



# COLORADO

Department of  
Natural Resources

## July 2020 Drought Update

On June 22, 2020, Governor Polis activated the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan and the supporting Drought- and Agricultural Impact Task Forces to respond to deepening drought conditions across the state. As of July 30th, dry conditions now cover 99.35% of the state with 83.72% in severe, extreme, or exceptional drought categories. To stay informed on the evolving 2020 drought season and response resources, please visit the Colorado Water Conservation Board [drought website](#) and submit questions on Twitter at [@CO\\_H2O](#) (observations, reports, or images can be tagged with #codrought2020).

The latest [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), released July 30th, presents abnormally dry conditions in all but 0.65% of the state (in Weld County). D4 (exceptional) drought conditions emerged for the first time on July 2 in Baca and Prowers counties but dropped off the monitor after one week. D3 (extreme) conditions cover 26.6% of the state; D2 (severe drought) covers 32.2%; D1 (moderate drought) covers 24.9%; and D0 (abnormally dry) covers 16% of the state.

The 90-day [Standardized Precipitation Index](#) (SPI) (April 21 to July 21) continues to show slightly below average moisture for nearly all of Colorado with deeper shortfalls now more prevalent in north central and front range mountains in addition to NE and SW corners.

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions now show borderline La Niña conditions, with the atmospheric response at weak La Niña or neutral. Sea surface temperature outlooks continue with equal chances neutral/La Niña in the fall and winter.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center's [three month outlook](#) maps continue to show very high confidence for above average temperatures July through Sept. and a stronger chance for below average precipitation compared to last month.

The VegDri Index (a satellite derived product that looks at how well plants are photosynthesizing) shows a bullseye of severe drought conditions in the NE (see Aug 2 map to the right).

[Reservoir storage](#), fell 7% over the last month (now 93% of average) with slightly better than average storage in northern CO and below average in southern CO. The Rio Grande basin-wide storage is only 55% of average for this time of year, the lowest in the state.

Several municipal water providers are reporting above average demands (10-30% above avg) and increased concerns around the lack of precipitation.

### Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting:

**AUGUST 25, 2020 9:30a - 11:30a - Webinar**

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

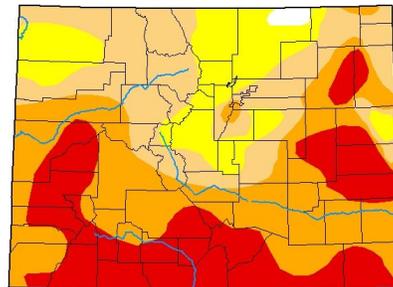
Questions? Contact [ben.wade@state.co.us](mailto:ben.wade@state.co.us)

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

### U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

July 28, 2020  
(Released Thursday, Jul. 30, 2020)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

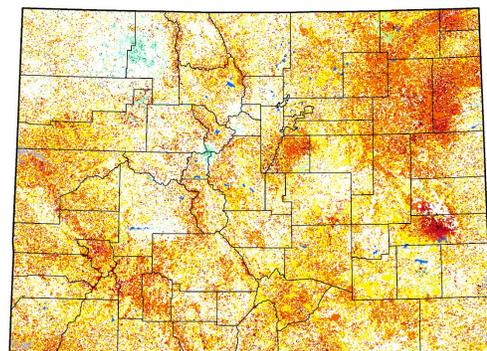
	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	0.65	15.63	24.93	32.15	26.64	0.00
Last Week 07-23-2020	2.95	23.06	13.65	28.57	31.77	0.00
3 Months Ago 04-23-2020	24.47	18.89	23.92	32.72	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2019	31.72	17.10	31.08	20.11	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 05-01-2019	30.14	42.34	27.53	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 07-30-2019	95.32	4.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



**Intensity**  
 None (white), D0 Abnormally Dry (yellow), D1 Moderate Drought (orange), D2 Severe Drought (red), D3 Extreme Drought (dark red), D4 Exceptional Drought (black).  
 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: Richard Heim, NCEI/NOAA

### Vegetation Drought Response Index Complete: Colorado

August 2, 2020



**Vegetation Condition**  
 Extreme Drought (dark red), Severe Drought (red), Moderate Drought (orange), Pre-drought stress (yellow), Near Normal (white), Unusually Moist (light green), Very Moist (green), Extreme Moist (dark green), Out of Season (grey), Water (blue).  
 Logos: NDMC, USGS, HPRCC, RMA

