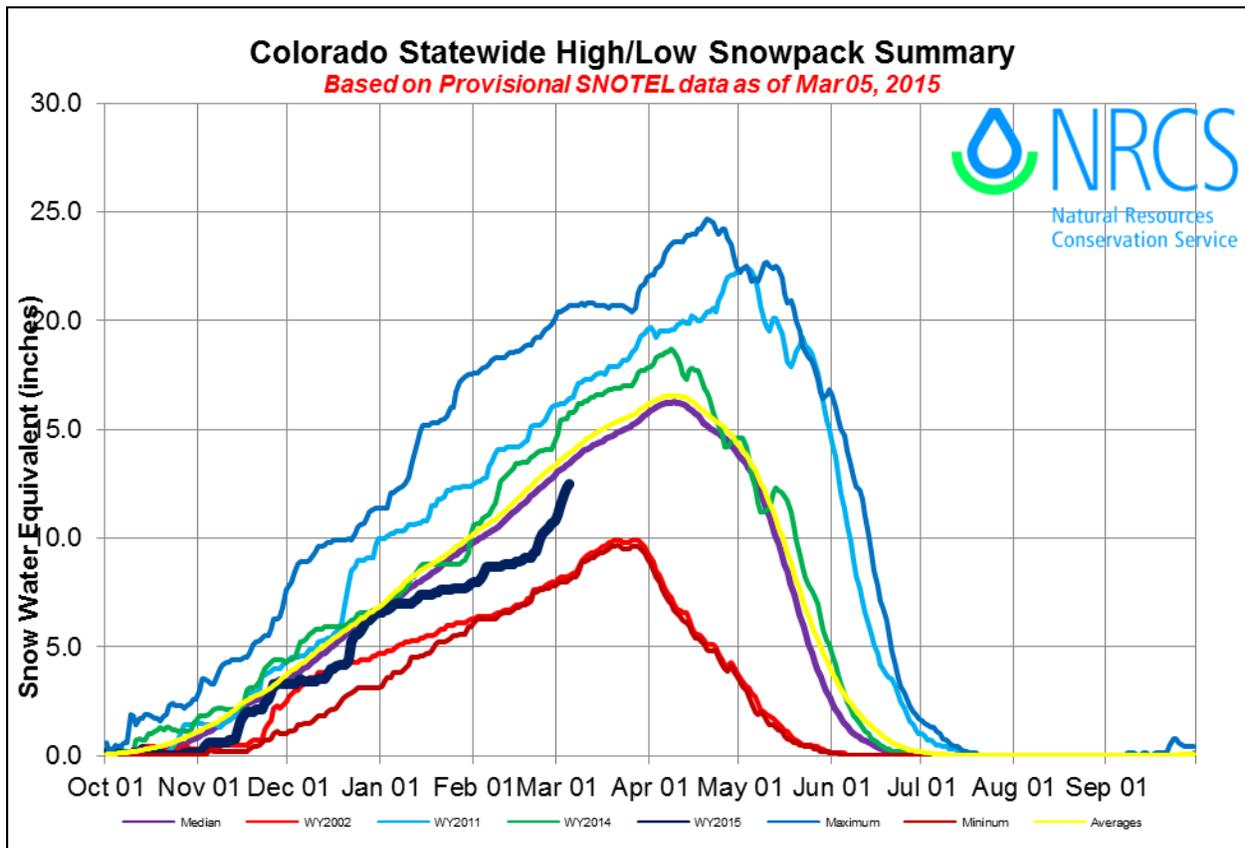


## Recent Weather Patterns Change for the Better

**Denver, CO – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015** – Two weeks of wet weather through the end of February and beginning of March have provided a significant increase in snowpack statewide and an even greater boost to those southern Colorado basins that are still ailing after several consecutive years of below normal snowpack. Despite substantial accumulations statewide, snowpack has not quite returned to normal, it was 87 percent as of March 1. Further investigation of SNOTEL data indicates that during the nine day period of February 20 through March 1, the state of Colorado received 2.0 inches of snow water equivalent, 181 percent of the normal for that timeframe. That is a 9 percent increase in snowpack percent of median. Preliminary numbers into March indicate an additional 7 percent increase between March 1 and March 5. On March 1, with 20 percent of the mountain snowpack accumulation season remaining, time is dwindling to close the gap and reach typical statewide peak snowpack levels. Brian Domonkos, Snow Survey Supervisor with the USDA Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service - comments, “While not every major watershed in the state saw snowpack improvements this month, precipitation during the latter half of February was a highly beneficial to many water budgets across the state.”



The recent storm patterns were most beneficial to the Rio Grande watershed, receiving 300 percent of normal snowfall in the last 9 days of February. The South Platte and the Rio Grande both received a 13 percent gain over the course of February. In the South Platte River basin, snowpack, has not reached 2011 or 2014 levels at this point but conditions are still better than 1988, 1993, 1994 and above normal.

Statewide precipitation for the month of February was right at normal, a drastic change from 45 percent of average received during the month of January. Year-to-date statewide mountain precipitation totals increased 3 percent since last month. Colorado reservoir storage increased as well from February 1 to March 1 from 104 to 105 percent of average. Streamflow forecasts saw marked improvements most particularly for the state’s southern streams.

Brian Domonkos put the recent weather into perspective, “This storm could not have come at a better time. Without this storm, if the same weather patterns since January 1 had persisted through spring, mountain snowpack would have narrowly reached only the minimum snowpack peak.”

### **Colorado’s Snowpack and Reservoir Storage as of March 1, 2015**

BASIN	% MEDIAN SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.’S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	LAST YR.’S % AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE
GUNNISON	79	71	111	89
COLORADO	93	73	120	97
SOUTH PLATTE	110	73	117	112
NORTH PLATTE	96	63	---	---
YAMPA/WHITE	79	66	122	111
ARKANSAS	101	91	80	60
RIO GRANDE	74	95	72	68
SAN JUAN, ANIMAS, DOLORES, SAN MIGUEL	68	82	89	85
STATEWIDE	87	75	105	90

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  
Brian.Domonkos@mt.usda.gov or 720-544-2852.