

The Weather Wire

April 2015

Volume 22 Number 4

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Is the snow season over?

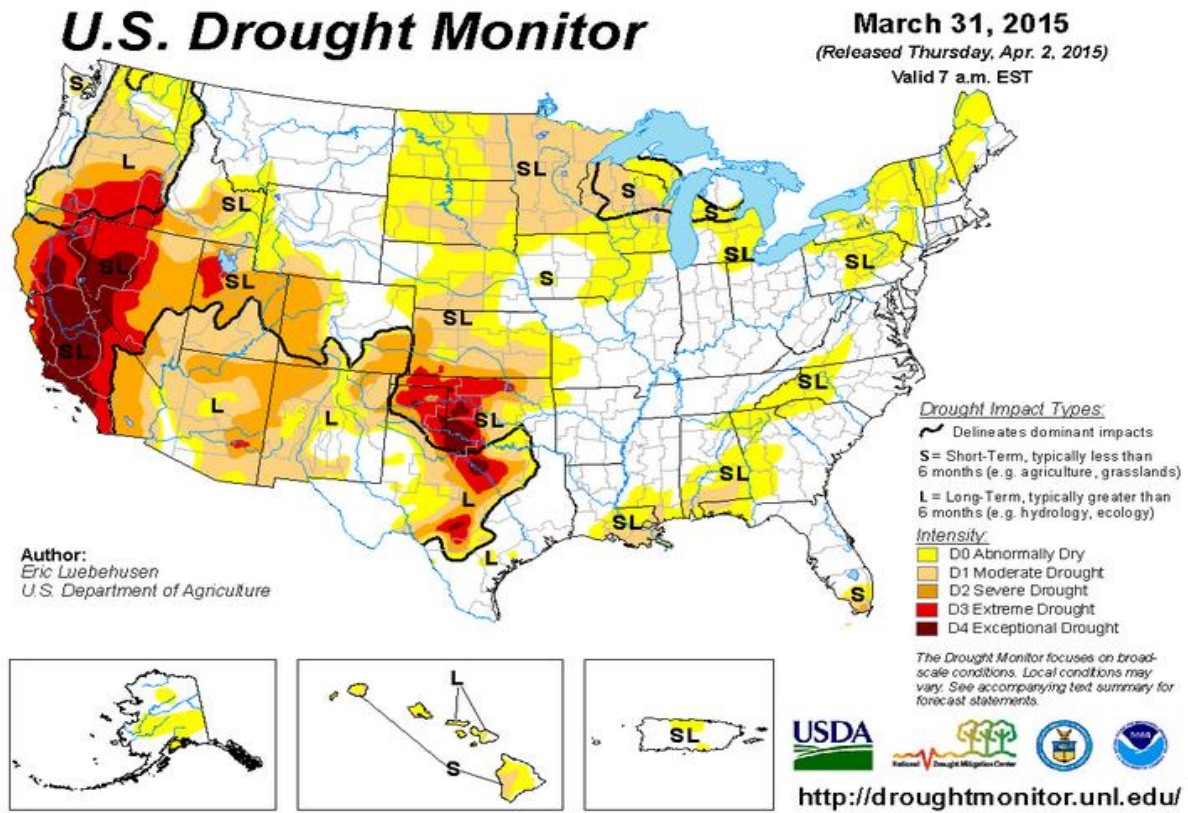
The question many are asking right now is when will the last snow occur and is our snow season already over this year? For people in the snow plow business that need snow to accumulate pavement the snow season may very well be over, especially for areas below 6,000' which includes Denver and suburbs. With the temperatures well above normal in March and more sunshine by the day ground temperatures have warmed and plants are starting to grow, even the trees are producing leaves and flowering out at lower elevations. The warm ground will be difficult to overcome and the accumulating snow season on pavement may very well have come to an end for the majority of communities in and around the Denver area. To get snow to accumulate at this point the snow will have to fall overnight and quite heavily with temperatures well into the 20s for an extended period of time. The chances of a storm like this developing decreases each week as we move forward in time and the chances are very low at this point but not 0% just yet... As far as additional snows that accumulate on grass/elevated surfaces there is still another month or so where there is a high probability of snow with any given storm system. April is the 5th snowiest month of the year on average with 6.8". The first half of April is expected to be rather calm with the second half becoming more active weather wise. With this in mind there will likely be another 1-3 snow events through the end of April/early May that will accumulate on grass and maybe even break some branches from newly leafed out trees.

The last snow of the season 4 out of the past 5 years has been in during the first 2 weeks of May and that is fairly typical to see one last gasp of winter before we turn to completely over to rain events. This year with the onset of the warmer than normal weather in March we may not receive a May snow with Skyview Weather only putting a 40% probability to see snow in May during the first 2 weeks below 6,000'. The foothills will certainly experience some snow in May and as we all know it can even snow in June on occasions over the higher foothills and in the mountains above tree line nearly any month of the year can produce snow.

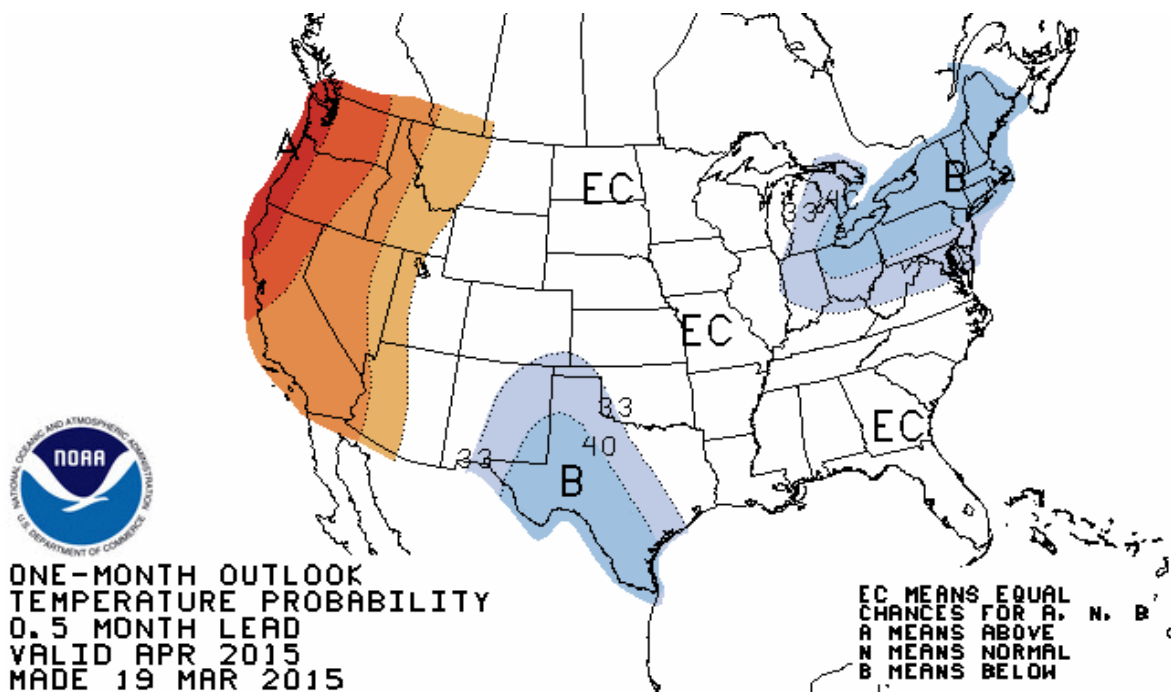
In a nutshell the snow season is not over quite yet but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Our attention will be turning to thunderstorms and severe weather season before we know it!

Drought Update

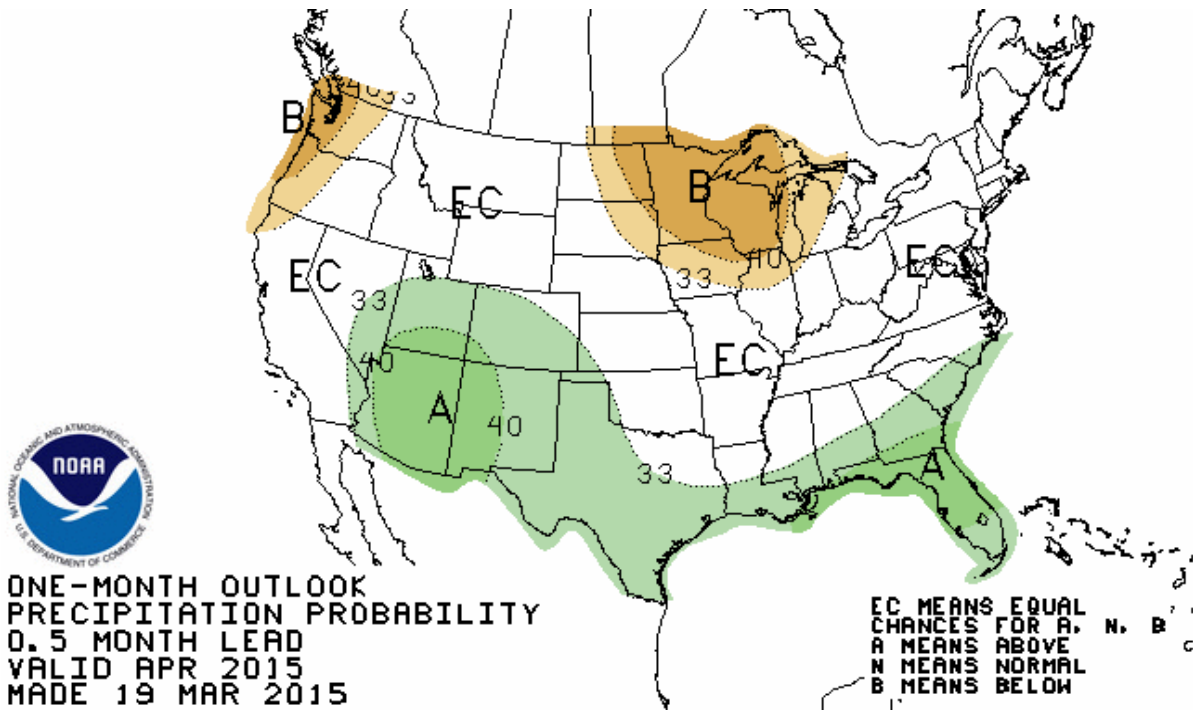
Drought severity has eased over portions of AZ and NM with exceptional drought over a large area of CA/NV persisting. Drought free conditions over NE Colorado with drought increasing over the W portions of the state and persisting over SE Colorado.



The map below shows forecasted temperature deviances for April 2015. There are equal chances for above and below normal temperatures over Colorado.



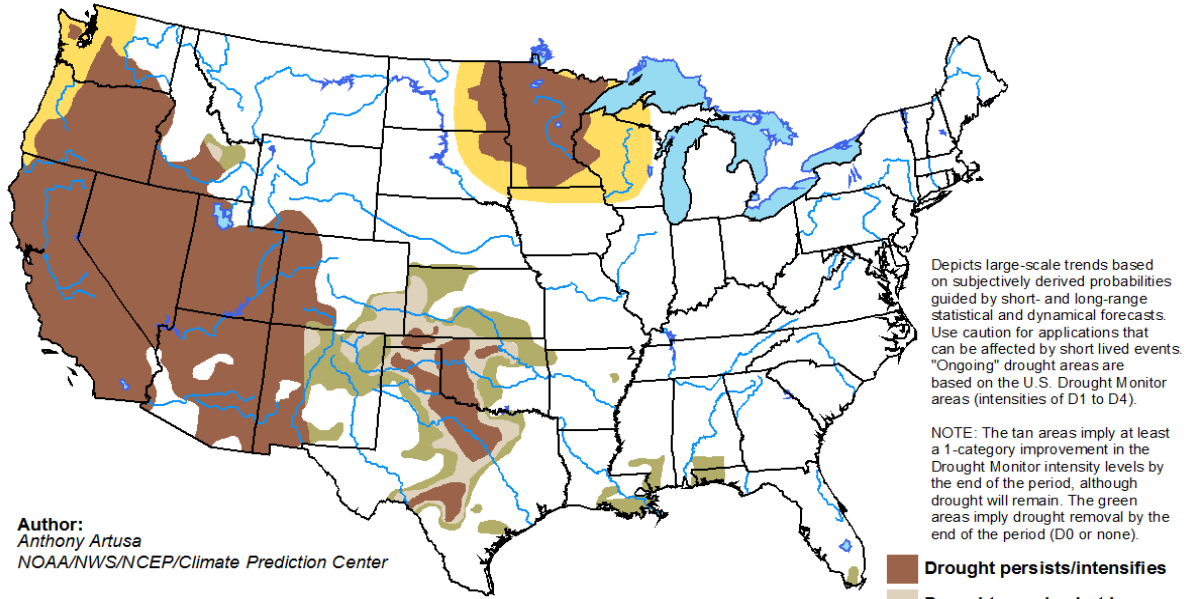
The map below shows forecasted precipitation deviances for April 2015. There is a slight bias towards above normal precipitation over far SW Colorado with equal chances for above/below normal precipitation for far NE Colorado.



Drought conditions are forecast to improve over SE Colorado. Drought looks to persist or intensify over the west Coast inland through the Great Basin as well as western Colorado.

U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook
Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for March 19 - June 30, 2015
Released March 19, 2015



- Drought persists/intensifies
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely



<http://go.usa.gov/hHTe>

March Summary

March of 2015 was mild and dry with little storm activity. Temperatures for the month were well above normal with average highs of 58.9 degrees and average lows of only 31.2 degrees. Combined they resulted in a monthly mean of 45 degrees which was 4.6 degrees above normal. The warmest temperature during the month was 81 degrees on the 16th and the coldest temperature was 2 degrees on the 5th. Two high temperature records were broken one on the 6th with a high of 79 and another record high on the 16th of 81 degrees. There were basically only 3 significant weather events during the month which produced 2.9" of snow and 0.79" of moisture, both of which were below normal. The 0.79" was 0.13" below the normal of 0.92". Snowfall was 7.8" below the normal of 10.7" but with the snowy February we are still 2.5" above normal in snowfall for the season. The average humidity for the month was 51% indicative of a relatively dry air mass in place. There were 4 days with heavy fog reported at DIA no thunderstorms were observed.

March Stats

TEMPERATURE (IN DEGREES F)

AVERAGE MAX	58.9	NORMAL 54.4	DEPARTURE 4.5
AVERAGE MIN	31.2	NORMAL 26.4	DEPARTURE 4.8
MONTHLY MEAN	45.0	NORMAL 40.4	DEPARTURE 4.6
HIGHEST	81 on the 16 th		
LOWEST	2 on the 5 th		

DAYS WITH MAX 90 OR ABOVE	0	NORMAL	0
DAYS WITH MAX 32 OR BELOW	2	NORMAL	2
DAYS WITH MIN 32 OR BELOW	12	NORMAL	24
DAYS WITH MIN ZERO OR BELOW	0	NORMAL	0

TEMPERATURE RECORDS

3/6 – New record high of 79 degrees

3/16 – New record high of 81 degrees

HEATING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	611	NORMAL 763	DEPARTURE -152
SEASONAL TOTAL	4724	NORMAL 5202	DEPARTURE -478

COOLING DEGREE DAYS

MONTHLY TOTAL	0	NORMAL 0	DEPARTURE 0
YEARLY TOTAL	0	NORMAL 0	DEPARTURE 0

PRECIPITATION (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	0.79	NORMAL	0.92	DEPARTURE	-0.13
YEARLY TOTAL	2.42	NORMAL	1.70	DEPARTURE	0.72
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	2/15-2/16				
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIP.					5

SNOWFALL (IN INCHES)

MONTHLY TOTAL	2.9	NORMAL	10.7	DEPARTURE	-7.8
SEASONAL TOTAL	49.4	NORMAL	45.9	DEPARTURE	2.5
GREATEST IN 24 HOURS	1.9" on the 3 rd				
GREATEST DEPTH	3" on the 4 th				

WIND (IN MILES PER HOUR)

AVERAGE SPEED	9.9mph
PEAK WIND GUST	45mph from the W

MISCELLANEOUS WEATHER

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORM	0	NORMAL	0
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HEAVY FOG	4	NORMAL	1
NUMBER OF DAYS WITH HAIL	0		
NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS	12		
NUMBER OF PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS	12		
NUMBER OF CLOUDY DAYS	7		
AVERAGE RELATIVE HUMIDITY	51%		

April Preview

April typically is our transition month from winter to spring but this year with such a warm March people already have spring fever. One of my favorite sayings for April is, "April snows bring May lawn mows". April can be quite variable in snowfall with 6.8" on average ranking as the 5th snowiest month of the year. The snowiest April was back in 1933 with 33.8" of snow and there have been multiple years with no snow at all or just a trace. Just 2 years ago in April of 2013 there was 20.4" of snow measured at DIA which ranked 10th all time. Snowfall for April 2015 is expected to be slightly below normal to near normal in the Denver Metro area. Along with the snow, overall moisture increases from the winter months with many storms starting out as rain before changing over to snow. Average precipitation for April is 1.71". The wettest April on record was back in 1900 with an impressive 8.42". The driest April on record was 0.03" set in 1963. Precipitation for April of 2015 is expected to be near normal. Temperatures for the month start out with an average high of 58 degrees and an average low of 30 but by the end of the month the average high is 66 degrees and the average low is 37 degrees. The monthly mean temperature is 47.4 degrees with 13 days on average with temperatures falling below freezing. It is very rare for temperatures to go below zero in April but it has occurred with a record low of -2 set back in 1975 on the 2nd of the month. The temperature has reached 90 degrees one time in history on 30th of the month back in 1992, otherwise expect the warmest days of the month to top out in the 80s. Temperatures for April of 2015 are also expected to be near normal. The second half of the month looks to be more active weather wise than the first half of the month.

DENVER'S APRIL CLIMATOLOGICALLY NORMAL (NORMAL PERIOD 1981-2010 DIA Data)

TEMPERATURE

AVERAGE HIGH	61.5
AVERAGE LOW	33.3
MONTHLY MEAN	47.4
DAYS WITH HIGH 90 OR ABOVE	0
DAYS WITH HIGH 32 OR BELOW	0
DAYS WITH LOW 32 OR BELOW	13
DAYS WITH LOWS ZERO OR BELOW	0

PRECIPITATION

MONTHLY MEAN	1.71"
DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION	9
AVERAGE SNOWFALL IN INCHES	6.8"
DAYS WITH 1.0 INCH OF SNOW OR MORE	NA

MISCELLANEOUS AVERAGES

HEATING DEGREE DAYS	529
COOLING DEGREE DAYS	1
WIND SPEED (MPH)	10.0mph
WIND DIRECTION	South
DAYS WITH THUNDERSTORMS	2

DAYS WITH DENSE FOG 1
 PERCENT OF SUNSHINE POSSIBLE 67%

EXTREMES

RECORD HIGH 90 on 4/30/1992
 RECORD LOW -2 on 4/2/1975
 WARMEST 56.4 in 1946, 1981
 COLDEST 38.8 in 1920
 WETTEST 8.42" in 1900
 DRIEST 0.03" in 1963
 SNOWIEST 33.8" in 1933
 LEAST SNOWIEST 0.0" in 1888, 1930, 1943, 1992

Snowfall

September 2014 to April 2015

City	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Aurora (Central)	0.0	0.0	5.5	8.4	15.4	22.6	5.5		57.4
Brighton	0.0	0.0	2.7	8.2	3.5	17.2	3.0		34.6
Broomfield	0.2	0.0	5.6	11.8	11.6	29.9	2.5		61.6
Castle Rock	0.1	0.2	7.0	12.4	17.0	28.3	5.3		70.2
Colo Sprgs Airport	0.0	0.0	6.8	4.2	14.4	16.6	3.7		45.7
Denver DIA	TR	0.0	4.0	12.0	8.1	21.5	2.9		48.5
Denver Downtown	0.0	0.0	5.0	9.7	15.8	27.0	4.2		61.7
Golden	0.1	0.0	9.5	13.5	11.1	33.4	3.0		70.6
Fort Collins	0.0	0.0	4.9	10.2	2.2	16.9	1.8		36.0
Highlands Ranch	0.1	0.0	7.8	15.6	18.4	33.6	4.3		79.8
Lakewood	0.0	0.0	5.3	10.7	12.2	25.0	3.0		56.2
Littleton	TR	0.0	6.3	13.2	10.2	31.4	5.6		66.7
Parker	TR	TR	6.5	12.4	17.0	22.5	3.7		62.1
Sedalia - Hwy 67	0.1	0.0	6.7	17.5	17.5	30.6	4.8		77.2
Thornton	0.0	0.0	4.1	9.4	8.9	26.5	4.2		53.1
Westminster	TR	0.0	6.3	12.8	13.4	31.0	3.6		67.1
Wheat Ridge	0.0	0.0	6.4	12.0	11.8	29.6	3.4		63.2

Note(Italics): The 0.3"(1/31) and 0.9"(2/1) from the storm on January 31st into the pre dawn hours on February 1st are combined for snow totals for DIA on our snow reports and will result in a surplus for January snow and a deficit for February snow if you are logging totals from our individual storm reports.

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