

March 1, 2011

Snowpack in Middle Park Remains High

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt, Vance Fulton, and Jenny Stricker took the March 1 snow survey measurements during the last days of February.

Snowpack in the high elevation mountains above Middle Park now ranges from 107% to 166% of the 30-year average, with the overall average for Middle Park at 128%. Snow density is averaging 28%, which means that for one foot of snow there are 3.4 inches of water. This year is very similar to the readings taken in March 1, 1996.

Southwest Colorado River Basins have the lowest snowpack in the state. The highest snowpack, relative to normal, is in the Colorado and North Platte River Basins. Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: the Colorado River Basin 127%; Gunnison River Basin, 120%; South Platte River Basin, 122%; Yampa and White River Basins, 125%; Arkansas River Basin, 105%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 90%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 99%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 132% of average for this time of year.

Most of the snow courses around Middle Park have been read since the 1940s. Snow course readings are taken at the end of each month, beginning in January and continuing through April. March is historically the snowiest month, and the April 1 readings are the most critical for predicting runoff and summer water supplies, as most of our high country snowpack peaks around that time.

For further information, including real-time snow and precipitation data for SNOTEL (automated Snow Telemetry) sites, visit <http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/index.html>.

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NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey for March 1, 2011, compared to long-term average.

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	Last year		This year		30-year average (1971 - 2000)		Percent of average	
	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content	Snow depth	Moisture content
	------(inches)-----						------(%)-----	
Arapaho Ridge ST	50	12.8		23.1	63	18.8		123%
Arrow ST	43	7.4		11.9		11.1		107%
Berthoud Summit ST	66	14.5		18.2		14.3		127%
Buffalo Park ST	35	8.0		15.0	42	10.8		139%
Columbine ST	55	16.0		27.3	78	21.9		125%
Copper Mountain ST	39	8.4		15.8		11.2		141%
Corral Creek SC	32	6.6	49	14.1	48	13.1	102%	108%
Elliot Ridge ST	45	11.2		15.5		<i>New site</i>		<i>New site</i>
Fremont Pass ST	52	10.8		15.9		12.9		123%
Gore Pass SC	35	7.2	50	13.4	34	9.2	147%	146%
Granby SC	24	4.6	41	10.6	27	6.4	152%	166%
Grizzly Peak ST	47	9.7		18.5		13.7		135%
Jones Pass ST	39	8.5		14.9		12.8		116%
Kremmling Reservoir SC	46	10.6	60	17.1				
Lake Irene ST	59	14.9		26.1		21.0		124%
Lynx Pass ST	33	7.3		12.7	41	10.2		125%
Middle Fork Camp SC	29	6.0	37	9.4	35	8.7	106%	108%
Phantom Valley ST	30	7.8		11.7		8.4		139%
Stillwater Creek ST	23	4.7		9.8	28	7.2		136%
Summit Ranch ST	31	7.0		9.7	36	8.5		114%
Willow Creek Pass SC	32	6.7	51	13.9	40	10.6	128%	131%
<i>Average</i>								128%

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NRCS Kremmling Field Office snow survey March 1 moisture content records.

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	Highest Feb. 1 moisture content			Lowest Feb. 1 moisture content		
	(inches)	(%)	(year)	(inches)	(%)	(year)
Arapaho Ridge ST (read since 2003)	23.5	125%	2006	12.8	68%	2010
Arrow ST	17.7	159%	1996	4.8	43%	1977
Berthoud Summit ST	20.3	142%	1996	7.5	52%	1981
Buffalo Park ST (read since 1996)	16.5	153%	1996	6.6	61%	2002
Columbine ST	40.1	183%	1984	8.2	37%	1981
Copper Mountain ST	18.9	169%	1996	4.8	43%	1981
Corral Creek SC (read since 1995)	18.0	137%	1997	6.6	50%	2010
Fremont Pass ST	18.8	146%	2006	6.4	50%	1981
Gore Pass SC	14.3	155%	1962	2.6	28%	1981
Granby SC	10.8	169%	1997	1.8	28%	1981
Grizzly Peak ST	23.7	173%	1996	6.1	45%	1981
Jones Pass ST (read since 2000)	18.1	141%	2006	8.5	66%	2010
Kremmling Reservoir SC (read since 2001)	17.1	(NA)	2008	8.6	(NA)	2002
<i>New record high</i>						
Lake Irene ST	32.3	154%	1956	7.1	34%	1977
Lynx Pass ST	17.5	172%	1962	2.8	27%	1981
Middle Fork Campground SC	13.9	160%	1996	3.0	34%	1981
Phantom Valley ST	12.0	143%	1996	3.4	40%	1977
Stillwater Creek ST (read since 1986)	11.4	158%	1997	2.9	40%	1981
Summit Ranch ST	15.4	181%	1996	5.0	59%	1981
Willow Creek Pass SC	20.4	192%	1952	3.8	36%	1977