



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Announces Final Snow Survey Results for 2008-2009

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources' (DWR) final snow survey of the season indicates snowpack water content is 66 percent of normal for the date, statewide. Last year at this time snowpack was measured at 72 percent of normal, statewide.

“Today’s snowpack survey further emphasizes the importance of Governor Schwarzenegger’s statewide drought emergency declaration and our call on all Californians to reduce their water use,” said DWR Director Lester Snow. “When combined with extremely dry years in 2007 and 2008, low storage in the state’s major reservoirs, restrictions on Delta pumping, a growing population and prediction of increasingly unpredictable weather patterns due to climate change, it is clear the problems facing California will persist beyond this year and this drought.”

Manual survey results taken today at four locations near Lake Tahoe, combined with electronic readings, put snowpack water content at 66 percent of normal in the Northern Sierra, 70 percent in the Central Sierra, and 61 percent in the Southern Sierra.

California’s major reservoirs remain low. Lake Oroville, principal storage reservoir for the State Water Project (SWP), registers only 58 percent of capacity.

On February 27, 2009, the Governor declared a [drought state of emergency](#), directing DWR and other state agencies to provide assistance to people and communities impacted by the drought. On March 30, 2009, DWR provided the Governor an update on drought conditions, recommended strategies, and called for the creation of an online drought bulletin. The monthly bulletin will provide updates about current water conditions, outline statewide reservoir storage levels, precipitation and runoff forecasts and discuss local impacts and responses to the drought. The report, transmittal letter, and first bulletin, released today, are available for viewing at <http://www.water.ca.gov/drought/updates.cfm>.

To assist with ongoing drought conditions, local water agencies are updating Urban Water Management Plans and DWR is facilitating water transfers through its Drought Water Bank program. Approximately \$240 million in bond funding has also been released for water conservation, drought assistance and Integrated Regional Water Management programs. The money was released by the Pooled Money Investment Board following the successful sale of California infrastructure bonds in March.

On April 21, DWR and the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) launched a statewide public education program challenging individuals to do their part to “Save Our Water.” For information about Save Our Water, conservation tips and drought and water shortage information, visit www.saveourH2O.org.

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	35.8 inches	18.6 inches	72 %
Phillips Station	6,800 feet	11.1 inches	5.7 inches	35 %
Lyons Creek	6,700 feet	45.0 inches	21.1 inches	93 %
Tamarack Flat	6,500 feet	30.8 inches	13.4 inches	73 %

Importance of Snow Surveying

Snow water content is important in determining the coming year's water supply and final snow survey results are used to determine final allocation of SWP deliveries. On April 15, DWR increased the allocation of SWP water to its contractors from 20 percent to 30 percent of requested amounts for calendar year 2009. If the allocation remains at 30 percent, it will match the lowest historical allocation in 1991. The final 2009 allocation will be calculated in May.

The measurements also 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/>