

March 1, 2012

## Snowpack in Middle Park Still Underwhelming

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Kremmling Field Office snow surveyors Mark Volt, Vance Fulton, and Joe Messina 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 55% to 111% of the 30-year average, with the overall average for Middle Park at 81%. Last year at this time we were at 128% of average. Snow density is averaging 22%, which means that for one foot of snow there is only 2.6 inches of water. This is pretty low snow density for this time of year. Snow density for March 1<sup>st</sup>. usually runs in the high 20's. Snow stability remains weak.

All Colorado river basins are reporting below average snowpack, but all are better than the Feb.1 measurements. Reported readings for the major river basins in Colorado are as follows: Colorado River Basin 78%; Gunnison River Basin, 82%; South Platte River Basin, 88%; Yampa and White River Basins, 78%; Arkansas River Basin, 88%; Upper Rio Grande Basin, 88%; San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basins 86%; and the Laramie and North Platte River Basins, 80% 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, 2012, 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		23.1		15.0		18.8		80%
Arrow ST		11.9		6.1		11.1		55%
Berthoud Summit ST		18.2		11.4		14.3		80%
Buffalo Park ST		15.0		12.0		10.8		111%
Columbine ST		27.3		17.7		21.9		81%
Copper Mountain ST		15.8		9.2		11.2		82%
Corral Creek SC	49	14.1	36	10.7	48	13.1	75%	82%
Elliot Ridge ST		15.5		11.6		<i>New site</i>		<i>New site</i>
Fremont Pass ST		15.9		10.2		12.9		79%
Gore Pass SC	50	13.4	43	9.6	34	9.2	126%	104%
Granby SC	41	10.6	40	6.8	27	6.4	148%	106%
Grizzly Peak ST		18.5		11.0		13.7		80%
Jones Pass ST		14.9		8.3		12.8		65%
Kremmling Reservoir SC	60	17.1	Not	Measured			-	-
Lake Irene ST		26.1		15.2		21.0		72%
Lynx Pass ST		12.7		7.7	41	10.2		76%
Middle Fork Camp SC	37	9.4	27	6.9	35	8.7	77%	79%
Phantom Valley ST		11.7		6.7		8.4		80%
Stillwater Creek ST		9.8		5.6		7.2		78%
Summit Ranch ST		9.7		7.4		8.5		87%
Willow Creek Pass SC	51	13.9	34	7.3	40	10.6	85%	69%
<i>Average</i>								<b>81%</b>

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

Snow course or SNOTEL (SC or ST)	<u>Highest March. 1 moisture content</u>			<u>Lowest March. 1 moisture content</u>		
	(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><b>New record high</b></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