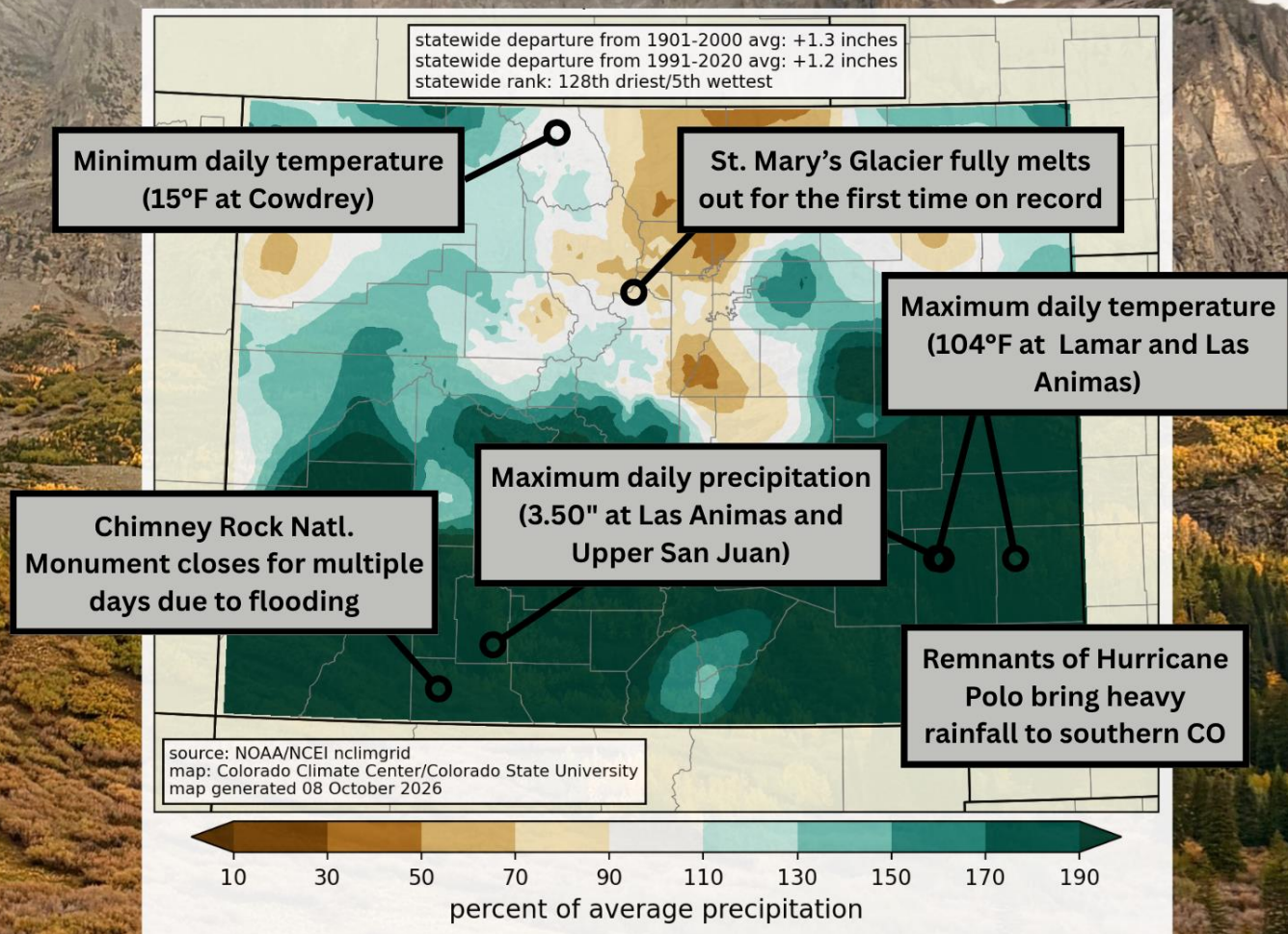


September 2026

Colorado Monthly Climate Summary



Percent of 1991-2020 average precipitation for September 2026

Statewide Temperature and Precipitation Ranks for September 2026

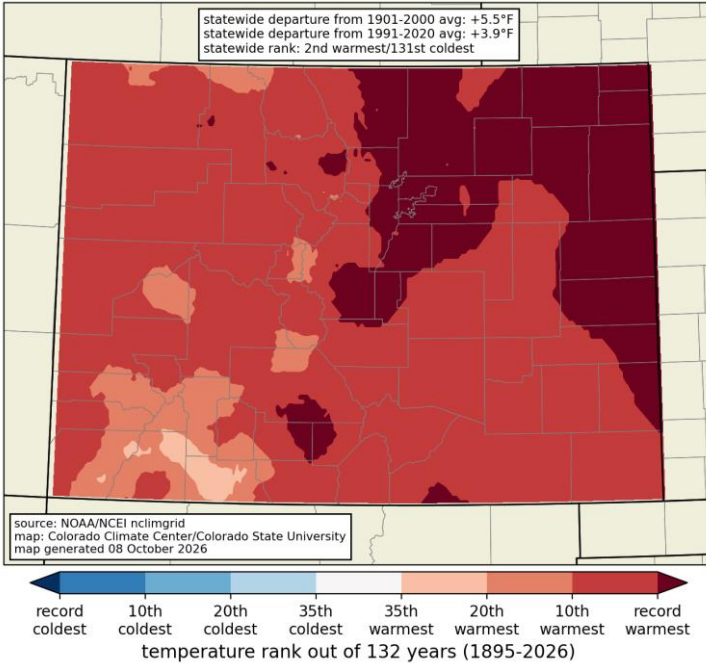
(based on 1895-2026 data)

2nd warmest (above average) ■ **Tied for 5th wettest (above average)**

temperature

average temperature rank
September 2026

statewide departure from 1901-2000 avg: +5.5°F
statewide departure from 1991-2020 avg: +3.9°F
statewide rank: 2nd warmest/131st coldest

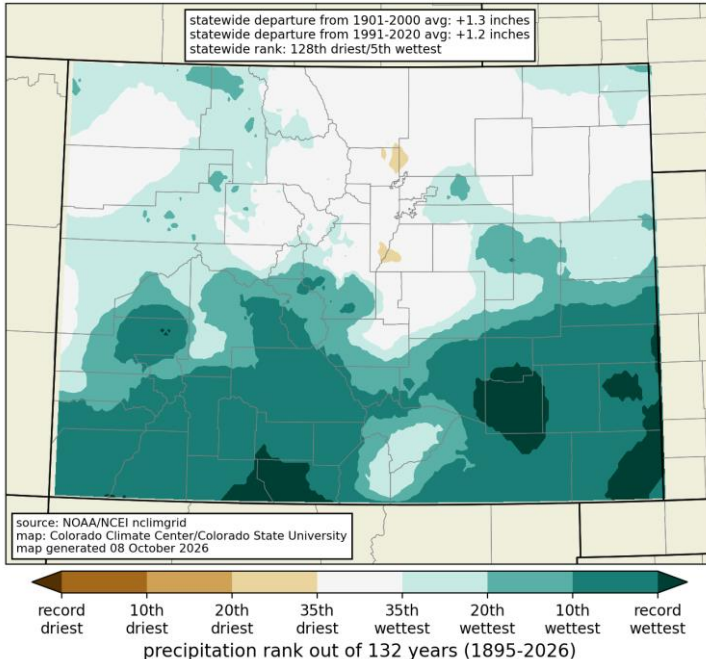


A record-breaking warm water year ended with another very warm month. All of Colorado was again warmer than average in September, driven especially by persistently warm nighttime low temperatures. Much of northeastern Colorado had its warmest September on record, while temperatures in the southwestern part of the state were less extreme. It was the 16th consecutive month of above-average temperatures in Colorado.

precipitation

precipitation rank
September 2026

statewide departure from 1901-2000 avg: +1.3 inches
statewide departure from 1991-2020 avg: +1.2 inches
statewide rank: 128th driest/5th wettest



September was extremely wet in southern Colorado, with multiple surges of subtropical moisture in the second half of the month. Some spots in both southwestern and southeastern Colorado tallied their wettest September on record. In contrast, northern Colorado did not fare as well, with some Front Range locations seeing less than half of their typical September precipitation.

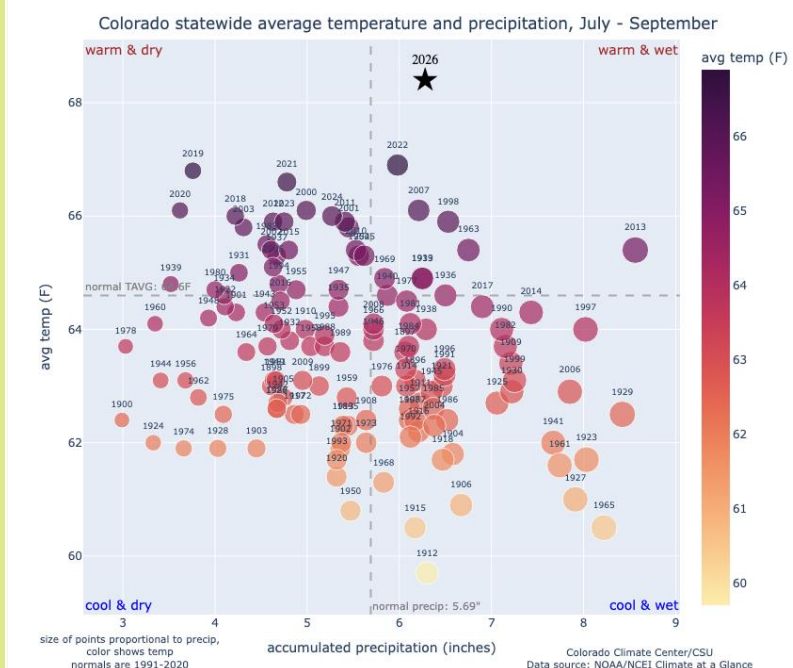
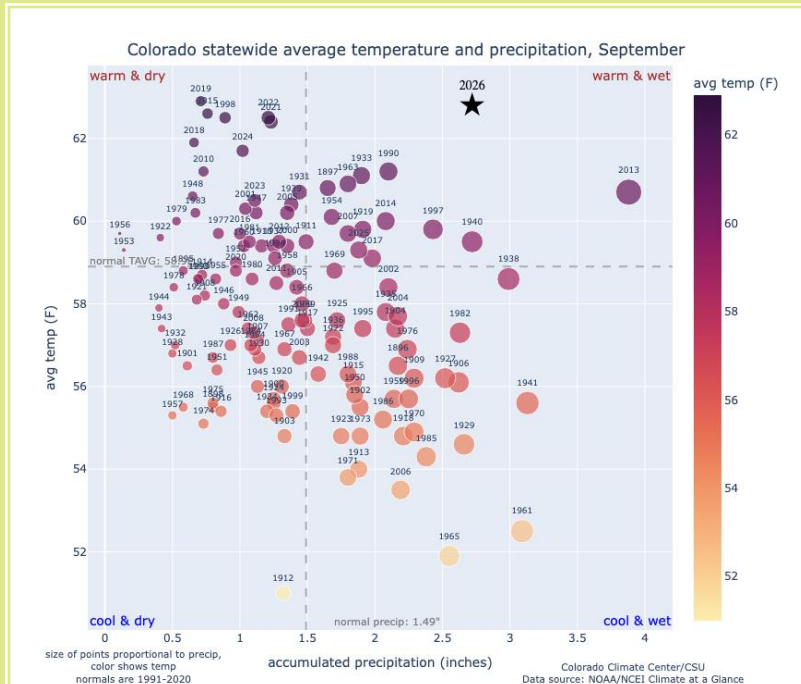
quadrant charts

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.

September 2026 was both very warm and very wet for Colorado when averaged across the state. It was the **2nd-warmest September in 132 years of records**, finishing just 0.1 °F cooler than Sept. 2019. It was 5.5 °F warmer than the 20th-century average and 3.9 °F warmer than the 1991-2020 average. It was tied (with 1940) for the **5th-wettest September**, with statewide precipitation 1.23" above the 30-year average.

The months of July, August, and September roughly correspond to the “monsoon season” in Colorado. This year, that 3-month period was extremely warm and slightly wetter than average across the state. It was **by far the warmest Jul-Aug-Sep on record for Colorado**, 3.8 °F warmer than the 30-year average and 1.5 °F above the previous record (2022). It was the **33rd-wettest Jul-Aug-Sep**, at 0.59" above average.

[view all quadrant charts](#)

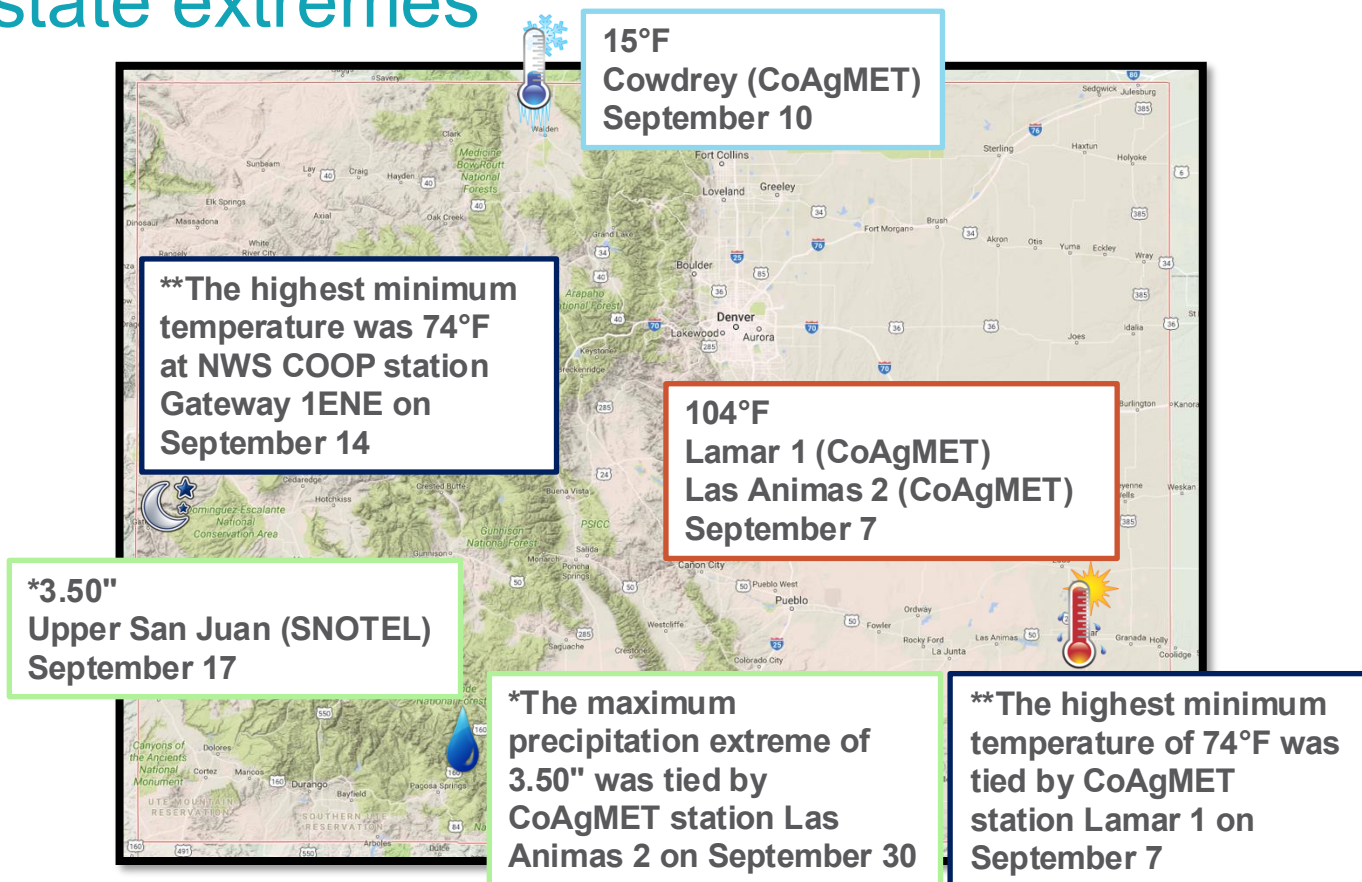


records tied and broken

	High Max	Low Max	High Min	Low Min	Precip	Snow
Daily	32/44	8/22	160/611	0/0	36/144	0/0
Monthly	1/1	0/0	14/17	0/0	1/7	0/0
All-time	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/0

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

state extremes



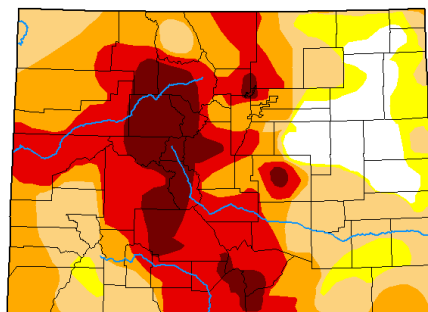
drought

Colorado Drought Update Page

At the end of September, about 82% of Colorado was experiencing some form of drought, down from ~89% at the beginning of the month. Severe to exceptional drought area (D2 to D4) also showed a notable reduction from the start of September, decreasing from ~75% to ~58% during that time. The worst drought conditions continue to be situated across central Colorado, including most of the mountain areas. At the end of the month, ~18% of the state was drought-free (D0 or better).

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

September 29, 2026
(Released Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4
Current	8.94	91.06	82.30	58.19	34.88	10.01
Last Week	6.48	93.52	86.72	67.86	38.47	13.37
3 Months Ago	0.00	100.00	92.96	79.52	39.20	9.32
Start of Calendar Year	25.96	74.04	46.22	15.77	4.35	0.67
Start of Water Year	45.82	54.18	45.19	35.88	14.34	0.00
One Year Ago	45.82	54.18	45.19	35.88	14.34	0.00

Intensity
 None D2 Severe Drought
 D0 Abnormally Dry D3 Extreme Drought
 D1 Moderate Drought D4 Exceptional Drought

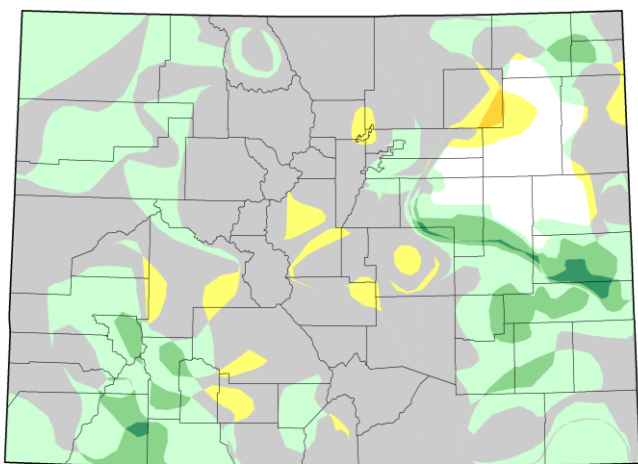
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:
Jonathan Case
NASA/MSFC/JUAH



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

U.S. Drought Monitor Class Change - Colorado 4 Week



5 Class Degradation
 4 Class Degradation
 3 Class Degradation
 2 Class Degradation
 1 Class Degradation
 No Change
 1 Class Improvement
 2 Class Improvement
 3 Class Improvement
 4 Class Improvement
 5 Class Improvement

September 29, 2026
compared to
September 1, 2026

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Widespread September precipitation brought notable drought improvements to Colorado. Most of the southern half of the state (as well as our far northeastern and northwestern corners) saw over twice their normal September precipitation. These wet conditions led to one- to two-category improvements in the USDM. The drought-free area on the Eastern Plains expanded further to the south and east. Meanwhile, conditions were drier than normal across parts of central Colorado and the Northeast Plains, which led to worsening drought in a few locations. Notably, exceptional drought (D4) was introduced to the Broomfield area, central El Paso County, and central Park County.



significant events

Heavy precipitation in September led to localized flooding, particularly in southern Colorado. In the middle of the month, heavy rain and thunderstorms impacted Southwest Colorado, prompting several reports of flooded roadways and debris flows in the area, including a multi-day closure of Chimney Rock National Monument. Later in the month, the remnants of Hurricane Polo brought rich tropical moisture to southern Colorado and combined with a secondary low pressure system to deliver additional heavy rainfall to the state. Localized debris flows were reported in a few areas, including once again in Beulah (near where the Aspen Acres Fire burned earlier this year).



Flooded roadway near the CSU Plainsman Research Station near Walsh on October 1.

Photo courtesy of Zane Jenkins.



Flood debris clean up at Chimney Rock National Monument near Pagosa Springs around September 17. Photo from the [Pagosa Daily Post](#).



St. Mary's Glacier on Sep. 12, 2024 (left) compared to Sep. 17, 2026 (right). Photos by Matt Siegfried and Ryan Venturelli, obtained via [Colorado Public Radio](#).

A fingerprint of Colorado's prolonged warm temperatures and low winter snowpack, St. Mary's Glacier (technically a permanent snow field) completely melted out for the first time on record. The "glacier" typically offers a reliable year-round refuge for skiers and snowboarders, but by mid-September, it was completely gone.



CCC in the news

- ❑ **September 3, 2026:** [Drought could make Colorado's fall colors arrive early and fade fast, CSU expert says - here's where to go](#)
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in CBS News Colorado
- ❑ **September 4, 2026:** [Colorado's year-round skiers are scrambling to keep streaks alive as summer snowfields shrink in a warming climate](#)
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in Summit Daily
- ❑ **September 4, 2026:** [Grand Junction Summer Ranks Among Hottest and Driest on Record Western Colorado](#)
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Daily Sentinel
- ❑ **September 9, 2026:** [Water restrictions exception, not rule](#)
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in the Ouray County Plaindealer
- ❑ **September 11, 2026:** [When Will Colorado See Its First Major Snowfall of the Season](#)
 - Featuring Colorado Climate Center in Unofficial Networks
- ❑ **September 11, 2026:** [A record El Niño is building in the Pacific. Here is what it could mean for a dry Colorado](#)
 - Featuring Peter Goble in Kiowa County Press
- ❑ **September 13, 2026:** [Colorado just experienced its hottest summer on record, continuing 15-month streak of above-average temperatures](#)
 - Featuring Peter Goble in Summit Daily



CCC in the news - continued

- ❑ **September 15, 2026:** [CMU hosts River District's annual seminar](#)
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Business Times
- ❑ **September 18, 2026:** [Statewide call-in show on the Colorado River Aspen Public Radio](#)
 - Featuring Allie Mazurek on Aspen Public Radio
- ❑ **September 18, 2026:** [Colorado River District hosts annual water seminar at CMU](#)
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in KJCT Grand Junction ABC News
- ❑ **September 18, 2026:** [St. Mary's Glacier, a Colorado landmark, has melted amid a record-hot summer](#)
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in Vail Daily
- ❑ **September 19, 2026:** [Winter forecast controversy. Can you trust an almanac?](#)
 - Featuring Peter Goble in USA Today
- ❑ **September 21, 2026:** [Historic El Niño could mean a wetter start to Colorado's winter — but the above-average snow might not stick around](#)
 - Featuring Peter Goble in The Aspen Times
- ❑ **September 22, 2026:** [CSU experts say rising heat will negatively impact academics this fall](#)
 - Featuring Allie Mazurek in The Rocky Mountain Collegian



CCC in the news - continued

- ❑ **September 23, 2026: [‘Super El Niño’ won't be savior for West Slope](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in the Ouray County Plaindealer
- ❑ **September 23, 2026: [El Niño boosts Colorado rainfall amid historic heat](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Denver Gazette
- ❑ **September 24, 2026: [Hail is a multibillion-dollar problem — and could get worse](#)**
 - Featuring the Colorado Climate Center in High Country News
- ❑ **September 27, 2026: [As the climate changes, will this year's record-smashing heat become Colorado's new normal](#)**
 - Featuring Russ Schumacher in The Aspen Times

See more news here: https://climate.colostate.edu/ccc_news.html

Subscribe to our blog here: <https://climate.colostate.edu/blog/>

Stay tuned for our Water Year 2026 Summary—coming soon!

