



January 2016 Drought Update

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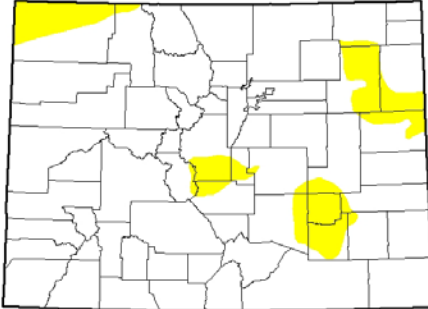
Snowpack through the first quarter of the water year (October- September) was above normal for nearly the entire state and well above normal in the San Juan Mountains. A cool and wet December helped to alleviate abnormally dry conditions over the majority of the state. Long-term forecast favor the state for continued above average snow accumulation over the coming months; and with 45% of the snow accumulation season still remaining, water providers have no immediate concerns.

- The 2015 calendar year was the warmest on record globally, the second warmest on record nationally and the 3rd warmest on record in Colorado. Colorado ended the year 2.9 degrees Fahrenheit above the 100 year average for temperature. January to-date has been below average for temperature statewide.
- Statewide SNOTEL water year-to-date precipitation is 104% of normal. Both November and December saw above average precipitation statewide, with nearly all basins receiving above average precipitation in both November and December. The Yampa/ White basin is the exception to this, but as of January 19th was at 98% of normal snowpack.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at above normal at 110%. The Arkansas basin has the highest storage levels in the state; the Upper Rio Grande has the lowest storage levels, just slightly below normal. However, the Rio Grande levels are the highest they have been since 2009.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) is near or above average across the majority of the state, with the southern half of the state faring better than the northern. At this time of year the index reflects reservoir storage and streamflow forecasts. January 1st forecasts were normal to above normal in all basins, except the Yampa/White. Still, forecasts within the Yampa/ White ranged from a maximum of 103% on the Laramie River near Woods, to a minimum of 80% on the Little Snake River near Dixon.
- El Niño conditions remain strong and should continue through spring. A recent large westerly wind anomaly may help keep the El Nino going and even cause a second peak. Assuming conditions persist as expected precipitation chances will be increased in March and April.
- Long term projections indicate a transition to La Nina conditions later this year. While La Nina conditions typically result in lower precipitation especially across the southern portion of the state; the first year following large El Nino events, like we are currently experiencing, is more often associated with good snow accumulation totals than not.

NOTE: The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting is on February 17, 2016 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

January 2016 Drought Update

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado



January 19, 2016
(Released Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4
Current	90.01	9.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 1/12/2016	99.99	10.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 10/19/2015	53.54	46.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2016	90.02	9.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 8/1/2015	71.49	28.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 1/19/2015	69.87	30.13	21.43	12.26	0.00	0.00

Intensity:
 D0 Abnormally Dry
 D1 Moderate Drought
 D2 Severe Drought
 D3 Extreme Drought
 D4 Exceptional Drought

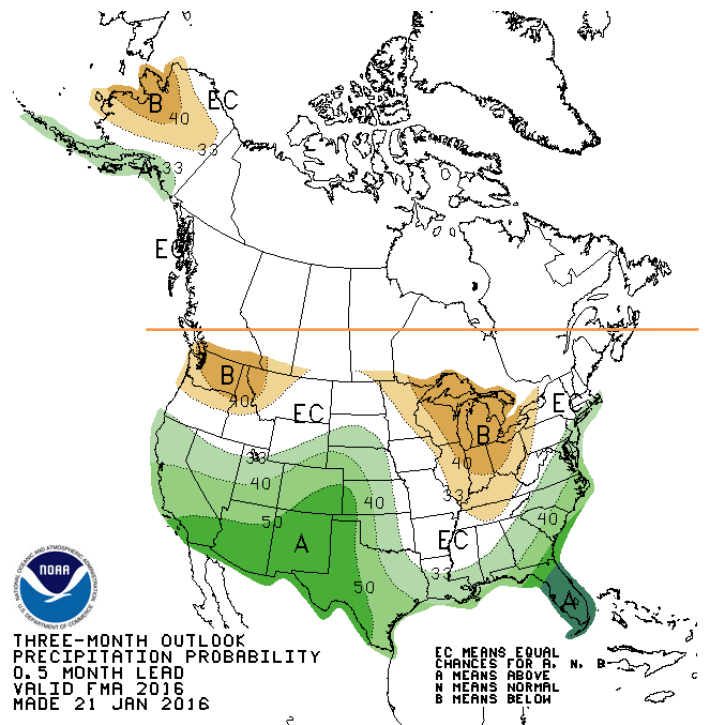
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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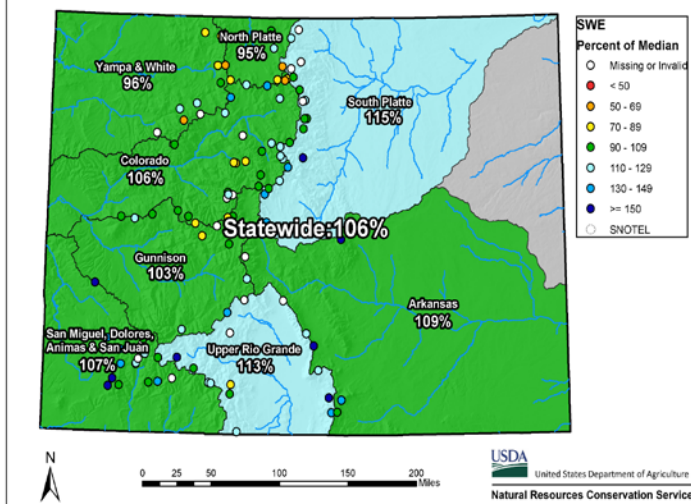
USDA
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

The Climate Prediction Center's three month forecast for February through April indicates wetter than average conditions across the entire state. This coincides with University of Colorado, CIRES & NOAA-ESRL PSD statistical forecasts for the spring. Historically, Colorado's largest snowstorms along the Front Range have occurred during the spring months of El Nino years.

The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Recent storms have alleviated some regions of abnormally dry conditions across the state. With 45% of the snow accumulation season remaining and strong storage levels, water providers have no immediate concerns.



Colorado SNOTEL Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) Update Map with Site Data
Current as of January 14, 2016



The map to the left shows snow water equivalent (SWE), statewide. SWE is a common snowpack measurement. It is the amount of water contained within the snowpack. It can be thought of as the depth of water that would theoretically result if you melted the entire snowpack instantaneously.