

The Weather Wire

February 2012

Volume 19 Number 2

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A Storm for the Record Books!

February of 2012 started off with a potent and slow moving snow storm that brought record snowfall for February standards to Denver and surrounding areas. This storm brought 15.9" of snowfall to DIA and even 16-22" or more many of the western and southern Denver Suburbs. Snowfall amounts of 3 and 4 feet were measured in the higher foothills with 51.1" near Pinecliffe. A storm of this magnitude is typically reserved for the spring and fall months, something we expect more during the month of March which is known for big spring snows. The 15.9" of snow is now the new record for a February snow breaking the old record of 14.1" set back in 1912. This storm lasted 3 days and set even more records with a new daily snowfall record set on the 3rd with 12.5" measured. This broke the old record of 7.5" set back in 1932. The same 12.5" of snow established a new daily record for the month of February replacing the old daily record of 9.5" set twice, once in 1909 and 1953. As of the 8th there have been two measureable snows with DIA currently reporting 17.0" which is already 7th on the all time list. With 3 more weeks of February left DIA only needs 5.1" of snow to tie the all time record of 22.1" set back in 1912. This is a very reachable record and could occur in just a storm or two. The 0.81" of precipitation does not get into the top ten wettest Februarys on record with the 10th spot at 1.22". The all time precipitation record for February stands at 2.01" and is still a far reach at this time. Remember that to become an official record DIA has to measure the snow even though many areas in and around Denver already have higher amounts of snow and precipitation to date. Below are the top 10's for February climate records and a picture of snow piles from the storm in Boulder County:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE - DENVER, COLORADO
 MONTHLY TEMPERATURE, RAINFALL, AND SNOWFALL EXTREMES
 FOR FEBRUARY

10 WARMEST FEB
(1873-2011)

43.7 1954
 42.3 1930
 41.0 1925
 40.7 1957
 40.5 1943
 40.3 1907, 1991
 40.2 1904
 40.1 1992
 39.8 1932
 39.3 1976

10 WETTEST FEB
(1872-2011)

2.01 1934
 1.66 1960
 1.44 1942
 1.39 1953
 1.35 1909
 1.34 1912
 1.31 1959
 1.28 1966
 1.27 1939
 1.22 1965

10 SNOWIEST FEB
(1882-2011)

22.1 1912
 19.5 1942
 18.3 1909, 1960
 18.0 1931
 17.5 1959
 17.1 1965
 16.9 1993
 16.5 1953
 16.3 1939
 15.7 1913

10 COLDEST FEB
(1873-2011)

17.6 1899
 21.8 1913
 22.2 1883
 22.4 1989
 22.7 1903
 23.6 1929
 24.1 1942
 24.8 1960
 24.9 1894
 25.2 1905

10 DRIEST FEB
(1872-2011)

0.01 1970
 0.02 2005
 0.03 1916
 0.04 1908, 1925, 1954, 2009
 0.06 1901, 1906
 0.07 1983
 0.08 1991
 0.09 1982, 1992, 1996
 0.10 1943, 1949
 0.11 1876

LEAST SNOWIEST FEB
(1882-2011)

T 2009
 0.3 1970, 1992
 0.5 2005
 0.6 1925, 1954
 0.8 1983, 1991
 1.0 1943
 1.1 1906, 1908
 1.3 1999
 1.5 1949
 1.6 1957

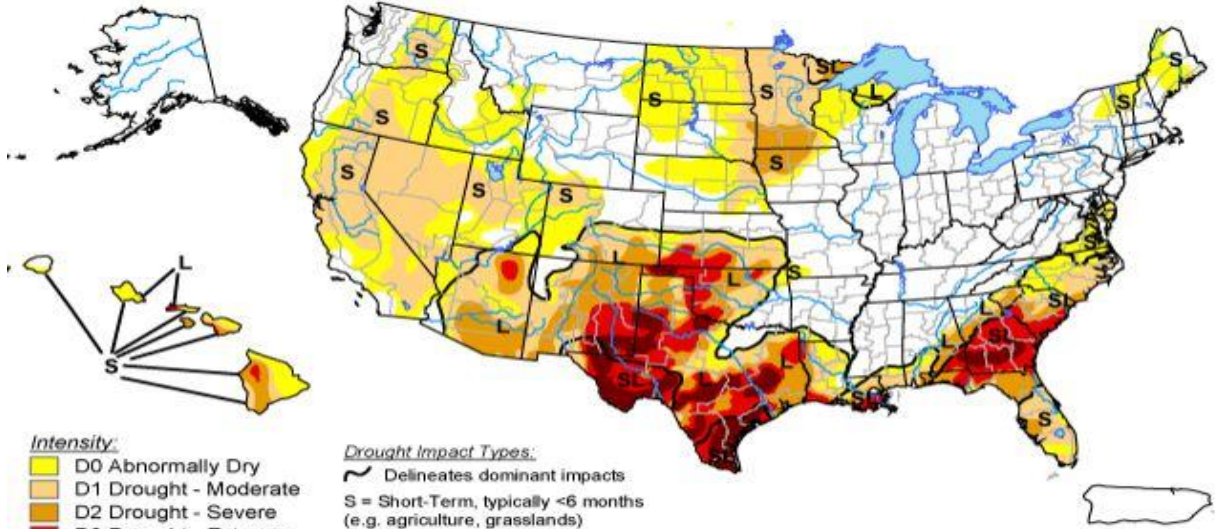


Drought Update

Drought conditions persist in parts of southern and southeastern Colorado but there has been some recovery as of late for the southeastern plains. The western half of the state is still abnormally dry with moderate drought developing in NW Colorado due to the lack of snowfall this winter.

U.S. Drought Monitor

January 31, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST



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

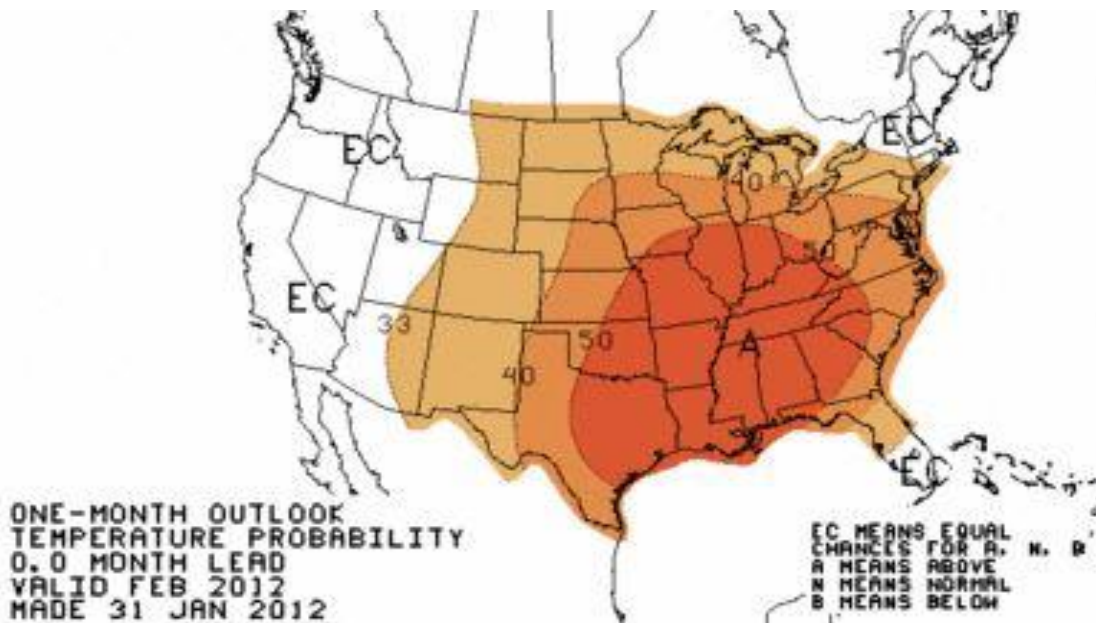
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>



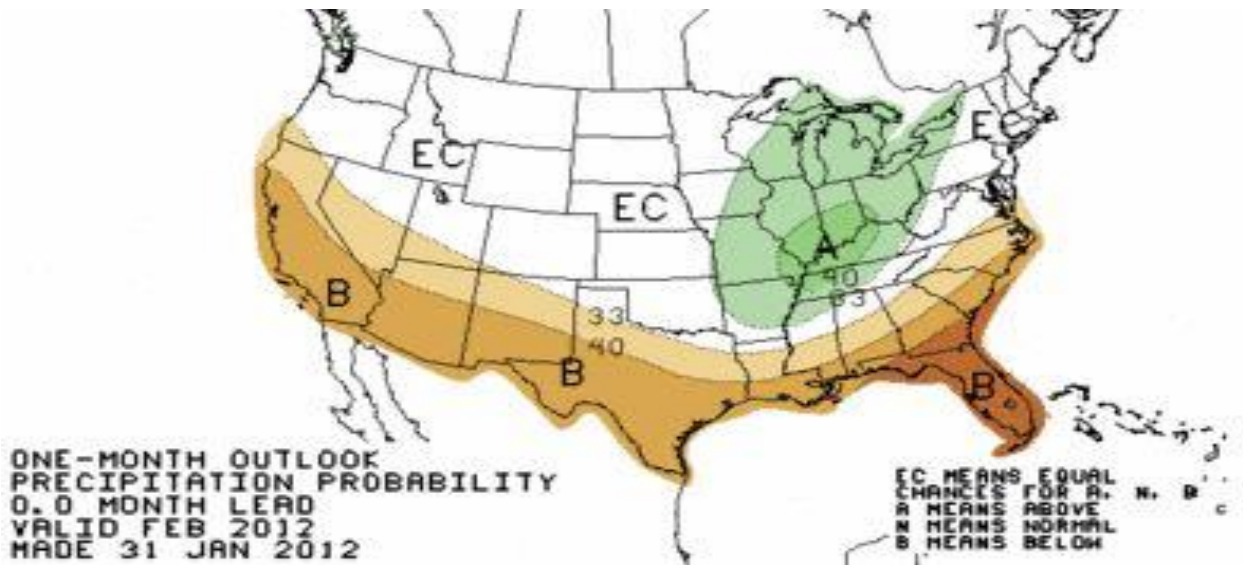
Released Thursday, February 2, 2012

Author: Eric Luebehusen, U.S. Department of Agriculture

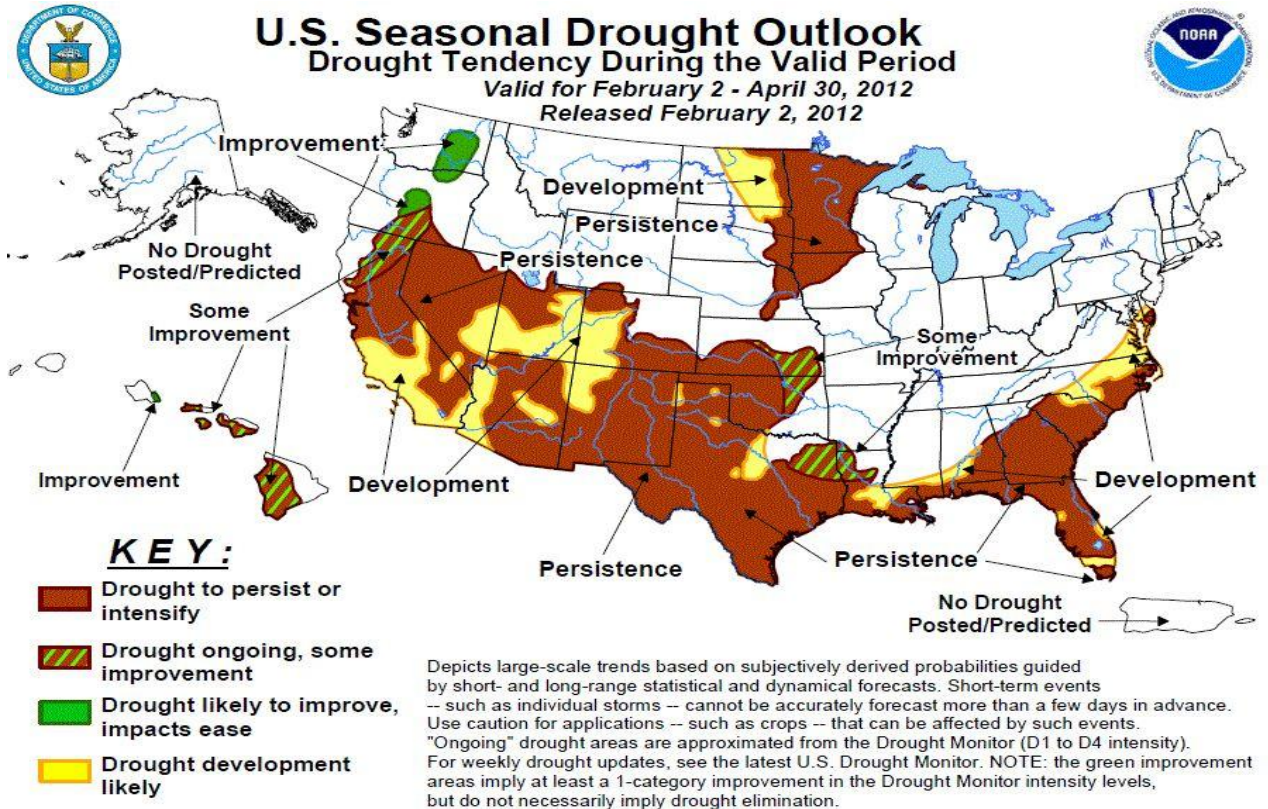
The map below shows forecasted temperature deviances for February 2012 but this does not take into account the snow on the ground which will affect temperatures in northeastern Colorado. In general above normal temperatures are expected but this will likely NOT be the cast for Denver and surrounding areas.



The map below shows forecasted precipitation deviances for February 2012. Near normal precipitation is expected across the state of Colorado but as we already know many areas from the Palmer Divide northward along the I25 corridor will be well above normal in both precipitation and snowfall.



Western and southwestern parts of the US will see drought developing or becoming worse as well as the upper Midwest as there has been very little snow so far this winter. Southeastern parts of the US may also see drought conditions worsen with the only improvement expected in northern California and the Pacific Northwest.



January Summary

January of 2012 was quiet weather wise with 4 meaningful snows during the month with the first storm on the 7th and another on the 11th and then 16th with a minor snow on the 27th. There was only 4.9" of snow measured at DIA which came up short of the average of 7.0". Total snowfall for the season starting in October through the end of January still stands 2.9" above normal. Temperatures during January were very warm with average highs in the 50s which is more than 6 degrees above normal. Average lows during the month were 21.6 which are a little over 4 degrees above normal. Precipitation came up short at 0.26" but January is one of the drier winter months anyway with only 0.36" on average so this can be easily made up in the coming months.

January Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	50.3	NORMAL 44.0	DEPARTURE 6.3
AVERAGE MIN	21.6	NORMAL 17.4	DEPARTURE 4.2
MONTHLY MEAN	36.0	NORMAL 30.7	DEPARTURE 5.3
HIGHEST	66 on the 21 st		
LOWEST	-6 on the 11 th		

DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	0	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	1	NORMAL	5.5
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	28	NORMAL	29.4
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	2	NORMAL	1.7

TEMPERATURE RECORDS

No temperature records tied or broken.

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	891	NORMAL 1063	DEPARTURE -172
SEASONAL TOTAL	3325	NORMAL 3526	DEPARTURE -201

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

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

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	0.26	NORMAL 0.36	DEPARTURE -0.10
YEARLY TOTAL	0.26	NORMAL 0.36	DEPARTURE -0.10

GREATEST IN 24 HOURS 0.10" on the 11th
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIP. 4

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL 4.9 NORMAL 7.0 DEPARTURE -2.1
SEASONAL TOTAL 34.4 NORMAL 31.5 DEPARTURE 2.9
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS 3.2" On the 11th
GREATEST DEPTH NA

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED 10.6mph
PEAK WIND GUST 51mph from the NNW

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORM 0 NORMAL 0
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HEAVY FOG 1 NORMAL 1
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HAIL 0
NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS 7
NUMBER OF PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS 22
NUNMER OF CLOUDY DAYS 2
AVERAGE RELATIVE HUMIDITY 48%

February Preview

With a record breaking snow storm to start the month February of 2012 is primed to set some more snowfall records, possibly including the snowiest February ever recorded! As of the 8th there is already 17" of snow for the month which is 10.7" above normal for the entire month of February and there are 3 more weeks to go. Temperatures in February on average begin to climb as the days are gaining sunlight at a good clip. The average high for February is 47.2 degrees and the average low is still a chilly 19.1. Typically February is one of the drier winter months but total precipitation as of the 8th is 0.81" far above the normal of 0.49" and more than makes up for the 0.10" below normal for January. With all of the snow on the ground it will take some time to melt and while it does so temperatures will likely be below normal resulting in a cooler than normal February.

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

TEMPERATURE

AVERAGE HIGH	47.2
AVERAGE LOW	19.1
MONTHLY MEAN	33.2
DAYS WITH HIGH 90 OR ABOVE	0
DAYS WITH HIGH 32 OR BELOW	4
DAYS WITH LOW 32 OR BELOW	26
DAYS WITH LOWS ZERO OR BELOW	2

PRECIPITATION

MONTHLY MEAN	0.49"
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION	6
AVERAGE SNOWFALL IN INCHES	6.3"
DAYS WITH 1.0 INCH OF SNOW OR MORE	2

MISCELLANEOUS AVERAGES

HEATING DEGREE DAYS	892
COOLING DEGREE DAYS	0
WIND SPEED (MPH)	8.8mph
WIND DIRECTION	South
DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORMS	Less than 1
DAYS WITH DENSE FOG	1
PERCENT OF SUNSHINE POSSIBLE	70%

EXTREMES

RECORD HIGH	77 on 2/28/2006 and 2/4/1890
RECORD LOW	-25 on 2/1/1951 and 2/8/1936
WARMEST	43.7 in 1954
COLDEST	17.6 in 1899
WETTEST	2.01" in 1934

DRIEST
 SNOWIEST
 LEAST SNOWIEST

0.01" in 1970
 22.1" in 1912
 TR in 2009

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 Apr 2012

City	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Aurora (Central)	6.0	7.0	19.3	5.4				37.7
Brighton	5.8	7.5	14.2	1.7				29.2
Broomfield	9.7	7.2	25.1	5.2				47.2
Castle Rock	10.1	9.5	23.6	6.8				50.0
Colo Sprgs Airport	3.6	1.0	11.7	0.5				16.8
Denver DIA	8.5	4.5	16.5	4.9				34.4
Denver Downtown	7.9	7.0	21.9	9.0				45.8
Golden	8.9	7.1	36.6	9.8				62.1
Fort Collins	9.7	10.6	16.5	1.0				37.8
Highlands Ranch	7.4	10.5	28.2	7.2				53.3
Lakewood	7.8	4.8	19.0	6.4				38.0
Littleton	6.0	7.6	26.4	8.4				48.4
Parker	12.1	10.0	23.8	6.2				52.1
Sedalia - Hwy 67	6.5	9.0	27.8	6.1				49.4
Thornton	6.6	7.1	20.7	2.3				36.7
Westminster	8.8	7.8	26.6	6.4				49.6
Wheatridge	7.6	7.6	25.7	7.7				48.6

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