



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

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DWR Sets Media Snow Survey on February 2; Snowpack Is Faring Better Than Any January Since 2011, but Final Drought Impact Is Still Unknown

SACRAMENTO – The second media-oriented snow survey of the winter will be conducted by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on Tuesday, February 2 at Phillips Station off Highway 50 near Sierra-at-Tahoe Road approximately 90 miles east of Sacramento.

Reservoir storage and snowpack have benefited from recent storms, but DWR officials say it's far too soon to know whether enough precipitation will have fallen by the end of winter's wet season to significantly impact the drought.

Precipitation since October 1 in the critical northern California watershed is 116 percent of the multi-decade average for today's date:

http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/products/PLOT_ESI.pdf

Storage in the state's major reservoirs has increased significantly since December 1, but all remain far below their historical averages for late January:

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

Electronic readings of the Sierra Nevada snowpack today show its statewide water content of 18.7 inches is greater now than on any January 26 since 2011. (The list at the end of this advisory shows the statewide snow water equivalents recorded for February 1 from 1950 through 2015.)

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

Below-normal precipitation and warm temperatures throughout the winter months during Water Year 2015 combined to create a historically meager snowpack, 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. The scant snowpack and subsequent drop in snowmelt runoff were large contributors to confirming California's fourth consecutive year of drought.

The statewide snowpack's water equivalent of 18.7 inches today is 115 percent of the historical average for January 26, and DWR's drought managers say the snowpack's water content will have to be much greater than normal – perhaps 150 percent greater than the April 1 average of 28 inches – to have a significant effect on California's drought, which now is four 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.; media should not arrive before 10 a.m. due to the landowner's concerns. Early arrivals may be towed. Survey results will be distributed in a press release by early afternoon. "Live" coverage of the Phillips Station survey will be available on DWR's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages. DWR will send reminders via social media before the survey. Parking zones are shown 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 at that page, select a date, then Refresh Data.

Water Year 2016 precipitation can be found at the following link http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow_rain.html. 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.

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_s_mall.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>



Average Statewide Snowpack Water Content on February 1: 18.3 Inches

Average Statewide Snowpack Water Content on April 1: 28 Inches

Percentage of Average Snow Water Content on Two Dates:

	April 1	February 1
1950	76%	119%
1951	49%	77%
1952	171%	267%
1953	95%	149%
1954	53%	82%
1955	65%	101%
1956	123%	193%
1957	43%	67%
1958	67%	104%
1959	32%	50%
1960	41%	65%
1961	35%	55%
1962	50%	78%
1963	13%	21%
1964	58%	91%
1965	111%	174%
1966	87%	136%
1967	103%	161%
1968	65%	101%
1969	147%	230%
1970	61%	96%
1971	109%	171%
1972	84%	132%

1973	88%	138%
1974	80%	125%
1975	42%	66%
1976	14%	22%
1977	16%	25%
1978	105%	164%
1979	49%	77%
1980	66%	104%
1981	40%	63%
1982	82%	130%
1983	121%	190%
1984	71%	112%
1985	62%	96%
1986	58%	91%
1987	30%	47%
1988	59%	93%
1989	62%	96%
1990	35%	55%
1991	13%	21%
1992	31%	48%
1993	128%	200%
1994	33%	51%
1995	132%	207%
1996	63%	98%
1997	106%	168%
1998	72%	113%
1999	63%	99%
2000	45%	71%
2001	39%	61%
2002	76%	120%
2003	65%	102%
2004	73%	116%
2005	102%	163%
2006	69%	110%
2007	25%	39%
2008	83%	132%
2009	39%	62%
2010	74%	117%
2011	80%	129%
2012	23%	37%
2013	54%	87%
2014	9%	14%
2015	14%	23%

