



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441
F (303) 866-4474

John Hickenlooper, Governor

Robert Randall, DNR Executive
Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Taryn Finnessey, Sr. Climate Change Specialist
Kevin Houck, P.E., Chief, Watershed & Flood Protection Section

DATE: March 21, 2018

AGENDA ITEM: Agenda Item #11 Spring Climate Outlook

Background:

As of March 8th, 71% of the state is classified in drought conditions ranging from D1 to D3, with 25% in moderate drought, 37% in severe and 9% classified as extreme drought; an additional 19% is classified as abnormally dry according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The southern half of the state is experiencing drier conditions than the north, with extreme drought isolated to the southwest corner of the state from southern Mesa County to western Conejos County. Snowpack is at 69% of normal for the state, with all basins below normal for this time of year. The San Miguel/Dolores/ Animas/ San Juan currently has the lowest snowpack at 51% of normal, other southern basins are slightly higher at 53% in the Upper Rio Grande, 60% in the Gunnison, 60% in the Arkansas. Northern Colorado is somewhat wetter at 79% in the Yampa/ White 80% in the Upper Colorado, 84% in the South Platte, and 88% in the North Platte. Statewide reservoir storage remains strong at 116% of average with all basins above average.

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. Staff will also present a long-term forecast for the region and discuss possible impacts from the current weather patterns.

A joint meeting of the Water Availability Task Force and the Flood Task Force will be held on March 23, 2018. Daily flood threat bulletins will be available on the CWCB website during the Colorado flood season from May through September.

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

