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NEWS

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COLORADO SNOWPACK REMAINS ABOVE AVERAGE AS MELT BEGINS

Lakewood, May 2, 2008—The latest snow surveys, conducted by the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), indicate that Colorado’s snowpack reached its maximum accumulation for the season, during April. As a whole, the second half of April was considerably drier than normal, which halted any significant additional accumulations. Warm temperatures have allowed snowmelt to proceed as is typically expected. By month’s end, snow melt was well underway, especially at lower elevations.

Across southern Colorado there was a much greater amount of snow melt than additional snow accumulations during April. As a result, the May 1 snow surveys show significant decreases as a percent of average from the April 1 statistics. For these basins, the May 1 surveys mark the second consecutive month of decreasing snowpack percentages. Since these basins had previously reported the highest snowpack totals in the state, the lack of additional snowfall and the initiation of lower elevation snow melt, will help to mitigate some of the higher runoff volumes that may have otherwise occurred. Across northern Colorado, snowmelt during April was less dramatic which has helped to maintain snowpack percentages at slightly above average levels, according to Allen Green, State Conservationist with the NRCS.

(MORE)

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Colorado's statewide snowpack dipped to 115% of average on May 1, which is the lowest statewide percentage reported since back on January 1 when snowpack totals were 110% of average. This month's decrease in snowpack percentage marks the second consecutive month where statewide snowpack percentages have decreased. The highest statewide percentage was recorded on March 1 at 135% of average.

Even with the decreasing snowpack percentages, Colorado's water supply outlook remains in excellent condition across the state. The lower elevation snow melt has produced above average streamflows in many basins during April. Meanwhile, runoff forecasts for the remainder of the spring and summer months continue to call for near average to well above average volumes. The highest volumes, as a percent of average, remain across southern Colorado, where mid-winter storms brought impressive snowpack totals. "This year's runoff across the Gunnison, Arkansas, Rio Grande and San Juan river basins appear to be the best in over a decade and many water users will be able to take advantage of the runoff in coming months", said Green.

The table below shows Colorado's snowpack and reservoir storage as of May 1, 2008.

BASIN	% AVERAGE SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.'S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	% LAST YR.'S RESERVOIR STORAGE
GUNNISON	136	290	99	79
COLORADO	120	171	97	91
SOUTH PLATTE	103	110	90	96
NORTH PLATTE	109	159	---	---
YAMPA/WHITE	108	259	92	81
ARKANSAS	131	148	90	96
RIO GRANDE	117	170	100	114
SAN JUAN, ANIMAS, DOLORES	103	200	100	83
STATEWIDE	115	172	95	89

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