



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SNOWPACK SURVEY RESULTS REVEAL RISE IN STATE WATER RESOURCES
Local WATER Agency Anticipates Water Supply Increase

Palmdale, CA – February 11, 2019 – Results of this season’s second Phillips Station Snow Survey, conducted on January 31 by the state Department of Water Resources, are welcome news for California’s State Water Contractors, including the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK). The manual survey recorded 50 inches of snow depth with a snow water equivalent of 18 inches, representing 98% of average for that site in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, at an elevation of 6800’, several miles west of Lake Tahoe.

By comparison, on Feb. 1 of last year, measurements at Phillips Station revealed the snow water equivalent was only 2.6 inches, or 14% of the early February average. Statewide, the Sierra snowpack is 100% of average for this time of year, according to a report from the DWR.

“The positive survey results bring with them the possibility of another significant increase to AVEK’s imported water allocation,” said AVEK’s General Manager, Dwayne Chisam. “During wet years, when snowpack is favorable and water is abundant, we can take advantage of our water banks, storing water to increase our water supply reliability in the dry years. It is similar having a savings account.”

To date, the Agency has recharged approximately 139,000 acre-feet of water. With the current recoverable water storage supply of 78,400 acre-feet, the Agency is close to being on par with their goal of having enough local water stored and available to meet the Agency’s demand for 3 years.

“We are speculating the Agency’s water allocation could soon rise to at least 35% of AVEK’s annual entitlement of 144,844 acre-feet – the amount of imported surface supplies AVEK can draw from the State Water Project when allocations reach 100%”, said Tom Barnes, AVEK’s Water Resource Manager. “If the allocation reaches 35%, that totals roughly 50,000 acre-feet for AVEK.”

Allocations depend on the combined amount of precipitation in a year, comprised of the snowpack water content which becomes the spring runoff, coupled with rainfall levels throughout the year, like the storms that soaked the Antelope Valley in recent weekends.

Snow surveys, like the one just conducted at Phillips Station, are essential to the management of California's water supply. More than 50 local, state and federal agencies work jointly as part of the Cooperative Snow Surveys Program to collect data from more than 300 snow courses throughout California.

The Sierra snowpack generally supplies about 30% of California's water needs as it melts in the spring thaw and early summer, to furnish consumer demands during the summer and fall.

ABOUT AVEK

3rd largest State Water Contractor in California - In 1959, AVEK received its charter as a regional water Agency from the State Legislature. In 1962, AVEK's Board of Directors signed a contract to secure imported water supplies that supplement local groundwater. AVEK entitlement of state water is 144,844 acre-feet. Optimizing water resources and developing groundwater storage enables AVEK to maintain reliable, sustainable and affordable water supplies for more than 20 municipal users along with Edwards Air Force Base, Plant 42 and U.S. Borax within a 2300-mile territory that spans portions Los Angeles, Kern and Ventura counties. AVEK is vital to future regional economic development and national defense programs.

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