



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DWR's Second Snow Survey of Winter Set for January 30

SACRAMENTO – As winter slips away, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) expects to find far less snow than normal for the date when it conducts its second snow survey of the winter on Thursday.

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

Storms finally breaking through a coastal high pressure ridge largely blamed for dry conditions are expected to bring some snow to higher elevations before Thursday's snow survey, but not enough to dent the drought. Still, conditions may be better than on January 3 when the first survey of the season found more bare ground than snow.

Manual and electronic readings on January 3 measured water content in the statewide snowpack at only about 20 percent of average for the date and a scant 7 percent of the April 1 average when it's normally at its peak.

Today, before the anticipated moderate storms, electronic readings indicate that statewide, snowpack water content has dropped to 10 percent of normal for the date and 6 percent of the April 1 seasonal average.

The snowpack normally provides about a third of the water used by the state's farms and cities.

California faces a triple threat of mostly dry forecasts, almost no mountain snow and low reservoirs.

"While we can only hope for wet weather," said DWR Director Mark Cowin, "we can act positively to conserve as much water as possible. Water conservation today is an absolute must."

The reservoir storage from winter 2012 storms that got most of California through last year's record dry weather is depleted, with each day reducing the odds that this winter will bring drought-ending precipitation.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's (SWP) principal reservoir, is only at 36 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity (54 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, also is at 36 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity and 54 percent of its historical average for this time of year. San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta pool for both the SWP and CVP, is at a mere 31 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity (39 percent of normal for the date).

On January 17, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared a state of drought emergency and called on local water suppliers and municipalities to implement their water shortage contingency plans. He also directed State officials to respond to the state's drought conditions by taking all necessary actions, including facilitating water transfers and reducing water use at government facilities.

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 their vehicles 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/snow/current/snow/index.html>

Reservoir conditions are found here:

<http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/reservoirs/RES>

Everyday water conservation tips may be found by clicking on Save Our Water at:



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.