

GUNNISON BASIN WATER SUPPLY REPORT

Gunnison Basin Roundtable

January 19, 2026

***Beverly Richards, Water Supply Planning Manager
Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District***



Gunnison Whitewater Park

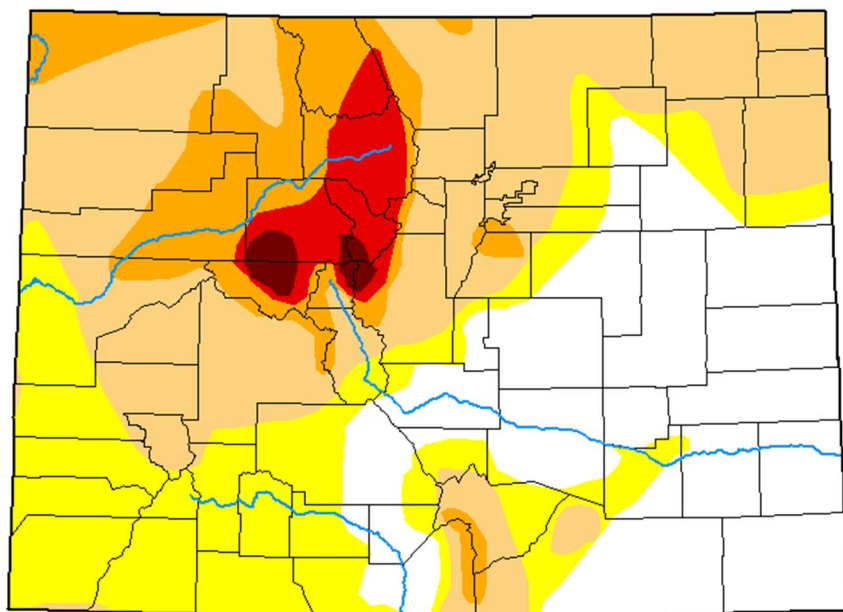
DROUGHT MONITOR MAP

AS OF JANUARY 13, 2026

[DROUGHT.GOV](https://drought.gov)

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

January 13, 2026
(Released Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026)
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

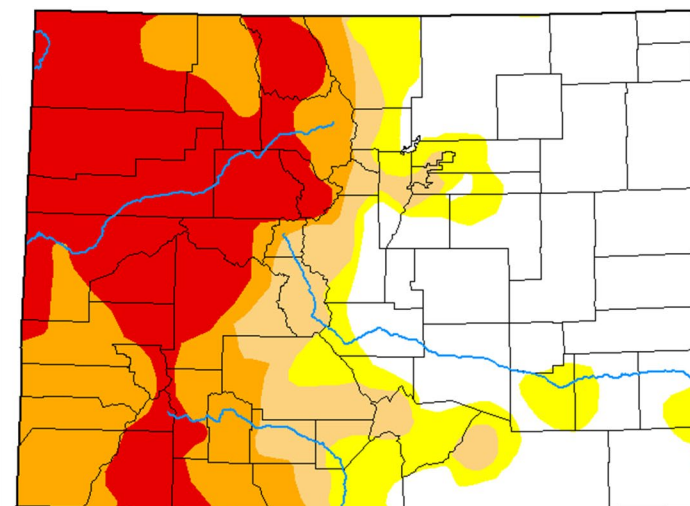
Brian Fuchs
National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

September 9, 2025
(Released Thursday, Sep. 11, 2025)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Brad Pugh
CPC/NOAA



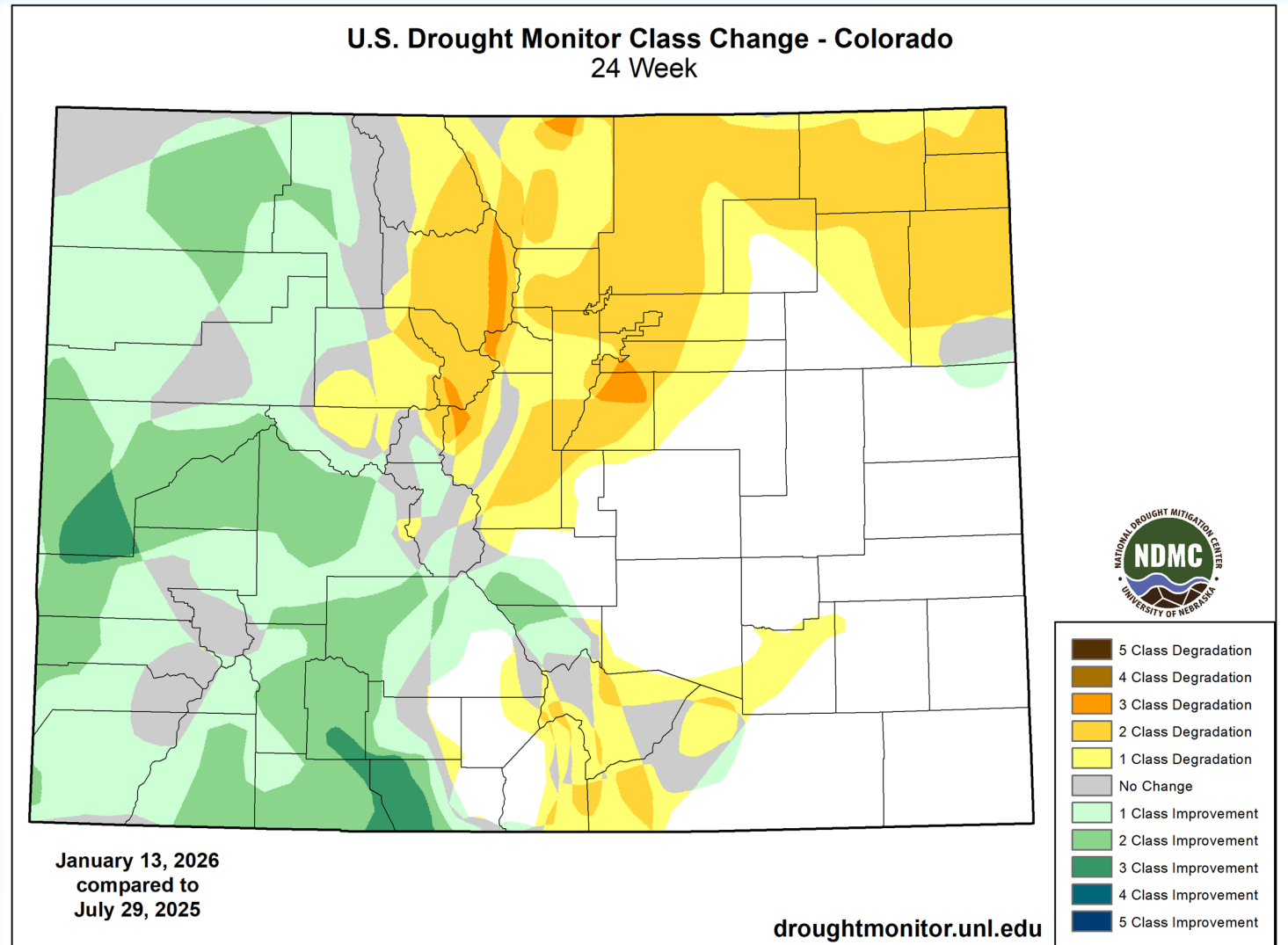
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

DROUGHT CONDITIONS CHANGE SIX MONTHS

DROUGHTMONITOR.UNL.EDU

JANUARY 13, 2025

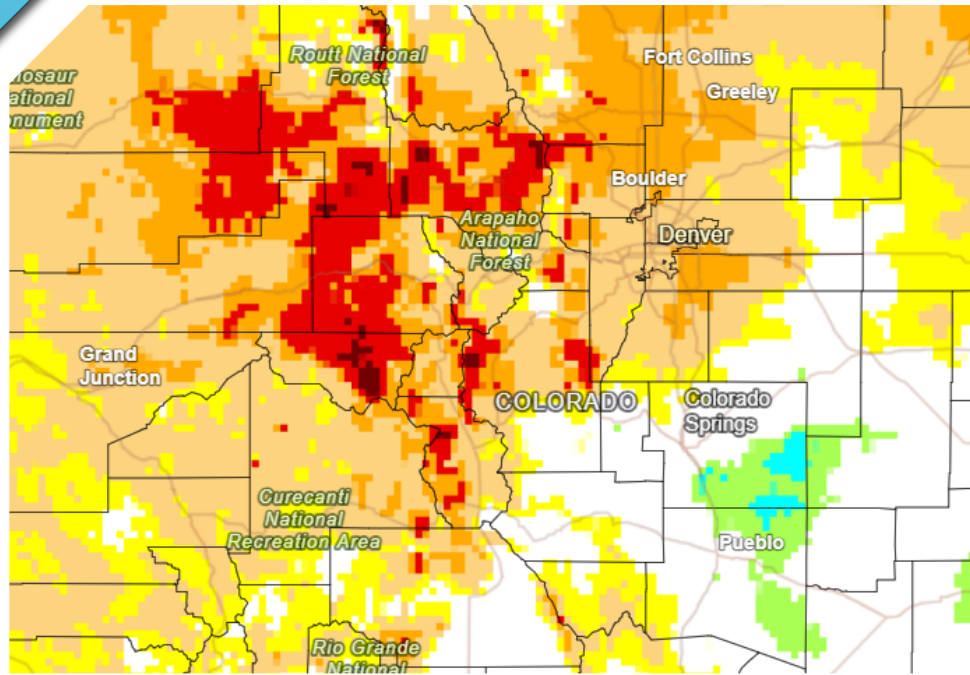
Drought conditions on most of the Western Slope have seen improvement in the range of 1 to 3 classes over the past six months.



SHORT-TERM MULTI-INDICATOR DROUGHT INDEX

DROUGHT.GOV
JANUARY 13, 2025

This map shows the approximate existing drought conditions based on precipitation and moisture that has actually occurred over the last three months.



Dry Conditions



Wet Conditions



Source(s): UC Merced, via Climate Engine
Data Valid: 01/10/26

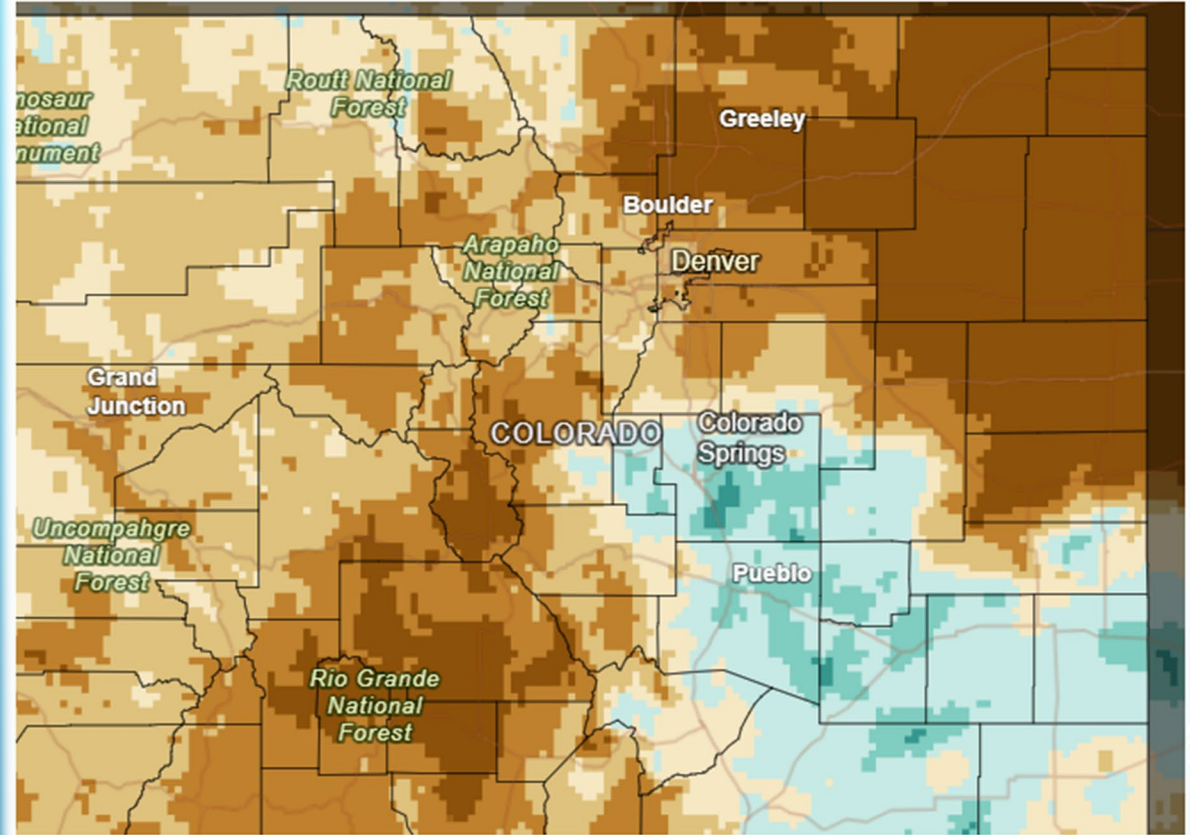
Drought.go

PRECIPITATION PREVIOUS 30- DAY

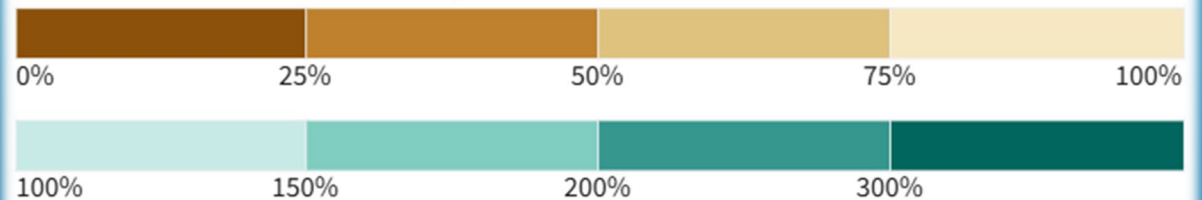
DECEMBER 14- JANUARY 13
DROUGHT.GOV, JANUARY 13, 2026

Precipitation ranges for entire
Gunnison Basin over past 30 days –
zero to areas of up to 100%
throughout the basin

30-Day Percent of Normal Precipitation



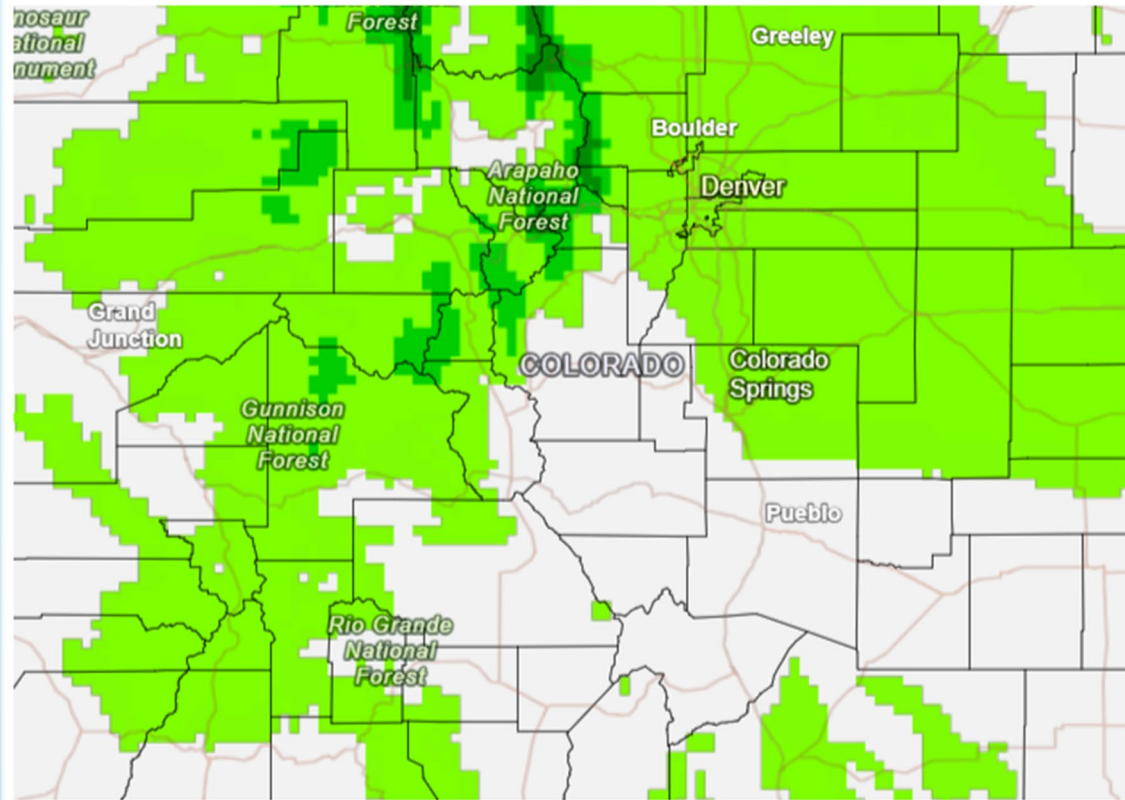
Precipitation Shown as a Percentage of Normal Conditions



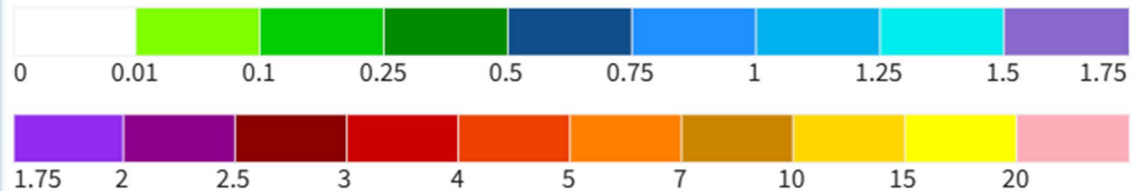
Source(s): UC Merced
Data Valid: 01/13/26

Drought.gov

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for January 16–23, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation



Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center
Last Updated: 01/16/26

Drought.gov

7-DAY QUANTITATIVE PRECIPITATION FORECAST

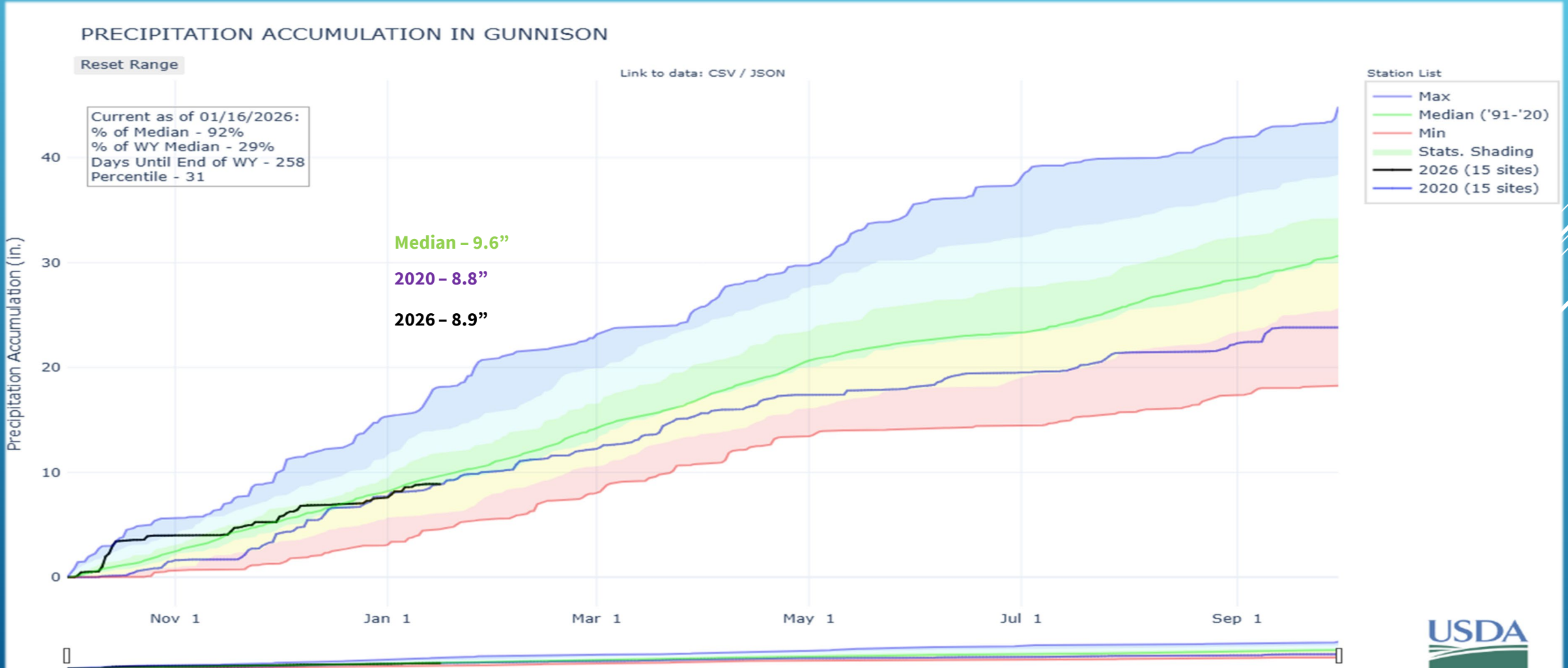
JANUARY 16 - 23

DROUGHT.GOV, JANUARY 16, 2026

Precipitation throughout the Upper and Lower Gunnison Basin forecasted to be in the range of 0.0" to 0.25" over the next 7 days

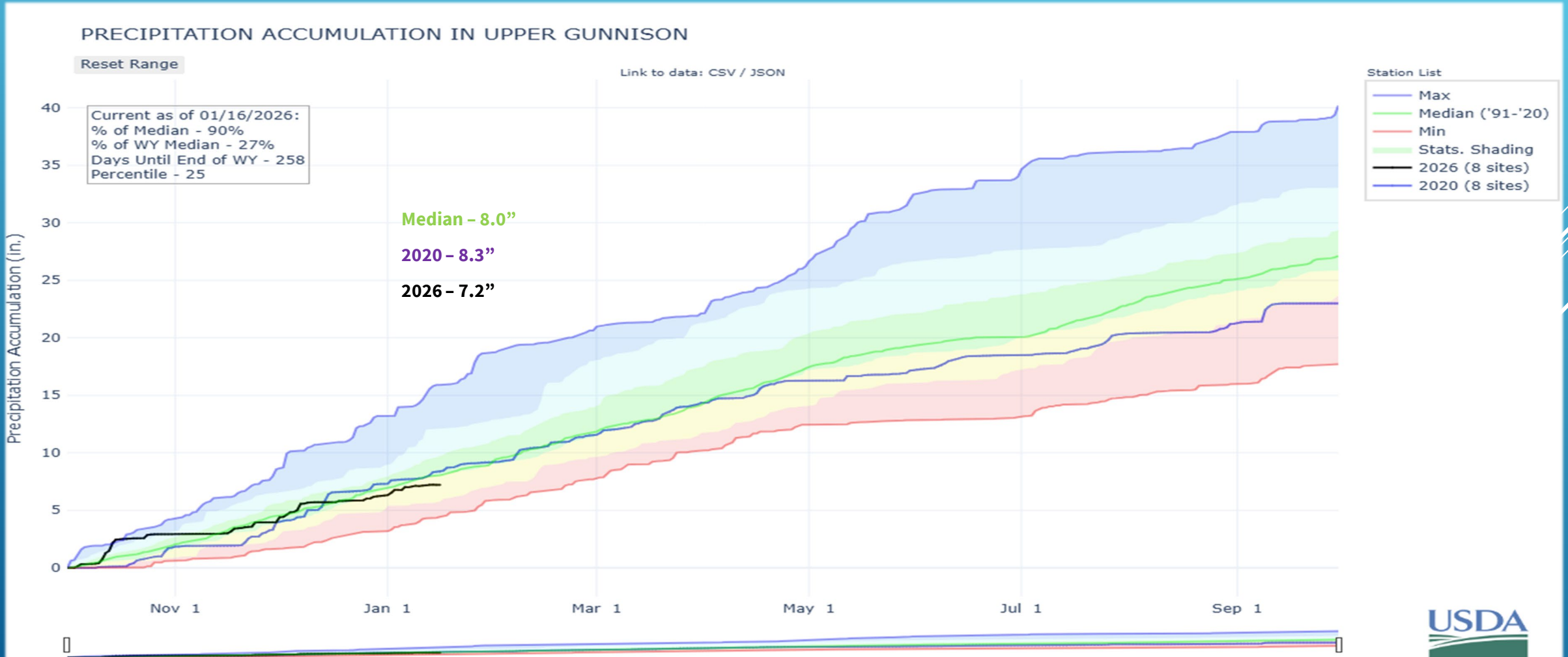
PRECIPITATION GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

NRCS
JANUARY 16, 2026



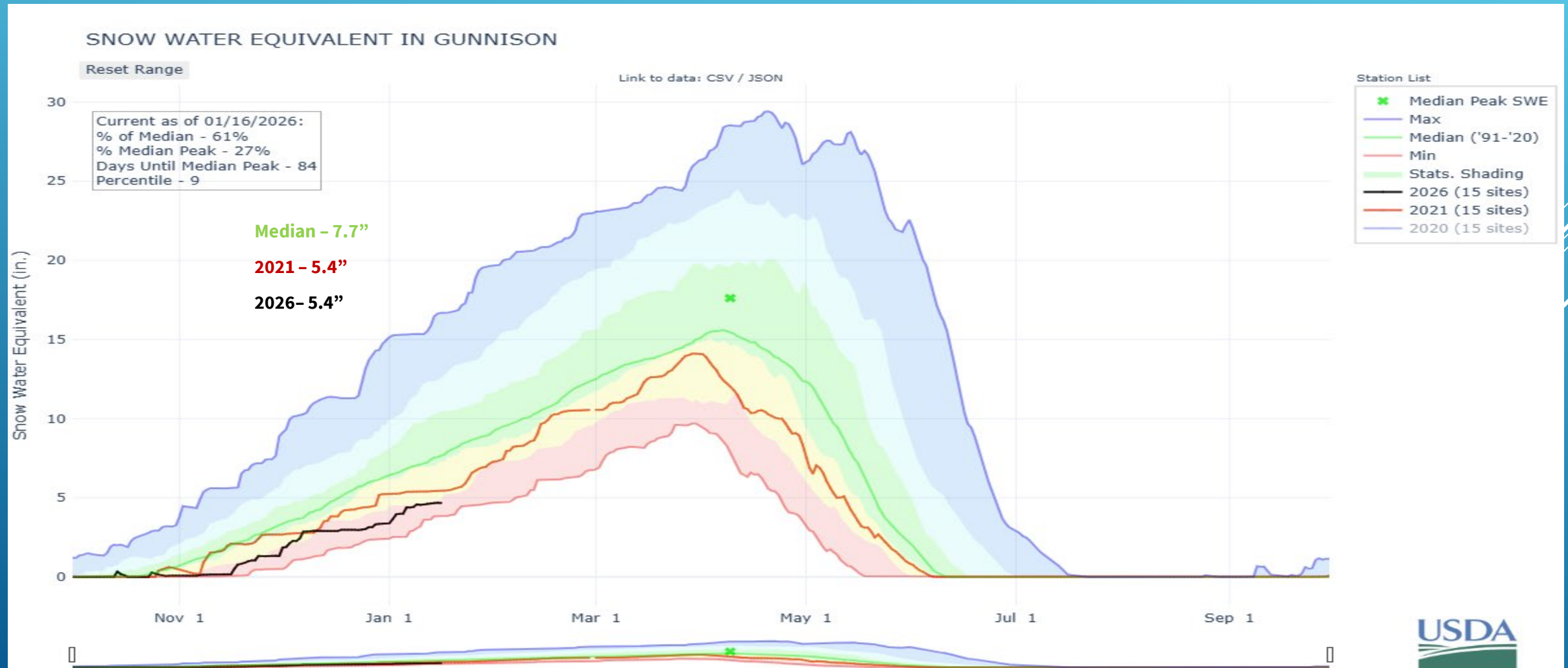
PRECIPITATION UPPER GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

NRCS
JANUARY 16, 2026



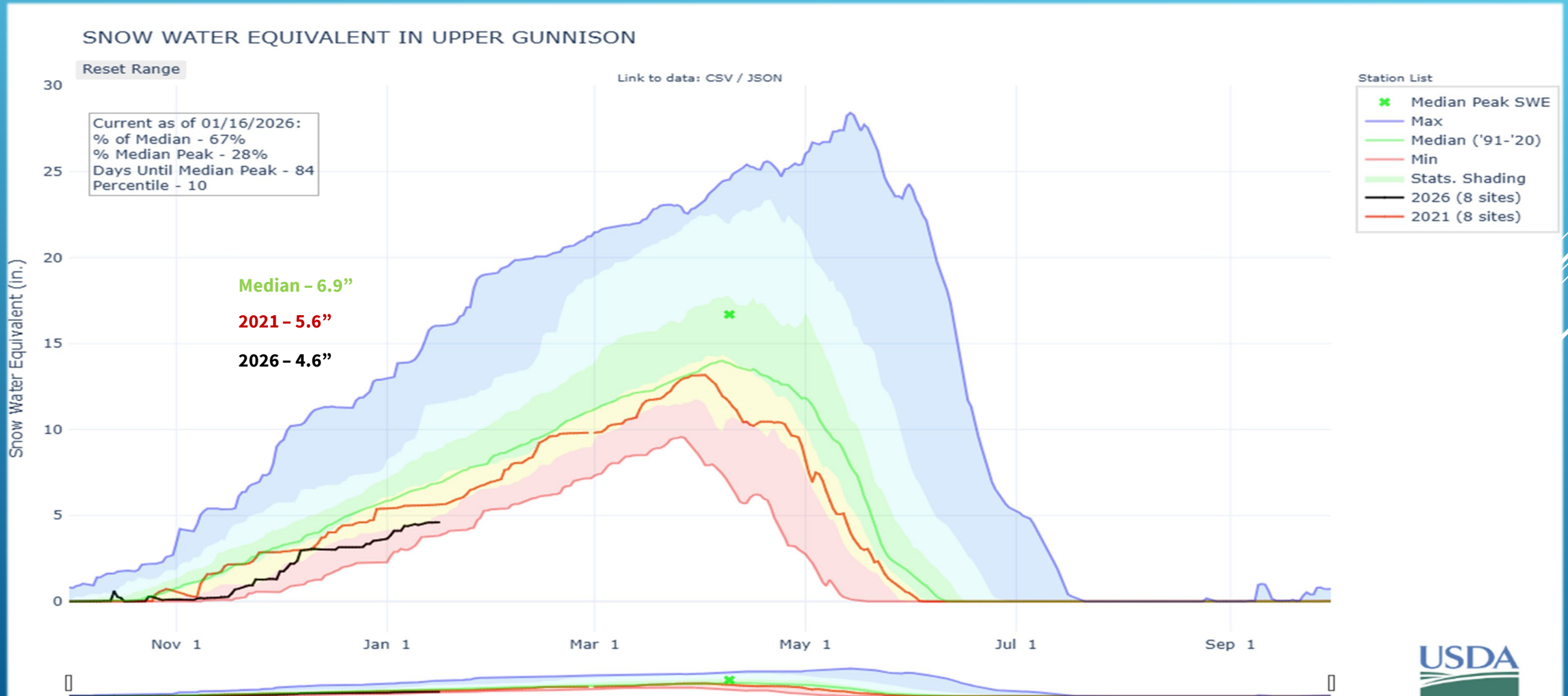
SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

NRCS
JANUARY 16, 2026



SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT UPPER GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

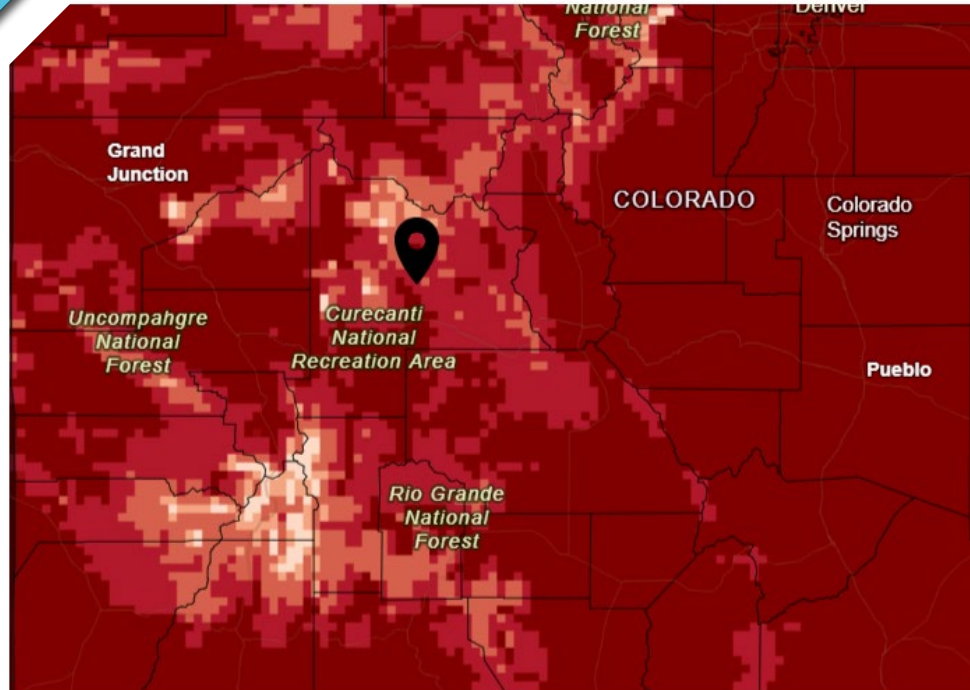
NRCS
JANUARY 16, 2026



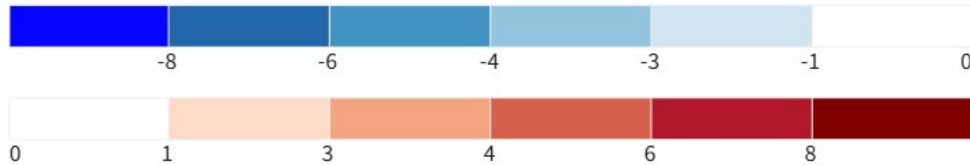
TEMPERATURE GUNNISON RIVER BASIN

DROUGHT .GOV
JANUARY 13, 2026

Gunnison River Basin had areas where there were departures from normal maximum temperatures in the range of 1 to over 8 degrees over the past 30 days.



Departure from Normal Max Temperature (°F)



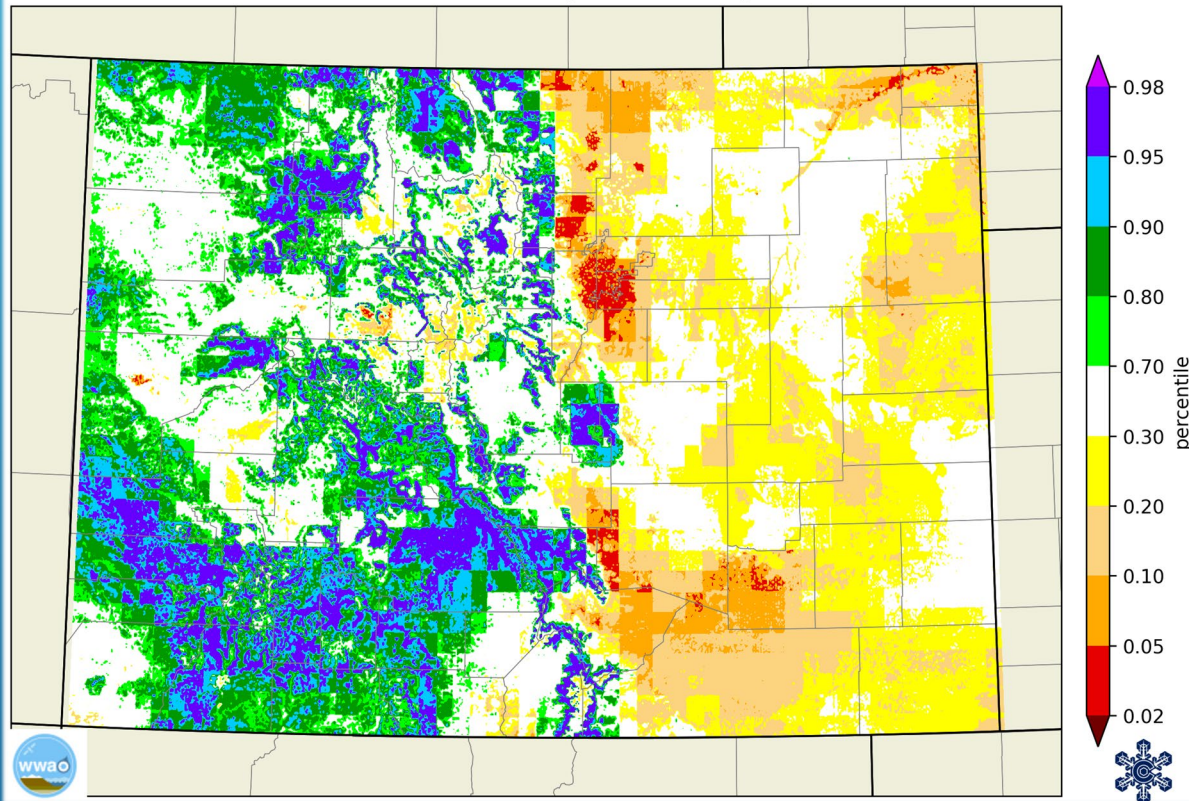
Source(s): UC Merced
Data Valid: 01/13/26

Drought.go

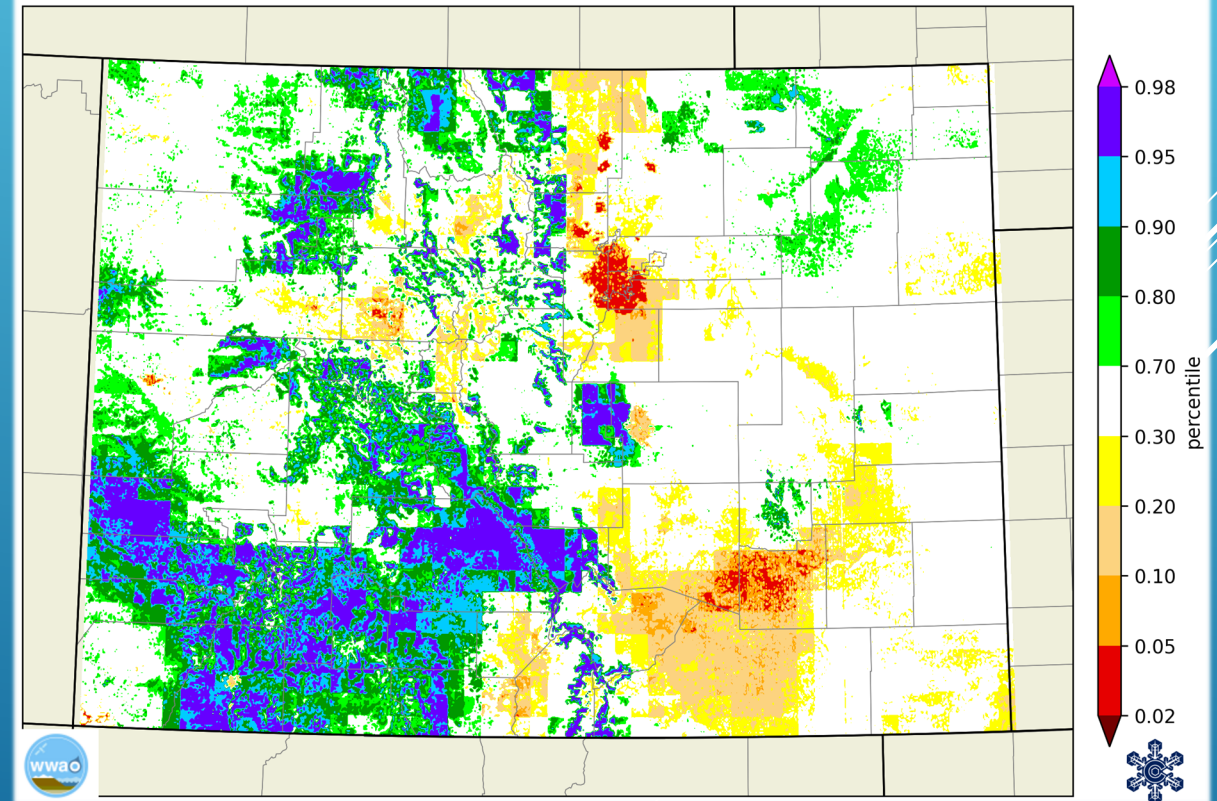
SOIL MOISTURE – 10-CM – 1M

AS OF JANUARY 9, 2026
COLORADO CLIMATE CENTER

WLDAS 10-cm Soil moisture percentile, 09 Jan 2026



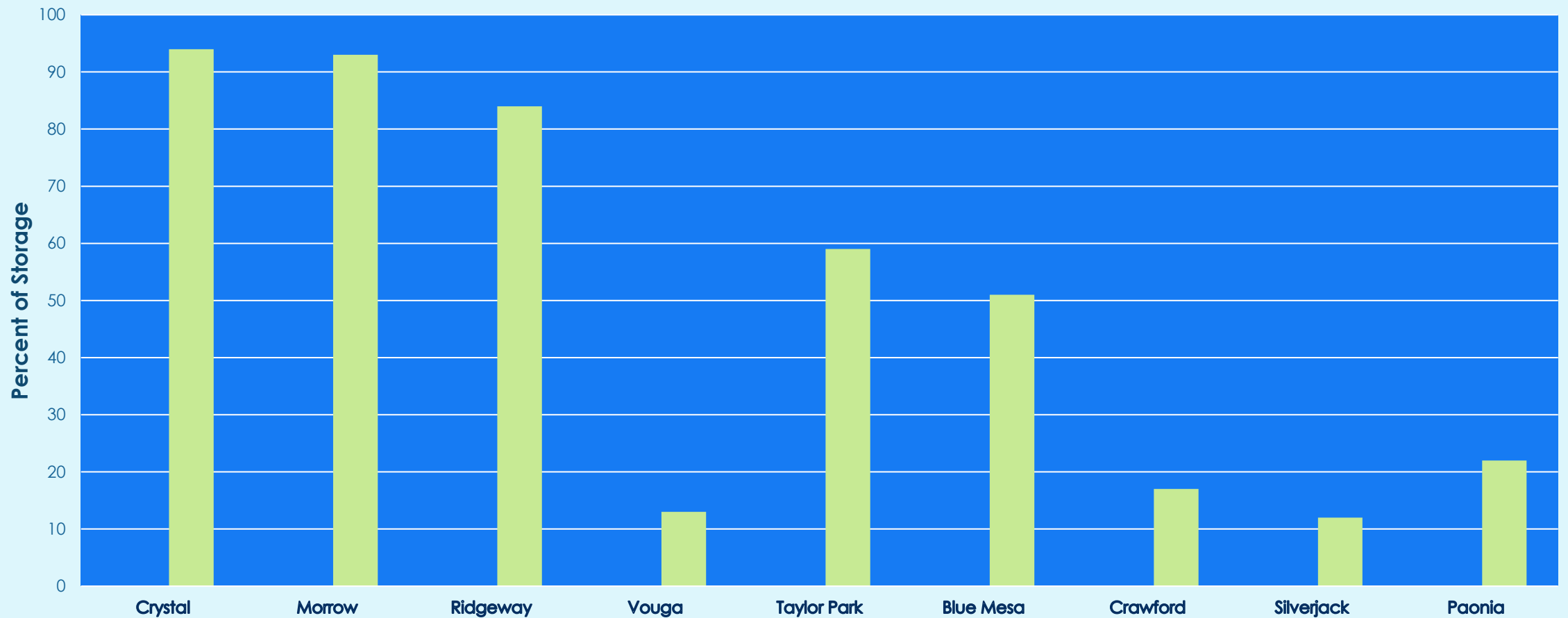
WLDAS 1-meter Soil moisture percentile, 09 Jan 2026



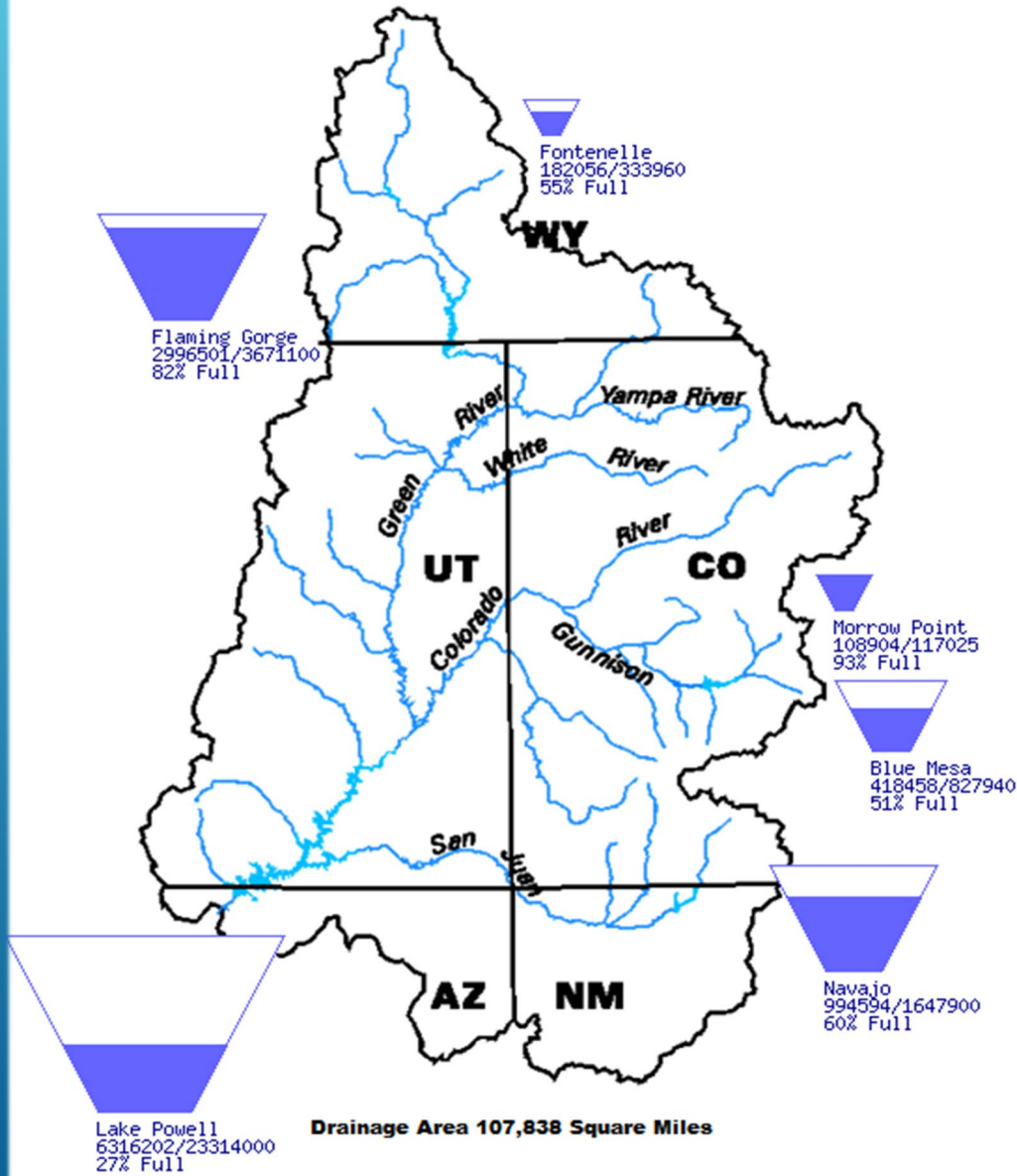
RESERVOIR STORAGE - GUNNISON BASIN

NRCS AND USBR
JANUARY 16, 2026

Reservoir Storage - Gunnison Basin



Upper Colorado River Drainage Basin



RESERVOIR STORAGE UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN

USBR
JANUARY 15, 2025

- ❖ Flaming Gorge – 82%
- ❖ Fontenelle – 55%
- ❖ Morrow Point – 93%
- ❖ Blue Mesa – 51%
- ❖ Navajo – 60%
- ❖ Lake Powell – 27%
- ❖ Total Upper Colorado– 61% of Storage Capacity

SUMMARY

- **Drought conditions have not degraded in the basin over the past six months, improvement has been seen in the range of 1 to 3 classes**
- **Both precipitation and SWE are below average, 92% and 61% respectively. SWE seems to only be at SNOTEL site elevation, not in mid and lower elevations. We are still only 1/3rd of the way through the season so may get some relief in February and March.**
- **Precipitation is trending closely with 2020 and SWE with 2021; both years were dry and warm years.**
- **Temperature throughout the basin has set records for the warmest in the POR and this has been ongoing since October 2025.**
- **Soil moisture is still in the 70th to 98th percentile, possibly due to precipitation events in October**
- **Reservoir storage is near 50% for the entire basin, and at 55% in the upper basin. The Upper Colorado River storage amount is 61%.**

An aerial photograph of a mountain landscape. The foreground and middle ground are covered in dense evergreen trees, likely pines or firs, which are partially covered in snow. A ski trail or road is visible winding through the trees. In the background, a large, snow-covered mountain peak rises against a clear sky. The overall tone is cool and wintry.

QUESTIONS?

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Italian Creek