



News for Immediate Release

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Contacts:

Elissa Lynn, Senior Meteorologist	(916) 574-2221
Frank Gehrke, Snow Surveys Office	(916) 952-4044
Ted Thomas, Information Officer	(916) 653-9712
Amy Norris, Information Officer	(916) 654-3755

DWR Announces Snow Survey Results

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources' (DWR) third snow survey of the winter season indicates snow water content is 80 percent of normal for the date, statewide.

“Although recent storms have added to the snowpack, California remains in a serious drought,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “This year’s precipitation levels are still below average. On the heels of two critically dry years it is unlikely we will make up the deficit and be able to refill our reservoirs before winter’s end. It’s very important that Californians continue to save water at home and in their businesses.”

Manual survey results taken today at four locations near Lake Tahoe were combined with electronic readings and indicate a statewide snowpack water content of 80 percent (84 percent in the Northern Sierra, 77 percent in the Central Sierra, and 83 percent in the Southern Sierra.) Last year at this time, snowpack was 114 percent of normal, but the driest spring on record followed, resulting in a second consecutive dry water year. Daily electronic readings may be accessed at http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/snowsurvey_sno/DLYSWEQ.

On February 27, 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger declared a [drought state of emergency](#), directing DWR and other state agencies to provide assistance to people and communities impacted by the drought.

Local water agencies are updating Urban Water Management Plans and DWR is facilitating what water transfers may be available through its Drought Water Bank program. Many providers have already enacted mandatory or voluntary water rationing and it is likely more agencies will require some form of rationing if dry conditions persist.

Storage in California’s major reservoirs is low. Lake Oroville, the principal storage reservoir for the State Water Project (SWP), is at 39 percent of capacity, and 55 percent of average storage for this time of year.

Continuing dry conditions and regulatory agency restrictions on Delta water exports are limiting water

deliveries to farms and urban areas. A forthcoming Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect salmon and steelhead may further reduce pumping capability. DWR's early estimate is that it will only be able to deliver 15 percent of requested State Water Project water this year to the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast and Southern California.

Governor Schwarzenegger has outlined steps to safeguard the state's water supply through a comprehensive plan that includes water conservation, more surface and groundwater storage, new investments in the state's aging water infrastructure, and improved water conveyance to protect the environment and provide a reliable water supply. Today's drought and regulatory restrictions underscore the need to take action to safeguard tomorrow's water supply.

Here are results from today's manual survey at Phillips Station and other sites near Lake Tahoe:

Location	Elevation	Snow Depth	Water Content	% of Long Term Average
Alpha	7,600 feet	61.1 inches	23 inches	82
Phillips Station	6,800 feet	54 inches	25 inches	101
Lyons Creek	6,700 feet	70.4 inches	25.1 inches	98
Tamarack Flat	6,500 feet	69.5 inches	27.8	119

Importance of Snow Surveying

Snow water content is important in determining the coming year's water supply. The measurements help hydrologists prepare water supply forecasts as well as provide others, such as hydroelectric power companies and the recreation industry, with needed data.

Monitoring is coordinated by DWR as part of the multi-agency California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program. Surveyors from more than 50 agencies and utilities visit hundreds of snow measurement courses in California's mountains to gauge the amount of water in the snowpack. The following Web sites offer an overview of important snow survey information:

Snowpack Site

http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/snowsurvey_sno/DLYSWEQ

Reservoir Storage Site

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/reservoirs/RES>

Snow Survey Illustrated

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/hwy50/>

Updated Drought Site

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

(The updated Drought Web site provides information on reservoir storage (current, percent of average, one year ago; snowpack information, and Northern and Southern Sierra precipitation currently, for the month, the season, and one year ago)

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.