



Klamath National Forest
Butte Valley National Grassland

Forest Service News Release

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Klamath National Forest's April snow levels highest in years

April 1st snow survey results for Scott River sub-basin

Yreka, Calif., April 10, 2023— The Klamath National Forest has completed the April 1st snow surveys. These measurements are a part of the statewide California Cooperative Snow Survey program, which helps the State forecast the quantity of water available for agriculture, power generation, recreation, and stream flow releases later in the year.

Winter continued strong all through March. There were many snowfall events; and when snow did fall, it stayed in place and helped build up the local snowpack. The end result is an amount of snow that hasn't been seen in years and quite welcome after the lows of the previous year. According to measurements taken for the April survey, the snowpack is at 178% of the historic average snow height (snow depth) and at 163% of the historic Snow Water Equivalent ("SWE", measure of water content) across all survey points (see results table).

The Box Camp site was unable to be surveyed this year. An attempt was made, but due to high snow load, the route proved to be overly technical and difficult for snowmobiles to access. However, even without the datapoint, it is clear that it would have joined the other sites as well above the long-term April average.

April 1st is an important date for surveying snow because early April is historically when the snowpack is at its maximum; and this date has the greatest weight when the State forecasts annual water availability. To gain additional data for April, three extra locations are added to the surveys for this month to supplement the usual five Scott River watershed snow measurement sites. Of these, Etna Mountain and Box Camp are also in the Scott River drainage, and Wolford Cabin is within the Trinity River basin. These additional sites are generally considered too remote or difficult to access on a monthly basis.

Snow surveys are conducted monthly during the winter and spring months (February through May). Forest Service employees travel to established sites in the headwaters of the Scott River watershed to take measurements. The newest measuring site at Scott Mountain has been monitored for over thirty-five years; the oldest site at Middle Boulder has been monitored for over seventy years. Some sites are located close to Forest roads with good access, while others require hours of travel by snowshoe and/or snowmobile.

The height of snow and SWE are measured by a snow sampling tube with a cutter end that is driven through the snowpack, measuring depth. The snow core is then weighed to determine the water content (SWE). The information is forwarded to the State of California, where the data is compiled with other snow depth reports and becomes part of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys program. The data is managed by the

California Department of Water Resources; more information is available on their website at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow/current/snow/index.html>.



For the April 2023 surveys, there was a lot of snow!

Upper photo: Untracked road to the Scott Mountain site.

Lower photo: Sampling at Etna Mountain site by Forest Service personnel Kip Van de Water and Anna Chinchilli using a long survey tube.

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April 1st, 2023, Snow Survey Results Scott River Sub-Basin

Snow Course	Height of Snow			Snow Water Equivalent		
	Measured	Long-term Average for Apr 1	% of Long-term Average	Measured	Long-term Average for Apr 1	% of Long-term Average
Middle Boulder 1 (Established 1946 / Elevation 6600')	115.7"	70.4"	164%	45.3"	30.2"	150%
Middle Boulder 3 (Established 1948 / Elevation 6200')	116.3"	63.1"	184%	47.5"	26.9"	177%
Dynamite Meadow (Established 1955 / Elevation 5700')	84.0"	44.0"	191%	32.4"	17.5"	185%
Swampy John (Established 1951 / Elevation 5500')	96.8"	77.9"	124%	32.4"	30.7"	106%
Scott Mountain (Established 1986 / Elevation 5900')	112.5"	48.9"	230%	50.5"	20.8"	245%
Box Camp (Established 1978 / Elevation 6440')	Did not survey			Did not survey		
Etna Mountain (Established 1951 / Elevation 5900')	106.1"	68.5"	155%	34.6"	27.0"	128%
Wolford Cabin (Established 1949 / Elevation 6150')	160.4"	81.7"	196%	49.6"	33.7"	147%
Total Average	178%			163%		

The Klamath National Forest & Butte Valley National Grassland cover 1,700,000 acres located in Siskiyou County, California and Jackson County, Oregon. Butte Valley National Grassland is the newest National Grassland and the only one in California. The forest is headquartered in Yreka, CA, and maintains ranger stations in the California communities of Macdoel, Happy Camp, and Fort Jones. More information is available at www.fs.usda.gov/klamath.

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