



Drought Information Statement for South Central and Southeast Colorado Valid September 17th, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: nws.pueblo@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated by October 16th, 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 and southeast Colorado, with some improvement from monsoonal rains





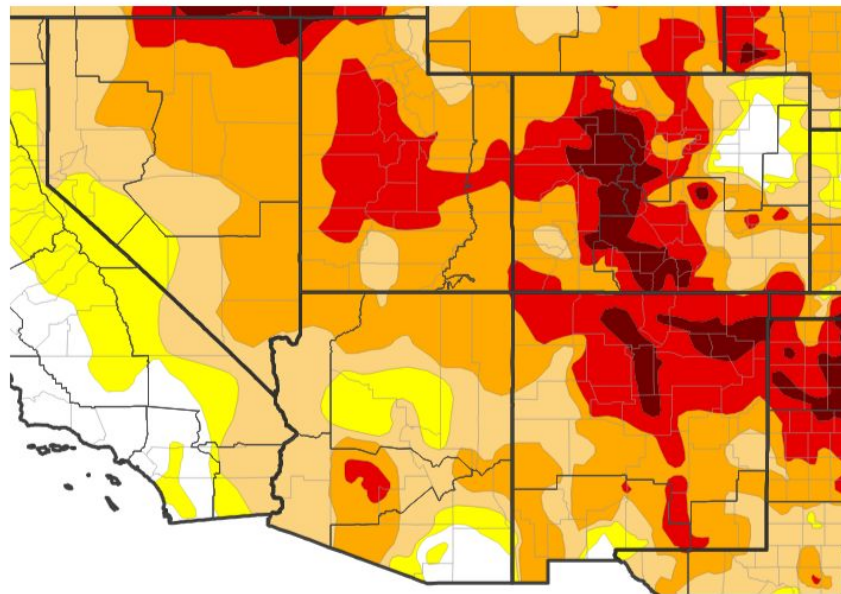
U.S. Drought Monitor

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

- **Drought intensity and Extent**

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

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 09/15/26



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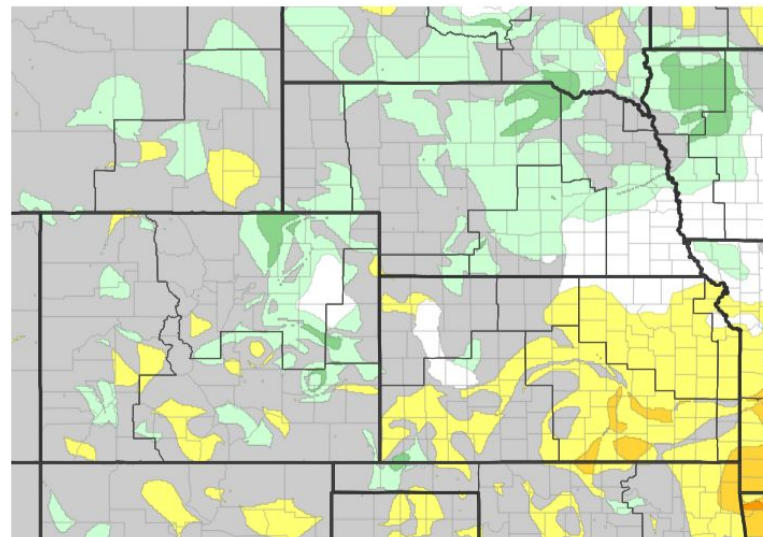


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

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

- 4 Week Drought Monitor Class Change.
 - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of the San Luis Valley, central El Paso county and portions of the southeast Plains.
 - **No Change:** Much of south central and southeast Colorado
 - **Drought Improved:** Pockets along the Palmer Dvd and portions across 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

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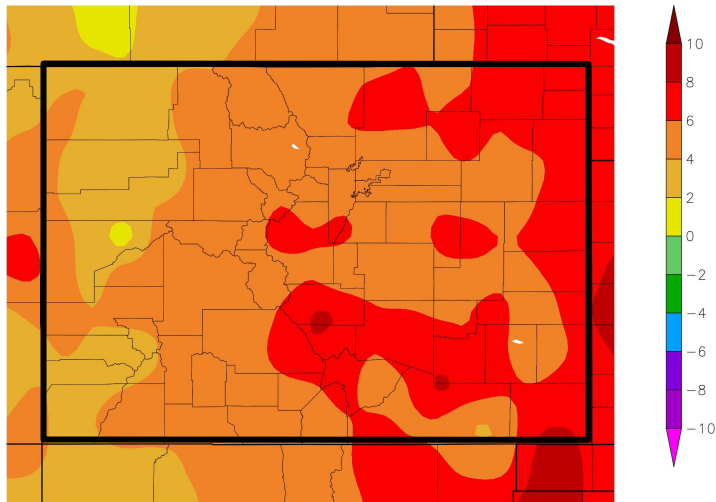
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Month to Date Temperature and Precipitation Departure

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

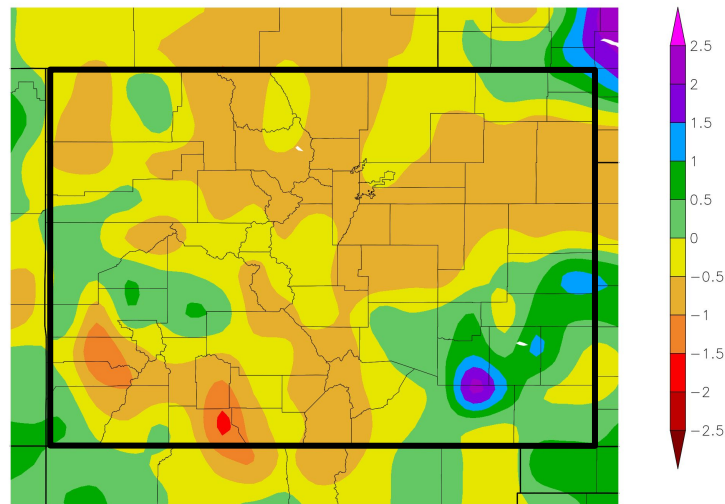
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
9/1/2026 – 9/16/2026



Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)
9/1/2026 – 9/16/2026



Generated 9/17/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

September thus far, has been unseasonably warm across south central and southeast Colorado, with periods of monsoonal moisture bringing some beneficial rainfall to the region, especially across the southeast Plains.



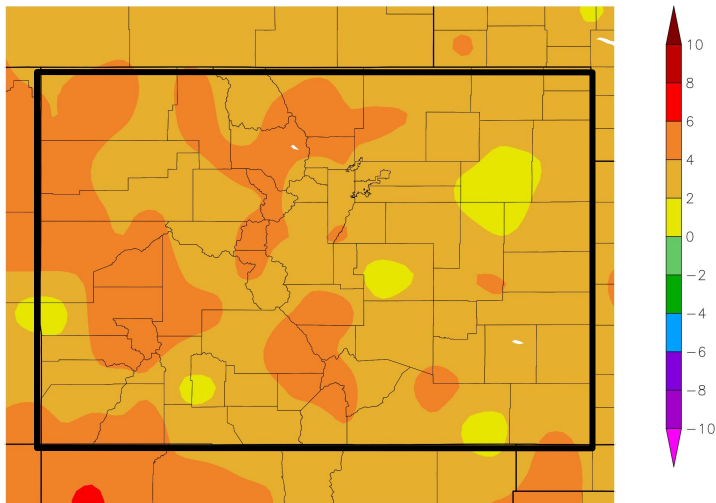


Summer 2026 Temperature and Precipitation Departure

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

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)

6/1/2026 – 8/31/2026

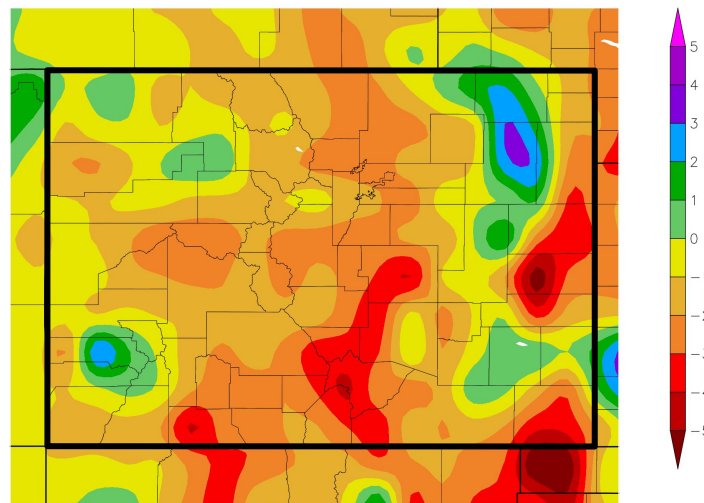


Generated 9/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)

6/1/2026 – 8/31/2026



Generated 9/10/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

The Summer of 2026 (June, July, August) started out generally warm and dry across south central and southeast Colorado, with passing weather systems through the middle and end of June bringing some precipitation across the higher terrain, along with periods of severe thunderstorms across the southeast Plains. July saw record breaking heat through the middle and end of the month, especially across the SE plains, with smoke from wildfires prevalent throughout much of the beginning of the month. Monsoonal moisture worked into the region towards the middle and end of July, bringing periods of heavy rains, as well as extensive flash flooding on Aspen Acres burn area. August remained unseasonably warm across SC and SE Colorado, with periods of monsoonal moisture bringing some beneficial moisture to the region, especially across the southeast Plains.



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Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Monsoonal moisture and periods of heavy rain continue to bring big fluctuations to daily area streamflow, however, general streamflow conditions across south central and southeast Colorado remain below seasonal levels.
- Statewide reservoir storage continues to drop, which continues to limit boating and recreation on some area lakes.

Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moisture continues to be below seasonal levels across most of south central and southeast Colorado. ([CPC Daily Soil Moisture Ranking](#))

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Precipitation and generally light wind regimes associated with the summer monsoon have helped to lower fire danger across the region. However, some area fuels remain critical, with some [area fire restrictions](#) still in place.

Mitigation Actions

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

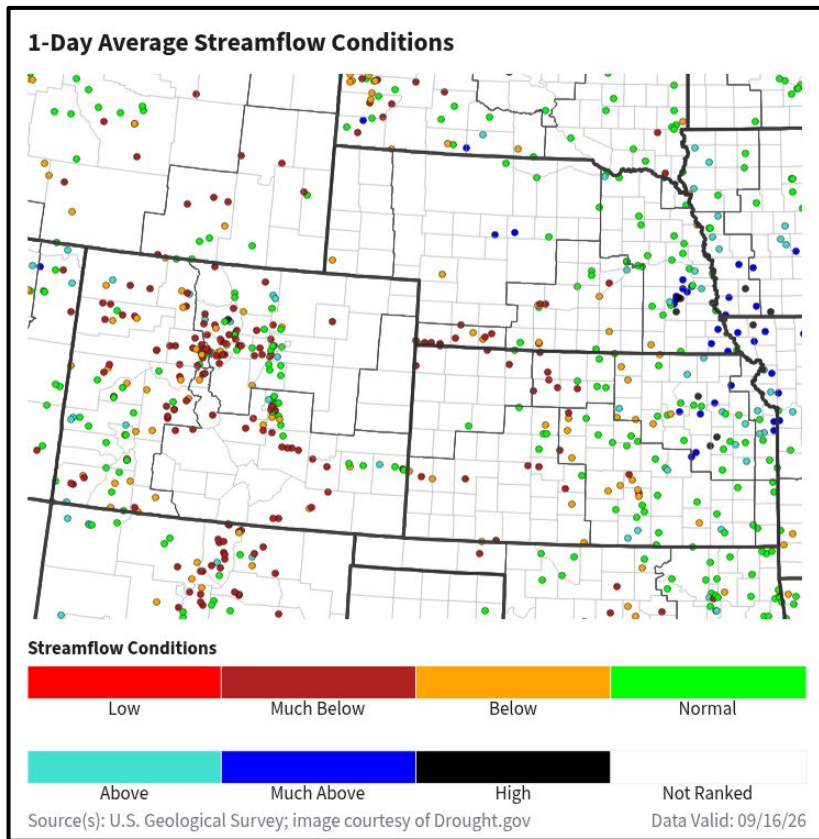




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

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

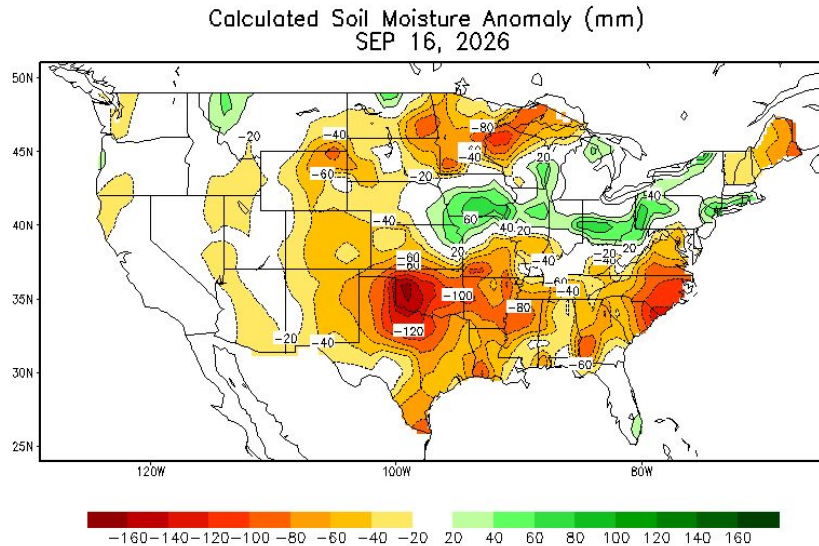
- Monsoonal moisture and periods of heavy rain continue to bring big fluctuations to daily area streamflow, however, general streamflow conditions across south central and southeast Colorado remain below seasonal levels.
- NRCS data indicates **statewide mountain precipitation** for the month of **August was 83 percent of median**, as compared to 85 percent of median at this time last year. This brings **statewide WY 2026 to date precipitation to 77 percent of median**, as compared to 84 percent of median at the same time last year.
- In the **Arkansas basin**, **August precipitation was 74 percent of median**, as compared to 97 percent of median at this time last year. This brings **Arkansas basin WY 2026 to date precipitation to 66 percent of median**, as compared to 94 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the **Upper Rio Grande basin**, **August precipitation was 60 percent of median**, as compared to 76 percent of median at this time last year. This brings **Upper Rio Grande basin WY 2026 to date precipitation to 75 percent of median**, as compared to 84 percent of median at this time last year.





Agricultural and Water Supply Impacts

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



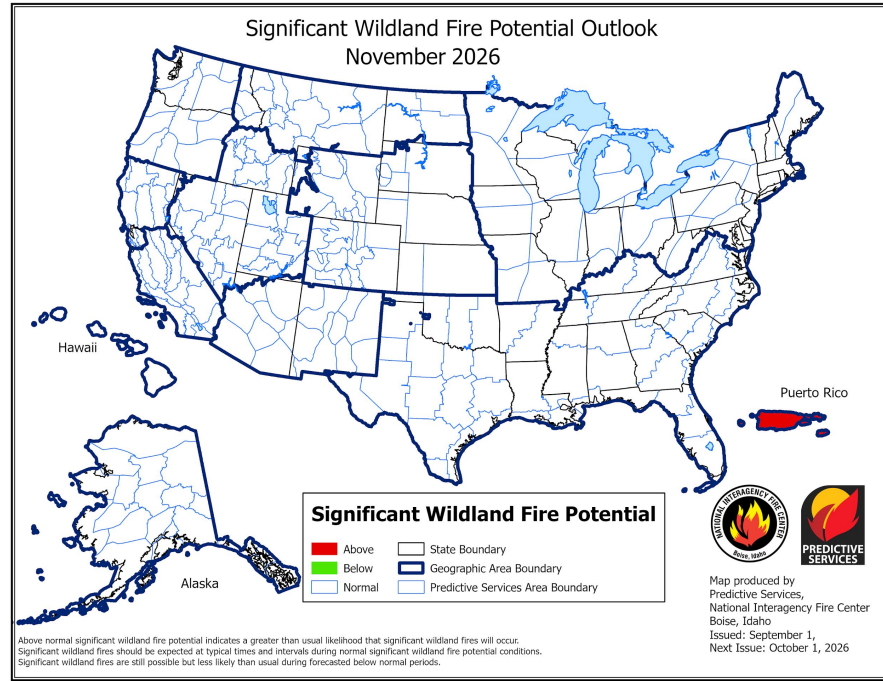
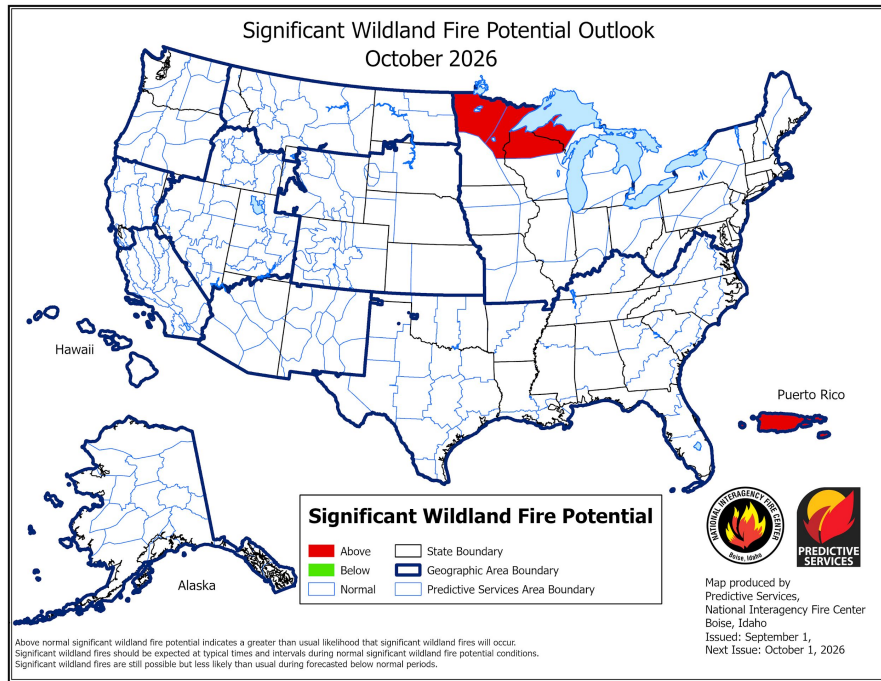
- NRCS data indicated [statewide Colorado Reservoir Storage](#) was at 56 percent of median at the end of August, as compared to 77 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the [Arkansas basin](#), reservoir storage was at 76 percent of median at the end of August, as compared to 100 percent of median at this time last year.
- In the [Rio Grande basin](#), reservoir storage was at 89 percent of median at the end of August, as compared to 101 percent of median at this time last year.





Fire Hazard Impacts

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



Increased precipitation and generally light wind regimes associated with the summer monsoon have helped to lower fire danger across the region. However, some area fuels remain critical, with some area fire restrictions still in place.



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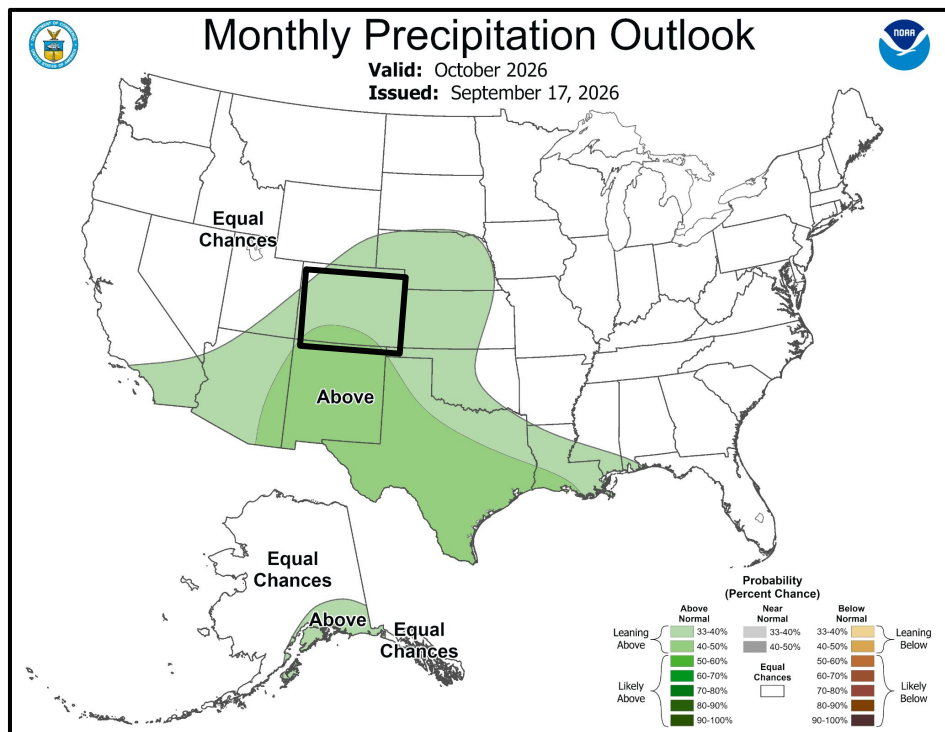
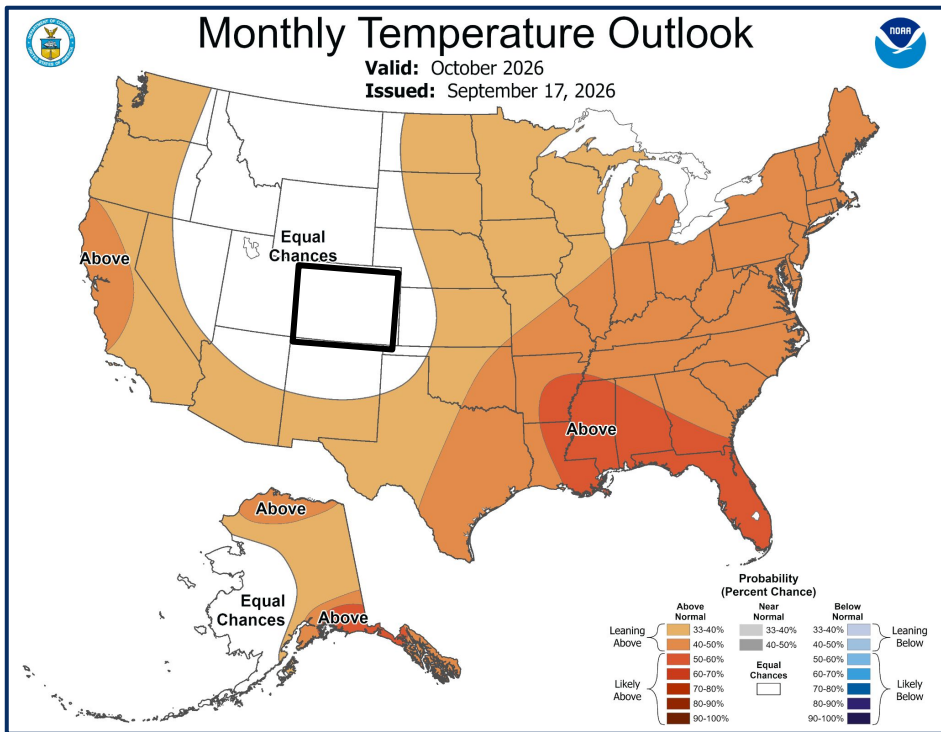
Link to [Latest Fire Restrictions across the state of Colorado](#)

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Monthly Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](https://cpc.ncep.noaa.gov)



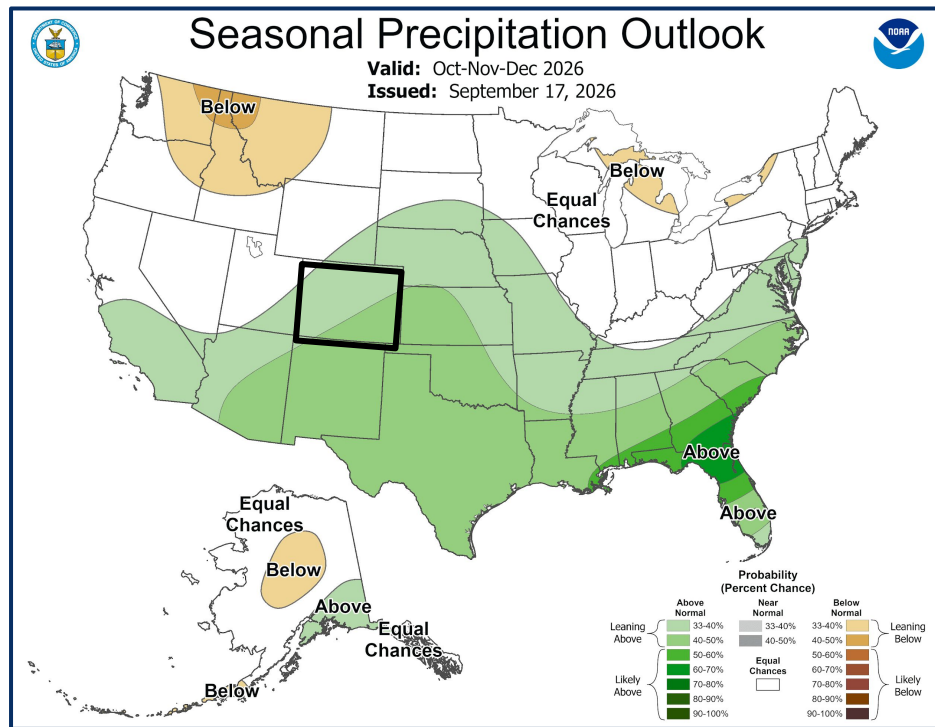
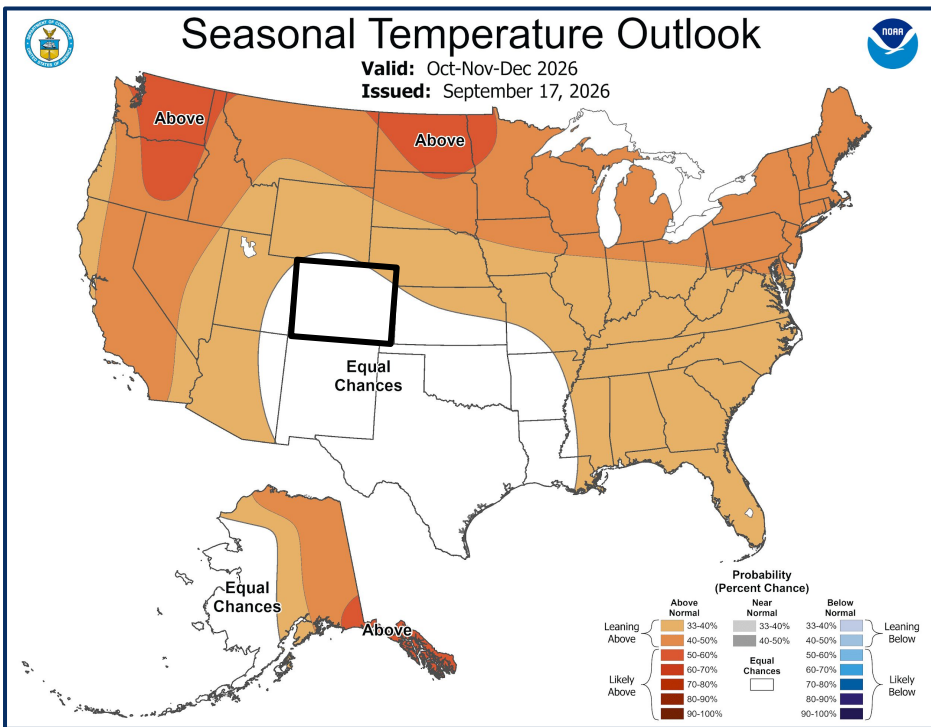
The CPC outlook for October indicates equal chances of above, below and near normal temperatures across south central and southeast Colorado, as well as good chances of above normal precipitation.





Seasonal Temperature and Precipitation Outlook

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



The CPC outlook for October through December indicates better chances for wetter than normal conditions across south central and southeast Colorado, along with equal chances of above, below and near normal temperatures.



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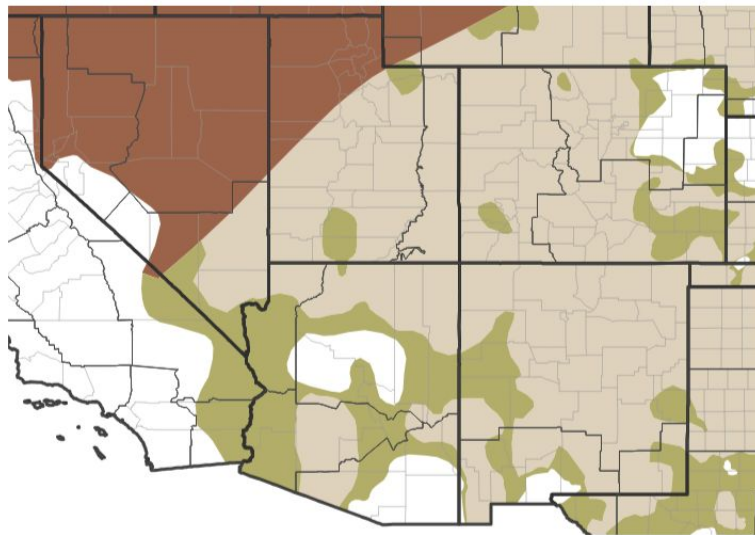


Drought Outlook

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

The potential for wetter conditions into early winter (October through December) supports the CPC forecast for improving drought conditions across all of south central and southeast Colorado.

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for September 17, 2026–December 31, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 09/17/26

Links to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)



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