



# JUNE 2014 DROUGHT UPDATE

## Water Availability Task Force Co- Chairs

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## ***Activation of the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan, and the activation of the Agricultural Impact Task Force remain in effect to respond to ongoing drought conditions in Southern Colorado.***

May was wet and cool across most of the state resulting in improvements to drought conditions throughout eastern Colorado. However, June, to-date, has seen just 33% of average precipitation; with portions of southern Colorado also seeing above average temperatures. Warm and dry conditions, such as these, can counteract gains from precipitation quickly. Reservoir storage remains high in the north but below average in the southern half of the state. Southeastern Colorado continues to struggle with blowing dust due to high winds and dry soil moisture. The hope that a strong El Nino event would bring significant moisture to the plains has largely dissipated with stagnant ENSO conditions. Water providers in attendance indicated that storage levels are strong, with many reservoirs near or at capacity (and some spilling), and they are not imposing watering restrictions beyond normal operating procedures.

- Currently, 49% of the state is in some level of drought classification according to the US drought monitor. 23% of that is characterized as “abnormally dry” or D0, while an additional 9% is experiencing D1, moderate drought conditions. 8% is classified as severe, 7% as extreme and 2% of the state remains in exceptional drought (D4). These conditions are slightly improved over last month.
- Current streamflow forecasts statewide range from greater than 150% of average in the South Platte to below 50% of average in parts of the southwest. The northern portion of the state has forecasts that are near to above normal, while the southern portion of the state has forecasts below normal.
- Snowpack statewide is at 197% of median. All basins are experiencing normal seasonal decline, but significant amounts of snow remain. By this time of year many basins have reached melt-out, making those with snow still on the ground appear greater than conditions actually reflect. As of June 17, the basins in the northern portion of the state are all above the median while the southwest, Rio Grande and Upper Arkansas are below the median.
- Reservoir Storage statewide is at 95% of average at the end of May 2014, slightly higher than last month. The lowest reservoir storage statewide is in the Arkansas & Upper Rio Grande basins, with 56% and 63% of average storage, respectively. The Yampa/White and the South Platte have the highest storage level at 114% and 113% of average.
- The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) for the state, which takes into account both reservoir storage and streamflow forecasts, is near normal across much of the state, with an “abundant” index in the northern basins of the South Platte, North Platte, and Colorado. The lowest values in the state are in the Southwest and Rio Grande Basins and indicate moderate drought.
- El-Nino conditions have begun, but are not yet firmly established and appear to have stalled resulting in a weak event for the time being. The stronger an El Nino event is the more likely we are to see a wetter growing season. Long term forecasts indicate dry conditions along the Colorado Front Range and eastern plains through September, which is consistent with a weak El Nino scenario. Western Colorado can hope for a near normal monsoon season.
- The short term forecast anticipates near normal rainfall at best throughout the state over the next 14 days. June in Colorado is typically driest in the mountains and on the western slope.

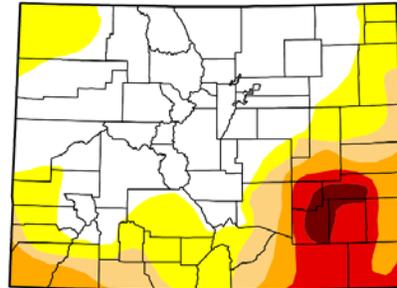
**NOTE:** The next Water Availability Task Force Meeting will be on July 23, 2014 at Colorado Parks and Wildlife Broadway Office; additional information can be found at [www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) or by contacting Ben Wade at [Ben.Wade@state.co.us](mailto:Ben.Wade@state.co.us)

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The US Drought Monitor illustrates current drought conditions across Colorado. Currently, nearly half the state is free of drought while the other half is experiencing drought ranging from abnormally dry to exceptional. The drought that is impacting southeastern Colorado is now well into its third year. Dry soils, blowing dust and a continued lack of moisture are slowing agricultural production in the region.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

June 17, 2014  
(Released Thursday, Jun. 19, 2014)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4
Current	50.84	49.16	26.49	17.30	9.31	1.89
Last Week 6/10/2014	50.86	49.14	25.38	16.56	9.33	1.89
3 Months Ago 3/16/2014	38.90	61.10	21.62	13.69	5.58	1.47
Start of Calendar Year 1/1/2014	32.04	67.96	22.33	13.56	4.01	1.47
Start of Water Year 10/1/2013	24.91	75.09	37.88	12.01	4.01	1.47
One Year Ago 6/16/2013	0.00	100.00	100.00	75.28	35.50	17.54

**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.

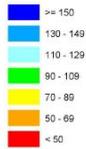
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USDA   
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

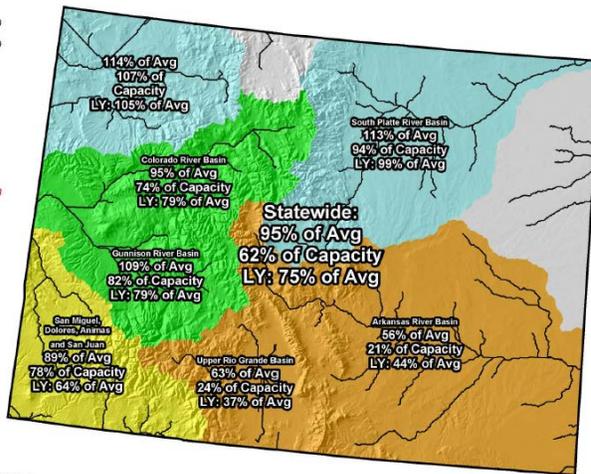
## Colorado Reservoir Storage Map



Percent of Average



Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision

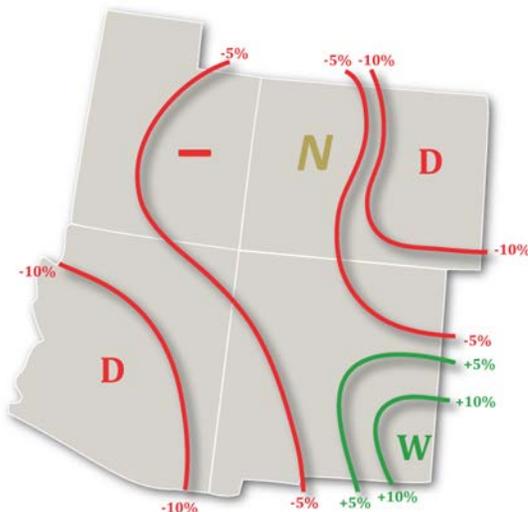


End of May 2014

Reservoir storage varies greatly across the state with the northern half of the state seeing more abundant conditions than the southern half. Reservoir levels may continue to rise in areas that still have remaining snowpack.

## Experimental PSD Precipitation Forecast Guidance

JUL - SEP 2014 (June 17, 2014)



July through September forecasts differ with the experimental forecast (left) indicating dry conditions, and the Climate Prediction Center (right) indicating wet conditions. ENSO conditions will affect the amount of moisture that materializes during the monsoon season.

