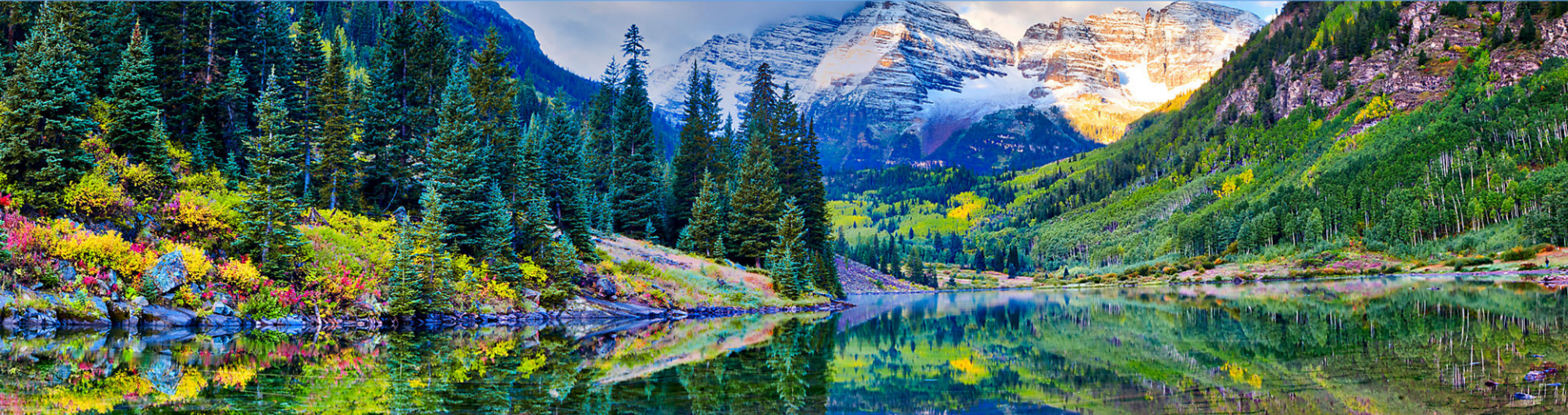


Colorado Drought

Conditions & Resources



MEGAN HOLCOMB
Senior Climate Risk & Resilience Specialist
Department of Natural Resources

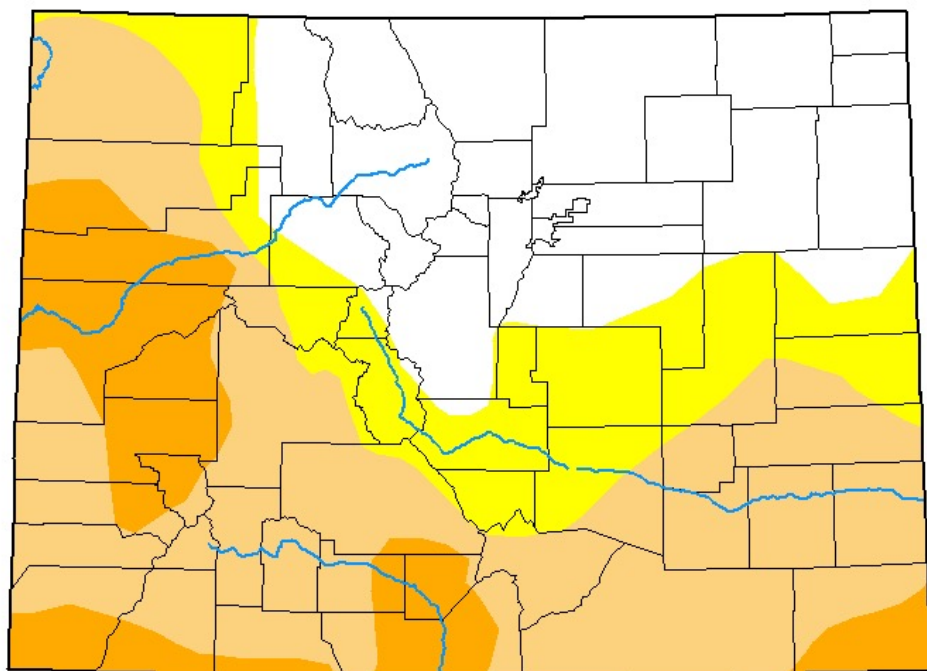


COLORADO
**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**
Department of Natural Resources

2020 Look Back

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

January 7, 2020
(Released Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020)
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- None
- 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. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Curtis Riganti
National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

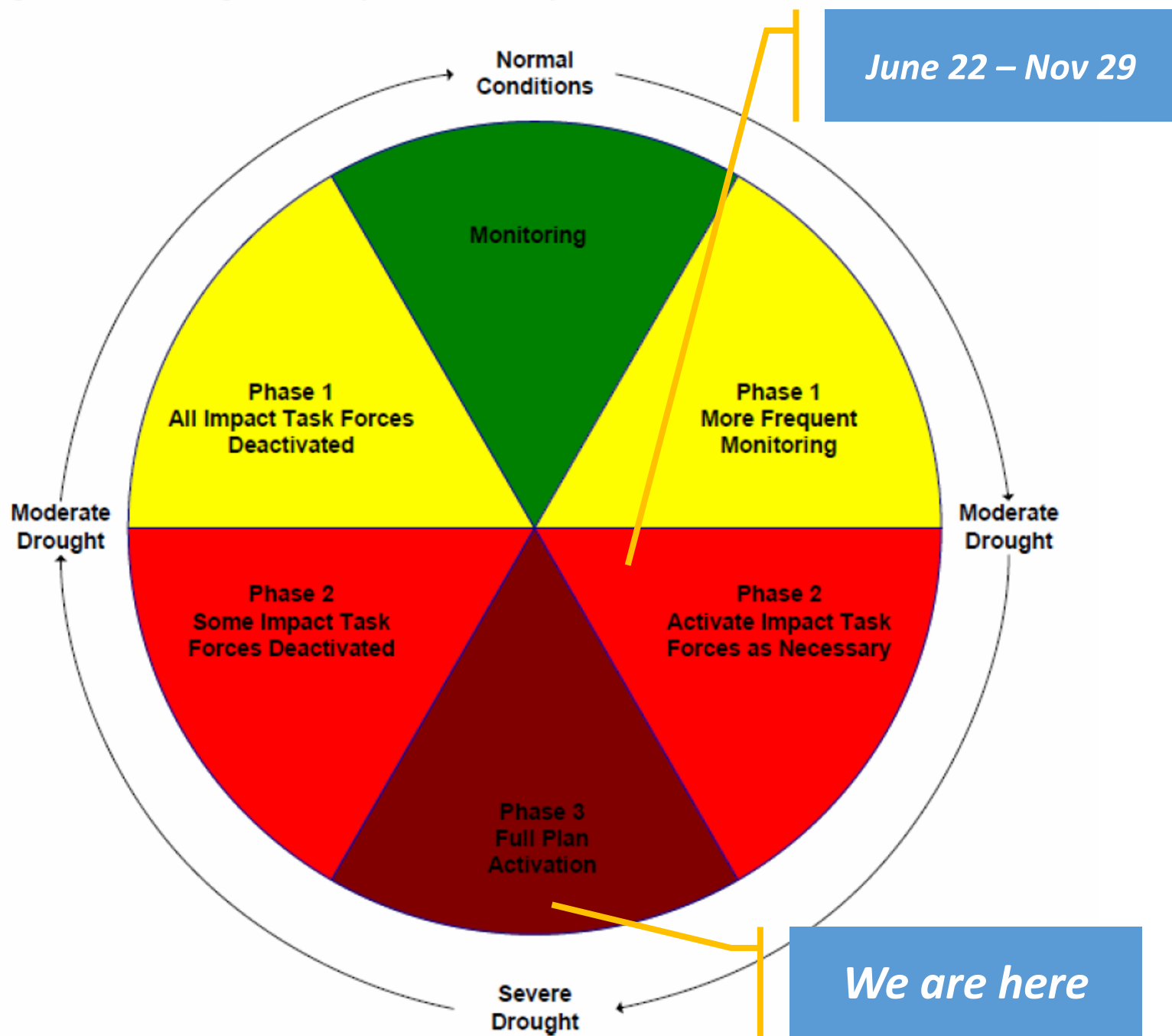
Drought Timeline

- May 5, 2020 - Extreme Drought Observed
- April 23 - Drought Task Force Activated
- June 22 - Drought Plan Phase 2 Activation
- August 4 - Entire State Abnormally Dry
- November 30 - Drought Plan Phase 3 Activation
- Current Drought Map

Figure 1 Drought Plan Implementation Cycle

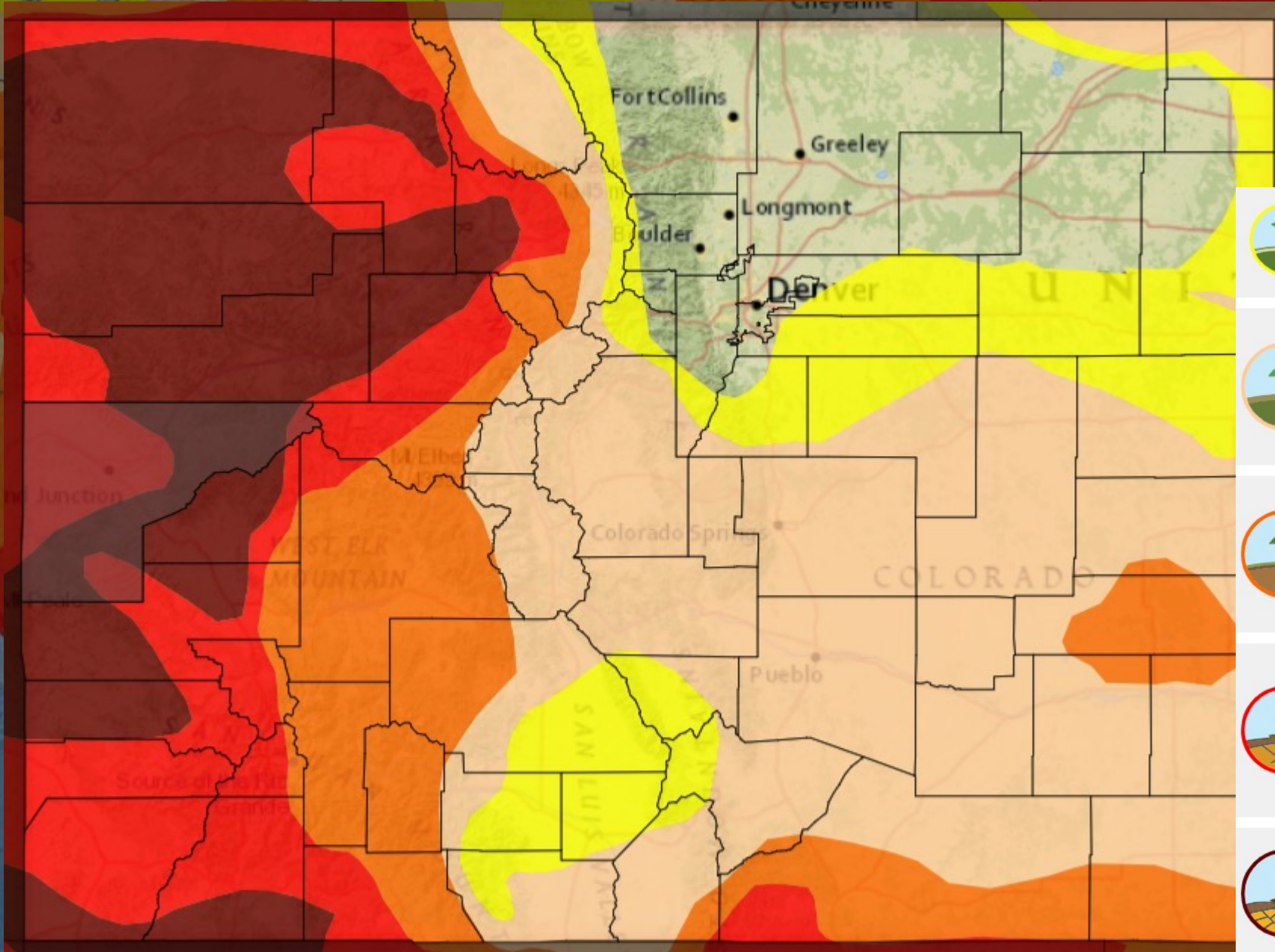
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CURRENT DROUGHT MONITOR

(May 13)



D0 - Abnormally Dry

- Hay production decreases; rangeland is dry
- Irrigation begins sooner

87.0%
of CO



D1 - Moderate Drought

- Rangeland growth is stunted; very little hay is available
- Dryland crops suffer
- Wildfires increase

75.2%
of CO



D2 - Severe Drought

- Farmers reduce planting; producers sell cattle
- Fire season is extended
- Snowpack is low; surface water levels are low; river flow is reduced

43.3%
of CO



D3 - Extreme Drought

- Pasture conditions worsen
- Large fires develop
- Reservoirs are extremely low; mandatory water restrictions are implemented; water temperature increases

29.5%
of CO



D4 - Exceptional Drought

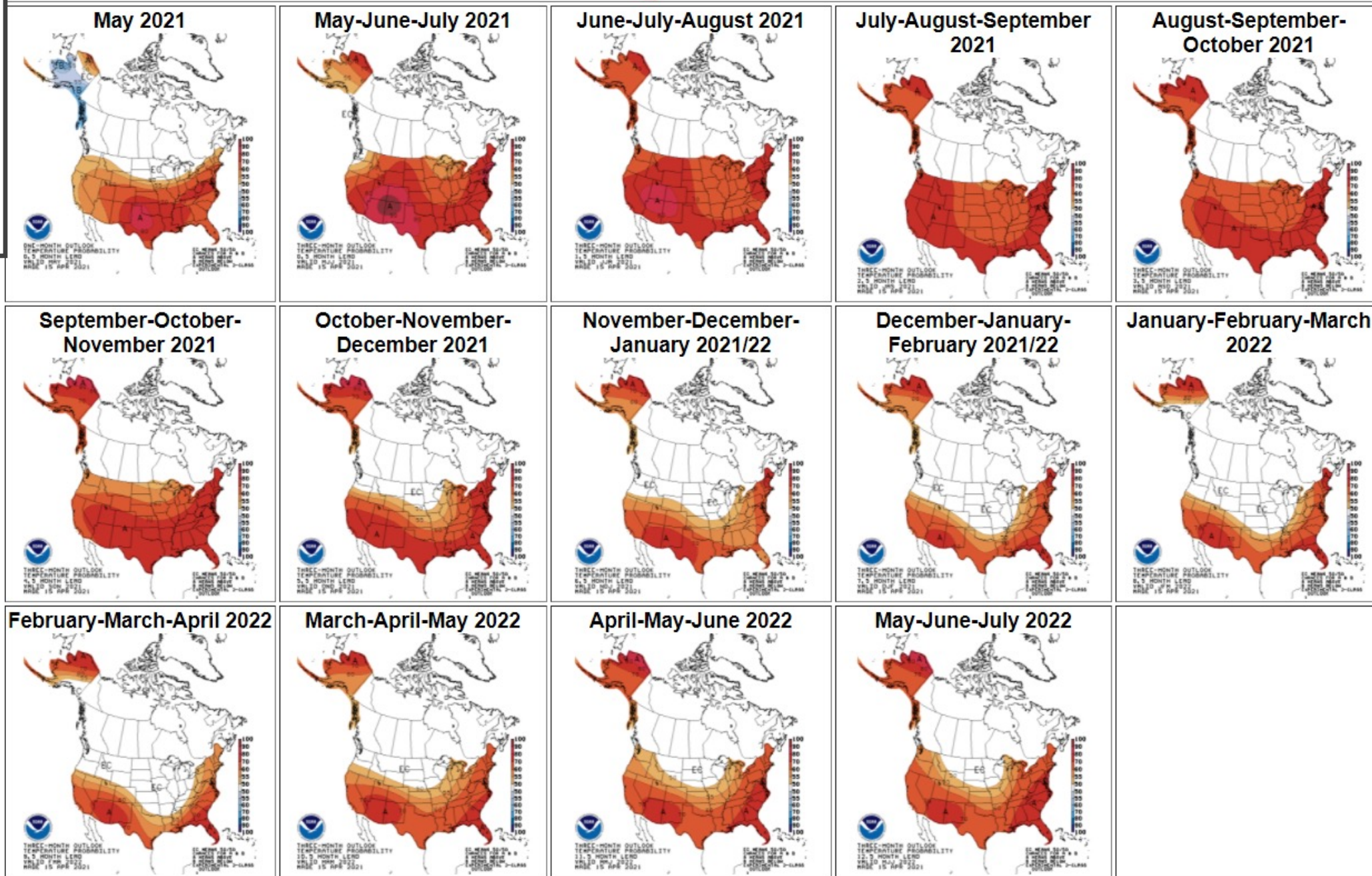
- Dust storms and topsoil removal are widespread
- Agricultural and recreational economic losses are large

16.4%
of CO

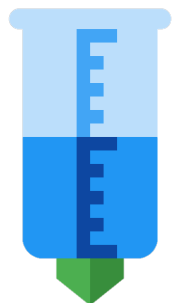
FORECAST



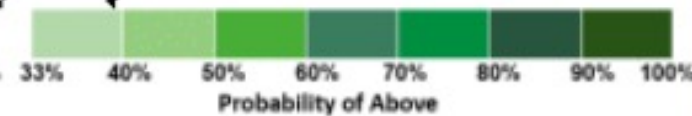
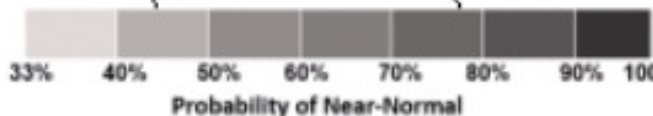
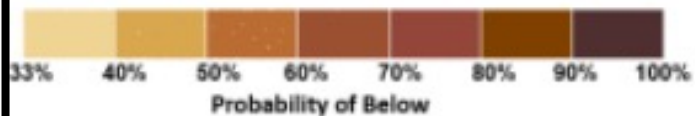
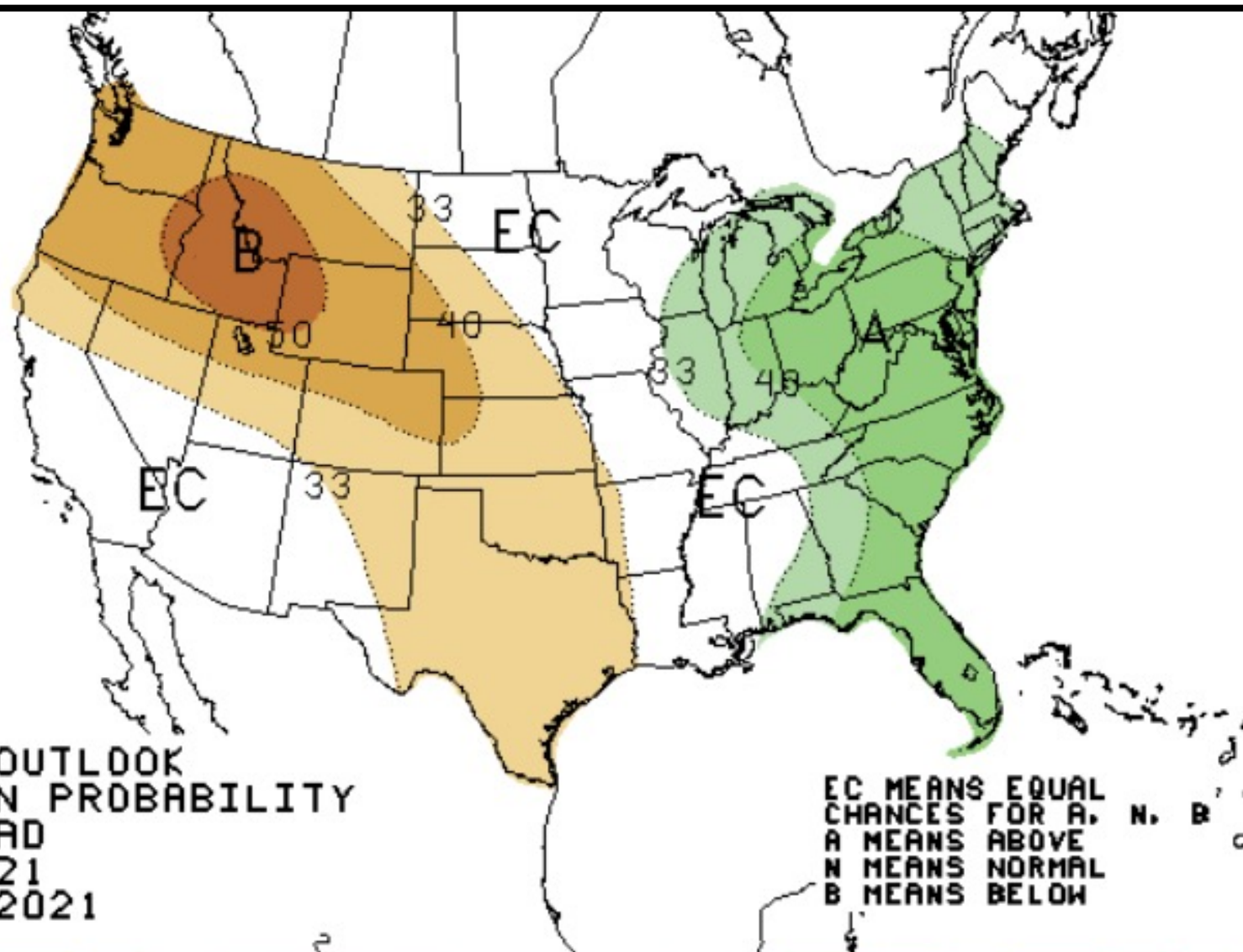
Temperature



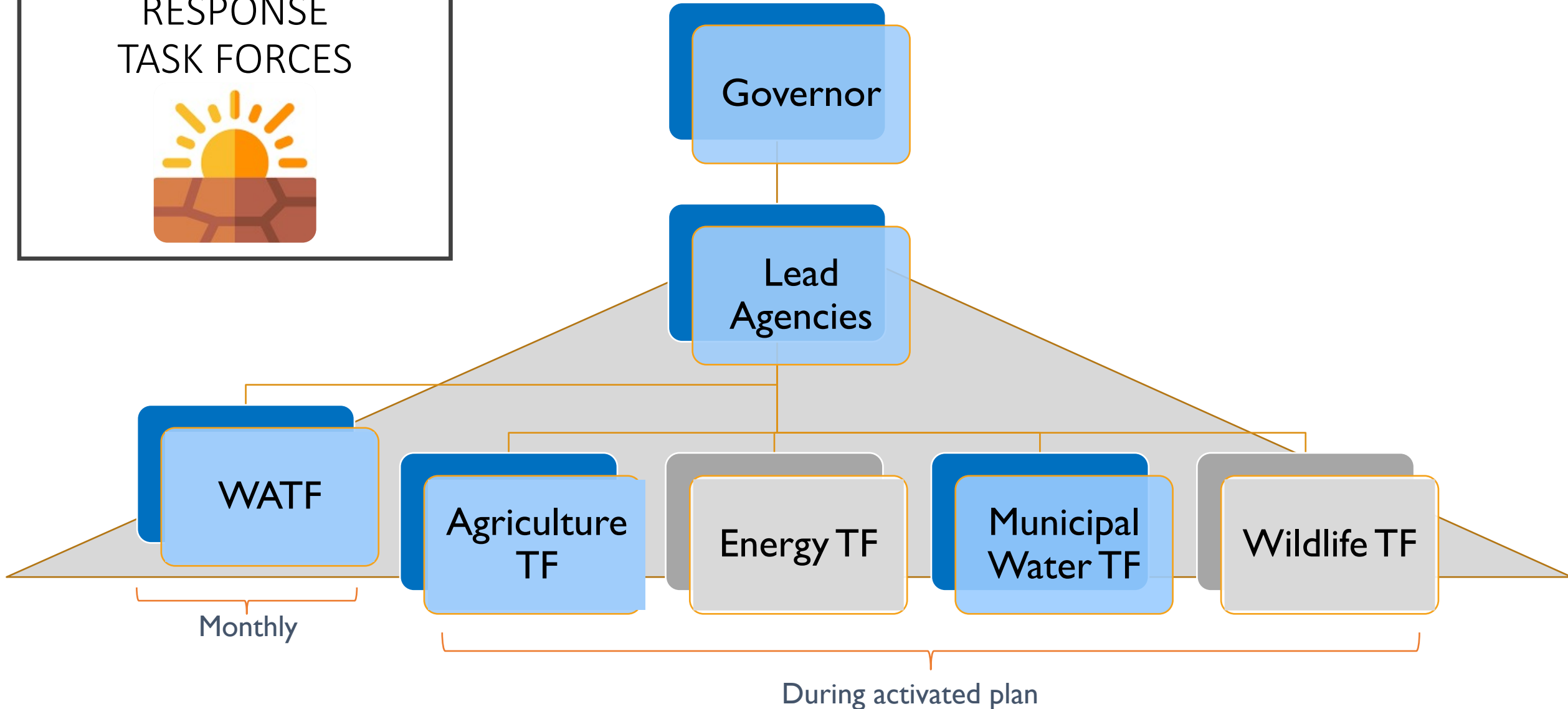
FORECAST



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID MJJ 2021
MADE 15 APR 2021



STATE DROUGHT RESPONSE TASK FORCES



TF = Task Force

AG IMPACT TASK FORCE

[Collection of Drought Resources](https://cwc.colorado.gov/drought)
(cwc.colorado.gov/drought)

[2020 Agricultural Drought Summary](#) →

[2020 Drought Stories](https://bit.ly/codroughtreport)
(bit.ly/codroughtreport) →

DROUGHT

A LOOMING THREAT TO A LEADING INDUSTRY

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Advance agricultural priorities through processes such as the Colorado Water Plan (2022) and Colorado Resiliency Framework (2020) updates
- Pursue creative, nimble interagency and inter-industry coordination to support community-led, localized response efforts
- Provide direct adaptation support for agricultural communities such as mental health resources, conflict resolution assistance, and risk management guidance
- Explore alternatives or amendments to how (and how quickly) disaster aid is made available based on drought and climate indicators including, but not limited to, the US Drought Monitor
- Support new revenue streams at local, state, and national levels for incentivized ecosystem markets that generate meaningful benefits to human health, climate, biodiversity, air, water, and wildlife

DROUGHTS OF THE PAST ARE NOT THE SAME AS DROUGHTS OF THE FUTURE

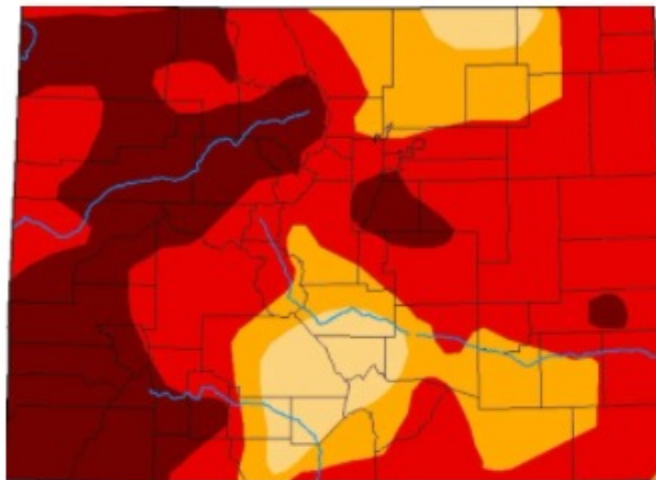
The Agricultural Impact Task Force, convened by Governor Polis in [June 2020](#), is a coalition of state, federal, and agricultural association partners working together for the future of agriculture. The Task Force requests an opportunity to share emerging solutions summarized in this interim report with policymakers.

FUTURE
PAST

WHAT CAN WE DO?

2021 is projected to be hot and dry again. Drought is not a short-term hazard or temporary policy issue. In disaster and

Municipal Drought Response



In June 2020, Governor Polis activated Phase 2 of the State's Drought Mitigation and Response Plan ([PDF](#)) which initiated the Drought Task Force and the Agricultural Impact Task Force.

On November 30th, 2020, Governor Polis expanded activation to Phase 3 of the State Drought Plan and enacted the Municipal Water Task Force. The objective of this task force is to coordinate with over 700 water providers across the state to prepare for anticipated drought-related challenges in 2021. The task force is co-chaired by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and Colorado Water Conservation

Board.

To explore current conditions [Continue reading](#)

NEWS FEED

QUESTIONS

Drought planning: An updated guide for water providers

09 Feb 2021

The CWCB has recently updated the "2010 Municipal Drought Management Plan Guidance" and supporting worksheets to assist water providers and local governments in developing drought management plans. These resources can be found on the [CWCB website](#) and are linked here for convenience.

Who's Listening

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Water & Wastewater Program
Manager

Department of Local Affairs



Tracy Kosloff

Deputy State Engineer
Division of Water Resources

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Russ Sands

Section Chief, Water Supply
Planning



Kat Weismiller

Deputy Section Chief





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cwcb.colorado.gov/drought

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[Home](#) > [Focus Areas](#) > [Hazards](#) > Drought

Drought

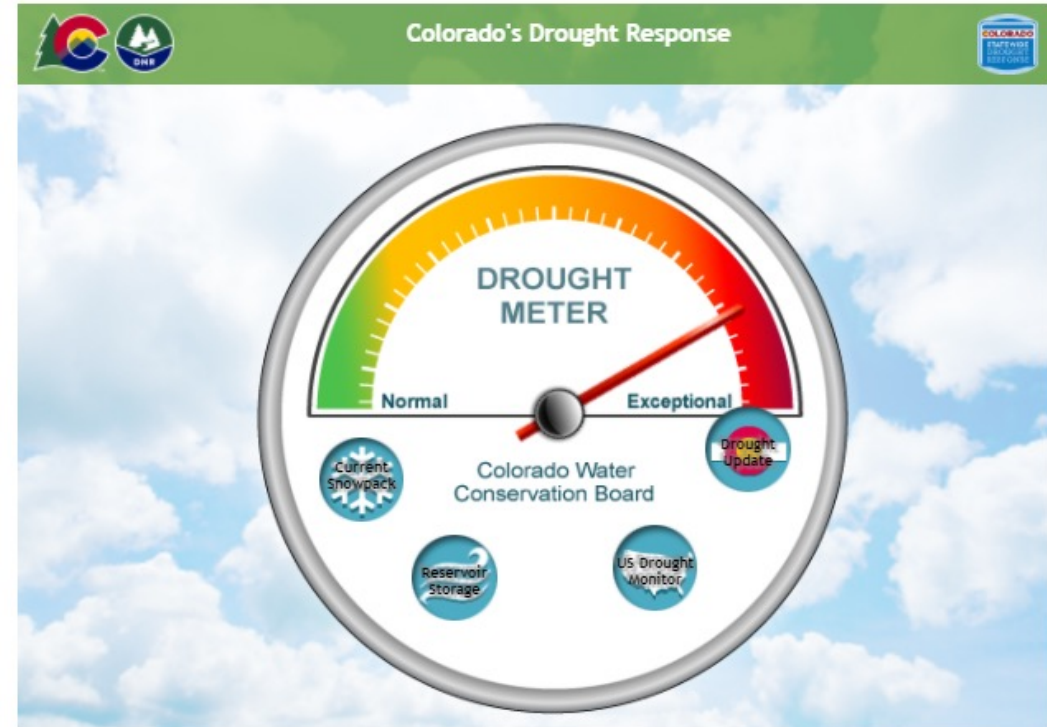
Current Drought Status

Colorado is in active drought. Water Year 2020 concluded as the 12th warmest water year on record in Colorado since 1895. It was the third driest water year on record, trailing only 2002 (driest) and 2018 (2nd driest). A critically hot spring, high winds, dry summer, and multiple monsoon seasons with poor to no moisture contributed to 2020's record breaking fires. Climate outlooks for 2021 indicate drought conditions are expected to continue next year.

On June 22, 2020, Governor Jared Polis activated Colorado's Drought Task Force and Phase 2 of the State Drought Mitigation and Response Plan to respond to deepening drought conditions across the state. Due to continued, worsening conditions throughout the fall and summer, the Governor expanded the Drought Plan to Phase 3 on November 30th. The Drought Plan and supporting task forces will remain activated - assessing conditions and recommending mitigation measures - until statewide conditions significantly improve.

The June Phase 2 activation called together the **Agricultural Impact Task Force** - a representative stakeholder group that has met biweekly to review physical and economic impacts of drought on Colorado's agricultural economy and to recommend opportunities for mitigation.

The November Phase 3 activation initiated the **Municipal Water Impact Task Force** - a representative group that will coordinate with water providers across the state to prepare for anticipated water challenges into 2021.





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[Home](#) > [Focus Areas](#) > [Hazards](#) > Drought

Get Involved



Explore conditions
and local watering
restrictions



Agricultural
Response



Municipal Response



Seek funding

Learn



How does Colorado
manage drought?



How to plan and
prepare

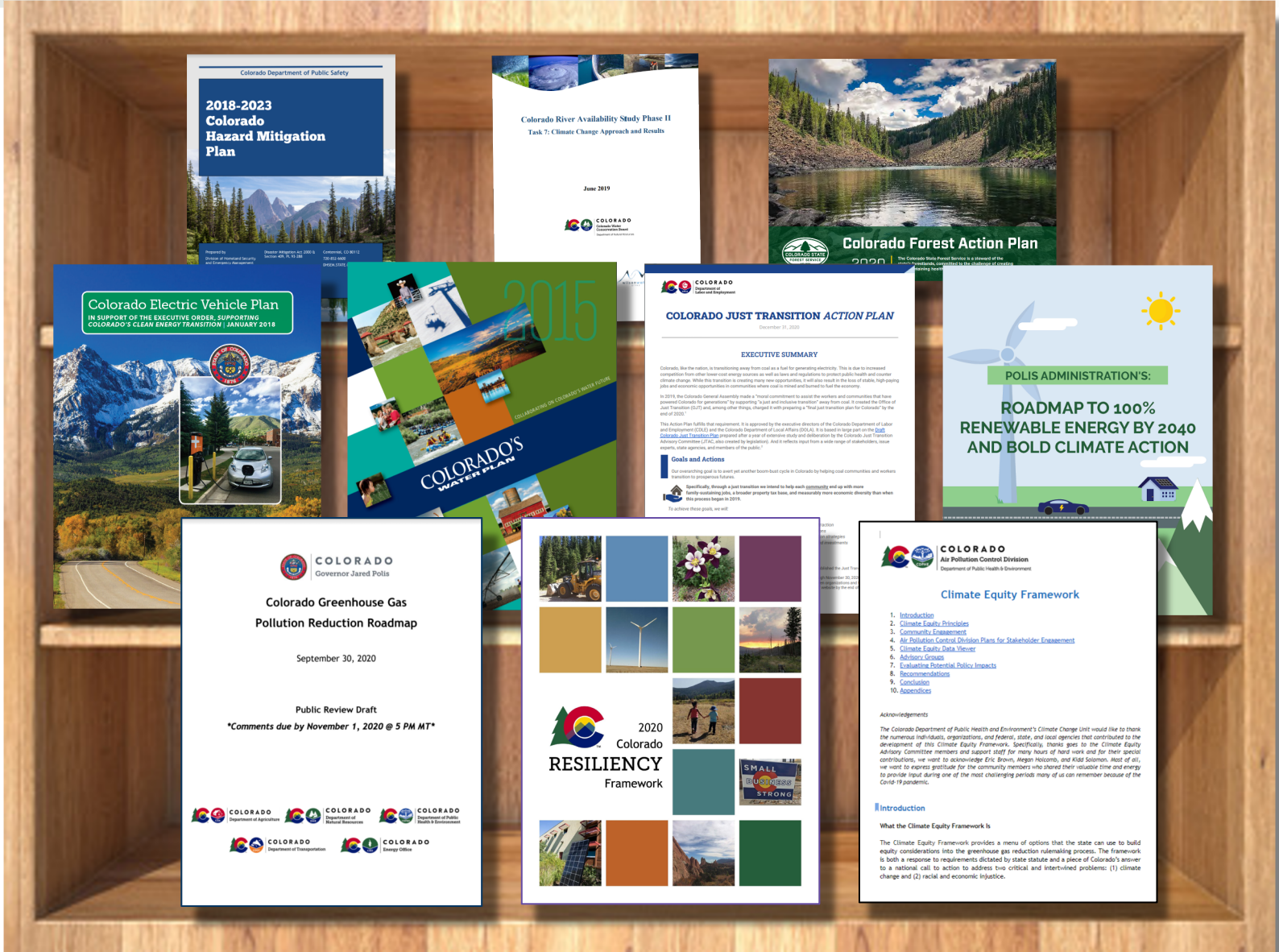
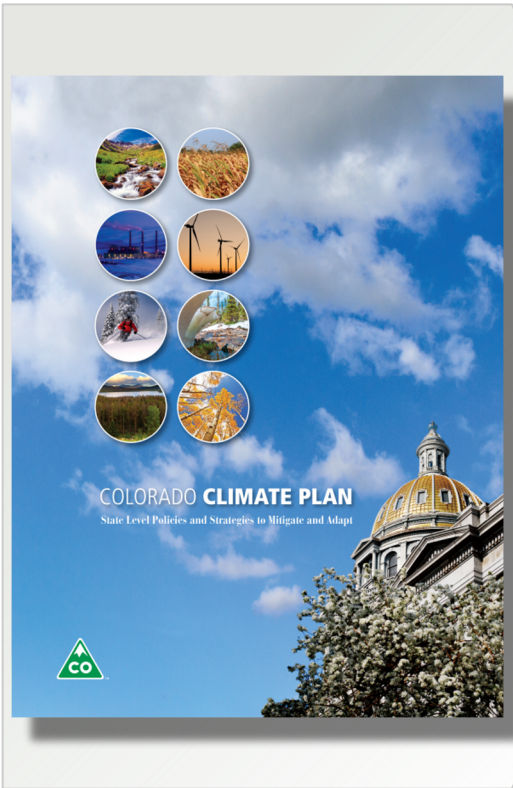


How vulnerable is
Colorado?



What is drought?

STATE PLANS: Mitigation & Adaptation



NOTE: Click on each image for a link to the plan

STATE ADAPTATION TOOLS



ENTER: Future Avoided Cost Explorer (FACE: Hazards)

Project Overview Case Studies Study Methods FAQs



Colorado Water Conservation Board Colorado Hazard Mapping & Risk MAP Portal Search Portal

HOME FLOOD HAZARD LIBRARY MAP FAQs COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (CRS) CALENDAR LiDAR CO HAZARD MAPPING COLORADO RISK MAP

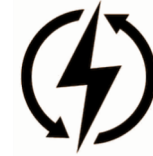
Welcome to the Colorado Hazard Mapping & Risk MAP Portal page. From this portal you can access various resources and websites using the links below.

Flood Hazard Library Map



WILDFIRE RISK PUBLIC VIEWER

Getting Started Reference Layers Explore Map Themes Identify Fire Intensity County Summary



Rebuild and Re-energize

Local Government Toolkit for a Resilient Clean Energy Future

November 9, 2020



Climate Equity Data Viewer BETA Version

Using data to prioritize community engagement efforts

CDPHE | February 10, 2021

STATE CLIMATE WEBSITE



Climate.colorado.gov



Bold Climate Action

In Colorado, we take climate action seriously.

Colorado is a spectacular, vibrant, and economically diverse state with much to offer residents and visitors alike.

Protecting Colorado's way of life means doing our part to mitigate and adapt to climate change by swiftly adopting renewable energy, protecting the health of our communities, creating good-paying jobs, and strengthening our economy.

Our mountains, rivers, and trails are world-renowned; as are our laboratories, breweries, universities, and agricultural products. Yet the Colorado that we know and love already faces real challenges with a changing climate. Our response to this global crisis is not a partisan issue; rather it is an economic development issue, a public health issue, a natural resource issue, and an emergency response issue.

Sign up to stay connected

Be the first to know when this site launches in Spring 2021.

Name

