



# Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado Valid May 12th, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Pueblo, Colorado

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

- This product will be updated by June 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.

- 96% of Colorado experiencing Moderate to Exceptional Drought conditions





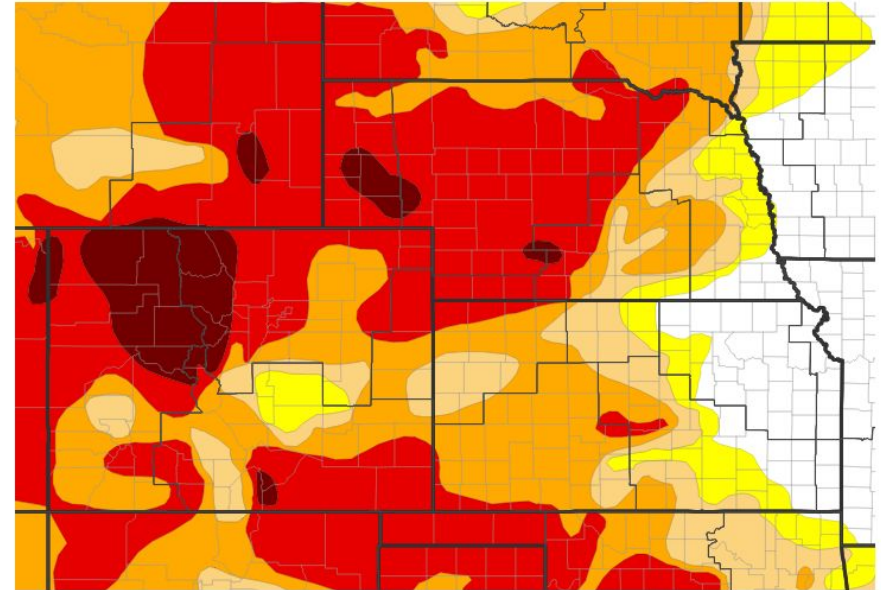
# U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- **Drought intensity and Extent**

- **D4 (Exceptional Drought):** Lake, northwestern Chaffee, eastern Costilla and western Huerfano and Las Animas counties.
- **D3 Extreme Drought:** Northern Chaffee, northern and southwestern Saguache, most of Mineral, western Rio Grande, western Conejos, eastern Costilla, the rest of Huerfano and Las Animas, southern Otero, southern Bent, southern Prowers, and Baca counties.
- **D2 Severe Drought:** Southern Chaffee, western and eastern Saguache, southwest Mineral, central Rio Grande, central Conejos, eastern Alamosa, western Fremont, Custer, central Costilla, southwestern and southeastern Pueblo, central and northern Otero, southern Crowley, the rest of Bent and Prowers, and the western 2/3rds of Kiowa counties.
- **D1 Moderate Drought:** Central Saguache, eastern Rio Grande and Conejos, the rest of Alamosa, western Costilla, central Fremont, northern Teller and El Paso, central Pueblo and Crowley, and northeastern Kiowa counties.
- **D0: Abnormally Dry:** Southern Teller and El Paso, eastern Fremont, and northern Pueblo and Crowley counties.

## U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 05/05/26



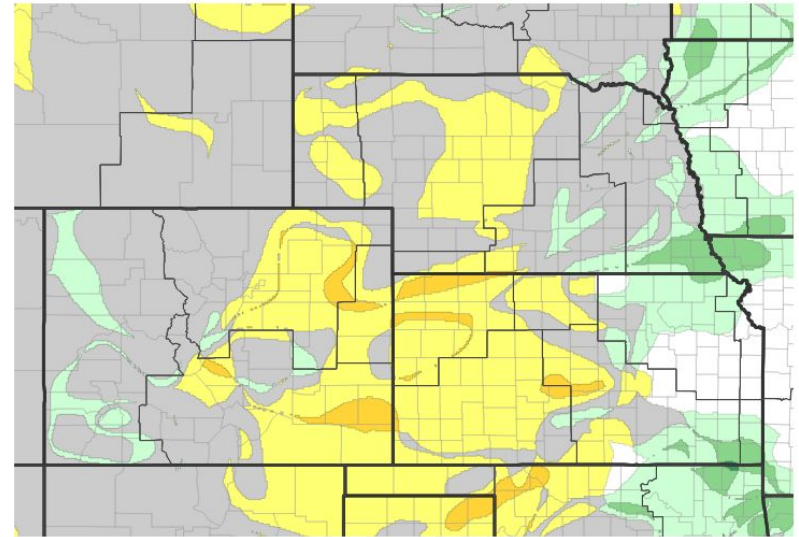


# Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest [4-week change map](#) for Colorado

- 4 Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
  - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of south central and southeast Colorado
  - **No Change:** Portions of south central and southeast Colorado
  - **Drought Improved:** Small pockets along the ContDvd and the southeast plains

U.S. Drought Monitor 4-Week Change Map



Drought Degradation



Drought Improvement



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

Data Valid: 05/05/26

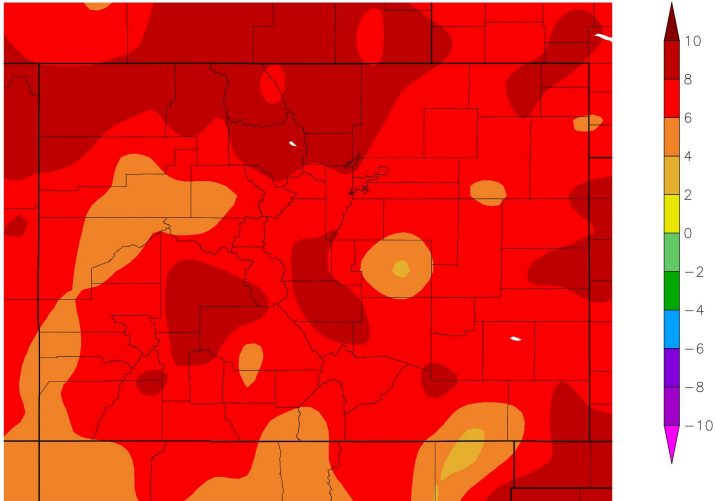




# Past 3 Month Temperature and Precipitation Departure

Links to the latest [HPRCC Mean Temperature](#) and [Precipitation](#) departures from normal over the past 3 months

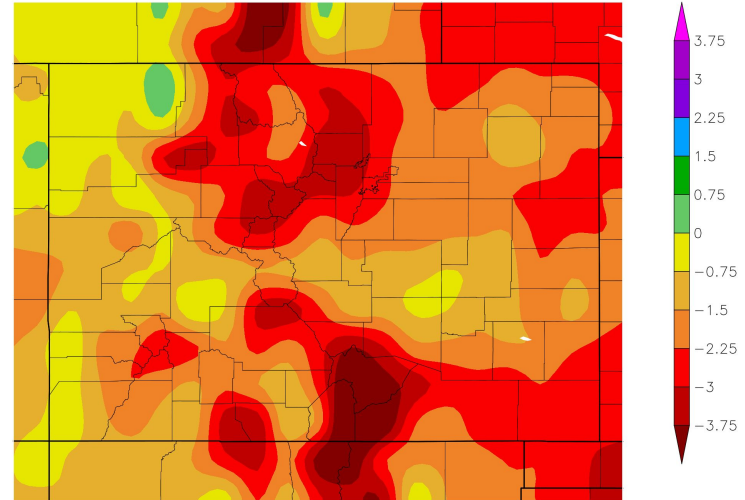
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
2/1/2026 – 4/30/2026



Generated 5/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)  
2/1/2026 – 4/30/2026



Generated 5/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

February was very warm and occasional windy, creating high fire danger and hazardous travel conditions at times, with areas of blowing dust. March started out unsettled, however, strong upper ridging through the 2nd half of the month, brought record shattering heat which quickly depleted the already record low snowpack across the state. While not as extreme as March, April was still unseasonably warm and dry, with a few passing weather systems bringing some beneficial precipitation to areas along the Continental Divide and portions of the plains, with breezy conditions bringing high fire danger to the high mountain valleys and immediate adjacent plains through much of the month.

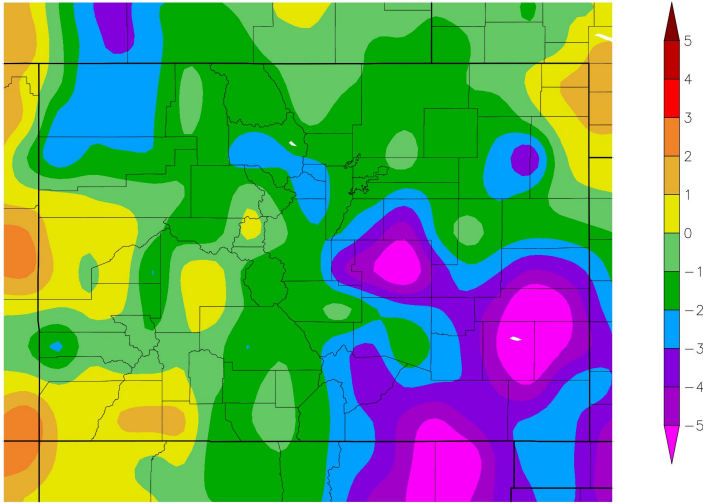




# Month to Date Temperature and Precipitation Departure

Links to the latest [HPRCC Mean Temperature](#) and [Precipitation](#) departures from normal month to date

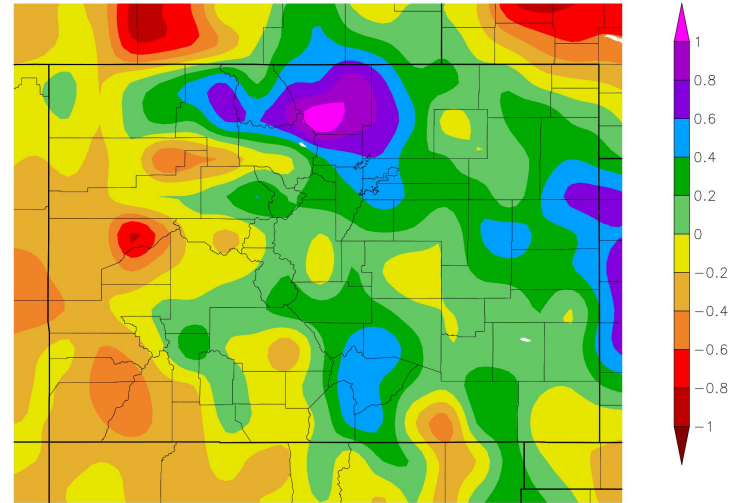
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
5/1/2026 – 5/10/2026



Generated 5/11/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)  
5/1/2026 – 5/10/2026



Generated 5/11/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

May, thus far, has been unseasonably cold, with a few quick moving weather systems bringing some beneficial moisture to areas over and near the higher terrain and portions of the southeast plains.





# Summary of Impacts

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

## Hydrologic Impacts

- Despite statewide April precipitation running around 90 percent of median, statewide snowpack remains at historically low levels, as peak snowpack levels are running 3 to 5 weeks ahead of historical peak timing. Current melt out dates are running from 19 to 63 days ahead of median statewide, with median departure of 43 days.
- Streamflow runoff forecasts remain well below normal levels, with many streams already experiencing peak flows from snowmelt runoff.

## Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moisture is running below seasonal levels across south central and southeast Colorado. ([CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking](#))

## Fire Hazard Impacts

- Warm and dry conditions has led to increased fire danger across south central and southeast Colorado. The earlier snowmelt season will bring an increased potential for significant wildfires across Colorado into the early Summer.

## Mitigation Actions

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

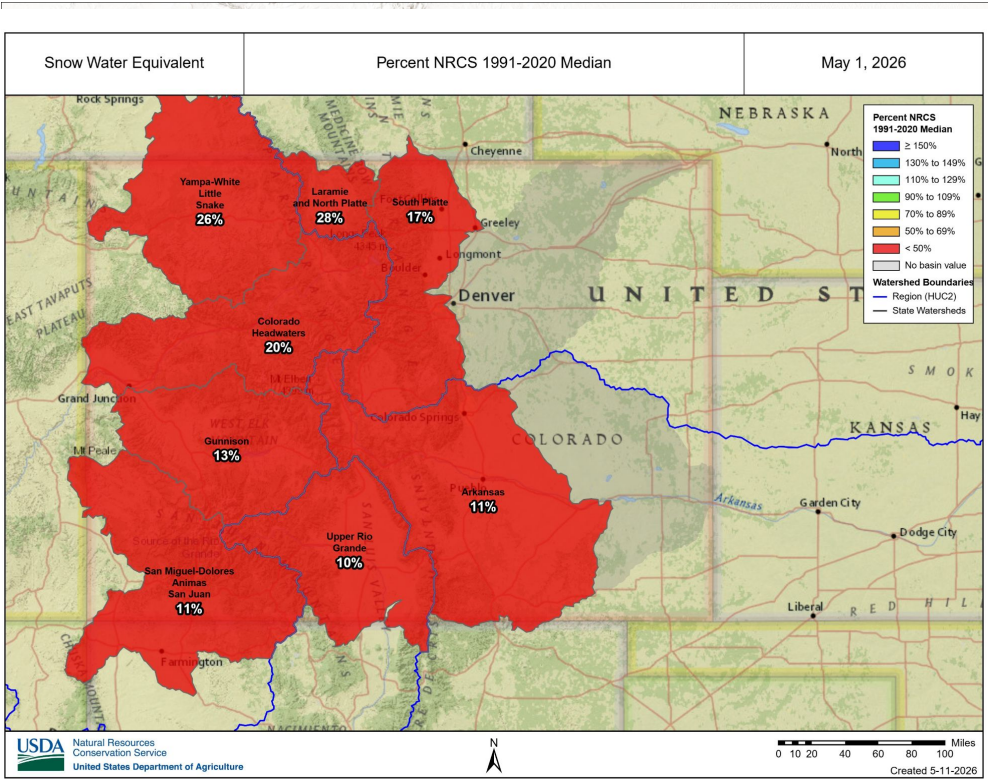




# Hydrologic Conditions Colorado Snowpack

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

- On May 1st, NRCS data indicated [Colorado Statewide Snowpack](#) was at 20 percent of the 30 year median, as compared to 57 percent of median at this time last year.
- May 1st snowpack in the [Arkansas basin](#) was at 11 percent of median, as compared to 42 percent of median at this time last year.
- May 1st snowpack in the [Upper Rio Grande basin](#) was at 10 percent of median, as compared to 19 percent of median at this time last year.





# May 1st 2026 Runoff Forecasts

Percent of Normal, April-September Runoff Volume

## Arkansas River Basin

- May 1st runoff forecasts remain **Well Below Normal**
- Conditions degrade further southward for streams draining from the east slope of the Sangre de Cristos

Forecast Location	Percent of 30-yr Normal
<b>Arkansas River</b>	
Granite, CO	36%
Salida, CO	36%
Cañon City, CO	35%
above Pueblo Reservoir	34%
<b>Chalk Creek</b>	
Nathrop, CO	31%
<b>Grape Creek</b>	
near Westcliffe, CO	21%
<b>Huerfano River</b>	
near Redwing, CO	29%
<b>Cucharas River</b>	
Boyd Ranch near La Veta, CO	19%
<b>Purgatoire River</b>	
Trinidad, CO	17%







# May 1st 2026 Runoff Forecasts

## Percent of Normal, May-September Runoff Volume

Forecast Location	Percent of 30-yr Normal
<b>Rio Grande</b>	
Thirty Mile Bridge	35%
Wagon Wheel Gap	34%
Del Norte, CO	36%
<b>South Fork Rio Grande</b>	
South Fork, CO	27%
<b>Saguache Creek</b>	
near Saguache, CO	42%
<b>Alamosa River</b>	
above Terrace Reservoir	28%
<b>La Jara Creek</b>	
Gallegos Ranch near Capulin	30%
<b>Conejos River</b>	
below Platoro Reservoir	31%

## Rio Grande Basin

- Runoff Outlook slightly more favorable for rivers and streams draining from the eastern San Juans and La Garitas
- Extremely below normal outlook for most streams draining from the west slope of the Sangre de Cristos

<b>Conejos River contd.</b>	
Mogote, CO	25%
<b>Ute Creek</b>	
Fort Garland, CO	4%
<b>Sangre de Cristo Creek</b>	
Fort Garland, CO	1%
<b>Trinchera Creek</b>	
above Turner Ranch	1%
<b>Culebra Creek</b>	
San Luis, CO	9%

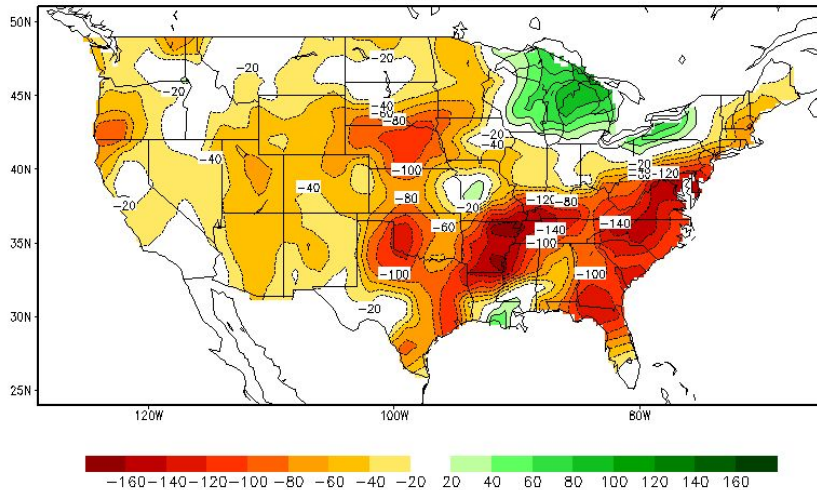




# Agricultural and Water Supply Impacts

- The latest CPC data indicates soil moisture is running below seasonal norms across south central and southeast Colorado

Calculated Soil Moisture Anomaly (mm)  
MAY 10, 2026



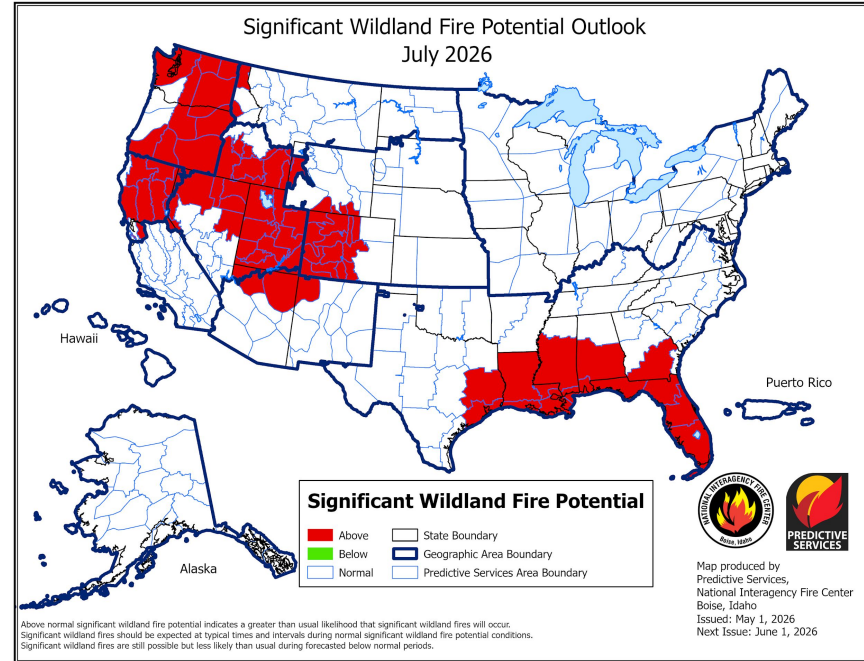
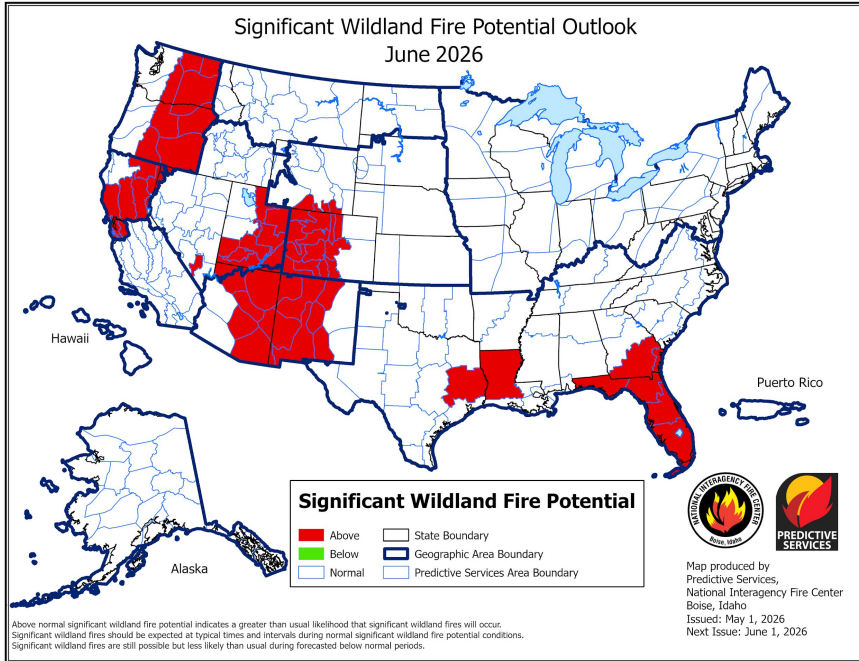
- NRCS data indicated [statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage](#) was at 85 percent of median at the end of April, as compared to 89 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the [Arkansas basin](#), reservoir storage was at 100 percent of median at the end of April, as compared to 108 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the [Rio Grande basin](#), reservoir storage was at 101 percent of median at the end of April, as compared to 117 percent of median at this time last year.





# Fire Hazard Impacts

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



With warmer and drier than normal conditions predicted across southeast Colorado into the summer, the potential for significant wildland fires will continue to increase across south central and southeast Colorado.





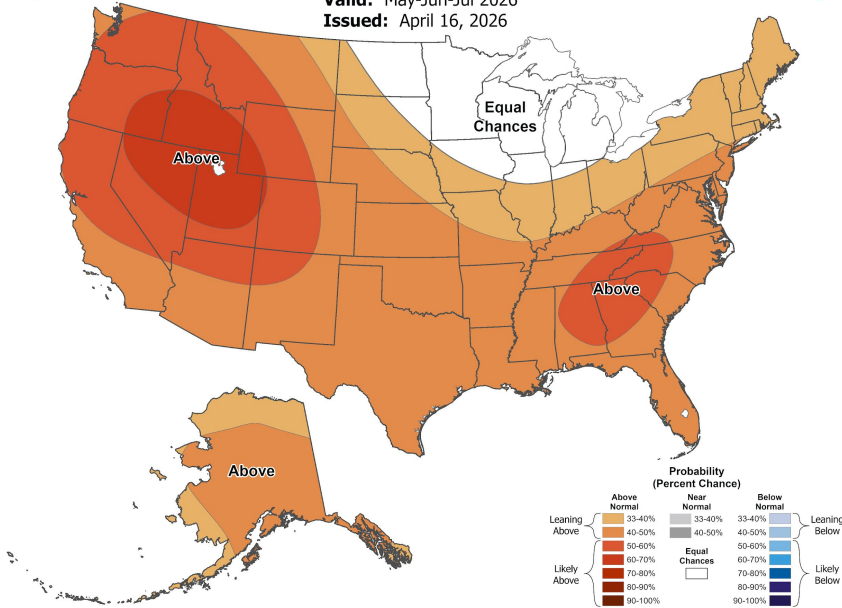
# Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

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



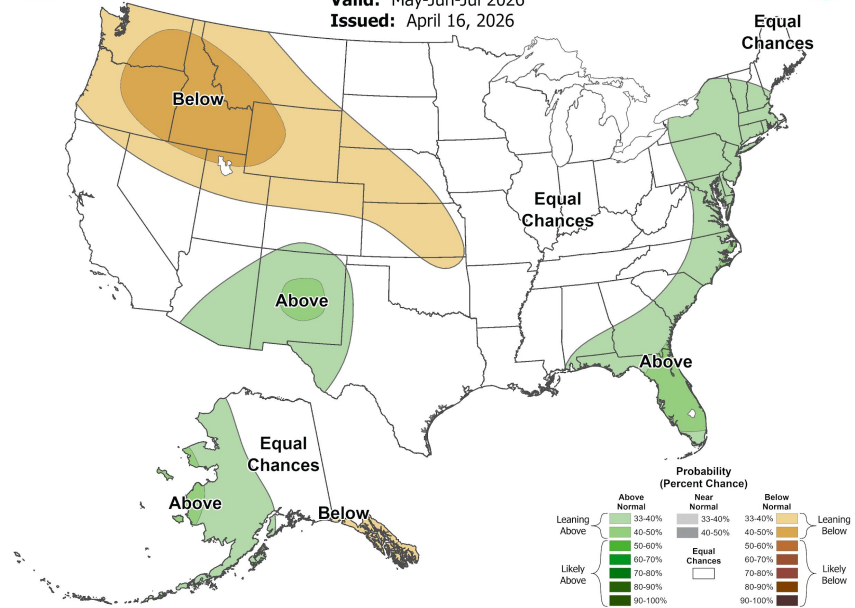
## Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: May-Jun-Jul 2026  
Issued: April 16, 2026



## Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: May-Jun-Jul 2026  
Issued: April 16, 2026



The CPC outlook for May through July supports warmer conditions with near normal precipitation across most of south central and southeast Colorado.



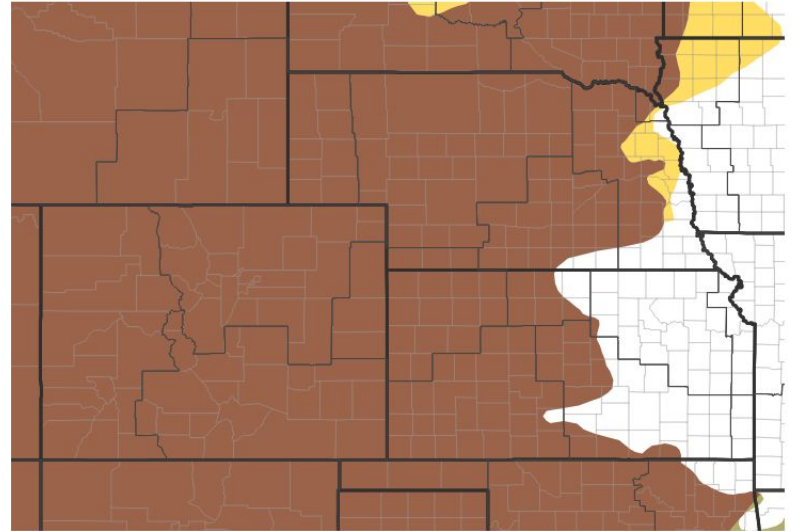


# Drought Outlook

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.

## Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for April 30, 2026–July 31, 2026



### Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 04/30/26

Links to the latest:

- [Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

