



# April 2019 Drought Update

## Water Availability Task Force Co-Chairs

Taryn Finessey, CWCB  
303.866.3441 ext. 3231

[Taryn.Finessey@state.co.us](mailto:Taryn.Finessey@state.co.us)

Tracy Kosloff, DWR  
303-866-3581 ext. 8211

[Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us](mailto:Tracy.Kosloff@state.co.us)

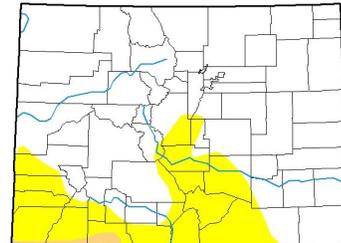
Persistent moisture and near normal temperatures throughout March resulted in significant drought improvements across the region. While April has seen warmer temperatures and decreased precipitation, water year to date precipitation remains above average statewide. This is helping to reduce the [threat of large wildfires](#). We will continue to monitor throughout the snow melt season to determine inflows to reservoirs, streamflow levels. Post wildfire flooding remains a concern and will be closely monitored. The daily flood threat bulletin can be accessed May 1 through September 30 [HERE](#).

- As of April 23, a mere one percent of the state remains in moderate drought and an additional 22 percent is abnormally dry. This represents a 71 percent reduction in D1-D4 conditions since the start of the water year.
- El Niño conditions are now present, and a weak event is likely to continue through summer (65 percent chance) and possibly fall (50-55 percent chance) of this year. Historically spring & summer during an El Niño are more likely to be wet than dry, and the NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlooks for May, and for the May-June-July period show increased chances of wetter-than-average conditions.
- SNOTEL snow water equivalent statewide is 120 percent of median with all basins near or above normal. The highest snowpack is in the Southwest basins of the San Miguel, Dolores, Animas & San Juan at 157 percent of median, while the lowest is the Yampa-White at 100 percent of median.
- Statewide reservoir storage as of April 1, is 84 percent of normal but is expected to increase as the runoff season begins. The South Platte, Arkansas, Colorado, and Yampa-White, are all above 90 percent of average, while the Upper Rio Grande basin has 79 percent of normal storage. The Southwest basins of the San Miguel, Dolores, Animas & San Juan, and Gunnison remain the lowest in the state at 58 and 67 percent of normal, respectively.
- Streamflow forecasts are near to above normal statewide. Snowpack in the southwestern corner of the state is driving streamflow forecasts greater than 150 percent of average in the Dolores, Surface Creek and Saguache-San Luis Basins. Above average streamflows can help to replenish reservoir storage in these regions of the state.
- The surface water supply index (SWSI) has improved in recent months with the majority of the state trending to the wetter conditions, this is in part due to strong streamflow forecasts.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

April 23, 2019  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 25, 2019)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D2-D3	D4	D5	D6
Current	78.01	21.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week (04-16-2019)	78.01	21.99	4.74	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago (01-22-2019)	15.91	34.09	48.49	42.41	22.04	2.78
Start of Calendar Year (01-01-2019)	17.94	82.06	66.26	54.91	27.11	11.22
Start of Water Year (10-01-2018)	14.19	85.81	72.30	64.41	48.47	16.21
One Year Ago (04-24-2018)	18.47	81.53	67.98	53.65	30.89	3.87



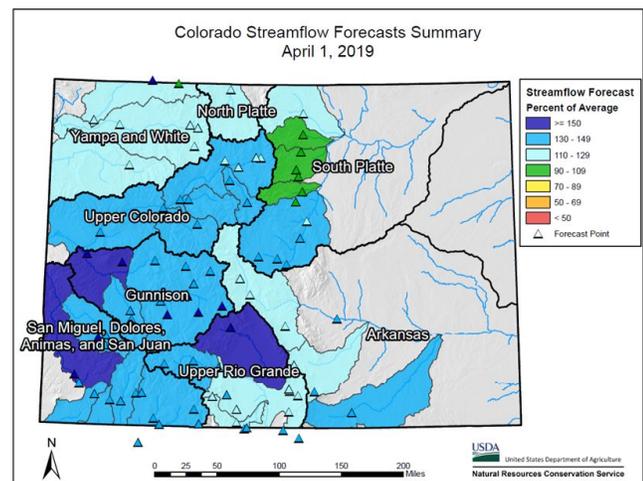
**Intensity:**  
 D0 Abnormally Dry      D3 Extreme Drought  
 D1 Moderate Drought    D4 Exceptional Drought  
 D2 Severe Drought

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

Author:  
David Miskus  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



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



**NOTE:** A Joint Water Availability & Flood Task Force Meeting will be held on May 14, 2019 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife; additional information can be found at [www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) or by contacting Ben Wade at [Ben.Wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.Wade@state.co.us)