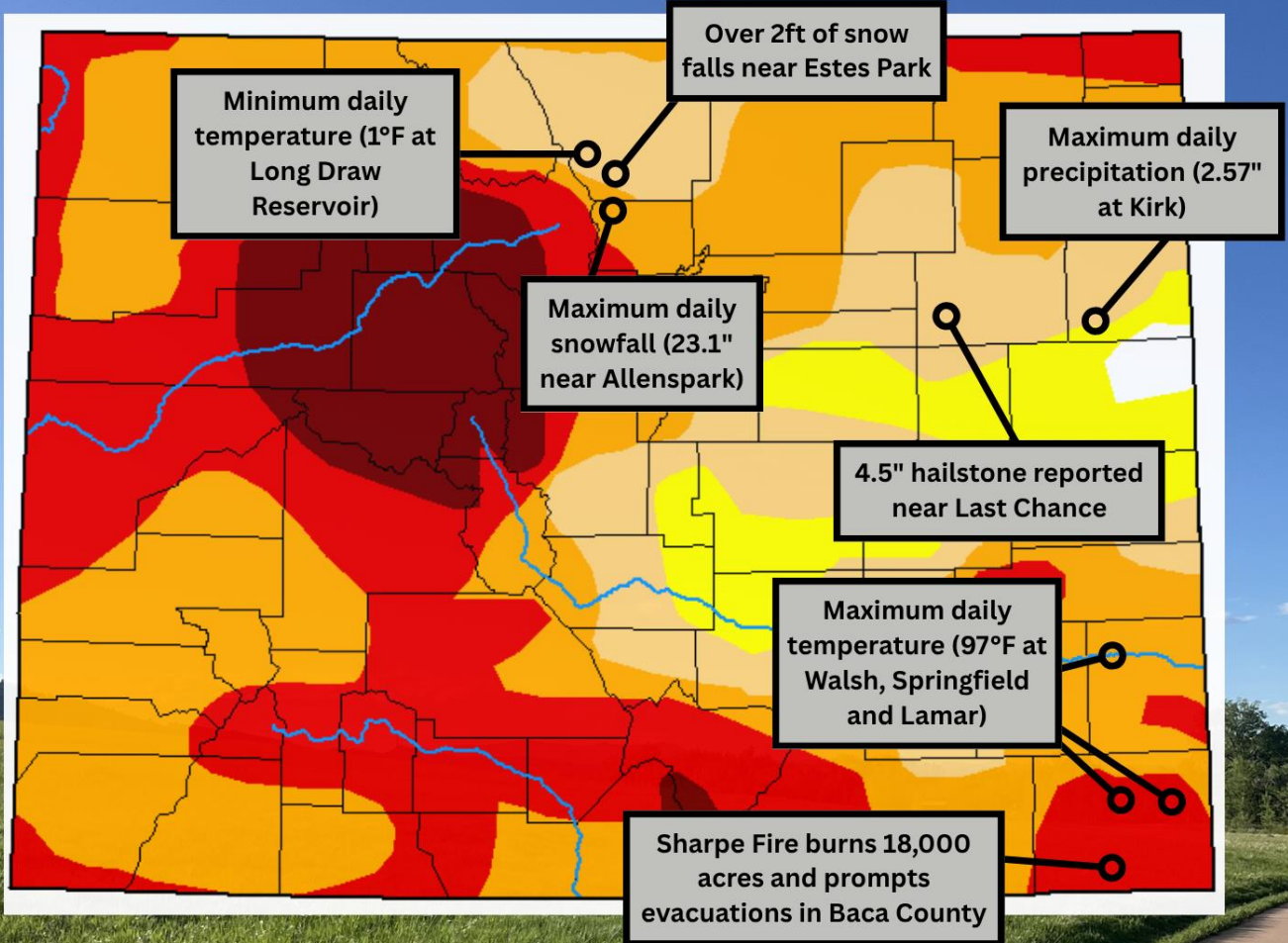


May 2026

Colorado Monthly Climate Summary



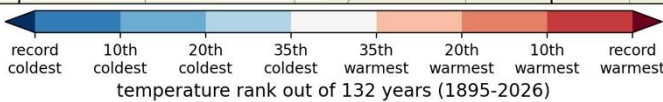
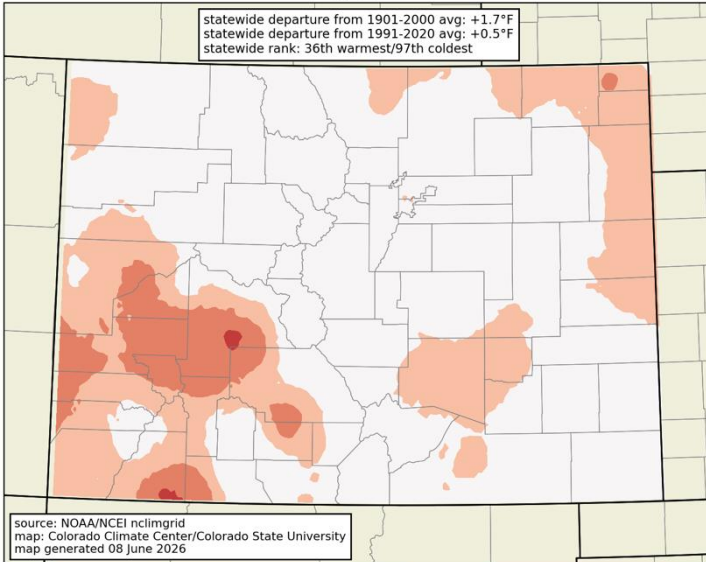
US Drought Monitor for May 26, 2026

Statewide Temperature and Precipitation Ranks for May 2026
(based on 1895-2026 data)
36th warmest (above average) ■ **50th driest (near average)**

temperature

average temperature rank
May 2026

statewide departure from 1901-2000 avg: +1.7°F
statewide departure from 1991-2020 avg: +0.5°F
statewide rank: 36th warmest/97th coldest

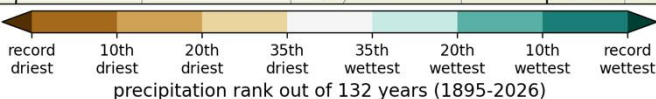
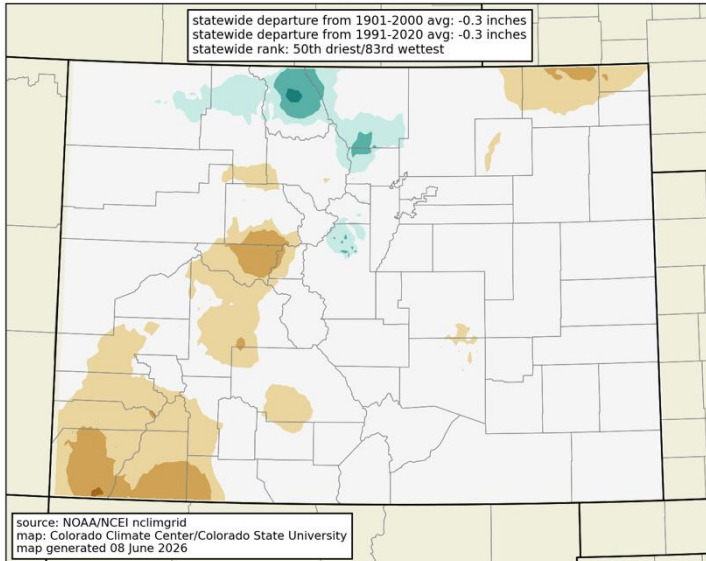


After a string of extremely warm months, temperatures in May 2026 were much closer to the long-term average. Parts of southwestern Colorado were much warmer than average, and some pockets of the eastern Plains were warm for May as well. But statewide, it was the most “normal” month for temperature since last September.

precipitation

precipitation rank
May 2026

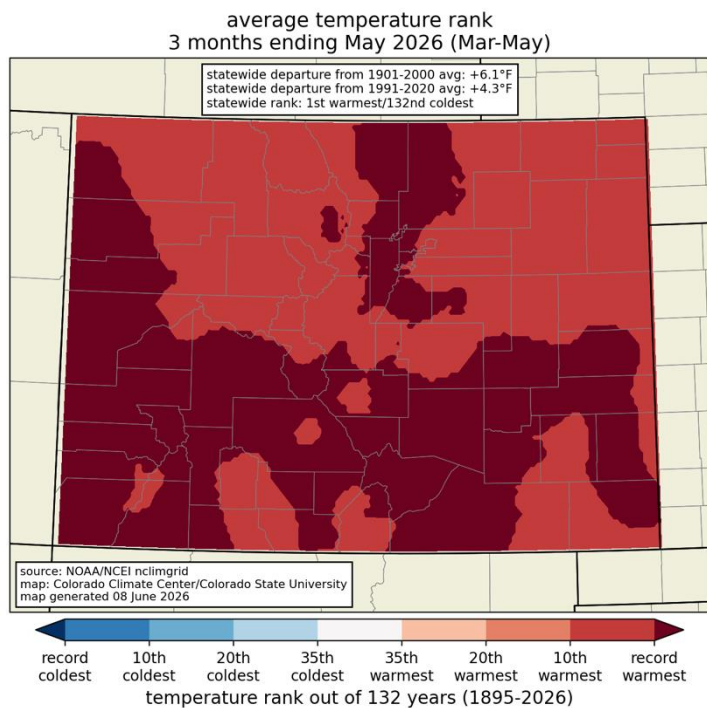
statewide departure from 1901-2000 avg: -0.3 inches
statewide departure from 1991-2020 avg: -0.3 inches
statewide rank: 50th driest/83rd wettest



May 2026 was slightly below average for precipitation statewide. The Four Corners region was much drier than average for May, while parts of northern Colorado were much wetter than average. Most of the state, however, was near the middle of the historical distribution for May precipitation.

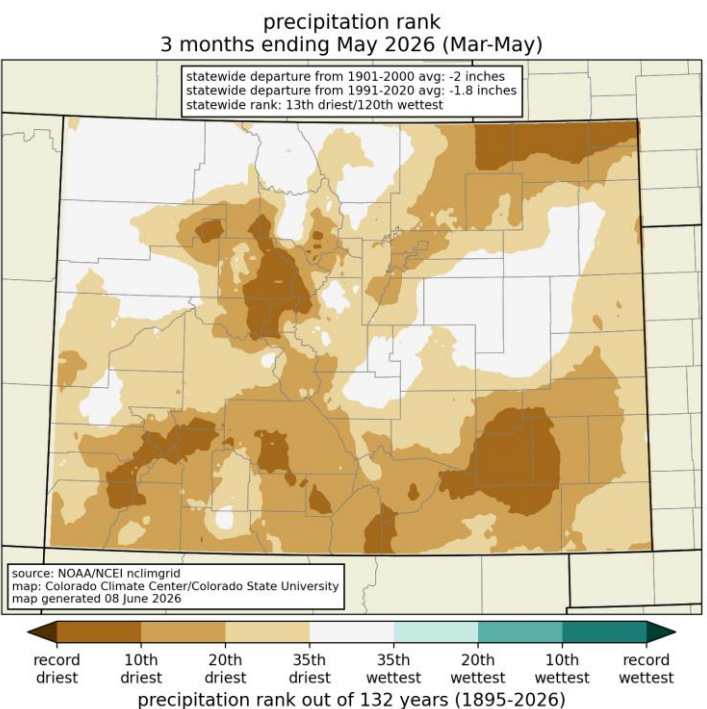


temperature: spring 2026



Even with a near-average May, **spring 2026 still ended up as the warmest climatological spring on record for Colorado**, after the record-smashing March and warmer-than-average April. The last two climatological seasons (winter and spring) have both been the warmest on record for the state.

precipitation: spring 2026



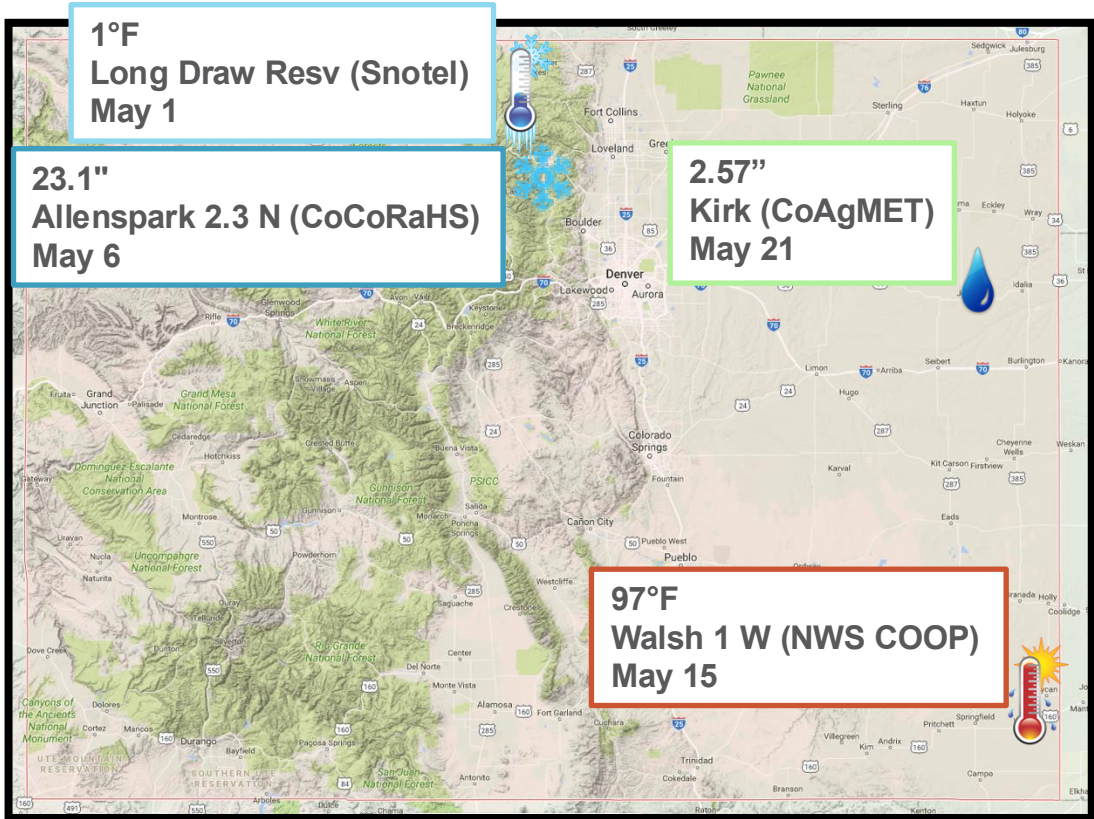
The near-average precipitation in May prevented spring precipitation deficits from getting worse across Colorado, but much of the state still ended the spring much drier than average. There were areas in southern Colorado, the central mountains, and the northeastern Plains that all had a top-10 dry spring. Northwestern Colorado and some Plains areas had closer to normal spring precipitation.



| | High Max | Low Max | High Min | Low Min | Precip | Snow |
|----------|----------|---------|----------|---------|--------|------|
| Daily | 60/183 | 16/98 | 50/168 | 13/45 | 9/56 | 3/28 |
| Monthly | 0/0 | 1/0 | 1/0 | 0/0 | 0/1 | 1/0 |
| All-time | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |

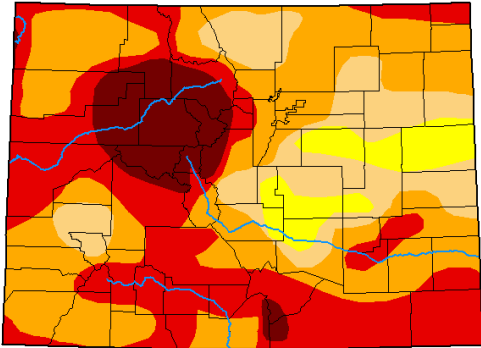
Tied/**Broken**, from NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

state extremes



U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

May 26, 2026
(Released Thursday, May 28, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

| | None | D0-D4 | D1-D4 | D2-D4 | D3-D4 | D4 |
|---|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Current | 0.00 | 100.00 | 93.58 | 77.67 | 40.24 | 9.51 |
| Last Week 05-19-2026 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 96.23 | 79.31 | 42.91 | 9.51 |
| 3 Months Ago 02-24-2026 | 24.66 | 75.34 | 56.02 | 33.97 | 9.20 | 0.83 |
| Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2026 | 25.96 | 74.04 | 46.22 | 15.77 | 4.35 | 0.67 |
| Start of Water Year 09-30-2025 | 45.82 | 54.18 | 45.19 | 35.88 | 14.34 | 0.00 |
| One Year Ago 05-27-2025 | 33.85 | 66.15 | 49.27 | 25.36 | 6.17 | 0.00 |

Intensity:
 None (White) D2 Severe Drought (Orange)
 D0 Abnormally Dry (Yellow) D3 Extreme Drought (Red)
 D1 Moderate Drought (Light Orange) D4 Exceptional Drought (Dark Red)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

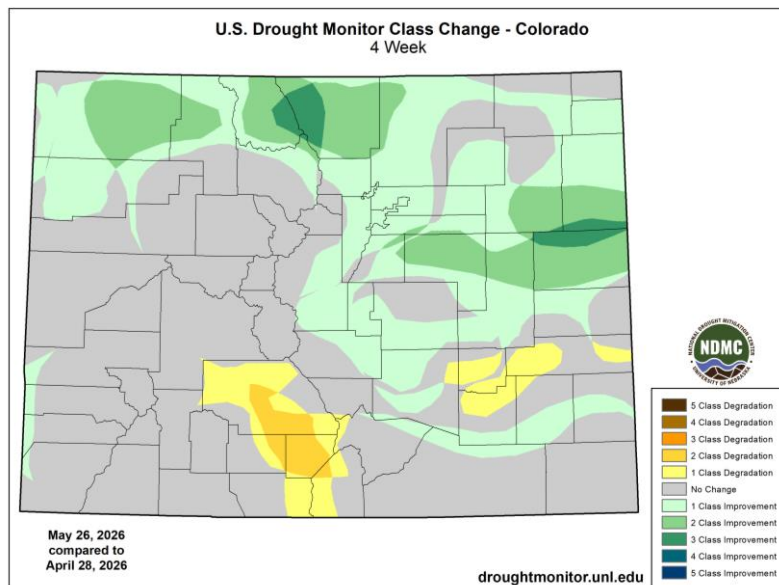
Author:
Adam Allgood
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

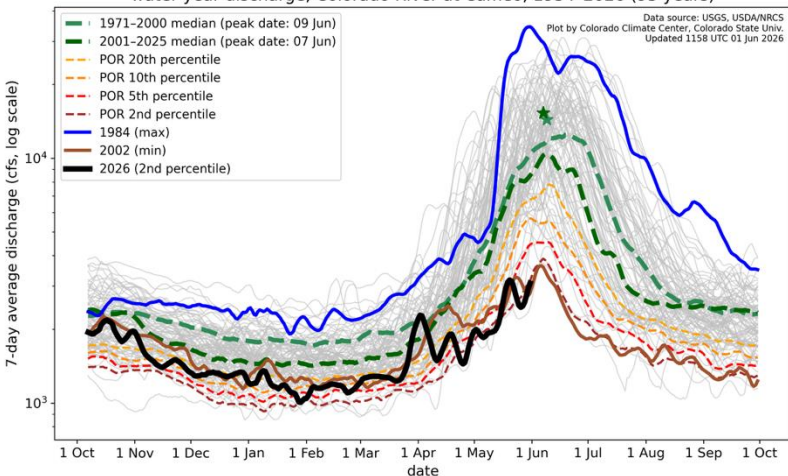
Drought conditions persisted throughout most of Colorado in May. At the end of the month, ~78% of the state remained under D2 (severe drought) or worse conditions. Exceptional drought also continued over portions of the north-central and Sangre de Cristo mountains (representing ~10% of the state).

For portions of northern Colorado and the Eastern Plains, May finally brought some much-needed precipitation after a severely dry April. Several storm systems led to drought to be improved by as many as three classes, including over some of the most drought-stricken areas of the state. The extreme to exceptional drought area (D3-D4) was reduced from ~59% at the end of April to ~40% at the end of May. Meanwhile, precipitation deficits led to deteriorating drought conditions in the San Luis Valley area and parts of southeastern Colorado. In western Colorado and most of the mountains, drought conditions were mostly unchanged.

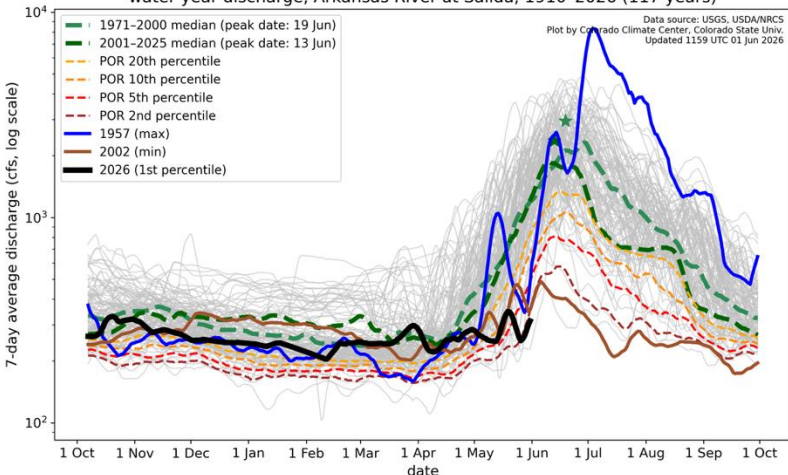


streamflow

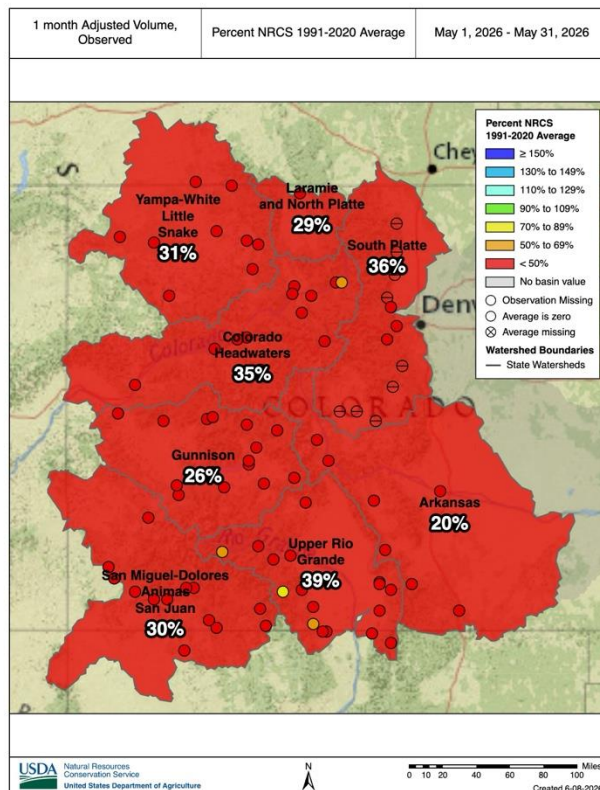
water year discharge, Colorado River at Cameo, 1934–2026 (93 years)



water year discharge, Arkansas River at Salida, 1910–2026 (117 years)



7-day average streamflow for the Colorado River at Cameo (top) and Arkansas River at Salida (bottom) as of June 1. Data from USGS.

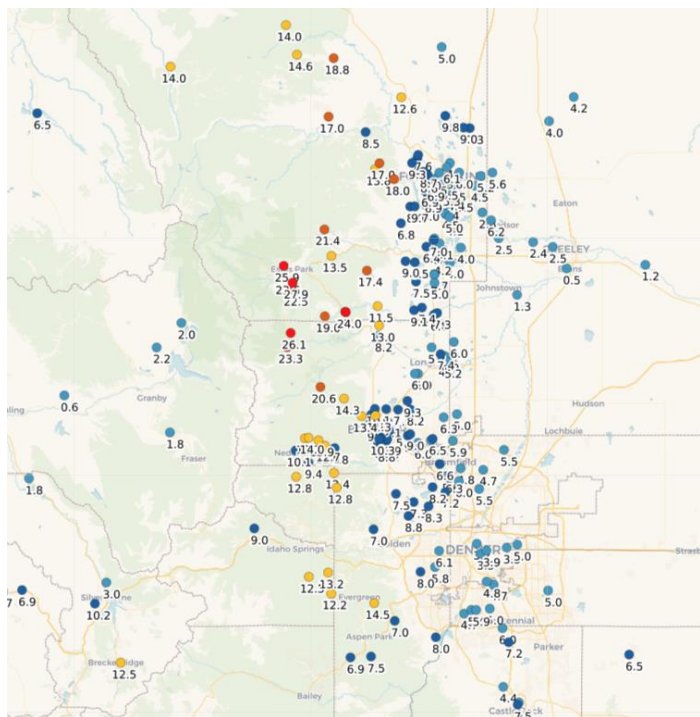


May 1 - May 31 percent of average streamflow volume. Data from NRCS.

Following a record-low snowpack, streamflow conditions were expectedly well-below average for May across all of Colorado’s major river basins. Per NRCS streamflow data, average streamflow volume in May was just 20% of normal in the Arkansas Basin, 26% of normal in the Gunnison Basin, and 29% of normal in the Laramie and North Platte Basin. USGS stream gauge data further corroborate that information: streamflow for the Arkansas River at Salida and Colorado River at Dotsero were hovering around record-low values at the end of May (with records dating back around a century or more). Gauge data from several other rivers (including the Eagle and Gunnison rivers) similarly reported record or near-record low flows to-date.



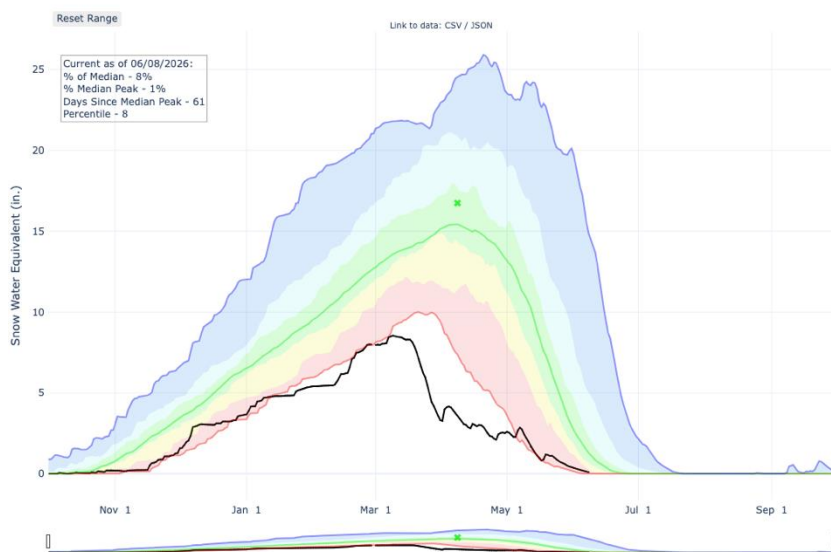
significant events



CoCoRaHS snowfall reports for May 5-6.

A late-season snowstorm impacted Colorado over the May 4-6 period. Totals along the Front Range Urban Corridor between Fort Collins generally ranged between 5-8". The foothills of Larimer and Boulder counties, particularly around the Estes Park area, saw the biggest snowfall accumulations (in excess of 2 ft in some locations). Boulder recorded 11.3" of snow, its largest 2-day May snowfall total since 2013 and 9th-largest overall for May.

What did the late-season snow mean for the lackluster snow season? Not much, unfortunately. While the early May snow (and a less potent storm later in the month) spared Colorado from seeing its earliest melt-off on record, Water Year 2026 will still mark the state's lowest snowpack on record.



NRCS Colorado snow water equivalent for Water Year 2026 (black line) compared to historical percentiles (according to SNOTEL). The red line represents Colorado's lowest snowpack since 1987 (prior to Water Year 2026).



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 - Featuring Allie Mazurek in the Denver Gazette
- ❑ **May 5, 2026: [Recap: Colorado snow totals are in. Look back at our storm coverage](#)**
 - Featuring Colorado Climate Center in The Coloradoan
- ❑ **May 5, 2026: [Recent precipitation pushes Roaring Fork watershed out of 'record-breaking' levels](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Glenwood Springs Post Independent
- ❑ **May 6, 2026: [Spring storm delivers rain, over 2 feet of snow to Northern Colorado](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Coloradoan
- ❑ **May 6, 2026: [Northern Colorado Farmers Welcome Spring Snow After Historically Dry Winter](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Longmont Leader
- ❑ **May 6, 2026: [Colorado Waited All Winter for Snow. It Finally Came in May](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the New York Times
- ❑ **May 8, 2026: [Colorado drought improves slightly, but extreme conditions remain](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in CBS News Colorado
- ❑ **May 9, 2026: [Recent storm brings sliver of hope to state's grim water supply](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Aspen Daily News

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- ❑ **May 10, 2026: [May snowstorm lifts Colorado snowpack from zeroth percentile, but will it hold?](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Aspen Times
- ❑ **May 14, 2026: [Drought, dollars and highways: LAC confronts strain on multiple fronts](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Huerfano, Las Animas and Colfax World Journal
- ❑ **May 14, 2026: [New map of drought in Colorado shows little improvement despite spring snowstorm](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Denver ABC 7 News
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 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Successful Farming
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 - Featuring Colorado Climate Center in The Coloradoan
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 - Featuring Allie Mazurek in The Colorado Sun
- ❑ **May 22, 2026: [Did Colorado get enough rain and snow to end Denver's drought?](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Westword



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 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Big Pivots
- ❑ **May 26, 2026: [Colorado Pine Beetle Outbreak Spreads as Forest Damage Jumps 148%](#)**
 - Featuring Allie Mazurek in Wood Central
- ❑ **May 28, 2026: [Can AI forecast if snow will be fluffy or dense? Only with help from humans](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Water Desk
- **May 29, 2026: [Fifty for 150: Fearsome East Troublesome Fire caps off 2020's historic wildfire outbreak](#)**
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in Colorado Newswire
- ❑ **May 29, 2026: [Colorado's race to cut water use off to a slow start](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Colorado Sun
- ❑ **May 29, 2026: [While El Niño odds are rising, snow chances in Colorado this winter still depend on storm track](#)**
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in CBS News



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- ❑ **May 30, 2026:** [Colorado's approaching monsoon season and El Niño conditions create hope for above-normal rainfall](#)
 - Featuring Peter Goble in The Aspen Times
- ❑ **May 31, 2026:** [New report shows pine beetle devastation surging in Colorado's forests](#)
 - Featuring Allie Mazurek in Rocky Mountain PBS

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