

A Review of the 2008 Water Year in Colorado

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Abstract. The 2008 Water Year (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008) saw a continued improvement in overall surface water supplies in Colorado. A slow start to winter was followed by three consecutive cold and snowy months in the mountains that lifted snowfall totals to their highest levels in several years. Concern over potential spring snowmelt flooding grew, but a fairly dry spring helped the snow to melt without causing much flood problems. For the first time in 15 years, temperatures remained near or below average for several consecutive months, helping delay spring snowmelt and extend water supplies. During the summer, several weeks of hot dry weather raised concerns of drought over portions of eastern Colorado, but heavy rains in August greatly improved soil moisture and grassland conditions. By the end of 2008, reservoir storage levels statewide had returned to average for the first time since in 2001. In this presentation, the traditional summary of water year precipitation, temperature, snow accumulation, streamflow and reservoir conditions will be provided. Comparisons with previous years will be given.

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