



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR's Third Snow Survey of Winter Set for February 27 *Anticipated Storms May Boost Readings*

SACRAMENTO – Department of Water Resources surveyors hope to find a bit more snow when they go into the mountains Thursday to measure snowpack water content. But water managers say this week's expected storms will do little more than dent California's persistent drought conditions.

"California is in the grip of a game-changing drought and we have no idea how long it will last," said DWR Director Mark Cowin. "We already have been forced to set State Water Project allocations at zero, and we have nothing but more hard choices ahead until we see significant new amounts of rain and snow. One choice we all must make is to get serious about conserving water in our homes and places of work and make it a lifelong habit."

The state's drought, pushing through its third year, has left the Sierra largely bare of snow and the state's reservoirs low.

Today, before anticipated storms, electronic readings indicate that water content in the statewide snowpack is only 23 percent of normal for the date and 19 percent of the average April 1 seasonal total.

Surveyors from DWR and cooperating agencies manually measure snowpack water content on or about the first of the month from January through May to supplement and check the accuracy of real-time electronic readings.

The snowpack – often called California's largest reservoir – normally provides about a third of the water used by cities and farms as it melts into streams and reservoirs in spring and early summer.

California's major reservoirs, mostly bereft of both snow and rain this winter, are dangerously low.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's (SWP) principal reservoir, is at only 39 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (57 percent of its historical average for the date). Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's (CVP) largest reservoir, is at 38 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity (53 percent of its historical average). San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta reservoir for both the SWP and CVP, is at a mere 33 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity (40 percent of average for this time of year).

The news media may accompany DWR snow surveyors near Echo Summit on Thursday. The site is Phillips Station at Highway 50 and Sierra at Tahoe Road, approximately 90 miles east of Sacramento. Reporters and photographers should bring snowshoes or cross-country skis and park along Highway 50. Measurements will begin at 11 a.m. and results should be available by early afternoon.

Electronic snowpack readings are available on the Internet at:

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

Electronic reservoir readings may be found at:

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

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

Water Conditions Page

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

Drought Page

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

For simple, every day water conservation tips, click on "Save Our Water" here:

