Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado Valid March 8th, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

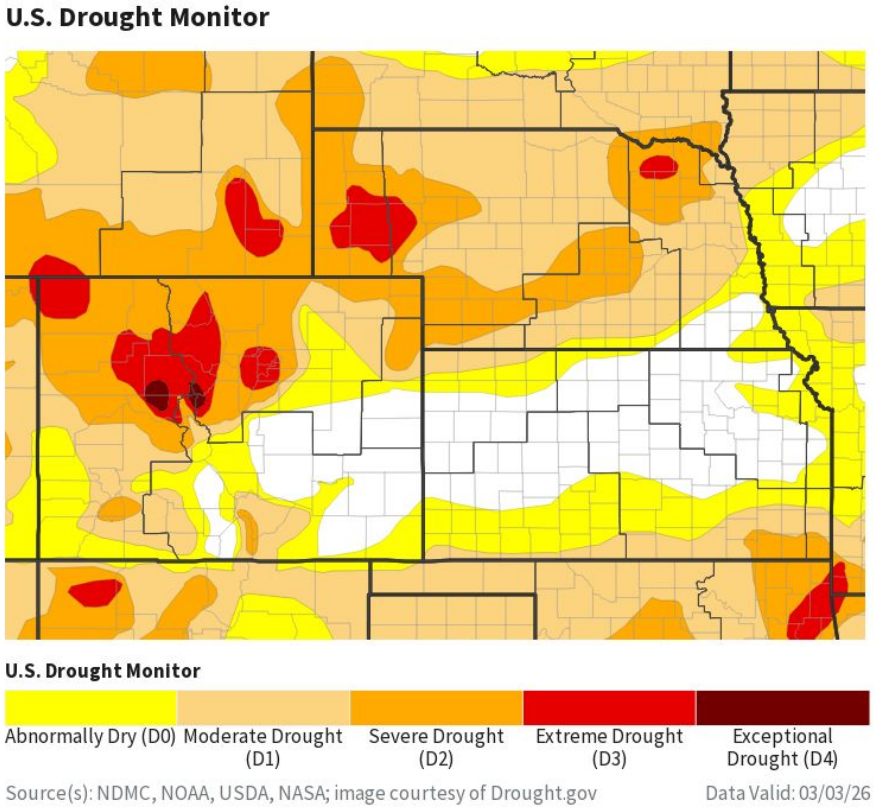
- This product will be updated by April 18th, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/pub/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

- Moderate to Exceptional Drought conditions continue across south central Colorado.
- Moderate to Severe Drought conditions continue across the southeast mountains.

U.S. Drought Monitor

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

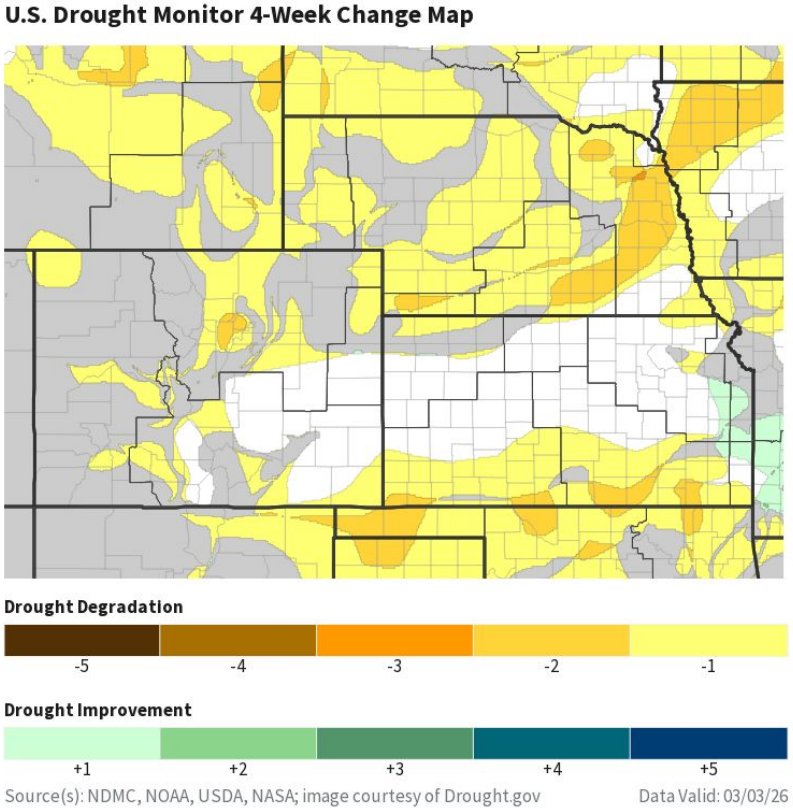
- **Drought intensity and Extent**
  - **D4 (Exceptional Drought):** Northeast Lake county.
  - **D3 Extreme Drought:** Eastern and western Lake, and extreme northwest Chaffee counties.
  - **D2 Severe Drought:** Central Lake, western and northeastern Chaffee, eastern Costilla, western Huerfano and northwestern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



Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 4-week change map for Colorado

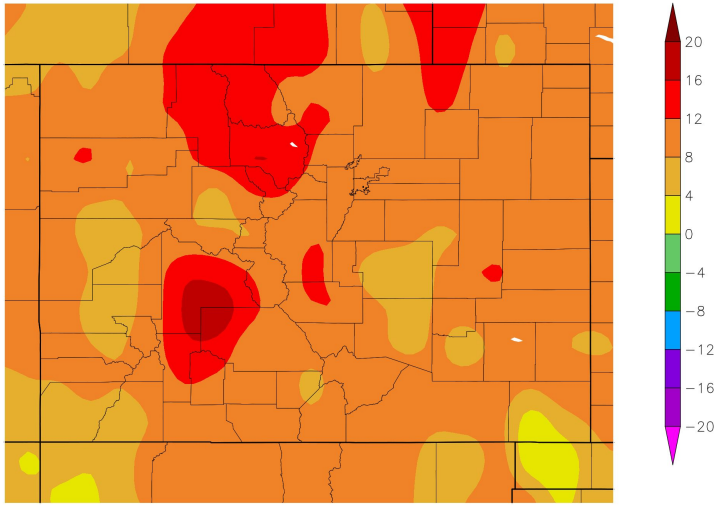
- 4 Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of south central Colorado, especially along the Continental Divide, the southeast mtns into southern portions of the southeast plains.
  - **No Change:** The rest of south central and southeast Colorado.
  - **Drought Improved:** N/A



Month to Date Temperature and Precipitation Departure

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

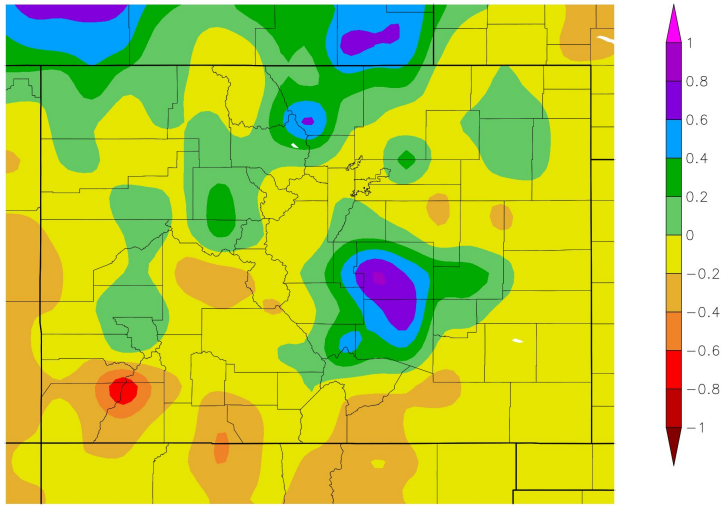
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
3/1/2026 – 3/6/2026



Generated 3/7/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
3/1/2026 – 3/6/2026



Generated 3/7/2026 using provisional data.

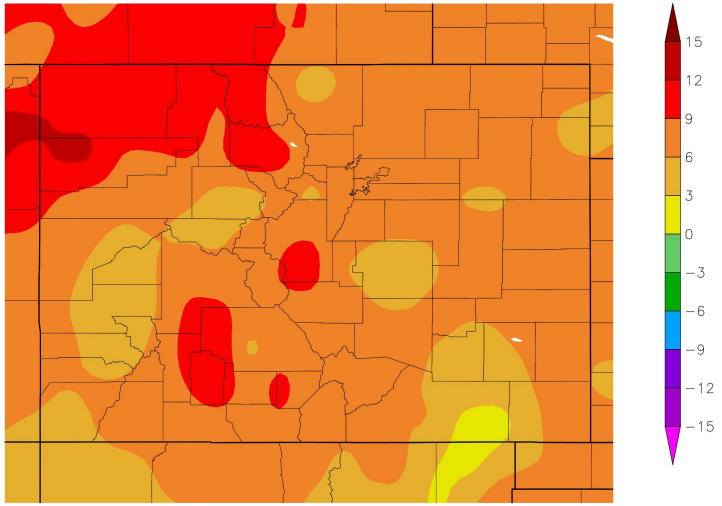
ACIS Web Services

March, thus far, has been very warm, with 2 quick moving weather systems bringing beneficial moisture to areas over and near the higher terrain.

Past 3 Month Temperature and Precipitation Departure

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

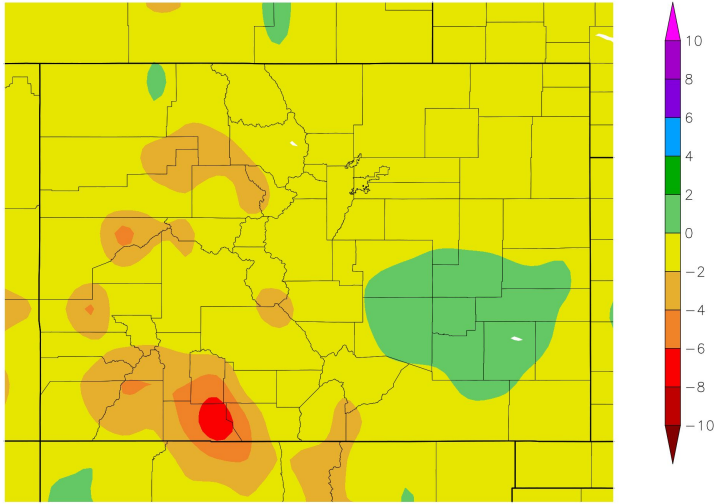
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
12/1/2025 – 2/28/2026



Generated 3/6/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
12/1/2025 – 2/28/2026



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ACIS Web Services

The Winter of 2025-2026 was very warm across SC and SE CO, with Alamosa and Colorado Springs experiencing their warmest winter on record. Pueblo experienced its 3rd warmest winter on record. One passing weather system at the beginning of December brought a period of cooler temperatures and some rain and snow to the area. January saw a few passing weather systems bringing precipitation and colder temperatures to the region, especially across Eastern Colorado, which saw an Arctic airmass at the end of the month. February was very warm and occasional windy, creating high fire danger and hazardous travel conditions at times, with areas of blowing dust.

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Statewide snowpack continues to run around aggregated historically low levels, with March 8th readings at 62 percent of median. March 8th snowpack readings in the Arkansas basin were at 48 percent of median while snowpack in the Rio Grande basin was at 52 percent of median.

Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moisture is running at to slightly below seasonal levels across south central and southeast Colorado. (CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking)

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Winter cured fuels and warm and dry conditions has led to increased fire danger across the snow free areas of south central and southeast Colorado. The likelihood for an earlier and lesser snow melt seasonal also adds to the potential for significant wildfires across Colorado.

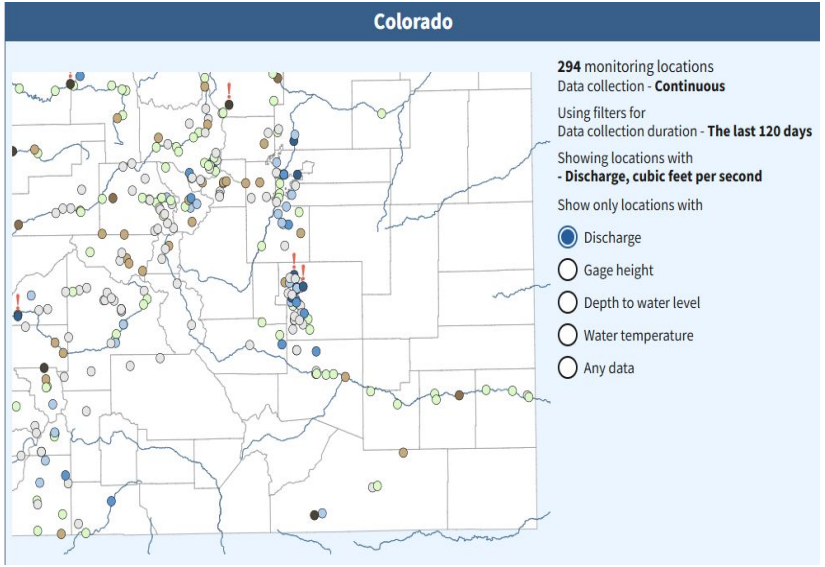
Mitigation Actions

- 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 stream flows are generally at and below seasonal normals across south central and southeast Colorado.
- NRCS data indicates **statewide mountain precipitation** for the month of February was 90 percent of median, as compared to 97 percent of median at this time last year. This brings statewide WY 2026 precipitation to 82 percent of median, as compared to 91 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, February precipitation was 72 percent of median, as compared to 67 percent of median at this time last year. This brings Arkansas basin WY 2026 precipitation to 77 percent of median, as compared to 98 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Upper Rio Grande basin**, February precipitation was 80 percent of median, as compared to 50 percent of median at this time last year. This brings Upper Rio Grande basin WY 2026 precipitation to 89 percent of median, as compared to 78 percent of median at this time last year.



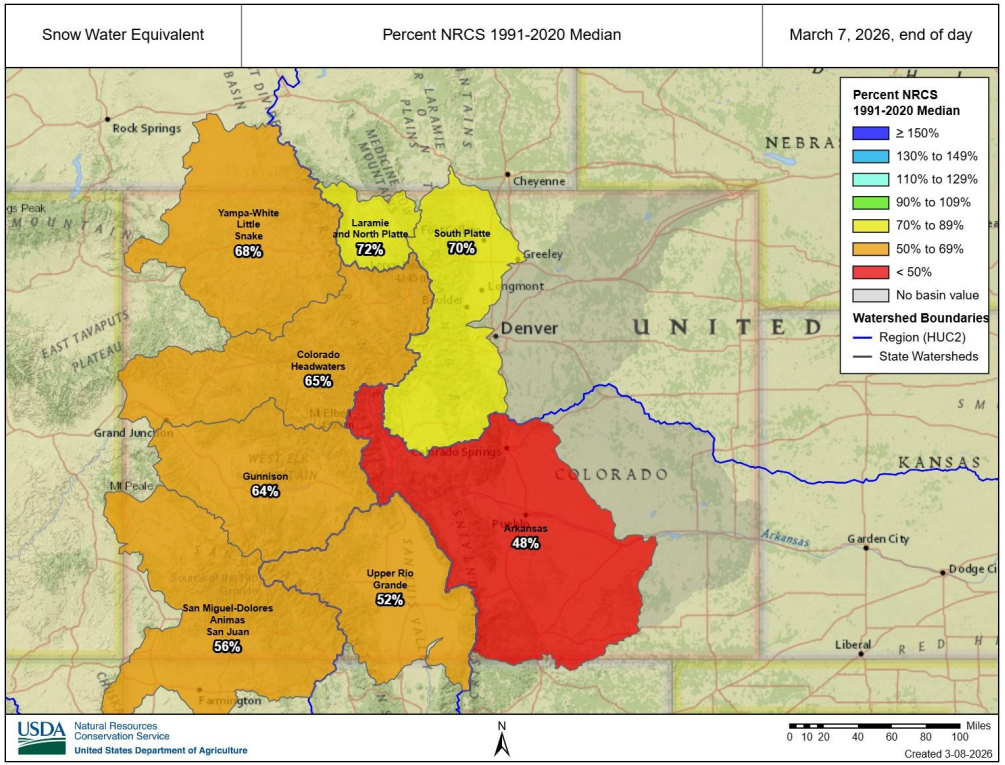
0-5 Extremely below	5-10 Much below	10-25 Below normal	25-75 Normal
75-90 Above normal	90-95 Much above	95-100 Extremely above	

USGS Colorado streamflow valid March 8th, 2026

Hydrologic Conditions Colorado Snowpack

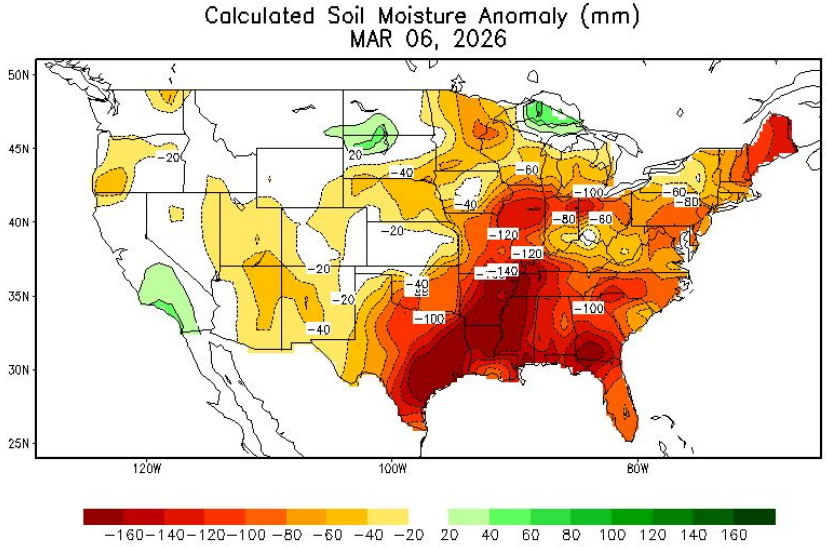
Links to Current NRCS Colorado Basin Report and NRCS Colorado Water Supply Outlook (January-June)

- On March 1st, NRCS data indicated Colorado Statewide Snowpack was at 60 percent of the 30 year median, as compared to 91 percent of median at this time last year. As of March 8th, statewide snowpack was at 62 percent of median. It was stated, even if we get typical March snowfall, this water year will set a new record low for snow water equivalent (SWE).
- March 1st snowpack in the Arkansas basin was at 46 percent of median, as compared to 79 percent of median at this time last year. As of March 8th, snowpack in the Arkansas basin was at 48 percent of median and was tracking at aggregated historical lows. Southern basins are lagging northern basins.
- March 1st snowpack in the Upper Rio Grande basin was at 51 percent of median, as compared to 63 percent of median at this time last year. As of March 8th, snowpack in the Upper Rio Grande basin was at 52 percent of median and was tracking near aggregated historical lows.



Agricultural and Water Supply Impacts

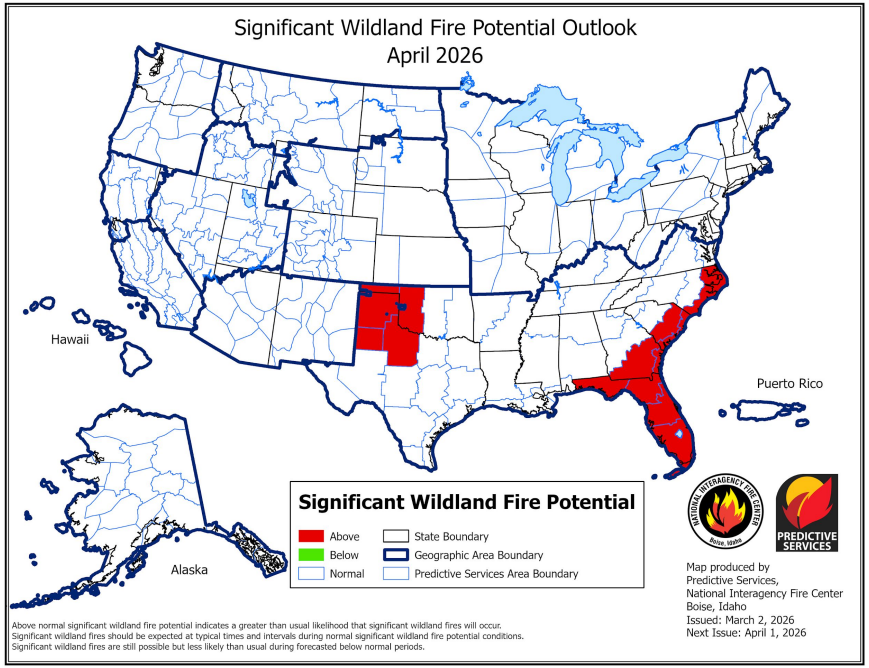
- The latest CPC data indicates soil moisture is running slightly below seasonal norms across portions of eastern and western Colorado.

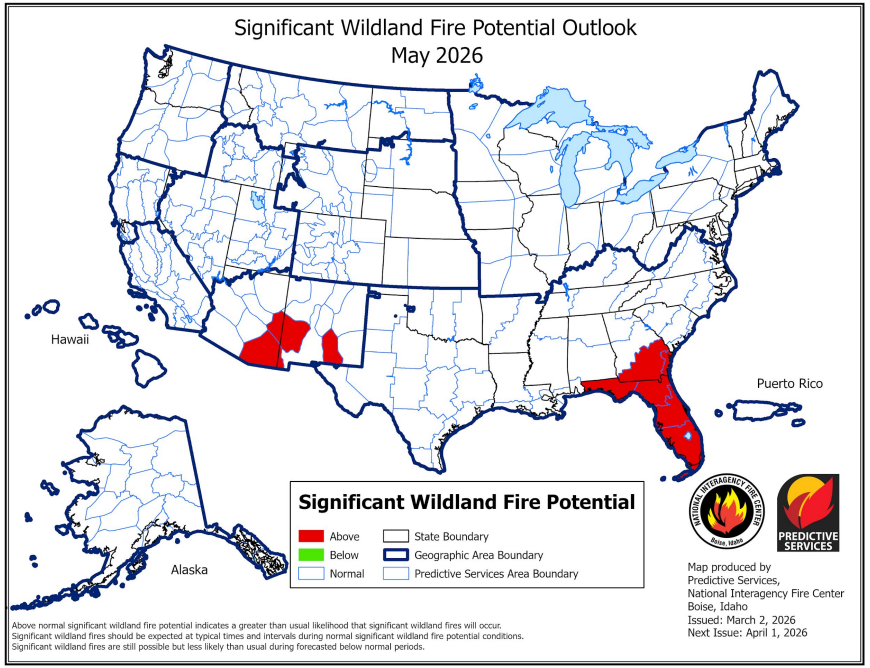


- NRCS data indicated **statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage** was at 87 percent of median at the end of February, as compared to 94 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, reservoir storage was at 99 percent of median at the end of February, as compared to 113 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Rio Grande basin**, reservoir storage was at 120 percent of median at the end of February, as compared to 121 percent of median at this time last year.

Fire Hazard Impacts

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

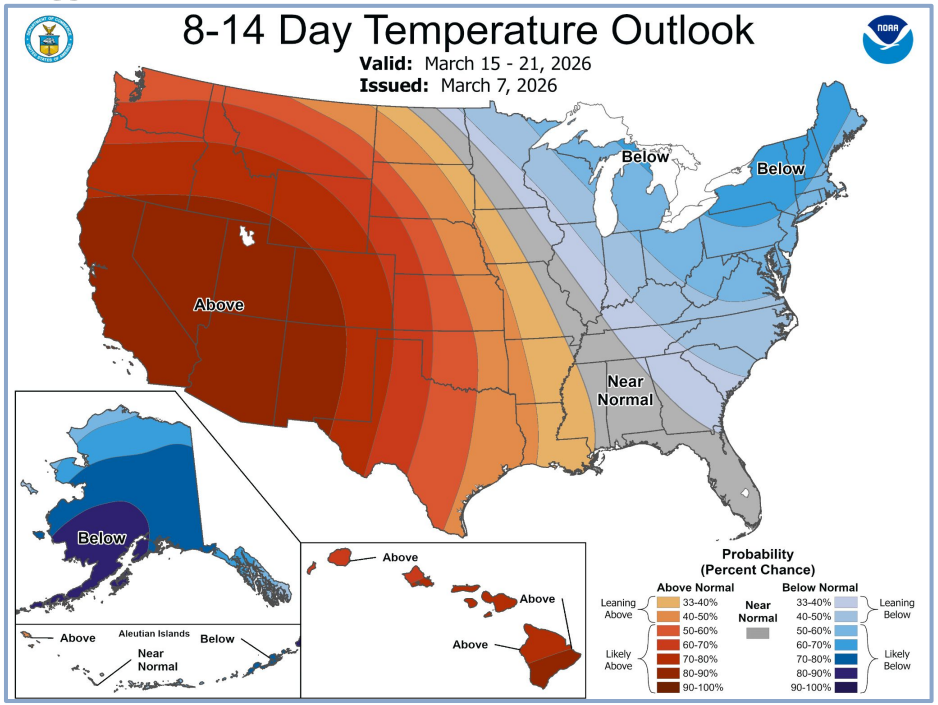


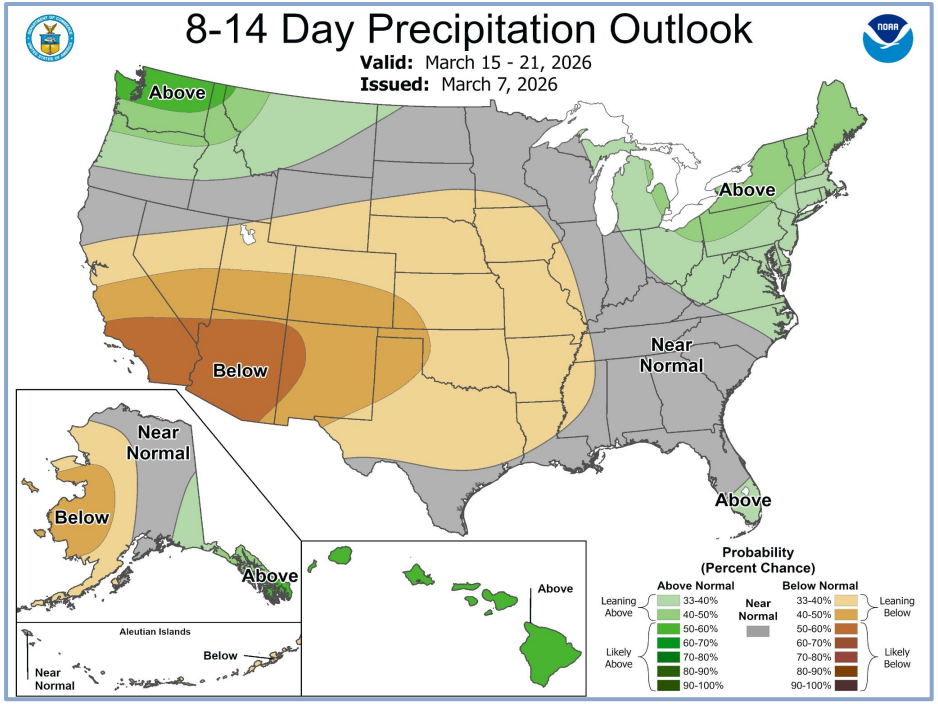


With drier than normal conditions predicted across southeast Colorado into the spring, the potential for significant wildland fires will continue to increase across south central and southeast Colorado, with an earlier and lesser snow melt season.

Monthly Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

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

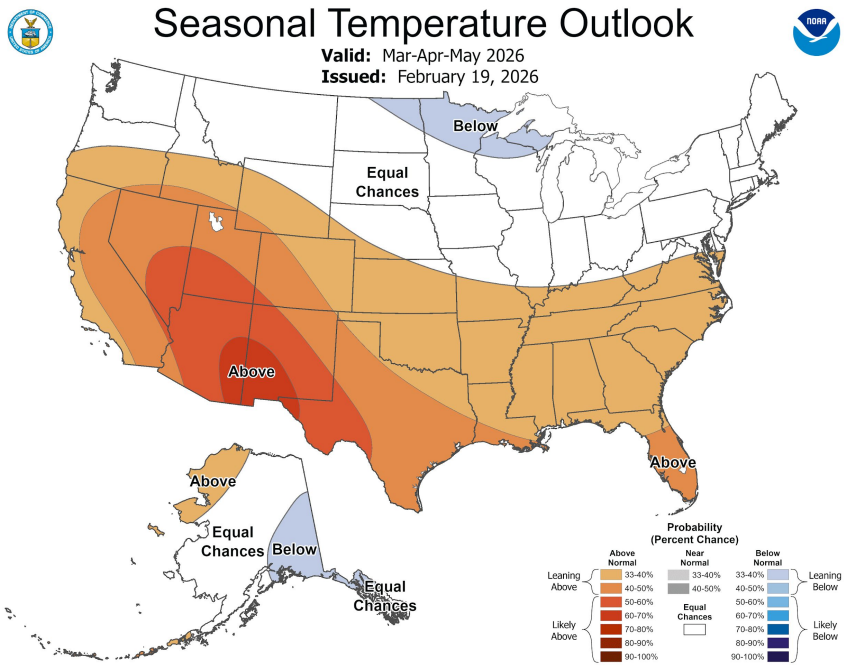


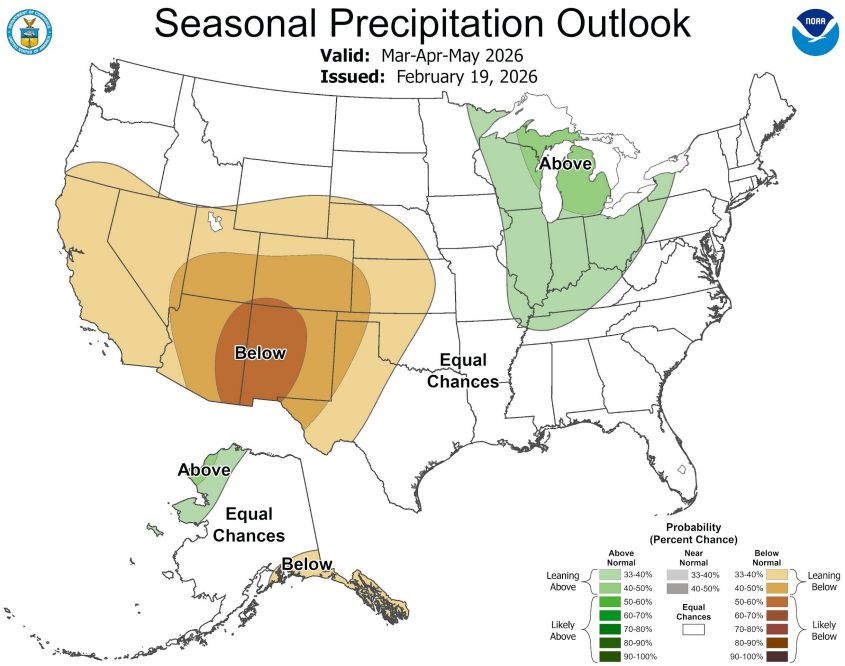


The CPC 8 to 14 day outlook, valid March 15th-21st, indicates better chances of above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation across south central and southeast Colorado, with continued broad west to northwest flow pattern. .

Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

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



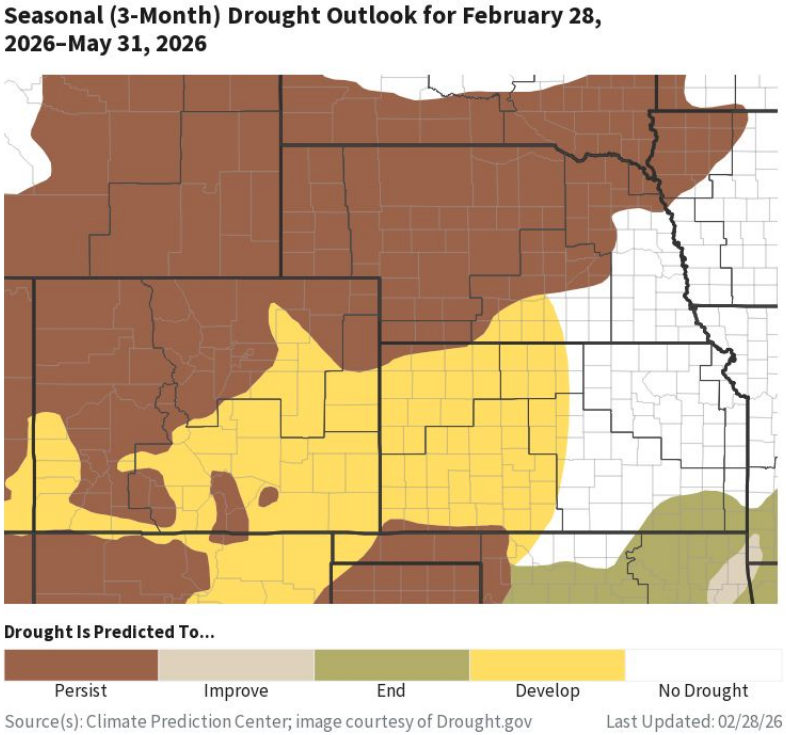


The CPC outlook for March through May supports warmer and drier conditions across much of southern Colorado with ENSO neutral conditions through the Spring, possible transitioning to El Nino conditions through the end of Summer into the Fall.

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 spring supports the development of drought conditions across south central and southeast Colorado through the early summer.



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