



Observed temperature

Colorado is experiencing the coolest start to a water year since 2010. Temperatures in January were cooler than recent averages over the last several years. The state experienced cool anomalies in northeastern Colorado and warm anomalies in San Luis Valley, however. Month to date temperatures in February have been mostly cool to normal across most of the state. Parts of the front range are tracking at just above normal, or normal. A cold front is coming into the state this week, and it will remain to be seen how that impacts average temperatures statewide overall.

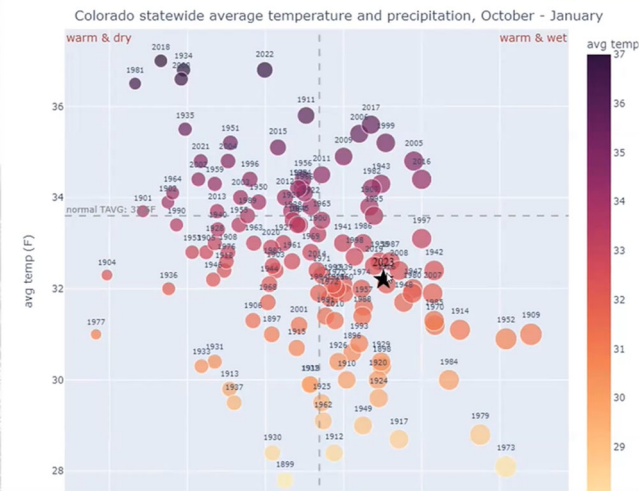
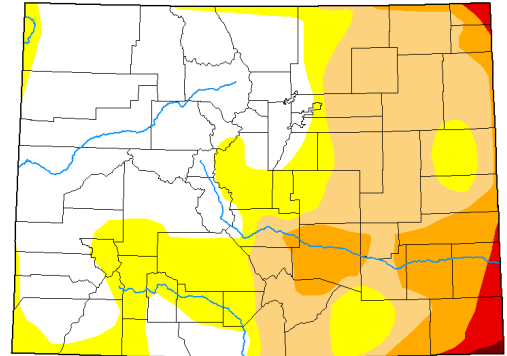
Observed precipitation and drought conditions

Colorado is experiencing the wettest start to a water year since 2016. This water year is tracking cool and wet - closely paralleling 2019. That is not guaranteed to last as we enter into the spring, however. Much of Northern Colorado has been average to dry. Water year to date precipitation is 112% of median. Northwestern Colorado has been very wet, and is tracking well above normal for this time in the year at this point. Parts of the northeast plains have had over 700% of normal precipitation for this time of the year. February started out dry, but fortunately snowpack has been building throughout the month. Near average and wetter than average conditions are observed across most of the state, though the pockets of the state have some lingering drought. Drought conditions are significantly better than last year at this time.

Forecasted streamflows

An above normal runoff year is not yet locked in, but the probability of it being an above normal runoff year is high. Current streamflow forecasts are variable across the state. February 1 streamflow forecasts range from slightly below normal to fairly well above normal across much of the state. Soil moisture reports from this week do not yet reflect the recent storm in Southern Colorado, but in general Colorado is seeing the wettest antecedent soil moisture conditions since 2014. March precipitation tends to be heavier at high elevations and drier at lower elevations.

U.S. Drought Monitor February 14, 2023
Colorado



Snowpack and reservoir storage

Statewide snowpack is 121% of normal and the statewide snow water equivalent is 82% of peak with roughly a month and a half left in the primary accumulation season. Snowpack is well above normal across most of Colorado, with the Gunnison Basin having highest snowpack totals. Snowpack is near normal in other basins, except the Arkansas which sits at 82% of median snowpack for this time of year. Statewide reservoir storage remains highly variable across Colorado with the Gunnison and combined Southwest Basins holding substantially less water than normal. These conditions are also a reflection of hydrological conditions in the Gunnison and combined Southwest Basin over the last few years, as well as releases from Blue Mesa.

Seasonal outlook

The seasonal forecast calls for cooler and wetter conditions to continue through the end of the month. There is a 60% likelihood that La Niña conditions will fade and neutral conditions are expected to dominate into spring. By April/May the outlook is fairly uncertain. Into summer, there is an elevated probability of above normal temperatures.

Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: March 28, 9:30am

Co-Chairs: Kathryn Weismiller, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR

Additional info at cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces

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