



WESTERN WATER ASSESSMENT

A NOAA CAP/RISA TEAM

December 2025 Newsletter

In this newsletter...

- Impact Videos with Lander, WY and Denver Water
- Second Cohort of the CU Boulder Water Fellows Program
- Wildfire Talk with La Plata County Emergency Management
- Extreme Weather Event: Flooding in Southwestern Colorado
- Featured News Articles



As we reflect on the past year, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support of our program during these challenging times. Your engagement and collaboration have been essential to advancing our mission and keeping our program afloat during this time of uncertainty. We look forward to continuing this important work in the year ahead. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a happy new year!

— The Western Water Assessment Team

Huge thanks to all of our partners and collaborators who have already contributed written stories and participated in video interviews about WWA's impact. We are excited to share our two most recent impact videos, which highlight our collaborations with Lander, WY and Denver Water.



Western Water Assessment's impact in Lander, Wyoming



Wester Water Assessment's partnership with Denver Water



Go to the WWA Impacts page to see more videos and written testimonials on WWA's impact in the region!

[Impacts page](#)

Would you like to provide a testimonial for WWA so we can show the

impact of our program to our funders?

Email us here

People

Second Cohort of the CU Boulder Water Fellows Program



WWA had a successful fall semester launching the second cohort of the Colorado Water Fellows Program at CU Boulder. This year's cohort includes undergraduate students Ella Burns, Arly Diaz de Leon, Eric Gosnell, Trieu Lam, Holly McCrory, and Michaela Perez. The fellows were able to attend a variety of events and conferences, including the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) Annual Water Resources Conference, the C9 Summit, the Water in the West Symposium, and the Rocky Mountain Hydrologic Research Center Annual Meeting. The fellows also attended monthly meetings featuring guest speakers who work in water policy/law and water quality, sharing about their work and career paths in their respective fields. Many thanks to our speakers: Jessica DiToro (LRE Water), Douglas Kenney (Western Water Policy Program, CU Boulder), David Dani (Colorado Water Quality Control Division, CDPHE), Caleb Owen (City of Thornton), and Brandon Coleman (City of Boulder).

Learn more about the program: <https://wwa.colorado.edu/water-fellows-program>

Wildfire Talk with La Plata County Emergency Management

In early November, WWA hydrologist Nels Bjarke traveled to Durango, CO to support efforts by the La Plata County emergency management department to build resilience to wildfire. During an annual meeting of local wildfire and land management experts, Nels set the stage for the meeting by presenting a county-specific assessment of current and future projected wildfire risk. WWA's introduction was followed by presentations of the extensive wildfire resilience work being done by county, federal, and non-profit entities in the region. Opportunities like this allow WWA to work directly with communities to build an understanding of their local risk and effectively support existing resilience-building networks. If your community, region, or organization would benefit from WWA expertise in understanding local hazard risk, please reach out to wwa@colorado.edu for more information.

Weather Event

Flooding in Southwestern Colorado

On October 10-14, a major flooding event impacted communities in southwestern Colorado. WWA produced a rapid assessment to serve as a scientific resource for understanding the drivers and impacts of the flooding event. The report is designed to support local resilience-building efforts and hazard planning for communities in the region. It provides long-term and recent historical context, hydrologic characteristics of the flood event, and an assessment of the local probability of an event of this magnitude.

Key Findings:

- The October 10th-14th, 2025 floods were the 3rd largest on record for Pagosa Springs, CO, with San Juan River levels reaching a maximum gauge height of 12.82 feet and peak flow rates of 8,570 cubic feet per second.
- A total of 12.5 inches of precipitation fell at a high-elevation observation site in the watershed over 5 days, saturating the watershed and driving the river to reach Major Flood stage twice in that period.
- Flood frequency analysis based on historical observations of runoff in Pagosa Springs suggests this flood has a return period of 25 to 40 years, meaning that there is a 2.5-4% likelihood of a flood of similar magnitude occurring in any given year.
- Early reports following the flooding suggest that hundreds of residents and households were evacuated in Pagosa Springs and surrounding rural communities and many structures were damaged or destroyed by the floods including homes, bridges, and roadways.

- Nearly two decades of exposure to drought conditions, increasing wildfire activity, and now the recent flooding collectively highlight the geographically unique and increasingly frequent natural hazard risks that rural mountain communities face in southwest Colorado.

[Learn more](#)

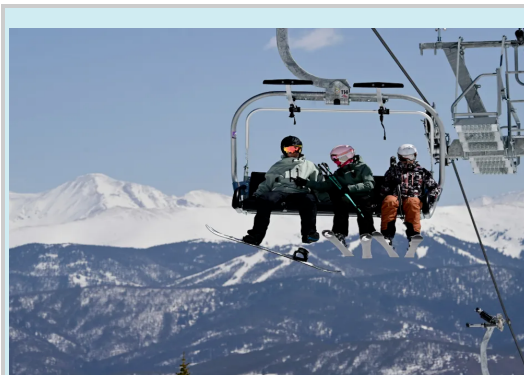


October 2025 flooding of the San Juan River at Pagosa Springs. Photo courtesy of Randi Pierce and The Pagosa Springs Sun.

WWA Features



Snowpack off to a slow start in the Rockies, but wetter soils could be a promising sign



Colorado's snow season is having an abnormally warm and dry start — boding poorly for snowpack

[Read article](#)



October storms brought damaging floods to southwestern Colorado, but also much needed drought relief

[Read article](#)

[Read article](#)



Rapid assessment led by CIRES researchers dives deep into Pagosa Springs' third-largest flood on record

[Read article](#)



Utah still has 'a long road ahead' despite record-setting moisture, state says

[Read article](#)

FROM FORECASTS TO FIELDWORK: WEATHER TOOLS FOR WYOMING FARMERS AND RANCHERS

October 17th, 2025

Oct. 1 marked the start of the new water year, and there is always a lot of coffee shop conversation around this time regarding the upcoming winter season.

What is expected for precipitation and where will it fall? What about daily high or low temperatures and passing storm fronts?

These things matter a lot to the farmers and ranchers who depend on the weather to make their living, and local weather conditions – especially precipitation – can mean the difference between profit and loss.

Having access to reliable and accurate weather information is critical to agriculturalists in Wyoming.

High-quality forecast information is delivered through the Wyoming Conditions and Outlooks Monthly Webinar. Likewise, high-quality weather and conditions data are collected daily through the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS), which makes forecasting information more robust for everyone.

From Forecasts to Fieldwork: Weather Tools for Wyoming Farmers and Ranchers

[Read article](#)

Background photo by [Bailey Alexander](#) on Unsplash

Western Water Assessment | wwa@colorado.edu | <http://www.colorado.edu/>

See what's happening on our social sites:



Western Water Assessment | CIRES University of Colorado | Boulder, CO 80309 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!