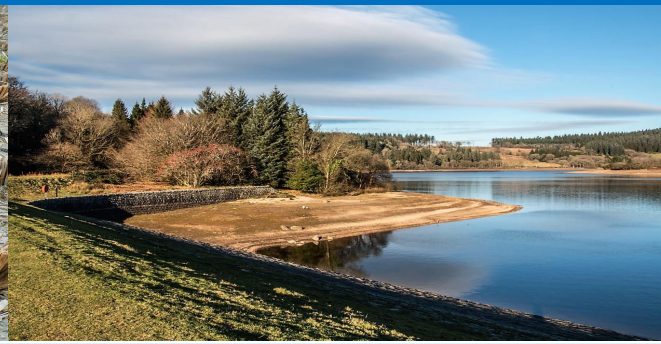
Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado

Valid February 12th, 2024

Issued By: NWS Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

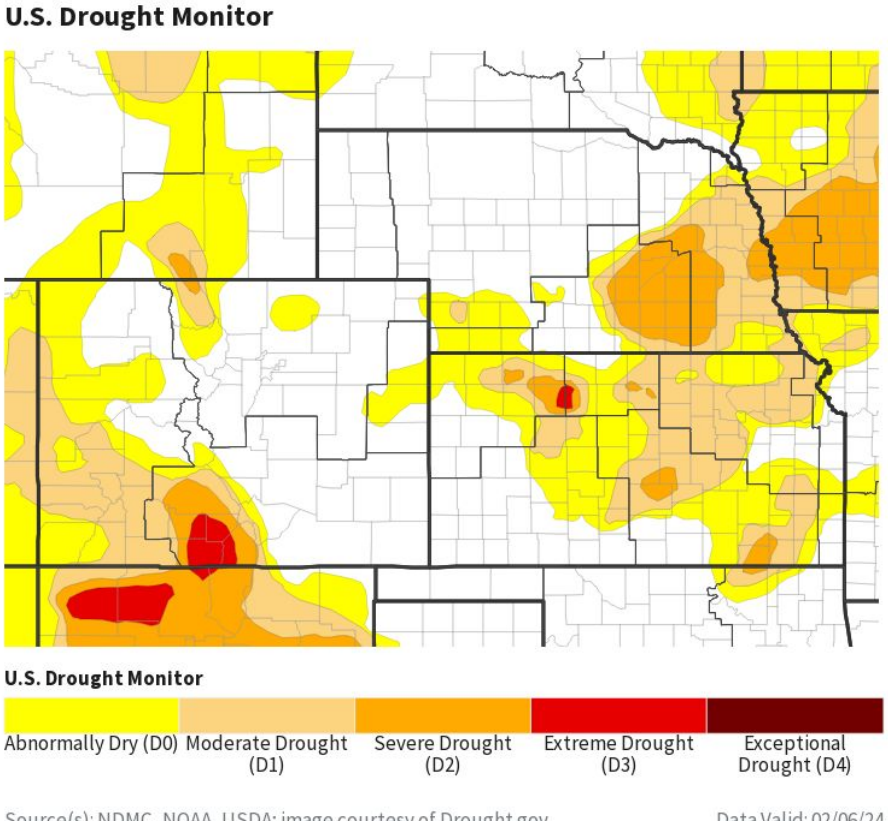
- This product will be updated by March 12th, 2024 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/pub/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.



U.S. Drought Monitor

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

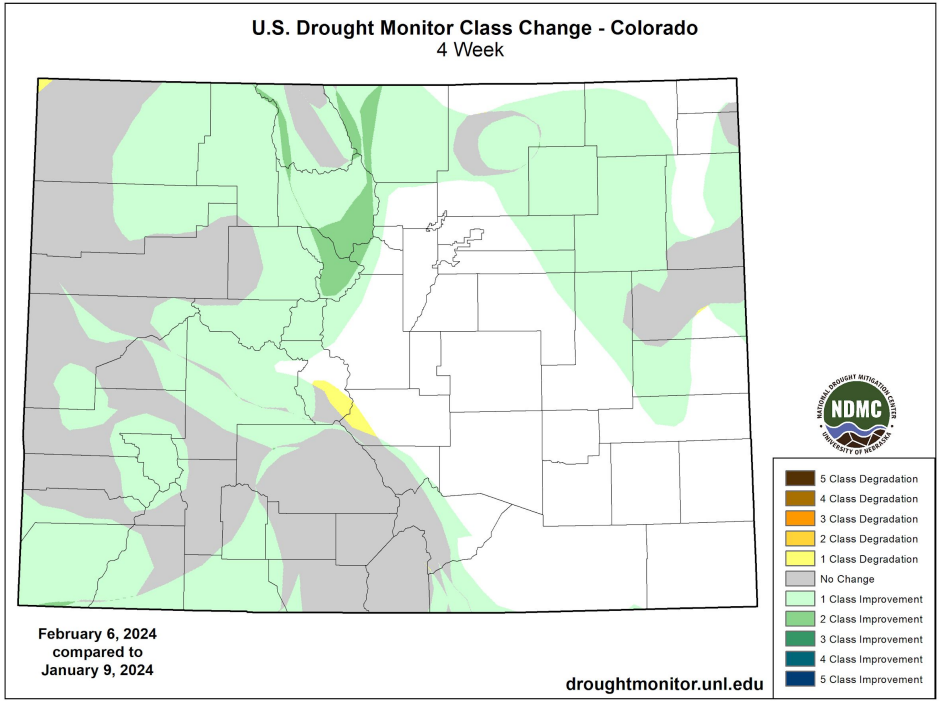
- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D4 Exceptional Drought:** N/A
  - **D3 Extreme Drought:** Portions of Rio Grande, Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla counties.
  - **D2 Severe Drought:** Portions of Saguache, Mineral, Rio Grande, Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla counties.
  - **D1 Moderate Drought:** Portions of Saguache, Mineral, Rio Grande, Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Huerfano and Las Animas counties.
  - **D0: Abnormally Dry:** Portions of Chaffee, Saguache, Fremont, Custer, Huerfano, and Las Animas counties.



Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Colorado

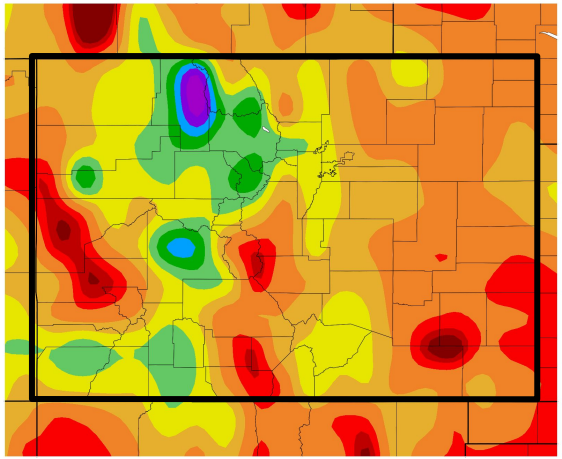
- Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - Drought Worsened: Portions of Chaffee county.
  - No Change: Most of south central Colorado.
  - Drought Improved: Portions of the higher terrain along the Continental Divide, the southeast Mountains and Plains.



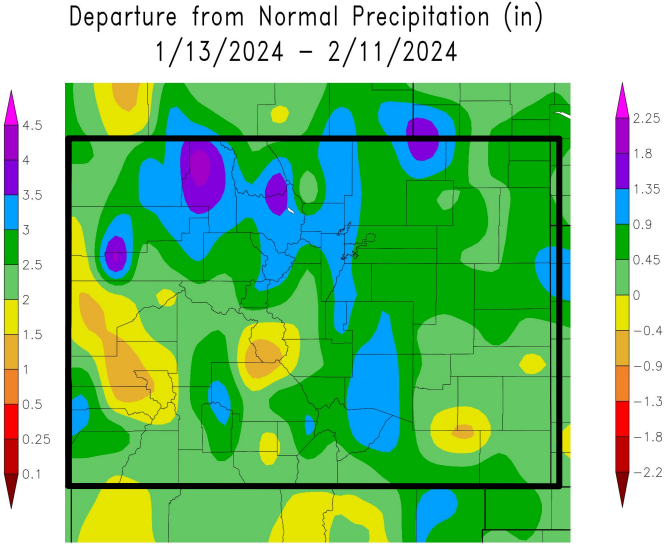
Precipitation

Links to the latest Precipitation Accumulation and Departure from Normal over the past 30 days

After a dry start to the 2024 Water Year (Oct 2023-Sept 2024), precipitation across south central and southeast Colorado picked up throughout the month of January and through February thus far. This is especially true across portions of southeast Colorado, with Pueblo setting a new daily record precipitation for the month of February with 1.06 inches recorded on February 3rd, 2024. (Pueblo's normal precipitation for the entire month of February is 0.32 inches)



Generated 2/12/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.



NOAA Regional Climate Centers 024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- While statewide snowpack was running below median (87%) at the end of January, storms through February thus far have boosted statewide snowpack to 98 percent of median, with the greatest gains across the southern mountains.

Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moisture deficits remain in place across portions of south central Colorado.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Cool and wet conditions throughout the past month has lessened fire danger across south central and southeast Colorado. However, cured fuels and strong winds, will occasionally boost fire danger to moderate 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 NRCS StreamFlow Forecast (January-June)

- Current 7 day average stream flows are at or above normal across most of south central and southeast Colorado. However, some gauges have been turned off due to predominance of ice this time of year.
- NRCS data indicated statewide mountain precipitation for the month of January was at 127 percent of median, as compared to 166 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is now at 86 percent of median, as compared to 120 percent at this time last year.
- In the Arkansas basin, January precipitation came in at 149 percent of median, as compared to 140 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is up to 90 percent of median, as compared to 92 percent last year.
- In the Upper Rio Grande basin, January precipitation came in at 117 percent of median, as compared to 172 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is now at 71 percent of median, as compared to 101 percent of median at this time last year.

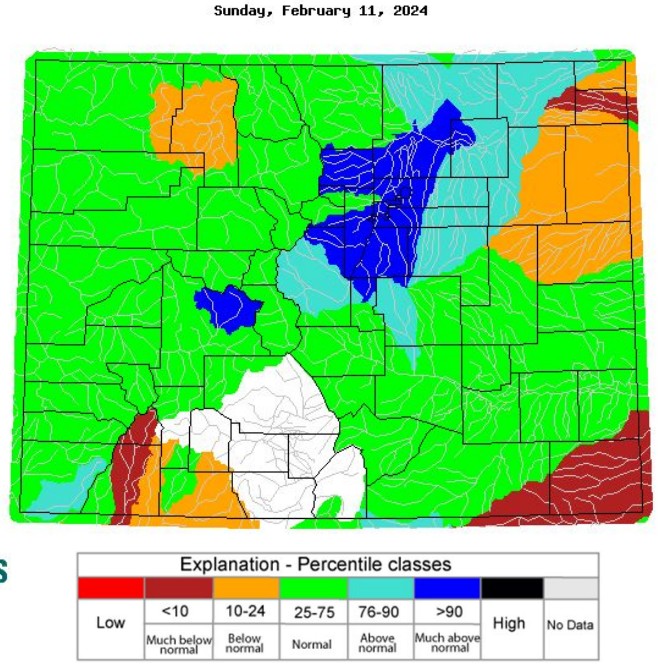


Image Caption: USGS 7 day average streamflow for Colorado valid February 11th, 2024

Hydrologic Conditions Colorado Snowpack

Link to NRCS Colorado Water Supply Outlook Report (January-June)

- As of February 11th, Colorado Statewide Snowpack was running at 97 percent of median.
- In the Arkansas basin, snowpack was at 98 percent of median. February 1st NRCS streamflow forecasts ranged from 54% of median at Grape Creek near Westcliffe to 100% of median at Chalk Creek near Nathrop.
- In the Upper Rio Grande basin, snowpack was at 94 percent of median. February 1st NRCS streamflow forecasts ranged from 40% of median for the San Antonio River at Ortiz to 84% of median for the Conejos River below the Platoro Reservoir.
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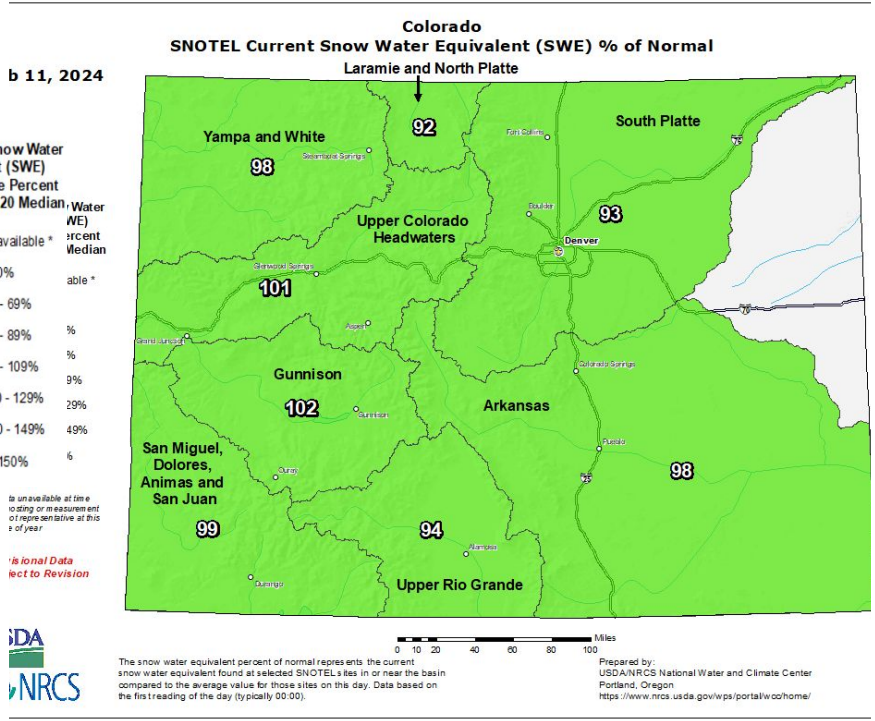


Image Caption: NRCS Colorado SNOWTEL SWE % of Normal valid February 11th, 2024

Agricultural and Water Storage Impacts

Link to the latest USDA Colorado Crop Progress and Condition Report

- CPC data continues to indicate soil moisture deficits across portions of the San Luis Valley.

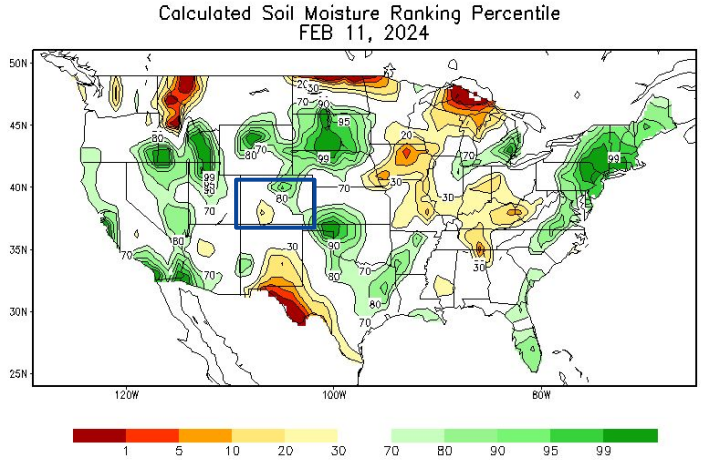


Image Caption: CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking valid February 11th, 2024

- NRCS data indicates statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage was at 100 percent of median at the end of January, as compared to 78 percent of median at this same time last year.
- In the Arkansas basin, reservoir storage was at 113 percent of median at the end of January, as compared to 94 percent of median at this same time last year.
- In the Rio Grande basin, reservoir storage was at 119 percent of median at the end of January, as compared to 107 percent of median at this same time last year.

Fire Hazard Impacts

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

- Unseasonably cool and wet conditions throughout the past month has lessened fire danger across south central and southeast Colorado.

Link to Latest Fire Restrictions across the state of Colorado

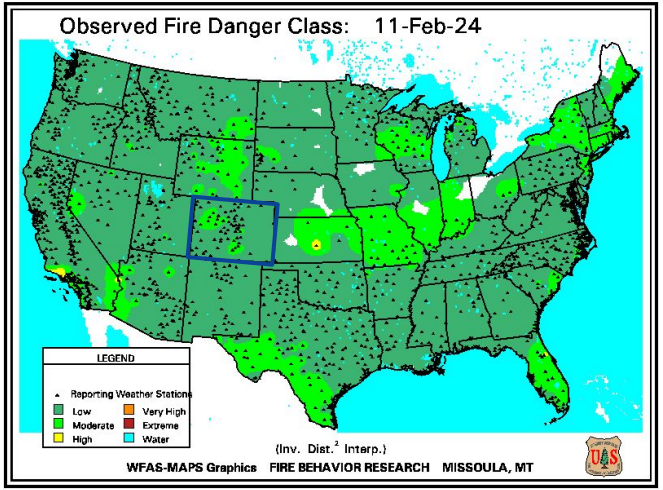


Image Caption: Wildland Fire Assessment System Observed Fire Danger valid February 11th, 2024

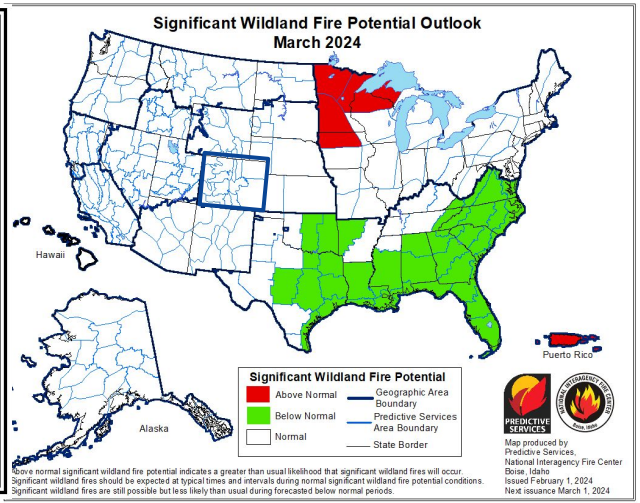
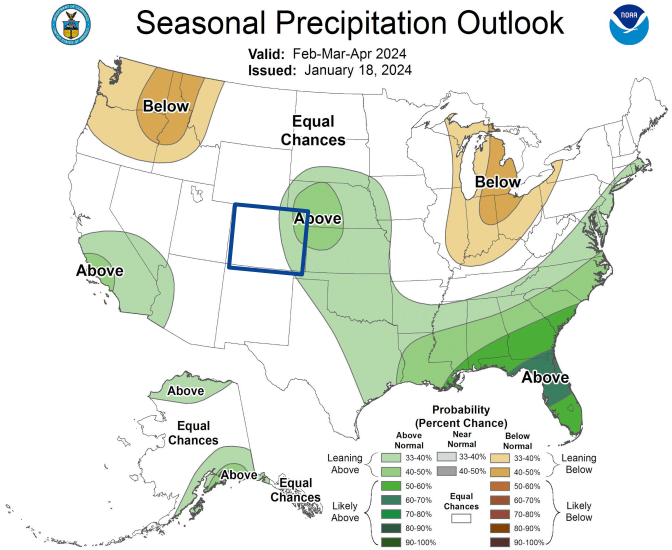


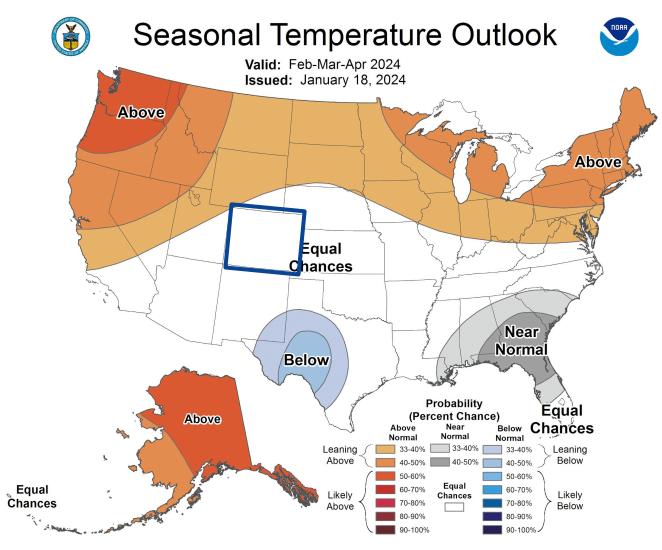
Image Caption: NIFC Monthly Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook valid March 2024

Long-Range Outlooks

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

- The CPC Temperature and Precipitation Outlook for the rest of February, March and April gives equal chances of above, below and near normal temperatures and precipitation across the region, save for better chances of above normal precipitation across eastern Colorado.

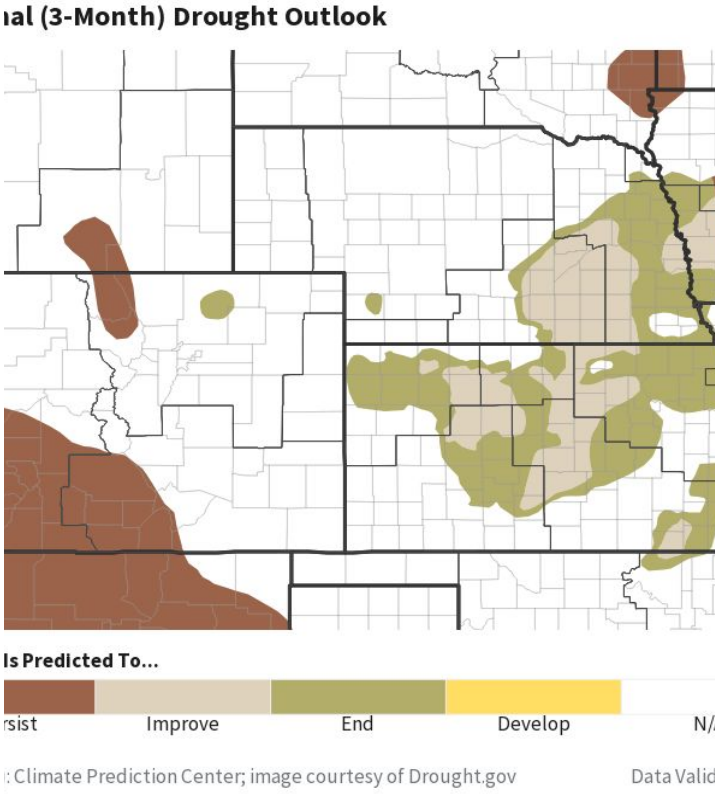




Drought Outlook

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

- Drought conditions are predicted to persist across portions of south central Colorado for the rest February through April.



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