



# December 2022 Colorado Monthly Climate Summary

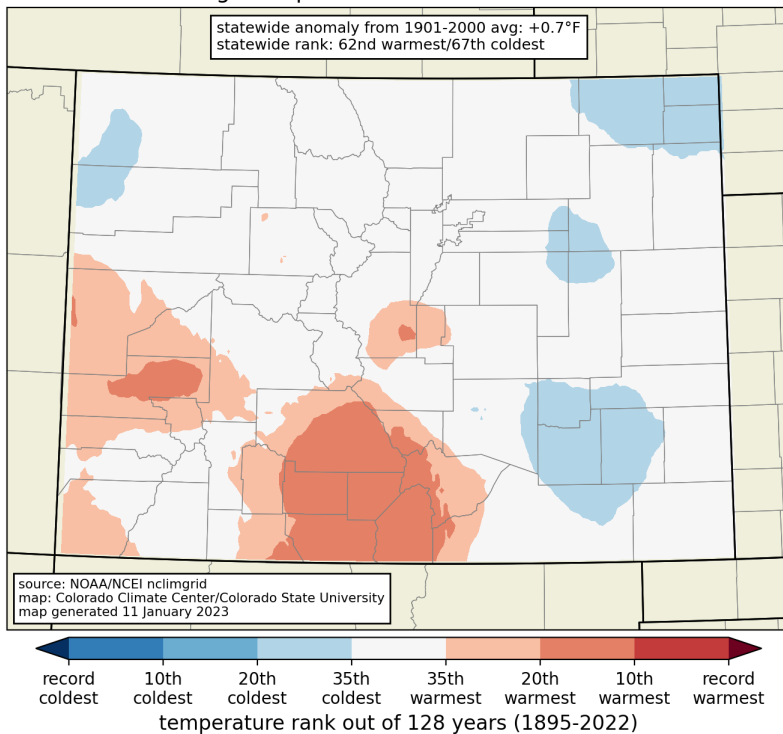
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ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

# temperature

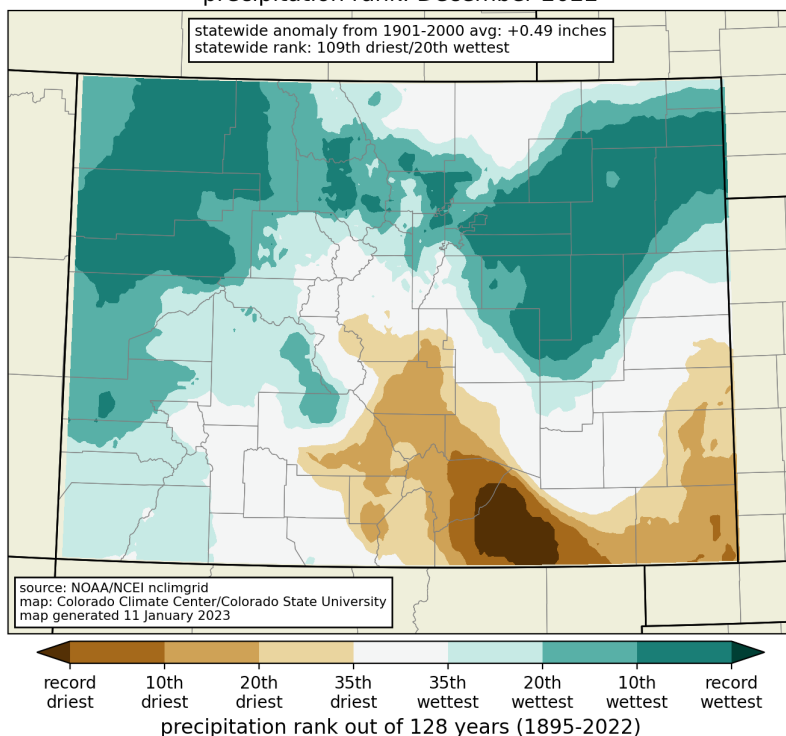
average temperature rank: December 2022



December had some wild temperature swings across Colorado, but on the whole most of the state ended up with near-average temperatures. One exception was the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, which was much warmer than average during December.

# precipitation

precipitation rank: December 2022



With a parade of snowstorms through the month, both northwestern and northeastern Colorado had a top-10 wettest December. This brought some drought relief to both of these areas. In contrast, much of southeastern Colorado was dry, with parts of Huerfano and Las Animas Counties seeing their driest December on record.



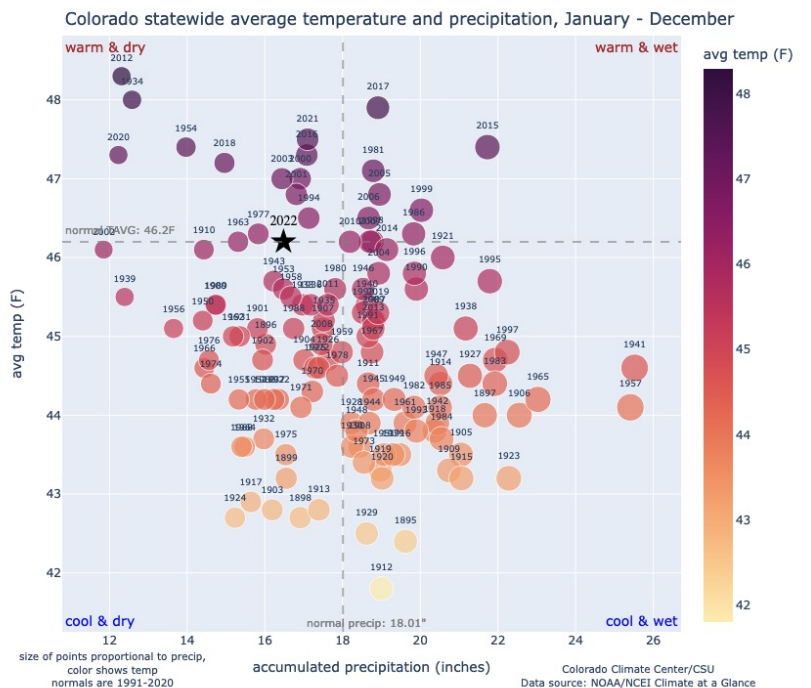
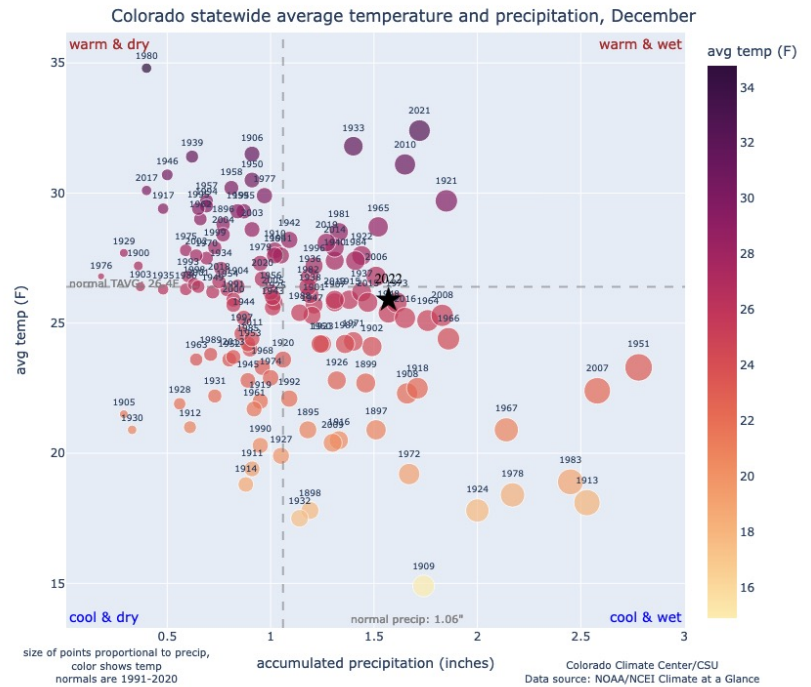
# quadrant charts

Each dot plots the precipitation on the x-axis and the temperature on the y-axis. Dots are colored based on temperature and size is based on precipitation. The current year is denoted with a star. Long-term averages are denoted by the dashed lines.

December 2022 was tied for the 20<sup>th</sup> wettest on record for the state. It was tied for the 62<sup>nd</sup> warmest December in 128 years of records. It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> straight month with temperatures below the 1991-2020 average.

Calendar year 2022 ended as tied for the 20<sup>th</sup> warmest and 36<sup>th</sup> driest on record for Colorado. It was the coolest year since 2019, and near the 1991-2020 average temperature, but still much warmer than the 20<sup>th</sup> century average temperature.

[view all quadrant charts](#)

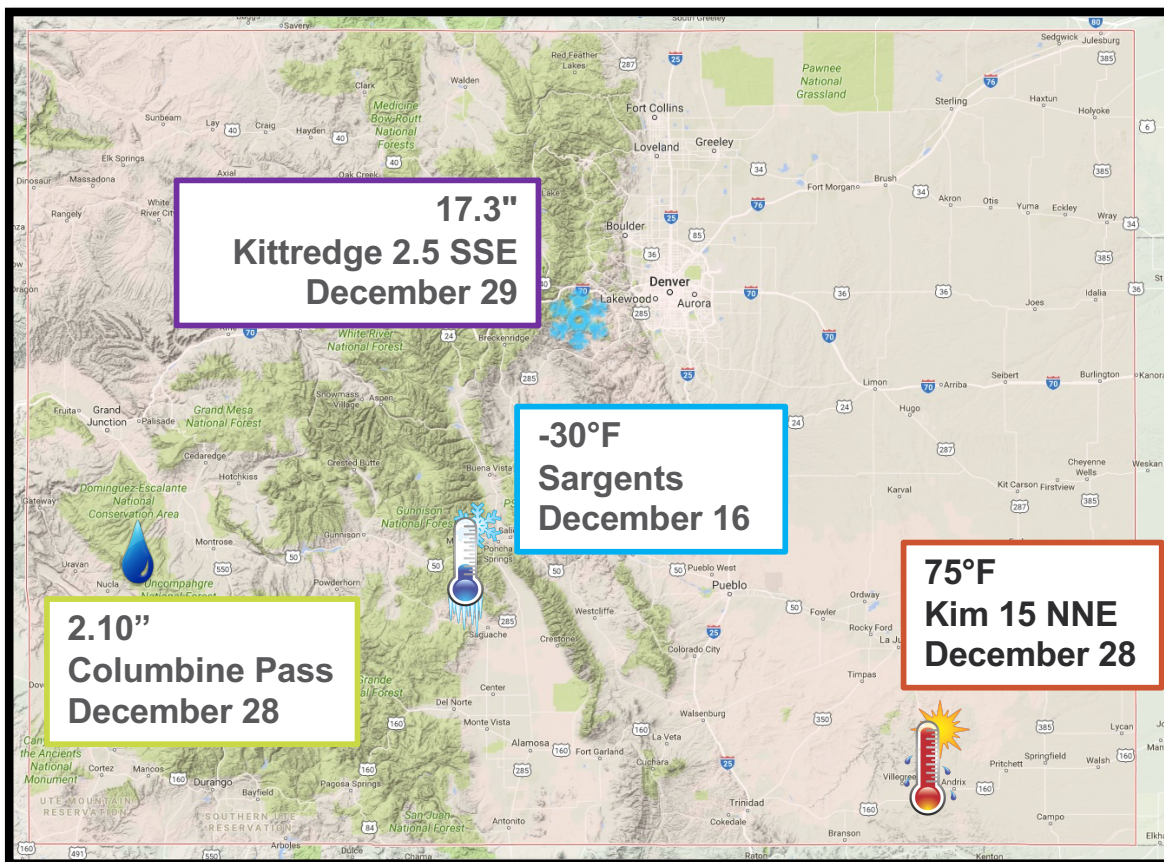


# records tied and broken

	High Max	Low Max	High Min	Low Min	Precip	Snow
Daily	12/36	17/100	17/178	21/41	25/86	2/23
Monthly	0/0	1/2	1/2	0/1	0/6	0/1
All-time	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

Tied/**Broken**, from NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

# state extremes



# drought

## U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado

**December 27, 2022**  
(Released Thursday, Dec. 29, 2022)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	13.75	86.25	42.37	30.79	3.23	0.53
<b>Last Week</b> 12-20-2022	16.26	83.74	43.34	30.79	3.23	0.53
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 09-27-2022	15.46	84.54	45.65	15.47	3.73	0.57
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 01-04-2022	0.00	100.00	95.49	67.08	22.25	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-27-2022	15.46	84.54	45.65	15.47	3.73	0.57
<b>One Year Ago</b> 12-28-2021	0.00	100.00	100.00	67.27	22.21	0.00

Intensity

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

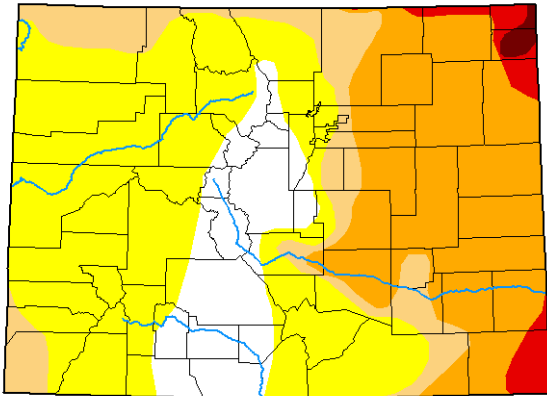
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author

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[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

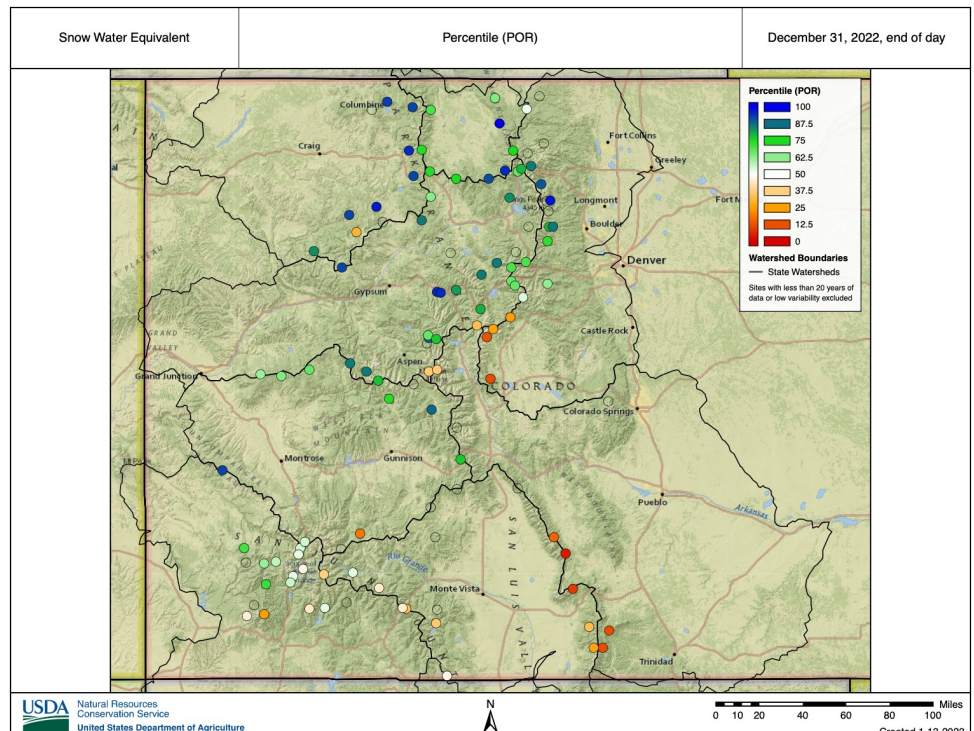


In December, some drought improvement occurred over the northern mountains and northwest CO, while areas in central and southeast CO continued to see degrading conditions. At the end of the year, 42% of the state was in drought with almost 31% in severe drought conditions or worse.

## [Colorado Drought Update Page](#)

# snowpack

Snowpack conditions improved in December 2022. For the northern basins snowpack percentiles at the end of December are above 70. Snowpack is a bit lower east of the Continental Divide, with below average conditions for the Rio Grande and Arkansas basins.



# significant events

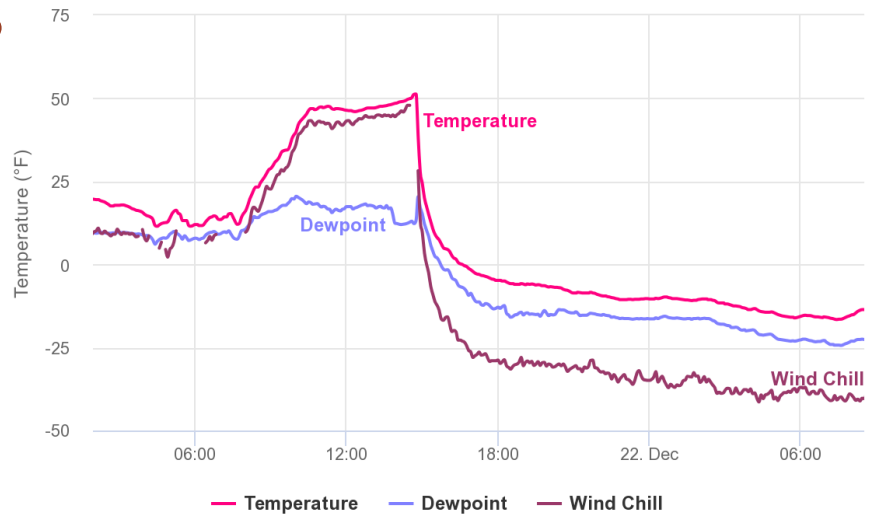
On December 21<sup>st</sup>, one of the strongest cold fronts in Colorado history swept across the state. Many locations went from above 40°F to below zero in less than two hours, which is incredibly rare even for a state known for rapid weather changes!

Map of the fastest temperature drops in 10 minutes from the December 2022 cold front.

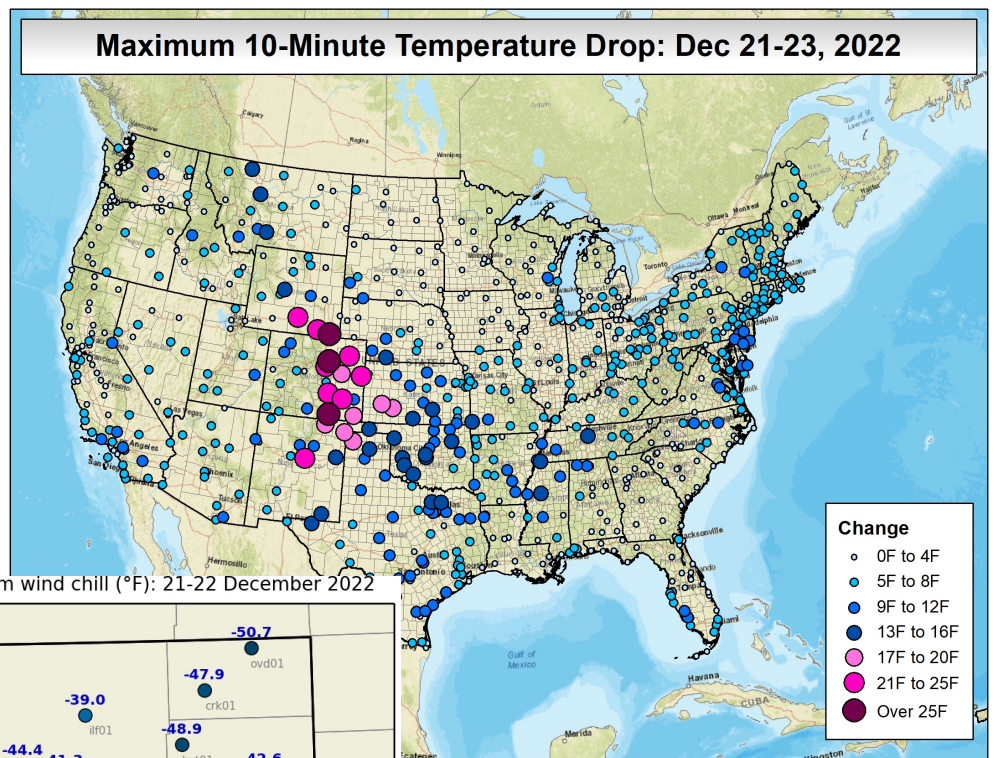
Courtesy  
Brian Brettschneider

## Temperature and Dewpoint for Kirk (KRK01)

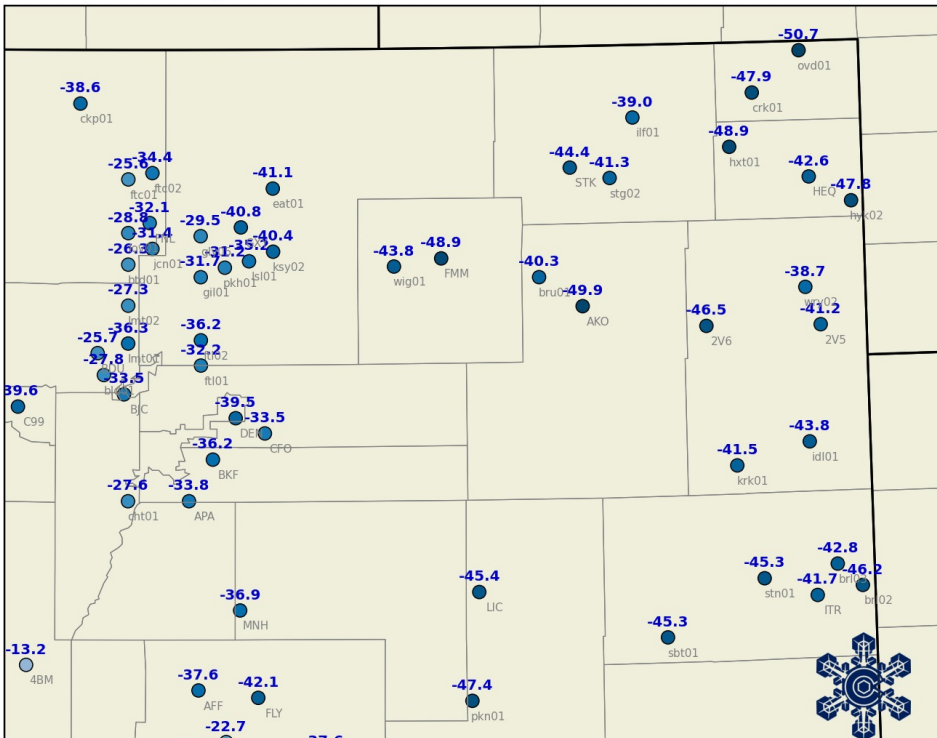
Dec 21 - 22, 2022



Highcharts.cc



Colorado ASOS, CoAgMET, and Northern Water minimum wind chill (°F): 21-22 December 2022



The cold air was accompanied by strong winds, and wind chills dipped below -45°F across the eastern Plains



# CCC in the news

- ❑ [Frozen pipe bursts, shuttering CSU's Clark Building](#)
  - The Coloradoan, December 28, Russ Schumacher
- ❑ [Can Colorado grow as much food with less water?](#)
  - Headwaters Magazine, December 27, Peter Goble
- ❑ [Why Is So Cold? State Climatologist Russ Schumacher Explains](#)
  - North Forty News, December 23, Russ Schumacher
- ❑ [Winter storm: Power outages, road closures and DIA flights cancelled](#)
  - The Coloradoan, December 21, Russ Schumacher
- ❑ [Lots of research, but no clear answer on role of climate change in extreme temp swings](#)
  - 9News, December 21, Russ Schumacher
- ❑ [Snowpack off to a good start across Colorado River basin](#)
  - Arizona Public Radio, December 21, Becky Bolinger
- ❑ [Why is it going to be so cold this week? State climatologist Russ Schumacher explains](#)
  - CSU Source, December 20, Russ Schumacher
- ❑ [NIDIS to Lead AMS Sessions on Megadrought, Drought Analysis & Prediction, and More](#)
  - Drought.gov, December 20, Peter Goble
- ❑ [Colorado weather: Frigid temps, dangerous wind chill to impact pre-Christmas travel plans](#)
  - The Coloradoan, December 19, Russ Schumacher

