October 2020 Monthly Climate Summary

The statewide average temperature for October 2020 was 47.3°F, which is 0.8°F warmer than the 1901-2000 average of 46.5°F. Average temperature since January 1 is 50.2°F, which is 2.6°F above the 1901-2000 average of 47.6°F. October 2020 is the 52nd warmest October on record and we are now on track for our 9th warmest year on record.

The statewide average precipitation for October 2020 was 0.57", which is 0.78" below the 1901-2000 average of 1.35". Average accumulated precipitation since January 1 is 10.38", 5.59" below the 1901-2000 average of 15.97". October 2020 is the 13th driest on record and we are now on track for the 2nd driest year on record.
Each dot plots the year for average temperature and precipitation statewide in Colorado, going back to 1895. From left to right, accumulated precipitation is shown, where the wettest years are plotted furthest to the right. Dot sizes are proportional to precipitation amounts. From bottom to top, average temperature is shown, where the warmest years are plotted towards the top. The dots are also color coded with darker colors indicating higher temperatures. The horizontal and vertical dotted lines indicate the 1981-2010 normals. The chart on the left displays October, where the star shows 2020 and we can clearly see it was much drier than normal and only slightly warmer than normal. The chart on the right displays January-October where we can see 2020 stands out as one of the driest (yet, not quite warmest) years so far.
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October News Feed

News stories featuring Climate Center staff:
- Oct 15 - Four Corners Public Radio: Colorado reservoirs down 25% as drought persists
- Oct 15 - Steamboat Pilot: Disappointing 2020 water year comes to a close
- Oct 16 - Journal-Advocate: Reservoir levels drop as hot, dry weather continues into fall
- Oct 16 - Colorado Public Radio: Record Drought Puts Colorado Farmers and Ranchers On the Front Line of Climate Change
- Oct 21 - KUNC: Mountain West in Climate Crosshairs as 2020 Heats Up – listen here
- Oct 23 - 9News: Current wildfire activity rare for Colorado in October
- Oct 30 - Fox 21 News: Colorados drought stretches on even after recent snow

Other News stories:
- Oct 13 Aspen drought restrictions trigger 20% drop in water use
- Oct 25: As Colorado wildfires burn, fears that climate change is causing "multi-level emergency" mount

New Data Access Tools

Temperature Graphs: Available for select stations for the current Water Year (Oct 1 – Sept. 30), these graphs provide daily high and low averages based on 1981-2010 normals, record max and min temperatures, and current daily highs and lows. See Colorado Springs where multiple records have already been broken.

Precipitable Water Climatology: Measured by weather balloons, these interactive graphs tell us how much moisture is in the air at a given location. Higher values mean more moisture while lower values indicate drier air.

Drought continues

At the end of October, 100% of the state was experiencing some level of drought. Areas in the Front Range and Eastern Plains experienced an expansion of D3 by 23% and the Western Slope worsened with expansions of D4 - up almost 20% from the end of September.