



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

## February 2021 Drought Update

Drought conditions in Colorado continue as we reach our ninth straight month of above-average temperatures combined with eleven months of below-average precipitation. The state experienced the 15th warmest October-January on record and noted an overall increased temperature of 2.5°F above Colorado's 20th century average. Despite the cold weather in mid-February, the month has shown warmer temperatures west of the divide and record-breaking low temperatures to the east. Holyoke reached their 5th coldest temperature on record at -30°F and Lamar recorded their 3rd coldest temperature at -27°F on the 15th of February.

The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) from February 11th recorded exceptional (D4) drought conditions across 25% of the state, which dropped to 18% on the February 18th monitor. Extreme (D3) drought covers 41% of the state; severe (D2) drought covers 30%; and moderate (D1) drought covers 10%.

The 90-day [Standardized Precipitation Index](#) (SPI) values from Nov 16 to Feb 13 highlight the northern mountains and central northern areas of the state in dry conditions. Eastern Colorado reflects select areas of above average precipitation after recent January snowstorms. However, the [12-month SPI map](#) provides more accurate depictions of the 2020 deficits across the state.

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center [three month outlooks](#) indicate the current La Niña pattern may weaken by the spring. It is common to see increased precipitation in the northern mountain ranges during La Niña years, but that has not been the case this year, though February has been snowy so far. Above normal temperatures and below average precipitation is anticipated in the upcoming months.

Through January statewide snowpack was 65% of normal. After a few February storms, [statewide snowpack](#) rose to 88% of normal as of Feb. 25th. State [reservoir storage](#) is currently at 83% of average. Extreme soil moisture deficits and below normal precipitation means all basins should prepare for a low runoff year. The continuance of drought is expected through 2021 and the State Drought Plan remains in [Phase 3 activation](#).

Water providers report slightly below average storage levels and near normal winter demands. Drought management planning and potential restrictions are being discussed through multiple coordinated groups. In January, over 120 water providers completed a CWCB needs survey to inform statewide drought coordination and near-term [Municipal Water Task Force](#) efforts. The [Agricultural Impact Task Force](#) released an [interactive report](#) and [summary PDF](#) documenting agriculture adaptation during the 2020 drought season.

### Next Meeting: Joint Water Availability & Flood Task Force Webinar

**MARCH 18, 2021 9:00a - 12:00p**

Co-Chairs: Megan Holcomb, CWCB & Tracy Kosloff, DWR

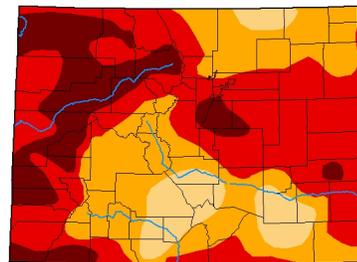
Questions? Contact [ben.wade@state.co.us](mailto:ben.wade@state.co.us)

Additional info at [cwcb.colorado.gov/drought](http://cwcb.colorado.gov/drought)

### U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

February 16, 2021  
(Released Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	0.00	0.00	9.76	31.33	41.13	17.78
Last Week 02-09-2021	0.00	0.00	9.76	20.13	45.32	24.79
3 Months Ago 11-17-2020	0.00	0.00	6.29	19.63	46.86	27.22
Start of Calendar Year 12-29-2020	0.00	0.00	6.27	17.56	48.57	27.60
Start of Water Year 09-25-2020	0.00	0.71	9.93	36.47	50.24	2.64
One Year Ago 02-16-2020	28.74	27.43	40.52	3.30	0.00	0.00

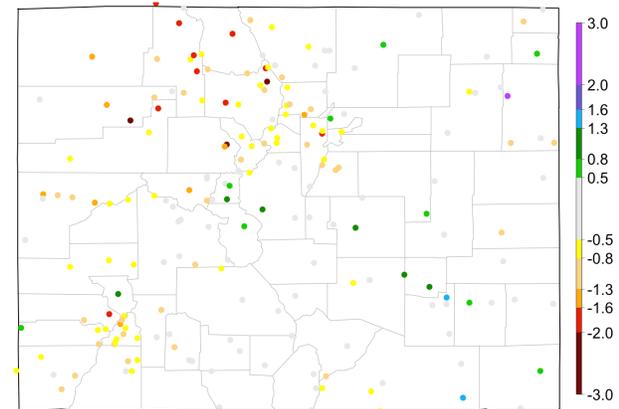


**Intensity:**  
 None  
 D0 Abnormally Dry  
 D1 Moderate Drought  
 D2 Severe Drought  
 D3 Extreme Drought  
 D4 Exceptional Drought

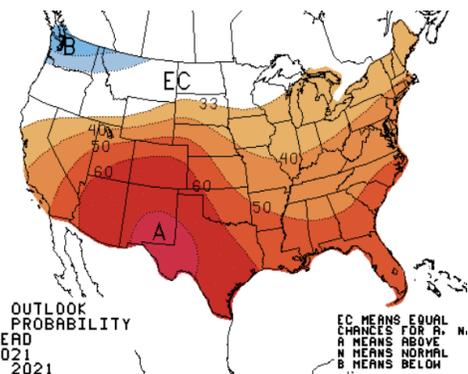
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:  
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NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

90-day SPI: 2020/11/16 - 2021/02/13



Data from High Plains Regional Climate Center and ACIS



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK  
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY  
0.5 MONTH LEAD  
VALID MAR 2021  
MADE 18 FEB 2021

EC MEANS EQUAL CHANCES FOR A, N, A MEANS ABOVE, B MEANS BELOW

