



Colorado CoCoRaHS

Because Every Drop Counts!

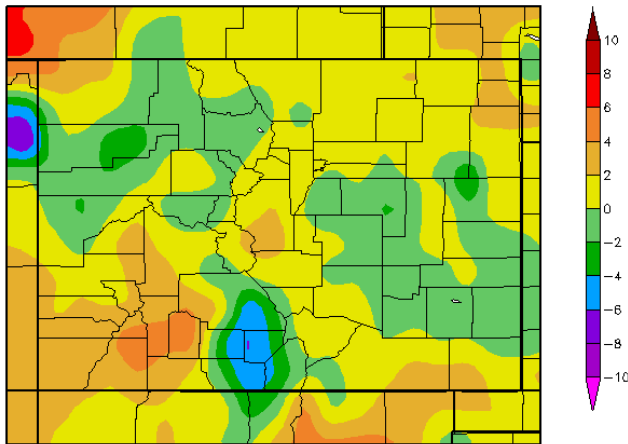
February 2014
Volume 2, Issue 2

JANUARY BRINGS A THAW

After a chilly December for most of Colorado, things warmed up last month. For some areas, it was notable. On January 18th, Grand Junction's temperature climbed above 40°F for the first time in 51 days. It was the second longest stretch of weather less than 40°F on record.

normal for precipitation during the month. But keep in mind, January is pretty dry in many areas, especially east of the mountains. In Denver for example, the average precipitation is 0.41" and the city recorded 0.94" ... it makes for a pretty impressive map when looking at the departure from normal. And while it is impressive and very nice to see, if we saw these colors after a month like May, June or July, it would be a much bigger deal!

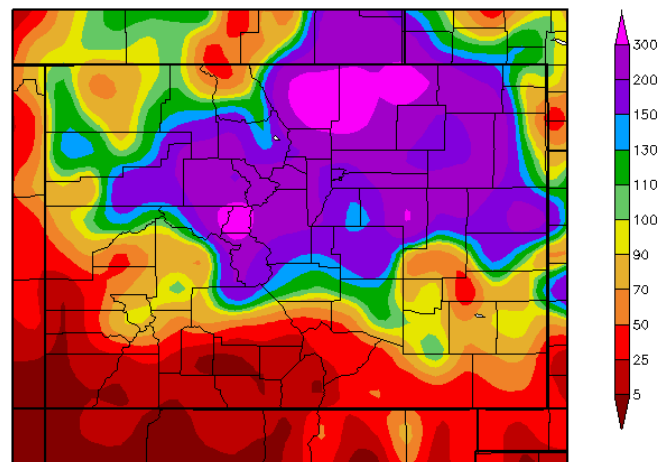
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
1/1/2014 - 1/31/2014



Generated 2/11/2014 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
1/1/2014 - 1/31/2014



Generated 2/11/2014 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

The San Luis Valley remained colder than normal. They maintained snow cover on the ground for the entire month; mainly a result of the big snow that fell in the last half of November. The rest of the state was within a degree or two on either side of where it should be during the first month of the year.

JANUARY PRECIPITATION

With the exception of the southern third of Colorado, much of the state was at or above

TIME TO LOOK AT STATE SNOWPACK

It's the time of year where meteorologists, climatologists and people in the water industry pay very close attention to how much snow is sitting in the high mountains. Since Colorado is one of only two states in the United States where no significant amounts of water flow into or through, it is critical to monitor snowpack on a weekly



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basis. Here is how quickly things can change with regard to snowpack in the high country...

The following two maps show statewide snowpack in the 8 major river basins of Colorado on January 22nd and January 28th. As you can see, one dry week can really make the numbers go the wrong direction!

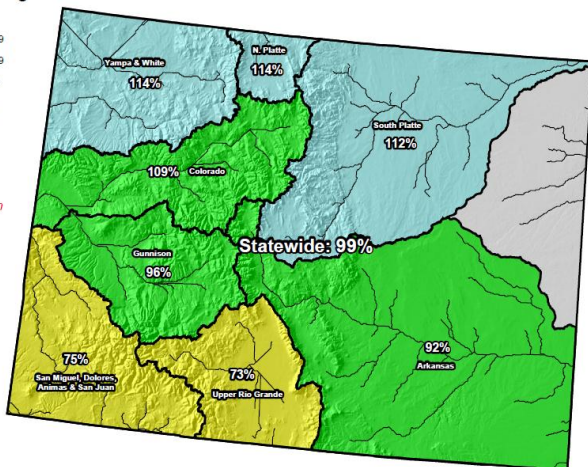
But then look at the map from February 12th, after a huge mountain snow event that had a moisture connection straight off the coast of Hawaii! (called the Pineapple Express)

Colorado SNOTEL Snowpack Update Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision



Current as of Jan 22, 2014

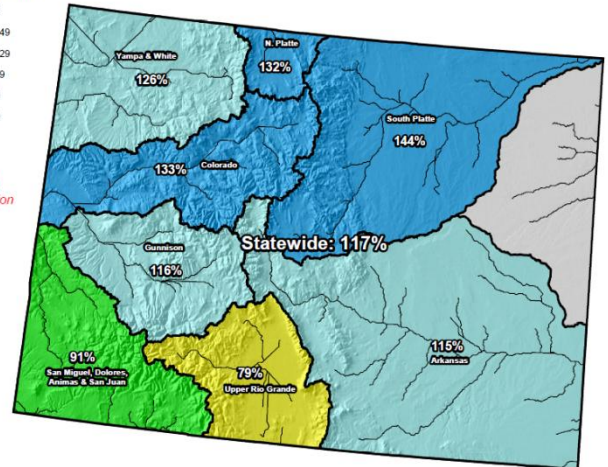
*Data may not provide a valid measure of conditions

Colorado SNOTEL Snowpack Update Map

Percent of Median



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision

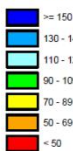


Current as of 02/12/2014

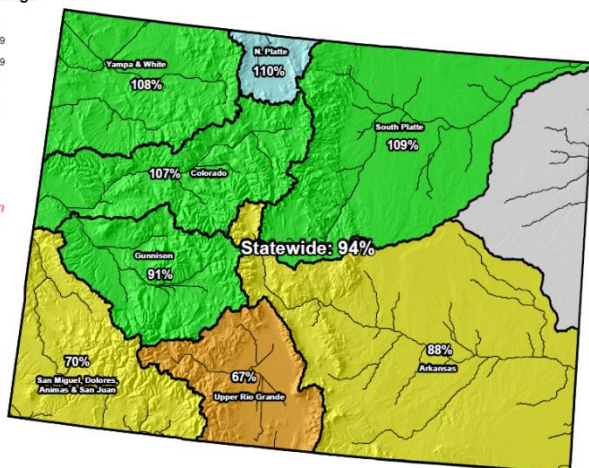
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Colorado SNOTEL Snowpack Update Map

Percent of Average



Provisional Data
Subject to Revision

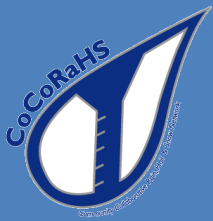


Current as of Jan 28, 2014

*Data may not provide a valid measure of conditions

The result: an increase in every single basin of the state, although we still need a lot more snow in the southwest and south-central mountains. The map is a little deceiving for southeast Colorado because they are in extreme to exception drought still along the Arkansas River Valley, east of Pueblo. Keep in mind this is showing mountain snowpack for the Arkansas River Valley.

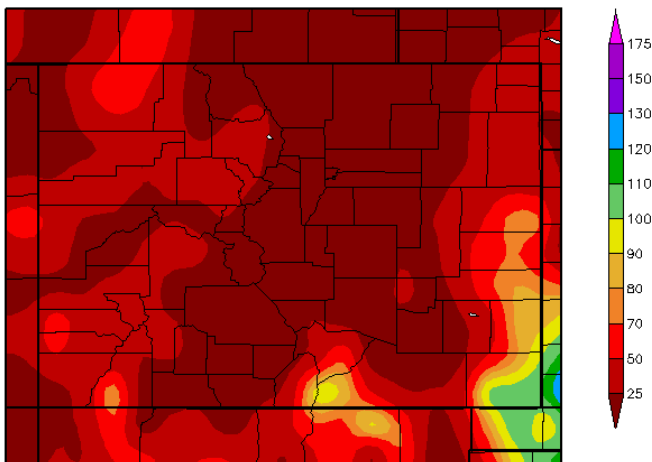
There are still two very important snow accumulations month ahead, so even though things look positive for Colorado right now, it's important to remember that things can take a drastic turn in a short period of time.



A LOOK BACK AT MARCH 2012

The 2011-2012 winter got off to a decent start for mountain snow accumulation in Colorado. There was great optimism as we approach the “snowy” month of March. But all of a sudden, in the last few days a February, the weather pattern showed signs of switching into a warm and dry phase. The result of that change can be seen in the two maps below.

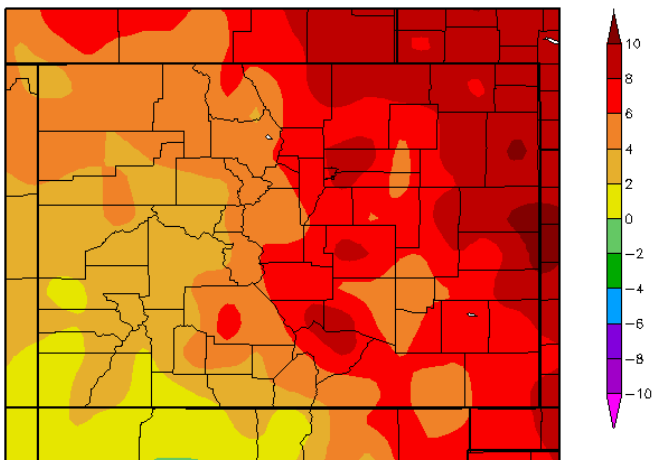
Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
3/1/2012 – 3/31/2012



Generated 6/22/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
3/1/2012 – 3/31/2012



Generated 6/22/2012 at HPRCC using provisional data.

Regional Climate Centers

March 2012 ended up being one of the warmest and driest we’ve ever recorded in Colorado! It set the stage for an early and record setting fire season. This is an example that I almost hate to bring up, but it is necessary, to communicate just how fast things can change for a state like Colorado, where we look to the high peaks each year to know if we will be able to comfortably go about life when the warm season arrives.

JANUARY FUN FACTS FROM AROUND COLORADO

*As of 4 pm, 2/13/2014

- 1,055 stations filed at least one daily report
- 796 stations reported at least half of the month
- 370 stations filed a report every day
- Wettest station: CO-SU-40 (Breckenridge 3.3 SE) with 5.80” of precipitation and 69.5” of snow
- Driest stations that reported all 31 days: 0 ... but CO-CS-11 (Ft. Garland 5.8 E) and CO-LP-48 (Ignacio 6.9 NW) each reported 0.00” for the month with 30 days of reports
- 66 stations filed a multi-day accumulation report
- 885 stations reported measurable snow (greater than a Trace) with the most being 84.8” at station CO-SU-6 (Silverthorne 2.1 WSW).



OBSERVER SPOTLIGHT

This month we feature Jesse Markham of Weld County! He operates station CO-WE-387 near Lochbuie.



Why did you join CoCoRaHS?

I found out about CoCoRaHS through the National Weather Service in Boulder. I am a Certified Skywarn severe weather spotter, and one day I saw a link to join and saw it as another way to provide useful weather observations to the Weather Service and other agencies that use the data.

What have you learned from measuring precipitation?

The most interesting thing that I have learned is how important measurements are on days that don't have any precipitation. A zero reading can help agencies define drought conditions; an issue that Colorado has become too familiar with.

Has being a CoCoRaHS observer made you more aware of climate?

As a CoCoRaHS observer, I have definitely become more aware of the current state of our climate. By taking just a few minutes a day to read the gauge you can really get a sense of current trends. You become more aware of instances of drought, or during last Septembers flooding, the amount of water that the area received over such a short period of time.

January 2014 Top 10 Snow Totals Colorado CoCoRaHS Stations		
Station	Name	Snow
CO-SU-6	Silverthorne 2.1 WSW	84.8
CO-GR-3	Kremmling 10.9 NW	79
CO-RT-44	Oak Creek 1.7 WNW	70.8
CO-SU-40	Breckenridge 3.3 SE	69.5
CO-RT-43	Steamboat Springs 1.9 E	64.1
CO-JK-23	Walden 16.3 WSW	63.2
CO-GN-18	Crested Butte 6.2 N	61.5
CO-EG-19	Vail 2.6 E	61.2
CO-RT-53	Steamboat Springs 0.7 ESE	56.1
CO-EG-21	Vail 0.9 WNW	55.9

Sept. 2013 - Jan. 2014 Top 10 Snow Totals Colorado CoCoRaHS Stations		
Station	Name	Snow
CO-GN-18	Crested Butte 6.2 N	203
CO-RT-43	Steamboat Springs 1.9 E	182.9
CO-SU-6	Silverthorne 2.1 WSW	174.1
CO-JK-23	Walden 16.3 WSW	150.7
CO-RT-25	Steamboat Springs 1 SE	144.6
CO-RT-44	Oak Creek 1.7 WNW	142.6
CO-GR-3	Kremmling 10.9 NW	142.1
CO-RT-16	Steamboat Springs 1.1 E	129.7
CO-RT-45	Steamboat Springs 1.5 WNW	124
CO-RT-50	Steamboat Springs 1.8 SSE	123.8