

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Department of Natural Resources

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Arkansas River Basin Drought Impact Fact Sheet

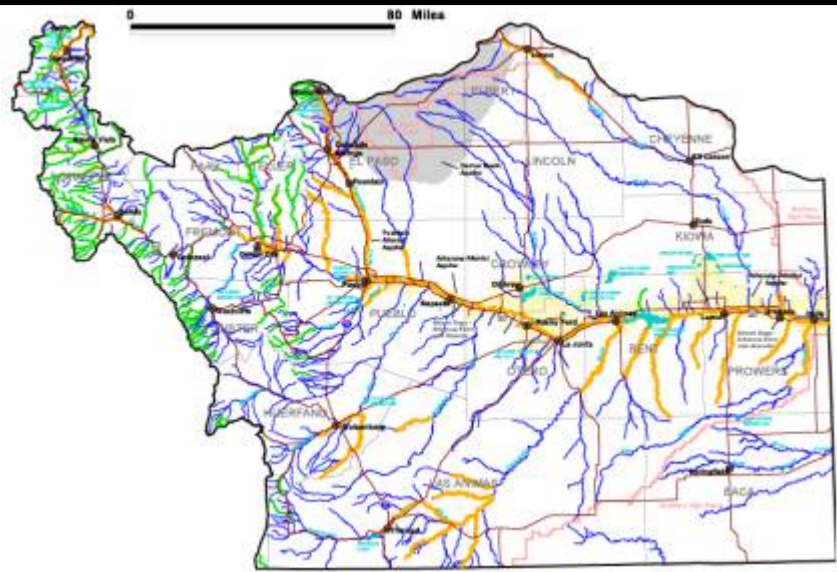
Water Division 2

Reservoir Storage

Reservoir storage in the Basin is about 40% of average. Municipal and irrigation reservoirs are affected by the low snowpack and runoff conditions.

Use of Storage

Reservoir storage will be needed for irrigation almost immediately unless weather conditions change with significant rainfall events. Because of the early draw on irrigation reservoirs and poor potential that these reservoirs will have a chance to refill as they do most years during runoff, it is likely major irrigation reservoirs will be empty by the end of the season or even before. Significant impacts are likely to recreation users due to lower water levels.



Streamflow

Overall, the upper Arkansas April 2002 flows appears to be about 85% of the lowest April values. The lower portion of the Arkansas River appears to be slightly above the lowest monthly value.

Arkansas River at Las Animas lowest recorded value for the month of April for the years 1975 through 1999 was 10.8 cfs in 1978. In April 2002, the lowest value was approximately 21 cfs.

Water Administration

The river call is emulating the stream flow condition analysis above and is slightly more senior than the average. In April 2002, the river call has oscillated between around 1884. 1978 appears to be a low flow period and for the month of April the river call was 1874.

Compliance with the Arkansas River Compact will focus much attention on the administration of Division of Water Resources and enforcement of the Amended Use Rules for wells in the Arkansas River Basin under drought conditions. A number of the large irrigation ditches with water rights that are comparatively junior are anticipating fairly poor surface water irrigation supplies and are making cropping and irrigation decisions accordingly.

Comparison to Prior Years

The period from 1972 through 1978 probably was the last time that the water conditions were similar.

For more information about this or other water resource topics, please contact the CWCB at:

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