

“Experts Warn About Dry Conditions in Colorado” — January 19, 2018 @H2ORadio

[January 20, 2018](#) [Coyote Gulch](#) [Climate Change](#), [Colorado Water](#)



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The [Governor’s Water Availability Task Force](#) met on Thursday, January 18th to discuss snowpack, precipitation, reservoir levels, and weather forecasts. While reservoir levels are currently doing well, the news delivered by a panel of experts overall was not very good.

Dr. Becky Bolinger, a climatologist at Colorado State University set the tone when she started off the meeting by saying, “I am going to apologize ahead of time for my doom and gloom report. It’s not my fault, I’m just the messenger.” She pointed out that November 2017 was the hottest November ever on average in Colorado in 123 years of record-keeping, and

December continued that pattern.

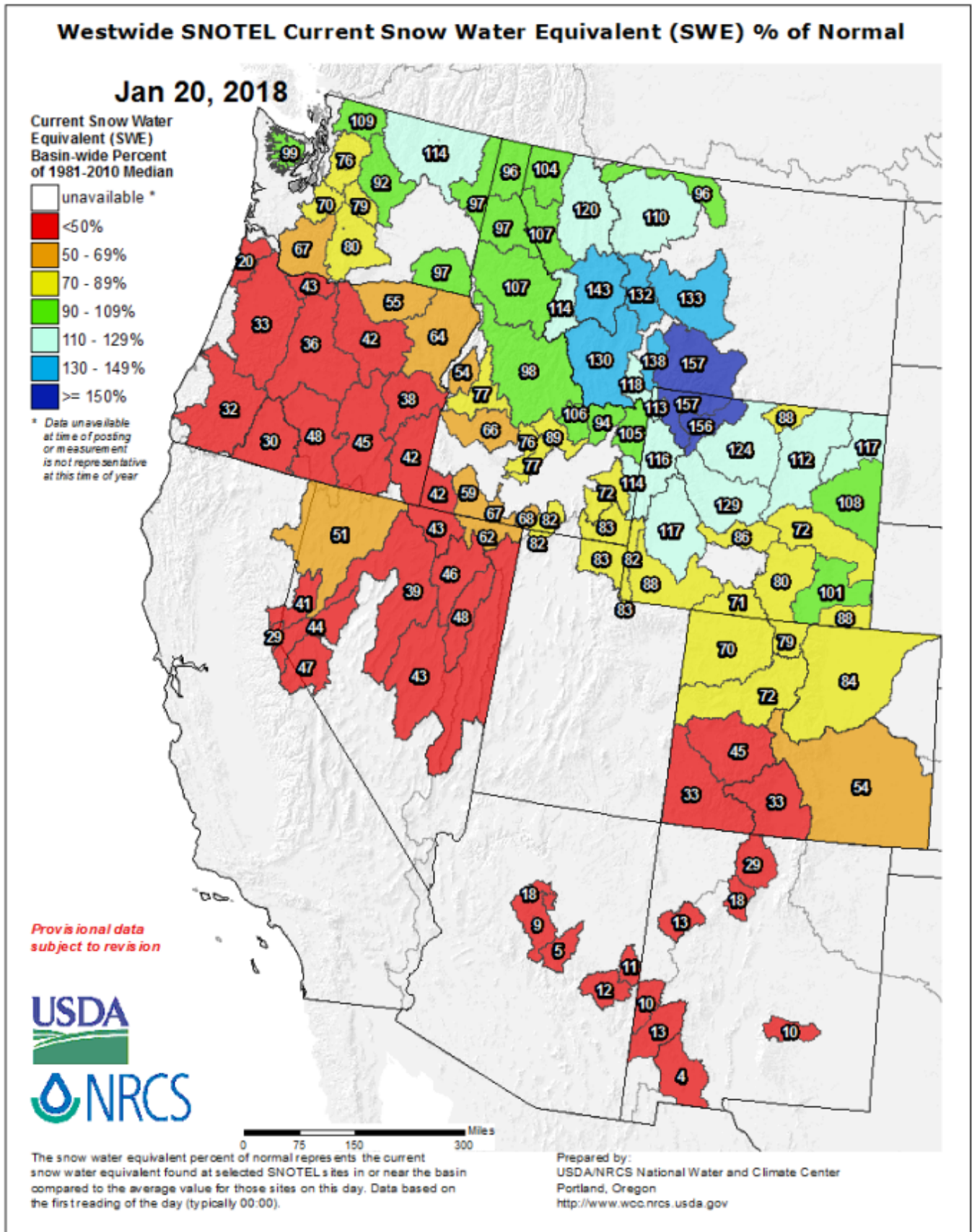
In fact, the average temperature from October to December last year was almost 4 degrees higher than previous years. And you may have noticed that the trend seems to be continuing into January this year with Friday's temperature approaching 70 some places along the Front Range.

As far as precipitation, it was very dry in December—almost 2 inches below average statewide, with the driest areas in the southwest and the southeast. According to recent data from the Colorado Snow Survey Program, the state snowpack is one of the lowest since 1980, with the Gunnison, San Juan, and Rio Grande basins receiving well below average precipitation.

But the most serious warnings about our current situation came from Klaus Wolter, a research scientist with the University of Colorado and NOAA. Dr. Wolter told H2O Radio that it is the first time in five years that we are looking at emerging drought conditions in Colorado. He added that all conditions are for a dry spring, and there may still be near normal precipitation and snow in the mountains for the next month, and maybe, if lucky two months. But, then going forward into the spring he is very concerned about a really dry spring.

He said it was time for a wakeup call that we could not only be looking at low precipitation in the spring, but an increased possibility of wildfires because of higher temperatures combined with the dry conditions. But even more worrisome, he said there are some signs indicating that a drought could be longer than one year, but added that it's still too early to predict.

The Governor's Task Force will meet next in February.



Westwide SNOTEL basin-filled map January 20, 2018 via the NRCS.