

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: CWCB Board Members

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

FROM: Taryn Finnessey, Water Supply Planning Section
Kevin Houck, Watershed & Flood Protection Section

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item #22, March 19- 20, 2013 Board Meeting**
Water Supply Planning /Watershed & Flood Protection- Drought and Flood Update and Outlook

Staff Recommendation: *This is an informational item only. No Board action is required.*

Background:

Colorado continues to experience moderate (11%), severe (41%), extreme (27%), and exceptional (21%) drought throughout the state. The precipitation deficit is severe enough that it will take above well average precipitation to recover, especially with peak snowpack typically occurring in early April. Given that Colorado has been experiencing drought for two years in some parts of the state, and one year statewide, another year of below average precipitation could bring severe impacts and require increased & more coordinated response. Reservoir storage is below average at 71% of average statewide and streamflow forecasts are significantly below average and predominantly in the 50-69% of average range. Municipal and Agricultural sectors are both preparing for continued dry conditions into the spring and summer months.

As a result of last year's dry conditions, the Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan remains in phase-two activation for the entire state.

Staff will present the latest information on both drought and flood conditions and outlooks for the coming weeks and months. Information on snowpack, reservoir levels, stream flows, potential response actions, and related topics will be presented. A review of last year's runoff season will be provided. Klaus Wolter of the University of Colorado will present his long-term forecast for the region and discuss possible impacts from the current La Nina event impacting Colorado's weather patterns.

A joint meeting of the Water Availability Task Force and the Flood Task Force will be held on March 21, 2012. Daily flood threat bulletins will be available on the CWCB website during the Colorado flood season from May through September.