

March 1, 2013

## Snowpack in Middle Park Still Underwhelming

(Lower than last year)

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt and Noah Bates took the March 1 snow survey measurements during the last days of February.

Snowpack in the high elevation mountains above Middle Park now ranges from 59% to 94% of the 30-year average, with the overall average for Middle Park at 75%. Last year at this time we were at 81% of average. Snow density is averaging 22%, which means that for one foot of snow there is only 2.6 inches of water. This is pretty low snow density for this time of year. Snow density for March 1<sup>st</sup>. usually runs in the high 20's. Snow stability remains weak.

All Colorado river basins are reporting below average snowpack. Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: Colorado River Basin 73%; Gunnison River Basin, 78%; South Platte River Basin, 66%; Yampa and White River Basins, 78%; Arkansas River Basin, 70%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 82%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 84%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 75% of average for this time of year.

Most of the snow courses around Middle Park have been read since the 1940s. Snow course readings are taken at the end of each month, beginning in January and continuing through April. March is historically the snowiest month, and the April 1 readings are the most critical for predicting runoff and summer water supplies, as most of our high country snowpack peaks around that time.

For further information, including real-time snow and precipitation data for SNOTEL (automated Snow Telemetry) sites, visit <http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/index.html>.

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## NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey for March 1, 2012, compared to long-term average.

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	Last year		This year		30-year average (1971 - 2000)		Percent of average	
	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content
	------(inches)-----						------(%)-----	
Arapaho Ridge ST		15.0		13.4		16.3		82%
Arrow ST		6.1		6.7		10.9		61%
Berthoud Summit ST		11.4		10.5		13.5		78%
Buffalo Park ST		12.0		9.9		10.8		92%
Columbine ST		17.7		15.1		19.4		78%
Copper Mountain ST		9.2		6.3		10.6		59%
Corral Creek SC	36	10.7	34	8.0	48	13.1	71%	82%
Elliot Ridge ST	11.6			11.5	<i>New site</i>		<i>New site</i>	
Fremont Pass ST		10.2		8.4		11.6		72%
Gore Pass SC	43	9.6	36	8.2	34	9.2	106%	89%
Granby SC	40	6.8	23	4.6	27	6.4	85%	72%
Grizzly Peak ST		11.0		8.3		12.8		65%
Jones Pass ST		8.3		7.7		9.5		81%
Kremmling Reservoir SC	Not	Measured	Not	Measured			-	-
Lake Irene ST		15.2		11.8		18.9		63%
Lynx Pass ST		7.7		8.2		8.7		94%
Middle Fork Camp SC	27	6.9	32	6.6	35	8.7	91%	76%
Phantom Valley ST		6.7		5.7		8.1		70%
Stillwater Creek ST		5.6		4.2		6.5		65%
Summit Ranch ST		7.4		5.2		8.5		61%
Willow Creek Pass SC	34	7.3	35	8.2	40	10.6	88%	77%
<i>Average</i>								<b>75%</b>



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## NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey March 1 moisture content records.

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	<u>Highest March. 1 moisture content</u>			<u>Lowest March. 1 moisture content</u>		
	(inches)	(%)	(year)	(inches)	(%)	(year)
Arapaho Ridge ST (read since 2003)	23.5	125%	2006	12.8	68%	2010
Arrow ST	17.7	159%	1996	4.8	43%	1977
Berthoud Summit ST	20.3	142%	1996	7.5	52%	1981
Buffalo Park ST (read since 1996)	16.5	153%	1996	6.6	61%	2002
Columbine ST	40.1	183%	1984	8.2	37%	1981
Copper Mountain ST	18.9	169%	1996	4.8	43%	1981
Corral Creek SC (read since 1995)	18.0	137%	1997	6.6	50%	2010
Fremont Pass ST	18.8	146%	2006	6.4	50%	1981
Gore Pass SC	14.3	155%	1962	2.6	28%	1981
Granby SC	10.8	169%	1997	1.8	28%	1981
Grizzly Peak ST	23.7	173%	1996	6.1	45%	1981
Jones Pass ST (read since 2000)	18.1	141%	2006	8.5	66%	2010
Kremmling Reservoir SC (read since 2001)	17.1	(NA)	2008	8.6	(NA)	2002
<i><b>New record high</b></i>						
Lake Irene ST	32.3	154%	1956	7.1	34%	1977
Lynx Pass ST	17.5	172%	1962	2.8	27%	1981
Middle Fork Campground SC	13.9	160%	1996	3.0	34%	1981
Phantom Valley ST	12.0	143%	1996	3.4	40%	1977
Stillwater Creek ST (read since 1986)	11.4	158%	1997	2.9	40%	1981
Summit Ranch ST	15.4	181%	1996	5.0	59%	1981
Willow Creek Pass SC	20.4	192%	1952	3.8	36%	1977