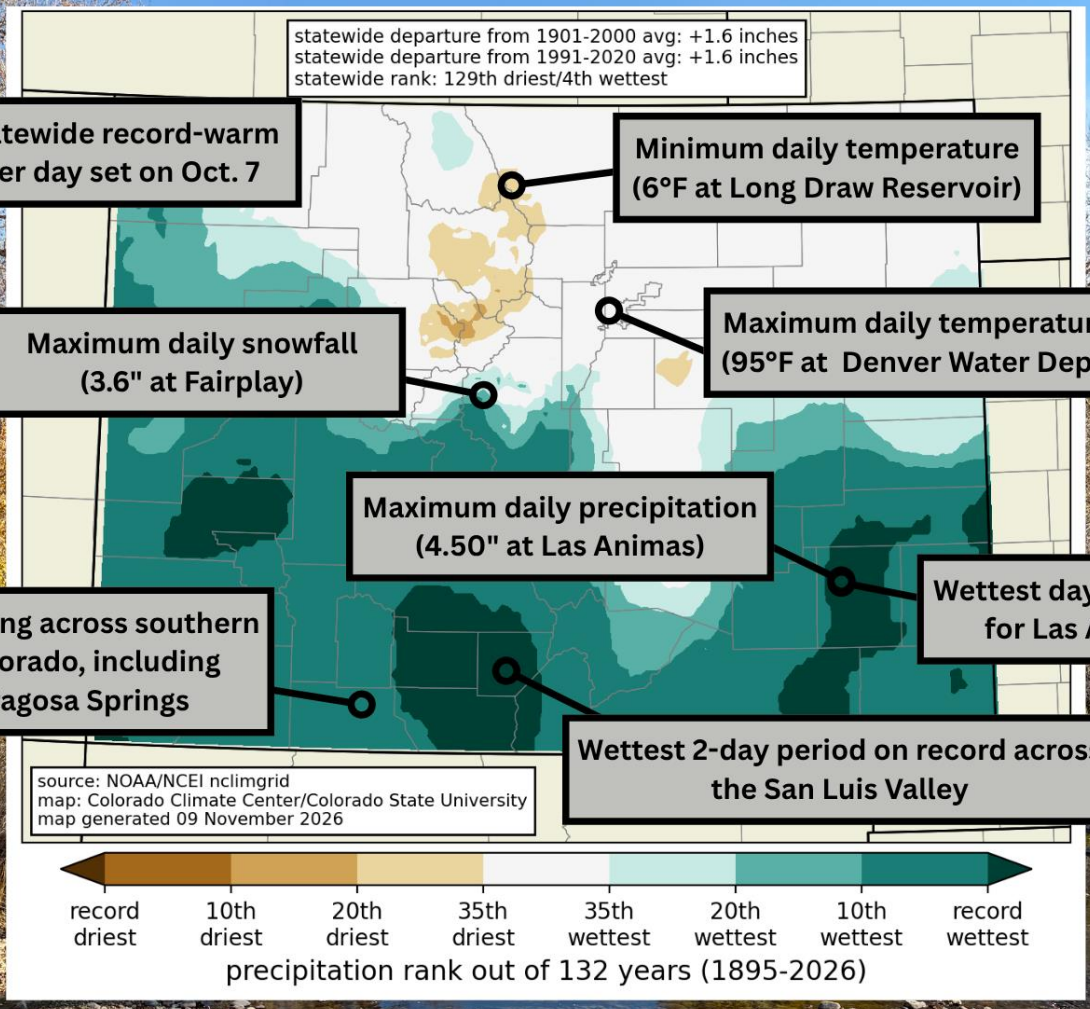
October 2026
Colorado Monthly Climate Summary



Precipitation ranks for October 2026

Statewide Temperature and Precipitation Ranks for October 2026

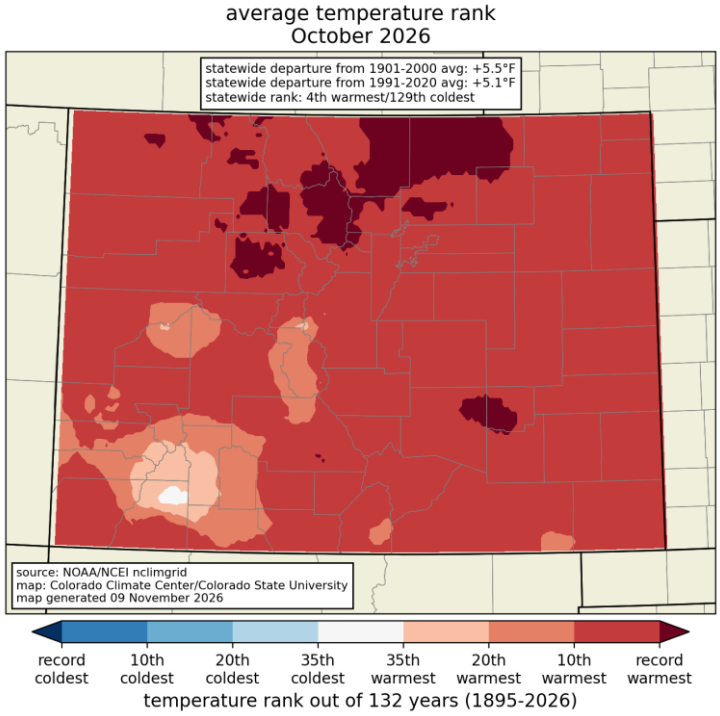
(based on 1895-2026 data)

4th warmest (above average) ■ 4th wettest (above average)

COLORADO CLIMATE CENTER

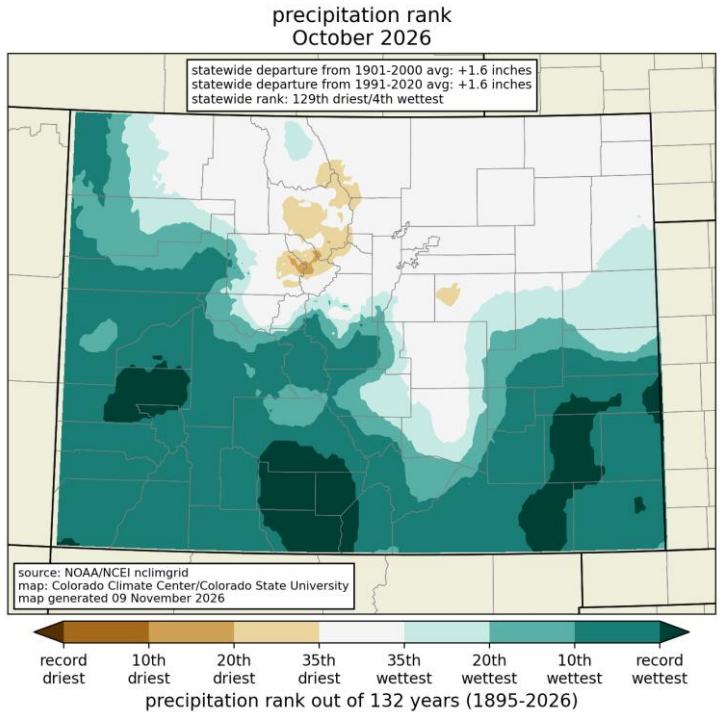
Bellvue, CO

temperature



October wasn't a record-breaking warm month for Colorado statewide average temperature, but it wasn't far off. And it was record-warm for nighttime low temperatures. The entire state saw above-average temperatures during October, and parts of the northern mountains and northern Front Range were record warm. The one part of the state that was close to average was the southwest, where multiple rounds of heavy precipitation occurred.

precipitation



October was the second consecutive month that was extremely wet in southern Colorado. In early October, the remnants of Tropical Storm Polo brought heavy rain across southern Colorado, and then an extreme rainstorm in late October hit southwestern Colorado and the San Luis Valley (much more on that below). In contrast, most of northern Colorado continued to be drier than average in October.

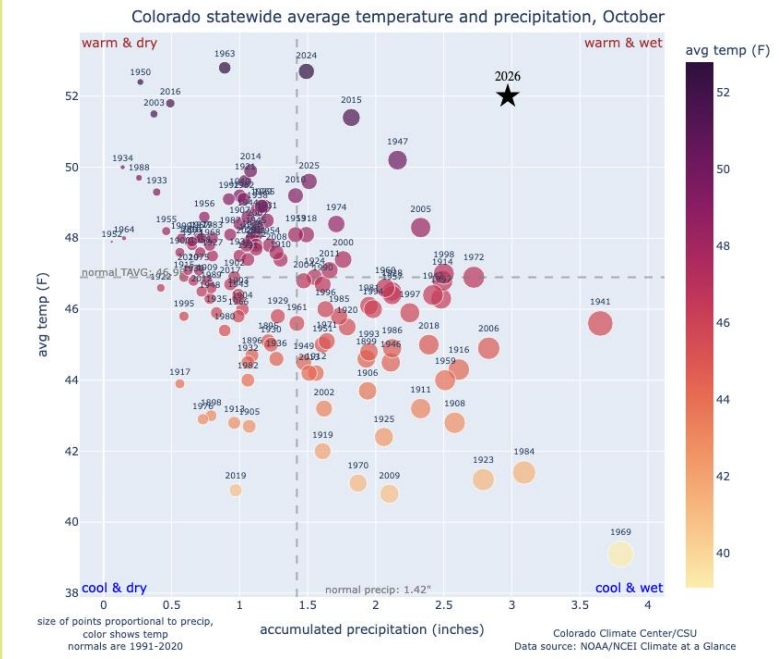
quadrant charts

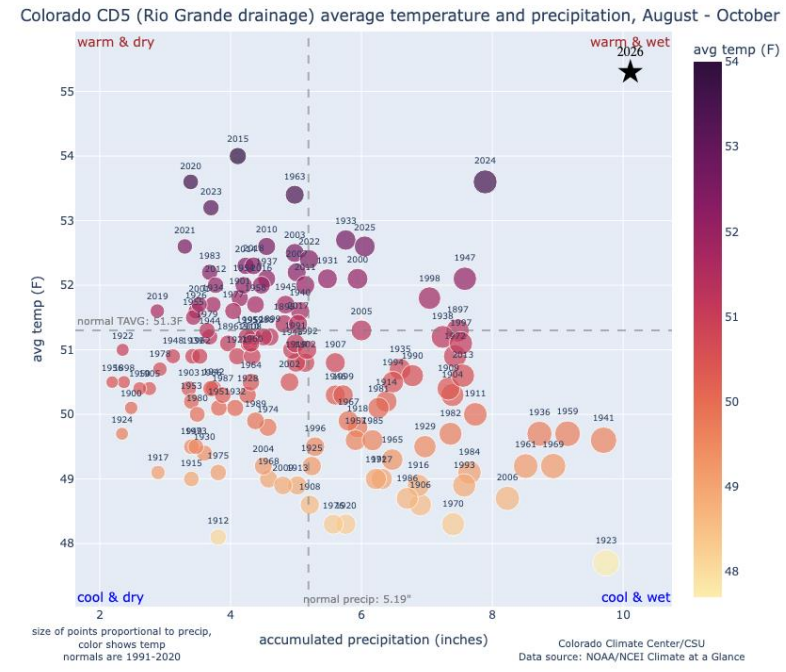
Each dot plots the precipitation on the horizontal axis and the temperature on the vertical axis. Dots are colored based on temperature and size is based on precipitation. The current year is denoted with a star. The 1991-2020 averages are denoted by the dashed lines.

Like September, October 2026 was much warmer and much wetter than normal when averaged across the state. **It was both the 4th-warmest and 4th-wettest October in 132 years of records.** October was 5.5°F warmer than the 20th-century average and 5.1°F warmer than the 1991-2020 average**.** The statewide precipitation of 2.97” was more than double the 30-year average of 1.55”.

In Colorado climate division 5, which covers the parts of southern Colorado that drain into the Rio Grande River, it was both the warmest and wettest August-September-October period on record. Repeated rounds of tropical moisture led to record-breaking rainfall, and the temperature over these three months was 1.3°F warmer than the previous record set in 2015 for this region.

[view all quadrant charts]



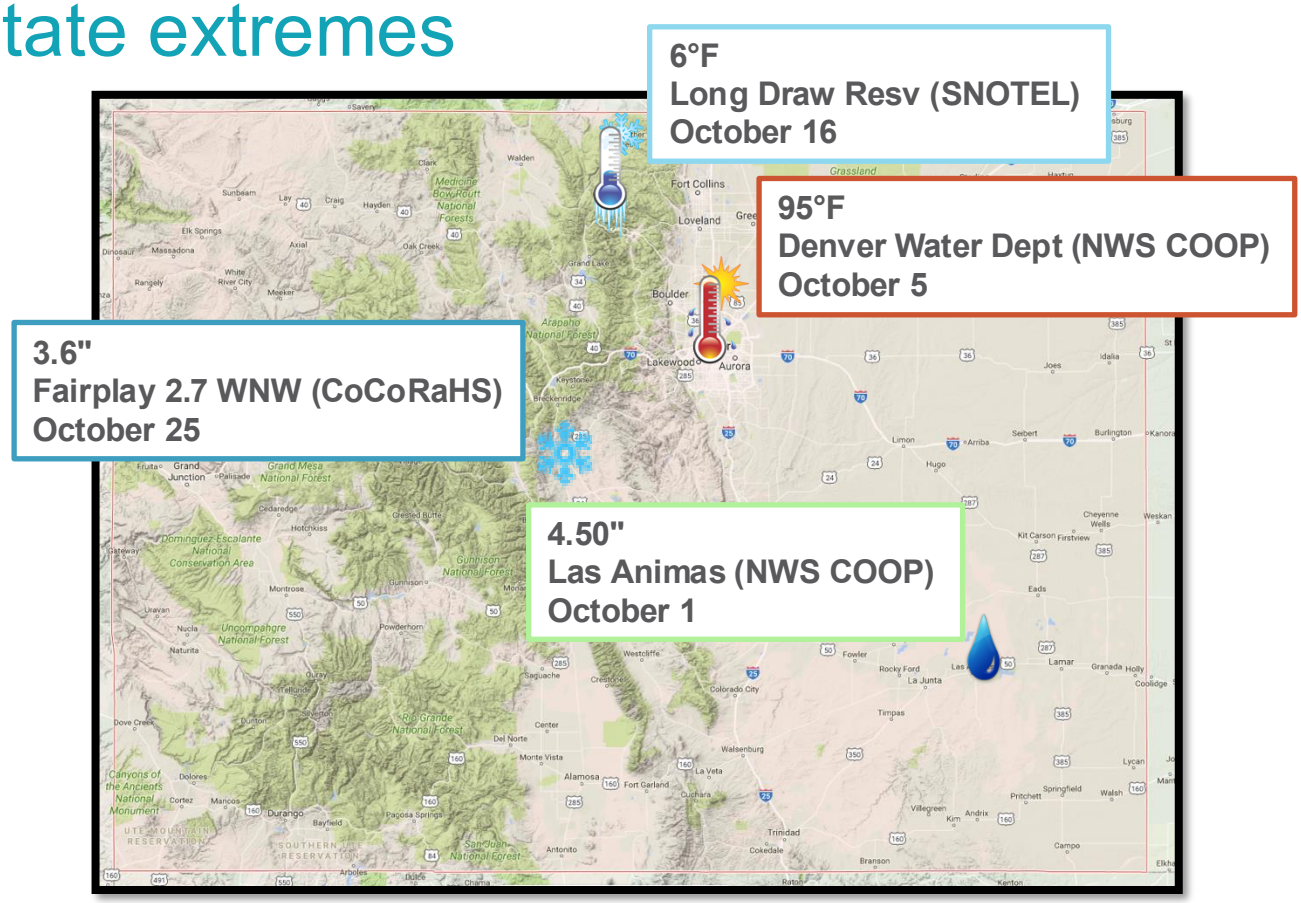


records tied and broken

	High Max	Low Max	High Min	Low Min	Precip	Snow
Daily	77/**148**	5/**14**	125/**532**	2/**4**	31/**219**	0/**0**
Monthly	10/**2**	0/**0**	10/**11**	0/**0**	2/**15**	0/**0**
All-time	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**	0/**0**	2/**1**	0/**0**

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

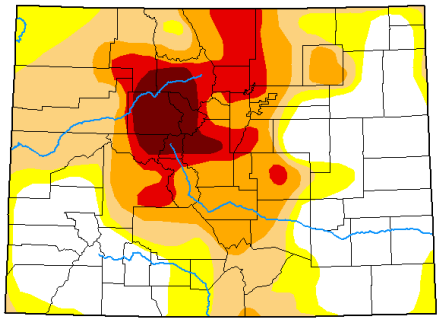
state extremes

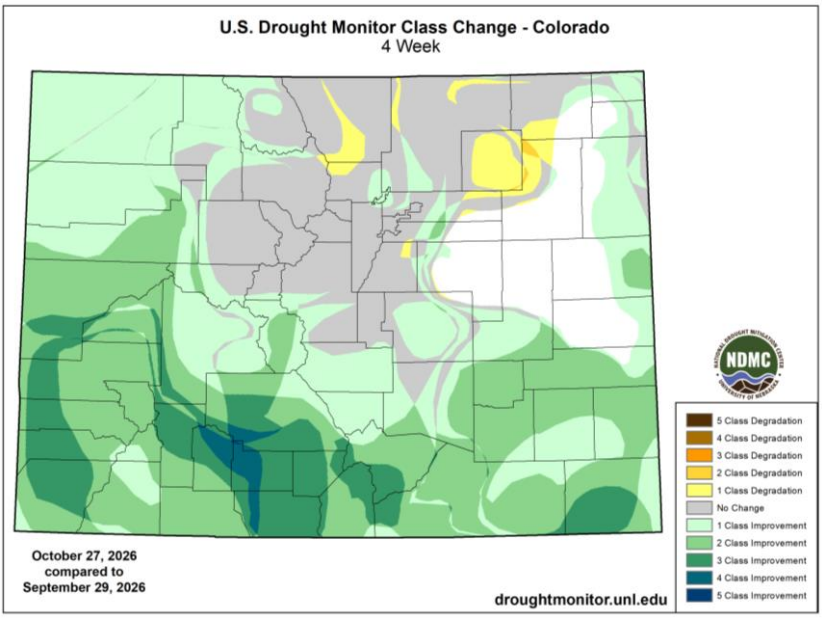


drought

[Colorado Drought Update Page]

At the end of October, about 50% of Colorado was experiencing some form of drought (D1-D4). This was a notable improvement from the end of September, when ~82% was seeing those conditions. Extreme to exceptional drought area (D3-D4) was slashed by more than half, down to ~13% by the end of the month compared to ~35% just four weeks earlier. Exceptional drought conditions remain over parts of the northern and central mountains.





The most notable drought improvements occurred across southern Colorado and the West Slope. Two-, three-, and even four-category drought improvements have left most of the San Juans and Eastern Plains drought-free. The most significant improvements were throughout the San Luis Valley, where conditions improved from extreme drought (D3) to drought-free.

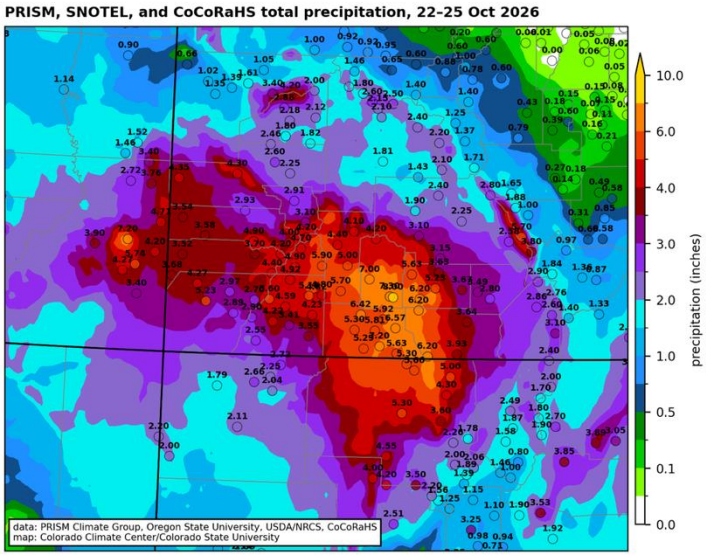
While most of the state saw improving drought conditions, the northern and central mountain areas, as well as potions of the Front Range Urban Corridor and adjacent plains had drought conditions remain steady or degrade further.

significant events

Multiple heavy rainstorms affected southern Colorado in October. But the most significant was from October 22-25, around the San Juan Mountains and in the San Luis Valley. Roads were washed out homes were damaged, water rescues were needed, and recreation areas were affected.



Colorado Highway 151 washed out, between Pagosa Springs and Ignacio. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Department of Transportation.



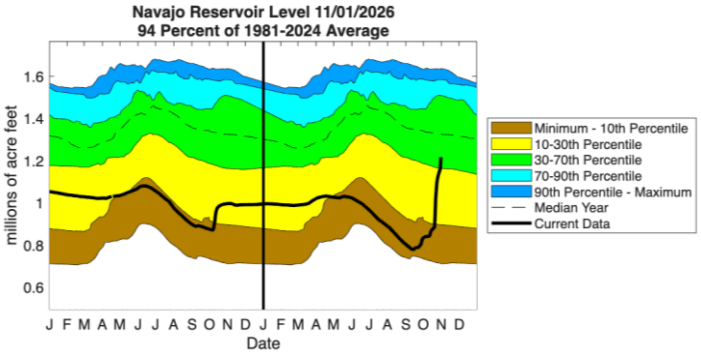
Total precipitation from 22-25 October 2026 with gridded data from the PRISM Climate Group and observations from SNOTEL stations and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow (CoCoRaHS) network.

Up to 8 inches of rain fell in four days at high elevations, with widespread observations of 4-6″ at lower elevations. Where the rain amounts were most unusual, however, was in the San Luis Valley. Alamosa, Monte Vista, and Del Norte all had their wettest 2-day period on record. In parts of the San Luis Valley the rainfall on October 21-23 represented more than a 1000-year rainstorm. Read more in our blog post, which explains why the late-October event was one of the most extreme rainstorms in state records.

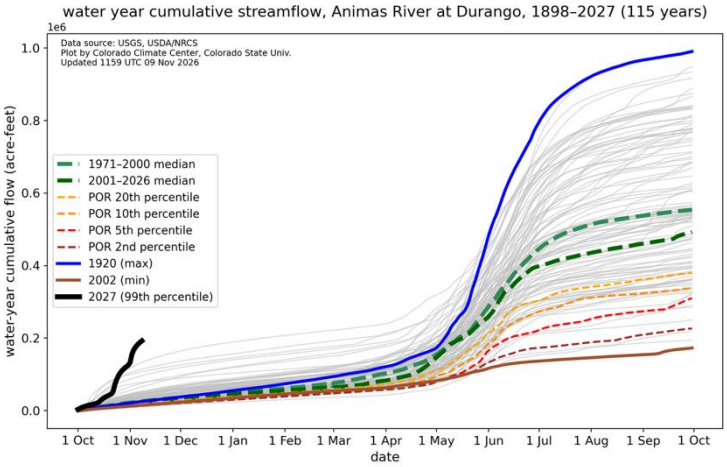
Some of the worst flooding impacts were felt in Archuleta County, where the San Juan River at Pagosa Springs reached a peak even higher than the destructive floods from a year ago. For September and October, Archuleta County received 13.44” of precipitation, compared to a countywide average of 4.05” for those two months. That is more than three times the normal precipitation for September and October, and nearly three inches more than the previous record of 10.64” in 1941!

significant events

Heavy precipitation across southern Colorado led to significant hydrologic response across some of the state's rivers and reservoirs. For example, storage in the Navajo Reservoir increased substantially October, from ~830.5k acre-feet at the beginning of the month to ~1.2M acre-feet by Nov. 1. Unsurprisingly, streamflows were also well above-normal across southwest CO, including along the San Juan, Rio Grande, and San Miguel Rivers. By the end of the month, Animas River at Durango (shown to the right) was reporting record-high water year to-date cumulative streamflow (and it has continued to climb since then).



Storage in the Navajo Reservoir through 11/1/2026. Data from the Bureau of Reclamation.



Water Year 2026 cumulative streamflow for the Animas River at Durango as of Nov. 9. Data from USGS.

Rank	Date	Statewide average temperature (°F)
1	2026-10-07	62.34
2	2025-10-04	62.26
3	2023-10-01	61.98
4	2024-10-03	61.66
5	2026-10-06	61.52
6	2015-10-02	61.32
7	1997-10-02	61.29
8	2005-10-03	60.99
9	2026-10-12	60.88
10	2005-10-04	60.82

Warmest statewide October daily averaged temperatures from 1951-present. Data from NOAA nclimgrid-daily.

While October was not quite record-warm at the state level, Colorado saw its warmest October day in at least the last 75 years on October 7, as well as two other top-10 warm days for the month. Five out of the top 20 warmest October days since 1951 occurred this year.

CCC in the news

- **October 1, 2026:** Forecasters predicted a strong monsoon season this summer. What really happened?
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Rocky Mountain PBS
- **October 5, 2026:** Historic drought doesn't dry conversation
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Criterion
- **October 7, 2026:** Fort Collins sets record for latest 90-degree day – twice
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in The Coloradoan
- **October 9, 2026:** Boulder reservoirs hold after record-tying dry year
  - Featuring Peter Goble in Axios
- **October 9, 2026:** September rains shrink Colorado drought footprint
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Denver Gazette
- **October 12, 2026:** A wet, hot September pulled Kiowa County out of drought. The mountains are still waiting
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in the Kiowa County Press
- **October 14, 2026:** Drought Forces Colorado Farmer to Salvage Corn for Silage
  - Featuring Peter Goble in Successful Farming
- **October 16, 2026:** Despite record-breaking rainfall in Colorado, drought continues to be a long term issue
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in KKCO Grand Junction

CCC in the news - continued

- **October 16, 2026:** A strong-to-very-strong El Niño will impact winter 2026-2027
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in The Fence Post
- **October 20, 2026:** The Runoff Colorado's hottest water year leaves its mark
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Aspen Journalism
- **October 20, 2026:** 2026 Water Year report highlights record-setting heat, dry conditions across Colorado
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher and Allie Mazurek in CSU's Source
- **October 20, 2026:** 'Ridiculously warm': Colorado Climate Center released 2026 water year report, and the numbers are bleak
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in Rocky Mountain PBS
- **October 21, 2026:** Drought conditions for county improved going into winter
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in the Crested Butte News
- **October 21, 2026:** Colorado's record-shattering water year was 'ridiculously warm,' a little bit 'scary ...
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in The Aspen Times
- **October 23, 2026:** Snowmaking begins in the high country. Which slopes will open first
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in Rocky Mountain PBS
- **October 24, 2026:** Will super El Niño erase memory of state's record heat, low snowpack?
  - Featuring Allie Mazurek in The Coloradoan

CCC in the news - continued

- **October 25, 2026:** 2026 Water Year report highlights record-setting heat, dry conditions across Colorado
  - Allie Mazurek in KUNC All Things Considered
- **October 26, 2026:** An astonishing year for heat in Colorado
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in Big Pivots and KUNC
- **October 27, 2026:** Colorado Records Warmest Water Year on Record as Snowpack Hits Historic Low
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in North Forty News
- **October 27, 2026:** Iconic Colorado glaciers are vanishing rapidly as photos show one almost disappeared in two years
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in MSN News
- **October 27, 2026:** CSU taps AI to predict hailstorms days in advance
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in AG Daily
- **October 27, 2026:** Northern Colorado's record heat, drought could give way to El Niño relief
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Loveland Reporter-Herald
- **October 28, 2026:** Drought uncovers Colorado historic highway as water reservoir shrinks
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in AccuWeather
- **October 28, 2026:** Southwestern Colorado flooding by the numbers - 540 damaged homes, 40 rescue missions
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in The Colorado Sun
- **October 28, 2026:** Unexpected voices in the national climate debate
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in The Fort Morgan Times

CCC in the news - continued

- **October 29, 2026:** Fort Collins Halloween forecast promises dry, mild weather
  - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in The Coloradoan
- **October 30, 2026:** More rain is forecast for southern Colorado elevating flood risk for some areas
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Colorado Sun
- **October 31, 2026:** After Months of Heavy Rain, the Southwest Faces More Weekend Storms
  - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the New York Times

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