

Colorado

Basin Outlook Report

May 1, 2012



Photo courtesy of Lars Santana, Rangeland Management Specialist and Snow Surveyor in Montrose, Colorado.

This picture was taken on April 30, 2012 at the Ironton Park Snow Course on Red Mountain Pass, elevation 9800 feet. It depicts the unseasonably warm and dry conditions observed by snow surveyors around the state this month. When this snow course was visited last year at this time, they measured 33 inches of depth and a density of 39 percent. This year's snowpack was dramatically below average and melted out an average of 5 weeks early at sites below 10,000 feet.

Basin Outlook Reports and Federal - State - Private Cooperative Snow Surveys

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How forecasts are made

Most of the annual streamflow in the western United States originates as snowfall that has accumulated in the mountains during the winter and early spring. As the snowpack accumulates, hydrologists estimate the runoff that will occur when it melts. Measurements of snow water equivalent at selected manual snow courses and automated SNOTEL sites, along with precipitation, antecedent streamflow, and indices of the El Niño / Southern Oscillation are used in computerized statistical and simulation models to prepare runoff forecasts. These forecasts are coordinated between hydrologists in the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Weather Service. Unless otherwise specified, all forecasts are for flows that would occur naturally without any upstream influences.

Forecasts of any kind, of course, are not perfect. Streamflow forecast uncertainty arises from three primary sources: (1) uncertain knowledge of future weather conditions, (2) uncertainty in the forecasting procedure, and (3) errors in the data. The forecast, therefore, must be interpreted not as a single value but rather as a range of values with specific probabilities of occurrence. The middle of the range is expressed by the 50% exceedance probability forecast, for which there is a 50% chance that the actual flow will be above, and a 50% chance that the actual flow will be below, this value. To describe the expected range around this 50% value, four other forecasts are provided, two smaller values (90% and 70% exceedance probability) and two larger values (30%, and 10% exceedance probability). For example, there is a 90% chance that the actual flow will be more than the 90% exceedance probability forecast. The others can be interpreted similarly.

The wider the spread among these values, the more uncertain the forecast. As the season progresses, forecasts become more accurate, primarily because a greater portion of the future weather conditions become known; this is reflected by a narrowing of the range around the 50% exceedance probability forecast. Users should take this uncertainty into consideration when making operational decisions by selecting forecasts corresponding to the level of risk they are willing to assume about the amount of water to be expected. If users anticipate receiving a lesser supply of water, or if they wish to increase their chances of having an adequate supply of water for their operations, they may want to base their decisions on the 90% or 70% exceedance probability forecasts, or something in between. On the other hand, if users are concerned about receiving too much water (for example, threat of flooding), they may want to base their decisions on the 30% or 10% exceedance probability forecasts, or something in between. Regardless of the forecast value users choose for operations, they should be prepared to deal with either more or less water. (Users should remember that even if the 90% exceedance probability forecast is used, there is still a 10% chance of receiving less than this amount.) By using the exceedance probability information, users can easily determine the chances of receiving more or less water.

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Colorado Water Supply Outlook Report May 1, 2012

Summary

As the disappointing winter of 2012 draws to a close, the state's water managers prepare for what will likely be one of the lowest runoff years since 2002. March and April's snowfall and precipitation totals were extremely low across the state. This coupled with abnormally warm spring weather sent the snowpack into an early melt cycle in March. With the exception of a minor storm that hit most of the state during the third week of April, rapid melt continued throughout this past month. The dry conditions in Colorado have also resulted in significant decreases in streamflow forecasts throughout the state over the past two months. It is likely that, barring well above average spring and summer precipitation, peak flows have already occurred in many basins. Statewide reservoir storage serves as the only positive outlook in this report. Currently reservoir storage is at 112 percent of average, largely due to water manager's diligence and last year's abundant snowpack.

Snowpack

The state's snowpack percentages steadily declined throughout April, from 52 percent of average on April 1 to 19 percent of average as of May 1. The anomaly of this year is exemplified when compared to last year; the current snowpack is only 14 percent of last year's May 1 totals. The current snowpack percentage matches the state's record low, set in 2002. The lowest percentages in the state are recorded in the Upper Rio Grande basin which is 15 percent of average, followed by the Yampa and White basins with 17 percent of average and the Gunnison River basin at 18 percent of average. The basins with the highest snowpack totals were the North Platte, South Platte and Arkansas; reporting 27, 25 and 25 percent of average respectively. With shallow snowpack accumulations and early summer-like conditions nearly half of the SNOTEL sites and manual snow courses in the state had completely melted out by May 1. As a generalization only sites above 10,000 feet in elevation had measurable snow remaining during the May 1 surveys. The two sites that have the deepest snowpack remaining are Tower SNOTEL in northwest Colorado with 26.2 inches of SWE and Wolf Creek Summit SNOTEL in the San Juan Mountains with 19.8 inches of SWE. Melt out at many sites in Colorado this year has been 4 to 6 weeks earlier than normal.

Precipitation

Mountain precipitation recorded during April, while an improvement over the abysmal 29 percent of average reported in March, was still just 60 percent of average. The South Platte basin recorded the lowest monthly total at just 52 percent of average and was closely followed by the Gunnison basin recording only 54 percent of average for the month. The outlier in the state was the Arkansas basin, which received 86 percent of its average precipitation in April. Cumulative precipitation for the entire water year is now just 75 percent of average statewide. This percentage is somewhat skewed by abnormal rain and snow events early in the water year. The state began the water year with 136 percent of average precipitation recorded at SNOTEL sites across the state in October. A more telling statistic is that 5 out of the 7 months in this current water year have reported below average precipitation totals, with December, March and April all reporting well below average amounts.

Reservoir Storage

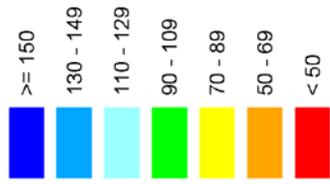
Reservoir storage remains above average across most of the state. Statewide volumes at the end of April were 112 percent of average and are 109 percent of the volumes recorded last year at this time. The lowest storage volumes, as a percent of average, are reported in the Upper Rio Grande basin which is also plagued with the lowest snowpack percentage this month. The Upper Rio Grande's reservoir storage was just 70 percent of average at the end of April; the Arkansas basin is also reporting storage volumes slightly below average at 95 percent. All other major basins are reporting storage that is above average for this time of year, totals range from 127 percent of average in the Colorado River basin to 102 percent of average in the South Platte basin. With low inflow volumes expected this spring reservoir storage may be dramatically reduced in the coming summer months.

Streamflow

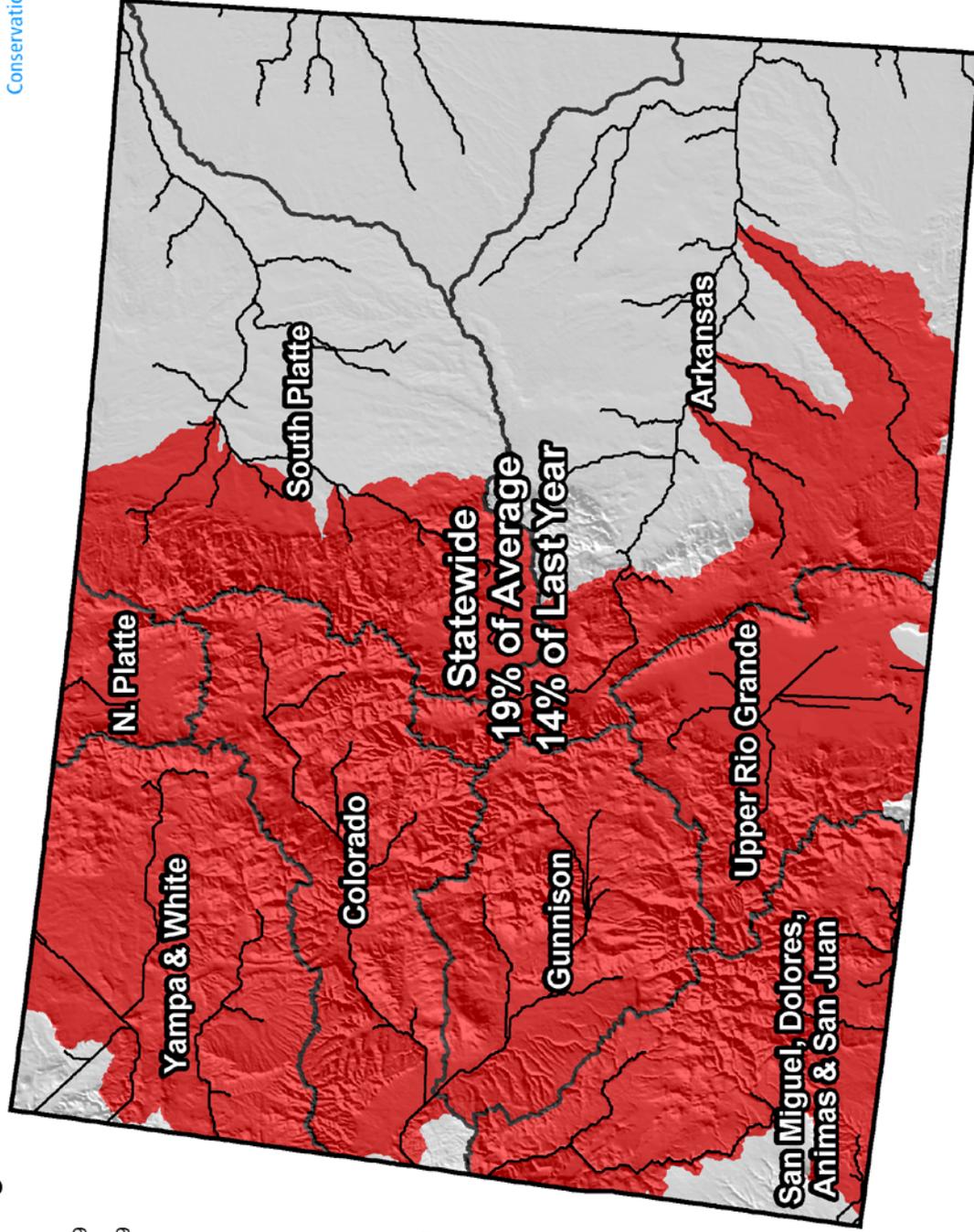
As we head into the high water demand season, the prospects for improved runoff conditions continue to diminish. The continuation of dry conditions in April resulted in significant reductions in streamflow forecasts for the second month in a row. Most of those decreases ranged from 5 to 20 percentage points. The highest forecasts in the state, which are still calling for less than 50 percent of average volumes, are in the Upper Rio Grande River basin and in the rivers in the southwest corner of the state. The majority of the state's streams and rivers are expected to produce only 20 to 40 percent of average volumes. The lowest runoff volumes are expected in northern Colorado, where streamflows are expected to be 15 to 30 percent of average. With much of the meager snowpack already melted we can only hope for abnormally wet conditions for the remainder of this spring and into the summer to alleviate shortages.

Colorado Snowpack Map

Percent of Average

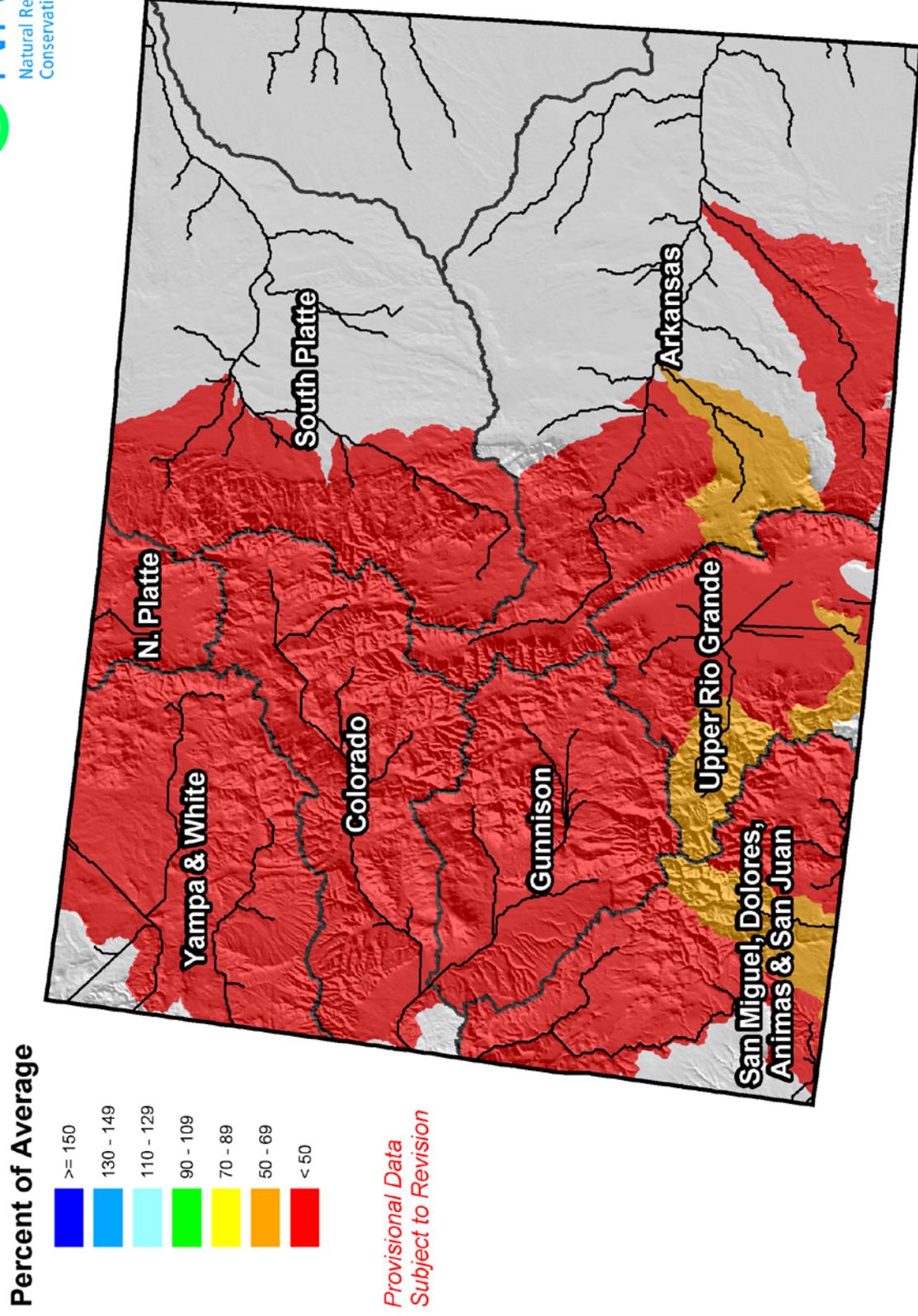


*Provisional Data
Subject to Revision*



Current as of May 1, 2012

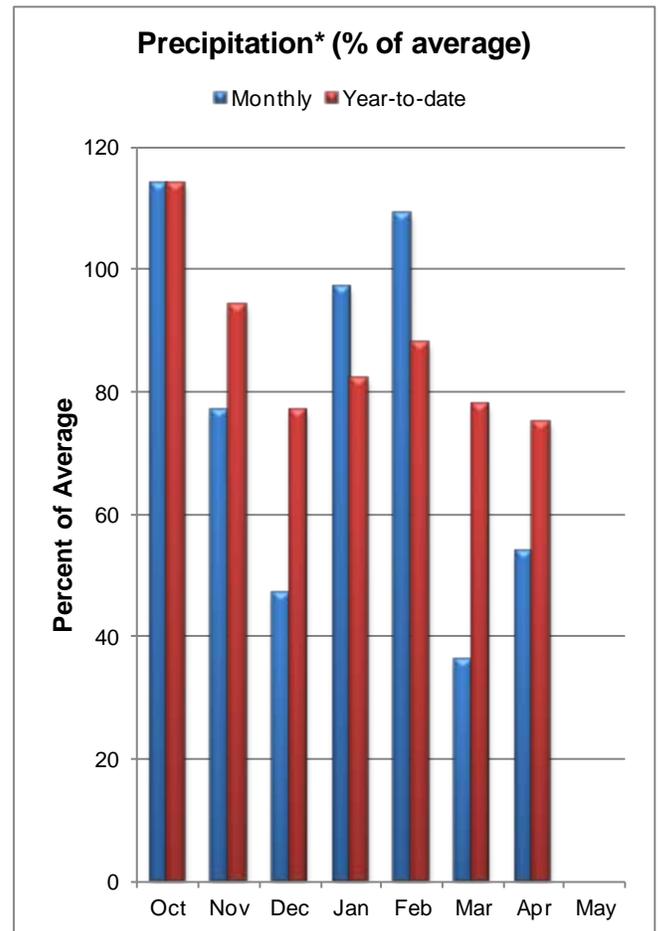
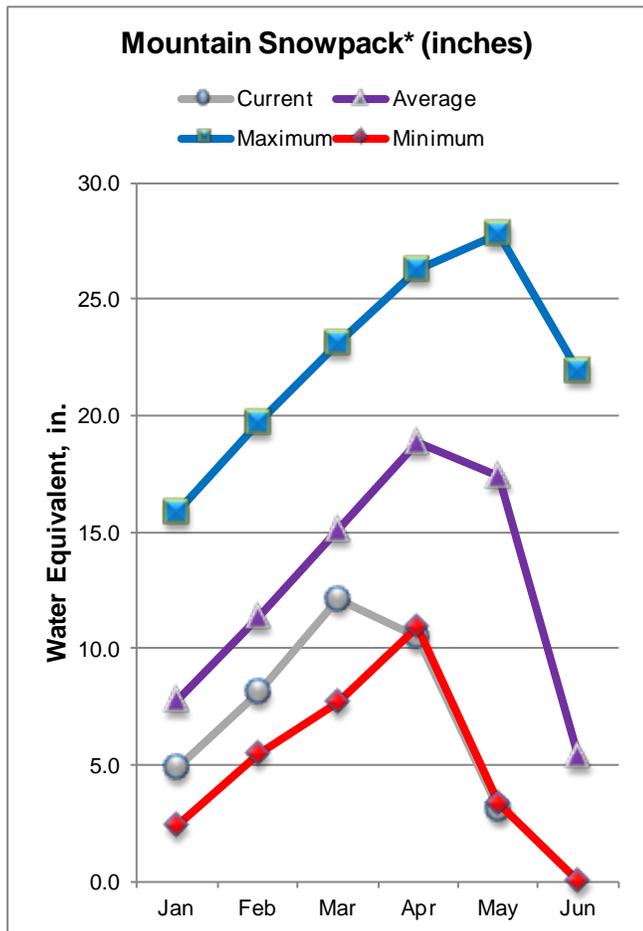
Colorado Streamflow Forecast Map



Current as of May 1, 2012

GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

Warm and dry weather patterns persisted in the Gunnison basin throughout April accelerating the melt of an already anemic snowpack. By May 1 most measurement locations in the basin had completely melted out, leaving only 8 out of 19 locations with snow to measure. May 1 measurements report the basin's snowpack at just 18 percent of average, down 38 percentage points from what was reported last month. Sub-basin snowpack reports range from 28 percent of average in the Surface Creek drainage to 18 percent of average in the Upper Gunnison watershed.

Precipitation measured at SNOTEL sites in the basin was just 54 percent of average for the month of April and year to date precipitation had dropped to just 75 percent of average as of May 1. Reservoir storage remains in good shape with stored volumes at 124 percent of average and 112 percent of what was stored this time last year. With much of the snowpack already departed many streams in the basin may have already reached their peaks in April. Water supply forecasts for the remainder of the runoff season are extremely low. May to July streamflow volumes are expected to range from 12 percent of average at Tomichi Creek at the headwaters of the Gunnison River to 47 percent of average for the Inflow to Ridgway Reservoir on the Uncompahgre River above Colona, CO.

GUNNISON RIVER BASIN
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<<===== Drier ===== Future Conditions ===== Wetter =====>>						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)				
		90%		70%		50%			30%		10%	
		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(% AVG.)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)
Taylor Park Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	34	41	46	45	51	60	103				
	MAY-JUL	24	31	36	38	41	50	95				
Slate R nr Crested Butte	APR-JUL	32	36	39	44	42	47	89				
	MAY-JUL	23	27	30	38	33	38	80				
East R at Almont	APR-JUL	57	65	70	37	76	84	192				
	MAY-JUL	41	49	54	30	60	68	178				
Gunnison R near Gunnison (2)	APR-JUL	81	101	117	30	134	163	390				
	MAY-JUL	50	70	86	24	103	132	355				
Tomichi Ck at Sargents	APR-JUL	5.4	7.0	8.4	26	10.0	13.0	32				
	MAY-JUL	3.0	4.6	6.0	21	7.6	10.6	28				
Cochetopa Ck bl Rock Ck nr Parlin	APR-JUL	2.4	3.3	4.2	24	5.3	7.5	17.3				
	MAY-JUL	1.0	2.0	2.9	22	4.0	6.2	13.1				
Tomichi Ck at Gunnison	APR-JUL	5.6	8.3	10.9	14	14.2	20	81				
	MAY-JUL	2.7	5.4	8.0	12	11.3	17.6	68				
Lake Fk at Gateview	APR-JUL	52	60	65	52	71	80	126				
	MAY-JUL	41	49	54	45	60	69	119				
Blue Mesa Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	174	205	230	32	255	295	720				
	MAY-JUL	117	149	173	27	199	240	645				
Paonia Reservoir Inflow (2)	MAR-JUN	30	35	38	38	42	49	100				
	MAY-JUN	8.5	13.2	17.0	23	21	28	75				
	APR-JUL	21	27	31	30	36	45	102				
	MAY-JUL	8.1	13.5	18.0	22	23	32	82				
NF Gunnison R nr Somerset (2)	APR-JUL	70	84	94	31	105	123	305				
	MAY-JUL	46	60	70	27	81	99	260				
Surface Ck at Cedaredge	APR-JUL	4.6	5.3	5.9	35	6.6	7.7	17.1				
	MAY-JUL	2.2	2.9	3.5	24	4.2	5.3	14.9				
Ridgway Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	40	47	52	51	57	66	102				
	MAY-JUL	31	38	43	47	48	57	92				
Uncompahgre R at Colona (2)	APR-JUL	43	54	63	45	73	88	139				
	MAY-JUL	32	43	52	42	62	77	123				
Gunnison R nr Grand Junction (2)	APR-JUL	315	390	450	29	515	620	1560				
	MAY-JUL	153	225	285	21	350	455	1340				

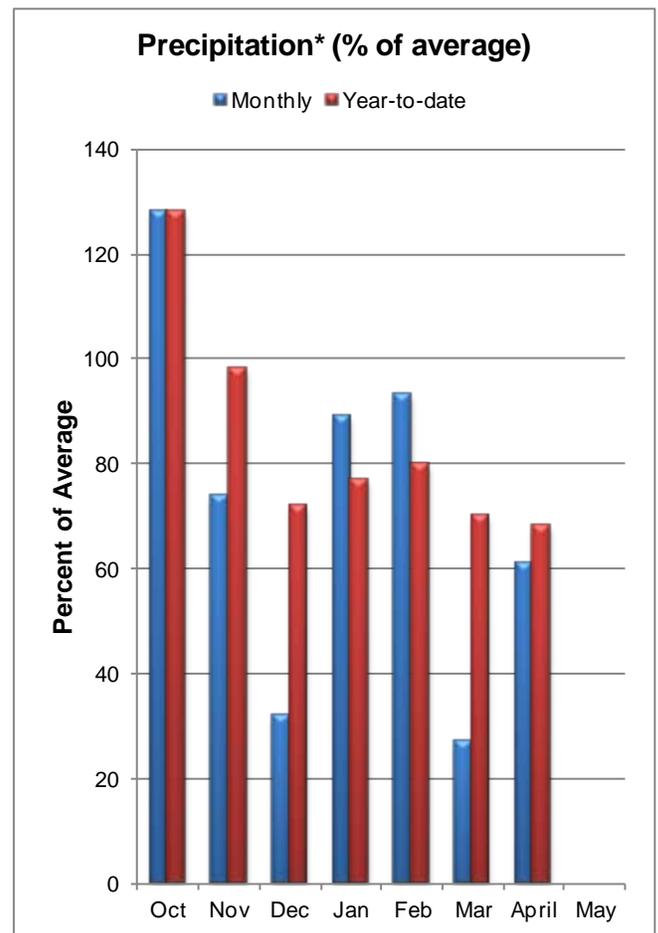
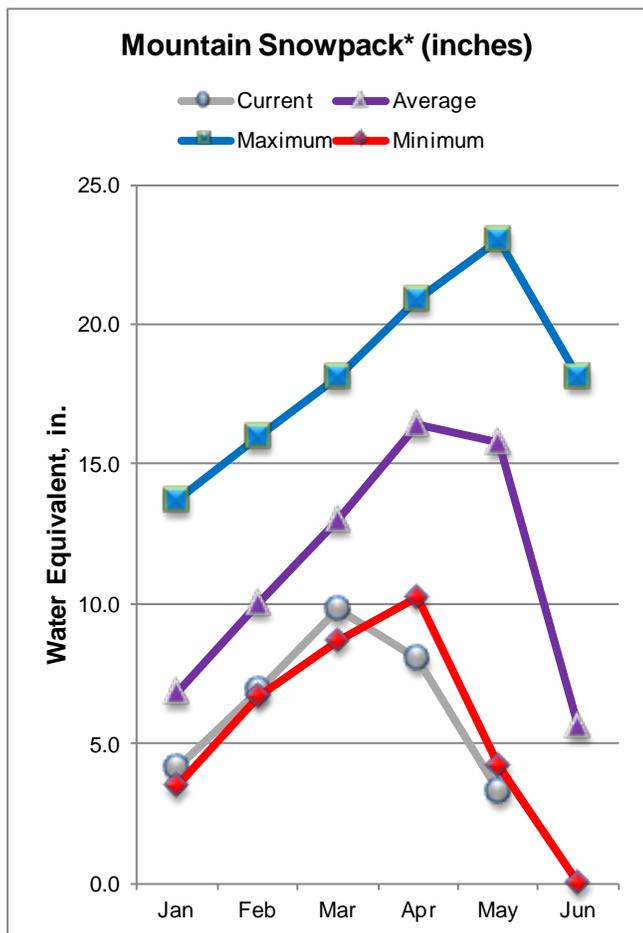
GUNNISON RIVER BASIN Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					GUNNISON RIVER BASIN Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
BLUE MESA	830.0	531.9	476.5	404.7	UPPER GUNNISON BASIN	15	12	18
CRAWFORD	14.0	11.3	11.9	12.1	SURFACE CREEK BASIN	3	20	28
FRUITGROWERS	3.6	3.4	3.4	4.1	UNCOMPAHGRE BASIN	4	15	20
FRUITLAND	9.2	4.9	5.3	4.9	TOTAL GUNNISON RIVER BASIN	19	13	18
MORROW POINT	121.0	114.7	110.8	113.4				
PAONIA	15.4	12.7	0.6	7.4				
RIDGWAY	83.0	74.2	56.1	57.9				
TAYLOR PARK	106.0	72.8	72.2	59.9				

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

The snowpack in the Colorado River basin has diminished by 28 percentage points since the beginning of April. Current May 1 snowpack measurements for the basin are the lowest reported in the 45 year historical record. At only 21 percent of average the current snowpack is 6 percentage points lower than the previous record low set in 2002 when the snowpack was reported to be 27 percent of average. Measurements in the sub-basins range from only 15 percent of average recorded in the Muddy Creek watershed to 29 percent of average in the Blue River basin.

For the sixth month in a row the Colorado River basin received below average mountain precipitation. April precipitation was just 61 percent of average and total precipitation for the water year dropped to 68 percent of average. Combined reservoir storage volumes in the basin are up from what was reported last month as water managers prepare for potential shortages this season. Storage volumes at the end of April were 127 percent of average and 119 percent of last year's storage at this same time. Seasonal water supply forecasts are now predicting, on average, streamflow volumes that are 45 percent of normal across the basin. Outlooks for the remainder of the season (May - July) currently range from 25 percent of average for Muddy Creek below Wolford Mountain Reservoir to 47 percent of average at the Inflow to Lake Granby.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<<===== Drier ===== Future Conditions ===== Wetter =====>>						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)
		90%		50%		10%		
		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(% AVG.)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	
Lake Granby Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	98	112	123	55	134	151	225
	MAY-JUL	75	89	100	47	111	128	215
Willow Ck Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	14.3	17.8	21	41	24	30	51
	MAY-JUL	5.6	9.1	12.0	26	15.3	21	47
Williams Fk Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	36	43	48	51	54	63	95
	MAY-JUL	28	35	40	45	46	55	89
Dillon Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	57	68	76	46	85	98	167
	MAY-JUL	44	55	63	40	72	85	158
Green Mountain Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	98	118	132	47	148	172	280
	MAY-JUL	75	94	109	41	125	149	265
Muddy Ck bl Wolford Mtn Resv (2)	APR-JUL	14.1	18.3	22	37	26	33	60
	MAY-JUL	5.2	9.4	13.0	25	17.2	24	52
Eagle R bl Gypsum (2)	APR-JUL	104	126	143	43	161	189	335
	MAY-JUL	76	98	115	37	133	161	315
Colorado R nr Dotsero (2)	APR-JUL	450	550	625	43	705	840	1440
	MAY-JUL	305	405	480	36	560	695	1325
Ruedi Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	50	59	65	46	72	83	141
	MAY-JUL	40	49	55	41	62	73	134
Roaring Fk at Glenwood Springs (2)	APR-JUL	240	275	305	43	335	380	710
	MAY-JUL	188	225	255	38	285	330	665
Colorado R nr Cameo (2)	APR-JUL	770	920	1030	43	1150	1340	2420
	MAY-JUL	550	700	810	37	930	1120	2220

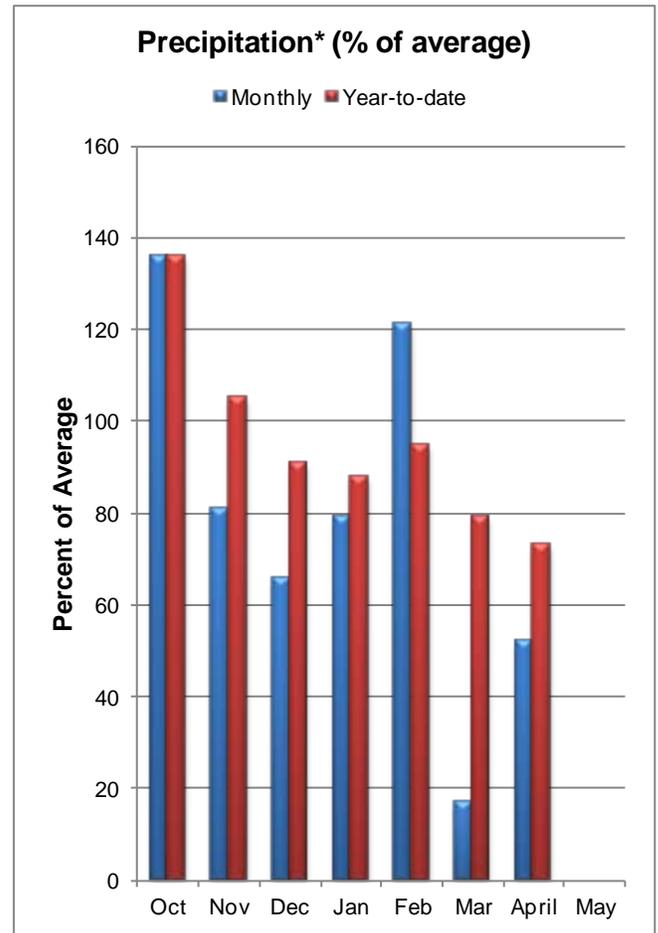
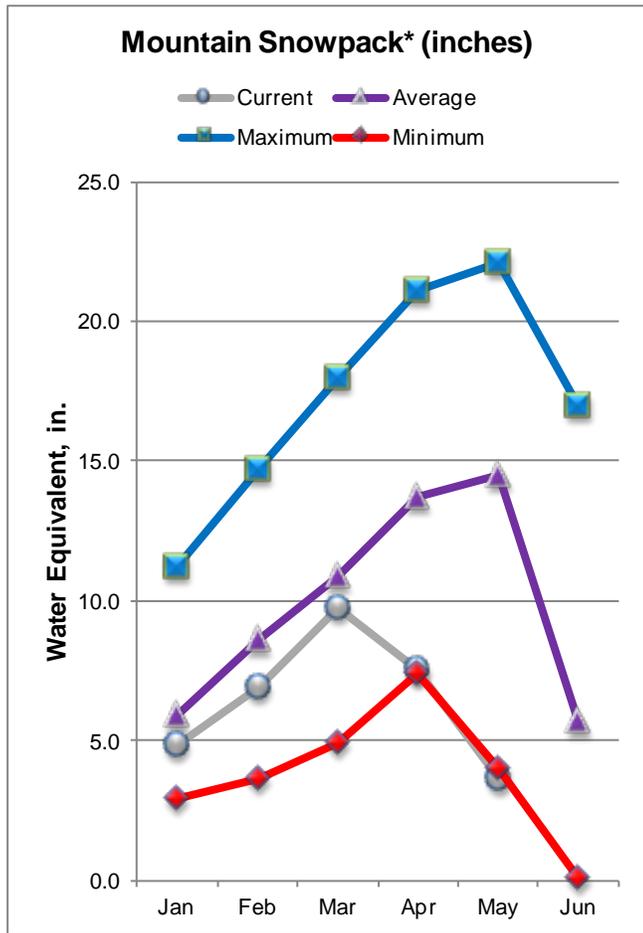
UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
DILLON	254.0	239.6	212.8	212.8	BLUE RIVER BASIN	9	19	29
LAKE GRANBY	465.6	346.1	295.0	259.5	UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASI	35	16	22
GREEN MOUNTAIN	146.8	81.8	50.7	54.3	MUDDY CREEK BASIN	3	7	15
HOMESTAKE	43.0	0.3	12.7	16.8	PLATEAU CREEK BASIN	3	20	28
RUEDI	102.0	77.3	59.8	59.7	ROARING FORK BASIN	8	12	16
VEGA	32.9	28.6	17.3	16.6	WILLIAMS FORK BASIN	4	14	22
WILLIAMS FORK	97.0	86.5	80.1	55.3	WILLOW CREEK BASIN	3	8	19
WILLOW CREEK	9.1	6.4	1.7	5.9	TOTAL COLORADO RIVER BASI	46	15	21

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

Abnormally warm temperatures and low snowfall during April have resulted in the lowest May 1 snowpack report since the 2002 water year in the South Platte basin. The current snowpack reports were just 25 percent of average in the basin. Many SNOTEL sites and manual snow courses at the lower and mid elevations have already melted out and what little remains will soon be gone. The Cache la Poudre, Clear Creek and St. Vrain snowpack's were all in the range of 32 to 33 percent of average while the Upper South Platte basin was only 15 percent of average. The Boulder Creek and Big Thompson sub-basins recorded snowpack's at 22 and 23 percent of average respectively.

Monthly precipitation in the South Platte was just 52 percent of average in April and total water precipitation was down to 73 percent of average on May 1. Reservoir storage in the South Platte basin was reported to be 102 percent of average at the end of April. Storage in the 32 reservoirs reporting this month provides some optimism for the coming months. The reservoirs were storing 939,000 acre feet of water at the end of April, while average storage for this time of year is 925,000 acre feet. With runoff season well underway forecasted runoff volumes are further reduced from those issued last month. Forecasts for May to July range from 18 percent of average at Bear Creek above Evergreen, to 51 percent of average at South Boulder Creek near Eldorado Springs.

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<----- Drier ----- Future Conditions ----- Wetter ----->						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)				
		90%		70%		50%			30%		10%	
		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)
Antero Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	2.4	3.5	4.4	26	5.5	7.5	16.8				
	APR-SEP	2.7	4.0	5.2	24	6.7	9.3	22				
	MAY-JUL	2.0	3.1	4.0	26	5.1	7.1	15.4				
	MAY-SEP	2.3	3.6	4.8	24	6.3	8.9	20				
Spinney Mountain Res Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	9.7	14.1	17.6	31	22	28	56				
	APR-SEP	11.4	17.2	22	32	27	36	69				
	MAY-JUL	8.0	12.4	15.9	31	20	26	51				
	MAY-SEP	9.7	15.5	20	31	25	34	64				
Elevenmile Canyon Res Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	9.4	13.9	17.5	30	22	28	58				
	APR-SEP	10.5	16.4	21	29	27	36	72				
	MAY-JUL	8.2	12.7	16.3	31	21	27	53				
	MAY-SEP	9.3	15.2	19.8	30	26	35	67				
Cheesman Lake Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	15.0	23	30	26	38	52	114				
	APR-SEP	18.0	29	39	28	50	70	140				
	MAY-JUL	10.0	19.0	26	26	34	48	101				
	MAY-SEP	14.0	25	35	28	46	66	127				
South Platte R at South Platte (2)	APR-JUL	22	35	47	23	61	85	205				
	APR-SEP	31	48	63	25	80	109	255				
	MAY-JUL	12.0	25	37	20	51	75	182				
	MAY-SEP	21	38	53	23	70	99	230				
Bear Ck ab Evergreen	APR-JUL	2.2	3.2	4.1	21	5.2	7.3	19.3				
	APR-SEP	3.0	4.6	6.1	24	7.9	11.3	25				
	MAY-JUL	1.2	2.2	3.1	18	4.2	6.3	17.3				
	MAY-SEP	2.0	3.6	5.1	22	6.9	10.3	23				
Bear Ck at Morrison	APR-JUL	3.4	5.1	6.6	26	8.5	12.0	25				
	APR-SEP	4.2	6.7	9.0	29	11.9	17.2	31				
	MAY-JUL	2.1	3.8	5.3	25	7.2	10.7	21				
	MAY-SEP	2.9	5.4	7.7	29	10.6	15.9	27				
Clear Ck at Golden	APR-JUL	34	38	42	38	46	52	110				
	APR-SEP	43	49	54	40	59	67	134				
	MAY-JUL	28	32	36	34	40	46	105				
	MAY-SEP	37	43	48	38	53	61	128				
St. Vrain Ck at Lyons (2)	APR-JUL	30	35	39	42	43	50	94				
	APR-SEP	31	38	43	39	48	57	109				
	MAY-JUL	26	31	35	40	39	46	87				
	MAY-SEP	27	34	39	38	44	53	102				
Boulder Ck nr Orodell (2)	APR-JUL	19.6	23	25	48	27	31	52				
	APR-SEP	22	26	29	48	32	37	60				
	MAY-JUL	17.0	20	22	45	24	28	49				
	MAY-SEP	19.4	23	26	46	29	34	57				
S Boulder Ck nr Eldorado Springs (2)	APR-JUL	16.6	19.7	22	54	25	29	41				
	APR-SEP	18.0	21	24	52	27	31	46				
	MAY-JUL	13.9	17.0	19.3	51	22	26	38				
	MAY-SEP	15.3	18.3	21	50	24	28	42				
Big Thompson R at Canyon Mouth (2)	APR-JUL	17.2	26	32	32	38	47	99				
	APR-SEP	17.0	29	38	32	47	59	119				
	MAY-JUL	12.2	21	27	28	33	42	95				
	MAY-SEP	12.0	24	33	29	42	54	114				
Cache La Poudre at Canyon Mouth (2)	APR-JUL	47	72	89	36	106	131	245				
	APR-SEP	50	80	100	36	120	150	275				
	MAY-JUL	28	53	70	30	87	112	235				
	MAY-SEP	31	61	81	31	101	131	260				

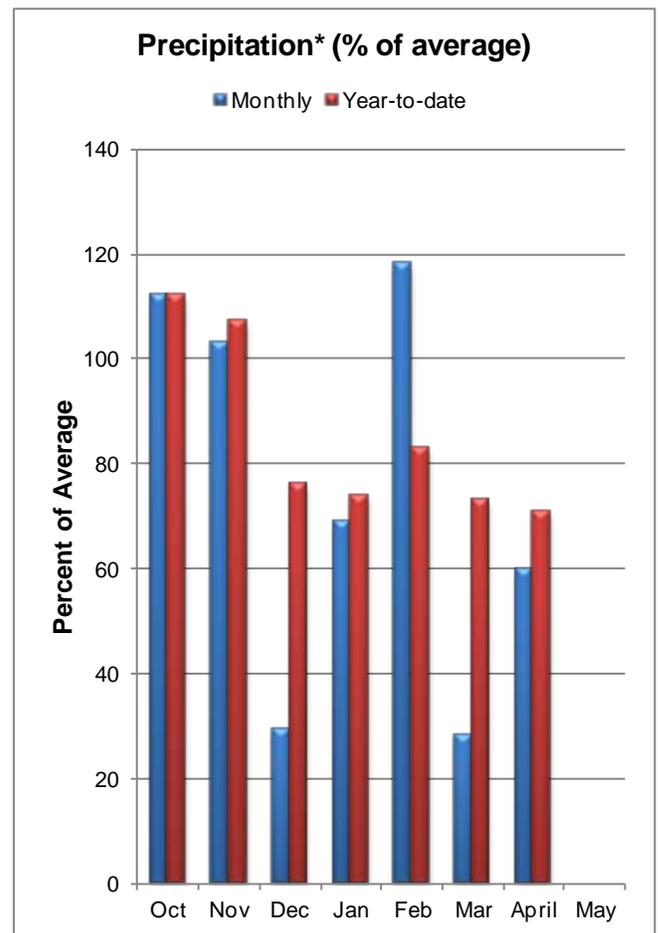
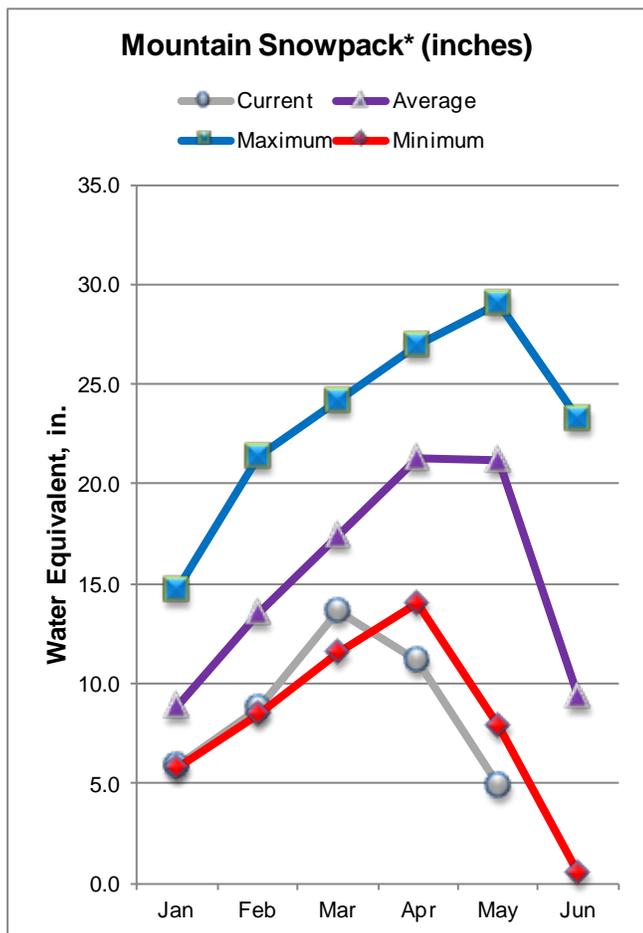
* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** This Year	Usable Storage Last Year	*** Avg	Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of Last Yr Average	
ANTERO	19.9	15.9	19.6	15.7	BIG THOMPSON BASIN	7	14	23
BARR LAKE	30.1	26.9	27.7	28.6	BOULDER CREEK BASIN	5	15	22
BLACK HOLLOW	6.5	4.0	2.6	4.2	CACHE LA POUFRE BASIN	8	18	32
BOYD LAKE	48.4	39.4	36.2	35.2	CLEAR CREEK BASIN	4	20	32
BUTTON ROCK/RALPH PRICE	16.2	12.1	12.5	13.2	SAINT VRAIN BASIN	4	7	33
CACHE LA POUFRE	10.1	10.4	10.0	8.9	UPPER SOUTH PLATTE BASIN	16	12	15
CARTER	108.9	86.0	101.5	103.0	TOTAL SOUTH PLATTE BASIN	44	15	25
CHAMBERS LAKE	8.8	5.7	3.4	3.6				
CHEESMAN	79.0	69.6	66.9	64.8				
COBB LAKE	22.3	18.8	20.0	14.2				
ELEVEN MILE	98.0	99.8	99.3	96.4				
EMPIRE	36.5	33.5	32.8	33.0				
FOSSIL CREEK	11.1	9.9	8.8	8.1				
GROSS	41.8	31.3	15.9	20.9				
HALLIGAN	6.4	5.6	6.3	4.8				
HORSECREEK	14.7	10.8	13.0	14.5				
HORSETOOTH	149.7	133.4	116.5	123.0				
JACKSON	26.1	25.9	25.5	30.4				
JULESBURG	20.5	20.4	20.5	21.3				
LAKE LOVELAND	10.3	8.9	8.6	10.1				
LONE TREE	8.7	8.1	8.5	7.9				
MARIANO	5.4	3.6	5.1	5.0				
MARSHALL	10.0	9.6	5.7	7.4				
MARSTON	13.0	8.3	8.8	14.5				
MILTON	23.5	23.0	21.4	19.2				
POINT OF ROCKS	70.6	66.3	70.3	69.8				
PREWITT	28.2	23.9	24.6	25.9				
RIVERSIDE	55.8	49.5	53.4	57.9				
SPINNEY MOUNTAIN	49.0	44.8	36.1	32.1				
STANDLEY	42.0	35.4	32.1	35.3				
TERRY LAKE	8.0	7.4	3.4	5.7				
UNION	13.0	11.8	12.3	11.7				
WINDSOR	15.2	14.8	12.0	13.6				

YAMPA, WHITE, NORTH PLATTE AND LARAMIE RIVER BASINS as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

Nearly 60 percent of the measuring locations in the combined Yampa, White, North Platte and Laramie River basins had completely melted out by the May 1 surveys. The surveys reported the snowpack for the combined basins to be a dismal 23 percent of average. In the Yampa and White sub-basins the snowpack, at 17 percent of average, is now the lowest on record, falling just below the previous record of 18 percent of average, set in 1977. Elsewhere, the North Platte's snowpack was 27 percent of average and the Little Snake came in the highest at 29 percent of average.

Precipitation in these basins was only 60 percent of average during April and total water year precipitation has dropped slightly to 71 percent of average. Reservoir storage in Stagecoach and Yamcolo reservoirs has decreased from last month's report but remains in good condition at 115 percent of average and 113 percent of last year's storage. Dry and warm conditions have persisted in these basins for most of the water year. As a result streamflow forecasts in these basins continue to be some of the lowest in the state. The North Platte near Northgate is expected to flow at just 15 percent of average from May to July while the forecast for Elkhead Creek near Hayden is now just 17 percent of average. The highest forecast in the basin is for the Laramie River near Woods Landing which is expected to run at 46 percent of average from May to July.

YAMPA, WHITE, AND NORTH PLATTE RIVER BASINS
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<<===== Drier ===== Future Conditions ===== Wetter =====>>						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)
		90%		50%		10%		
		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(% AVG.)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	
North Platte R nr Northgate	MAY-JUL	12.0	20	30	15	63	111	205
	MAY-SEP	15.0	22	37	16	75	131	230
Laramie R nr Woods	MAY-JUL	19.0	39	53	46	67	87	115
	MAY-SEP	21	44	59	47	74	97	127
Yampa R ab Stagecoach Reservoir	APR-JUL	5.4	6.4	8.4	23	12.5	13.4	37
	MAY-JUL	2.0	3.0	5.0	18	9.1	10.0	28
Yampa R at Steamboat Springs (2)	APR-JUL	92	110	124	44	138	162	280
	MAY-JUL	53	71	85	35	100	124	245
Elk R nr Milner	APR-JUL	132	156	175	54	196	230	325
	MAY-JUL	72	96	115	41	136	169	282
Elkhead Ck ab Long Gulch nr Hayden	APR-JUL	16.7	19.9	23	32	27	35	71
	MAY-JUL	1.5	4.7	8.0	17	12.1	19.7	48
Yampa R nr Maybell (2)	APR-JUL	310	340	400	40	465	570	990
	MAY-JUL	160	193	250	30	315	420	840
Little Snake R nr Slater	APR-JUL	55	66	74	47	83	99	159
	MAY-JUL	26	37	45	32	54	70	141
Little Snake R nr Dixon	APR-JUL	102	118	139	42	163	205	330
	MAY-JUL	50	66	87	30	111	152	290
Little Snake R nr Lily	APR-JUL	92	116	141	39	171	210	365
	MAY-JUL	40	64	89	29	119	160	310
White R nr Meeker	APR-JUL	103	122	137	47	153	178	290
	MAY-JUL	61	80	95	37	111	136	260

YAMPA, WHITE, AND NORTH PLATTE RIVER BASINS
Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April

YAMPA, WHITE, AND NORTH PLATTE RIVER BASINS
Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012

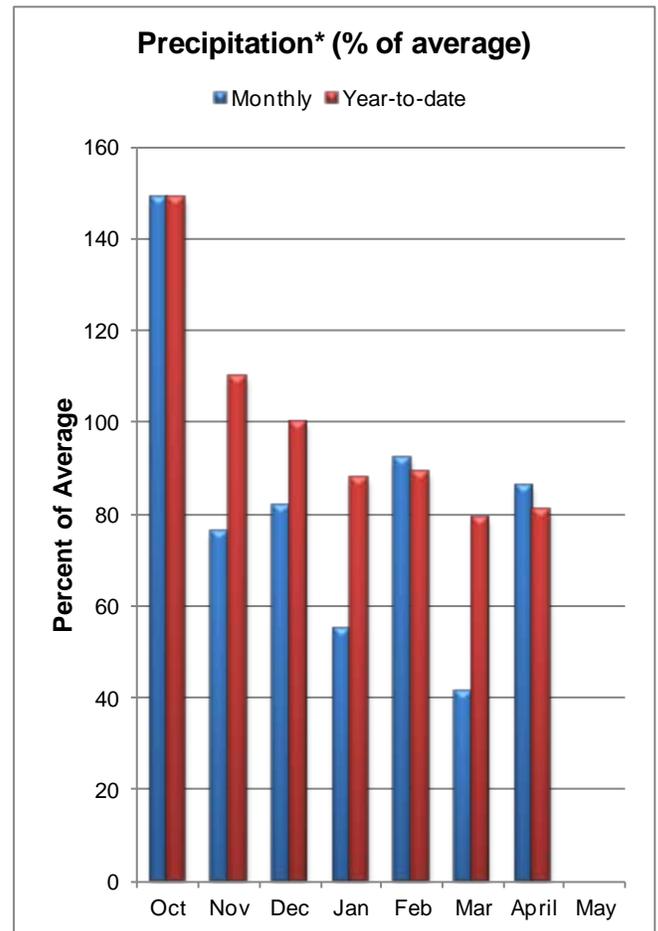
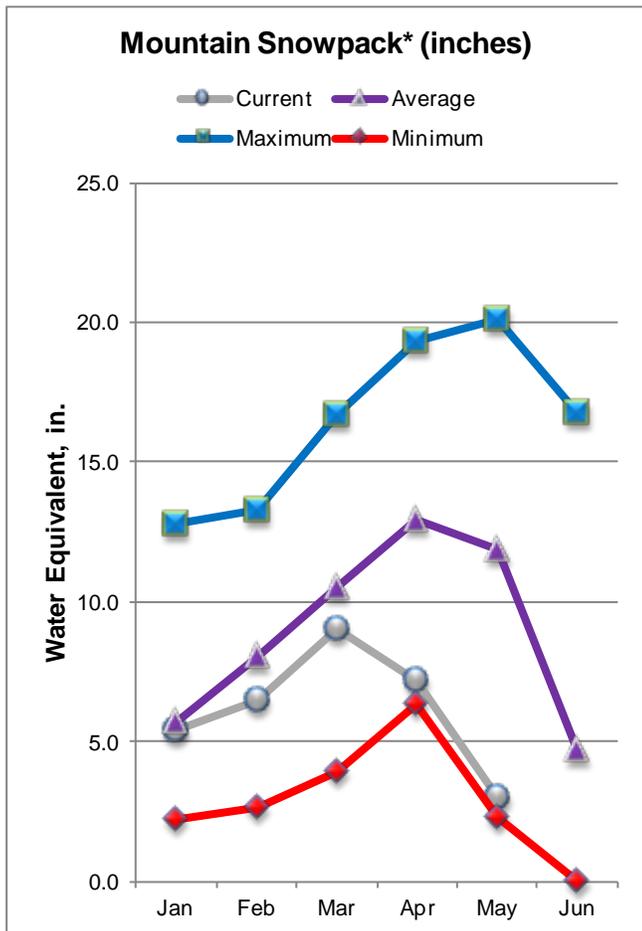
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
STAGECOACH	36.4	34.3	27.8	28.1	LARAMIE RIVER BASIN	4	21	37
YAMCOLO	8.7	6.6	8.3	7.4	NORTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN	11	15	25
					TOTAL NORTH PLATTE BASIN	14	16	27
					ELK RIVER BASIN	2	1	2
					YAMPA RIVER BASIN	12	10	17
					WHITE RIVER BASIN	6	16	23
					TOTAL YAMPA AND WHITE RIV	17	11	17
					LITTLE SNAKE RIVER BASIN	8	17	29
					TOTAL YAMPA, WHITE AND NO	36	14	23

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

May 1 snowpack measurements in the Arkansas basin are at the lowest levels reported since the 2002 water year and the third lowest in the 45 year period of record. Current measurements show the snowpack in the basin to be just 25 percent of average, a drop of 31 percentage points from what was measured last month. Less than half of the SNOTEL and snow courses in the basin had measurable snow remaining on May 1. Snowpack reports for the sub-basins ranged from no snow in the Purgatoire drainage to 28 percent of average in the Upper Arkansas basin.

Precipitation for the month of April was 86 percent of average in the basin, the highest amount as a percent of average recorded in the state. Year to date precipitation increased slightly from 79 percent of average reported on April 1 to 81 percent of average on May 1. Combined storage in the 10 reporting reservoirs also increased from last month and was reported to be 95 percent of average at the end of April. Streamflow forecasts have followed the snowpack trends this past month and are significantly lower than those issued last month. Current predictions for the May to July forecast period range from 21 percent of average at Grape Creek near Westcliffe, to 41 percent of average on the Huerfano River near Redwing.

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ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

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Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<<===== Drier ===== Future Conditions ===== Wetter =====>>						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)
		Chance Of Exceeding *						
		90% (1000AF)	70% (1000AF)	50% (1000AF)	(% AVG.)	30% (1000AF)	10% (1000AF)	
Chalk Ck nr Nathrop	APR-JUL	2.9	5.2	7.2	31	9.6	13.9	23
	MAY-JUL	2.1	4.4	6.4	29	8.8	13.1	22
	APR-SEP	3.2	6.2	8.9	33	12.2	18.0	27
	MAY-SEP	2.4	5.4	8.1	30	11.4	17.2	27
Arkansas R at Salida (2)	APR-JUL	57	74	86	34	100	122	255
	MAY-JUL	43	60	72	30	86	108	240
	APR-SEP	64	87	105	34	125	158	310
	MAY-SEP	50	73	91	30	111	144	300
Grape Ck nr Westcliffe	APR-JUL	1.3	2.4	3.4	21	4.7	7.0	16.1
	MAY-JUL	0.6	1.7	2.7	21	4.0	6.3	13.0
	APR-SEP	2.0	3.6	5.0	26	6.7	9.7	19.6
	MAY-SEP	1.3	2.9	4.3	26	6.0	9.0	16.5
Arkansas R ab Pueblo (2)	APR-JUL	70	104	134	35	168	230	385
	MAY-JUL	47	82	112	32	146	205	350
	APR-SEP	74	120	160	33	205	280	485
	MAY-SEP	52	98	138	31	182	260	450
Huerfano R nr Redwing	APR-JUL	3.6	4.8	5.8	47	6.9	8.7	12.3
	MAY-JUL	2.4	3.6	4.6	41	5.7	7.5	11.2
	APR-SEP	4.8	6.3	7.5	48	8.8	11.0	15.5
	MAY-SEP	3.6	5.1	6.3	43	7.6	9.8	14.5
Cucharas R nr La Veta	APR-JUL	4.9	5.8	6.4	57	7.1	8.2	11.3
	MAY-JUL	2.4	3.3	3.9	39	4.6	5.7	9.9
	APR-SEP	5.5	6.7	7.6	59	8.6	10.2	13.0
	MAY-SEP	3.0	4.2	5.1	44	6.1	7.7	11.7
Purgatoire R at Trinidad (2)	MAR-JUL	8.8	11.7	14.2	42	17.0	22	34
	MAY-JUL	4.0	6.9	9.4	32	12.2	17.1	29
	APR-SEP	10.9	16.1	20	46	26	34	44
	MAY-SEP	7.4	12.6	16.5	41	23	31	40

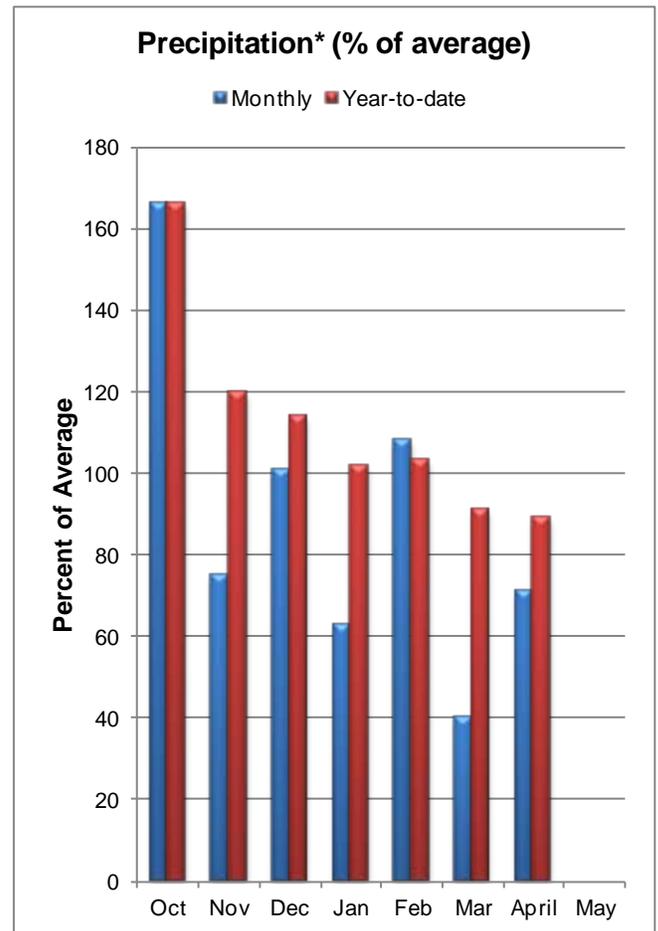
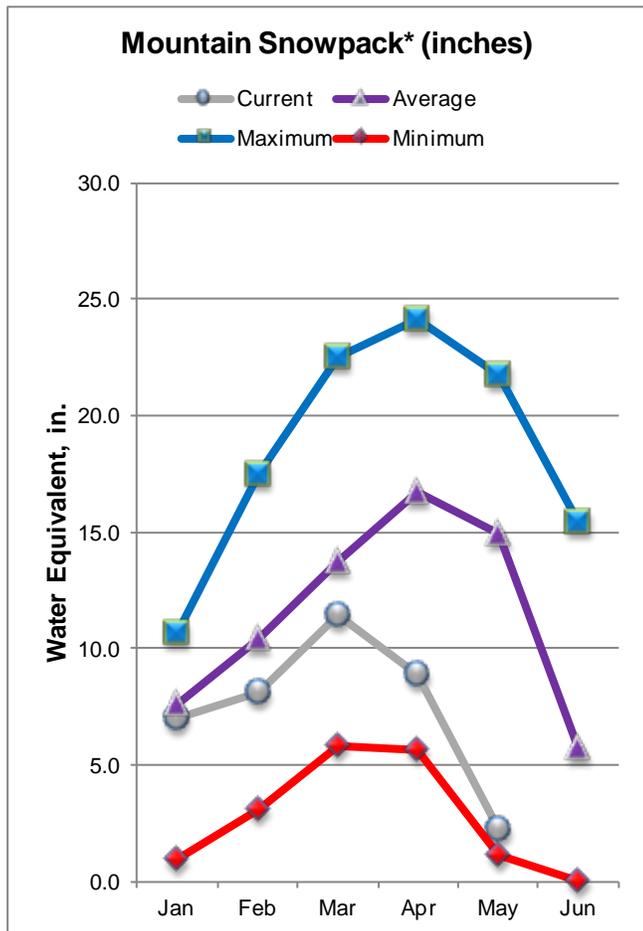
ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
ADOBE	62.0	35.3	35.0	34.3	UPPER ARKANSAS BASIN	10	22	28
CLEAR CREEK	11.4	7.6	8.0	6.0	CUCHARAS & HUERFANO RIVER	4	32	15
CUCHARAS RESERVOIR	40.0	0.1	0.1	6.9	PURGATOIRE RIVER BASIN	2	0	0
GREAT PLAINS		NO REPORT			TOTAL ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN	15	22	25
HOLBROOK		NO REPORT						
HORSE CREEK		NO REPORT						
JOHN MARTIN	616.0	37.5	47.3	123.7				
LAKE HENRY	8.0	7.3	8.1	6.0				
MEREDITH	42.0	30.2	28.9	20.1				
PUEBLO	354.0	230.3	241.2	163.5				
TRINIDAD	167.0	19.7	20.7	29.1				
TURQUOISE	127.0	67.4	49.7	70.8				
TWIN LAKES	86.0	34.4	38.2	41.3				

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

UPPER RIO GRANDE RIVER BASIN as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

Snowpack measurements in the Upper Rio Grande basin as of May 1 are the lowest they have been since the 2002 water year and the second lowest in the period of record. The recent warm and dry weather has melted most of what little accumulation existed in the basin. Snowpack totals have decreased from 53 percent of average reported on April 1 to just 15 percent of average on May 1; a total decline of 38 percent. The Alamosa Creek and Culebra and Trinchera Creek sub-basins reported no measurable snow this month while the Upper Rio Grande sub-basin recorded the largest snowpack within the major basin at 22 percent of average.

Precipitation in the Upper Rio Grande basin provides a somewhat more optimistic outlook. Precipitation was 71 percent of average in April, up from just 40 percent of average received in March. Year to date precipitation for the basin, while heavily weighted by well above average conditions early in the year, is at 89 percent of average as of May 1. Reservoir storage remains the lowest reported in the state at just 70 percent of average and 22 percent of capacity. Streamflow forecasts in the basin have declined further this month but still boast some of the highest outlooks, as a percent of average, in the state. Forecasts for the May to September season currently range from only 8 percent of average on the San Antonio River at Ortiz, to 47 percent of average for the Platoro Reservoir Inflow.

UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

Forecast Point	Forecast Period	<<==== Drier ==== Future Conditions ===== Wetter =====>>						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)				
		90%		70%		50%			30%		10%	
		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(% AVG.)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)		(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)	(1000AF)
Rio Grande at Thirty Mile Bridge (2)	APR-SEP	59	69	76	56	84	96	136				
	MAY-SEP	41	51	58	45	66	78	129				
	APR-JUL	56	63	68	58	73	82	118				
	MAY-JUL	38	45	50	44	55	64	113				
Rio Grande at Wagon Wheel Gap (2)	APR-SEP	153	180	200	58	220	255	345				
	MAY-SEP	95	122	142	44	164	199	322				
SF Rio Grande at South Fork (2)	APR-SEP	59	65	70	53	75	83	132				
	MAY-SEP	35	41	46	38	51	59	120				
Rio Grande nr Del Norte (2)	APR-SEP	235	265	290	55	315	360	531				
	MAY-SEP	148	181	205	42	230	275	491				
Saguache Ck nr Saguache (2)	APR-SEP	9.6	13.1	16.0	49	19.2	25	33				
	MAY-SEP	6.5	10.0	12.9	45	16.1	22	29				
Alamosa Ck ab Terrace Reservoir	APR-SEP	30	33	36	51	39	44	70				
	MAY-SEP	19.2	23	26	41	29	34	63				
La Jara Ck nr Capulin	MAR-JUL	3.3	3.8	4.2	48	4.6	5.4	8.7				
	MAY-JUL	0.9	1.4	1.8	30	2.2	3.0	5.9				
Trinchera Ck ab Turners Ranch	APR-SEP	3.6	4.7	5.6	47	6.6	8.2	12.0				
	MAY-SEP	2.2	3.3	4.2	45	5.2	6.8	9.3				
Sangre de Cristo Ck (2)	APR-SEP	2.6	3.1	4.0	46	5.2	7.7	8.8				
	MAY-SEP	0.0	0.6	1.4	25	2.6	5.1	5.7				
Ute Creek	APR-SEP	2.5	4.1	5.6	46	7.4	10.5	12.2				
	MAY-SEP	1.4	3.0	4.5	41	6.3	9.4	11.1				
Platoro Reservoir Inflow	APR-JUL	29	33	35	55	38	42	64				
	MAY-JUL	20	24	26	46	29	33	56				
	APR-SEP	32	35	38	54	41	46	71				
	MAY-SEP	23	26	29	47	32	37	62				
Conejos R nr Mogote (2)	APR-SEP	91	102	110	55	119	132	200				
	MAY-SEP	61	72	80	43	89	102	185				
San Antonio R at Ortiz	APR-SEP	4.9	5.2	5.5	34	5.9	6.6	16.4				
	MAY-SEP	0.3	0.6	0.9	8	1.3	2.0	10.7				
Los Pinos R nr Ortiz	APR-SEP	30	32	35	47	37	42	74				
	MAY-SEP	7.9	10.7	13.0	21	15.6	19.9	63				
Culebra Ck at San Luis (2)	APR-SEP	5.6	8.2	10.5	46	13.2	18.0	23				
	MAY-SEP	4.4	7.0	9.3	44	12.0	16.8	21				
Costilla Reservoir Inflow	MAR-JUL	3.4	4.3	5.0	47	5.8	7.3	10.6				
	MAY-JUL	1.8	2.6	3.3	38	4.1	5.6	8.8				
Costilla Ck nr Costilla (2)	MAR-JUL	7.5	9.1	10.6	41	12.4	15.5	26				
	MAY-JUL	2.6	4.2	5.7	28	7.5	10.6	20				

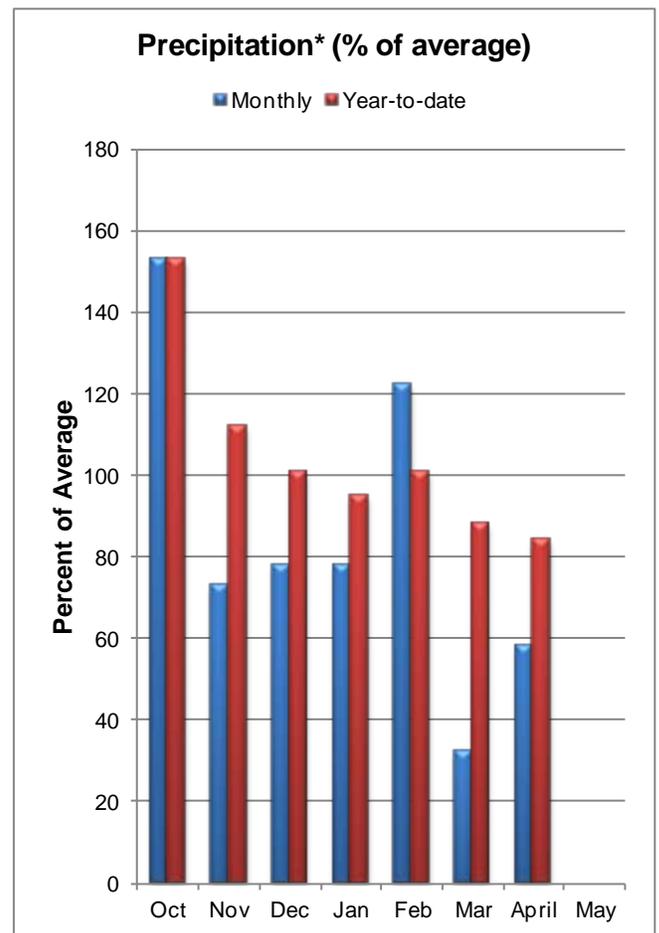
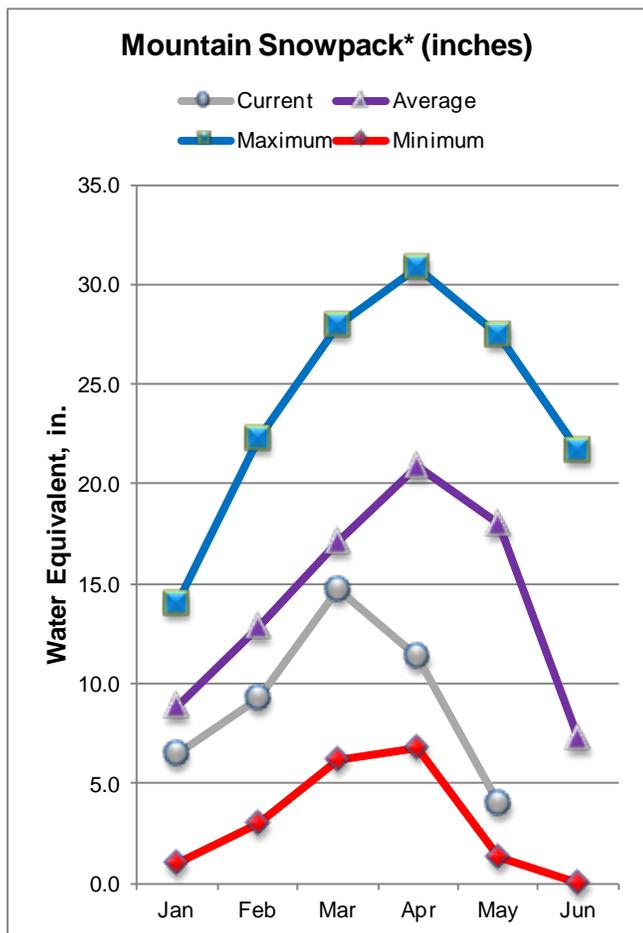
UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
CONTINENTAL	27.0	6.8	6.3	6.6	ALAMOSA CREEK BASIN	2	0	0
PLATORO	60.0	15.2	21.5	23.3	CONEJOS & RIO SAN ANTONIO	4	8	7
RIO GRANDE	51.0	21.0	19.6	21.4	CULEBRA & TRINCHERA CREEK	5	0	0
SANCHEZ	103.0	9.0	16.7	25.8	UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN	12	30	22
SANTA MARIA	45.0	7.5	6.0	11.1	TOTAL UPPER RIO GRANDE BA	23	20	15
TERRACE	18.0	7.8	5.3	7.8				

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.

SAN MIGUEL, DOLORES, ANIMAS, AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS as of May 1, 2012



*Based on selected stations

Only 8 out of the 24 measuring locations in these basins had measurable snow on May 1. What little snow remaining is located above 10,000 feet in elevation and continues to melt rapidly. For the combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan basins May 1 snow measurements were only 22 percent of average. Snowpack's in the individual basins are quite variable, ranging from 9 percent of average in the San Miguel basin to 27 percent of average in the San Juan basin.

The combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins received well below average precipitation for the second month in a row. Mountain precipitation received in April was only 58 percent of average in the basins and the year to date precipitation dropped to 84 percent of average. Reservoirs in the basins remain in good shape, having added an additional 89,000 acre-feet of water in the last month. Storage levels at the end of April were 119 percent of average. Forecasts for spring and summer streamflow volumes are following the snowpack trends and have dropped from those issued last month. Current forecasts issued May 1, range from 47 percent of average for the Inflow to Lemon Reservoir to just 32 percent of average expected at the Inflow to Navajo Reservoir for the May to July period.

SAN MIGUEL, DOLORES, ANIMAS, AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS
Streamflow Forecasts - May 1, 2012

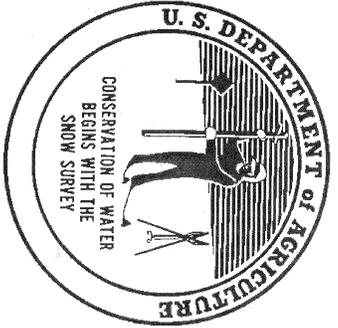
Forecast Point	Forecast Period	Future Conditions						30-Yr Avg. (1000AF)
		Drier		Future Conditions		Wetter		
		90% (1000AF)	70% (1000AF)	Chance Of Exceeding * 50% (1000AF) (% AVG.)		30% (1000AF)	10% (1000AF)	
Dolores R at Dolores	APR-JUL	105	118	128	48	139	157	265
	MAY-JUL	57	70	80	36	91	109	220
McPhee Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	109	126	138	43	151	172	320
	MAY-JUL	56	73	85	33	98	119	260
San Miguel R nr Placerville	APR-JUL	50	57	63	48	69	79	132
	MAY-JUL	36	43	49	42	55	65	117
Gurley Reservoir Inlet	APR-JUL	5.9	7.6	9.0	49	10.5	13.0	18.3
	MAY-JUL	4.2	5.7	7.0	42	8.4	10.9	16.5
Cone Reservoir Inlet	APR-JUL	0.4	1.0	1.5	46	2.2	3.6	3.3
	MAY-JUL	0.3	0.6	1.0	34	1.5	2.5	2.9
Lillylands Reservoir Inlet	APR-JUL	0.8	1.1	1.4	48	1.7	2.2	2.9
	MAY-JUL	0.5	0.8	1.0	39	1.2	1.7	2.5
Rio Blanco at Blanco Diversion (2)	APR-JUL	18.9	24	28	53	32	37	53
	MAY-JUL	9.1	14.4	18.0	40	22	27	45
Navajo R at Oso Diversion (2)	APR-JUL	25	29	32	46	36	42	69
	MAY-JUL	14.5	18.7	22	38	26	32	58
San Juan R nr Carracas (2)	APR-JUL	136	168	190	47	210	245	405
	MAY-JUL	71	103	125	39	147	179	325
Piedra R nr Arboles	APR-JUL	77	95	108	47	121	139	230
	MAY-JUL	29	47	60	35	73	91	172
Vallecito Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	86	101	111	54	121	136	205
	MAY-JUL	50	65	75	41	85	100	184
Navajo Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	235	300	345	44	390	455	785
	MAY-JUL	87	152	196	32	240	305	615
Animas R at Durango	APR-JUL	168	205	230	52	255	290	440
	MAY-JUL	99	135	160	41	185	220	390
Lemon Reservoir Inflow (2)	APR-JUL	30	34	37	64	40	45	58
	MAY-JUL	18.0	22	25	47	28	33	53
La Plata R at Hesperus	APR-JUL	10.8	12.2	13.2	53	14.4	16.2	25
	MAY-JUL	5.6	7.0	8.0	38	9.2	11.0	21
Mancos River Near Mancos	APR-JUL	9.5	11.8	13.7	42	15.8	19.2	33
Mancos R nr Mancos (2)	MAY-JUL	7.3	9.6	11.5	40	13.6	17.0	29

SAN MIGUEL, DOLORES, ANIMAS, AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS Reservoir Storage (1000 AF) - End of April					SAN MIGUEL, DOLORES, ANIMAS, AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS Watershed Snowpack Analysis - May 1, 2012			
Reservoir	Usable Capacity	*** Usable Storage ***			Watershed	Number of Data Sites	This Year as % of	
		This Year	Last Year	Avg			Last Yr	Average
GROUNDHOG	22.0	8.8	16.5	14.2	ANIMAS RIVER BASIN	9	28	26
JACKSON GULCH	10.0	8.0	8.5	7.4	DOLORES RIVER BASIN	6	15	12
LEMON	40.0	27.5	18.8	23.4	SAN MIGUEL RIVER BASIN	5	10	9
MCPHEE	381.0	340.9	317.8	304.6	SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN	4	27	27
NARRAGUINNEP	19.0	19.0	18.2	17.1	TOTAL SAN MIGUEL, DOLORES	23	24	22
VALLECITO	126.0	116.9	94.7	70.3	AN JUAN RIVER BASINS			

* 90%, 70%, 50%, 30%, and 10% chances of exceeding are the probabilities that the actual volume will exceed the volumes in the table.

The average is computed for the 1971-2000 base period.

- (1) - The values listed under the 10% and 90% Chance of Exceeding are actually 5% and 95% exceedance levels.
- (2) - The value is natural volume - actual volume may be affected by upstream water management.
- (3) - Median value used in place of average.



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In addition to the basin outlook reports, water supply forecast information for the Western United States is available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Weather Service monthly, January through May. The information may be obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service web page at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/wsf/westwide.html>

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