



MEDIA ADVISORY

December 23, 2015

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DWR Sets First Media-Oriented Snow Survey for December 30; Snowpack's Water Content Higher than Average, but Drought's Still On

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) will conduct this winter's first manual snow survey for the media on December 30 at Phillips Station off Highway 50 near Sierra-at-Tahoe Road approximately 90 miles east of Sacramento.

Electronic readings of the Sierra Nevada snowpack today show its statewide water content is 9.3 inches, 112 percent of the December 23 average. (See list at the end of this advisory showing the statewide snow water equivalents on or about January 1 from 2002 through 2015.)

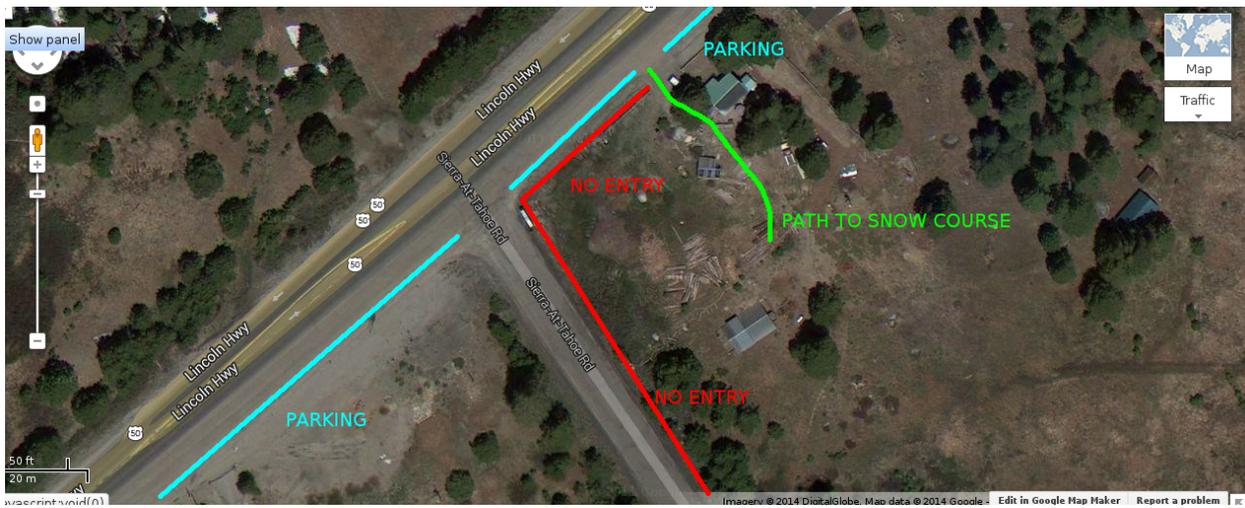
The Phillips snow course is one of dozens that will be measured during a 10-day window around January 1 to determine the water content of the snowpack, which normally contributes about 30 percent of California's water when it melts.

Last winter was remarkably warm; the average minimum temperature in the Sierra Nevada was 32.1 degrees Fahrenheit, the first time this value was higher than water's freezing point since record-keeping began. On January 1, 2015, the water content of the snowpack was 47 percent of that date's statewide historical average.

Below-normal precipitation and warm temperatures throughout the winter months combined to create a historically meager snowpack last winter, according to DWR's records. The snowpack at the start of February and March was only 23 percent and 19 percent of average respectively on those dates. By April 1, when the snowpack normally is at its peak, electronic readings showed the snowpack's water content was only 5 percent of normal for that date, the lowest on record.

Although the snowpack's water equivalent this year is slightly above the historical average for late December, DWR's drought managers say precipitation would have to be much greater than normal to have a significant effect on California's drought, which now is three months into its fifth consecutive year.

Media should stay abreast of road conditions and be prepared to equip their vehicles with chains. The survey will begin at 11 a.m.; results will be distributed in a press release by early afternoon. Media should not arrive before 10 a.m. due to the landowner's concerns. Early arrivals may be towed. Parking zones are indicated in this graphic:



Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared a state of drought emergency on January 17, 2014. His April 1, 2015 proclamation mandated a 25-percent statewide reduction in water use. Visit <http://drought.ca.gov> to learn how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.

Electronic snowpack readings are available on the Internet at:
<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/snowapp/sweq.action> For earlier readings, click the calendar icon below the map, select a date, then Refresh Data.

Water Year 2016 precipitation can be found at the following link; look in the right-hand column for the Northern Sierra 8-station index for updated rainfall readings in the critical northern portion of the state, as well as the San Joaquin 5-station and Tulare Basin 6-station links:
http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow_rain.html

Electronic reservoir readings are at:
<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cdecapp/resapp/getResGraphsMain.action>

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

California's Most Significant Droughts--Comparing Historical and Recent Conditions:
http://water.ca.gov/waterconditions/docs/California_Significant_Droughts_2015_summary.pdf

Drought Breaking News Page:
<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/>

Water Conditions Page:
<http://water.ca.gov/waterconditions/waterconditions.cfm>

For water conservation tips, visit Save Our Water:
<http://saveourwater.com>



Statewide Snowpack Water Content -- January 1 Average (10.2 inches)

| Year | Percent of January 1 Average |
|-------------|---|
| 2002 | 162 |
| 2003 | 162 |
| 2004 | 142 |
| 2005 | 159 |
| 2006 | 117 |
| 2007 | 61 |
| 2008 | 59 |
| 2009 | 78 |
| 2010 | 87 |
| 2011 | 209 |
| 2012 | 20 |
| 2013 | 137 |
| 2014 | 20 |
| 2015 | 47 |