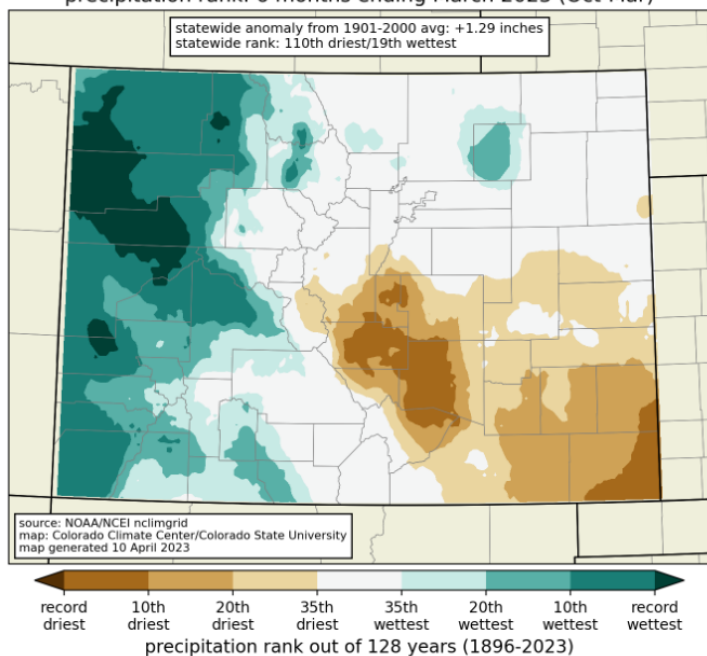
Colorado's Western Slope is experiencing a wetter than normal start to the water year. However, the Arkansas basin is experiencing a drier than normal water year, as well as parts of the South Platte and the Eastern Plains. It has been a top 10 wettest year on record for the Western Slope and a top 10 driest year for the Arkansas Basin. Drought conditions have shown improvement throughout the majority of the state since the beginning of the water year, but drought conditions have persisted and indicated signs of deepening across the Eastern Plains.

### U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

April 18, 2023  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 20, 2023)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



precipitation rank: 6 months ending March 2023 (Oct-Mar)



### Forecasted streamflows

Within western Colorado, drought concerns have largely faded for now, with streams and reservoirs likely to return to a near-normal range. April 1st streamflow forecasts increased significantly over the previous month, particularly on the Western Slope. Early signs of snowmelt runoff have already been observed in many basins. In some cases already having had high volume spikes.

### Snowpack and reservoir storage

Statewide snowpack is 131% of normal and the timing of the snowpack peak is normal. Snowpack is well above normal across most of Colorado, with the Southwest having highest snowpack totals. All major basins are holding above normal snowpack with the exception of the Arkansas Basin. The combined basins of Southwest Colorado have reached record snowpack for this time of year. Statewide reservoir storage remains highly variable across Colorado with the Gunnison and combined Southwest Basins holding substantially less water than the rest of the state. These conditions are also a reflection of hydrological conditions in the Gunnison and combined Southwest Basin over the last few years, as well as releases

from Blue Mesa. The basins that are holding the lowest reservoir storage also have the most plentiful snowpack which is encouraging for replenishing storage volumes.

### Seasonal outlook

El Niño is currently developing after three straight winters of La Niña conditions. Current rapid transition to El Niño is linked to high uncertainty. El Niño development should support an increased chance of a cold or wet extremes for eastern Colorado this time of year.

**Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: May 25, 2023 9:30am**

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

Additional info at [cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces](http://cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces)

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