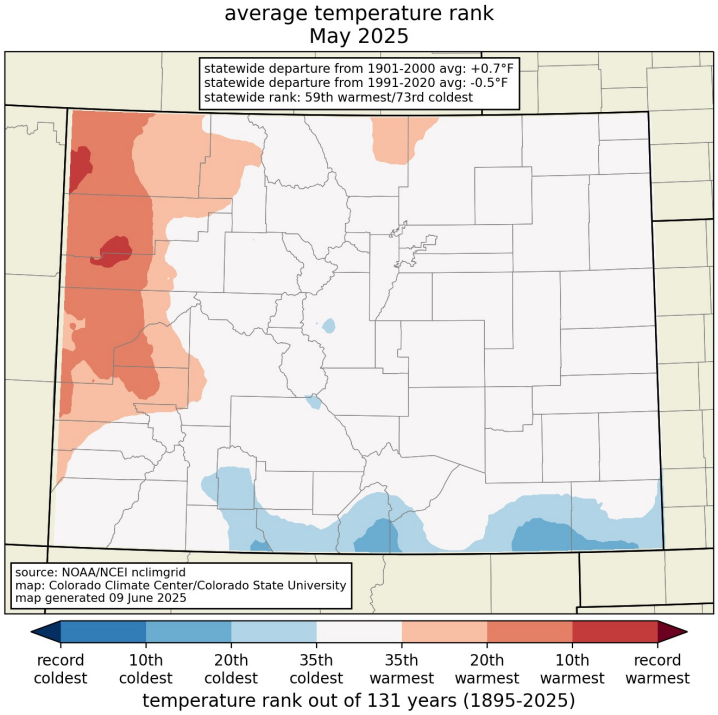
May 2025 Colorado Monthly Climate Summary

COLORADO CLIMATE CENTER

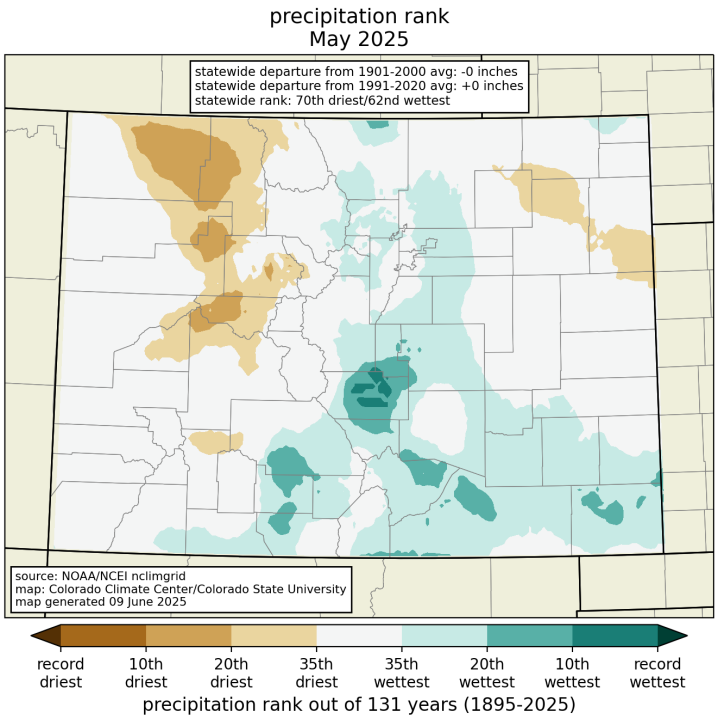
ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

temperature



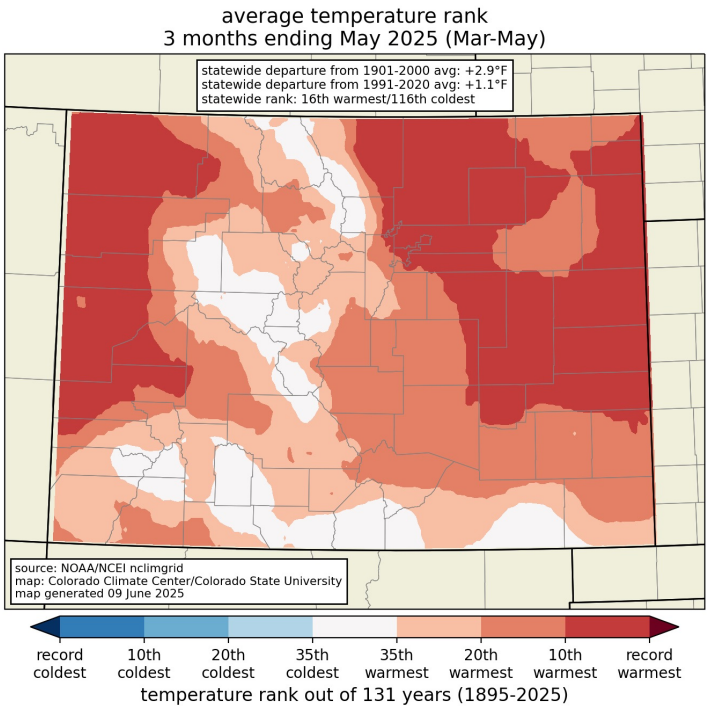
Temperatures across Colorado were generally close to average for May. The two exceptions were far southern Colorado, which had a cooler-than-average May; and the western slope, which was warmer than normal. Early in the month there was some anomalous heat, but that was followed by a cooler pattern later in May.

precipitation



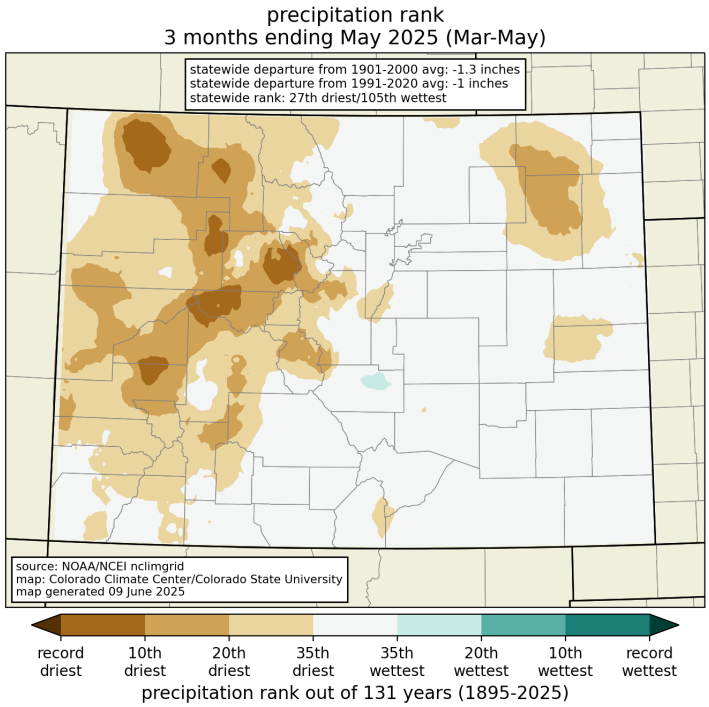
Averaged across Colorado, precipitation in May was almost exactly average! But within that average were wet conditions in southeastern Colorado, and a drier-than-normal May in the northwest and on parts of the northeastern Plains.

temperature: spring



Climatological spring (March-April-May) was warmer than average for most of Colorado. Northeastern Colorado and much of the western slope had a top-10 warm spring. Many mountain areas had closer to normal temperatures for spring, as did the southern tier of counties.

precipitation: spring



Climatological spring was drier than average in the mountains and in most of western Colorado, which is not great news considering that it's typically the wettest season of the year for much of this part of the state. The northeastern plains were also relatively dry during spring, while the rest of the state was close to the long-term average. April was especially dry, with March and May closer to normal.

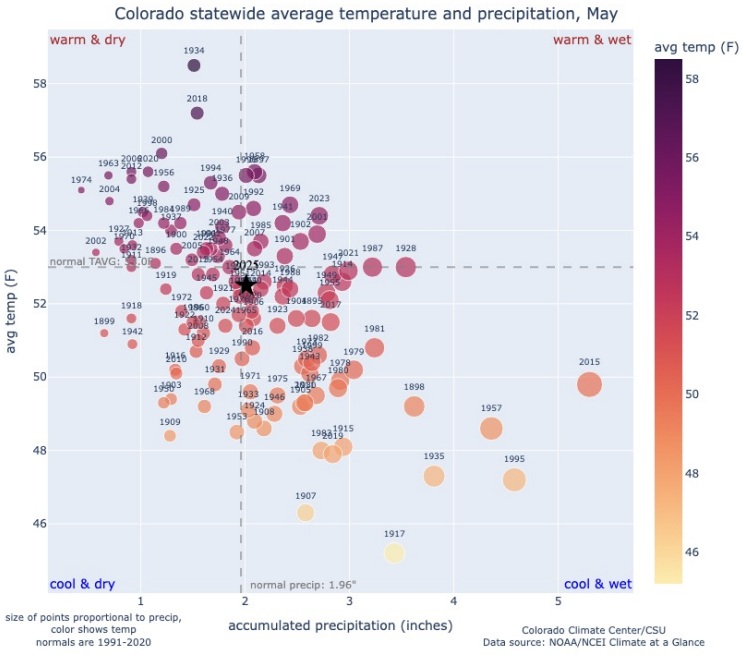
quadrant charts

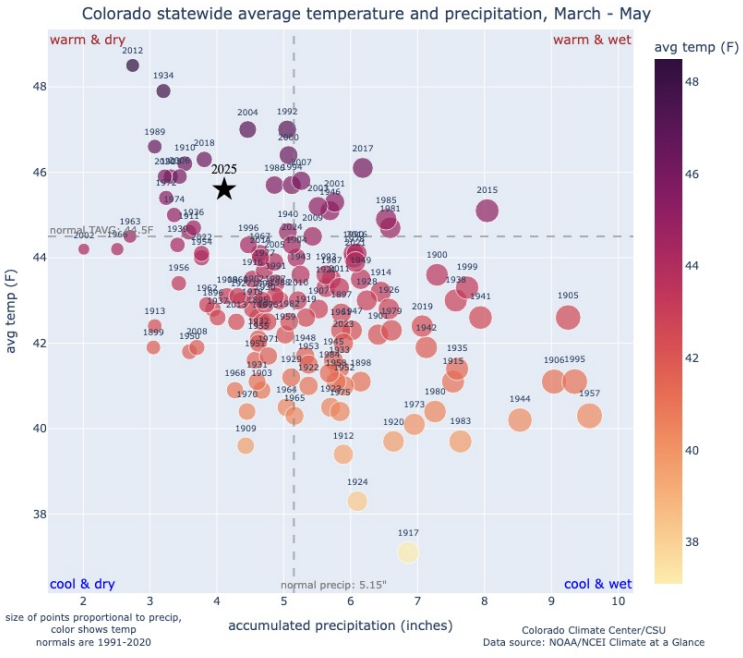
Each dot plots the precipitation on the horizontal axis and the temperature on the vertical axis. Dots are colored based on temperature and size is based on precipitation. The current year is denoted with a star. The 1991-2020 averages are denoted by the dashed lines.

May was very close to average for both precipitation and temperature when averaged across the state. It was tied for the 59th warmest/73rd coolest May in 131 years of records, at 0.5°F cooler than the 1991-2020 average and 0.7°F warmer than the 20th-century average. It was tied for the 62nd driest/70th wettest May, at 0.01" below average precipitation.

During climatological spring, Colorado was in the warm and dry quadrant. It was the 16th warmest spring in 131 years of records, at 1.1°F warmer than the 1991-2020 average and 2.9°F above the 20th-century average. It was the 27th-driest spring across Colorado, with precipitation 1.26" below average.

[view all quadrant charts]

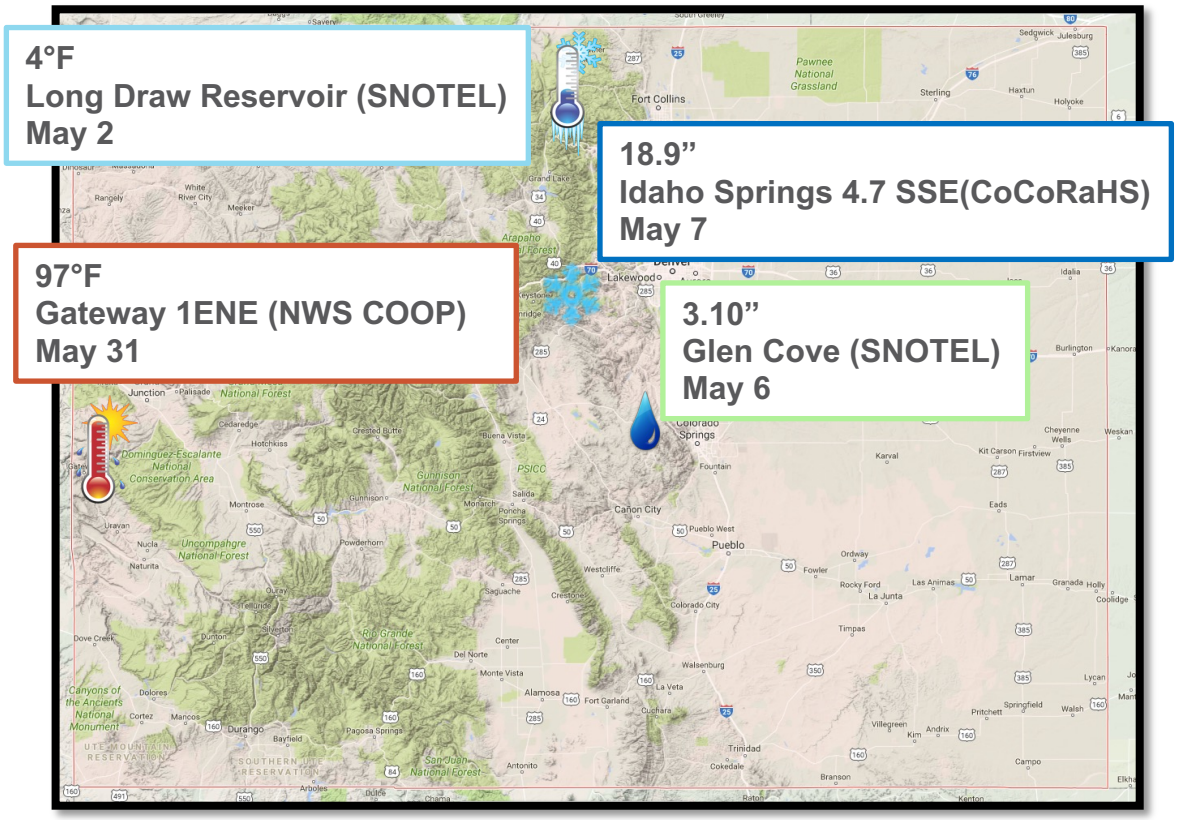




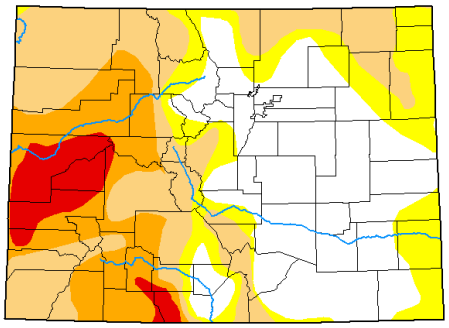
	High Max	Low Max	High Min	Low Min	Precip	Snow
Daily	15/**9**	18/**120**	27/**61**	15/**23**	20/**91**	0/**4**
Monthly	0/**0**	0/**0**	1/**0**	0/**0**	1/**1**	0/**0**
All-time	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**

Tied/**Broken**, from NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

state extremes



drought & snowpack



June 3, 2025
(Released Thursday, Jun. 5, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	35.39	64.61	48.18	21.12	6.17	0.00
Last Week 05-27-2025	33.85	66.15	49.27	25.36	6.17	0.00
3 Months Ago 03-04-2025	54.98	45.02	24.85	7.56	1.18	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-07-2025	71.40	28.60	10.78	4.08	0.98	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2024	48.27	51.73	24.40	4.62	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 06-04-2024	61.53	38.47	12.89	0.50	0.00	0.00

Intensity:
- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

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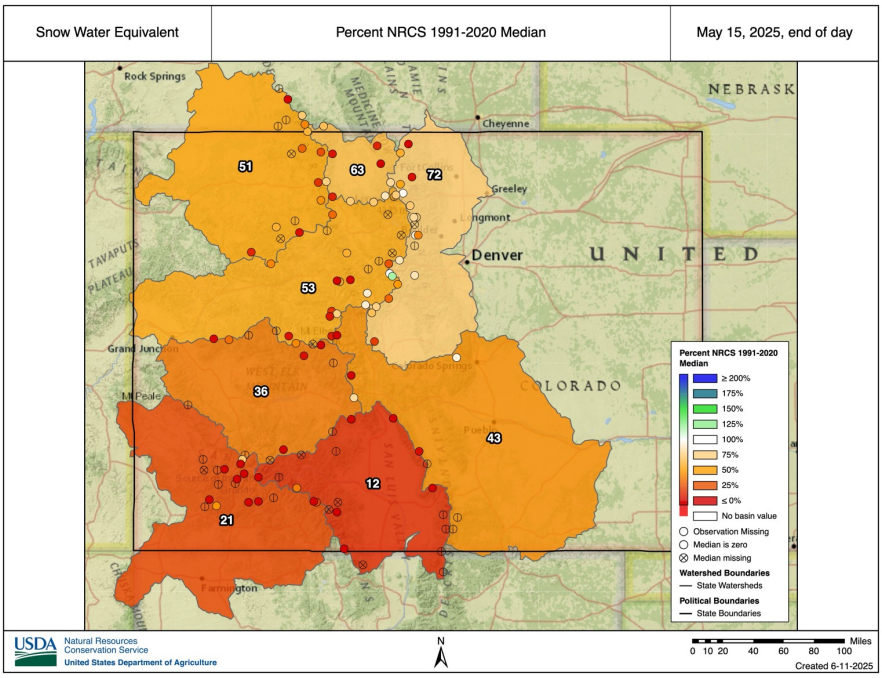
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

In May, drought generally worsened across western Colorado while above-average precipitation in southeastern Colorado led to improvements on the US Drought Monitor. As of early June, there were two areas of D3 (extreme drought) in western Colorado, and just over 48% of the state was in some level of drought conditions.

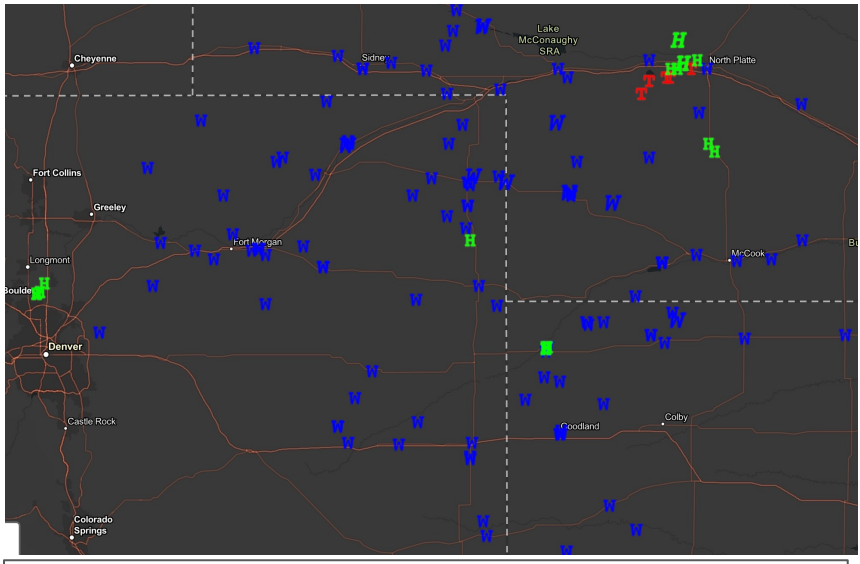
Colorado Drought Update Page

Snowpack continued to be below average through May, after a subpar peak and fast melt through April and early May. As of mid-May (shown on the map at right), SNOTEL stations showed a range from just 12% of average in the Upper Rio Grande basin to 72% of average in the South Platte basin.

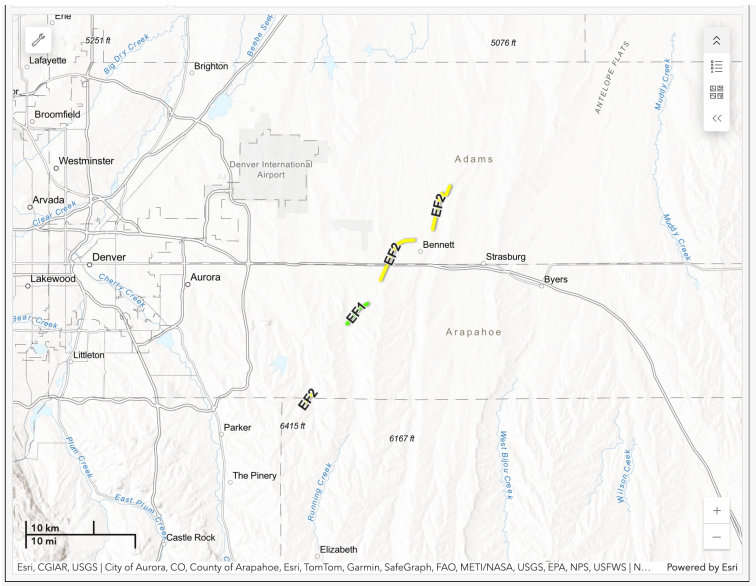


significant events

Severe thunderstorm season ramped up in during May. On the evening of May 14, a line of storms produced intense winds across northeastern Colorado with gusts up to 86 mph reported near Holyoke. There were 54 reports of severe winds, which is second only to the June 6, 2020 derecho for the number of severe thunderstorm wind reports on a single day in Colorado records.



Severe thunderstorm reports from May 14-15, 2025. The "W" reports indicate severe wind gusts and "H" indicate hail. From the Storm Prediction Center at https://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/gm.php?rpt=250514_rpts



On May 18, tornadoes were observed to the east of the Denver metro area. Four tornadoes were surveyed by the National Weather Service, and three of them were rated EF-2. Even though Adams County is one of the most tornado-prone counties in the US, this was the first EF-2 tornado in Adams County since July 1996.

Tornado tracks on May 18, 2025. From NWS Boulder at https://www.weather.gov/bou/May182025ECOTornadoes

CCC in the news

- ❑ **May 3, 2025:** 'You give them power': Students embark on a climate action how-to at inaugural Colorado Youth Climate Summit
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Post Independent
- ❑ **May 6, 2025**: May showers bring hope for water supply and drought conditions for the Pikes Peak region
  - Featuring Peter Goble with KKTV 11 Colorado Springs
- ❑ **May 20, 2025**: Expect a warmer, drier summer in Colorado, water experts say
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in Colorado Politics
- ❑ **May 22, 2025**: What Western Colorado's early snowmelt and worsening drought could mean for streamflows this summer
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in Sky-Hi News
- ❑ May 27, 2025: Drought conditions likely to get worse in Colorado as Western water supplies shrink
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in CPR News (referencing the May 15 blog post below)

In case you missed it, here's a link to our blog post from May 15 about the changing drought landscape after a big storm and May heat.

You can now also find links to recent blog posts, and our Bluesky feed, on the Colorado Climate Center homepage!