Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado Valid January 18th, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

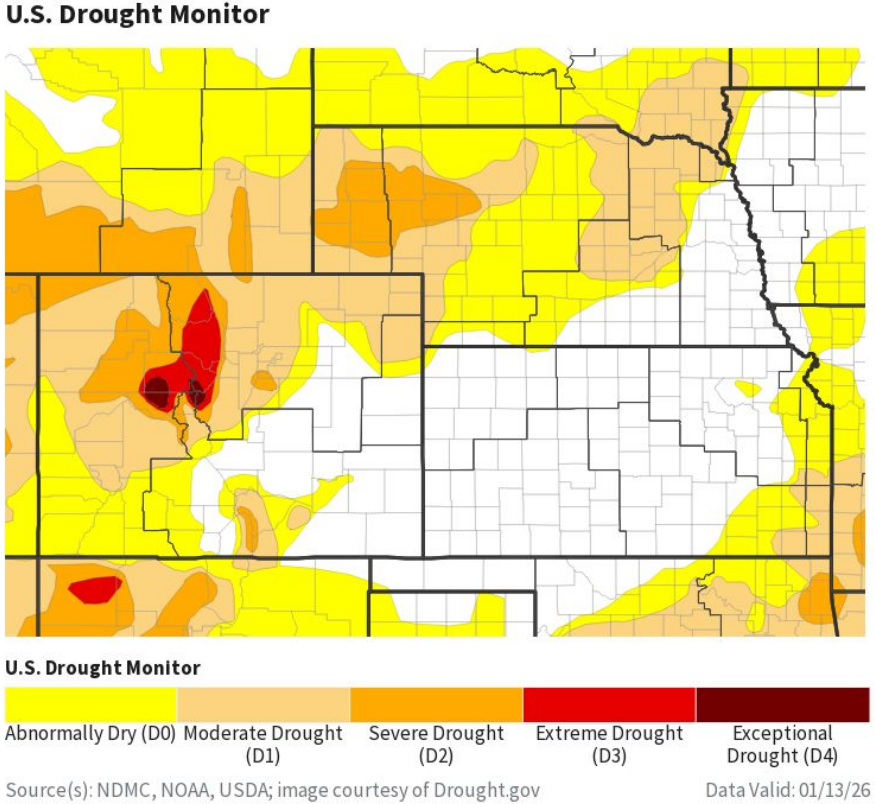
- This product will be updated by February 19th, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/pub/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

- Drought conditions across south central Colorado expected to persist and expand through the rest of the Winter

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for Colorado

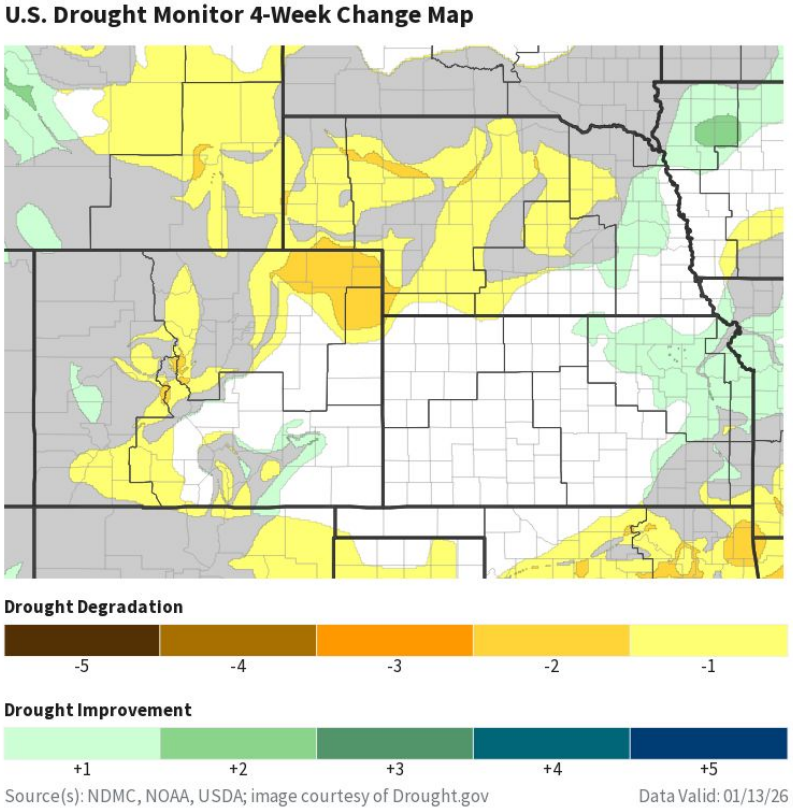
- **Drought intensity and Extent**
  - **D4 (Exceptional Drought):** Extreme NE Lake county.
  - **D3 Extreme Drought:** Northeast Lake county.
  - **D2 Severe Drought:** Western and eastern Lake county, western Chaffee county, eastern Costilla county, western Huerfano county and northwestern Las Animas county.
  - **D1 Moderate Drought:** Central and southern Lake county, central Chaffee county, northwest Saguache county, northwest Teller county, southwest Custer county, western into central Huerfano county, eastern Costilla county, western and northeast Las Animas county.
  - **D0: Abnormally Dry:** Southern Chaffee county, northwestern Fremont county, western into northern Teller county, northwest El Paso county, western into central Saguache county, Mineral county, western into central Rio Grande county, western into central Conejos county, northeast Alamosa county, central Custer county, southwest and southeast Pueblo county, eastern Huerfano county, central Las Animas county, and southwest into to northeast Otero county.



Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Colorado

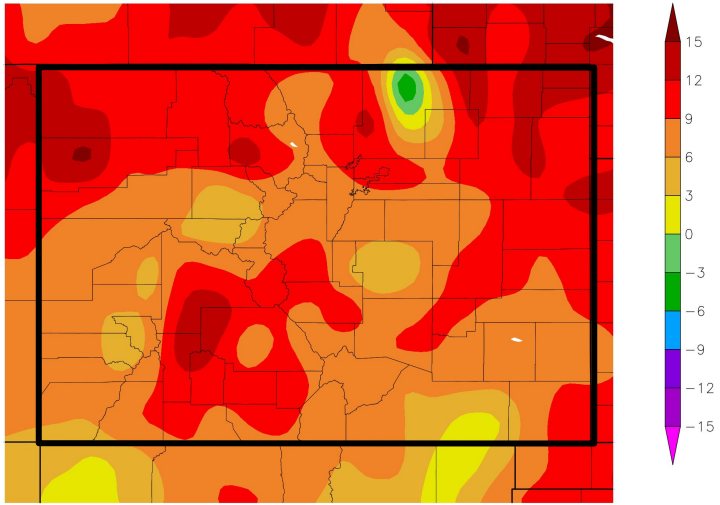
- 4 Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of southwest, central and southeast mountains.
  - **No Change:** Portions of the south central and southeast Colorado.
  - **Drought Improved:** Portions of the southern I-25 Corridor into portions of the southeast plains.



Month to Date Temperature and Precipitation Departure

Links to the latest HPRCC Mean Temperature and Precipitation departures from normal month to date

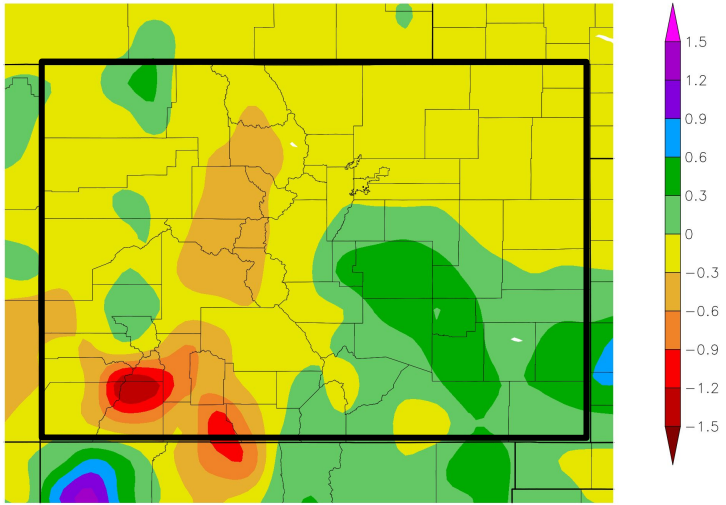
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
1/1/2026 – 1/17/2026



Generated 1/18/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
1/1/2026 – 1/17/2026



Generated 1/18/2026 using provisional data.

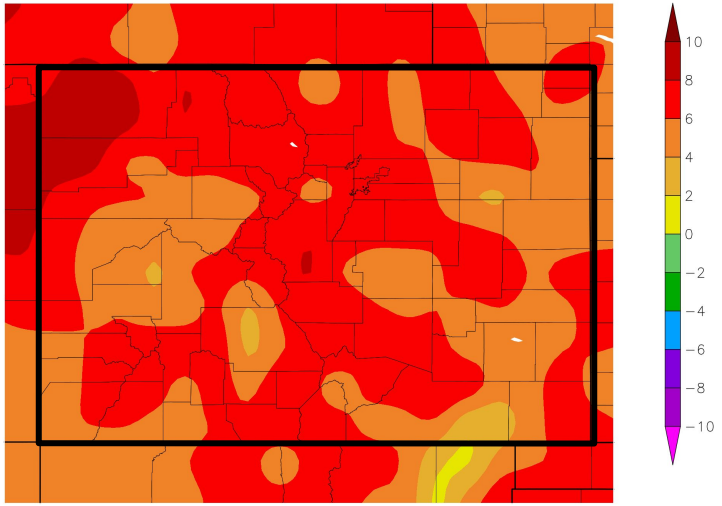
ACIS Web Services

January, thus far, has been generally warm and dry, with one storm system in the January 8th-9th timeframe bringing cooler temperatures and precipitation to much of southeast Colorado.

Past 3 Month Temperature and Precipitation Departure

Links to the latest HPRCC Mean Temperature and Precipitation departures from normal over the past 3 months

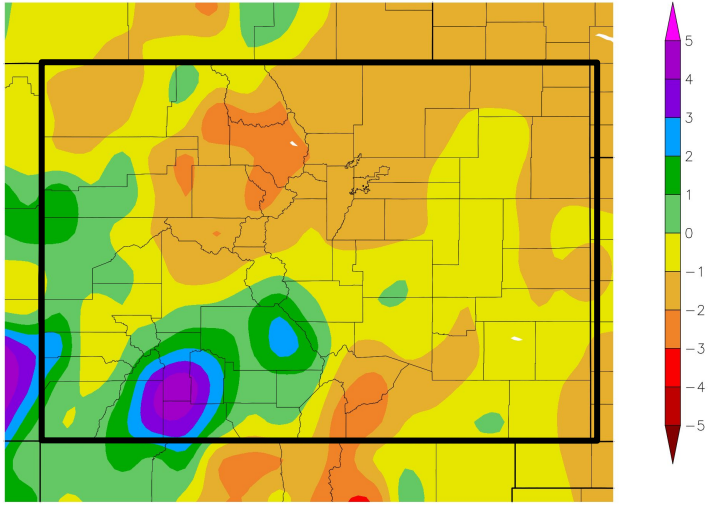
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
10/1/2025 – 12/31/2025



Generated 1/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
10/1/2025 – 12/31/2025



Generated 1/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

October through December was very warm and mainly dry across south central and southeast, Colorado, save for remnants of Hurricane Priscilla bringing record breaking rainfall to southwestern Colorado in early October, and a few passing weather systems bringing some precipitation at the end of November and beginning of December.

Summary of Impacts

Links: See/submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) and view the Drought Impacts Reporter

Hydrologic Impacts

- Statewide snowpack is running around record low levels with January 17th readings at 58 percent of median. January 17th snowpack readings in the Arkansas basin were at 47 percent of median while snowpack in the Rio Grande basin was at 51 percent of median.

Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moisture is running around seasonal levels across south central and southeast Colorado, save of slightly below normal across portions of the Northern I-25 Corridor. (CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking)

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Winter cured fuels has led to increased fire danger across the snow free areas of south central and southeast Colorado.

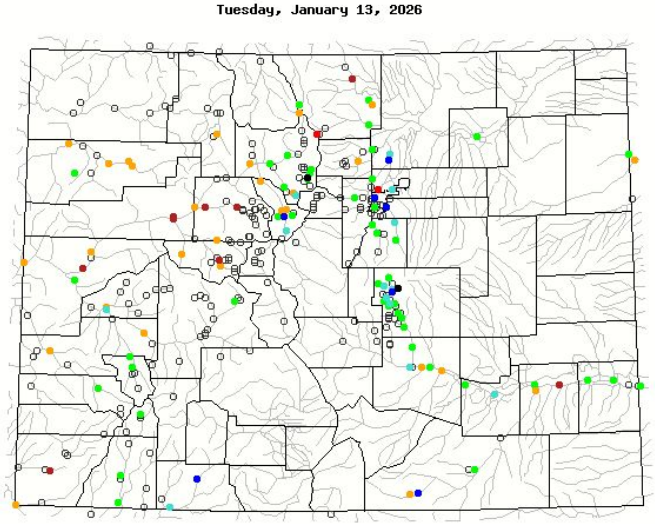
Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

Links to [Current NRCS Mountain Precipitation] and [NWS Western Water Supply and Streamflow Forecasts]

- Latest 7 day average stream flows are generally around normal across south central and southeast Colorado.
- NRCS data indicates **statewide mountain precipitation** for the month of December was 89 percent of median, as compared to 69 percent of median at the same time last year. This brings statewide WY 2026 precipitation to 89 percent of median, as compared to 98 percent of median at this same time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, December precipitation was 74 percent of median, as compared to 51 percent of median at the same time last year. This brings Arkansas basin WY 2026 precipitation to 83 percent of median, as compared to 115 at the same time last year.
- In the **Upper Rio Grande basin**, December precipitation was 61 percent of median, as compared to 30 percent of median at the same time last year. This brings Upper Rio Grande basin WY 2026 precipitation to 105 percent of median, as compared to 96 percent of median at the same time last year.

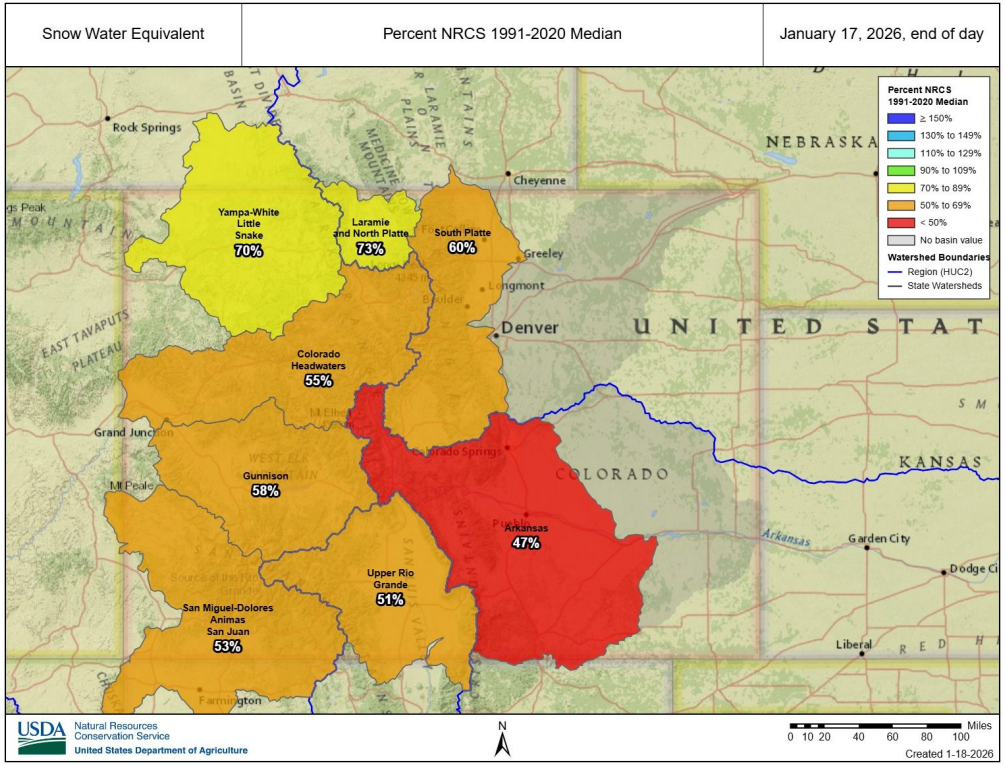


USGS 7 day average streamflow for Colorado
valid January 13th, 2026

Hydrologic Conditions Colorado Snowpack

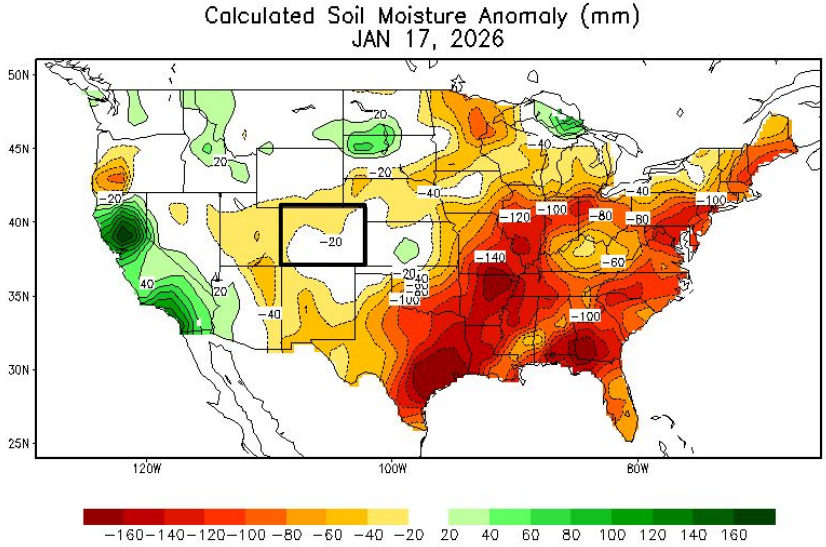
Links to Current NRCS Colorado Basin Report and NRCS Colorado Water Supply Outlook (January-June)

- At the beginning of January, NRCS data indicated Colorado Statewide Snowpack was at 56 percent of median, as compared to 93 percent of median at the same time last year. As of January 17th, statewide snowpack was at 58 percent of median.
- January 1st snowpack in the Arkansas basin was at 47 percent of median, as compared to 101 percent of median at the same time last year. As of January 17th, snowpack in the Arkansas basin was at 47 percent of median.
- January 1st snowpack in the Upper Rio Grande basin was at 52 percent of median, as compared to 84 percent of median at the same time last year. As of January 17th, snowpack in the Upper Rio Grande basin was at 51 percent of median.



Agricultural and Water Supply Impacts

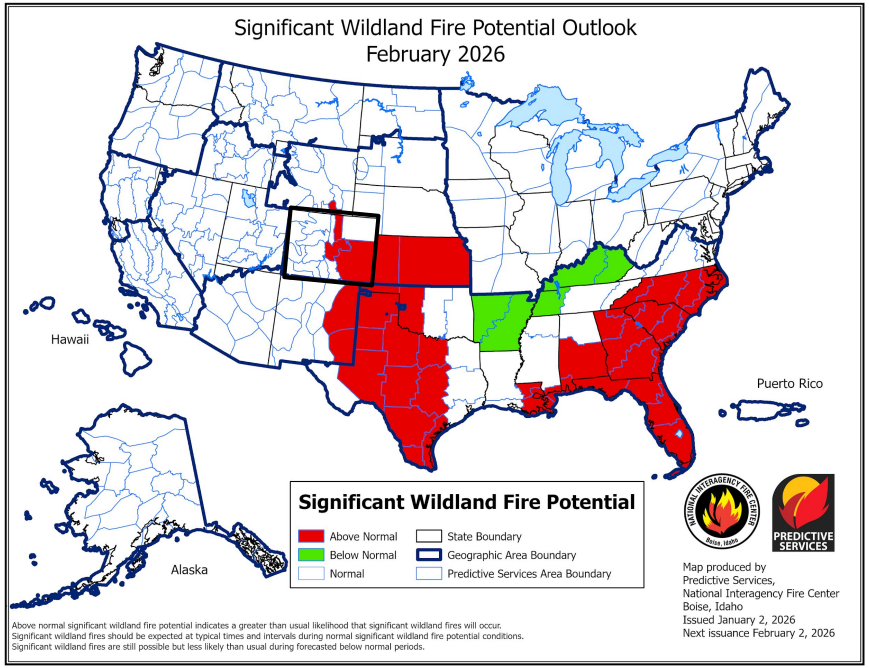
- Latest CPC data indicates soil moisture is running around seasonal norms across south central and southeast Colorado, save for slightly below normal across northern portions of the I-25 Corridor.

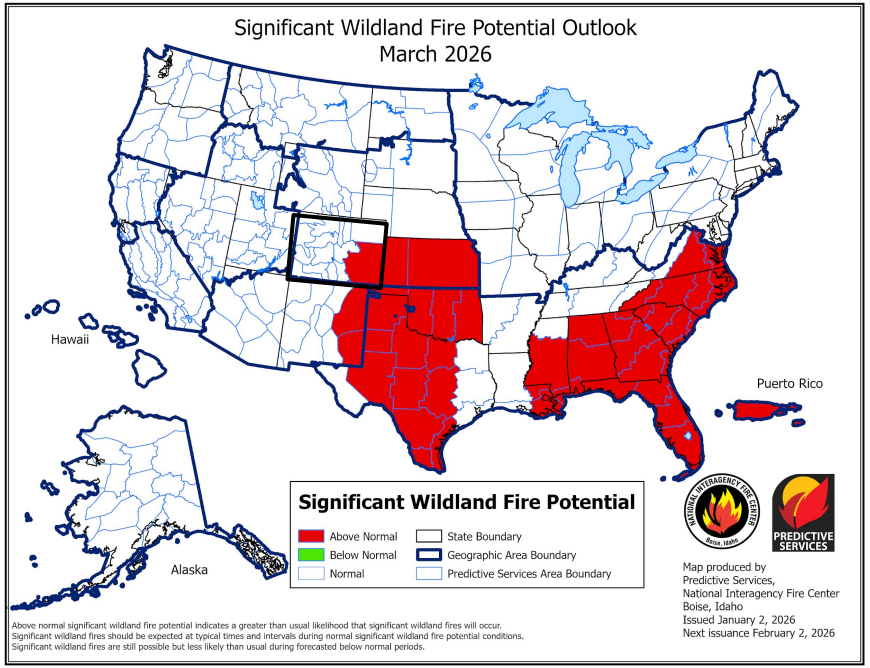


- NRCS data indicated **statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage** was at 85 percent of median at the end of December, as compared to the same 85 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, reservoir storage was at 100 percent of median at the end of December, as compared to 114 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Rio Grande basin**, reservoir storage was at 122 percent of median at the end of December, as compared to 124 percent of median at this time last year.

Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to [Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.]

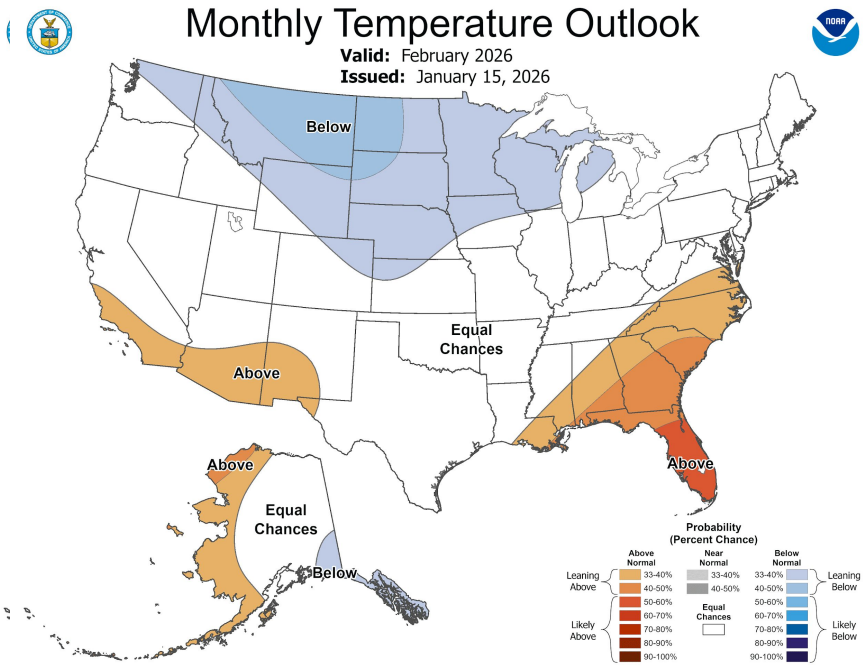


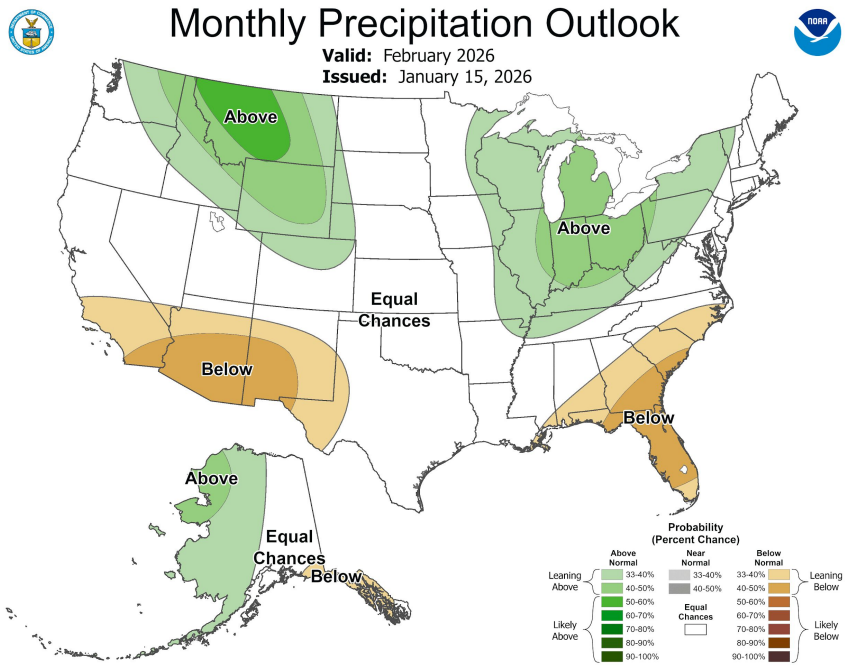


With drier than normal conditions still predicted across southeast Colorado through the winter, the potential for significant wildland fires has increased over the next few months.

Monthly Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage]

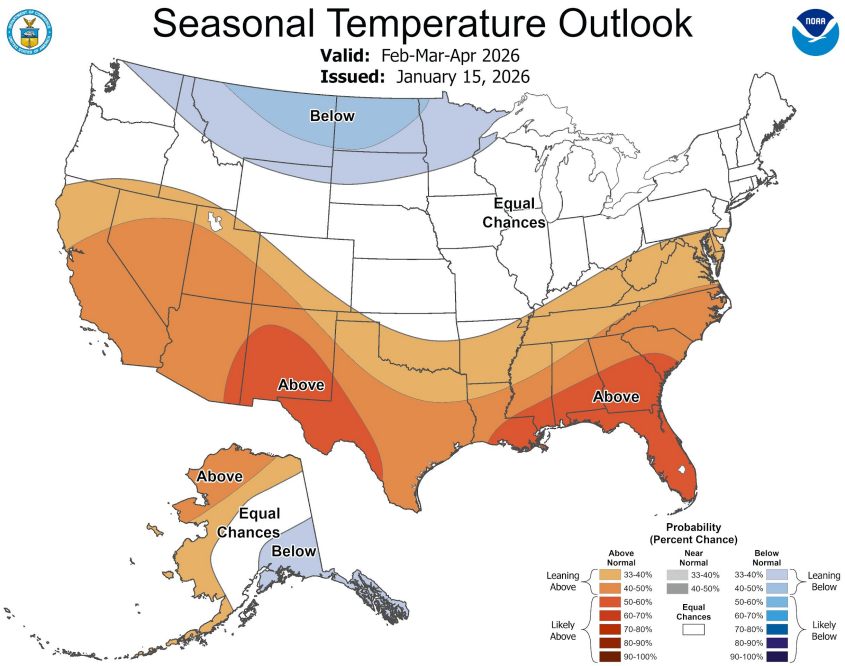


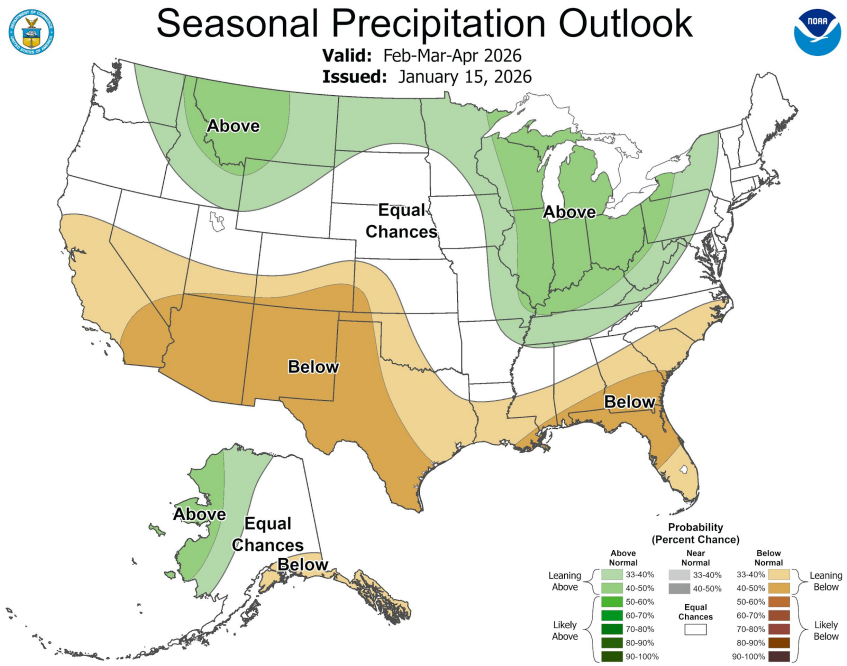


The CPC outlook for February supports equal chances of above, below and near normal temperatures and precipitation across south central and southeast Colorado, with continued broad west to northwest flow keeping Colorado on the fringe of cooler and wetter conditions.

Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage]



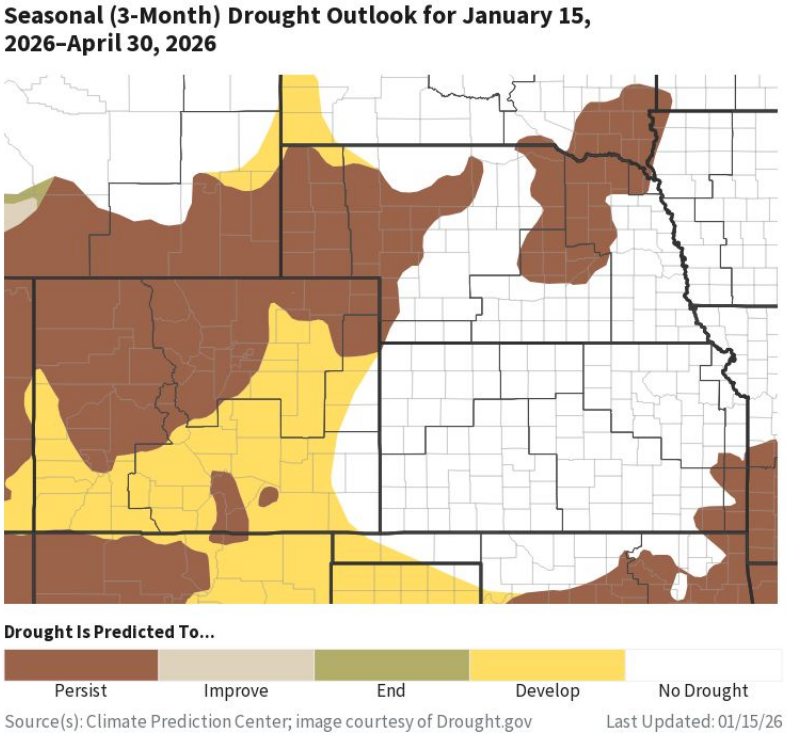


The CPC outlook for February through April supports warmer and drier conditions across much of southern Colorado with an expected transition to ENSO neutral conditions through the Spring and possible El Nino conditions through the end of Summer.

Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

The potential for warmer and drier conditions across much southern Colorado through the rest of the winter supports the development of drought conditions across south central and southeast Colorado through the early Spring.



Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook