

April 1, 2018

## Snowpack Low – But still 89% of average

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt and Derrick Wyle took the April 1 snow survey measurements during the last days of March. Snowpack for Middle Park and the upper Colorado River Basin stands at 89%. We were at 103% last year and only 58% back in the drought year of 2012. Lack of snowfall and warm weather during March, which is usually our snowiest month, has melted all of the valley snow and most of the mid-elevation snow up to 8,500 feet. Snow density is averaging 30%, which means that for every foot of snow there are 3.6 inches of water and that's about normal for April 1<sup>st</sup>. From this point on, spring runoff will be highly dependent on melting conditions (i.e., temperature and wind), as well as additional spring snow accumulation and/or rainfall. It would take several good snowstorms to put us back up to average at this point in time! Irrigators, water users and river runners should anticipate lower stream and river flows for the upcoming summer.

Reported median readings for the major river basins in Colorado are low as well: Colorado River Basin 82%; Gunnison River Basin, 60%; South Platte River Basin, 83%; Yampa and White River Basins, 91%; Arkansas River Basin, 59%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 52%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 51%; and Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 93%.

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. Manual snow courses will be read for the final time this year at the end of April.

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 April 1, 2018, compared to long-term median.**

Snow course or SNOTEL	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
	------(inches)-----						-----(%)------	
Arapaho Ridge st		24.6		19.5		20.2		97%
Berthoud Summit st		17		14.8		19		78%
Buffalo Park st		15		15.4		12	suspect!	
Columbine st		18.6		22.3		22.6		99%
Copper Mountain st		16		11		13.5		81%
Corral Creek sc		Not read			45	13		0%
Elliot Ridge st		Not read		17				#DIV/0!
Fremont Pass st		17.6		15.1		15.1		100%
Gore Pass sc	21	8.1	32	10	34	9.7	62	103%
Granby sc	28	11.4	23	7.3	26	7.2	108	101%
Grizzly Peak st		21.8		14.9		16.2		92%
Jones Pass st		14.2		11.3		13.3		85%
Lake Irene st		25.1		19.4		24.1		80%
Lynx Pass st		4.3		8.9		10.9		82%
Middle Fork Camp sc	21	7.6	26	7.6		11.5		66%
Phantom Valley st		8.9		9.4		9.3		101%
Stillwater Creek st		4.2		6.6		7.1		93%
Summit Ranch st		10.3		8.5		11.2		76%
Willow Creek Pass sc		17.1	38	10.5		11.9		88%
<i>Average</i>								<b>89%</b>

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

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	Highest Apr. 1 moisture content			Lowest Apr. 1 moisture content		
	(inches)	(%)	(year)	(inches)	(%)	(year)
Arapaho Ridge ST (read since 2003)	26.9	117%	2008	14.8	65%	2010
Berthoud Summit ST	25.3	138%	1996	10.9	59%	2002
Buffalo Park ST (read since 1996)	17.7	123%	1996	8.0	56%	2002
Columbine ST	37.9	152%	1984	12.0	48%	1981
Copper Mountain ST	18.1	129%	2008	7.9	56%	1981
Corral Creek SC (read since 1995)	16.9	116%	1996	8.0	55%	2002
Fremont Pass ST	21.9	135%	1978	10.0	62%	1966
<b>Gore Pass SC</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>2011</b>	4.3	41%	1966
Granby SC	14.8	206%	2014	0.0	0%	2004
Grizzly Peak ST	27.7	151%	1996	8.7	47%	1981
Jones Pass ST (read since 2000)	19.2	119%	2006	9.7	60%	2002
Lake Irene ST	37.6	146%	1962	11.8	46%	1977
Lynx Pass ST	20.8	163%	1962	6.0	47%	1977
Middle Fork Campground SC	17.0	168%	1996	5.8	57%	1981
Phantom Valley ST	14.9	160%	1996	1.1	12%	2004
Stillwater Creek ST (read since 1986)	12.8	164%	1965	1.1	14%	2012
Summit Ranch ST	17.0	153%	1996	5.9	53%	2012
Willow Creek Pass SC	20.5	164%	1952	6.6	53%	2012



**Mark Volt** taking snow measurements near Willow Creek Pass

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