



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

February 20, 2024  
Water Conditions  
Summary - WY 2024

## Observed temperature

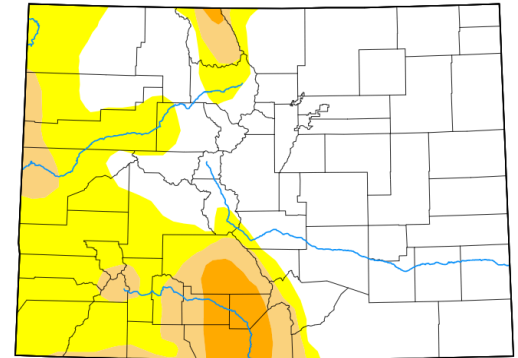
Temperatures during the first four months of the water year rank 10th warmest in the 129-year record. October and November temperatures were above average, and December ranked 7th warmest in the 129-year record. January remained near average, while February temperatures so far have been higher than average statewide, especially along the eastern plains.

## Observed precipitation and drought conditions

The water year so far is the 33rd driest in the 129-year record, with drier conditions focused over southwest CO and the northern Front Range. However, recent winter storms in January and February have brought the statewide precipitation accumulation at SNOTEL sites in higher elevations back up to near normal numbers. Statewide precipitation is currently at 94 percent of the median, ranging from 104 percent in the Arkansas basin to 85 percent in the San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basin.

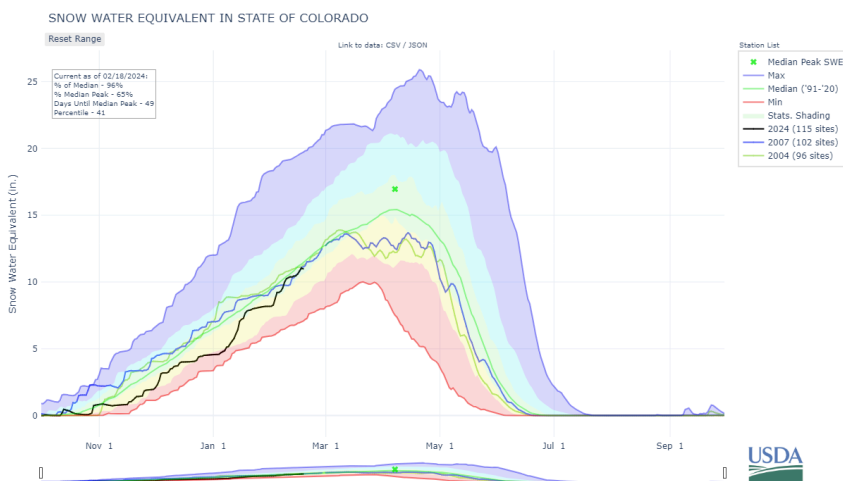
Drought conditions have recently improved in the southwest and northeast quadrants of the state. The US Drought Monitor indicated 1 class improvement to these areas and downgraded the D3 drought classification that remained consistent in the Rio Grande basin to D2. About 63 percent of the state is not classified under any drought conditions, yet about 11 percent of the state remains in moderate to severe drought.

U.S. Drought Monitor  
Colorado



## Streamflows and soil moisture

The streamflow forecast as of February 1 was around normal for most of the central and northern portions of the state, with particularly low streamflow forecasts for the Upper Rio Grande and San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basins. However, February snow accumulations have been more focused in these areas, and it is likely that we will see some improvement to the streamflow forecasts when they are updated on March 1. In terms of soil moisture, we've seen some improvements along the Front Range and Eastern Plains due to recent storm activity, while areas of lower soil moisture continue along the Sangre de Cristo mountain range.



## Snowpack and reservoir storage

Snow water equivalent (SWE) has improved considerably across the state since the beginning of the water year. Currently, the statewide SWE is 96 percent of median, and all major basins are at or above 90 percent of median, ranging from 100 percent in the Gunnison and Yampa-White- Green basins and 90 percent in the Upper Rio Grande basin. Average reservoir storage statewide is 100 percent of median, ranging from 119 percent in the Upper Rio Grande basin to 83 percent in the Eastern Arkansas basin.

## Seasonal outlook

The spring seasonal outlook (March-April-May) indicates uncertainty for both temperature and

precipitation anomalies. Climate models may be indicating the possibility of a wetter March. The El Niño signal is strong for the rest of winter into early spring, which tends to favor wetter conditions along the western slope, mountains east of the Continental Divide, and Front Range areas. By late spring, neutral conditions are likely, and climate signals indicate a return to La Niña conditions as we head into late summer and fall.

**The next Water Conditions Monitoring Committee Meeting will be on March 19, 2024.**

Co-Chairs: Emily Adrid, CWCB and Sarah Brucker, DWR

Additional info at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/Water-Conditions-Monitoring-Committee>

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