

Water content improves, but only 52% of average



Three years ago Gov. Jerry Brown found dirt, not snow during the April survey. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

March was good, but it wasn't a miracle. That was the conclusion Monday of the snow survey.

While the water content increased dramatically in a one-month period, it is only at 52 percent of average for the state.

The manual measurement that was taken April 2 near Echo Summit recorded a depth of 32.1 inches of snow, 12.4 percent water content, for an average of 49 percent.

A month ago the water content was at 23 percent of average.

The water content is more important than the snow depth because that is what will melt this spring and be consumed by about one-third of the state's water users downstream. Reservoirs throughout the state are the catch basins for the

Sierra runoff, which then is filtered out for municipalities and farmers throughout California throughout the summer.

“The early April snow survey is the most important for water supply forecasting because the snowpack is normally at its peak before it begins to melt with rising spring temperatures,” officials with the state Department of Water Resources said.

The good news is that the reservoirs in the state are doing well because of the record rain/snowfall from last winter. Most are still at above average levels despite this winter’s dismal rain/snow.