

Dry winter can't stop snow carnivals

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An absence of precipitation over more than 10 weeks has not stopped Beijingers from enjoying a snowy winter.

With snow machines blowing out flakes, six public recreation spots have staged snow-themed carnivals. Locations include Beihai Park, the Bird's Nest and the Old Summer Palace, where the "royal snow festival" features snow scooter racing and snowfield Counter-Strike shooting.

Man-made wintry scenes are not a waste of water as long as parks do not use tap water, Beijing Water Authority officials said Monday.

Beijing parks have churned out more than 60,000 cubic meters of snow, using over 30,000 tons of water, starting late last year when the Old Summer Palace opened its snow festival on December 22, according to the Legal Mirror.

Water utilized to create these snow parks came from local lakes or non-drinkable water supplies, the newspaper reported. Citizens do not have to worry about their precious water resources being affected, because the parks will recycle the water when the thawing season arrives, assured the water authorities.

Artificial snow is considered a blessing by some urbanites during one of the driest winters in Beijing's history. "I love snow carnivals," said a park visitor at Yuyuantan, Haidian district, quoted in a Beijing Daily report Monday. "Playing in the snow, it feels like winter."

Beijing has not seen any precipitation since October 25, with the exceptions of a scanty drizzle on November 7 and a trace of snow in late December in the outer districts of Mentougou, Yanqing and Changping, according to Weather China (weather.com.cn), which is run by the China Meteorological Administration.

Snow usually falls in Beijing around November 29. This winter is coming close to breaking the all-time record for latest snow in Beijing. The existing record is for the winter of 1983-84, when the season persisted without a single flake until January 29.

<http://beijing.globaltimes.cn/society/2011-01/611064.html>