

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Weather Service, Arkansas Red River Forecast Center  
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Water Supply Outlook

May 4, 2022

Our forecasts for the 2022 Water Year are using the 1991-2020 AVERAGE runoff as our Normal Seasonal runoff.

After a relatively snowy March, general dryness returned to much of the Arkansas and Canadian River Basins during April.

By the end of April, snowpack conditions were generally below normal in the headwaters of the Arkansas River, and significantly below normal along the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Southern Colorado. The snowpack was mostly melted in the headwaters of the Canadian Basin in New Mexico, except for the very highest elevations.

Seasonal runoff (April-September) is forecast to be 81 percent-of-average for the Arkansas River at Salida and 75 percent-of-average below Pueblo Reservoir. Runoff from Grape Creek, and the Cucharas and Huerfano Rivers is forecast to be 69, 68, and 71 percent-of-average, respectively. Chalk Creek is forecast to provide 80 percent-of-average runoff. Runoff from the Purgatoire River is forecast to be 38 percent-of-average.

In New Mexico, seasonal runoff (March-June) from Rayado and Ponil Creeks is forecast to be 31 and 26 percent-of-average, respectively. The Vermejo and Cimarron Rivers are forecast to be 20 and 39 percent-of-average, respectively.

Water-year-to-date precipitation (October-April) in the mountain headwaters of Colorado is below normal. Reports range from 71 percent-of-median at Glen Cove to 109 percent-of-median at Porphyry Creek. Snowpack above Salida, as measured by (NRCS) SNOTEL sites, is below normal with 82 percent-of-median snowpack. Snowpack in the Cucharas and Huerfano basins is 29 percent-of-median. In the Purgatoire River basin, the snow pack is at 41 percent-of-median.

New Mexico's water-year-to-date precipitation is below normal. Reports range from 60 percent-of-median at North Castilla to 78 percent-of-normal at the Palo site. The snowpack in the Canadian River basin is near normal at 1 percent-of-median.

Reservoir storage in the Arkansas River system is 94 percent-of-median above Pueblo Reservoir and 67 percent-of-median below the reservoir. The upper reservoirs are at 100 percent of last year's total. The lower reservoirs are at 91 percent of last year's total.

The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) issues three-month temperature and precipitation outlooks for the nation. The outlook for May through July calls for increased chances of above normal temperatures across New Mexico and Colorado. CPC's precipitation outlook calls for increased chances of below normal precipitation across New Mexico and Colorado.

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*   This, and additional Water Supply Information,   *  
*           can be found on our Web Page at:           *  
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*           www.weather.gov/abrffc/water_supply       *  
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