

NWS GRAND JUNCTION COLORADO



A LOOK
BACK AT

DECEMBER 2021

WEATHER ACROSS E UTAH / W COLORADO

December was overall an unsettled month, with a major winter storm impacting some portion of the area nearly weekly. And in between major storms, strong cold fronts pushed through, bringing the potential for snow squalls and nighttime lows well below average. Gusty winds were also fairly common through the month, with one wind event on December 14th-15th producing widespread 50-60 mph gusts, and a peak gusty near Steamboat Springs of 87 mph! For the first half of the month, major snowfall remained confined to the higher terrain, with lower valleys seeing mainly rain, but this changed at the end of the month. A truly tremendous storm cycle impacted the area between December 23rd and 31st, with several strong low pressure systems combining with strong Atmospheric Rivers to coat nearly all of eastern Utah and western Colorado in snow. Grand Junction saw its first snowfall of the year on Christmas Eve, with a little over an inch falling. Then, just a week later, another 4-5 inches of snow fell in the Grand Valley. The mountains also received some much needed and much anticipated snow during this 10 stretch, with the top 5 reporting sites recording 95-170 inches of snow - that's 8-14 feet of snow in just 10 days!



DECEMBER 2021

CLIMATE SUMMARY



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NOTE: all data mentioned is collected from our automated observing stations from 10 airports across the area. Some observers in more remote areas DECEMBER have measured warmer or colder temperatures, or more or less precipitation than mentioned in this summary.

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STORY OF THE MONTH

DECEMBER WINTER STORM CYCLE

The month of December was characterized by a succession of strong, wet winter storms bringing substantial snowfall to the mountains and even to the lower desert valleys. Mountain areas saw 1-3 feet of snow nearly weekly, with the period of December 23rd through January 1st, 2022 seeing 8 to a whopping 14 feet of snowfall across the mountains. That's 8-14 feet of snow in just over a week. To top that off, the Grand Valley finally saw its first measurable snowfall on Christmas Eve, with an inch of snow. And a week later, 4 inches of the white stuff fell at the NWS Grand Junction office on New Years Eve.

Coal Bank Pass, Christmas Eve
Webcam Courtesy of CDOT



DECEMBER
2021

TEMPERATURES



Location	Average Temp (°F) (VS Normal)	Warmest Temp (°F)	Coldest Temp (°F)
Aspen, CO	26.3 (+4.5)	57 on 12/2	-7 on 12/11
Cortez, CO	32.5 (+3.9)	57 on 12/3	7 on 12/11, 18
Craig, CO	24.6 (+5.9)	59 on 12/2	-11 on 12/18
Durango, CO	28.0 (+2.0)	58 on 12/2, 5	-6 on 12/11
Grand Junction, CO	32.8 (+4.4)	59 on 12/14	14 on 12/19, 20
Meeker, CO	27.2 (+4.8)	61 on 12/3	-8 on 12/11
Montrose, CO	33.1 (+5.8)	57 on 12/1	10 on 12/11
Rifle, CO	29.6 (+4.0)	59 on 12/2, 3	4 on 12/11
Canyonlands Airport, UT	33.2 (+5.6)	58 on 12/2	10 on 12/11
Vernal, UT	25.6 (+3.4)	53 on 12/1	1 on 12/10, 11



DECEMBER
2021

PRECIPITATION



Location	Total Precipitation (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
Aspen, CO	2.34	+1.52
Cortez, CO	2.20	+1.40
Craig, CO	1.77	+0.87
Durango, CO	2.51	+1.64
Grand Junction, CO	2.08	+1.48
Meekeer, CO	1.46	+0.58
Montrose, CO	0.67	+0.21
Rifle, CO	1.37	+0.80
Canyonlands Airport, UT	0.88	+0.35
Vernal, UT	0.62	+0.07

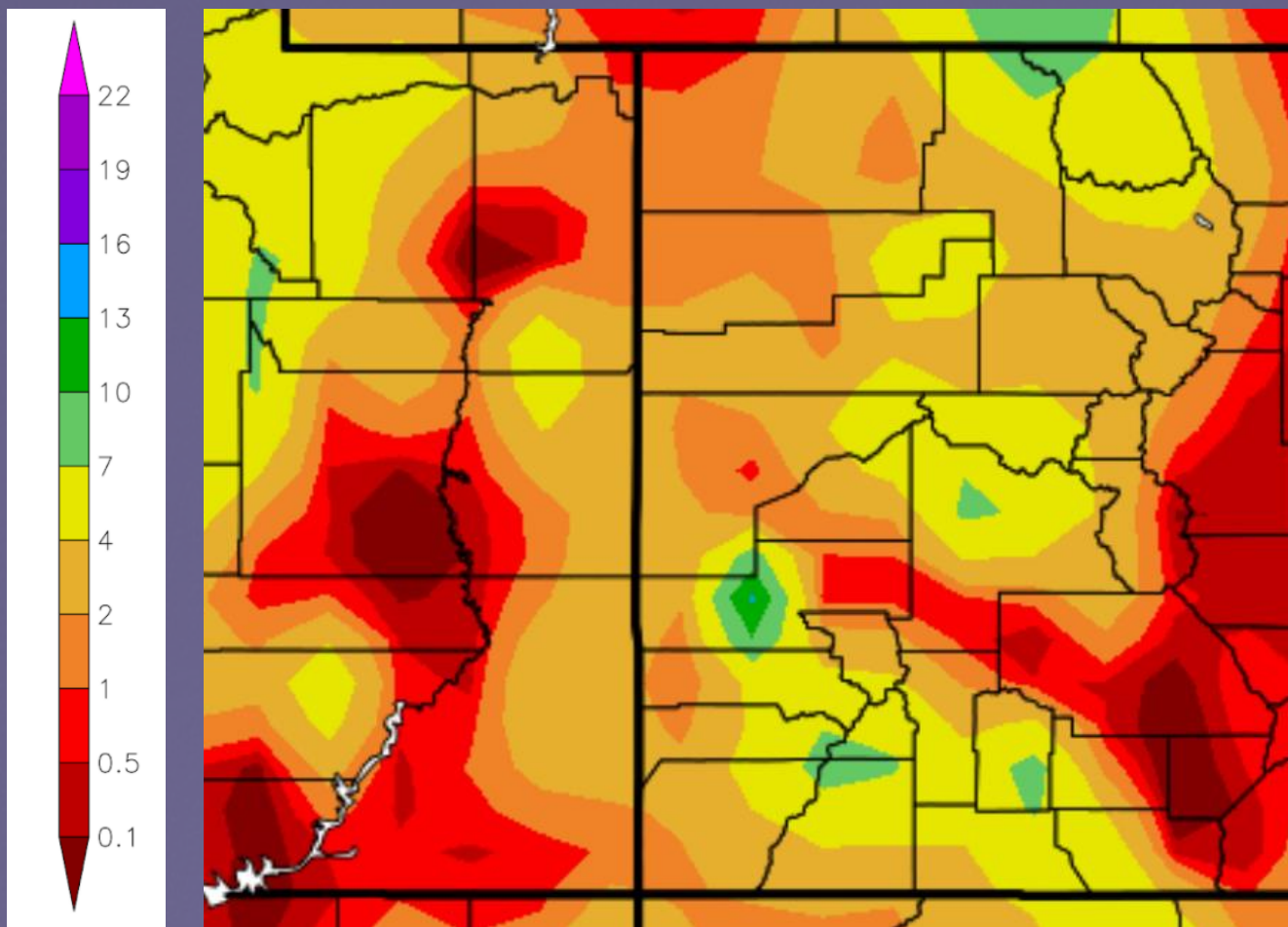


DECEMBER 2021

CLIMATE SUMMARY



TOTAL MONTHLY PRECIPITATION



DECEMBER 2021

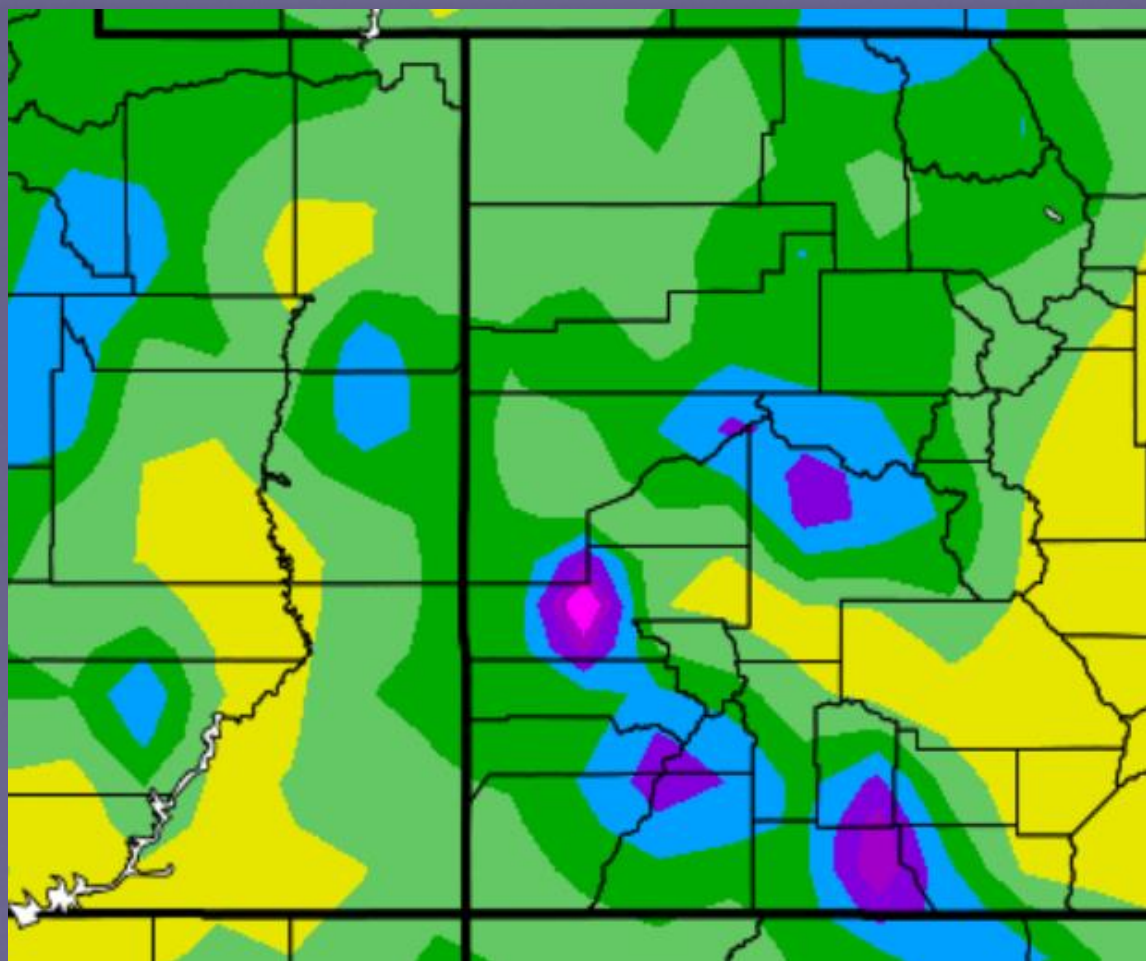
CLIMATE SUMMARY



TOTAL
MONTHLY

PRECIPITATION

DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL



DECEMBER 2021

CLIMATE SUMMARY



DAILY RECORDS **R E P O R T**

A total of 1 daily record was set across the primary climate sites

Site	Date	Record Type	New Record	Previous Record
Grand Junction, CO	December 9th	Max Rainfall	0.57 inches	0.25 inches in 1899
Grand Junction, CO	December 14th	Max High Temperature	59 degrees	57 degrees in 1948
Grand Junction, CO	December 24th	Max Rainfall	0.53 inches	0.27 inches in 1937
Grand Junction, CO	December 31st	Max Rainfall	0.47 inches	0.25 inches in 1915

High Max

Low Max

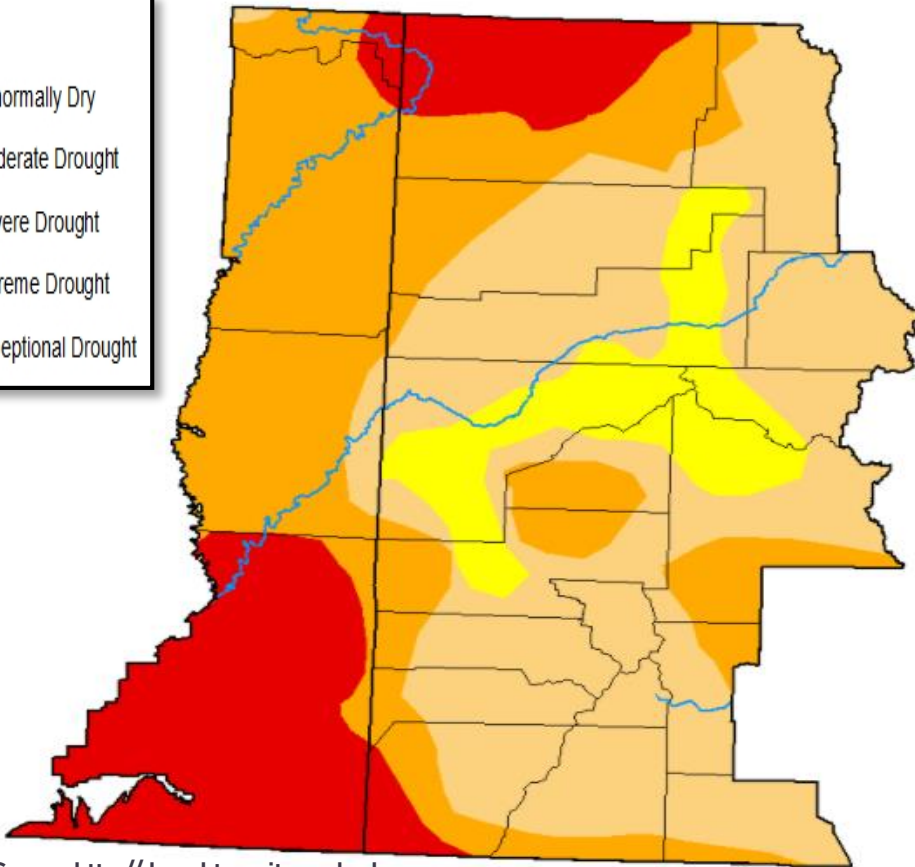
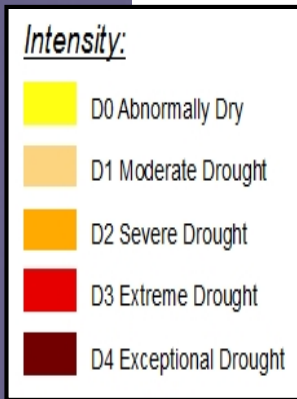
Precip

High Min

Low Min



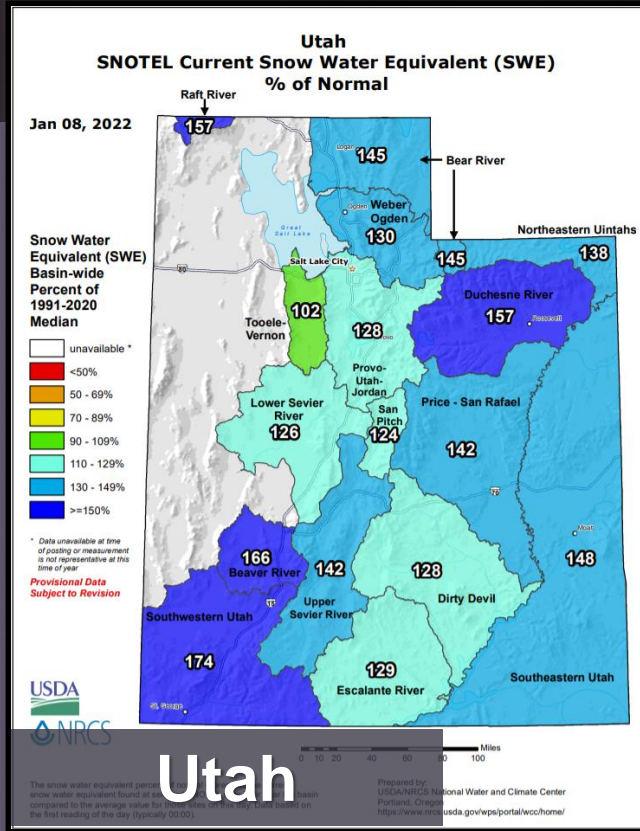
Extreme (D3) drought conditions continued to persist across most of eastern Utah and northwest Colorado throughout DECEMBER. Along the Northern Divide mountains the category improved from Extreme (D3) to Severe (D2) Drought, while portions of the Central Mountains and the San Juans degraded from Abnormally Dry (D0) to areas of Moderate (D1) to Severe (D2) Drought



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

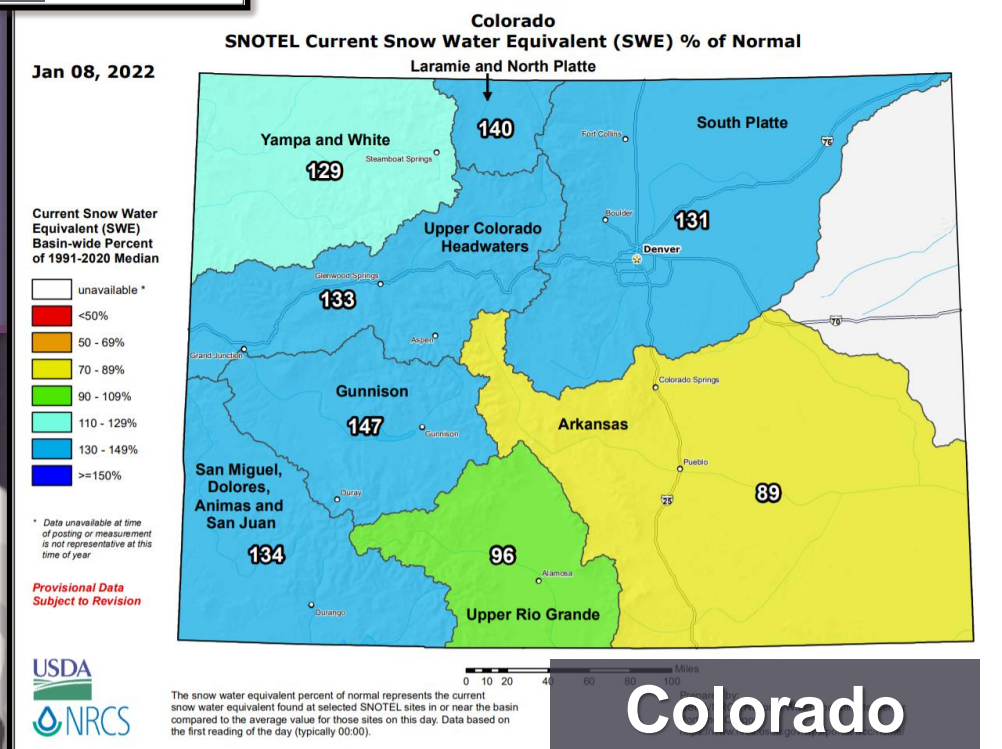
SNOWPACK CONDITIONS

UPDATE AS OF JANUARY 9TH



For Utah...The snowpack for all eastern Utah basins is at 130-140% of normal, thanks to several very wet storms this month.

For Colorado...The snowpack for all western Colorado basins are above 100%, with southern and central basins at 130-150% of normal, and northern basins at 120-130% of normal, again thanks to several very wet storms this month.





Temperatures



A map of western Colorado and eastern Utah with a color gradient from light orange to dark red. The dark red area, labeled 'Above', covers the central and eastern parts of the region. The lighter orange areas cover the western and northern parts.

Above

For January, 2022, the outlook from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) for western Colorado and eastern Utah shows odds favoring above normal temperatures. Guidance favors above normal precipitation for northwest Colorado and northeast Utah, while the rest of western Colorado and eastern Utah is not favored for either above or below average precipitation.



A map of western Colorado and eastern Utah with a color gradient from green to yellow. The green area, labeled 'Above', covers the northwest. The yellow area, labeled 'Below', covers the southeast. The rest of the region is white, labeled 'Equal Chances'.

Above

Precipitation

**Equal
Chances**

Below