

February 1, 2015

Snowpack is right at average

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

Snowpack in the high-elevation Mountains above Middle Park is now around 100 % of the 30-year average (1980-2010). Last year's snowpack at this time was 120% of average.

Snow density is averaging 24%, which means that for a foot of snow there are 2.9 inches of water. In far western Grand County, the lower depths of the snowpack are very granular with an ice layer at around 10" above the ground, which is responsible for the weak snow stability.

Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: The upper Colorado River Basin averages 95%; Gunnison River Basin, 80%; South Platte River Basin, 97%; Yampa and White River Basins, 81%; Arkansas River Basin, 100%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 67%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 66%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins 82% 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 1st. 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>.



NEWS RELEASE

NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey for February 1, 2015- compared to long-term average.

Snow course (SC) or SNOTEL (ST)	Last year		This year		30-year average (1981 - 2010)		Percent of average	
	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content
	------(inches)-----						------(%)-----	
Arapaho Ridge ST		14.3		9.6		12.4		77%
Berthoud Summit ST		12.4		11.0		10.0		110%
Buffalo Park ST		12.2		9.0		6.7		134%
Columbine ST		17.9		11.7		15.0		78%
Copper Mountain ST		11.3		9.5		8.1		117%
Corral Creek SC	36	9.5	27	7.4	42	8.6	64%	86%
Elliot Ridge ST		10.7		9.2		<i>New site c</i>		<i>New site</i>
Fremont Pass ST		9.5		11.4		9.5		120%
Gore Pass SC	35	8.9	26	7.0	30	7.1	87%	99%
Granby SC	28	6.8	23	4.0	23	4.7	100%	85%
Grizzly Peak ST		11.4		10.7		9.2		116%
Jones Pass ST		9.3		9.0		7.6		118%
Lake Irene ST		14.7		12.8		13.9		92%
Lynx Pass ST		8.3		6.8		6.7		101%
Middle Fork Camp ST	32	7.4		6.8	29	6.5	%	105%
Phantom Valley ST		6.3		4.9		6.5		75%
Stillwater Creek ST		5.8		4.7		4.4		107%
Summit Ranch ST		5.6		6.4		6.6		107%
Willow Creek Pass SC	34	8.1	23	5.6	34	8.2	67%	68%
<i>Average</i>								100%

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NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey February 1 moisture content records.

Snow course or SNOTEL	<u>Highest Feb. 1 moisture content</u>			<u>Lowest Feb. 1 moisture content</u>		
	(inches)	(%)	(year)	(inches)	(%)	(year)
Arapaho Ridge ST (read since 2003)	19.3	125%	2011	9.4	63%	2003
Berthoud Summit ST	17.1	154%	1984	5.0	45%	1981
Buffalo Park ST (read since 1996)	14.7	167%	1997	4.6	52%	2002
Columbine ST	28.0	170%	1978	5.1	31%	1981
Copper Mountain ST	14.5	167%	1997	3.5	40%	1981
Corral Creek SC (read since 1995)	15.6	154%	1997	4.3	43%	2010
Fremont Pass ST	16.2	156%	1952	5.0	48%	1981
Gore Pass SC	11.7	165%	1997	1.3	18%	1981
Granby SC	10.6	226%	1997	1.1	23%	1981
Grizzly Peak ST	18.9	177%	1996	3.6	34%	1981
Jones Pass ST (read since 2000)	17.2	177%	1997	3.3	34%	1963
Lake Irene ST	26.4	163%	1962	6.0	37%	1977
Lynx Pass ST	13.4	174%	1978	1.6	21%	1981
Middle Fork Campground SC	11.6	178%	1952	1.8	28%	1981
Phantom Valley ST	10.6	166%	1996	2.9	45%	1981
Stillwater Creek ST (read since 1986)	10.8	200%	1997	2.2	41%	1981
Summit Ranch ST	12.1	181%	1984	4.0	60%	1981
Willow Creek Pass SC	17.6	215%	1984	2.2	27%	1981



Noah Bates, who has helped measure snow courses for the past three winters, measures snow for his last time on Gore Pass. Noah is moving to Washington State. Mark Volt with the NRCS will miss Noah's help. Snow courses are read at the end of each month between January and May. (Adios Noah)