

# May 2020 Climate Summary for Denver

## Warmer & Drier Than Normal

The month started out warm and dry as upper level high pressure extended from the Rockies into the Central Plains States. An upper level disturbance and associated cold front brought much cooler temperatures and precipitation to north central and northeastern Colorado on the 2nd. Denver experienced dry weather and seasonable temperatures from the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup>. A strong upper level disturbance and a dry cold front produced strong winds across the northeastern plains on the 7<sup>th</sup> with a 65 mph wind gust from the northwest recorded at DIA. Below are some other wind reports across northeastern Colorado.

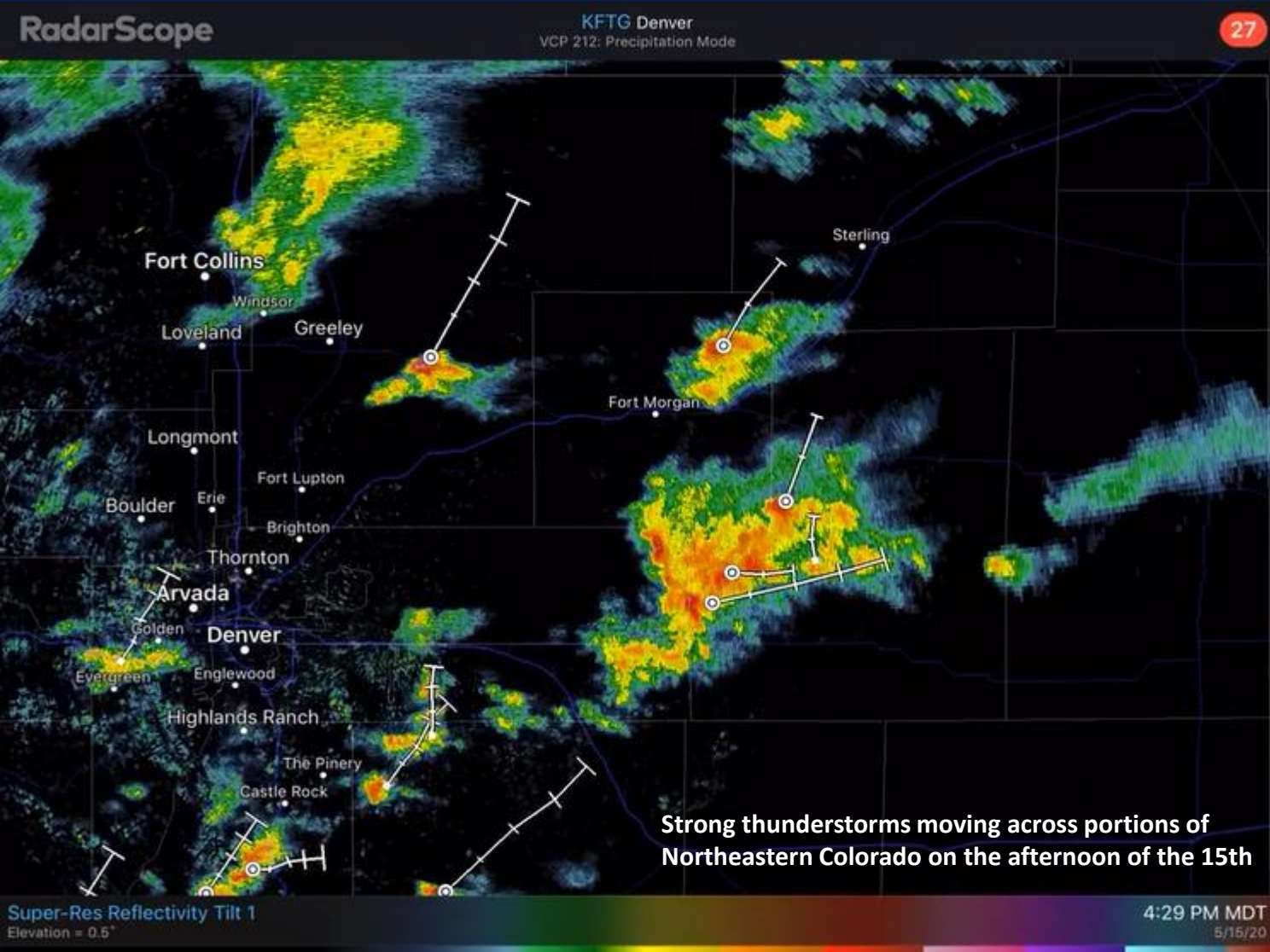


## Wind Reports (mph)

3 Nw Marshall	76	5 N Pawnee Buttes	75
Wiggins	73	2 Nnw Briggsdale	72
5 N Pawnee Pass	71	Fort Morgan Airport	70
2 Nne New Raymer	70	3 Ese Buckeye	67
8 Ssw Grover	65	Keenesburg	62
Denver Intl Airpor	65	Akron	56
2 S Briggsdale	55	1 Sse Eaton	54
5 Nnw Nunn	53	3 Wsw Sterling	52
1 Sse Ault	52	1 Ne Crisman	52
4 S Keenesburg	51	5 S Barr Lake	51

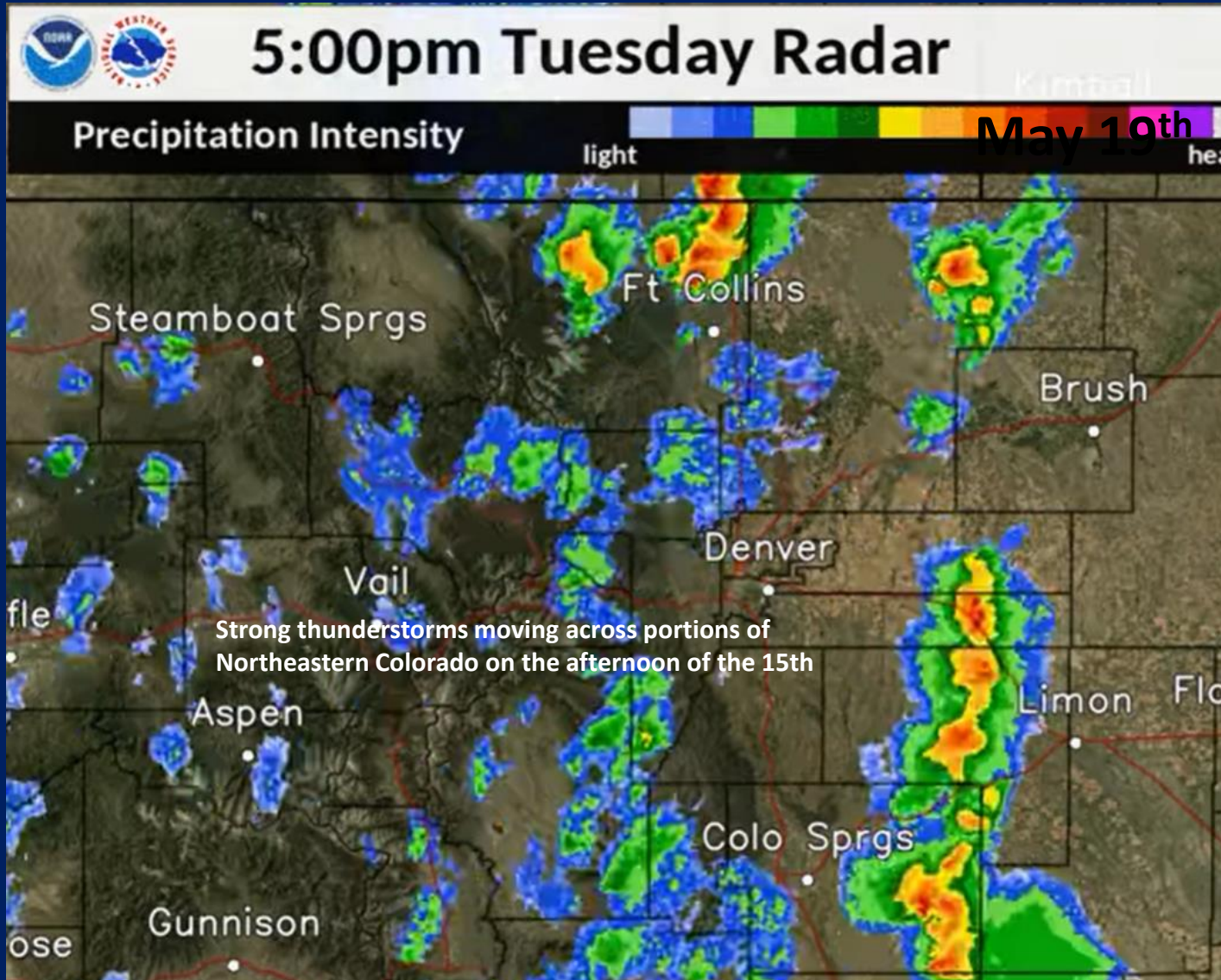
data valid as of Thu 07:11 pm - NWS Denver/Boulder

A deep upper level trough of low pressure dominated the central and eastern U.S from the 8<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup> with a large upper level ridge of high pressure centered over the western states. Colorado was in-between these two systems under the influence of a northwesterly flow aloft. This pattern allowed a series of cold fronts to move across northeastern Colorado resulting in below normal temperatures. Dry weather prevailed through this period with the exception of some precipitation on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Typical weather returned on May 12<sup>th</sup> and continued through the 17<sup>th</sup> with temperatures in the 70s along with the daily round of afternoon and evening showers and storms.



**Strong thunderstorms moving across portions of Northeastern Colorado on the afternoon of the 15th**

A strong upper level ridge of high pressure combined with a dry southwesterly downslope flow resulted in hot and mostly dry weather from the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>. During this period, high temperatures on the plains were in the upper 80s to lower 90s. Some strong storms with hail, brief heavy rain and gusty winds did develop late in the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> but the storms managed to stay well north, south and east of Metro Denver.



During the early evening of May 20, 2020, six landspout tornadoes occurred in the Eaton and Greeley area in Weld County which is approximately 40 miles to the north of Denver International Airport.

The tornadoes were weak enough that only a few reports of damage were received by the NWS Boulder office, and all damage was consistent with the EF-0 rating. Three farmsteads were impacted with minor damage, and there were no injuries or deaths.

The landspout tornadoes developed along a dry line which had moist air to the east and very dry air to its west. Denver was on the dry side of this boundary with hot temperatures and gusty southerly winds.

A landspout tornado is a narrow, rope-like funnel that forms while the thunderstorm cloud is still growing and there is no rotating updraft - the spinning motion originates near the ground, typically along a near-surface boundary between two different, converging air masses.

We would like to thank all of our storm spotters for all of their storm reports and great photos.



Photo taken by Greg Polese

Temperatures returned to near normal values from the 21<sup>st</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup> as a cooler airmass associated with an upper trough over the Great Basin approached Colorado from the west. Denver experienced much cooler & wetter weather on the 24<sup>th</sup> as the upper trough of low pressure and cold front moved across the state. Most of north central and northeastern Colorado received beneficial rainfall with many locations across Metro Denver and the Palmer Divide receiving over an inch of precipitation.



**Low Clouds on the Flatirons After a Rain Late Afternoon of the 24th**

Showers & thunderstorms which moved off the foothills brought beneficial rainfall to the Front Range Urban Corridor, Palmer Divide & adjacent plains on the afternoon & evening of the 24<sup>th</sup>. Many locations measured over an inch of precipitation. Temperatures rebounded on the 26<sup>th</sup> as upper level high begin to build into Colorado from the west. Temperatures gradually warmed to near 90 across northeastern Colorado by the end of the month.



# TEMPERATURES :

The average temperature at Denver International Airport for the month of May was 59.6 degrees F which is 2.5 degrees above the normal of 57.1 degrees. There were two days in the month (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>) in which the temperature reached or exceeded the 90 degree mark. The max Temperature of 92 degrees on the 19<sup>th</sup> set a new record high temperature for the date. The old record was 90 degrees set back in 2009. The coldest temperature of 30 degrees occurred on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Ten Warmest May Average Temperature in Denver Weather History

SINCE 1872: DEGREES F

64.7 - 1934  
63.2 - 1994  
62.0 - 1886  
61.7 - 1958  
61.6 - 1974, 1879  
61.5 - 1939  
61.4 - 2018  
61.3 - 1936  
61.1 - 1875

## Ten Coldest May Average Temperature in Denver Weather History

SINCE 1872: DEGREES F

48.7 - 1917  
50.0 - 1995  
50.1 - 1935  
50.3 - 1907  
51.4 - 1983  
51.5 - 1892  
51.6 - 2019  
52.0 - 1946  
52.6 - 1967  
52.7 - 1924

# PRECIPITATION:

Denver received 1.65 inches of precipitation during May of 2020. This is 0.47 inches below the monthly average of 2.12 inches. The highest daily precipitation amount of THE HIGHEST DAILY PRECIPITATION AMOUNT OF 0.94 occurred during the afternoon and evening of the 24th. No snow was measured at Denver International Airport which is 1.1 inches below the normal of 1.1 inches.

## TEN WETTEST MAY TOTALS IN DENVER WEATHER HISTORY SINCE 1872:

### INCHES

8.57 - 1876  
7.31 - 1857  
6.12 - 1969  
5.06 - 1973  
4.95 - 1935  
4.88 - 1938, 1898  
4.79 - 2011  
4.77 - 1967  
4.67 - 1995

## TEN DRIEST MAY TOTALS IN DENVER WEATHER HISTORY SINCE 1872:

### INCHES

0.06 - 1974  
0.09 - 1886  
0.15 - 1899  
0.22 - 1919  
0.34 - 1977, 1966  
0.43 - 1925  
0.49 - 1972  
0.52 - 1911  
0.53 - 1900



## SNOWFALL:

May is Denver's least snowiest month of the snow season with a monthly average of 1.1 inches (NCEI 1980-2010). No snow fell during May of 2020 which is 1.1 inches below normal.

### TEN HIGHEST SNOW TOTALS FOR MAY IN DENVER WEATHER HISTORY

#### INCHES

15.5 - 1898  
13.7 - 1950  
13.5 - 1978  
13.2 - 1912  
12.0 - 1917  
10.0 - 1908  
9.0 - 1907  
8.9 - 1893  
8.8 - 1957  
8.3 - 1944

Least snowiest May's in Denver Weather History:

There have been numerous times in which Denver received no snowfall during the month of May.

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## Weather:

There were 7 days with thunder and no days with hail observed at Denver International Airport in May of 2020. In addition, there was only 1 day with dense fog with a visibility at or below  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile. The strongest wind gusts during the month was 65 mph from the northwest on the 7<sup>th</sup>.