July 2015 Drought Update

Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

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Following the wettest May since record keeping began in1895, June and July have continued to provide beneficial moisture to the state. For the first time since August 2009, 97% of the state is drought free. As of July 20, the state has received 200% of average in precipitation based on SNOTEL sites. The year-to-date precipitation totals for the state have risen from 80% on May 1 to 97% of average as of July 1.

- Water year-to-date precipitation at mountain SNOTEL sites statewide, as of July 21, is at 97% of normal. Southwestern Colorado and the Rio Grande Basin, which did not receive as much moisture over the winter, have had a wet spring and early summer. All eight basins have experienced above average precipitation so far in July with the Gunnison basin experiencing 270% of average.

- June was the 14th warmest June on record (1985-2014) but so far in July, the state has experienced near normal temperatures with a few pockets on the west slope and the Front Range that are two to five degrees below average.

- All of the CoAgMet sites measuring evapotranspiration (ET) continue to report below average ET and the Olathe and Lucernce stations are reporting record low ET. These stations have been collecting & reporting ET data since the early 1990s.

- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 112% of average as of July 1st, up five percent from last month. Seven out of eight basins have over 100% of average. The Rio Grande has the lowest value at 89% of average, however, storage has improved since last month when they were at 66% of average. Storage in the Arkansas Basin is the highest since 2000. Between May 1 and July 1, John Martin reservoir, in the Lower Arkansas River basin gained over 250,000 acre feet of additional storage.

- The NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) shows improvements in all but two SWSI values in the Upper Arkansas and South Platte. Several SWSI values in the Southwest basins increased nearly five index points. Only three SWSI values remain below normal, two in the North Platte basin and the other in the Rio Grande.

- Agriculture officials in attendance reported 131,000 prevented planted acreage due to such wet conditions. The crops that have been planted are expected to do well as soil moisture has greatly improved.

- The Division of Water Resources announced the completion of the SWSI Automation Project. They will discontinue the 1980's era SWSI and will begin reporting the automated SWSI, which is similar to the NRCS SWSI, which has been produced since 2011. Additional information is available at: http://water.state.co.us/DWRDocs/Reports/Pages/SWSIReport.aspx

- According to water providers in attendance, their respective systems are in good shape as reservoirs are full and customer water demand is low.

NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting on August 12, 2015 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

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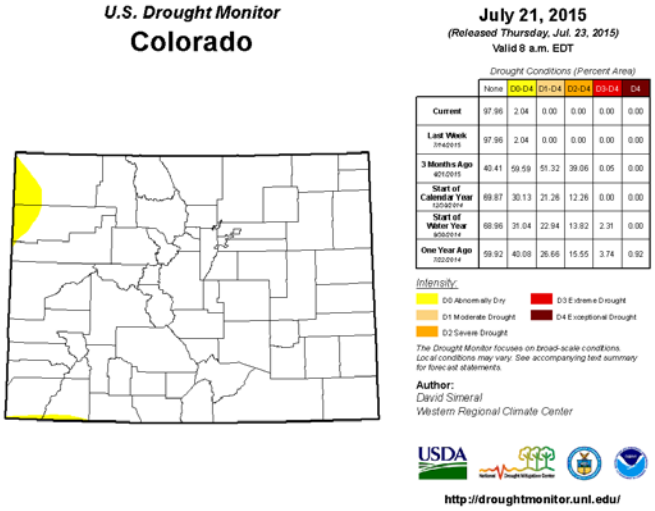
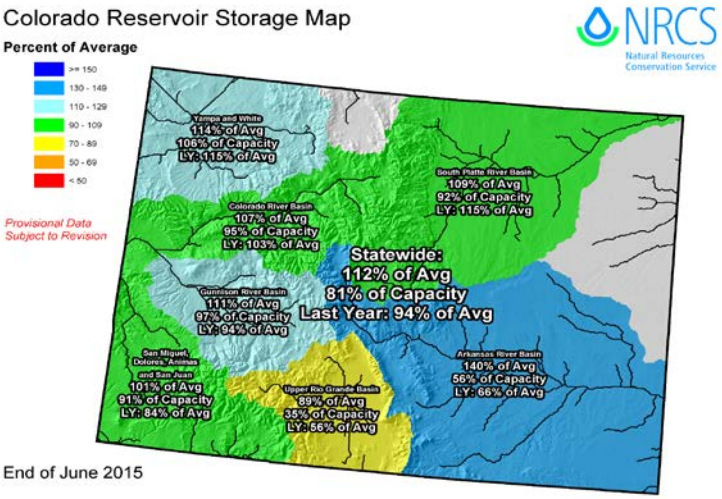
The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Drought conditions have disappeared in the state with just a small abnormally dry area remaining. There is a small portion in the northwest part and along the southwestern border of the state that is experiencing D0 or abnormally dry conditions. This is the first time since the beginning of August 2009 that 97% of the state is not experiencing any drought conditions.





Reservoir Storage across the state remains in good shape and is up 5% from June. The largest increases in storage are in the Arkansas and Rio Grande basins. The Arkansas has improved from 108% of average at the beginning of June to 140% and the Rio Grande has experienced an increase of 13% of average improving to 89% this month.

The Colorado SNOTEL Water Year to Date Precipitation map shows all basins are near normal, at or above average as of July 21. A very wet month of May and continued moisture in July has greatly improved conditions across the state following below average snow fall during the winter and springs months.