

## **Water Supply Outlook for Colorado Much Better Than This Time Last Year**

**Denver, CO - May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014** - The latest snowpack measurements, conducted by the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), show above normal levels of snow at many measuring sites throughout the Yampa, Colorado, North and South Platte River basins in Colorado. Conversely, observations in the Upper Rio Grande, Arkansas, Gunnison and combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan River basins indicate near to below normal snowpack's.

“The month of April yielded below average precipitation in all watersheds but affected year-to-date precipitation and snowpack totals little, rounding out the snowpack on May 1 at 107 percent of median,” according to Brian Domonkos, Colorado Snow Survey Supervisor with the NRCS.

In general, moisture laden storms favored the northern tier basins in the state of Colorado throughout 2014. Last month the Gunnison, Upper Rio Grande and San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins were impacted by warmer temperatures and lack of snowfall. These basins have fallen further below normal since last month's report, with the most severe deficit in the Upper Rio Grande basin, which fell from 79 percent of median last month to 50 percent of median this month. The latest surveys indicate the lowest snowpack percentage in the state was measured in the Upper Rio Grande basin at 50 percent of median. The San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins declined to 68 percent of median and the Gunnison declined to 97 percent of median.

With slightly better than one half of the states reservoirs at 100 percent of average or better, and nearly three quarters of the state's reservoirs at or better than 80 percent of average at the end of April, statewide reservoir storage is in fairly good standing. The Arkansas River basin currently has the lowest storage as a percent of average at 59 percent but on a positive note Pueblo Reservoir is right at the 30 year average and 54 percent of capacity. The South Platte basin has the best storage at 110 percent of average and 90 percent of capacity. The vast majority of all reservoirs in the state have higher storage levels than at this time last year. For areas with well above normal snowpack or projected streamflows, it is often necessary to draft reservoirs to allow for the above average inflows. If reservoir storage is below average in a drainage basin with above to well above normal snowpack the project may be anticipating above average streamflow.

For most of the state, this spring's runoff and summer water supplies are predicted to be good to excellent. More than half of the 89 streamflow forecast points in Colorado are predicted to have better than 100 percent of average streamflows. Nearly two thirds of the state is projected to have better than 80 percent of average streamflows. Two excellent statistics compared to this time last year. The basins that can expect some of the largest volumes include the Colorado, Yampa, North Platte and along the Cache La Poudre River in the South Platte basin. The exceptions are the Upper Rio Grande, and those basins in southwestern Colorado where runoff volumes for the May through July period are expected to range from average to below average volumes.

### Colorado's Snowpack and Reservoir Storage as of May 1, 2014

BASIN	% MEDIAN SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.'S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	LAST YR.'S % AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE
GUNNISON	97	129	107	80
COLORADO	122	121	94	65
SOUTH PLATTE	133	135	110	92
NORTH PLATTE	135	133	---	---
YAMPA/WHITE	121	127	106	101
ARKANSAS	99	131	59	47
RIO GRANDE	50	120	67	52
SAN JUAN, ANIMAS, DOLORES, SAN MIGUEL	68	148	85	64
STATEWIDE	107	128	93	71

For more information about Colorado's snowpack or supporting water supply related information, please go to the Colorado Snow Survey website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/co/snow/>

Or contact Brian Domonkos, Colorado Snow Survey Supervisor at  
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