

The Weather Wire

January 2012

Volume 19 Number 1

Contents:

- **2011 Climate Summary**
- **Drought Monitor**
- **December Summary/Statistics**
- **January Preview**
- **Sunrise/Sunset**
- **Snowfall Totals**

2011 Climate Summary

With all of the wild temperature swings 2011 ended up right around normal for the entire year with average highs of 64.8 and average lows of 36.2 which is only 0.1 degrees above normal. Precipitation was well above normal with 17.31" reported at DIA compared to 14.92" on average. This was 2.39" above normal or 14%. Much of this rainfall occurred during the spring and summer months as numerous strong thunderstorms rolled through Denver and surrounding areas. Snowfall came in below average at 47.5" with 29.5" of that snow coming from October leaving only 18" from January through May. There were 50 days of temperatures at 90 or above with 40 on average. To make up for some of the warm days there was an abnormally high amount of days below zero at 12 compared to 6. There were 158 days with lows at or below freezing which is right around normal. For the entire year there were officially 51 thunderstorm days with 11 of those days producing heavy rain.

2011 Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	64.8	NORMAL 64.7	DEPARTURE 0.1
AVERAGE MIN	36.4	NORMAL 36.3	DEPARTURE 0.1
YEARLY MEAN	50.6	NORMAL 50.5	DEPARTURE 0.1
HIGHEST	99 on 8/25, 7/31, 7/4		
LOWEST	-17 on 2/2		

DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	50	NORMAL	40
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	23	NORMAL	20
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	158	NORMAL	157
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	12	NORMAL	6

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

TOTAL 6069 NORMAL 6059 DEPARTURE 10

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

TOTAL 964 NORMAL 769 DEPARTURE 195

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

TOTAL 17.31 NORMAL 14.92 DEPARTURE 2.39

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

SEASONAL TOTAL 47.5

SINCE 7/1 29.5

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED 9.9mph

PEAK WIND GUST 72mph SSW

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

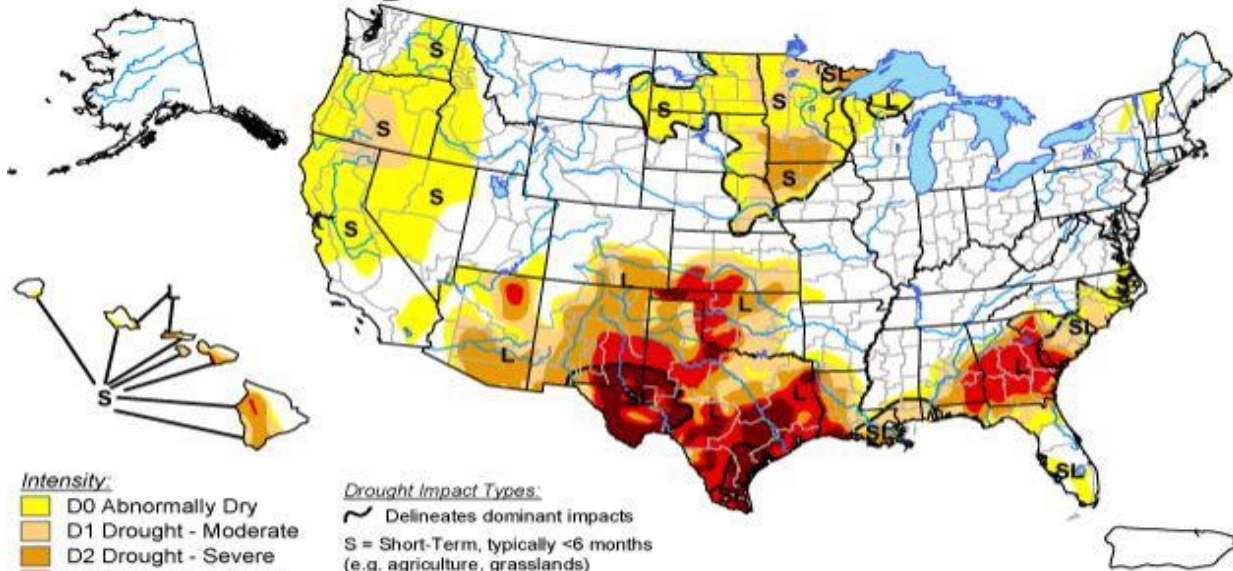
THUNDERSTORM	51	MIXED PRECIP	0
HEAVY RAIN	11	RAIN	22
LIGHT RAIN	76	FREEZING RAIN	1
LT FREEZING RAIN	3	HAIL	8
HEAVY SNOW	7	SNOW	21
LIGHT SNOW	39	SLEET	0
FOG	92	FOG W/VIS <= 1/4 MILE	30
HAZE	65		

Drought Update

Drought conditions persist in parts of southern and southeastern Colorado but have started to improve as they have had some good snows over the month of December but one good month will not be enough to make up for the lost moisture over the years.

U.S. Drought Monitor

December 27, 2011
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

Drought Impact Types:

- Delineates dominant impacts
- S = Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

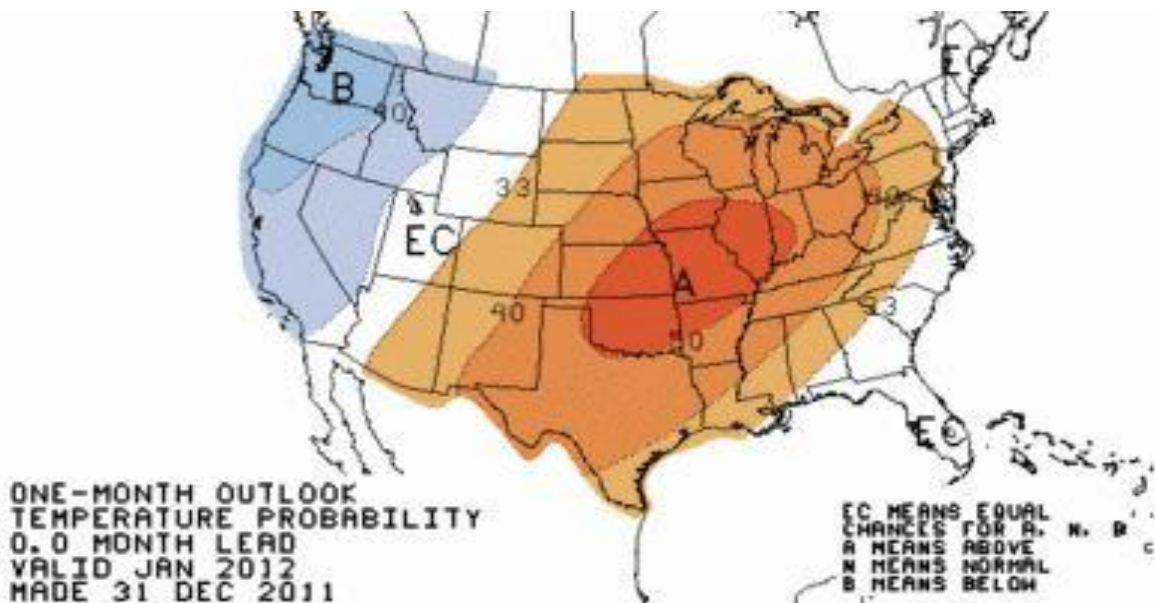
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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

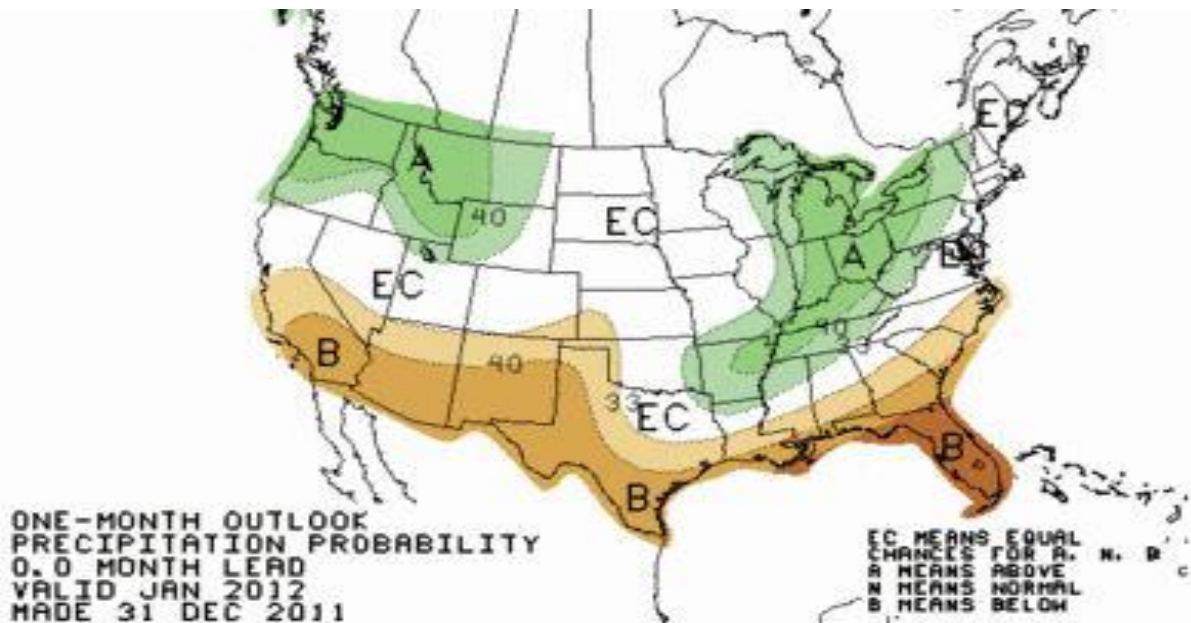


Released Thursday, December 29, 2011
Author: Brad Rippey, U.S. Department of Agriculture

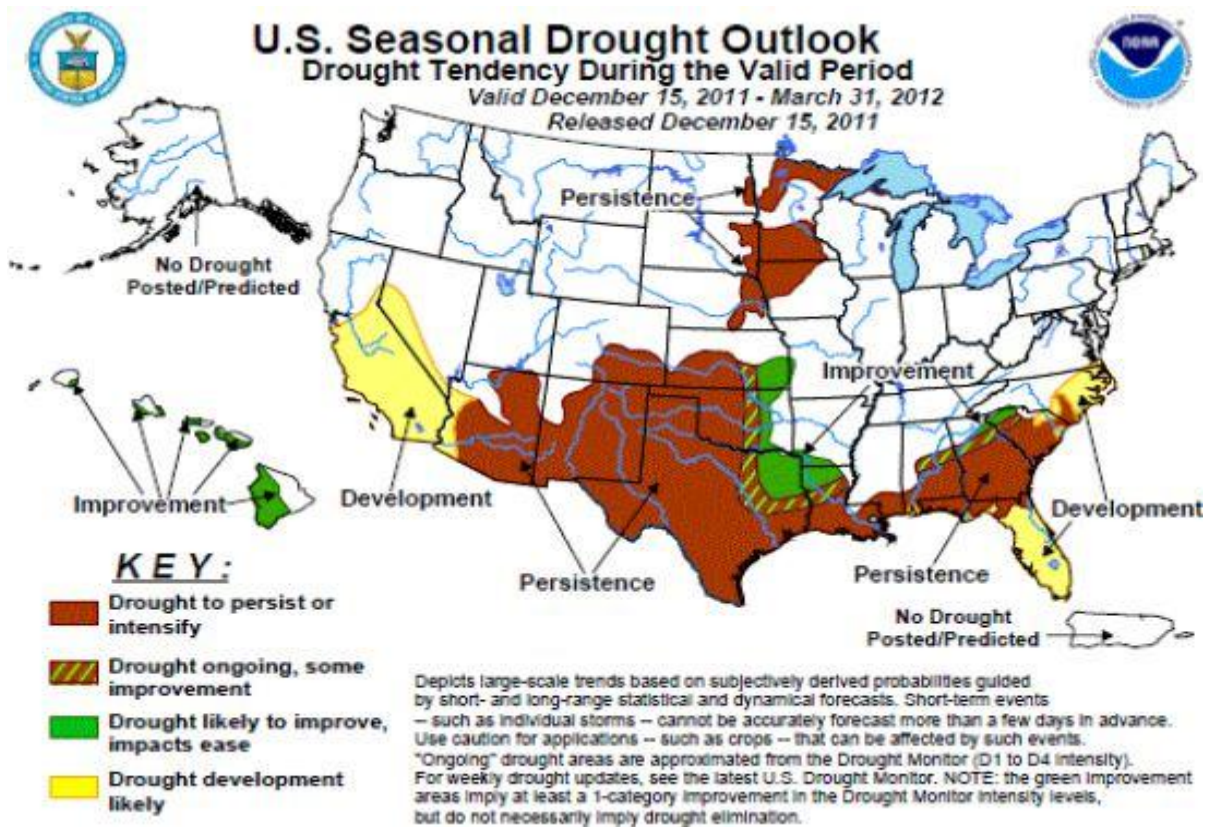
The map below shows forecasted temperature deviances for January 2012. Above normal temperatures are expected over much of Colorado as the weather pattern will likely favor the northern California and the Pacific Northwest extending into the northern Rockies.



The map below shows forecasted precipitation deviances for January 2012. Near normal precipitation is expected across the state of Colorado with slightly below normal extreme southern areas of the state.



The jet stream should be more active over the Pacific Northwest during the heart of winter which should improve snow pack in the central and northern Rockies as well as the Cascades and Sierra Nevada.



December Summary

December came in like a lion and out like a lamb with heavy snow to start the month as a trio of storm systems would bring accumulating snows through the 5th. The coldest temperature during the month occurred after the third storm system pulled away with a low of -5 at DIA. There would then be a lull in the weather until the 19th when back to back storm systems would again bring heavy the Front Range. For the month DIA tallied 16.5" of snow which is about 8" above normal. Other areas of the Front Range from Fort Collins through Douglas County measured anywhere from 16" up to 30" or more such as the Boulder area. With all of the snow temperatures were below normal for the month but could have been much colder was it not for a late string of warm days to end the month. Precipitation for the month was above normal but still under 1" at 0.78". There were 30 days with a temperature below freezing and 2 days below zero. 7 days during the month the maximum temperature did not even reach freezing. There were 3 days with dense fog reported at DIA with visibilities of ¼ mile or less.

December Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	38.5	NORMAL 42.8	DEPARTURE -4.3
AVERAGE MIN	14.8	NORMAL 17.1	DEPARTURE -2.3
MONTHLY MEAN	26.6	NORMAL 30.0	DEPARTURE -3.4
HIGHEST	58 on the 18 th		
LOWEST	-5 on the 6 th		

DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	0	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	7	NORMAL	5.8
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	30	NORMAL	29.4
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	2	NORMAL	2

TEMPERATURE RECORDS

No temperature records tied or broken.

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	1182	NORMAL 1086	DEPARTURE 96
SEASONAL TOTAL	2434	NORMAL 2463	DEPARTURE -29

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	0	NORMAL 0	DEPARTURE 0
YEARLY TOTAL	964	NORMAL 769	DEPARTURE 195

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	0.78	NORMAL	0.31	DEPARTURE	0.47
YEARLY TOTAL	17.31	NORMAL	14.92	DEPARTURE	2.39
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	0.48" on the 21 st – 22 nd				
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIP.	6				

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	16.5	NORMAL	8.5	DEPARTURE	8.0
SEASONAL TOTAL	29.5	NORMAL	24.5	DEPARTURE	5.0
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	7.3" On the 21 st – 22 nd				
GREATEST DEPTH	NA				

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED	9.4mph
PEAK WIND GUST	59mph from the W

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORM	0	NORMAL	0
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HEAVY FOG	3	NORMAL	1
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HAIL	0		
NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS	15		
NUMBER OF PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS	12		
NUNMER OF CLOUDY DAYS	4		
AVERAGE RELATIVE HUMIDITY	62%		

January Preview

The average high for January is 44 degrees and the average low is 17.4 but this can be misleading as January is typically far from average on any given day. This is due to arctic air masses that move southward into the state resulting in highs only in the single digits and teens some days while other days can reach the 60s with abundant sunshine. January is also one of the drier months of the year with only 0.36" on average but snowfall is a modest 7.0". The snow in January typically contains very little water content with "dry" and powdery snows that can be swept away with a broom. When the snow does fall it can linger as the sun angle remains low and the ground is frozen. The record high for the month is 76 degrees and the record low is -29. -29 is the coldest temperature ever recorded in Denver and results in a temperature spread of 105 degrees. Coming off of a snowy December, January of 2012 may disappoint some in the snowfall department as only near normal snowfall is expected with some areas below normal. There will likely be 2-4 snow events during the month.

ENVER'S NOVEMBER CLIMATOLOGICALLY NORMAL (NORMAL PERIOD 1971-2000)

TEMPERATURE

AVERAGE HIGH	44.0
AVERAGE LOW	17.4
MONTHLY MEAN	30.7
DAYS WITH HIGH 90 OR ABOVE	0
DAYS WITH HIGH 32 OR BELOW	6
DAYS WITH LOW 32 OR BELOW	29
DAYS WITH LOWS ZERO OR BELOW	2

PRECIPITATION

MONTHLY MEAN	0.36"
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION	4
AVERAGE SNOWFALL IN INCHES	7.0"
DAYS WITH 1.0 INCH OF SNOW OR MORE	3

MISCELLANEOUS AVERAGES

HEATING DEGREE DAYS	1063
COOLING DEGREE DAYS	0
WIND SPEED (MPH)	8.6mph
WIND DIRECTION	South
DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORMS	0
DAYS WITH DENSE FOG	1
PERCENT OF SUNSHINE POSSIBLE	71%

EXTREMES

RECORD HIGH	76 on 1/27/1888
RECORD LOW	-29 on 1/9/1875

WARMEST	40.3 in 1986
COLDEST	16.9 in 1930
WETTEST	2.35" in 1883
DRIEST	0.01" in 1933, 1934, 1952
SNOWIEST	24.3" in 1992
LEAST SNOWIEST	TR in 1934, 2003

Sunrise/Sunset (January - June Denver area)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
	sr - ss	sr - ss	sr - ss	sr - ss	sr - ss	sr - ss	
01	0721-1646	0708-1719	0632-1753	0643-1925	0600-1955	0534-2022	01
02	0721-1647	0707-1720	0631-1754	0642-1926	0559-1956	0533-2023	02
03	0721-1648	0706-1722	0629-1755	0640-1927	0557-1957	0533-2024	03
04	0721-1649	0705-1723	0628-1756	0639-1928	0556-1958	0533-2024	04
05	0721-1649	0704-1724	0626-1757	0637-1929	0555-1959	0533-2025	05
06	0721-1650	0703-1725	0625-1758	0635-1930	0554-2000	0532-2025	06
07	0721-1651	0702-1726	0623-1759	0634-1931	0553-2001	0532-2026	07
08	0721-1652	0701-1728	0622-1800	0632-1932	0552-2002	0532-2027	08
09	0721-1653	0700-1729	0620-1801	0631-1933	0551-2002	0532-2027	09
10	0721-1654	0659-1730	0618-1802	0629-1934	0550-2003	0532-2028	10
11	0720-1655	0658-1731	0717-1903	0628-1935	0549-2004	0531-2028	11
12	0720-1656	0657-1732	0715-1904	0626-1936	0548-2005	0531-2029	12
13	0720-1657	0655-1733	0714-1905	0625-1937	0547-2006	0531-2029	13
14	0720-1658	0654-1735	0712-1906	0623-1938	0546-2007	0531-2029	14
15	0719-1659	0653-1736	0710-1907	0622-1939	0545-2008	0531-2030	15
16	0719-1701	0652-1737	0709-1908	0620-1940	0544-2009	0532-2030	16
17	0718-1702	0650-1738	0707-1909	0619-1941	0543-2010	0532-2030	17
18	0718-1703	0649-1739	0706-1910	0617-1942	0542-2011	0532-2031	18
19	0718-1704	0648-1740	0704-1911	0616-1943	0542-2012	0532-2031	19
20	0717-1705	0646-1741	0702-1913	0614-1944	0541-2013	0532-2031	20
21	0716-1706	0645-1743	0701-1914	0613-1945	0540-2014	0532-2031	21
22	0716-1707	0644-1744	0659-1915	0612-1946	0539-2014	0533-2032	22
23	0715-1709	0642-1745	0658-1916	0610-1947	0539-2015	0533-2032	23
24	0715-1710	0641-1746	0656-1917	0609-1948	0538-2016	0533-2032	24
25	0714-1711	0639-1747	0654-1918	0608-1949	0537-2017	0533-2032	25
26	0713-1712	0638-1748	0653-1919	0606-1950	0537-2018	0534-2032	26
27	0712-1713	0637-1749	0651-1920	0605-1951	0536-2019	0534-2032	27
28	0712-1714	0635-1750	0650-1921	0604-1952	0536-2019	0535-2032	28
29	0711-1716	0634-1752	0648-1922	0602-1953	0535-2020	0535-2032	29
30	0710-1717		0646-1923	0601-1954	0535-2021	0536-2032	30
31	0709-1718		0645-1924		0534-2022		31

Snowfall

Oct 2011 to Sept 2011

City	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Aurora (Central)	6.0	7.0	19.3					32.3
Brighton	5.8	7.5	14.2					27.5
Broomfield	9.7	7.2	25.1					42.0
Castle Rock	10.1	9.5	23.6					43.2
Colo Sprgs Airport	3.6	1.0	11.7					16.3
Denver DIA	8.5	4.5	16.5					29.5
Denver Downtown	7.9	7.0	21.9					36.8
Golden	8.9	7.1	36.6					52.3
Fort Collins	9.7	10.6	16.5					36.8
Highlands Ranch	7.4	10.5	28.2					46.1
Lakewood	7.8	4.8	19.0					31.6
Littleton	6.0	7.6	26.4					40.0
Parker	12.1	10.0	23.8					45.9
Sedalia - Hwy 67	6.5	9.0	27.8					43.3
Thornton	6.6	7.1	20.7					34.4
Westminster	8.8	7.8	26.6					43.2
Wheatridge	7.6	7.6	25.7					40.9

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Snow covered roadways were common in December:

