



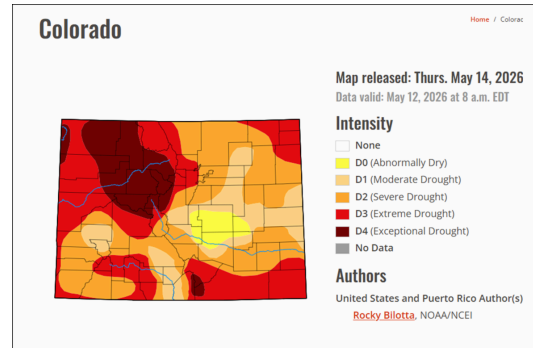
Between Frost and Fire

The summer furnace—will supercharge by a [historically strong El Niño cycle \(NOAA\)](#)—is poised to test landscapes and nerves alike. Drought-stricken soils, parched crops, and dwindling reservoirs set the scene for a season of extremes; searing heat, violent storms that spark fires, and winds that conflagrate them into disasters. Overlay that with a population already strained by rising costs and divided on solutions—and the pressure builds long before the first heat wave arrives. For now, the switch has not flipped. Emerging from a strange winter, and a mud season that never materialized, I find myself consciously absorbing the rapid greening of daisies, poppies and Iris that arrived my home in Eagle the second week of May. The sunflowers hint at the towering presence they will become. It's still too early to plant annuals in the window boxes; the pre-dawn hours carry a lingering trace of frost.

This is a brief, generous moment of in-between, foliage emergent, not yet in flower, a flourishing lawn. The high country *appears* to briefly hold reassuring snowpack, though all data and my gut says otherwise.

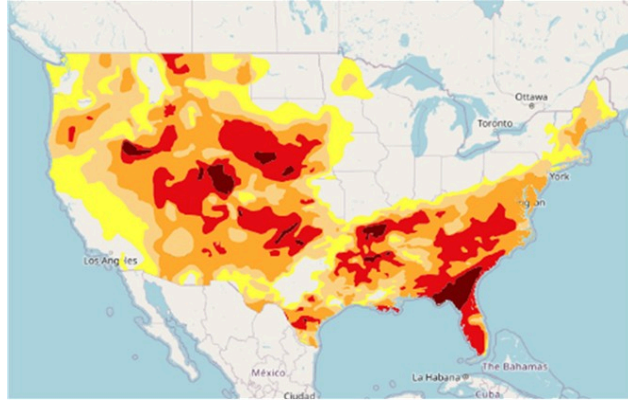
A [Colorado Climate Center map](#) reveals much of the NWCCOG region to be in an “Exceptional Drought.” Ours is one of the darkest blobs in all the West. Following one of the [worst snow-drought years](#) on record, [several Front Range cities](#) have already declared Stage 1 Drought Emergencies - with two-day a week watering: Denver, Aurora, Arvada, Northglenn. [Aspen](#) began May enacting Stage III restrictions, following [Eagle River Water and Sanitation District](#) and the [Town of Breckenridge](#) which did so in April, and the [City of Steamboat Springs](#) (Stage II) which did so in March, each limiting watering to two days per week. [The Grand County Drought Preparedness Program](#) on May 1, declared a Stage III, “Exceptional Drought.”

Extended years of drought across the West have depleted major reservoirs, leaving [Lake Mead](#) at 30% capacity and Lake Powell at 24% capacity. The latter is predicted to receive no more than [13% of average spring runoff inflow](#) this year – a dire situation for the forty million people who rely on the river, thirty million who live downstream of these two storage units, including Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, San Diego, and Los Angeles.



Despite the current extreme conditions in the NWCCOG region which are yet to be felt by the average person, it is still possible that the El Niño could bring [a summer monsoon cycle](#) that cools, greens, and tempers fire-risk and anxiety across our region. For now, we are in a fleeting window; a landscape waking up to a season undefined, and an awareness that what comes next could shape the months and years ahead.

Jon Stavney
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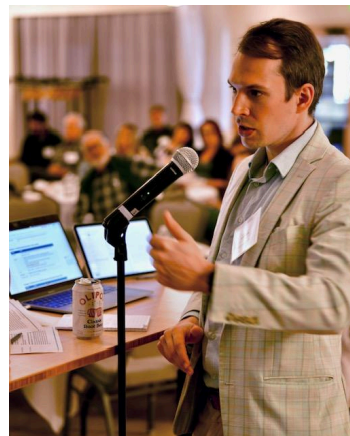


The full [Colorado Climate Center](#) map

We Talked About CEDS (Baby)



Thanks to the twelve speakers and more than eighty attendees at this year's Regional Economic Summit on May 4th at the Silverthorne Pavilion. For those who missed it, the presentations, including State Demographer Kate Watkins' slide deck, the preliminary findings from the Regional Statistical Analysis by Insights Collective (full report published in June) and the exciting afternoon workshop led by Stephen Kuban that set the base for the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), due September 1 are all [here](#).





2026 Vintage Caregiver Conference

Caregivers across the region are invited to attend the upcoming "Caregiver Conference: A Day of Restoration & Practical Tools" on Wednesday, June 3, at the Eagle County Community Center in El Jebel. Hosted by the Vintage Area Agency on Aging, the free conference is designed to provide caregivers with practical tools, expert guidance, and meaningful community connections.

The event will feature presentations from local aging experts, keynote speakers, caregiver-focused workshops, and discussions on topics including safe mobility assistance, daily caregiving strategies, and caregiver wellness. Breakfast, lunch, giveaways, and networking opportunities are included for registered participants.

The conference is open to family caregivers, professionals working with older adults, and individuals supporting loved ones living with dementia. Organizers hope the event will provide both valuable information and a restorative space for those who spend so much time caring for others.

The conference runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Eagle County Community Center. Registration is free, and attendees who register by May 27 will receive complimentary breakfast and lunch. Additional event details and registration information are available at <https://2026careconference.eventbrite.com>.

CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

June 3, 2026

10am-3pm Hot Breakfast @ 9:30am

El Jebel Community Center

0020 Eagle County Dr. El Jebel, CO

FREE



KAY ADAMS
LCSW



STACEY JAMES
MSPT, CMC



RENITA HENSON
RN, BSN



LOCAL RESOURCE
EXPERTS

We created a **free** caregiver conference for YOU with **local resources, aging experts** and caregiver presentations. Includes hot breakfast and lunch, **giveaways**, keynote speakers, practical **tools** and new **connections**.



REGISTER BY 5/27
For additional details, to register & agenda:



<https://2026CareConference.eventbrite.com>

Congrats to Amanda!

Amanda Rens-Moon, Vintage Business Operations Manager, received her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Walden University.

Be sure to congratulate her the next time you see her!



EIP Staff Member Earns Prestigious QEI Certification

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments' Elevator Inspection Program (EIP) is continuing to strengthen its industry knowledge and technical expertise through staff development and professional achievement.

On April 3, EIP team member Nicole Bridgewater successfully passed the highly challenging Qualified Elevator Inspector (QEI) Certification Exam. The intensive eight-hour exam requires candidates to complete a rigorous year-long training program before qualifying to sit for the test.

Nicole balanced the demands of her full-time role while dedicating significant time and effort to prepare for the certification, demonstrating exceptional commitment and resilience throughout the process.

"I look forward to continuing and strengthening my knowledge in the industry for not only myself but the EIP program as well," Nicole shared.

Nicole joined the EIP program in 2021 as an administrative staff member and never imagined her career path would lead to becoming a Certified Elevator Inspector. Her accomplishment highlights both her personal dedication and the opportunities for professional growth within the program.

In addition, both Bryanne and Nicole are scheduled to take their State Inspector's License exam on June 1, continuing the team's momentum toward expanding expertise and certifications.

EIP Director David Harris praised the team's initiative and dedication, stating, "I couldn't be prouder of the motivation and dedication of our entire team, especially our administrative staff. They want to take these initiatives versus being required to."

NWCCOG congratulates Nicole and the entire EIP team on this outstanding achievement and continued commitment to excellence in elevator safety and inspection services.



NWCCOG Welcomes Blaine Rhoden to the Northwest Loan Fund



NWCCOG is excited to welcome Blaine Rhoden as Deput Director of Northwest Loan Fund!

Originally from Florida, Blaine earned his degree in Food and Resource Economics from the University of Florida before moving to Colorado to pursue his Juris Doctor at the University of Denver.

Prior to joining the NLF, he worked in private equity, where he focused on financial analysis, underwriting, and supporting growing businesses through capital investment and strategic planning.

Blaine married his wife, Allyssa, in Keystone in 2024 and they moved to Summit County in 2025. He is excited to support economic development and small business growth across Northwest Colorado. Outside of work, he enjoys biking, hiking, and spending time with Allyssa and their golden retriever, Brick.

Upcoming Board Meetings

Thursday, June 4, 2026 – NWCCOG Energy Warehouse in Gypsum
Full Council & EDD Board Meeting Primary Agenda Items: Approve March meeting minutes, approve Q1
Financials; EDD Board meeting

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