

NWS GRAND JUNCTION COLORADO

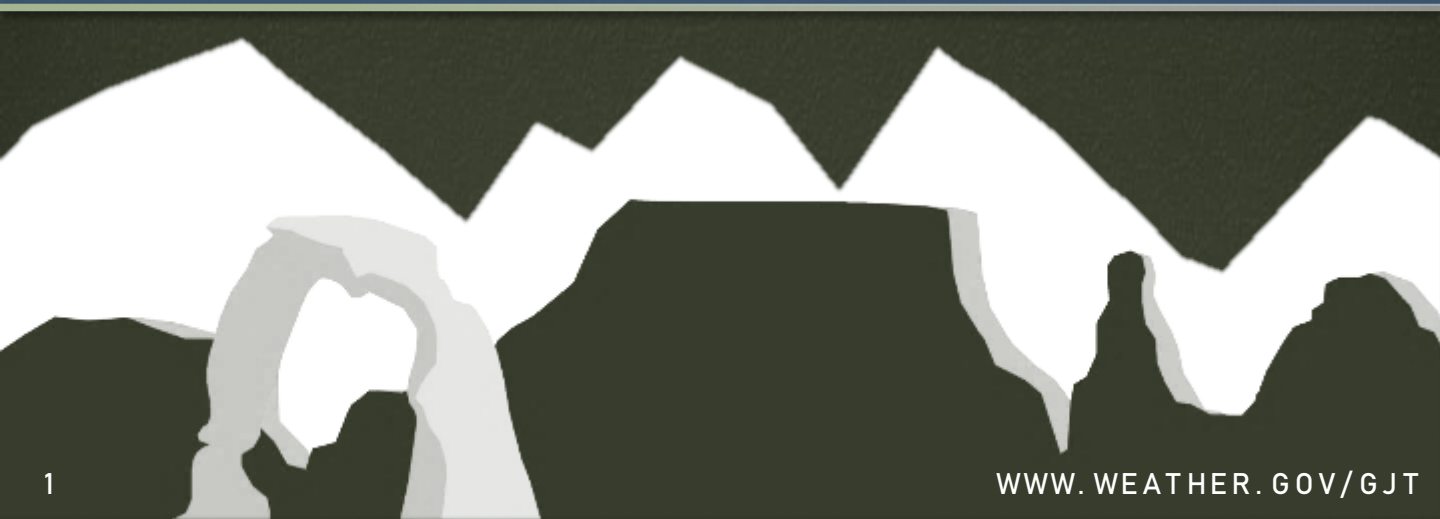


A LOOK
BACK AT

December 2023

WEATHER ACROSS E UTAH / W COLORADO

The last month of 2023 was characterized by short but intense stormy periods broken up by clear periods with near to above normal temperatures. The first storm of the month brought snow to all ranges in eastern Utah and western Colorado, but the subsequent storms tended to target only certain areas of the CWA. The system that hit from the 8th to the 10th mainly focused on the central and northern mountains and brought a snow squall to the I-70 corridor on the 8th. The next system focused primarily on the San Juans and the southern Colorado valleys. As snow cover accumulated in valley locations and cooler air began to work into the region, valley inversions and fog became issues in favored spots, such as Craig and Durango by the middle of the month. Outside of these areas, temperatures once again climbed, running 10-15 degrees above normal in spots. Other than occasional mountain snow showers, from roughly the 16th through to the 23rd, conditions were quiet and warmer. Then the next storm took target at one of the busiest travel days of the year, bringing significant snow to the higher terrain on December 23rd. This system ushered in much cooler air for the Christmas period, before a warming trend kicked in under quiet conditions for the last week of the year.



December 2023

CLIMATE SUMMARY



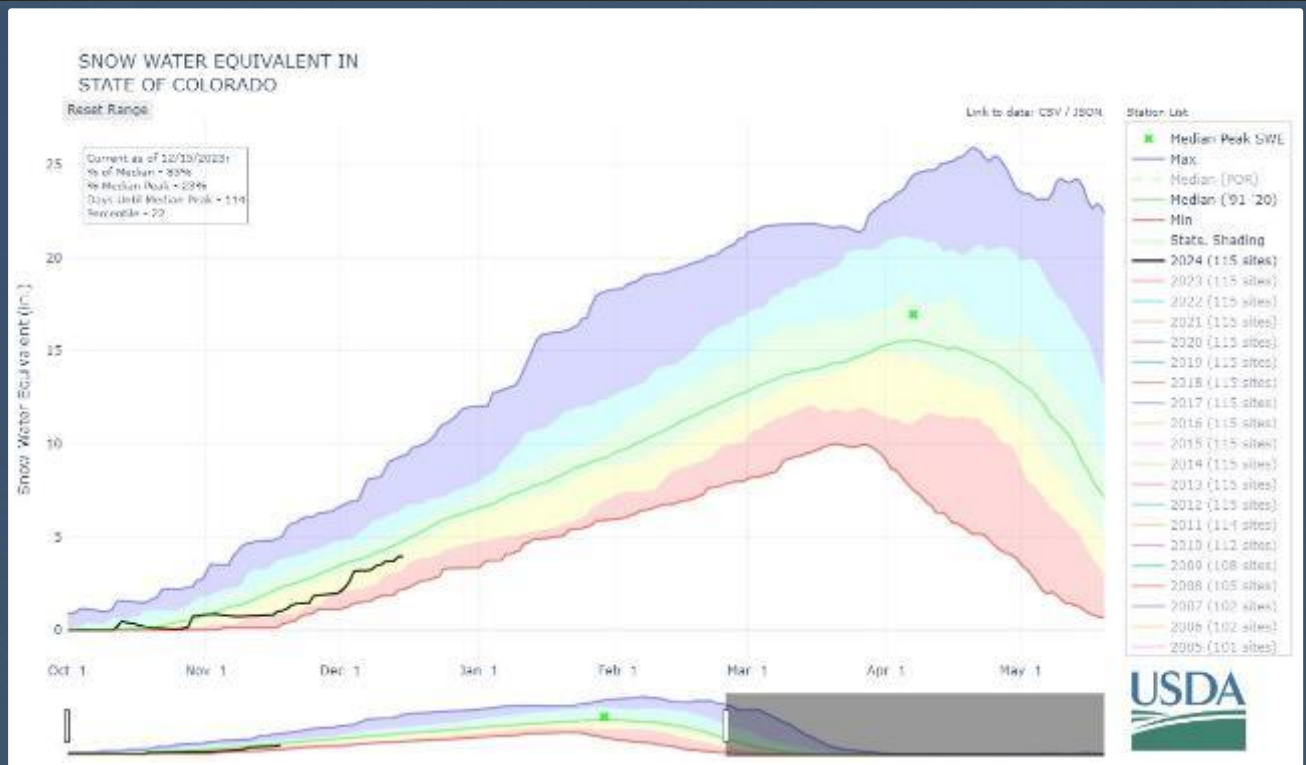
TABLE OF CONTENTS

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.

PAGE #	PAGE TITLE
1	Cover / Monthly Weather Synopsis
2	Table of Contents
3	Story of the Month
4	Temperatures
5	Precipitation
6	Total Monthly Precipitation
7	Monthly Precipitation Departure from Normal
8	Daily Records Report
9	Drought Conditions, as of January 3rd
10	Snowpack Conditions, as of January 1st
11	January Outlook

STORY OF THE MONTH **SLOW START TO THE SNOW SEASON**

This year's snowpack has been off to a slow start, thanks in no small part to the highly amplified and blocked pattern that has kept a ridge of high pressure overhead for most of the fall. This ridge promoted above normal temperatures (sometimes as much as 15F above normal) and below normal precipitation. Not to mention that because of the warmer than normal temperatures, much of the precipitation that did fall fell partially as rain. Luckily, January has kicked off with a cooler and wetter pattern, and there's plenty of winter left to change this trend.

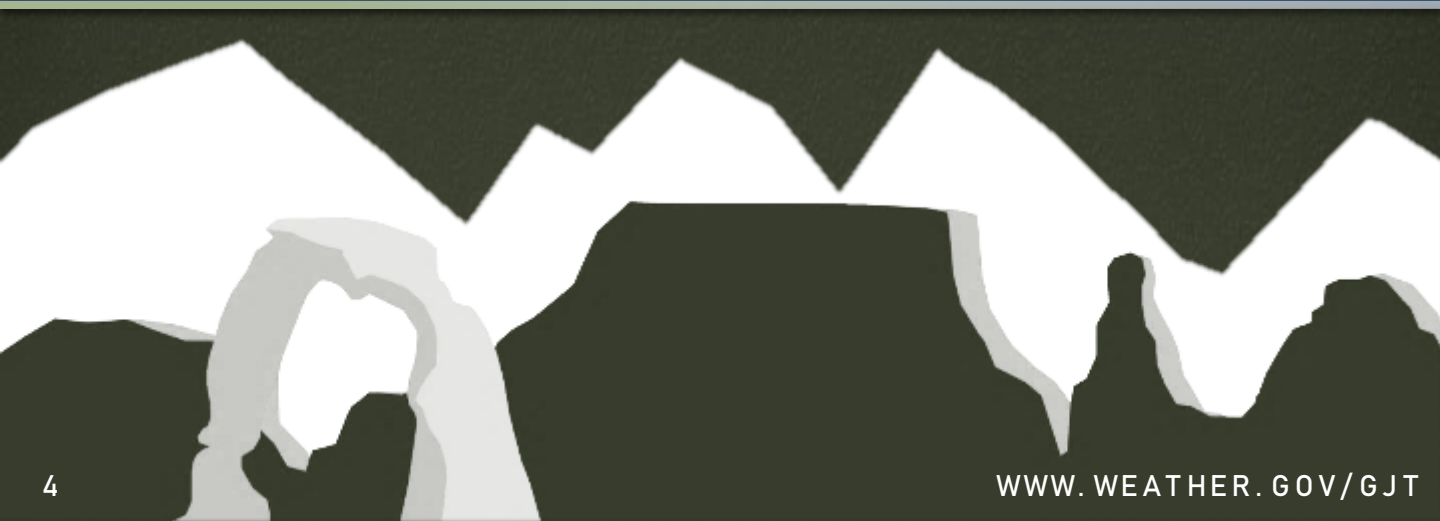


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TEMPERATURES



Location	Average Temp (°F) (VS Normal)	Warmest Temp (°F)	Coldest Temp (°F)
Aspen, CO	24.4 (+2.6)	48 on 12/20	-5 on 12/25
Cortez, CO	32.3 (+3.7)	55 on 12/7, 12	7 on 12/29
Craig, CO	22.8 (+4.1)	51 on 12/20	-12 on 12/26, 27
Durango, CO	31.3 (+5.3)	55 on 12/6	8 on 12/10
Grand Junction, CO	34.3 (+5.9)	55 on 12/4, 13	15 on 12/27
Meeker, CO	22.6 (+0.2)	47 on 12/6, 20	-12 on 12/25, 26
Montrose, CO	31.6 (+4.3)	55 on 12/7	9 on 12/27
Rifle, CO	30.5 (+4.9)	54 on 12/5	7 on 12/10
Canyonlands Airport, UT	32.5 (+4.9)	54 on 12/4	10 on 12/27
Vernal, UT	27.4 (+5.2)	50 on 12/7	3 on 12/25, 26

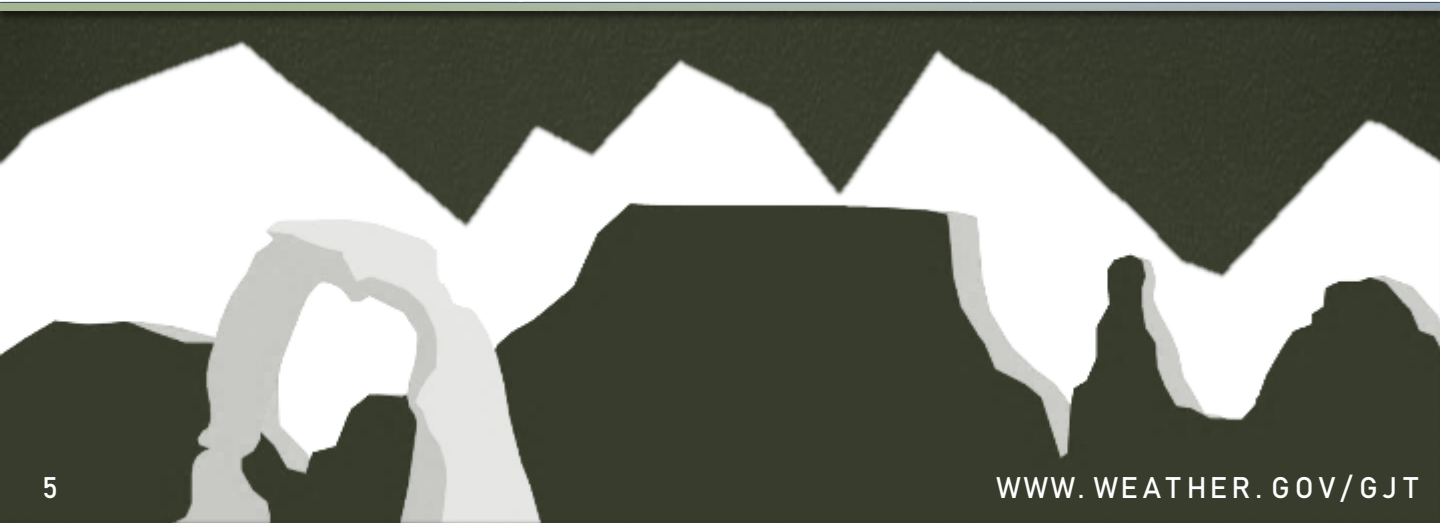


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PRECIPITATION



Location	Total Precipitation (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
Aspen, CO	0.53	-0.29
Cortez, CO	0.66	-0.14
Craig, CO	0.62	-0.28
Durango, CO	1.22	+0.35
Grand Junction, CO	0.57	-0.03
Meeker, CO	0.92	+0.04
Montrose, CO	0.41	-0.05
Rifle, CO	0.45	-0.12
Canyonlands Airport, UT	0.37	-0.16
Vernal, UT	0.02	-0.53



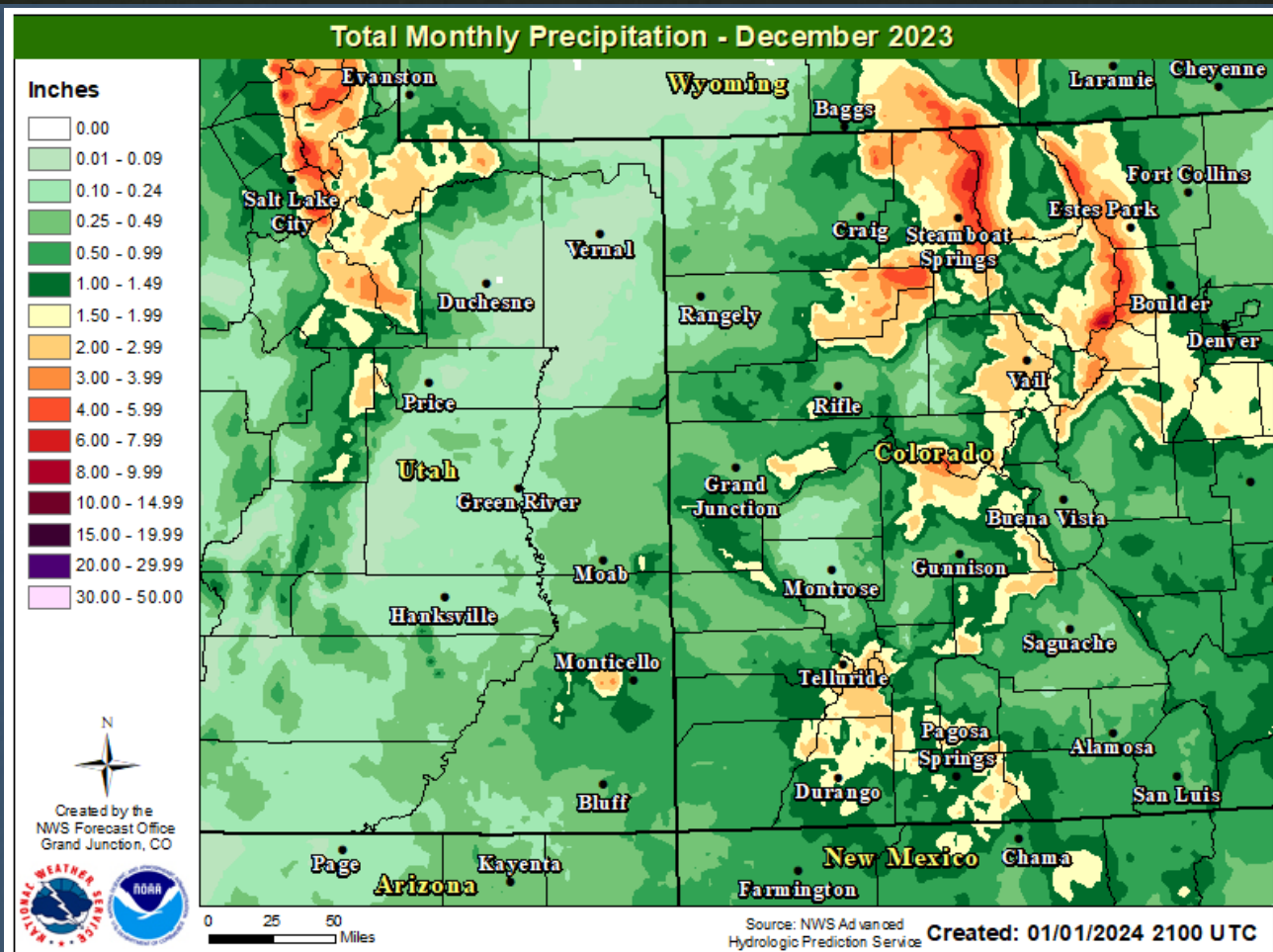
December 2023

CLIMATE SUMMARY



TOTAL
MONTHLY

PRECIPITATION



December 2023

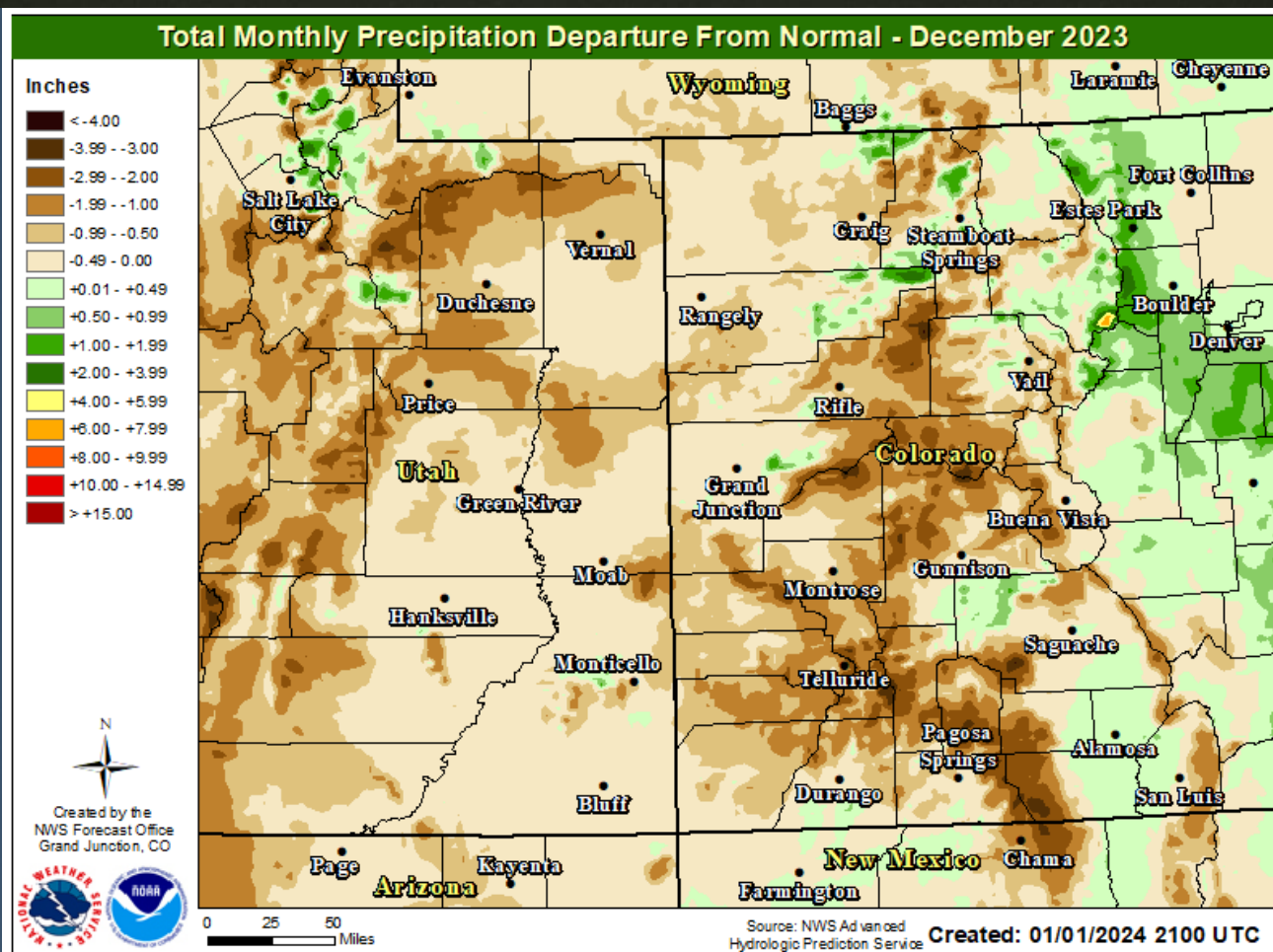
CLIMATE SUMMARY



TOTAL
MONTHLY

PRECIPITATION

DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL



December 2023

CLIMATE SUMMARY



DAILY
RECORDS

R E P O R T

A total of 2 daily records were set across the primary climate sites

Site	Date	Record Type	New Record	Previous Record
Grand Junction, CO	December 23 rd	Precipitation	0.42	0.36 in 1948

High Max

Low Max

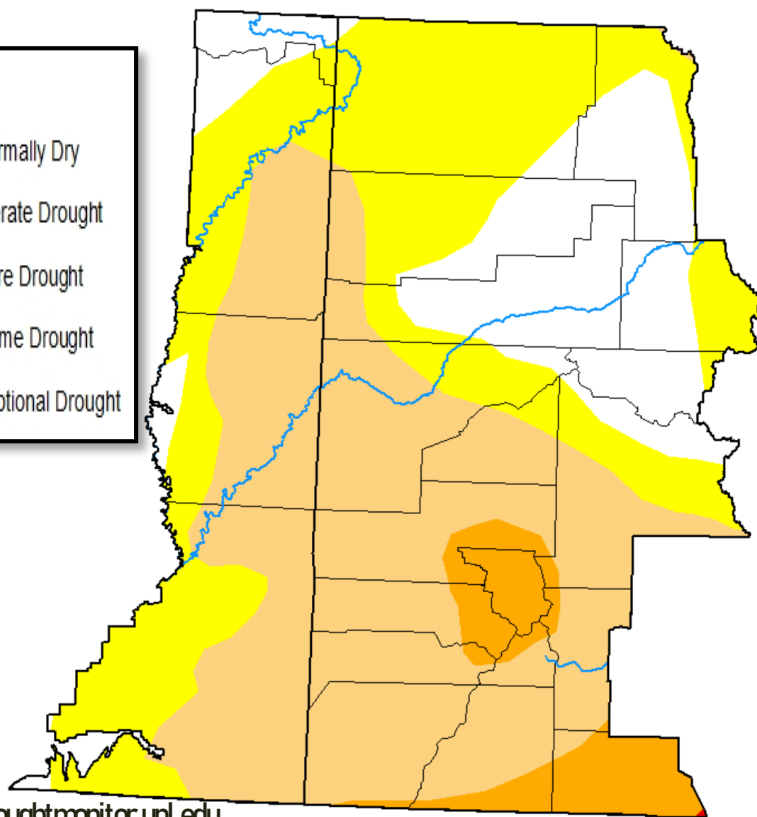
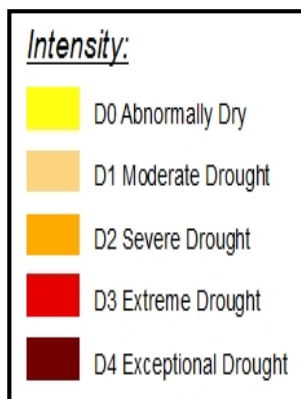
Precip

High Min

Low Min



An unusually warm and dry December led to the return of Severe (D2) Drought to the San Juan mountains, as well as the reintroduction of Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions along the Northern Divide. But, across northwest Colorado there has been some improvement, with the removal of areas of Moderate (D1) Drought in Rio Blanco and Moffat counties. Otherwise, there has been little change in the state of the drought across eastern Utah and western Colorado over the last month.



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

SNOWPACK CONDITIONS

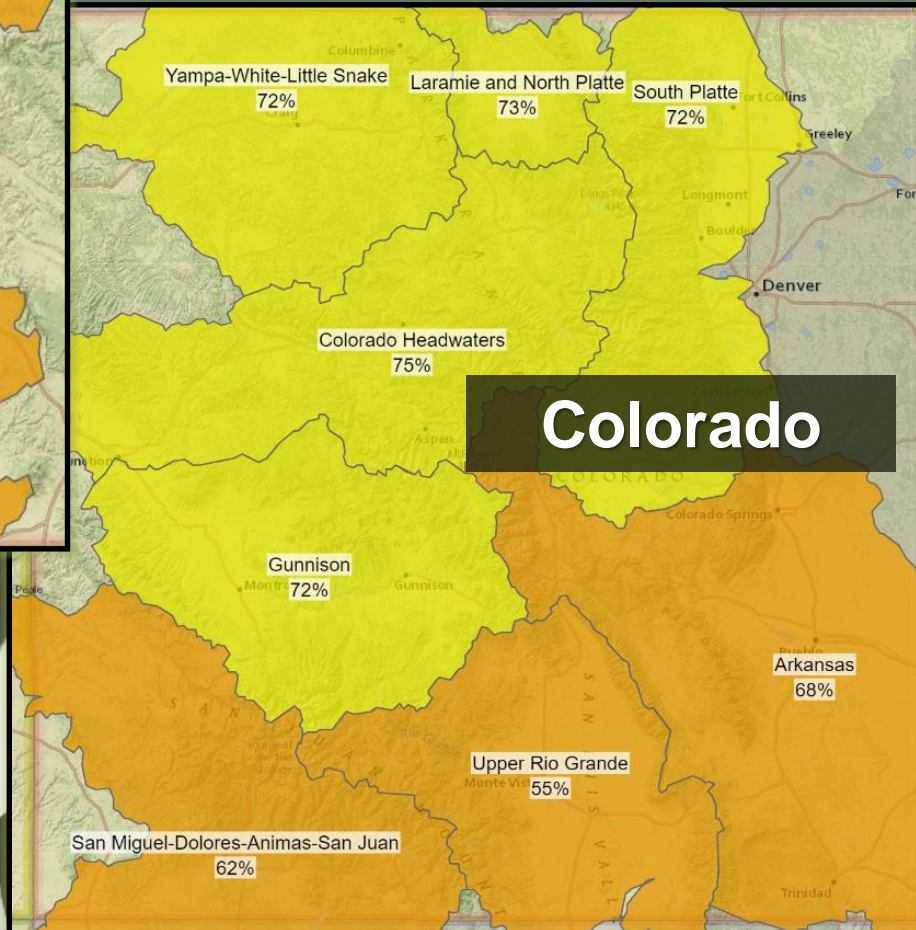
UPDATE

AS OF January 1st



Utah

While December did see a few winter storms, it was overall a warmer and drier than normal month. This is reflected in current snowpack estimates, where all of the region is below normal. Eastern Utah's snowpack ranges from 55% to 65% of normal. Northwest Colorado down as far south as the Gunnison Basin is in the 65-75% of normal range, while southwest Colorado is sitting in the 55-65% of normal range. Definitely a far cry from December of '22, but there is still plenty of winter left to see improvement.

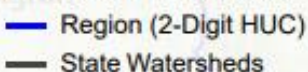


Colorado

Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median



Watershed Boundaries



January
2023

OUTLOOK

TEMPERATURES & PRECIPITATION



The latest guidance from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is slightly favoring (33-40%) above normal precipitation across the majority of eastern Utah and western Colorado. The Four Corners are slightly more favored (40-50%) to see above normal precipitation. Areas along the Wyoming border are looking at equal chances of above or below normal precipitation. As far as temperatures, the whole of eastern Utah and western Colorado are favored to see below normal values. Areas south of the I-70 corridor are most likely (50-60%) to see below normal values, with decreasing likelihood as one moves northwest.

Precipitation

Temperatures

Equal
Chances

Above

Below