

Snowpack exceeds average for first time in years



Kirkwood received so much snow earlier this week that when the roads were closed employees spent the night at the resort. Photo/Provided

By Bettina Boxall, Frank Shyong and Joseph Serna, Los Angeles Times

A series of powerful snowstorms in the Sierra Nevada has resulted in a small milestone in drought-stricken California: The snowpack is now higher than average for this time of year.

The storms, which are likely to continue into Friday, have fattened the mountain snowpack to levels California hasn't seen for two years, said Steve Nemeth, water supply forecaster for the state Department of Water Resources.

The announcement was welcome news to a state that has struggled with extremely dry conditions for more than four years. However, experts were quick to point out that California's drought is far from over.

Statewide, the snowpack is 111 percent of average for the date. In the northern Sierra, it is 116 percent of the norm; in the central Sierra, 121 percent of average and in the southern Sierra, 85 percent of the norm.

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