Colorado Climate & Drought Update

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Extension Drought Task Force Webinar
April 6, 2018
Recent Climate

February and March temperature and precipitation

climate.colostate.edu/~drought

Summary: April 3, 2018

The precipitation pattern that has dominated the Intermountain West region since the beginning of the water year continued for the month of March. For the most part, areas to the north saw near to above average precipitation, while areas to the south remained drier than average. A couple of areas of note are the central and northern ranges of Utah, which received widespread near average precipitation and a slight rebound in snowpack percentiles. However, WYTD precipitation at SNOTEL sites throughout UT are still mostly below the 10th percentile.

March typically begins the ramp-up of spring precipitation to help kick-start the growing season. But for many areas of southern CO, eastern NM, and southern AZ, March precipitation was less than 20% of average. As we continue toward summer, these deficits become harder to make up. On the east side of the IMW, WYTD precipitation deficits from southeast CO and eastern NM range from 2 to 3.5 inches. Around the Four Corners and down into the higher elevations of NM and AZ, WYTD deficits range from 4 to 9 inches - amounts that are unlikely to be made up prior to the start of the monsoon season.

Fire danger has been a major concern, especially for eastern areas of the IMW that saw a much wetter than average summer (which helped grow fuels)
Water-Year-to-date
Drought
Evolution and current drought conditions

U.S. Drought Monitor
April 3, 2018
(Released Thursday, Apr. 5, 2018)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Impact Types:
- Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g., agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g., hydrology, ecology)

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.

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/
U.S. Drought Monitor Class Change - Colorado
6 Months

April 3, 2018
compared to
October 17, 2017

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu

COLORADO CLIMATE CENTER
Outlook

Precipitation Projections and Climate Prediction Center’s Outlook
COLORADO CLIMATE CENTER
TRINIDAD Precipitation Accumulation Projections

WY2017 Projection: 115% of Average

Average Projection: 85% of Average

WY2018 as of 4/4 - 2.65"
1981-2010 Average - 5.07"
Currently 52% of Average

WY2011 Projection: 49% of Average
Thank you

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Drought Summary:
http://climate.colostate.edu/~drought

Please call or email me your impacts!