

Water planners work to enhance snowpack data

By Christine Souza, AgAlert

Access to precise, real-time data about the amount of water in the Sierra Nevada snowpack has become more critical than ever, California water managers say, in order to assist them in making informed decisions about an ever-less-predictable supply of water.

That's why water managers came to a panel discussion about advancements in snow-measurement technology during an Association of California Water Agencies conference in Sacramento last week. The discussion focused on the Airborne Snow Observatory, or ASO program, developed by researchers at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

Turlock Irrigation District Chief Hydrologist Wes Monier said TID, which co-owns Don Pedro Reservoir on the Tuolumne River, has taken advantage of the program for the past six years. Calling the ASO program "the best solution going forward for the next generation," Monier said the technology helps with flood control, minimizes downstream impacts, provides more flexibility and optimizes the system.

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