JULY 2013 DROUGHT UPDATE

Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

Taryn Finnessey, CWCB
303.866.3441 ext. 3231
Taryn.Finnessey@state.co.us

Tracy Kosloff, DWR
303-866-3581 ext. 8211
Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us

Activation of Phase 2 &3 of the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan, and the activation of the Agricultural & Municipal Impact Task Force remain in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions throughout Colorado.

June was the 9th warmest June on record (dating back to 1895) with most areas of the state experiencing temperatures 2-4 degrees above normal. Compounding the warm temperatures was the lack of precipitation; as a percent of average, June was the driest month of 2013. Above average temperatures have continued to-date in July, with the western slope seeing temperatures 4-5 degrees above normal. However, July has also brought well above average moisture for many portions of the state, alleviating, but not eliminating, dry conditions in those areas. Water providers feel they have adequate storage and supplies to meet customer demands for the remainder of the summer months.

- As of the July 16, 2013 US Drought Monitor, 100% of Colorado continues to experience some level of drought classification. Conditions across the state have slightly improved since June. Two percent of the state, isolated to the northern Front Range foothills, are now classified as D0 (abnormally dry), while D1 (moderate) conditions cover 35% of the state. D2 (severe) conditions comprise 29% and D3 (extreme) accounts for an additional 17%. 17% of the state is experiencing D4 conditions (exceptional drought).

- As of July 3, 2013, all of Colorado's 64 counties have some level of Federal USDA Drought designation. 53 Colorado counties have primary designations, while an additional 11 counties have designations for being contiguous to the primary counties.

- Following two consecutive months of below average precipitation statewide, July to-date has seen precipitation levels ranging from 100% of average in the Yampa/White to 243% of average in the Upper Rio Grande. The state as a whole has seen 163% of average precipitation thus far in July. Since October 1, 2012 the state as a whole has received 78% of average precipitation.

- Spring snow storms brought significant gains in the snowpack to the Colorado and South Platte River basins, which helped to fill reservoirs and improve storage; however increased demands and higher temperature have led to a slight decline in overall statewide storage, as a percent of average, from 78% last month to 74%. The Rio Grande has the lowest storage levels at 35% of average, well below where the Basin was this time last year. All but two basins (the Upper Colorado and the Yampa/ White) have storage levels below where they were this time last year.

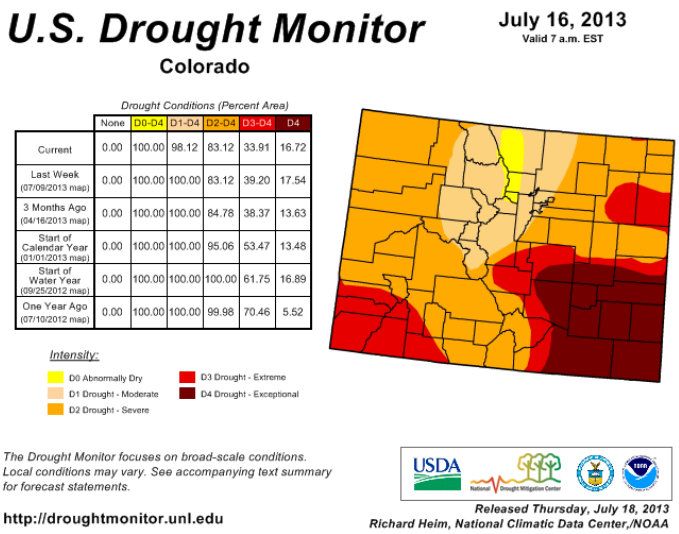
- Improvements in storage levels from earlier in the year, coupled with successful drought response measures have led many municipalities along the Front Range to relax mandatory watering restrictions. www.coh20.co remains active and can be utilized to determine what restrictions are in place in local communities.

- Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) values remain largely negative, with the exception of the Colorado Headwaters which sits at +2.27 due to strong reservoir storage. The July SWSI uses the observed streamflow measured during June rather than a forecasted flow. Many streamflows across the state remain below average.

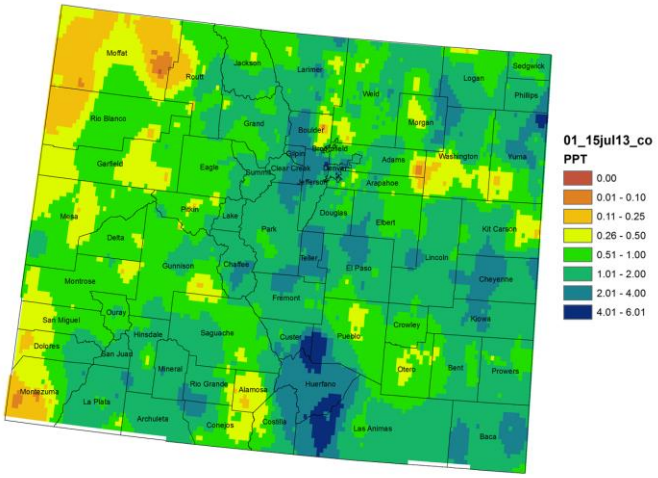
- The long term experimental forecast for late summer (July-September) favors precipitation on the eastern plains of CO, while the northern Front Range may face renewed drought conditions. The Climate Prediction Center forecasts for August through October and October through December both show high probability for above normal temperatures, while equal chances of wet and dry conditions are reflected in the precipitation forecast.

JULY 2013 DROUGHT UPDATE

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Most of the state continues to experience severe drought conditions, although improvements occurred along the northern Front Range, portions of the Rio Grande and central plains.

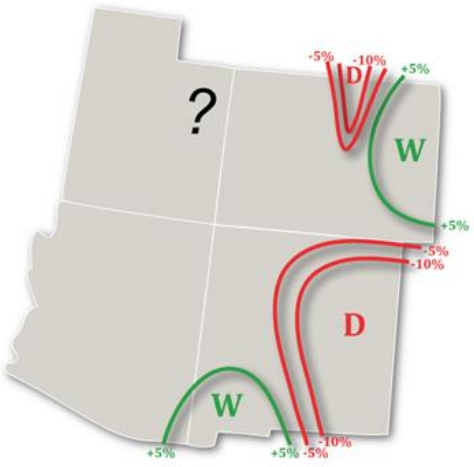


Colorado Month to Date Precipitation (in)
1 - 15 July 2013

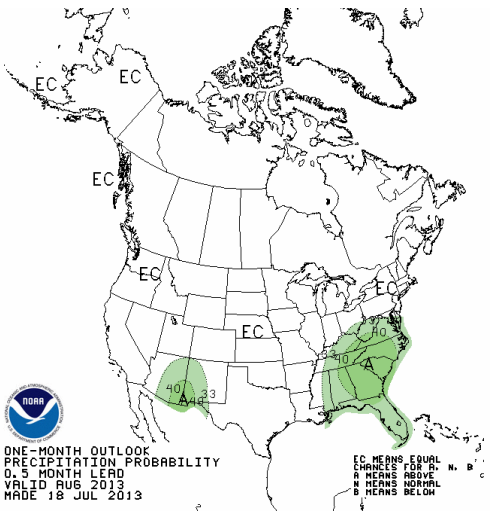


Recent moisture across much of the state in early July has brought some drought relief. However, the entire state remains in some level of drought classification.

Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance
JUL – SEP 2013 (Issued July 12, 2013)



The long term experimental forecast for July through September is projecting above normal moisture for the eastern plains of the state and a drying out of the northern Front Range (left). The Climate Prediction Center at NOAA is showing equal chances for wet or dry conditions over Colorado through August (right).



NOTE: The next WATF meeting will be held August 20, 2013 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office, additional information can be found at www.cwcb.state.co.us or by contacting Ben Wade at Ben.Wade@state.co.us