



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Colorado State Office
Denver Federal Center
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Web: <http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov>

News Release

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Colorado Snowpack - Improvement in North, Deprecation in South

Denver, CO – April 6th, 2016 – After lackluster February precipitation, the month of March provided near normal increases for the state as a whole, with year-to-date precipitation on April 1st at 98 percent of normal. March weather patterns in Colorado favored the northern half of the state, but provided little accumulation in the southern half. Upon closer analysis of the underlying data, the map below shows that snowpack is near to slightly above normal in the Colorado, Yampa, White, North and South Platte River basins. However, in much of the Gunnison, Arkansas, Rio Grande and San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins snowpack received minor accumulations and even experienced snowmelt at lower elevations, leading to below normal snowpack conditions in those southern basins.

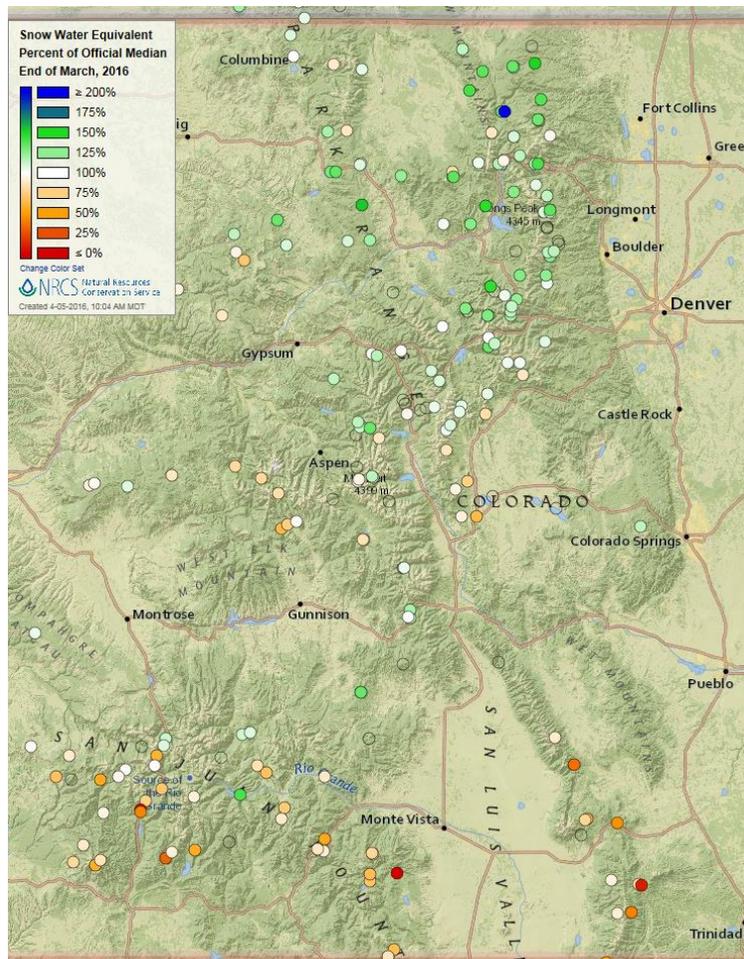


Figure 1: April 1 Snowpack observations at SNOTEL & Snow Course locations (Click on map for link)

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“Snowpack improved markedly in the North Platte, Willow Creek (Colorado River) and Cache La Poudre River basins with increases of 17 percent or more in these watersheds. Unfortunately, some southern watersheds saw proportionate decreases in snowpack levels – the greater Arkansas, Rio Grande, San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan basins averaged nearly a 17 percent decrease in percent of median snowpack,” commented Brian Domonkos, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service Colorado Snow Survey Supervisor.

Cumulative reservoir storage for Colorado has increased only minimally since last month and decreased as much as 4 percent in the Arkansas River watershed.

Domonkos went on to say, “Generally Colorado’s mountain snowpack typically peaks in the beginning of April. Without an abnormally cool or wet spring, snowpack should begin running off soon.” Because various parts of the state are experiencing different weather patterns, streamflow predictions are ranging greatly. In general, water users and planners in southern basins should begin to expect 60 to 90 percent of normal runoff, while those in northern basins should expect 85 to 105 percent of normal runoff.

Colorado’s Snowpack and Reservoir Storage as of April 1, 2016

| BASIN | % MEDIAN SNOWPACK | % LAST YR.’S SNOWPACK | % AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE | LAST YEARS % AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| GUNNISON | 95 | 148 | 115 | 120 |
| COLORADO | 107 | 137 | 111 | 125 |
| SOUTH PLATTE | 108 | 125 | 107 | 114 |
| NORTH PLATTE | 109 | 145 | --- | --- |
| YAMPA/WHITE | 102 | 157 | 120 | 125 |
| ARKANSAS | 92 | 107 | 120 | 80 |
| RIO GRANDE | 79 | 131 | 94 | 78 |
| SMDASJ* | 81 | 165 | 105 | 90 |
| STATEWIDE | 98 | 138 | 111 | 108 |

*Combined San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan Basins

For more detailed information about individual Colorado watersheds or supporting water supply related information, have a look at the Colorado Water Supply Outlook Report or feel free to 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 Brian.Domonkos@mt.usda.gov or 720-544-2852.



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With the end of the winter fast approaching and predicted streamflow forecast skill rising, how much snowpack is currently in place and how much snowmelt runoff can irrigators, dam operators, river enthusiasts and all other water users expect this spring and summer for water availability?

April 6th, 2016 – The NRCS Colorado Snow Survey program will be hosting its annual Media Day on April 7th at 1:00 pm MDT at the Berthoud Summit SNOw TELelemetry (SNOTEL) site. With the latest data and streamflow forecasts recently published in the April 1, 2016 Water Supply Outlook Report we plan to field all your questions regarding this latest snowstorm and current streamflow prospects for spring runoff.

Be sure to bring touring skis or snowshoes (which you can rent from many locations around the area) so that you can access the data site which is a 200 yard uphill trek from Colorado Highway 40. In order to be at the SNOTEL site by 1:30 pm we ask that everyone meet at the Berthoud Pass proper parking area (very top of the Pass) at 1:00 pm. From there we will drive a very short distance down the west side of Berthoud Pass toward Winter Park to a small parking area where we will suit up in our gear and then proceed by foot up to the SNOTEL. If you would like you may reserve a pair of snowshoes with us, but keep in mind we only have a very limited supply, please send an email to brian.domonkos@co.usda.gov or karl.wetlaufer@co.usda.gov requesting snowshoes.

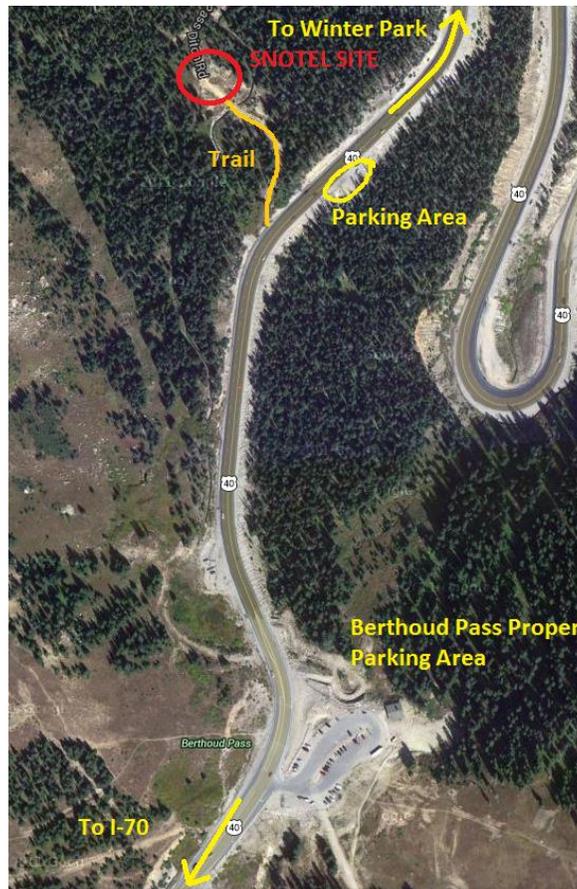


United States Department of Agriculture

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Be prepared for all weather conditions so dress warmly with layers and be prepared for snow because we will host this event no matter what the weather conditions. Only in the event Highway 40 and Berthoud Pass is closed by CDOT will this event be canceled. Please direct questions to brian.domonkos@co.usda.gov or karl.wetlaufer@co.usda.gov.

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