

# Technology helps measure snowpack with accuracy

By Ezra David Romero, Capital Public Radio

Frank Gehrke trudges through snow and ice, as he's done for nearly four decades in the Sierra Nevada. He's one of many state workers who takes monthly snow surveys, in the same spots, to figure out how much water is in the snowpack. And this old-fashioned way of measuring the snowpack is quite laborious.

The data from surveys and a system of around 150 sensors informs local and state officials how much water is stored in the Sierra. But there's a flaw: Measurements can be up to 40 percent off.

In dry, warm years like 2018, snow sensors often don't work because they're covered in thick layers of ice as snow melts and freezes.

That's why Gehrke is stoked about a new way to measure the snowpack from the sky.

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