

February 1, 2012

## Snowpack remains below average

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

Snowpack in the high-elevation mountains above Middle Park now around 75% of the 30-year average. Last year's snowpack at this time was 138% of average.

Snow density is averaging 22%, which means that for a foot of snow there are 2.6 inches of water. The lower depth of the snowpack is very granular 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 70%; Gunnison River Basin, 73%; South Platte River Basin, 77%; Yampa and White River Basins, 63%; Arkansas River Basin, 84%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 81%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 73%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 67% 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, 2012, 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	77	19.3		11.1		15.0		74%
Arrow ST	39	9.8		4.0		8.6		47%
Berthoud Summit ST	62	15.5		7.4		11.1		67%
Buffalo Park ST	50	12.5		8.2		8.8		93%
Columbine ST	88	21.9		11.2		16.5		68%
Copper Mountain ST	54	13.6		6.3		8.7		72%
Corral Creek SC	46	12.0	29	6.9	42	10.1	69%	68%
Elliot Ridge ST		12.2		7.9	<i>New site</i>		<i>New site</i>	
Fremont Pass ST	54	13.5		6.9		10.4		66%
Gore Pass SC	44	11.2	32	6.7	30	7.1	106%	94%
Granby SC	34	8	29	6.4	23	4.7	126%	136%
Grizzly Peak ST		16.2		8.0		10.7		75%
Jones Pass ST		12.3		5.7		9.7		59%
Kremmling Reservoir SC	53	15.4		Not read	38	9.6		
Lake Irene ST		21.7		10.7		16.2		66%
Lynx Pass ST		10.4		5.0		7.7		65%
Middle Fork Camp SC	31	7.2	24	5.1	29	6.5	83%	78%
Phantom Valley ST		9.9		4.4		6.4		69%
Stillwater Creek ST		7.9		3.9		5.4		72%
Summit Ranch ST		7.8		5.7		6.7		85%
Willow Creek Pass SC	44	11.2	26	5.2	34	8.2	76%	63%
<i>Average</i>								<b>75%</b>

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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
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>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)	15.4	160%	2011	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