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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recent Storms Help But Kings River Snowpack Is Lagging

ANOTHER MOSTLY DRY JANUARY has given way to a series of storms that helped the Kings River watershed's snowpack and runoff prospects but is far from ensuring even an average water year. The season's first snow surveys conducted Wednesday (January 28) by the Kings River Water Association found that snowpack water content readings are still below where they should be at this time of year.

Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen, who manages the KRWA, said surveyors found significant new snow accumulations in many parts of the South Fork and North Fork watersheds. "Unfortunately, overall conditions are much as they have been during snow surveys over the past two dry years," said Haugen. "It's discouraging."

Data collected from eight remote locations showed water content is averaging 11.3 inches, 44% of the average for April 1, the date upon which the snowpack is assumed to peak, and less than 80% of what should have accumulated by this date in a "normal" year. Snow depths are averaging 30 inches.

"Future weather is the key," 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 more significant precipitation, we could still be heading for a third consecutive dry year."

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, a forecast expected within the next two weeks. That information is crucial to water and power managers for planning purposes.

Kings River SNOW SURVEY SUMMARY

*Surveys Conducted January 28, 2009 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 of (Inches)	Percent April 1 Average*	2/6/08 Water Content (Inches)
Bench Lake	10,600	45.3	12.9	27.1	48%	16.8
State Lakes	10,300	40.9	11.1	29.0	38%	
Mitchell Meadow	9,900	57.0	18.5	32.9	56%	26.8
Scenic Meadow	9,650	29.7	9.4	24.1	39%	19.4
Rowell Meadow	8,850	31.2	11.2	26.5	42%	19.6
Big Meadows	7,600	27.5	8.8	24.6	36%	29.2
Big Meadows (Sensor Site)	7,600	28.0	10.4	26.0	40%	31.3
Horse Corral Meadow	7,600	21.0	7.8	16.3	48%	20.5
COURSE AVERAGES		30.0	11.3	25.8	44%	23.4

* *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.*

SOURCE: Kings River Water Association