Drought Planning in the Intermountain Southwest

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Drought Year(s)

1960's

*Population: 5,338,844

1962-1964

Reservoirs near Park City less than half of normal

1970's

*Population: 6,686,011

1976-1977

CO Drought Council formed

- Losses to Colorado ski industry estimated at $78.6 million
- Water providers in Fort Collins and Denver imposed mandatory water restrictions

1980's

*Population: 9,315,096

1981

- CO Drought Mitigation and Response Plan adopted
- CO Water Availability Task Force formed

1986

CO drought plan updated

1988-1989

Lack of forage in Utah thinned cattle herds and reduced the state's deer population by 80%

1990's

*Population: 11,530,610

1991-1993

- CO drought plan updated
- City of Phoenix Drought Management Plan adopted
- UT drought response plan adopted

1996

NM Drought Task Force formed

- Multiple severe, large wildfires in Arizona and New Mexico
- Major losses to Arizona's cattle ranching industry

2000's

*Population: 15,539,468

2000-2001

- City of Phoenix Drought Plan updated
- NV drought plan adopted
- CO drought plan updated

2002-2003

- NM drought plan adopted
- Southern Nevada Water Authority drought plan adopted
- City of Boulder drought plan adopted
- Las Cruces drought plan adopted
- CO Drought Impact and Mitigation Report adopted
- UT drought plan updated
- AZ Drought Task Force formed
- NM current drought task force formed

- In 2002, water providers in Boulder, Denver, Fort Collins, and Lakewood instituted voluntary and mandatory water restrictions.
- In 2002 and 2003, bark beetles killed more than 3.1 million pinyon pines in Nevada, increasing an already high risk for wildfire.
- In 2003 and 2004 the Phoenix area reduced their allocation of water

2004

- Southern Nevada Water Authority drought plan updated
- Arizona Drought Preparedness Plan adopted
- NM drought plan updated

2005

- Southern Nevada Water Authority drought plan updated
- Santa Fe drought plan adopted
- Texas drought plan adopted

2006-2008

- Tucson Water Drought Preparedness and Response Plan adopted
- Pima County drought task force formed
- Pima County Drought Management Plan adopted
- CO drought plan updated

In early 2009, combined storage on Lakes Mead and Powell were 52% of normal

Reservoirs on the Colorado River and Rio Grande have declined over the course of the drought to levels not seen since these reservoirs first filled

2014

Denver Water Drought Response Plan updated

2010's

*Population: 18,996,193

2010-2011

- City of Boulder drought plan updated
- Santa Fe drought plan updated
- CO drought plan updated
- Denver Water Drought Response Plan adopted

2012-2013

- Tucson Water Drought Preparedness and Response Plan updated
- NV drought plan updated
- CO drought plan updated

- The High Park Fire burned over 250 homes near Fort Collins and threatened the city's water supply
- The Wallow Fire, the largest fire ever recorded in the contiguous U.S., burned 538,000 acres on the Arizona/New Mexico border

*Population data are for Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, El Paso County, Texas, and Clark County, Nevada. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.