

The Weather Wire

May 2012

Volume 19 Number 5

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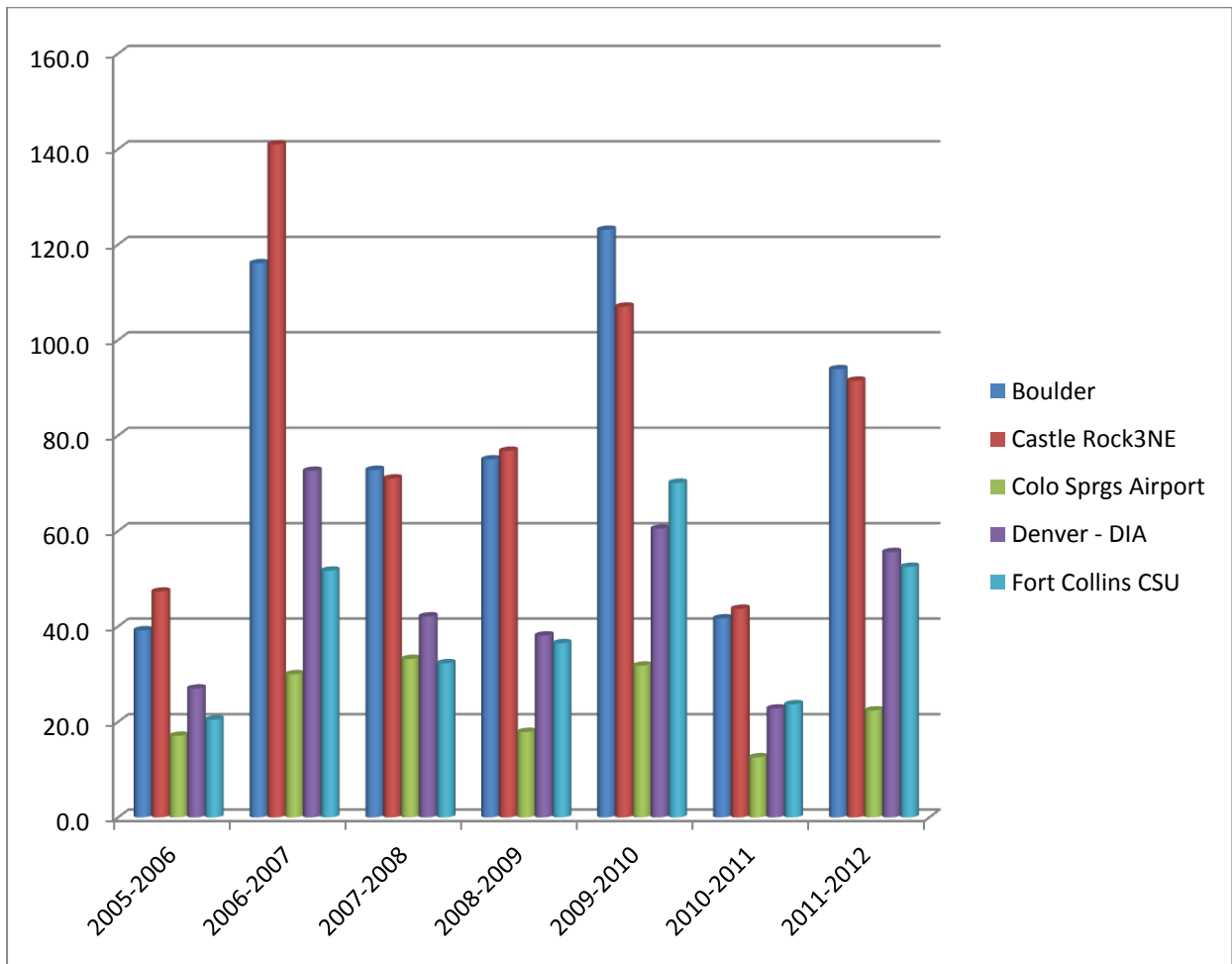
2011-2012 Snow Summary

After one of the least snowiest winter seasons on record last year the 2011-2012 snow season was closer to normal for many Front Range Cities in Colorado. Parts of NE Colorado would see more snow than many other areas of the US with below normal snowfall for the northern Great Plains states, Great Lakes region extending to the east coast. Even within the state of Colorado parts of the NE were closer to normal than many other areas. There were locations with above normal snowfall along the Palmer Divide as well as below normal snowfall in areas such as Colorado Springs but most areas along the I-25 corridor from north to south experienced near normal snowfall with a few exceptions.

The snow season began in October as the first snow fell on the 8th - 9th with a major storm bringing 5-10" or more of snow for many areas on the 25th - 26th. November started out snowy with a storm on the 1st - 2nd which produced some good snowfall but that would be the only meaningful snow for the month for many areas. December was very active with 5 measureable snow storms producing above normal snowfall. January was fairly typical with a number of disturbances moving through producing generally light snowfall totals. February was one for the record books with near record monthly snowfall, falling just shy with 20.2" tallied at DIA but many other Denver suburbs and surrounding cities recorded almost half a season's worth of snow in just one month! February of 2012 would save the winter season as our typically heavier snowfall months of March and April would produce very little snow. March of 2012 was actually the driest and least snowiest in Denver History with only a trace reported! April snowfall depended upon elevation as areas at and below 5,500' did not report much snow at all as rain or a rain snow mix occurred instead of accumulating snow. There can be snow in May but it is looking unlikely to see any additional snows lower elevations this month.

Temperatures this winter were rather mild most months with slightly above normal temperatures in October and November. December would be about 3.5 degrees colder than normal with above normal precipitation and snowfall. January was about 5 degrees warmer than average. February was below normal in temperature and well above normal in snowfall with a record breaking storm to begin the month. March of 2012 was just the opposite of February with record breaking heat and very little snow at all. April was also well above normal in temperature at about 6 degrees above historical averages. Warm enough to place April of 2012 in 7th place all time.

From one winter to the next snow totals can vary greatly along the Front Range. Below are snow totals since the 2005-2006 snow season to present for selected cities along the Front Range.



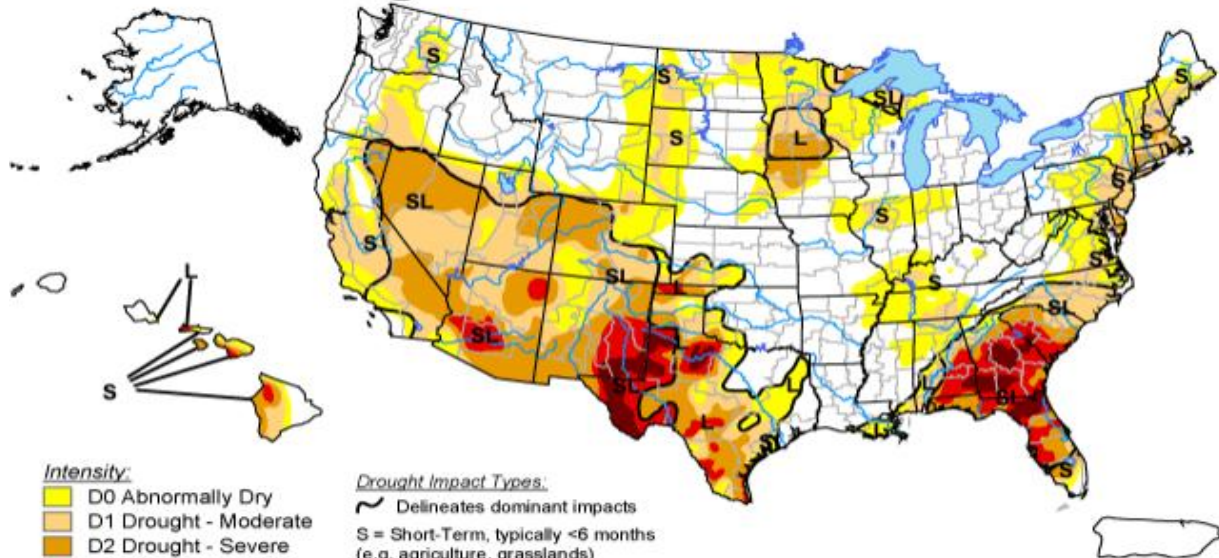
Additional yearly totals can be found at the bottom of the newsletter for more cities along the I-25 corridor.

Drought Update

With abnormally dry conditions during the month of March and April there are new areas of drought developing over northeastern Colorado. Drought conditions are becoming more severe in portions of west and northwestern Colorado.

U.S. Drought Monitor

May 1, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EDT



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)

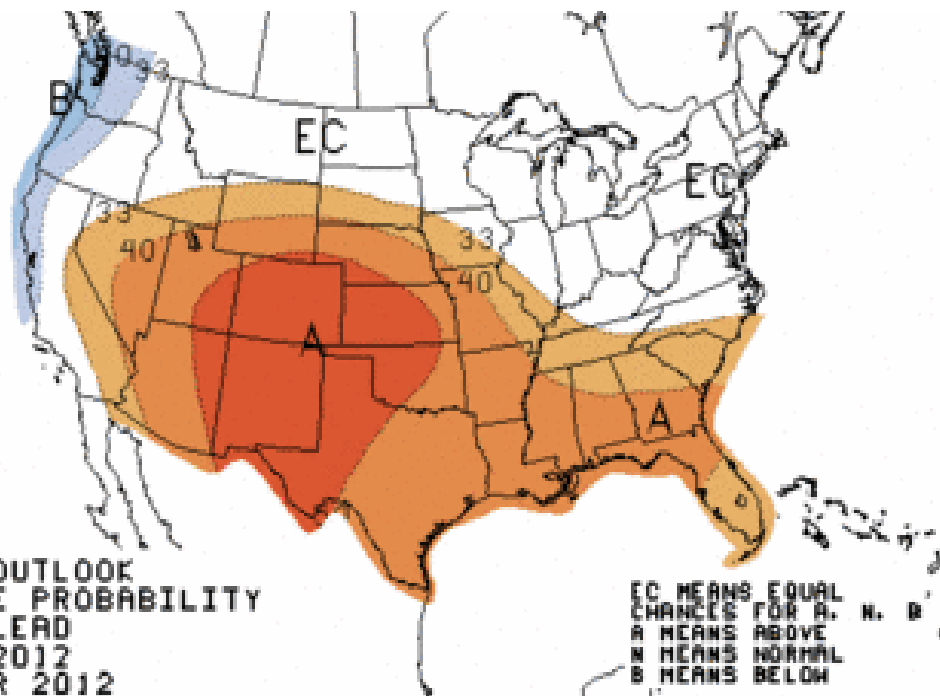
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

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



Released Thursday, May 3, 2012
Author: Matthew Rosencrans, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

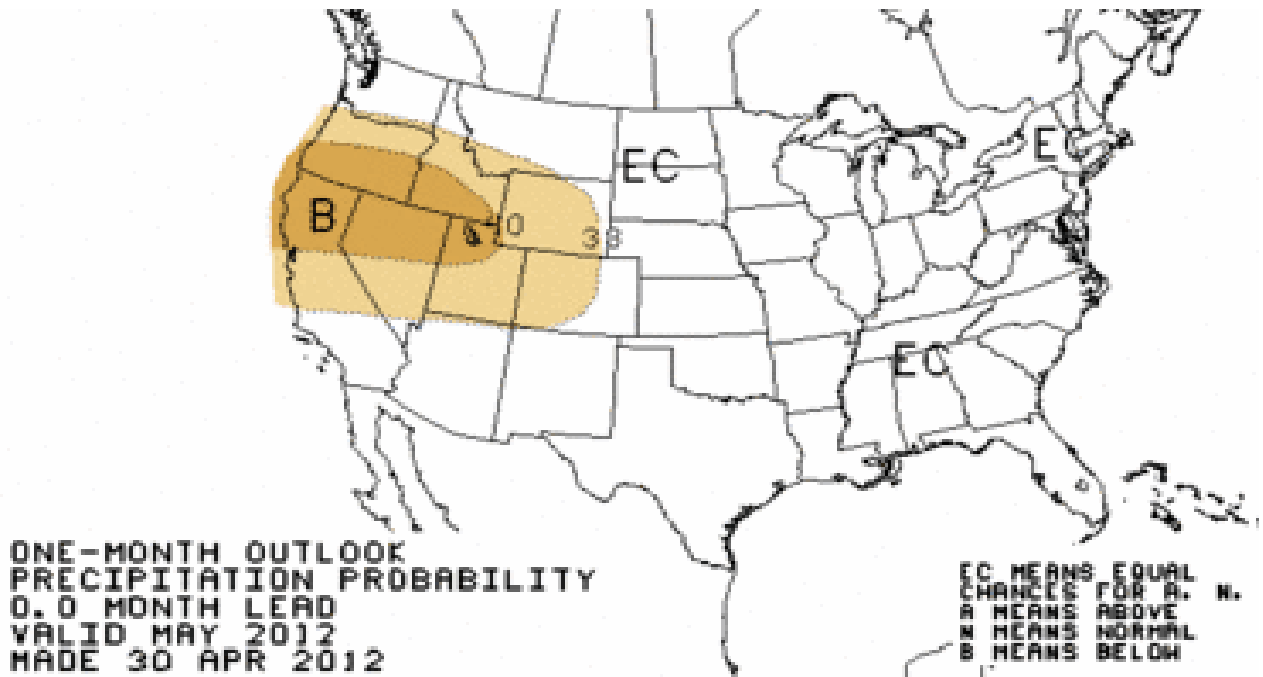
The map below shows forecasted temperature deviances for May 2012. Above normal to well above normal temperatures are likely for the entire state of Colorado.



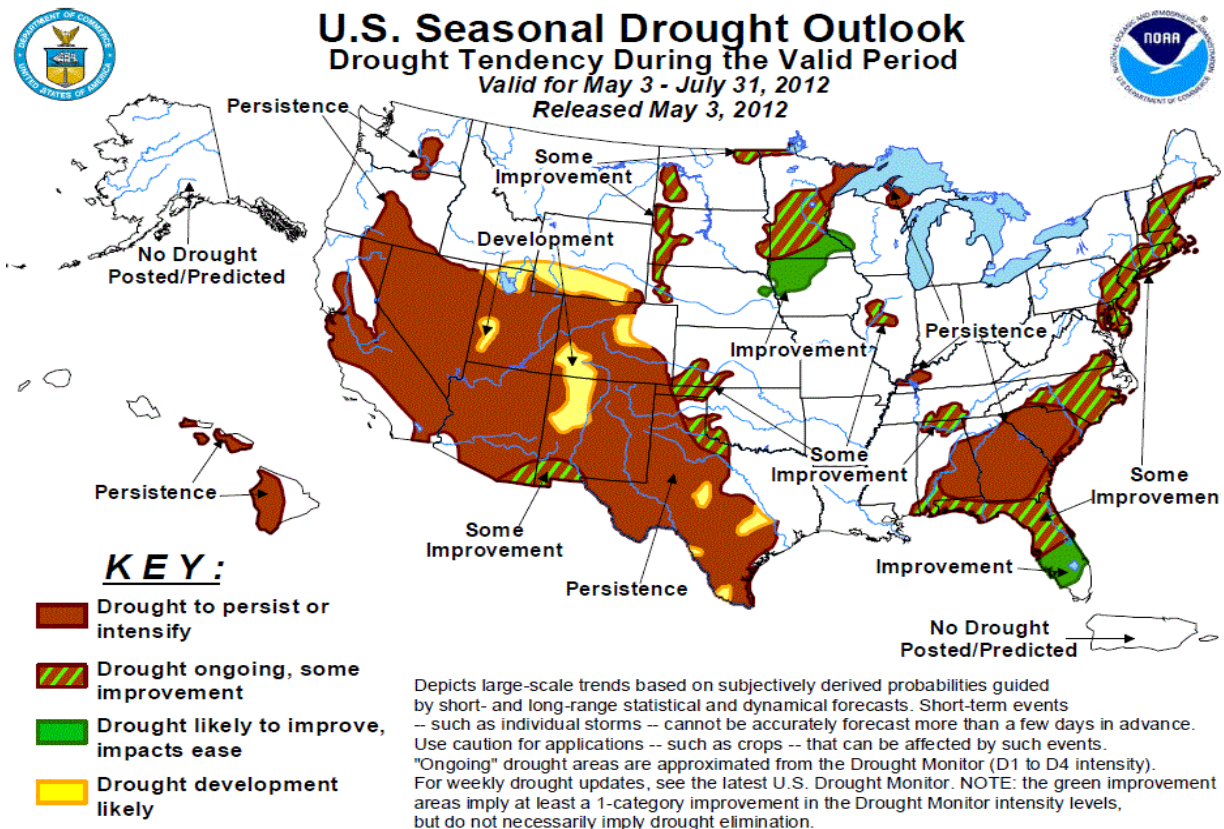
ONE-MONTH OUTLOOK
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY
0.0 MONTH LEAD
VALID MAY 2012
MADE 30 APR 2012

EC MEANS EQUAL CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW

The map below shows forecasted precipitation deviances for May 2012. Below normal precipitation is forecast for central and western portions of the state with near normal precipitation eastern areas although Skyview Weather believes that below normal precipitation will likely continue eastern areas as well.



Drought conditions are expected to persist and/or intensify over the majority of Colorado except the far northeastern corner of the state.



April Summary

After coming off the driest, least snowiest nearly the warmest March in Denver history above normal temperatures, below normal snow and precipitation continued through the month of April. The average high temperature for April was 68.6 which is about 7degrees above normal. The average April low was 37.9 degrees, 4.6 degrees warmer than the 33.3 historical average. The monthly mean was 53.3 degrees which ranks April of 2012 in 7th place all time for the warmest April on record. There were 2 temperature records this month with a record high of 84 set on the 1st and 88 on the 24th. Precipitation tallied 1.39" for the month which was 0.32" below the normal of 1.71". There was 1" of snow reported at DIA early in the month falling 5.6" shy of the average of 6.6". Thanks to some good snows earlier in the season the snowfall for the 2011-2012 snow season is right around normal. Higher elevations to the west and south of the Denver area received much higher snowfall totals for the month with Castle Rock coming in with 8-10" for April.

April Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	68.6	NORMAL 61.5	DEPARTURE 7.1
AVERAGE MIN	37.9	NORMAL 33.3	DEPARTURE 4.6
MONTHLY MEAN	53.3	NORMAL 47.4	DEPARTURE 5.9
HIGHEST	88 on the 24 th		
LOWEST	24 on the 7 th		
DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	0	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	0	NORMAL	0.3
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	4	NORMAL	13.0
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	0	NORMAL	0.0

TEMPERATURE RECORDS

Record Highs of 84 on the 1st and 88 on the 24th.

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	352	NORMAL 529	DEPARTURE -177
SEASONAL TOTAL	5215	NORMAL 5731	DEPARTURE -516

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	6	NORMAL 1	DEPARTURE 5
YEARLY TOTAL	6	NORMAL 1	DEPARTURE 5

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	1.39	NORMAL	1.71	DEPARTURE	-0.32
YEARLY TOTAL	2.58	NORMAL	3.31	DEPARTURE	-0.73
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	0.52" on the 26 th to 27 th				
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIP.					8

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	1.0	NORMAL	6.6	DEPARTURE	-5.6
SEASONAL TOTAL	55.6	NORMAL	55.7	DEPARTURE	-0.1
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	1.0" on the 2 nd -3 rd				
GREATEST DEPTH	NA				

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED	11.5mph
PEAK WIND GUST	56mph from the North

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORM	2	NORMAL	2
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HEAVY FOG	2	NORMAL	1
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HAIL	0		
NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS	9		
NUMBER OF PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS	16		
NUMBER OF CLOUDY DAYS	5		
AVERAGE RELATIVE HUMIDITY	48%		

May Preview

May of 2012 will likely continue to be above normal in temperature and below normal in precipitation for the Front Range of Colorado. Normal highs and lows for the month increase about 10 degrees from the 1st to the 31st. Highs normally start out in the upper 60s and finish in the upper 70s. Lows start out in the upper 30s and finish in the upper 40s. There can still be a late frost or freeze during the first few weeks of the month so if you have planted tender vegetation pay attention to the overnight lows and cover if needed. The weather in May can be highly variable with rain, snow, hail, thunderstorms, strong winds and even some severe weather with the threat for tornadoes eastern areas of the state. Average snowfall for the month is 1.1" but it is not looking like we will see any snow in the Metro area this year. There has been as much as 15.5" of snow in Denver during the month of May but this occurred all the way back in 1898. Most years no snow at all or only a trace is observed. Precipitation continues to climb in May which is one of the wetter months of the year and on average 1 out of every 3 days precipitation is reported. Normal monthly precipitation is 2.15" and if we don't get close it will become very difficult over the coming months to make up for the deficit we have already dug due to March and April.

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

TEMPERATURE

AVERAGE HIGH	71.5
AVERAGE LOW	42.7
MONTHLY MEAN	57.1
DAYS WITH HIGH 90 OR ABOVE	0.6
DAYS WITH HIGH 32 OR BELOW	0
DAYS WITH LOW 32 OR BELOW	2
DAYS WITH LOWS ZERO OR BELOW	0

PRECIPITATION

MONTHLY MEAN	2.15"
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION	11
AVERAGE SNOWFALL IN INCHES	1.1"
DAYS WITH 1.0 INCH OF SNOW OR MORE	NA

MISCELLANEOUS AVERAGES

HEATING DEGREE DAYS	265
COOLING DEGREE DAYS	21
WIND SPEED (MPH)	10.0mph
WIND DIRECTION	South
DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORMS	6.4
DAYS WITH DENSE FOG	0.5
PERCENT OF SUNSHINE POSSIBLE	64%

EXTREMES

RECORD HIGH	95 on 5/26/1942
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RECORD LOW	19 on 5/3/1907
WARMEST	64.6 in 1934
COLDEST	38.8 in 1920
WETTEST	8.57" in 1876
DRIEST	0.06" in 1974
SNOWIEST	15.5" in 1898
LEAST SNOWIEST	0.0"

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	16.8	0.2	3.0	57.7
Brighton	5.8	7.5	14.2	1.7	18.9	0.2	0.7	49.0
Broomfield	9.7	7.2	25.1	5.2	26.8	Trace	1.4	75.4
Castle Rock	10.1	9.5	23.6	6.8	30.3	1.2	10.0	91.5
Colo Sprgs Airport	3.6	1.0	11.7	0.5	4.9	0.7	Trace	22.4
Denver DIA	8.5	4.5	16.5	4.9	20.2	Trace	1.0	55.6
Denver Downtown	7.9	7.0	21.9	9.0	25.7	0.3	2.3	74.1
Golden	8.9	7.1	36.6	9.8	33.2	0.4	3.7	99.4
Fort Collins	9.7	10.6	16.5	1.0	14.7	Trace	Trace	52.5
Highlands Ranch	7.4	10.5	28.2	7.2	34.7	0.3	4.4	92.7
Lakewood	7.8	4.8	19.0	6.4	23.0	0.3	3.3	64.6
Littleton	6.0	7.6	26.4	8.4	33.7	0.3	2.6	85.0
Parker	12.1	10.0	23.8	6.2	23.2	0.3	3.3	78.9
Sedalia - Hwy 67	6.5	9.0	27.8	6.1	28.9	1.0	9.8	89.1
Thornton	6.6	7.1	20.7	2.3	22.0	0.3	0.8	59.8
Westminster	8.8	7.8	26.6	6.4	28.2	0.1	2.5	80.4
Wheatridge	7.6	7.6	25.7	7.7	30.9	0.2	3.6	83.3

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Below is a picture taken near Castle Rock of the April snow:

