



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Year's Final Snow Survey Comes up Dry 3-Year Drought Retains Grip as Summer Approaches

SACRAMENTO – Today's final snow survey of the year found more bare ground than snow as California faces another long, hot summer after a near-record dry winter

Today's manual and electronic readings recorded the statewide snowpack's water content – which normally provides about a third of the water for California's farms and cities -- at a mere --18 percent of average for the date.

Just as telling was the April 1 survey that found water content at only 32 percent of average at the time of year it normally is at its peak before it begins to melt into streams and reservoirs with warming weather.

"Anyone who doesn't think conservation is important should drive up the hill and take a look," said DWR Director Mark Cowin. "Coupled with half our normal rainfall and low reservoir storage, our practically nonexistent snowpack reinforces the message that we need to save every drop we can just to meet basic needs."

Most dramatically, today's electronic readings show a dismal 7 percent of average water content in the northern Sierra snowpack that helps fill the state's major reservoirs which currently are only half full.

Electronic water content readings for the central and southern Sierra are 24 and 18 percent of normal, respectively.

Snow surveyors from DWR and cooperating agencies manually measure snowpack water content on or about the first of the month from January through May to supplement and check the accuracy of real-time electronic readings from remote sensors up and down the mountain ranges.

Results of today's manual readings by DWR off Highway 50 near Echo Summit are as follows:

Location	Elevation	Snow Depth	Water Content	% of Long Term Average
Alpha	7,600 feet	inches	inches	Missing
Phillips Station	6,800 feet	0 inches	0 inches	0
Lyons Creek	6,700 feet	inches	inches	Missing
Tamarack Flat	6,500 feet	8.0 inches	3.4 inches	18

California's reservoirs obviously will not be significantly replenished by a melting snowpack this spring and summer.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's (SWP) principal reservoir, today is at only 53 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (65 percent of its historical average for the date). Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's (CVP) largest reservoir, also is at 53 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity (61 percent of its historical average). San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta reservoir for both the SWP and CVP, is at 47 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity (52 percent of average for this time of year).

With most of the wet season behind us, it is highly unlikely late-season storms will significantly dampen the effects of the three-year drought on parched farms or communities struggling to provide drinking water.

On January 31, with no relief from the three-year drought in sight, DWR set its allocation of State Water Project (SWP) water at zero. The only previous zero allocation was for agriculture in the drought year of 1991, but cities and others that year received 30 percent of requested amounts.

After late season storms, DWR on April 18 increased this year's allocation to 5 percent of requested SWP amounts. If it stands, this will be the lowest across-the-board allocation in the 54-year history of the SWP.

Collectively, the 29 public agencies that deliver SWP water to more than 25 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated agriculture requested 4,172,536 acre-feet of water this calendar year.

The final SWP allocation for calendar year 2013 was 35 percent of the 4.1 million acre-feet requested. In 2012, the final allocation was 65 percent of the requested 4.1 million acre-feet. It was 80 percent in 2011, up dramatically from an initial allocation of 25 percent. The final allocation was 50 percent in 2010, 40 percent in 2009, 35 percent in 2008, and 60 percent in 2007. The last 100 percent allocation – difficult to achieve even in wet years because of Delta pumping restrictions to protect threatened and endangered fish – was in 2006.

On April 25, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued an executive order to strengthen the state's ability to manage water and habitat effectively in drought conditions and called on all Californians to redouble their efforts to conserve water. On January 17, the Governor declared a drought state of emergency.

(Visit Drought.Ca.Gov for an update on how the state is dealing with the drought.)

NOTE: For video footage of today's snow survey call or email DWR videographer Albert Madrid at (916) 717-9833, Albert.Madrid@water.ca.gov.

Electronic snowpack readings are available on the Internet at:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/snowapp/sweq.action>

Electronic reservoir readings may be found at:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/resapp/getResGraphsMain.action>

For a broader snapshot of current and historical weather conditions, see DWR's "Water Conditions" and "Drought" pages:

Water Conditions Page

<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/>

Drought Page

<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/waterconditions.cfm>

For simple, every day water conservation tips, click on "Save Our Water" here:

