

Colorado CoCoRaHS

Because Every Drop Counts!

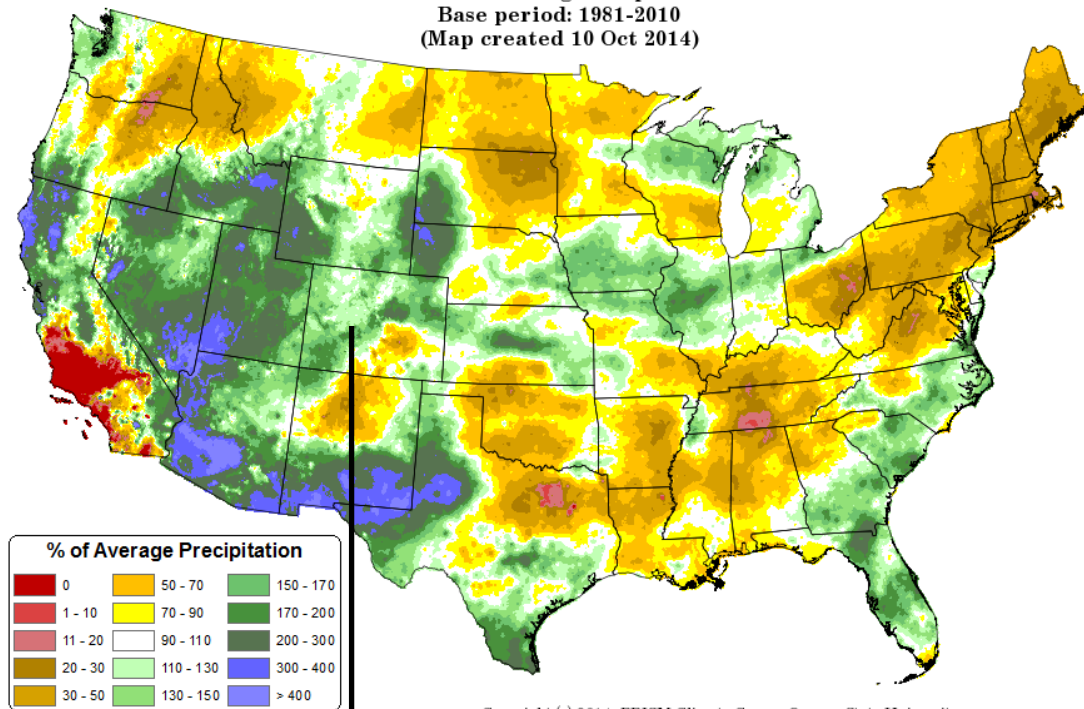
October 2014
Volume 2, Issue 10

U.S. PRECIPITATION (% OF AVERAGE) – LOOKING BACK AT SEPTEMBER 2014

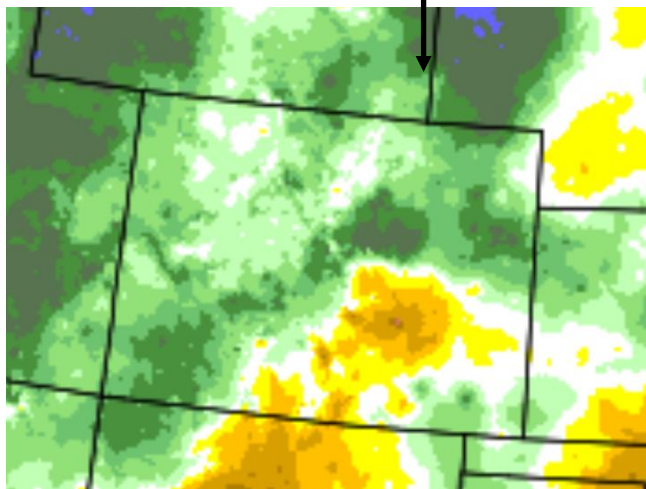
September was dry for much of the nation with a few exceptions; one of those being the central Rockies. In Colorado, it was wetter-than-average across portions of the northeast plains, the central and southwest mountains and along the western slope. In between there were pockets of near to slightly below normal. Most of southeast Colorado & the San Luis Valley were the driest.

Total Precipitation Anomaly: September 2014

Period ending 30 Sep 2014
Base period: 1981-2010
(Map created 10 Oct 2014)



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	Sept. Precip (in.)	Departure From Average
Alamosa	0.41	-0.50
Aspen	1.64	-0.18
Co. Springs	0.61	-0.58
Denver	1.79	0.83
Durango	3.61	1.70
Fort Collins	1.28	-0.05
Grand Junction	1.84	0.65
Lamar	0.78	-0.47
Pueblo	0.62	-0.15



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U.S. TEMPERATURES (ANOMALY) – LOOKING BACK AT SEPTEMBER 2014

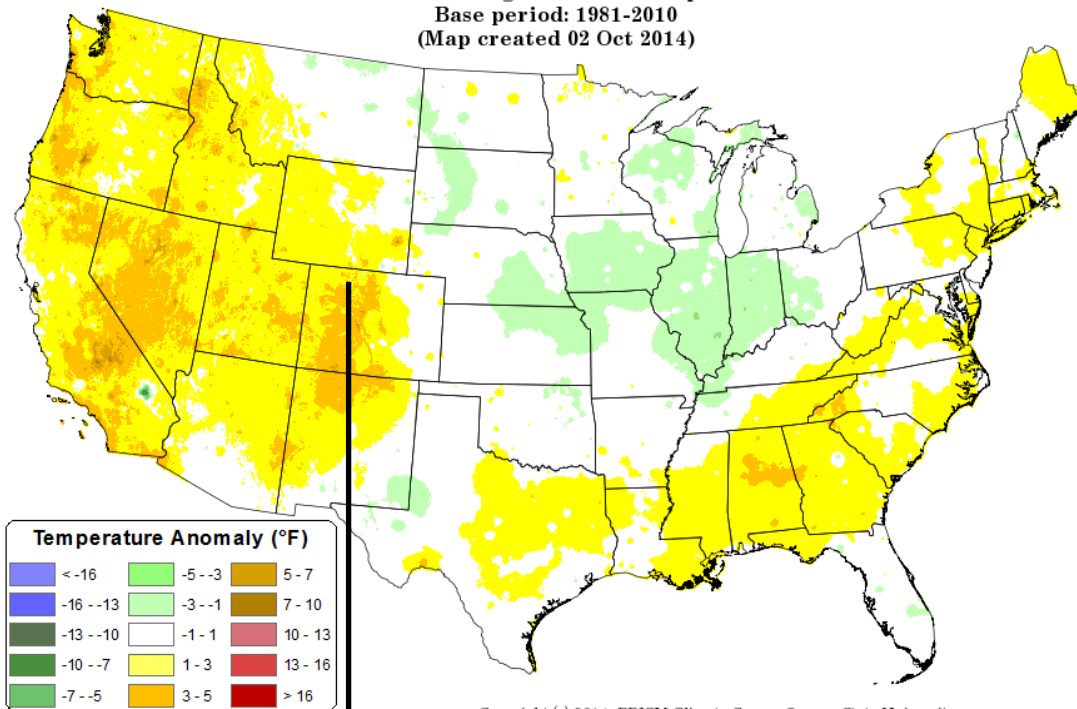
September was a warm month for much of the country, and Colorado was no exception. Many locations ran 3 to 5 degrees above normal, especially in the mountains. The far eastern plains saw temperatures right around the 30-year average.

Daily Mean Temperature Anomaly: September 2014

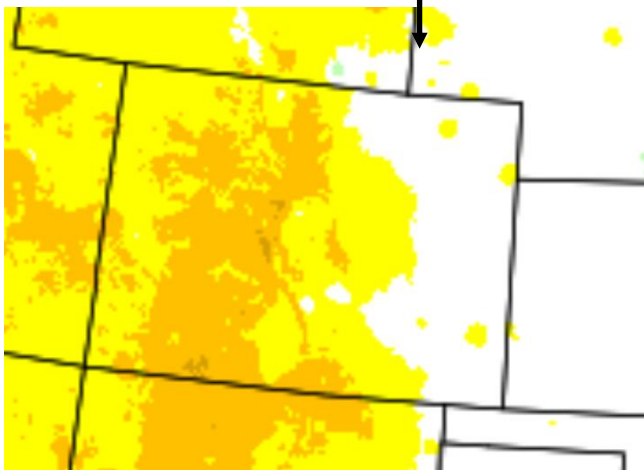
Period ending 7 AM EST 30 Sep 2014

Base period: 1981-2010

(Map created 02 Oct 2014)



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	Sept. Mean Temp. (°F)	Anomaly
Alamosa	58.7	3.7
Aspen	57.3	4.0
Co. Springs	63.9	3.0
Denver	64.8	1.4
Durango	62.1	3.4
Fort Collins	63.4	1.6
Grand Junction	67.3	1.2
Lamar	68.1	1.6
Pueblo	67.2	2.5



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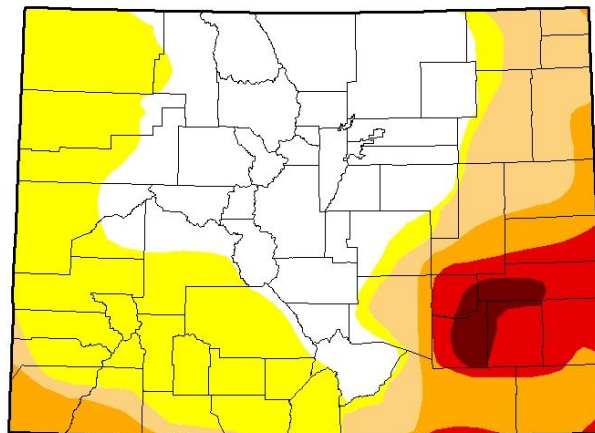
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COLORADO DROUGHT UPDATE – BREAKING NEWS

For the first time since May 2012, Colorado has been cleared of extreme and exceptional drought, thanks to a wet summer. We still have a pocket of severe drought in the southeast part of our state, and by no means are we out of the woods. A dry fall and winter could quickly swing things back the other way next year. Let’s keep our fingers crossed for more moisture!

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

May 6, 2014
(Released Thursday, May 8, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



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.

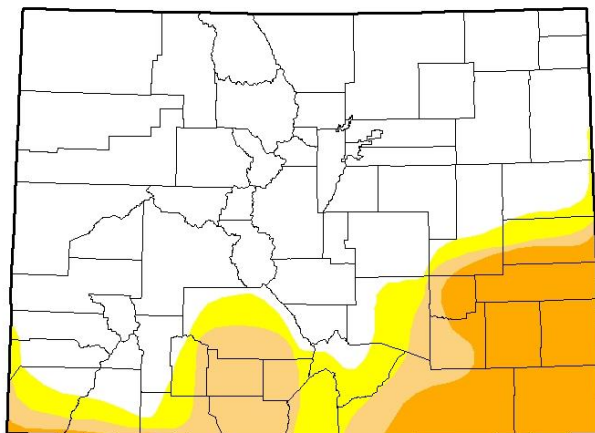
Author:
Mark Svoboda
National Drought Mitigation Center



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

October 14, 2014
(Released Thursday, Oct. 16, 2014)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

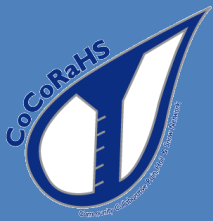
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Author:
Mark Svoboda
National Drought Mitigation Center



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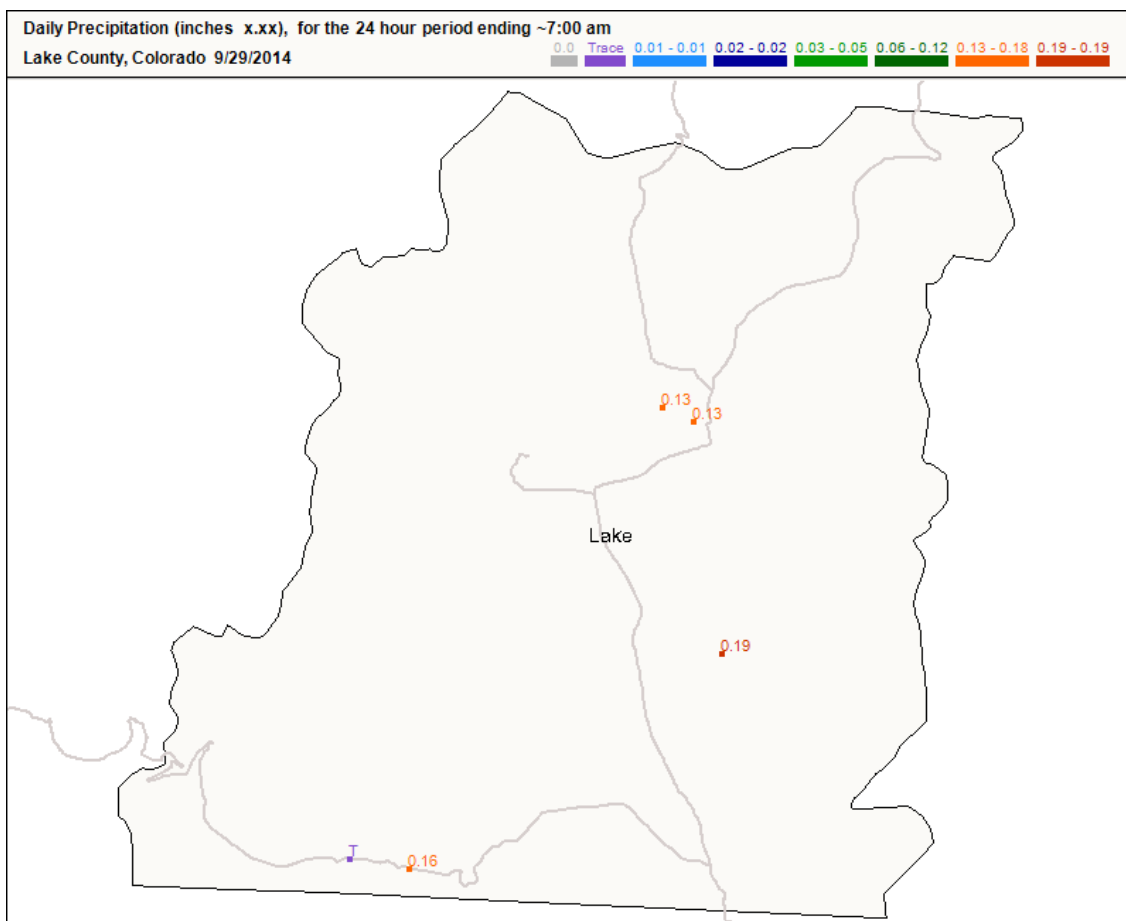


OCTOBER'S FEATURED COLORADO COUNTY – LAKE

Lake County is home to Mount Elbert, the highest point in the state of Colorado. This majestic mountain reaches an astounding 14,440 feet above sea level. It's the second highest mountain in the lower 48 United States. According to rockymountainhikingtrails.com, when you are standing on Mt. Elbert, you are at the highest point between Mt. Whitney, California, Mt. Fairweather in British Columbia, Canada, La Malinche Mountain in Mexico and Mont Blanc in France. Mount Elbert was named for Samuel Elbert, who served as a territorial governor for Colorado in the 1870s. He was also a justice for the state supreme court.

Lake County has a rich history in Colorado's mining industry and is home to numerous ghost towns, including Finntown, Stumptown and Malta. It was one of the original 17 counties created by the state legislature on November 1, 1861, and its original boundaries covered much of western and southwest Colorado.

It's tough to get CoCoRaHS observers in Lake County due to its low population and lack of towns. Leadville and Twin Lakes are about the only two in the county. If you know someone who lives in Lake County who would enjoy being a part of CoCoRaHS, encourage them to join!





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SEPTEMBER FUN FACTS FROM AROUND COLORADO

*As of 8 am, 10/17/2014

- 1,252 stations filed at least one daily report
- 907 stations reported at least half of the month
- 424 stations filed a report every day
- Wettest station: CO-LP-35 (Bayfield 7.0 N) with 6.06" of precipitation
- Driest station that reported all 30 days: CO-PU-15 (Pueblo 4.3 N) with 0.17" of precipitation
- 115 stations filed a multi-day accumulation report
- 92 stations reported snow during the month of September, with the most being 4.0" at CO-GN-18 (Crested Butte 6.2 N) The second highest total was 1.7" at CO-JF-151 (Aspen Park 5.2 ESE).

WHAT COULD EL NIÑO MEAN FOR COLORADO?

As of the publishing of this newsletter, the phenomena called El Niño Southern Oscillation, was still in a neutral phase, but close to the criteria which would designate the start of an El Niño cycle.

El Niño is an irregular warming of the waters in the tropical Pacific Ocean,

between Indonesia and the western coast of South America. It occurs about every 2 to 7 years.

El Niño can have a significant impact on the global circulation of winds, which results in a teleconnection between the ocean and earth's atmosphere. That teleconnection produces temperature and precipitation trends that we often associate with an El Niño winter.



The current winter outlook for precipitation and temperature in the United States, issued by NOAA on October 16, 2014.



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For parts of Colorado, El Niño can mean a wet, snowy winter, especially in the southwest mountains. The northern and central mountains tend to be drier. Temperatures are typically near normal, but southern Colorado can run cool.

During an El Niño winter the subtropical jet stream positions itself across the southern United States, keeping the storm track fairly far south, with Colorado on the northern fringe. The polar jet stream retreats to Canada and is fairly weak in an El Niño winter, preventing major cold snaps from gripping the lower 48 states. When we talk winter averages (i.e. temperature or precipitation), we're talking a mathematical average of everything that happens during the climatological winter, which is December, January and February. While El Niño winters are often thought to be mild, it doesn't mean we are exempt from an occasional outbreak of bitter cold arctic air.

ICE SAFETY ON AREA LAKES THIS WINTER

CoCoRaHS observer Chuck from Erie wrote me earlier this year and asked about ice safety. Now that temperatures are approaching or falling below freezing on a consistent basis, especially in the mountains, it won't be long before we start to see the annual cycle of ice forming on some rivers, lakes and streams.

The following suggestions for how thick the ice should be before crossing applies to new ice that is clear. White ice is only about half

as strong as clear ice, so thickness values should be doubled.

It's critical to know the following numbers are only suggestions, and that there are other factors involved that impact ice safety, including wind, temperature, snow cover, and the current below the surface of the ice. For new, clear ice, as a general rule, if 2" or less in thickness, you should stay off it. When ice is at least 4" thick, it's generally safe to walk across. To support the weight of a snowmobile or ATV, it should be at least 5" thick. Ice should be 8-12" thick to support the weight of a small car and 12-15" thick for a medium truck. Remember to double these values for white ice.

Because ice is rarely a uniform thickness across the entire body of water, and because conditions can vary so much, you are encouraged to stop and check the ice thickness at least every 150 feet on lakes, and as much as every foot on rivers.



Courtesy: Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources