

**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DWR's Fourth Snow Survey of 2012 Shows Dry Conditions**

**SACRAMENTO** -- Department of Water Resources (DWR) hydrologists today announced that water content in California's mountain snowpack is only 55 percent of the April 1 full season average.

"An unusually wet March improved conditions, but did not make up for the previous dry months," said DWR Director Mark Cowin. "The take-home message is that we've had a dry winter and although good reservoir storage will lessen impacts this summer, we need to be prepared for a potentially dry 2013."

Snowpack water content is measured both manually on or near the first of the month from January to May, and in real-time by electronic sensors.

This month's survey and electronic readings are considered the most important of the year, since early April is when the state's snowpack normally is at its peak before it begins to melt into streams, reservoirs and aquifers in the spring and summer months.

The mountain snowpack normally provides about a third of the water for California's households, industry and farms.

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

Location	Elevation	Snow Depth	Water Content	% of Long Term Average
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Alpha	7,600 feet	44 inches	15.9 inches	48
Phillips Station	6,800 feet	31 inches	11 inches	39
Lyons Creek	6,700 feet	52.4 inches	19.1 inches	61
Tamarack Flat	6,500 feet	44.9 inches	13.6 inches	50

Electronic readings indicate that water content in the northern mountains is 78 percent of the April 1 seasonal average.

Electronic readings for the central Sierra show 51 percent of the April 1 average. The number for the southern Sierra is 39 percent. The statewide number is 55 percent.

On March 1, snowpack water content was only 34 percent of the April 1 average in the northern mountain ranges, 28 percent in the central Sierra, and 29 percent in the southern Sierra. Statewide, the early March snowpack water content was 30 percent of the April 1 seasonal average.

On April 1 last year, snowpack water content readings were 173 percent of the April 1 average in the northern mountains, 161 percent in the central ranges, 155 percent in the south, and 163 percent statewide.

California has above average reservoir storage as summer approaches thanks to runoff from last winter's storms.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's principal reservoir, is 107 percent of average for the date (84 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity). Lake Shasta north of Redding, the federal Central Valley Project's largest reservoir with a capacity of 4.5 million acre-feet, is at 104 percent of average (86 percent of capacity).

DWR estimates it will be able to deliver 50 percent of the slightly more than 4 million acre-feet of State Water Project (SWP) water requested this year by the 29 public agencies that supply more than 25 million Californians and nearly a million acres of irrigated farmland. An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons of water, enough to cover one acre to a depth of one foot.

A 50 percent allocation is not severely low.

Wet conditions last year allowed the State Water Project to deliver 80 percent of the slightly more than 4 million acre-feet requested for calendar year 2011. 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 due to pumping restrictions to protect threatened and endangered fish -- was in 2006.

**Statewide snowpack readings from electronic sensors are available on the Internet**

at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/snow/DLYSWEQ>

**Historic readings from snowpack sensors are posted at**

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/rpts1/DLYSWEQ>

**Pick-a-Date snowpack water content readings are at**

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

**Electronic reservoir level readings may be found at**

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

**See DWR's new Water Conditions page at:**

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

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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. Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities