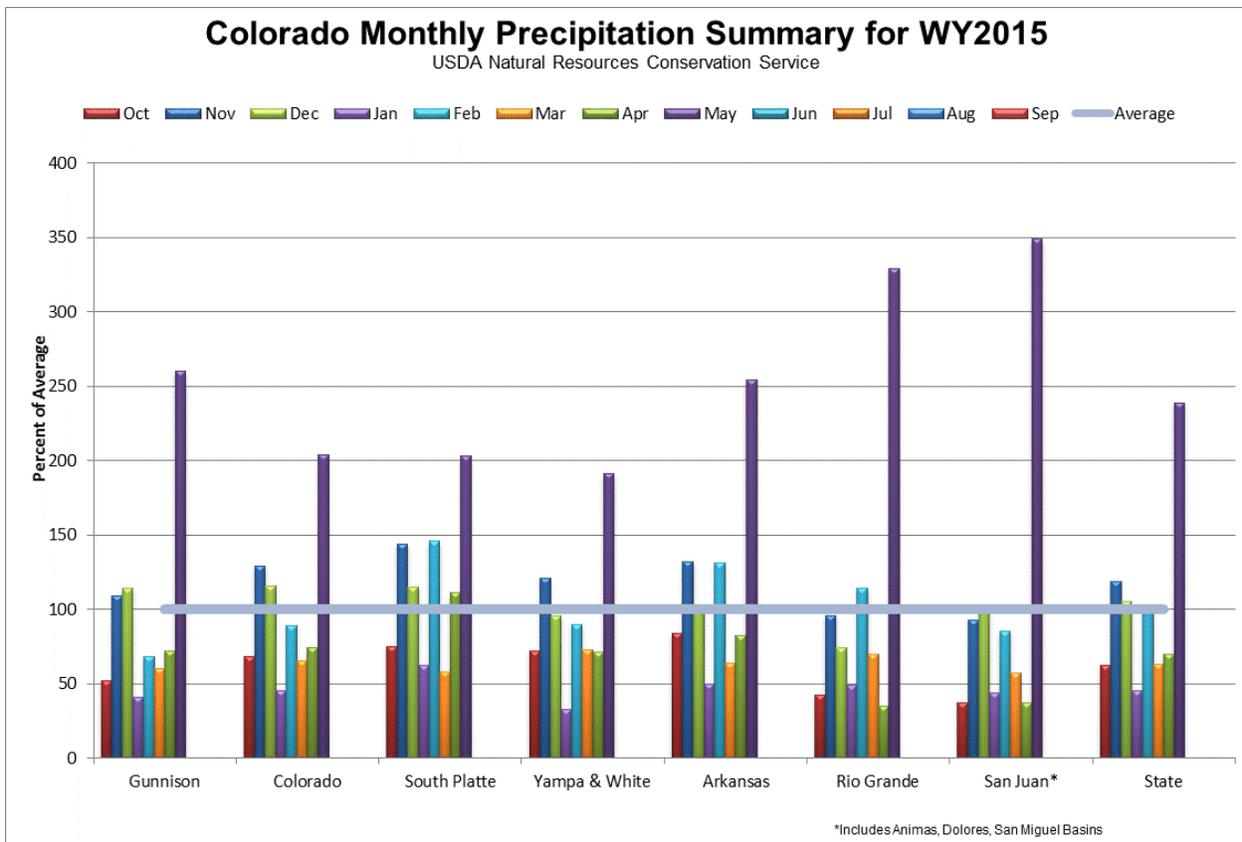


May Precipitation Increases Snowpack and Water Supply Forecasts

Denver, CO – June 5th, 2015 – The month of May produced an impressive 239 percent of average precipitation across the mountains of Colorado, a welcome change from the two previous months of below average precipitation. This precipitation combined with cool temperatures at high elevations allowed for a prolongation of the snowpack during a time of year when snowmelt is often already well under way. “This substantial addition of moisture, both in the form of snow and rain have notably increased water supply forecasts across the state from a month ago,” comments Brian Dompokos, Colorado Snow Survey Supervisor.

While this additional moisture helped to increase water supply for the upcoming summer statewide it was a particularly welcome addition to the basins of south central and southwest Colorado. The Upper Rio Grande and combined Sam Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan basins received well over three times the normal amount of May precipitation, at 329 and 349 percent of average, respectively. These amounts were the highest on record for most SNOTEL sites across the San Juan Mountains in the month of May. While the snowpacks in these basins never reached their median peak values these late additions to the snowpack will help provide notably more water to the area, and for longer into the summer than previously expected.



While the exceptionally wet May was great news for many parts of Colorado from a water supply standpoint, there is a flip side, particularly in areas with the most snow remaining. Having a substantial amount of snow in the mountains as temperatures continue to rise, and the probability of rain on snow events, increases the risk of flooding resulting from accelerated snowmelt. These events depend on a variety of combined factors but are something to be aware of as a possibility in the coming weeks.

Snow and precipitation aside, reservoir storage across the state remains very similar to last month statewide, at 107 percent of average, with most basins showing only modest changes from last month. The Arkansas basin reservoirs were the main exception to this, showing a very large increase from 79 to 108 percent of average over the last month. Streamflow forecasts, however, are a different story. While there was a net increase from last month across the state the largest increases were seen in the basins of the northern Front Range, which already had the most plentiful forecasts in the state (not to mention the entire Western U.S.), even further widening the gap between those and forecasts in the Upper Rio Grande and combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan basins of Southwest Colorado.

Colorado's Snowpack and Reservoir Storage as of June 1, 2015

BASIN	% MEDIAN SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.'S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	LAST YR.'S % AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE
GUNNISON	216	155	111	109
COLORADO	223	99	112	93
SOUTH PLATTE	320	112	114	113
NORTH PLATTE	100	55	---	---
YAMPA/WHITE	98	70	113	114
ARKANSAS	282	275	108	56
RIO GRANDE	86	610	66	63
SAN JUAN, ANIMAS, DOLORES, SAN MIGUEL	207	266	89	89
STATEWIDE	212	115	107	94

For more information about Colorado's snowpack or supporting water supply related information, please go to the Colorado Snow Survey website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/co/snow/>

Or contact Brian Dmonkos, Colorado Snow Survey Supervisor at Brian.Dmonkos@mt.usda.gov or 720-544-2852.