



# Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado

Valid March 10th, 2024

Issued By: NWS Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: [nws.pueblo@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.pueblo@noaa.gov)

- This product will be updated by April 11th, 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.





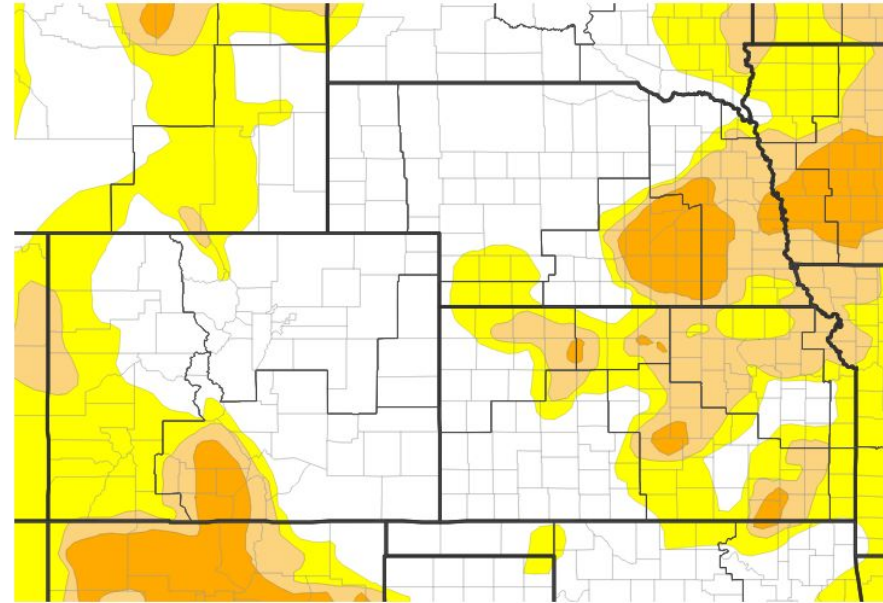
# U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Colorado

Valid Tuesday March 5th, 2024

- Drought intensity and Extent
  - **D4 Exceptional Drought:** N/A
  - **D3 Extreme Drought:** N/A.
  - **D2 Severe Drought:** Portions of Saguache, 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, Mineral, Fremont, Custer, Huerfano, and Las Animas counties.

## U.S. Drought Monitor



## U.S. Drought Monitor



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/05/24





# Recent Change in Drought Intensity

- Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - Drought Worsened: N/A.
  - No Change: Most of south central Colorado.
  - Drought Improved: Portions of the higher terrain along the Continental Divide, the San Luis Valley and southeast Mountains.

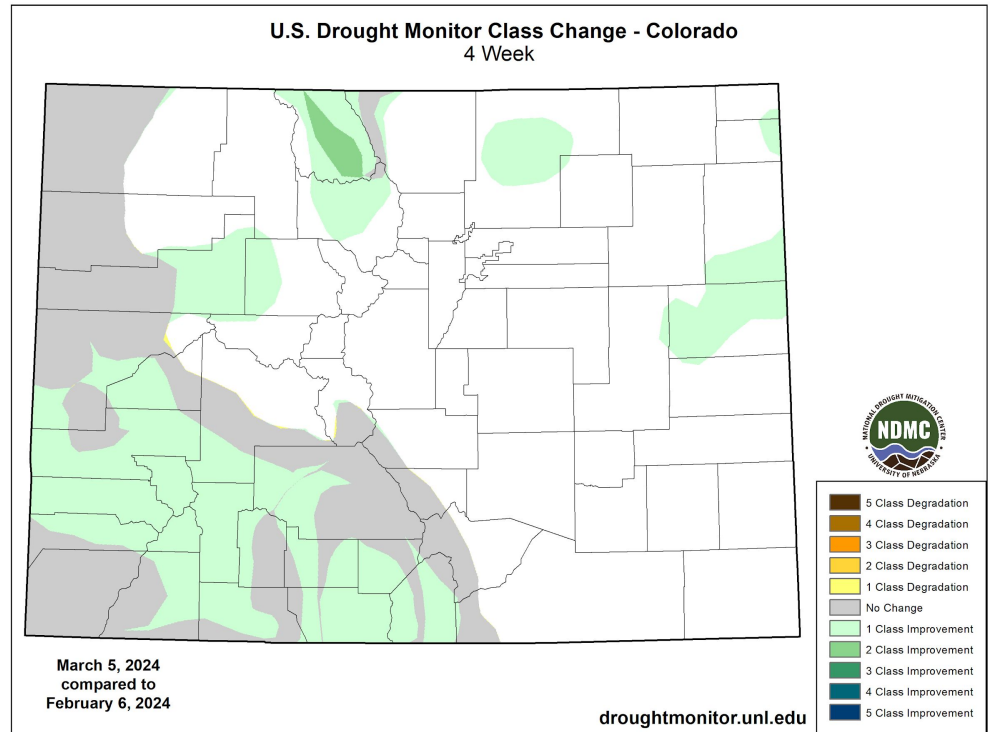


Image Caption: [Drought Monitor Colorado 4 Week Change Map](#)  
valid March 5th, 2024



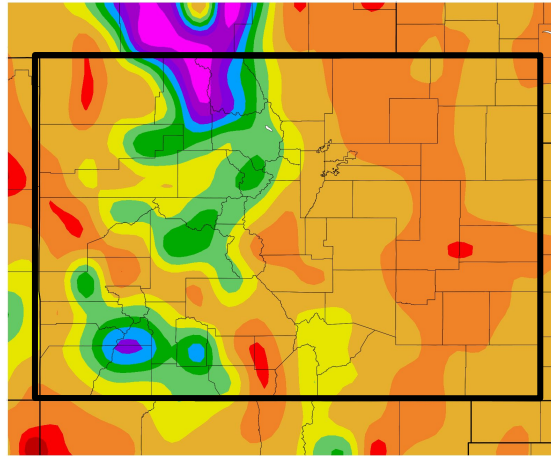


# Precipitation

Links to the latest [Precipitation Accumulation](#) and [Departure from Normal](#) over the past 90 days

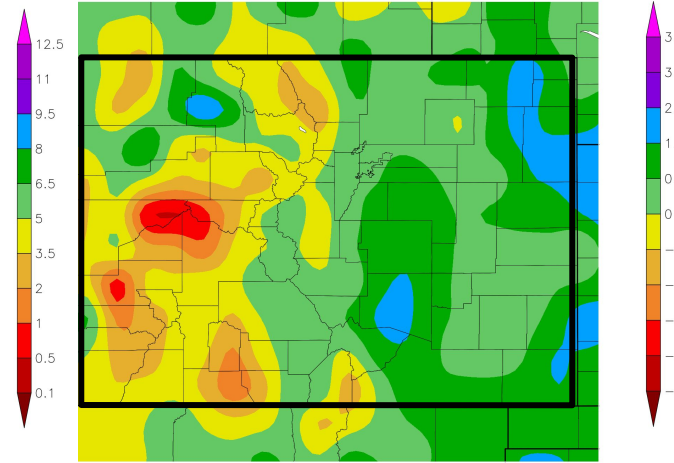
Winter precipitation (December of 2023 through February of 2024) was near to slightly below normal across south central Colorado and above to well above normal across southeast Colorado.

Precipitation (in)  
12/11/2023 - 3/9/2024



Generated 3/10/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)  
12/11/2023 - 3/9/2024



NOAA Regional Climate Centers 4 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Center



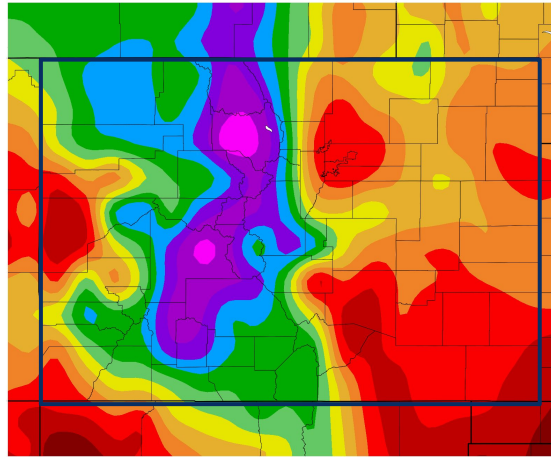


# Temperature

Links to High Plains RCC Maps for Colorado [Average Temp](#) and [Departure from Normal Temp](#) for the past 90 days

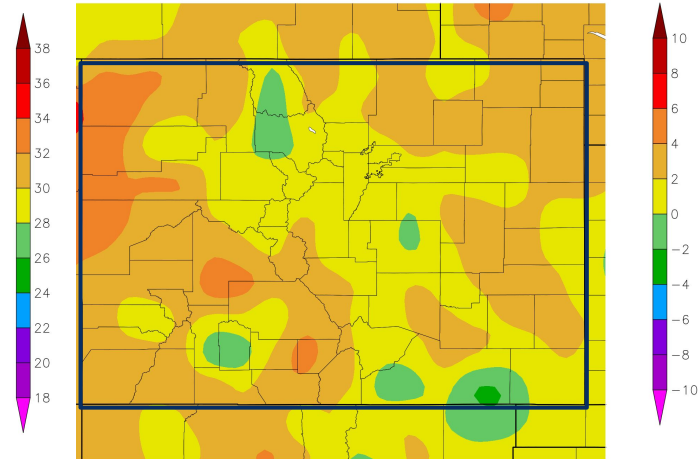
While a few passing weather systems brought spells of cold weather along with one “Arctic Blast” in mid January, most of south central and southeast Colorado saw above normal temperatures throughout the Winter of 2023-2024.

Temperature (F)  
12/11/2023 – 3/9/2024



Generated 3/10/2024 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
12/11/2023 – 3/9/2024



NOAA Regional Climate Centers <sup>3024</sup> 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

- Statewide snowpack increased to 97 percent of median at the end of February, with the greatest gains across the northern mountains and basins.

## Agricultural Impacts

- Beneficial moisture has improved soil moisture though some soil moisture deficits remain in place across portions of south central Colorado.

## Fire Hazard Impacts

- Despite the beneficial moisture, cured fuels and occasional bouts of strong winds, has led to increased fire danger across the snow free areas of south central and southeast Colorado, with several wildfires being reported across southeast Colorado over the past month.

## Mitigation Actions

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



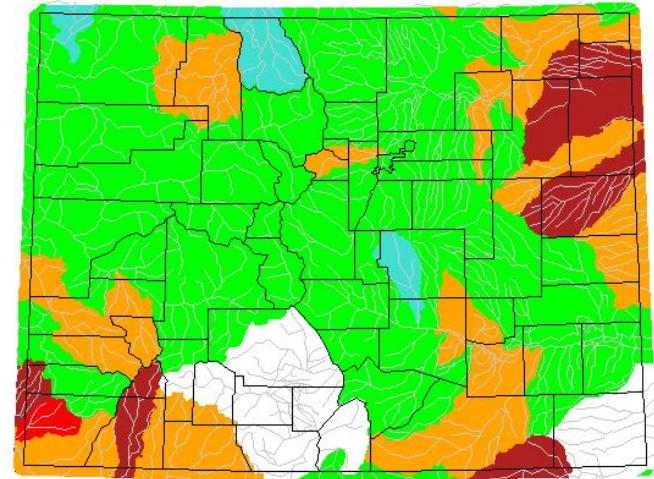


# Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

Links to [Current NRCS Mountain Precipitation](#) and [NRCS StreamFlow Forecast \(January-June\)](#)

Saturday, March 09, 2024

- 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 February was at 131 percent of median, as compared to 99 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is now at 95 percent of median, as compared to 114 percent at this time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, February precipitation came in at 143 percent of median, as compared to 89 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is up to 101 percent of median, as compared to 92 percent last year.
- In the **Upper Rio Grande basin**, February precipitation came in at 145 percent of median, as compared to 118 percent of median at this time last year. Water Year to date precipitation is now at 85 percent of median, as compared to 103 percent of median at this time last year.



USGS

Explanation - Percentile classes						
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High
	Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal	No Data

Image Caption: [USGS 7 day average streamflow for Colorado](#) valid March 9th, 2024





# Hydrologic Conditions Colorado Snowpack

Link to [NRCS Colorado Water Supply Outlook Report \(January-June\)](#)

- As of March 9th, [Colorado Statewide Snowpack](#) is running at 97 percent of median.
- In the [Arkansas basin](#), snowpack is at 89 percent of median. March 1st NRCS streamflow forecasts ranged from 58% of median at Huerfano River near Redwing to 110% of median at Chalk Creek near Nathrop.
- In the [Upper Rio Grande basin](#), snowpack was at 86 percent of median. March 1st NRCS streamflow forecasts ranged from 36% of median at Sangre de Cristo Creek to 94% of median for the Conejos River below the Platoro Reservoir.

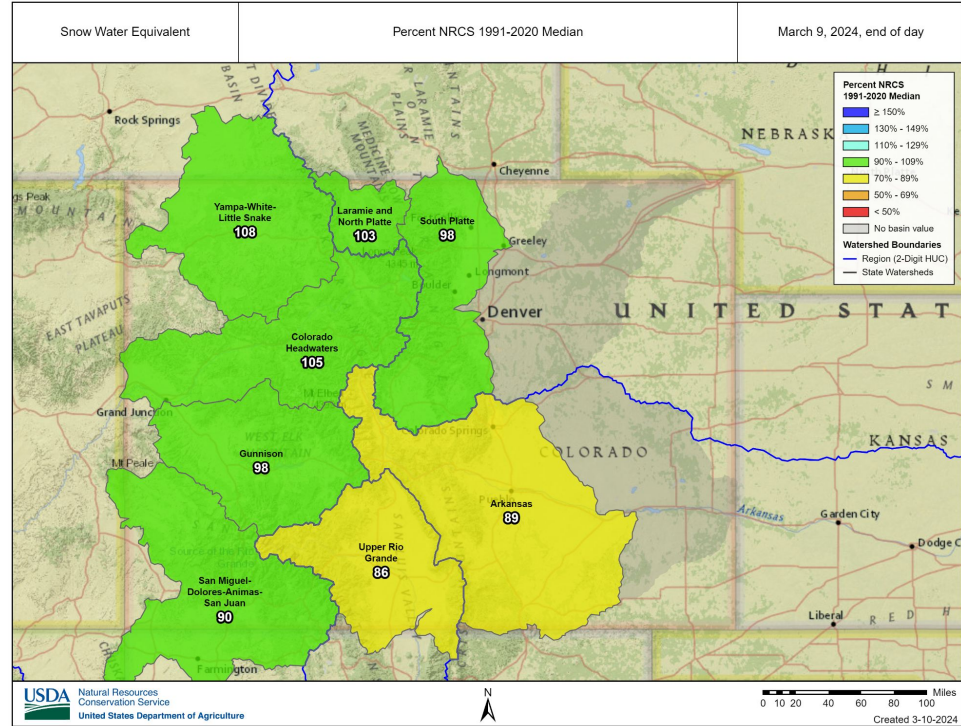


Image Caption: [NRCS Colorado SNOWTEL SWE % of Normal](#) valid March 9th, 2024







# Agricultural and Water Storage Impacts

Link to the latest [USDA Colorado Crop Progress and Condition Report](#)

- CPC data indicates some improvements in soil moisture with some deficits still in place across portions of the San Luis Valley.

Calculated Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile  
MAR 09, 2024

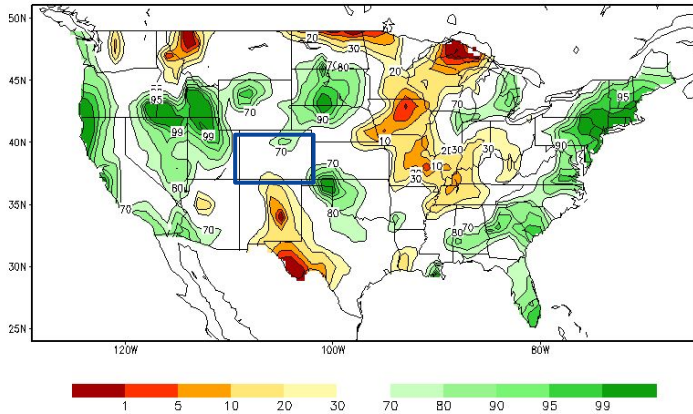


Image Caption: [CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking](#)  
valid March 9th, 2024

- NRCS data indicates [statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage](#) was at 100 percent of median at the end of February, as compared to 85 percent of median at this same time last year.
- In the Arkansas basin, reservoir storage was at 112 percent of median at the end of February, as compared to 91 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 February, 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](#).

- Warm and windy conditions in February, along with cured fuels has led to increased fire danger across the snow free areas of south central and southeast Colorado.

Link to [Latest Fire Restrictions across the state of Colorado](#)

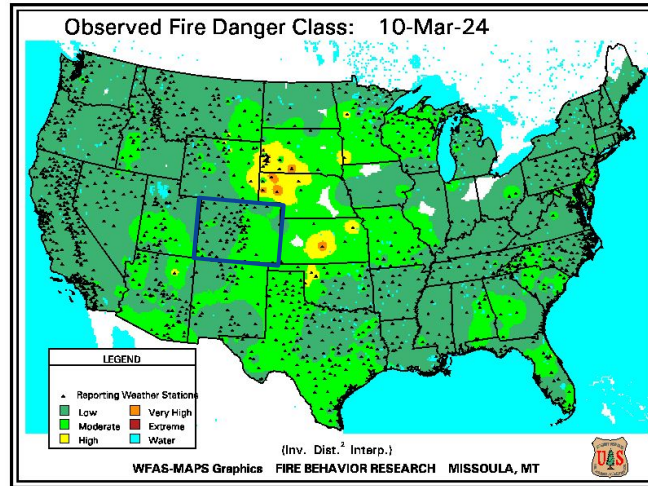


Image Caption: [Wildland Fire Assessment System Observed Fire Danger](#) valid March 10th, 2024

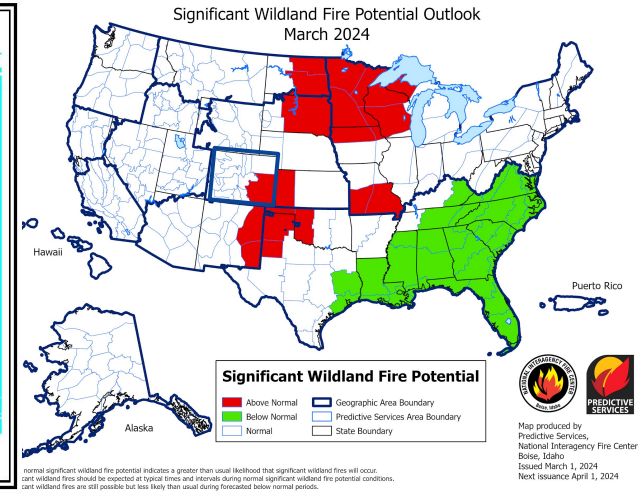


Image Caption: [NIFC Monthly Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook](#) valid March 2024

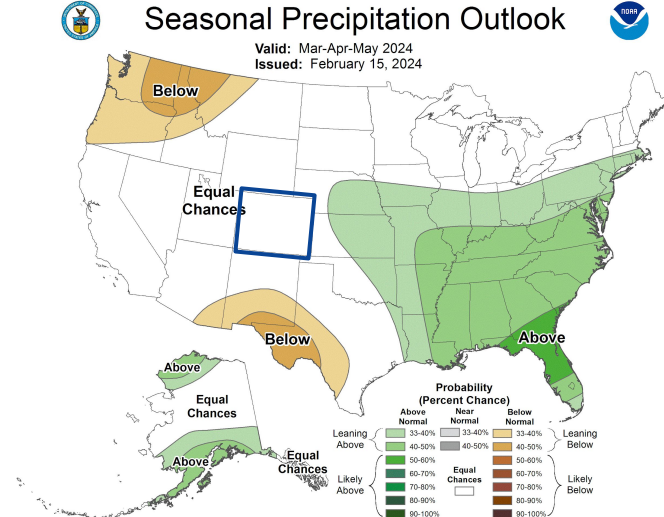
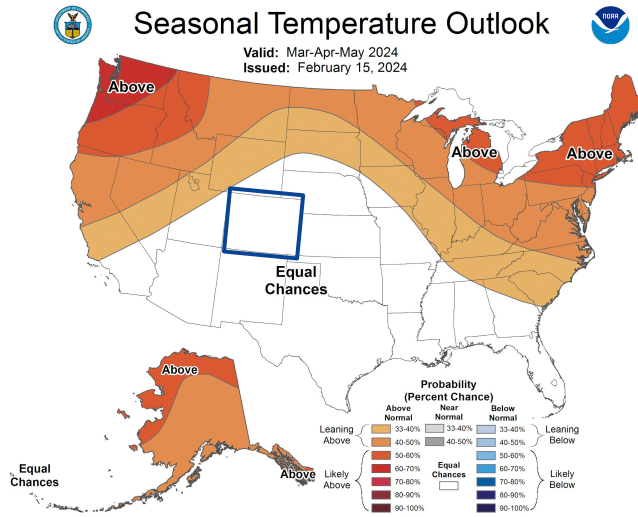




# Long-Range Outlooks

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

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



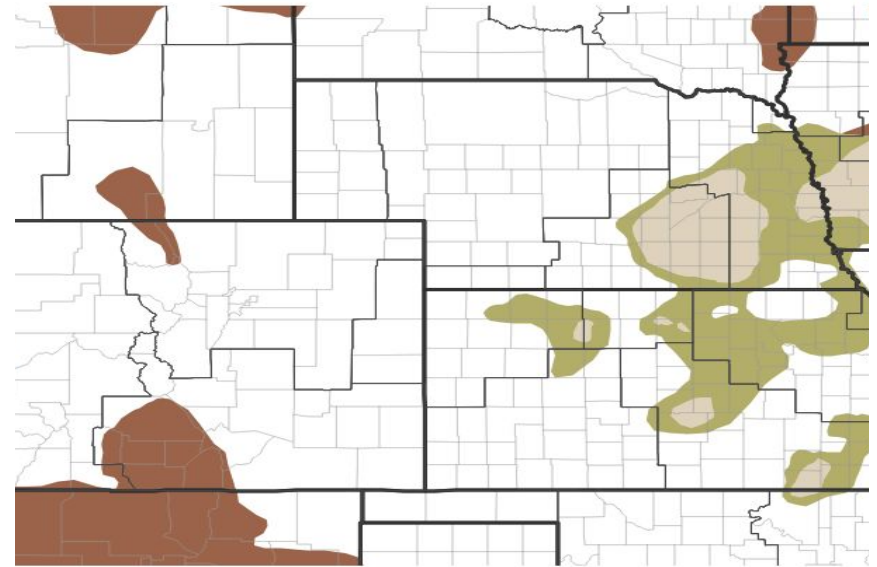


# Drought Outlook

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 March through May.

## Annual (3-Month) Drought Outlook



### What Is Predicted To...



Source: Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid:

Valid March 1st through May 31st, 2024

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

