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NEWS

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FEBRUARY STORMS FAIL TO BOOST SNOWPACK

Denver, March 5, 2013 – Statewide snowpack totals saw a nominal increase during February. While the storm systems that moved through Colorado during February did improve the statewide snowpack, unfortunately it was not enough to boost conditions to normal. As of March 1, the state snowpack was 73 percent of normal and 83 percent of last year's readings at this same time, according to Phyllis Ann Philipps, Colorado State Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Colorado's snowpack has tracked below the long-term normal for three consecutive months with miniscule fluctuations (it was 71 percent of normal on January 1 and 71 percent of normal February 1).

Most basins within the state benefitted from the February storms, but not all. The greatest decline in snowpack percentage was measured in the combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins whose March 1 snowpack dropped 5 percentage points from last month to 83 percent of normal as of March 1. In the Rio Grande basin the snowpack increased from 78 percent of normal last month, to 79 percent of normal as of March 1. The Arkansas basin also showed a gain in snowpack percentage, increasing from 63 percent on February 1 to 71 percent on March 1. The largest increase, as a percent of normal, from last month's report was recorded in the South Platte basin; as of February 1 the snowpack in this basin was at just 54 percent of normal, as of March 1 the basin's snowpack had increased to 63 percent of normal.

(MORE)

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This recent data collected during the March 1 snow surveys directly reflects what the state can expect for surface water supplies this coming spring and summer. The most recent streamflow forecasts continue to point towards well below normal volumes for this spring and summer in all the major river basins in Colorado. Reservoir storage across the state remains well below average, at just 71 percent of average as of March 1.

Unless Colorado sees weather patterns in March that bring well above average snowfall and precipitation to the state, there will not be much relief from the current drought conditions.

The table below shows Colorado's snowpack and reservoir storage as of March 1, 2013.

BASIN	% MEDIAN SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.'S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	% LAST YR.'S RESERVOIR STORAGE
GUNNISON	74	87	77	69
COLORADO	70	86	66	57
SOUTH PLATTE	63	62	82	78
NORTH PLATTE	76	87	---	---
YAMPA/WHITE	76	95	106	85
ARKANSAS	71	79	55	62
RIO GRANDE	79	91	53	78
SAN JUAN, ANIMAS, DOLORES, SAN MIGUEL	83	89	67	64
STATEWIDE	73	83	71	67

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