

March 1, 2018

Snowpack in Middle Park and Statewide Remains Below Normal

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt and Vance Fulton took the March 1st. snow survey measurements during the last days of February. And even with the recent warm weather and valley melt, the survey shows that we are in fair shape up high...only ~10% below normal. Valley snowpack has decreased significantly during February while high elevation snowpack continued to slowly climb.

Snowpack in the high elevation mountains above Middle Park now ranges from 75% to 109% of the 30-year average, with the overall average for Middle Park at 91%. Last year at this time we were at 143% of average. Snow density is 24%, which means that for one foot of snow there is 2.9 inches of water, which is pretty normal for March 1st.

Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: Colorado River Basin 85%; Gunnison River Basin, 64%; South Platte River Basin, 90%; Yampa and White River Basins, 82%; Arkansas River Basin, 66%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 59%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 56%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 91% 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. At this point in time, it will take some significant spring snowstorms to bring our snowpack up to normal before summer.

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, 2018, compared to long-term average.

| Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST) | Last year | | This year | | 30-year average (1981 - 2010) | | Percent of median | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| | Snow depth | Moisture content | Snow depth | Moisture content | Snow depth | Moisture content | Snow depth | Moisture content | |
| | | | | | | | ------(%)----- | | |
| Arapaho Ridge ST | | 22.6 | | 16.0 | | 16.3 | | 98% | |
| Berthoud Summit ST | | 15.5 | | 11.0 | | 14.1 | | 81% | |
| Buffalo Park ST | | 14.0 | | 12.6 | | | | 103% | |
| Columbine ST | | 22.7 | | 18.2 | | 19.9 | | 91% | |
| Copper Mountain ST | | 14.3 | | 8.9 | | 11.1 | | 80% | |
| Corral Creek SC | 52 | 16.6 | 37 | 9.5 | 48 | 11.2 | 77% | 85% | |
| Elliot Ridge ST | | | 18.0 | 13.2 | <i>New site</i> | | | | |
| Fremont Pass ST | | 15.0 | | 11.9 | | 11.9 | | 100% | |
| Gore Pass SC | 37 | 11.8 | 36 | 9.4 | 34 | 8.6 | 106% | 109% | |
| Granby SC | 42 | 13.4 | 25 | 6.4 | 26 | 6.5 | 96% | 98% | |
| Grizzly Peak ST | | 20.5 | | 12.4 | | 13.3 | | 93% | |
| Jones Pass ST | | 13.0 | | 9.2 | | 9.8 | | 94% | |
| Lake Irene ST | | 24.4 | | 15.9 | | 19.5 | | 82% | |
| Lynx Pass ST | | 9.7 | | 8.0 | | 8.9 | | 90% | |
| Middle Fork Camp SC | 40 | 10.3 | 28 | 6.5 | 36 | 8.7 | 78% | 75% | |
| Phantom Valley ST | | 12.7 | | 8.2 | | 8.3 | | 99% | |
| Stillwater Creek ST | | 11.1 | | 6.2 | | 6.8 | | 91% | |
| Summit Ranch ST | | 13.0 | | 7.3 | | 8.7 | | 84% | |
| Willow Creek Pass SC | 54 | 17.1 | 37 | 8.5 | 34 | 10.3 | 109% | 83% | |
| <i>Average for Middle Park</i> | | | | | | | | | 91% |





Mark Volt measures snow depth and water content at the Gore Pass snow course during the March 1st. snow survey. High elevation snowpack remains around 10% below normal in Middle Park. (Yep, he retired but still works part time measurin' snow)

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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 |
| Berthoud Summit ST | 20.3 | 142% | 1996 | 7.5 | 52% | 1981 |
| Buffalo Park ST (read since 1996) | 17.1 | 188% | 2014 | 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 | 13.4 | 206% | 2017 | 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 |
| 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 |