

April 1, 2019

Snowpack - Way Above Normal !

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt and Vance Fulton 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 125% of median. This is very similar to the high April 1st. snowpack in 2011. We were at only 89% last year and only 58% back in the drought year of 2012. Snow density is averaging 32%, which means that for every foot of snow there are 3.8 inches of water and that's about normal for April 1st. 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. Irrigators, water users and river runners should anticipate higher stream and river flows for the upcoming summer. A welcome change from last year. Localized flooding may be a concern if all this snow comes off too fast.

Reported median readings for the major river basins in Colorado are high as well: Colorado River Basin 133%; Gunnison River Basin, 150%; South Platte River Basin, 125%; Yampa and White River Basins, 122%; Arkansas River Basin, 143%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 149%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 159%; and Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 124%.

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>.



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NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey for April 1, 2019, compared to long-term median.								
Snow course or SNOTEL	Last year		This year		30-year median (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		19.5		25.3		20.2		125%
Berthoud Summit st		14.8		20.3		19		107%
Buffalo Park st		15.4		16.3		12		136%
Columbine st		22.3		29.3		22.6		130%
Copper Mountain st		11		18.9		13.5		140%
Corral Creek sc			46	12.8	45	13		98%
Elliot Ridge st		17		22.2				#DIV/0!
Fremont Pass st		15.1		21.7		15.1		144%
Gore Pass sc	32	10	45	14.4	34	9.7	62	148%
Granby sc	23	7.3	35	10.2	26	7.2	108	142%
Grizzly Peak st		14.9		22		16.2		136%
Jones Pass st		11.3		17.8		13.3		134%
Lake Irene st		19.4		24.7		24.1		102%
Lynx Pass st		8.9		13.1		10.9		120%
Middle Fork Camp sc	26	7.6	41	12.2		11.5		106%
Phantom Valley st		9.4		10.1		9.3		109%
Stillwater Creek st		6.6		8.9		7.1		125%
Summit Ranch st		8.5		13.7		11.2		122%
Willow Creek Pass sc	38	10.5	52	15.9		11.9		134%
<i>Average</i>								<i>125%</i>

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

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	<u>Highest Apr. 1 moisture content</u>			<u>Lowest Apr. 1 moisture content</u>		
	(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
Gore Pass SC	16.6	157	2011	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

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2019/02/26

Mark Volt taking April 1 snow measurements on Gore Pass