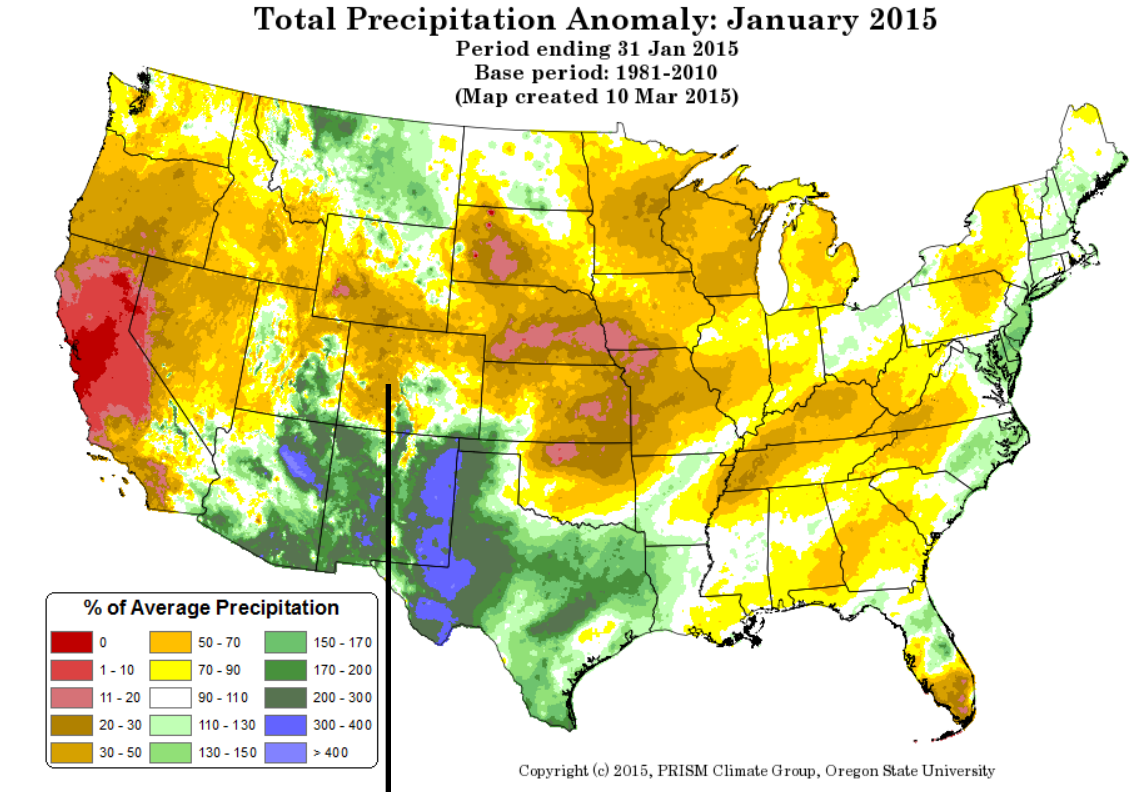
# Colorado CoCoRaHS

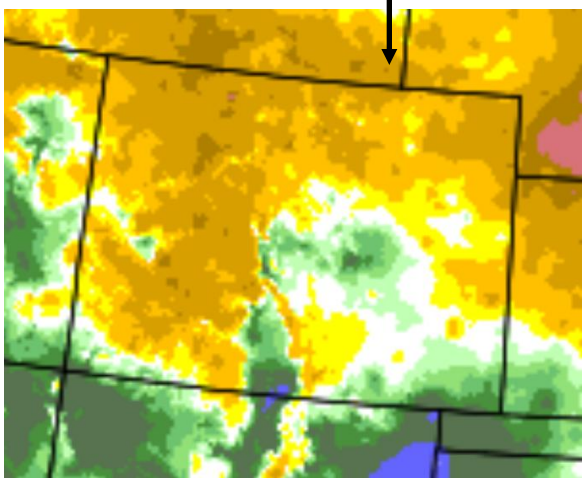
Because Every Drop Counts!

Feb/Mar 2015
Volume 3, Issue 2


## U.S. PRECIPITATION (% OF AVERAGE) – JANUARY 2015

2015 got off to a rather dry start for most of Colorado with a few exceptions, including areas in and around Colorado Springs, the far southeast plains and isolated pockets on the western slope. It was a similar story for most of the country with dry conditions prevailing. There were a few exceptions such as along the east coast, the extreme northern Rockies and the southern Rockies.



| | Jan. Precip (in.) | Departure From Average |
|---|---|---|
| Alamosa | 0.33 | 0.07 |
| Aspen | 0.27 | -0.76 |
| Co. Springs | 0.87 | 0.55 |
| Denver | 0.38 | -0.03 |
| Durango | 1.71 | 0.59 |
| Fort Collins | 0.11 | -0.29 |
| Grand Junction | 0.73 | 0.15 |
| Lamar | 0.32 | 0.02 |
| Pueblo | 0.25 | -0.10 |

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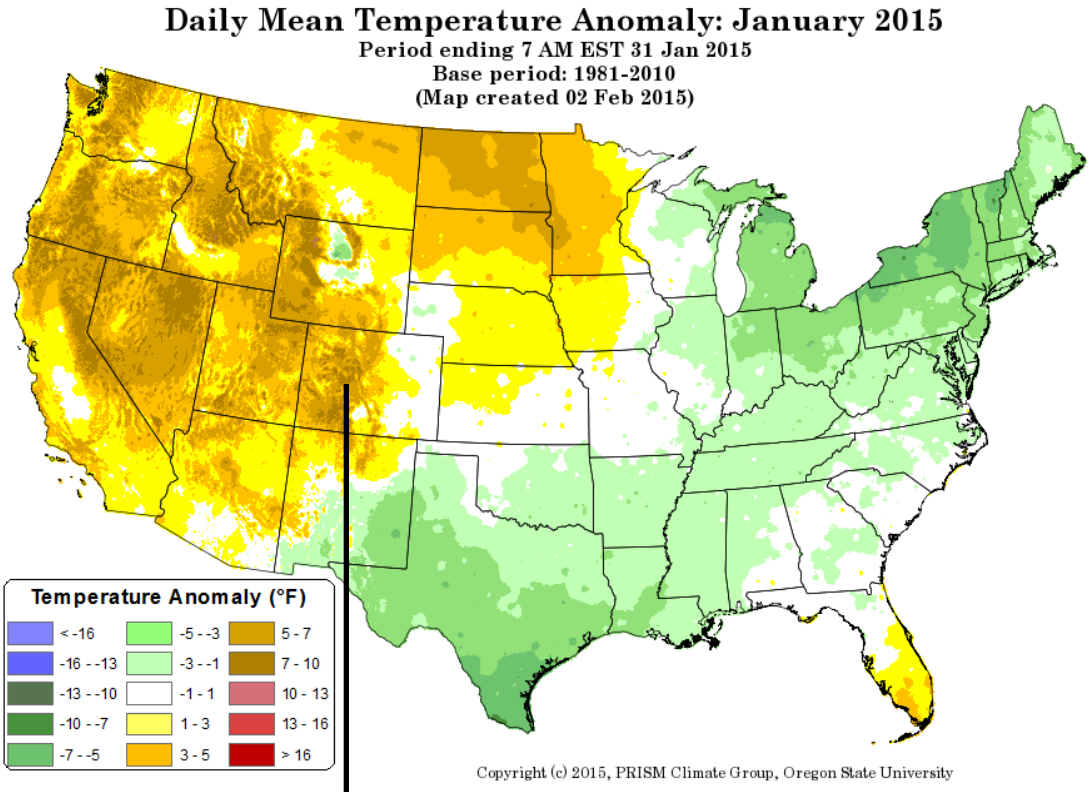
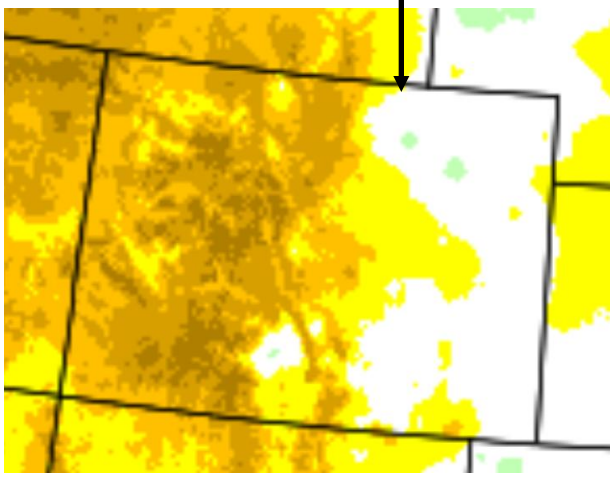
## U.S. TEMPERATURES (ANOMALY) – JANUARY 2015

A very stubborn pattern in the upper atmosphere kept the lower 48 states almost split down the middle during January. On the left side it was warm thanks to a large ridge of high pressure. Colorado fell into that category with many locations running 3 to 6 degrees above normal. Some places saw temperatures in the 70's during the last week of January, including Denver.



| | Jan. Mean Temp. (°F) | Anomaly |
|---|---|---|
| Alamosa | 22.6 | 6.3 |
| Aspen | 24.3 | 4.5 |
| Co. Springs | 32.8 | 2.3 |
| Denver | 33.9 | 3.2 |
| Durango | 28.4 | 4.7 |
| Fort Collins | 34.6 | 3.5 |
| Grand Junction | 31.5 | 4.1 |
| Lamar | 32.3 | 3.4 |
| Pueblo | 33.5 | 3.0 |

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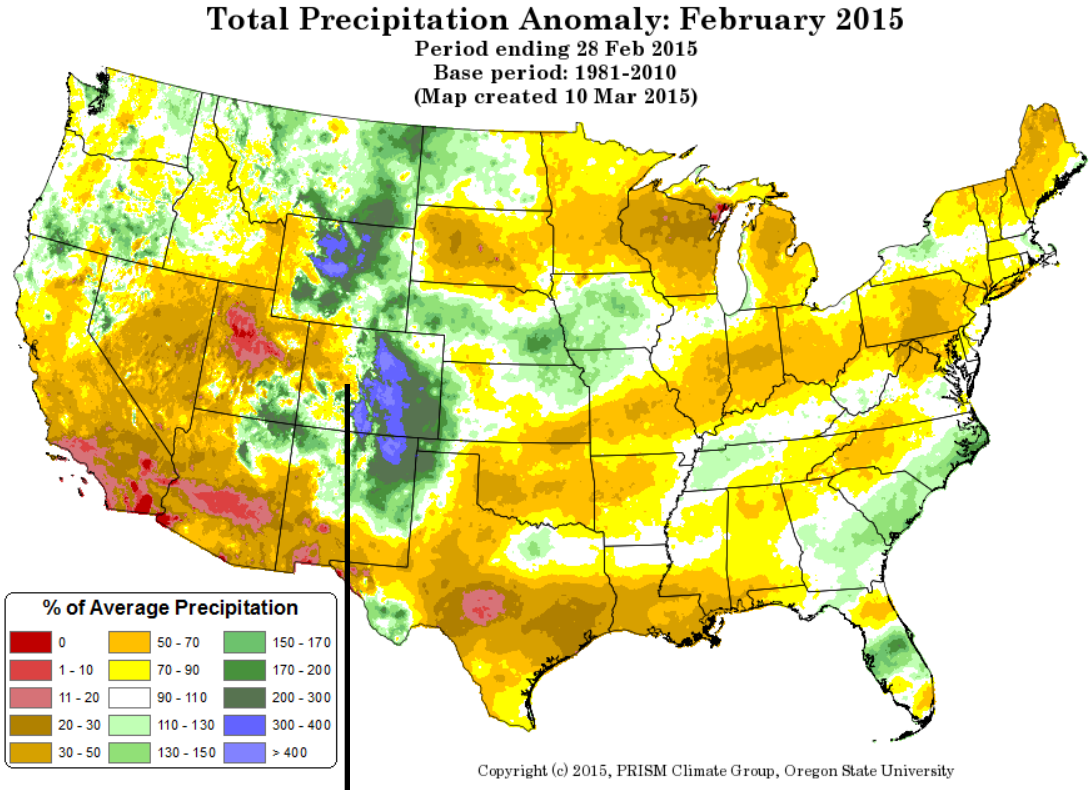
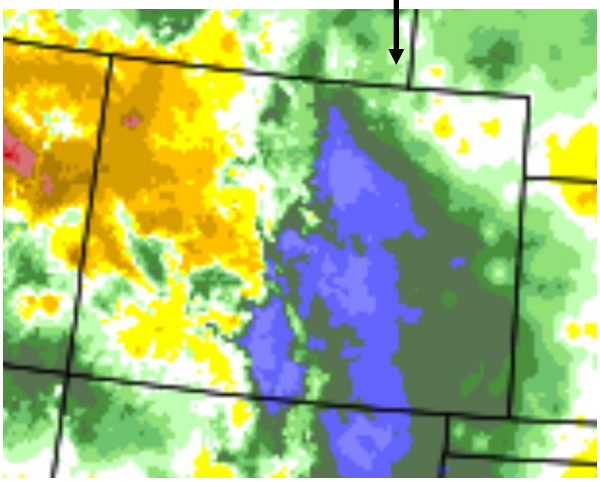
## U.S. PRECIPITATION (% OF AVERAGE) – FEBRUARY 2015

February brought copious amounts of precipitation to much of central and eastern Colorado with some places as much as 400% above average. Northwest Colorado missed out on much of the action as did the majority of the lower 48 states. Most of the precipitation in Colorado fell in the form of snow with some places along the Front Range setting all-time snowfall records.



| | Feb. Precip (in.) | Departure From Average |
|---|---|---|
| Alamosa | 1.01 | 0.75 |
| Aspen | 0.78 | -0.43 |
| Co. Springs | 1.45 | 1.11 |
| Denver | 1.25 | 0.88 |
| Durango | 1.56 | 0.40 |
| Fort Collins | 1.09 | 0.69 |
| Grand Junction | 0.13 | -0.41 |
| Lamar | 0.57 | 0.20 |
| Pueblo | 1.13 | 0.83 |

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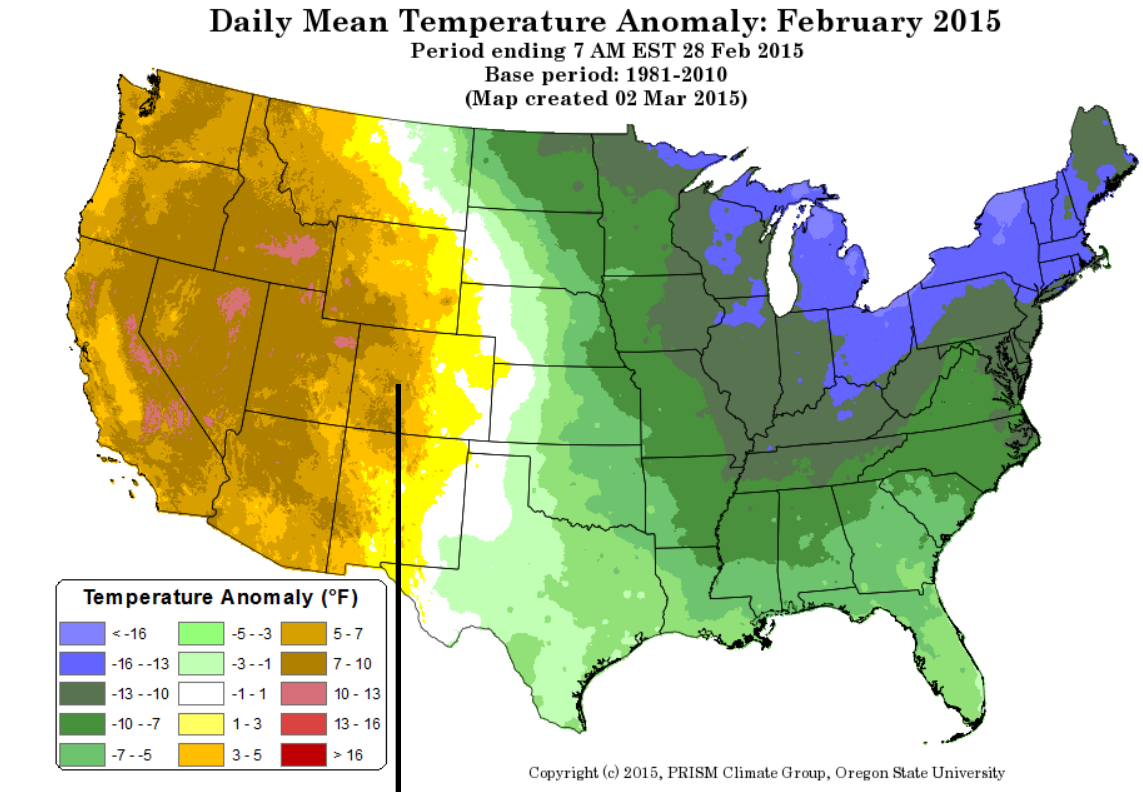
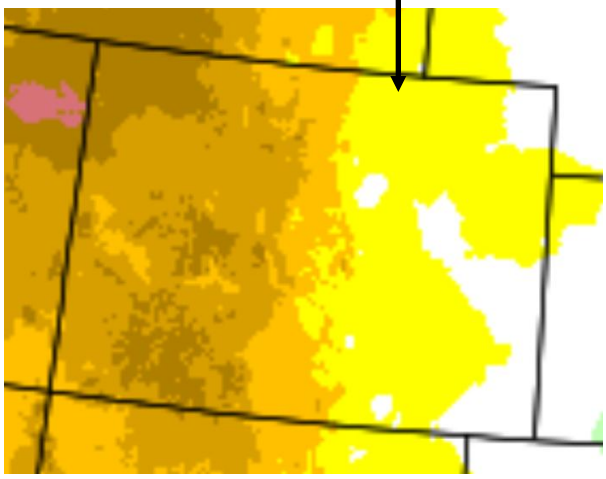
## U.S. TEMPERATURES (ANOMALY) – FEBRUARY 2015

For the second month in a row a persistent pattern at the jet stream level kept most places east of the Rockies much colder than normal with temperatures along and west of the Rockies on the warm side. In Colorado, temperatures ran 3 to 7 degrees above normal west of the Continental Divide and about 1 to 4 degrees above normal on the east side of the divide.



| | Feb. Mean Temp. (°F) | Anomaly |
|---|---|---|
| Alamosa | 28.0 | 5.2 |
| Aspen | 29.5 | 7.3 |
| Co. Springs | 33.5 | 1.4 |
| Denver | 33.8 | 1.3 |
| Durango | 35.5 | 7.0 |
| Fort Collins | 36.2 | 2.5 |
| Grand Junction | 39.2 | 4.7 |
| Lamar | 34.6 | 1.0 |
| Pueblo | 35.3 | 1.4 |

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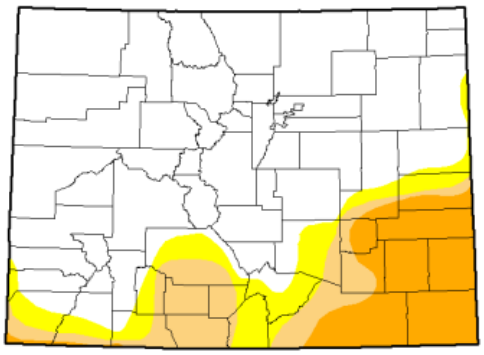
## COLORADO DROUGHT MORE THAN DOUBLES SINCE CHRISTMAS

The next two images shocked me! But I suppose it's because the I-25 urban corridor where I live (between Castle Rock and Fort Collins) is doing fairly well with regards to precipitation. It's a different story in southern and western Colorado. Since Christmas, the amount of land in our state experiencing some level of drought has risen from 21% to almost 52%. As of March 17, nearly 600,000 people were in a drought.

While we're in much better shape than some of our neighbors to the west, we know all too well how fast things can change when the weather patterns shift. Colorado is a land-locked state about 1,000 miles from the nearest source of atmospheric moisture and it depends on weather patterns to bring rain and snow.



***U.S. Drought Monitor***
**Colorado**

**December 23, 2014**
***(Released Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2014)***
**Valid 7 a.m. EST**

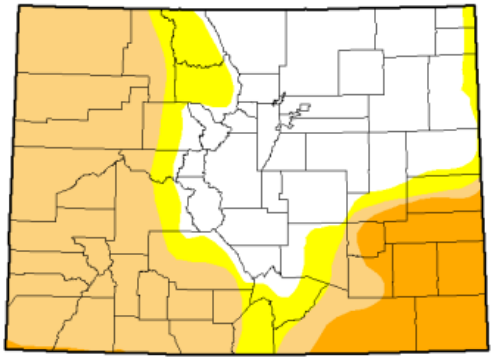
*Drought Conditions (Percent Area)*

| | None | D0-D4 | D1-D4 | D2-D4 | D3-D4 | D4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Current** | 69.87 | 30.13 | 21.26 | 12.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **Last Week** 12/16/2014 | 69.87 | 30.13 | 21.26 | 12.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **3 Months Ago** 9/23/2014 | 66.51 | 33.49 | 24.00 | 14.11 | 2.33 | 0.00 |
| **Start of Calendar Year** 12/31/2013 | 32.04 | 67.96 | 22.33 | 13.56 | 4.01 | 1.47 |
| **Start of Water Year** 9/30/2014 | 68.96 | 31.04 | 22.94 | 13.82 | 2.31 | 0.00 |
| **One Year Ago** 12/24/2013 | 32.04 | 67.96 | 22.33 | 13.56 | 4.66 | 1.47 |

*Intensity:*
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.*

**Author:**
*David Miskus*
*NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC*



***U.S. Drought Monitor***
**Colorado**

**March 17, 2015**
***(Released Thursday, Mar. 19, 2015)***
**Valid 7 a.m. EST**

*Drought Conditions (Percent Area)*

| | None | D0-D4 | D1-D4 | D2-D4 | D3-D4 | D4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Current** | 36.34 | 63.66 | 51.51 | 12.20 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **Last Week** 3/10/2015 | 36.97 | 63.03 | 51.51 | 12.20 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **3 Months Ago** 12/16/2014 | 69.87 | 30.13 | 21.26 | 12.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **Start of Calendar Year** 12/30/2014 | 69.87 | 30.13 | 21.26 | 12.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| **Start of Water Year** 9/30/2014 | 68.96 | 31.04 | 22.94 | 13.82 | 2.31 | 0.00 |
| **One Year Ago** 3/18/2014 | 38.90 | 61.10 | 21.62 | 13.69 | 5.58 | 1.47 |

*Intensity:*
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.*

**Author:**
*Chris Fenimore*
*NCDC/NESDIS/NOAA*

USDA

**http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/**

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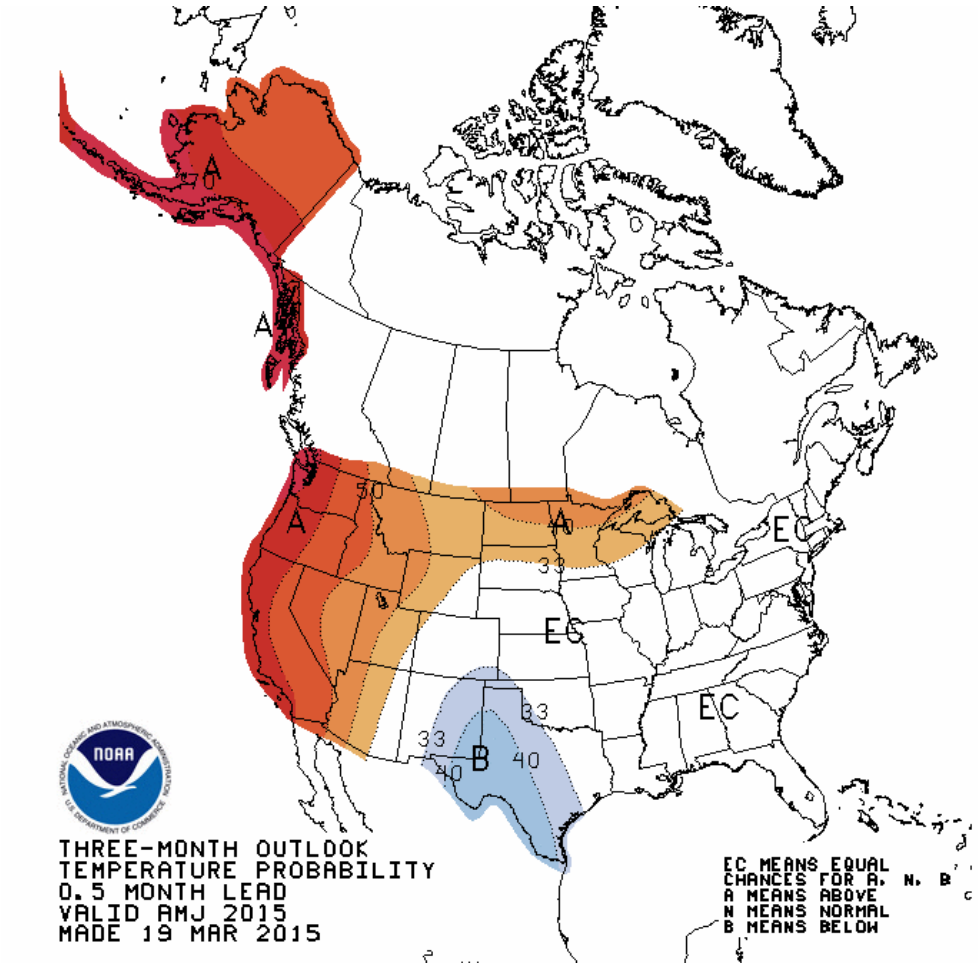
## SPRING ARRIVES WITH A WET OUTLOOK FOR COLORADO

Spring officially arrived in Colorado at 4:45 p.m. MDT on Friday, Mar. 20. The first day of spring, known as the vernal equinox, means equal day and equal night, where the entire planet had roughly 12 hours of each. On the first day of spring the sun is directly overhead during the noon hour at the equator. But now through the first day of summer, the direct rays of the sun will move north with each passing day. They'll eventually be directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, or 23.5° N, at 12 p.m. on the summer solstice. As the northern hemisphere begins to heat up and come alive during spring, the southern hemisphere will start to cool down and go dormant during their fall.

So what will the new season hold in store for Colorado with regard to the weather? The latest 90-day weather outlook from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is calling for wetter-than-normal conditions across Colorado. Spring 2015 will feature a weak cycle of El Niño which could be one of the reasons why the outlook is on the wet side. The overall storm track across North America tends to take a southern trek during El Niño.



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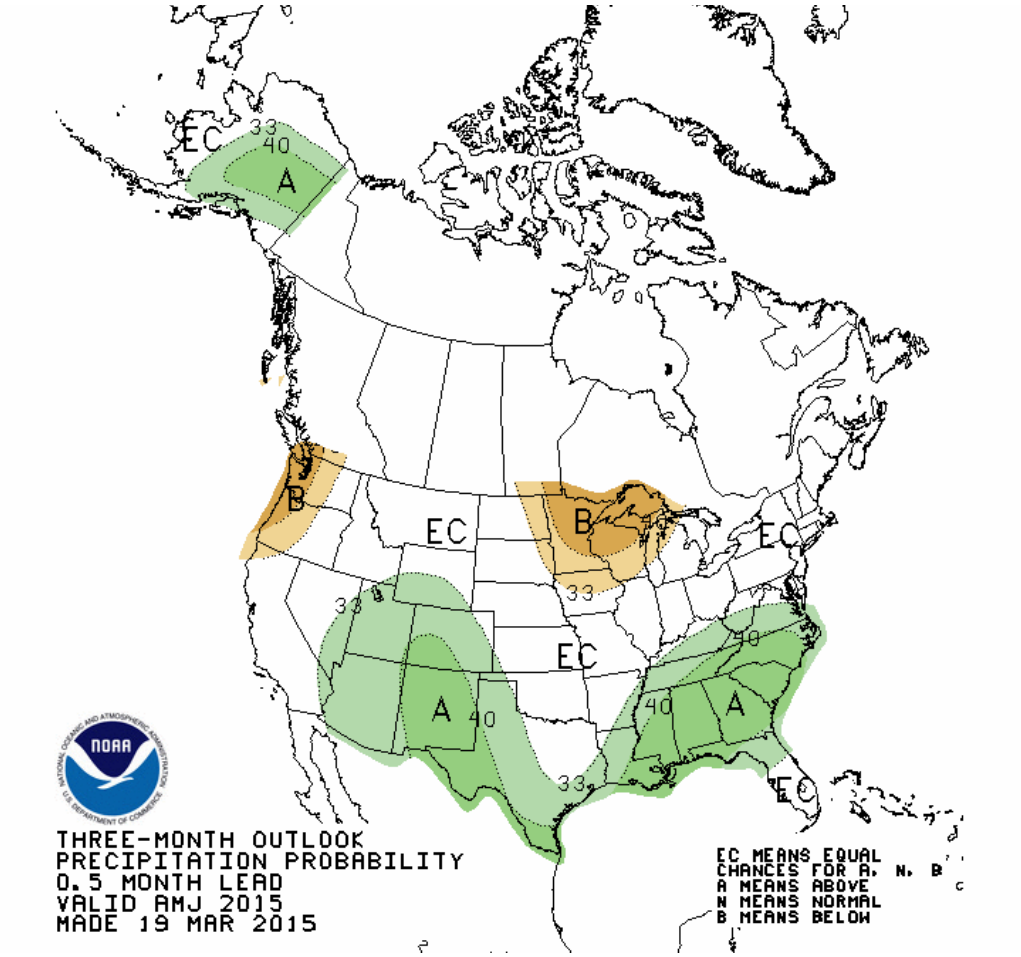
Temperatures throughout the spring season are forecast to have an "equal chance" to be below, above or near average for most of Colorado. So really anything can happen! But we could see a more definite trend toward warmer-than-average conditions in the extreme northwest corner and a trend toward cooler-than-average conditions on the far southeast plains.

90-day outlooks are fantastic for overall planning but they must be used with a bit of caution. When it comes to temperatures, if over the next 90 days we have 10 days with extreme cold and 10 days with extreme heat, when averaged, those extremes will cancel each other out. The result would be a final outcome that might look normal, but in reality, it had two different stretches of extreme weather in between.

For precipitation, just because a 90-day outlook calls for wet conditions doesn't mean it will be wet the entire time. While it is possible that we could see storm after storm keep us wet overall, we could also see lengthy dry stretches with a few unusually wet storms in between. Both scenarios could produce a 90-day period that results in above average precipitation.



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## JANUARY 2015 - FUN FACTS FROM AROUND COLORADO

- 1,017 stations filed at least one daily report
- 780 stations reported at least half of the month
- 396 stations filed a report every day
- Wettest station: CO-LP-72 (Hesperus 4.9 SE) with 2.79" of precipitation
- Driest station that reported all 31 days: CO-RT-22 (Clark 0.7 NW) with 0.00" of precipitation
- 82 stations filed a multi-day accumulation report
- 811 stations reported snow during January with the most being 34.3" at CO-LP-35 (Bayfield 7.0 N)

## FEBRUARY 2015 - FUN FACTS FROM AROUND COLORADO

- 1,045 stations filed at least one daily report
- 795 stations reported at least half of the month
- 382 stations filed a report every day
- Wettest station: CO-BO-57 (Nederland 5.8 E) with 4.31" of precipitation
- Driest station that reported all 28 days: CO-ME-24 (Mack 5 NW) with 0.04" of precipitation
- 72 stations filed a multi-day accumulation report
- 877 stations reported snow during February, with the most being 62.8" at CO-BO-202 (Ward 4.6 NE)