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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kings River Snowpack Lagging Far Below Average, Survey Finds

WEEKS OF DRY WINTER WEATHER and clear skies have taken a significant toll on the Kings River watershed's snowpack and runoff prospects. The season's first snow surveys conducted Thursday (January 25) by the Kings River Water Association found that snowpack water content readings are lagging far below where they should be at this time of year.

"There is very little snow," Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen, who manages the KRWA, said after flying over much of the high country within the watersheds of the South Fork and North Fork. "There was grass sticking out of every course we surveyed and bare rock showing everywhere. It's not a good sign."

Data collected from seven remote locations was equally discouraging. KRWA's surveys found snow depths and water contents that are nearly four times less than they were a year ago.

Water content is averaging just five inches, 19.7% of the average for April 1, the date upon which the snowpack is assumed to peak, and less than 40% of what should have accumulated by this date in a "normal" year. Snow depths are averaging only 20 inches, compared with more than 56 inches a year ago. Snow depths and water content readings are uniformly low in various parts of the watershed.

"Future weather is the key but each day without storm activity causes on-the-ground conditions to fall a little further below the average," Haugen said. "It would take much-above-average storm activity for the remainder of the season to have a chance at having normal Kings River runoff during the spring and summer months. If we do not receive any significant precipitation, we could be heading for a critically dry year."

By contrast, the past two years produced above-average water conditions. Last year's Kings River runoff amounted to 2,952,968 acre-feet, 173.5% of average. It was the 14th largest Kings River water year on record.

Survey data will be used by the California Department of Water Resources to make its initial prediction of runoff on the Kings River and other streams. That information is crucial to water and power managers for planning purposes.

Kings River SNOW SURVEY SUMMARY

*Surveys Conducted January 25, 2007 in the Watersheds of the
South Fork and Middle Fork*

By the Kings River Water Association for the February 1 California Cooperative Snow Survey

KRWA Snow Survey Course Locations	Elevation (Feet)	Snow Depth (Inches)	Water Content (Inches)	April 1 Average (Inches)	Percent of April 1 Average ^Y	1/25/06 Water Content (Inches)
Bench Lake	10,600	15.8	4.3	27.1	15.9%	22.6
State Lakes	10,300	(No Survey)		29.0		
Mitchell Meadow	9,900	25.0	7.0	32.9	21.3%	26.5
Scenic Meadow	9,650	18.7	4.1	24.1	17.0%	18.4
Rowell Meadow	8,850	21.3	5.9	26.5	22.3%	19.4
Big Meadows	7,600	20.6	5.0	24.3	20.3%	18.7
Big Meadows (Sensor Site)	7,600	21.2	5.0	26.0	19.2%	16.6
Horse Corral Meadow	7,600	17.6	3.7	16.3	22.7%	10.8
COURSE AVERAGES		20.0	5.0	25.4	19.7%	19.0

^Y *The snowpack water content average should be 100% on April 1 in an average water year. On January 25 in a "normal" year, the snowpack water content should be 50% of the April 1 average.*



**Bare Ground near Bench Lake Snow Survey Course
(Elevation 10,600 ft.)**



**Sierra Crest above Bench Lake Snow Survey Course
(Elevation 10,600 ft.)**