

February 1, 2010

## Snowpack above Middle Park lowest in 29 years

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt and Matt Barnes took the February 1 snow survey measurements during the last days of January, when the monthly precipitation for the upper Colorado River Basin was only 65% of average.

Snowpack in the high-elevation mountains above Middle Park now ranges from 43% to 92% of the 30-year average, with the highest readings on the east side of the valley, and the lowest readings on the north side. This is very similar to, and on average slightly less than 2002—the driest February 1 since 1981 (when snowpack was a scant 40% of average). Snowpack for the total Colorado River Basin within the state of Colorado is slightly above 2002 levels.

Snow density is averaging 22%, which means that for a foot of snow there are 2.6 inches of water.

Northwestern Colorado has the lowest snowpack in the state. The highest snowpack, relative to normal, is in the upper Rio Grande Basin and the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado. Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: The upper Colorado River Basin averages 75%; Gunnison River Basin, 95%; South Platte River Basin, 81%; Yampa and White River Basins, 73%; Arkansas River Basin, 90%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 110%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 106%; 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 February 1, 2010, compared to long-term average.**

Snow course or SNOTEL	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	57	14.2	43	10.5	57	15.0	75%	70%
Arrow ST	46	12.6	22	4.1		8.6		48%
Berthoud Summit ST	51	13.3	38	10.1		11.1		91%
Buffalo Park ST	45	10.0	30	6.1	38	8.8	79%	69%
Columbine ST	70	18.3	46	12.1	58	16.5	79%	73%
Copper Mountain ST		10.8	29	5.9		8.7		68%
Corral Creek SC	45	9.3	30	4.3	42	10.1	71%	43%
Elliot Ridge ST	<i>New site</i>		31	7.7	<i>New site</i>		<i>New site</i>	
Fremont Pass ST		13.1	37	8.0		10.4		77%
Gore Pass SC	41	10.1	25	4.4	30	7.1	83%	62%
Granby SC	35	7.4	18	3.4	23	4.7	79%	72%
Grizzly Peak ST		12.9	31	7.0		10.7		65%
Jones Pass ST	48	12.1	29	6.0		9.7		62%
Kremmling Reservoir SC	51	13.8	31	6.1	38	9.6	81%	64%
Lake Irene ST	51	13.1	45	11.5		16.2		71%
Lynx Pass ST	42	9.8	23	4.9	37	7.7	62%	64%
Middle Fork Camp SC	40	7.9	21	3.5	29	6.5	73%	54%
Phantom Valley ST	38	7.1	21	5.9		6.4		92%
Stillwater Creek ST	32	7.2	14	2.9	23	5.4	61%	54%
Summit Ranch ST	38	10.1	22	5.0	33	6.7	67%	75%
Willow Creek Pass SC	37	8.2	24	5.1	34	8.2	70%	62%
<i>Average</i>							<b>73%</b>	<b>67%</b>

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

Snow course or SNOTEL	Highest Feb. 1 moisture content			Lowest Feb. 1 moisture content		
	(inches)	(%)	(year)	(inches)	(%)	(year)
Arapaho Ridge ST (read since 2003)	18.1	121%	2006	9.4	63%	2003
Arrow ST	13.5	157%	1984	2.6	30%	1941
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
<b>Corral Creek SC (read since 1995)</b>	15.6	154%	1997	<b>6.1</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>1995</b>
<i>New record low</i>				<b>4.3</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>2010</b>
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
Kremmling Reservoir SC (read since 2001)	13.8	144%	2009	5.6	58%	2002
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