



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, D.C. 20013

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**Date: February 15, 2006**

**Subject: February 1, 2006 Western Snowpack Conditions and Water Supply Forecasts**

The following information is provided for your use in describing western climate and water supply conditions as of February 1, 2006.

## **OVERVIEW**

Record low snowpacks continue in the Southwest while snowpacks were above, to well above average in the Sierras of California, Oregon, southern Washington, southern Idaho, southwestern Montana, western Wyoming, northern Utah and northwestern Colorado.

Seasonal precipitation is extremely low in the Southwest and well above average in most Pacific Northwest basins in response to a series of warm, sub-tropical storms that have moved through the region starting in September and October of 2005.

Extremely low seasonal streamflow is forecast for most basins in Arizona, New Mexico and southwest Utah as a result of record low snowpacks and lack of precipitation. Streamflow forecasts are above average in western Colorado, eastern and northern Utah, southern and southwestern Wyoming, northern Nevada, southern Idaho, the Sierras of California, most of Oregon, the southern Cascades of Washington, and parts of western Montana. Near to slightly below average streamflow is forecast for northern Washington, northern Idaho, British Columbia, western Montana, northern Wyoming and southern Utah and southwestern Colorado.

As of February 1, reservoir storages for all western states are slightly below seasonal averages with the exception of Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon which are slightly above historical averages.

## **SNOWPACK**

*Special Report:* As of February 15th, Arizona's snowpack has not improved. As shown in Fig. 1, Arizona's February 15th snow measurements go back to 1940 and in 2006, 17 of 38 active sites in Arizona reported no snow, 13 reported snow, but less than 0.5 inches for a total of 30. For total number of sites with less than 0.5 inches, 2006 comes in second place to 2000, which reported 31 sites. 2000 and 2006 also have the highest percentage of sites with less than 0.5" (82% and 79% respectively). New Mexico is reporting 5 snow-free sites of the 53 reporting February 1st measurements.

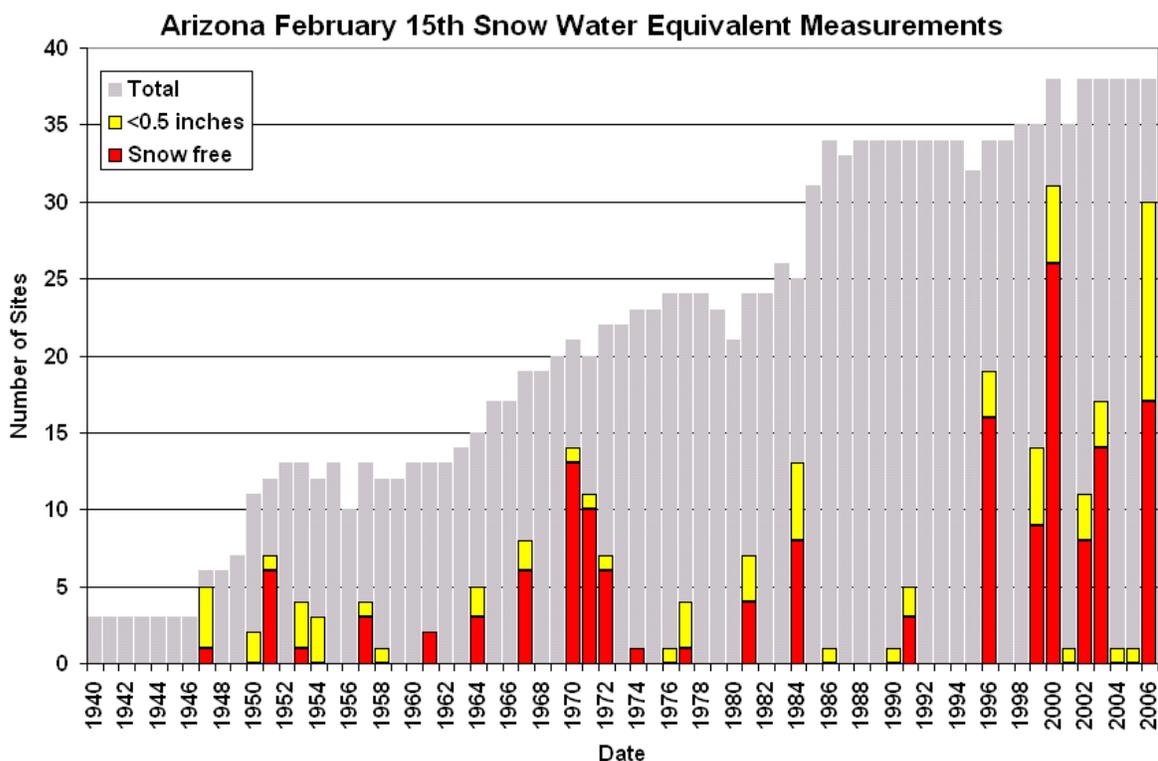


Fig. 1. Arizona February 15<sup>th</sup> Snow Water Equivalent Measurements.

The westwide February 1, 2006 snowpack map reflects extremely low (less than 50% of average snowpacks) in Arizona, New Mexico, southern Colorado, and southwestern Utah (Fig. 2). The scarcity of winter storms in the Southwest is the primary reason for the extremely low snowpacks.

A series of strong winter storms has boosted snowpacks to above, or well above average (111% to over 150%) in central Oregon, the southern Cascades of Washington, southern Idaho, southwest Montana, western and southern Wyoming, northern Utah, northern Colorado and the central Sierras of California. Snowpacks are below average throughout Alaska.

A map containing a daily update of the westwide snowpack may be obtained from the following URL - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/snow.htm>

### MONTHLY AND SEASONAL PRECIPITATION

December precipitation was extremely low, less than 50% of average, in southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, central Montana and Alaska (Fig. 3). Precipitation was below average in southern California, southern Nevada, southern Utah, western Colorado, northern Wyoming, and parts of northern Montana. Precipitation was well above average (greater than 150%) in central California, central Nevada, most of Oregon, Washington, most of Idaho, northern Utah, western Wyoming, parts of southeastern Colorado and British Columbia.

Seasonal precipitation for the period October 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006 reflects a very similar pattern of the December precipitation (Fig. 4). Very low amounts have been reported in

southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Near average totals are reported in the parts of the Great Basin and Wyoming. Well above average amounts are reported in northern California, northern Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and northern Colorado. Alaska precipitation is near to slightly below average in most basins and slightly above average in some southwestern basins.

### **SPRING AND SUMMER STREAMFLOW FORECASTS**

Extremely low seasonal streamflow is forecast for most basins in Arizona, New Mexico and southwest Utah as a result of record low snowpacks and lack of precipitation (Fig. 5). Streamflow forecasts are above average in western Colorado, eastern and northern Utah, southern and southwestern Wyoming, northern Nevada, southern Idaho, the Sierras of California, most of Oregon, the southern Cascades of Washington, and parts of western Montana. Near to slightly below average streamflow is forecast for northern Washington, northern Idaho, British Columbia, western Montana, northern Wyoming and southern Utah and southwestern Colorado.

Specific state streamflow summaries can be obtained from the Internet location - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cqibin/bor.pl>

### **RESERVOIR STORAGE**

As of February 1, reservoir storages for all western states are slightly below seasonal averages with the exception of Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon which are slightly above historical averages.

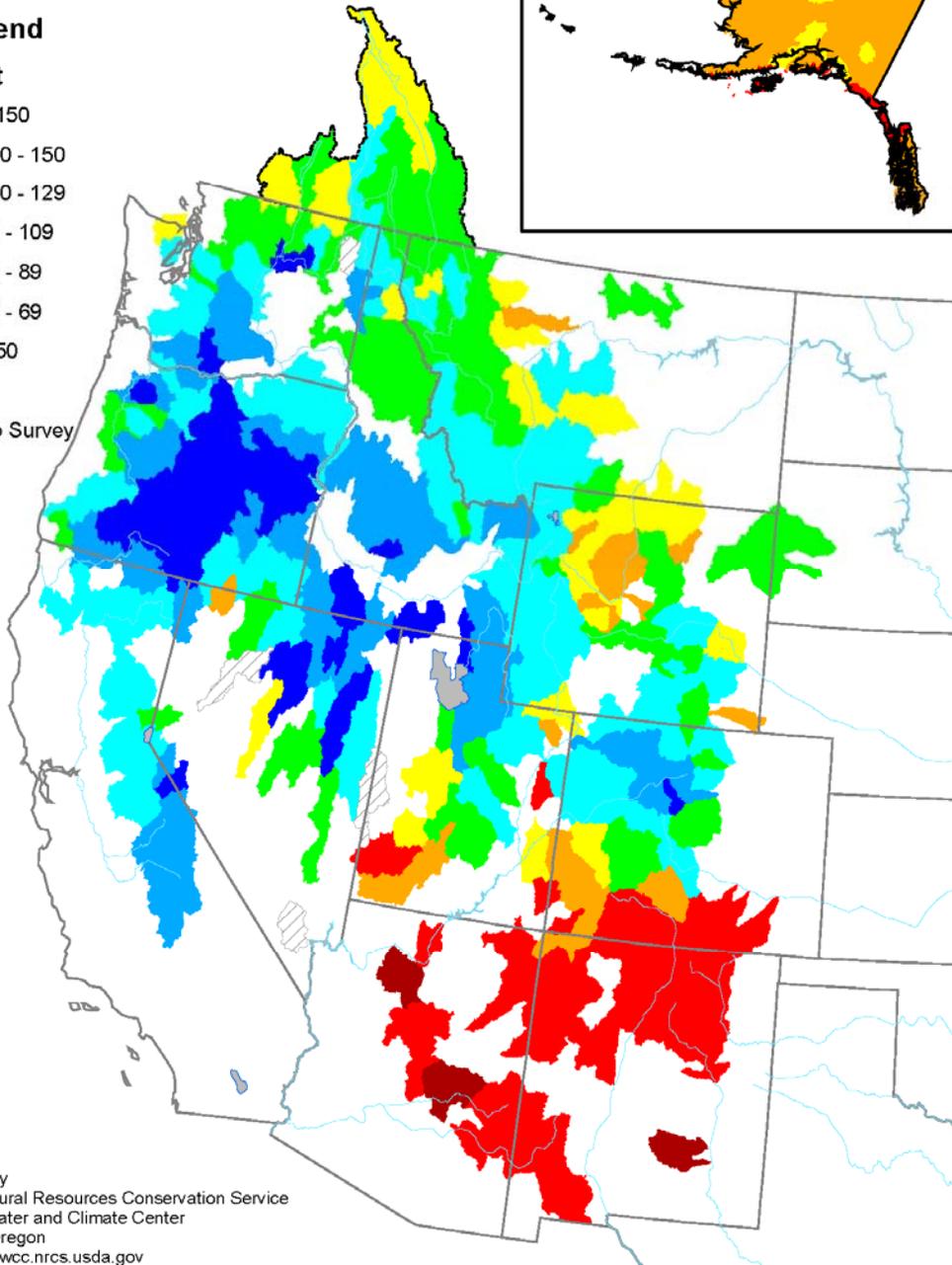
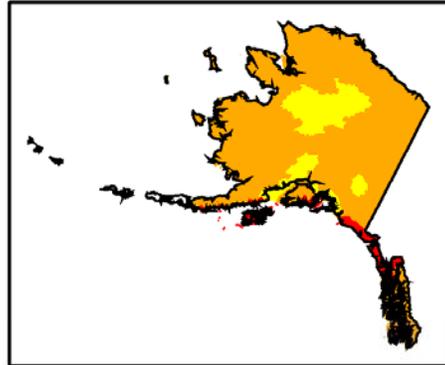
### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provides the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

/s/ DAVID THACKERAY

Director, Conservation Engineering Division, Natural Resources Conservation Division,  
Washington, DC

# Mountain Snowpack as of February 1, 2006



Prepared by  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
National Water and Climate Center  
Portland, Oregon  
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Figure 2. Mountain Snowpack, February 1, 2006

# Monthly Precipitation for January 2006

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

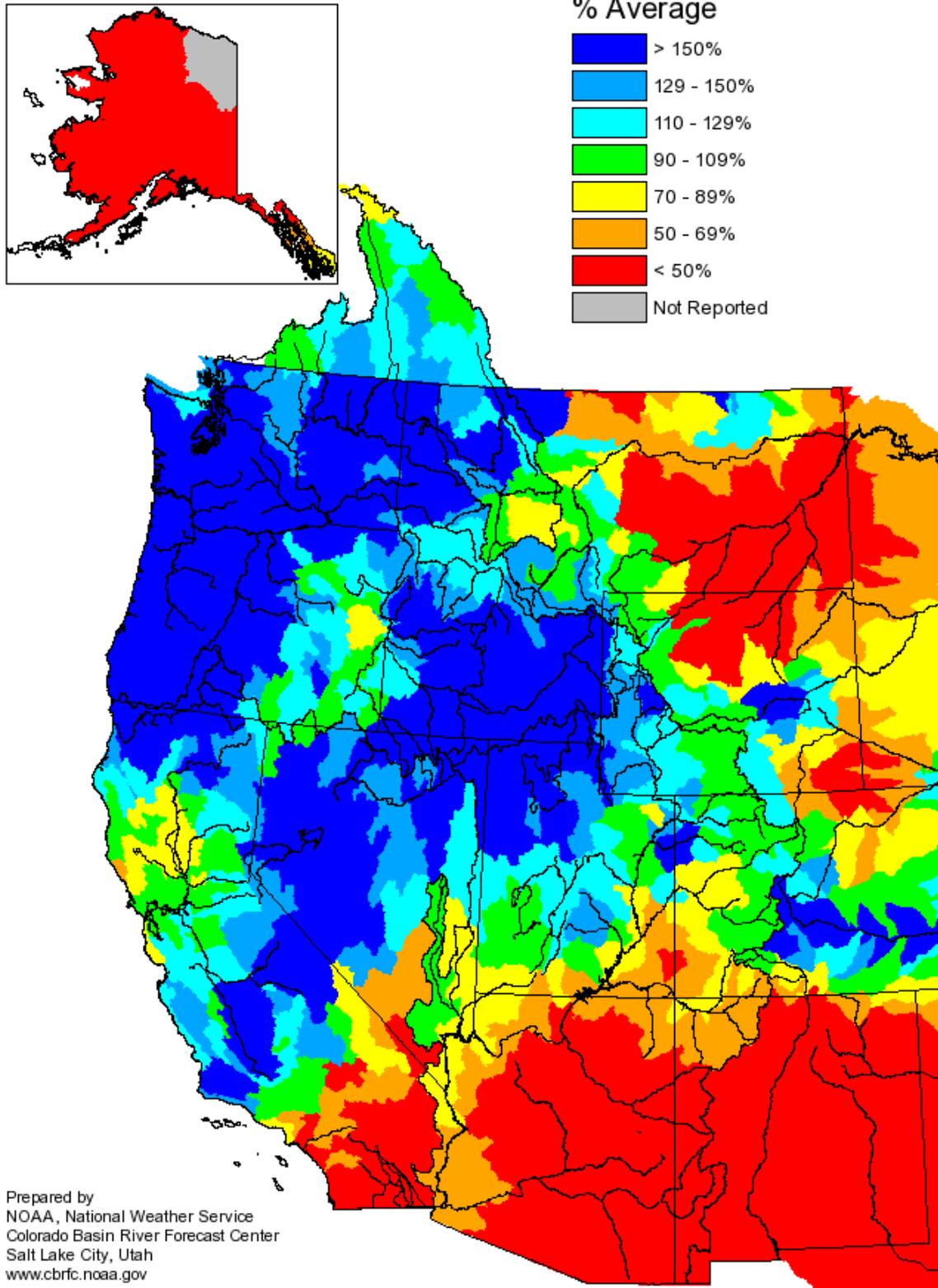
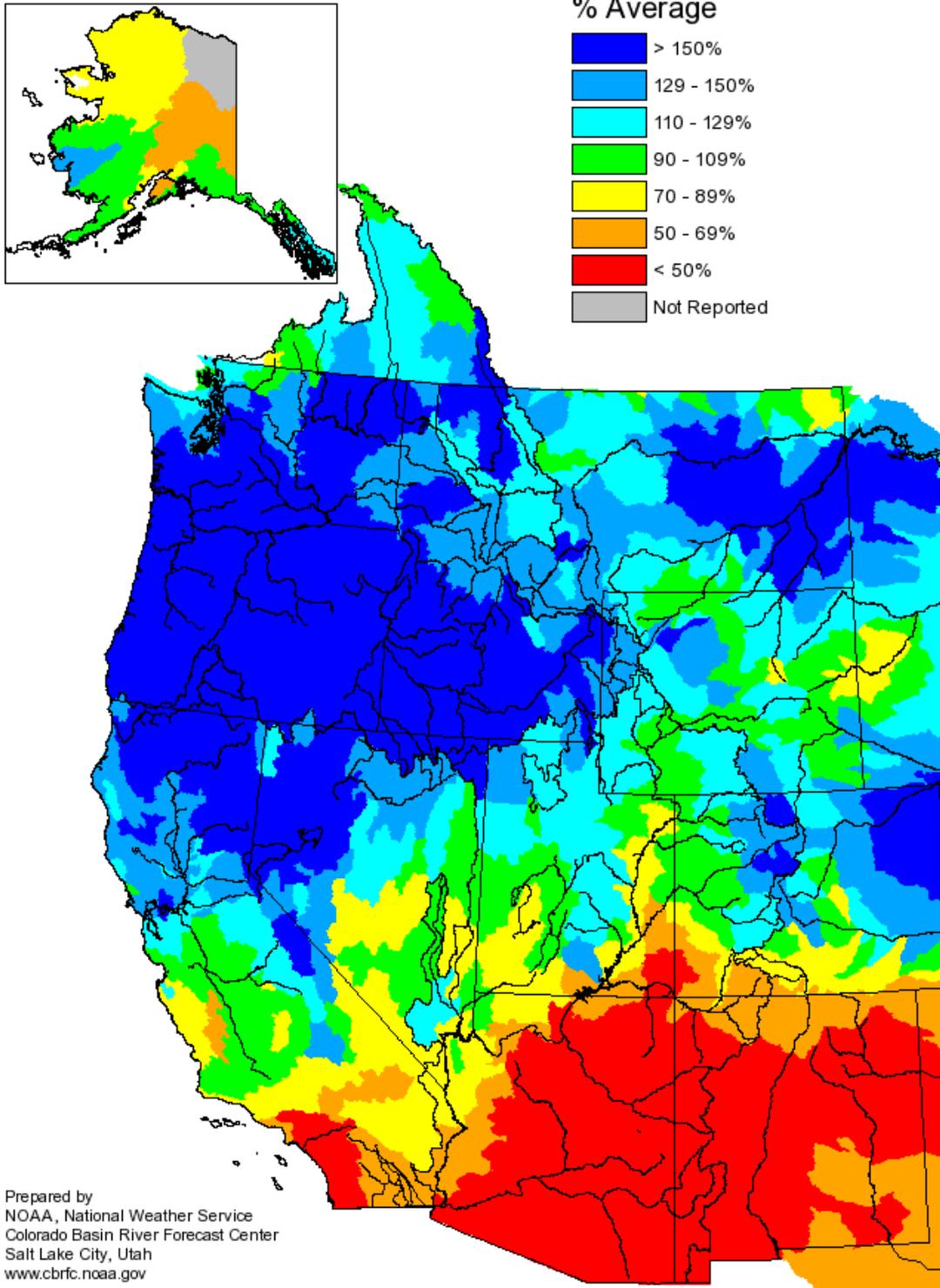


Figure 3. January 2006 Precipitation

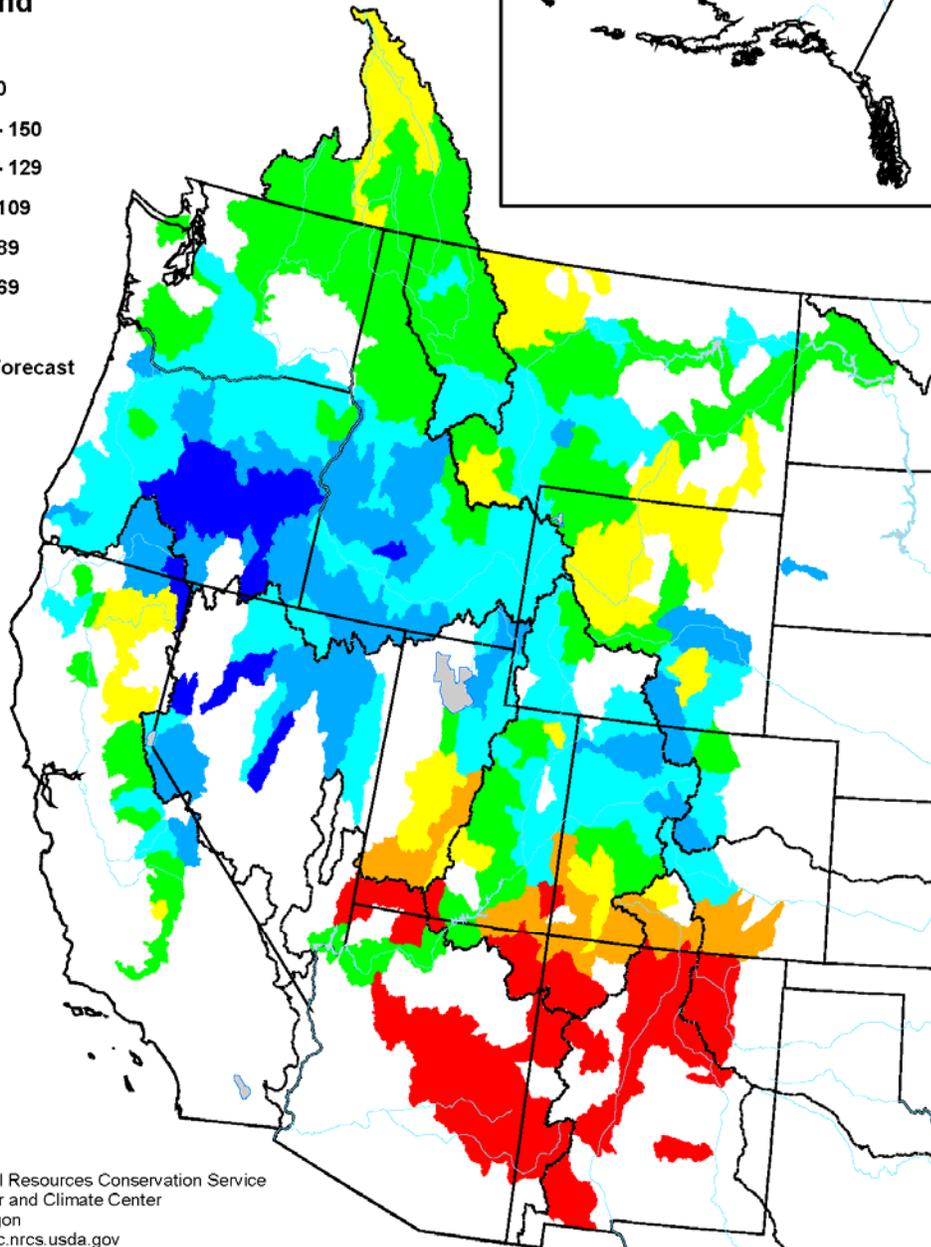
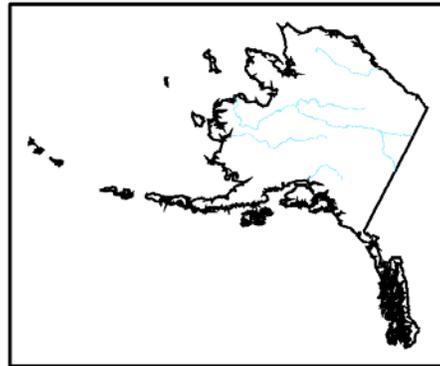
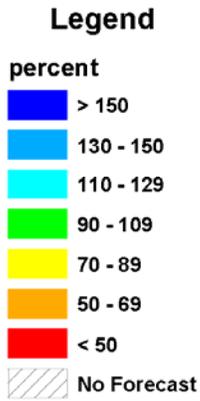
# Seasonal Precipitation, October 2005 - January 2006

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)



**Figure 4. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006**

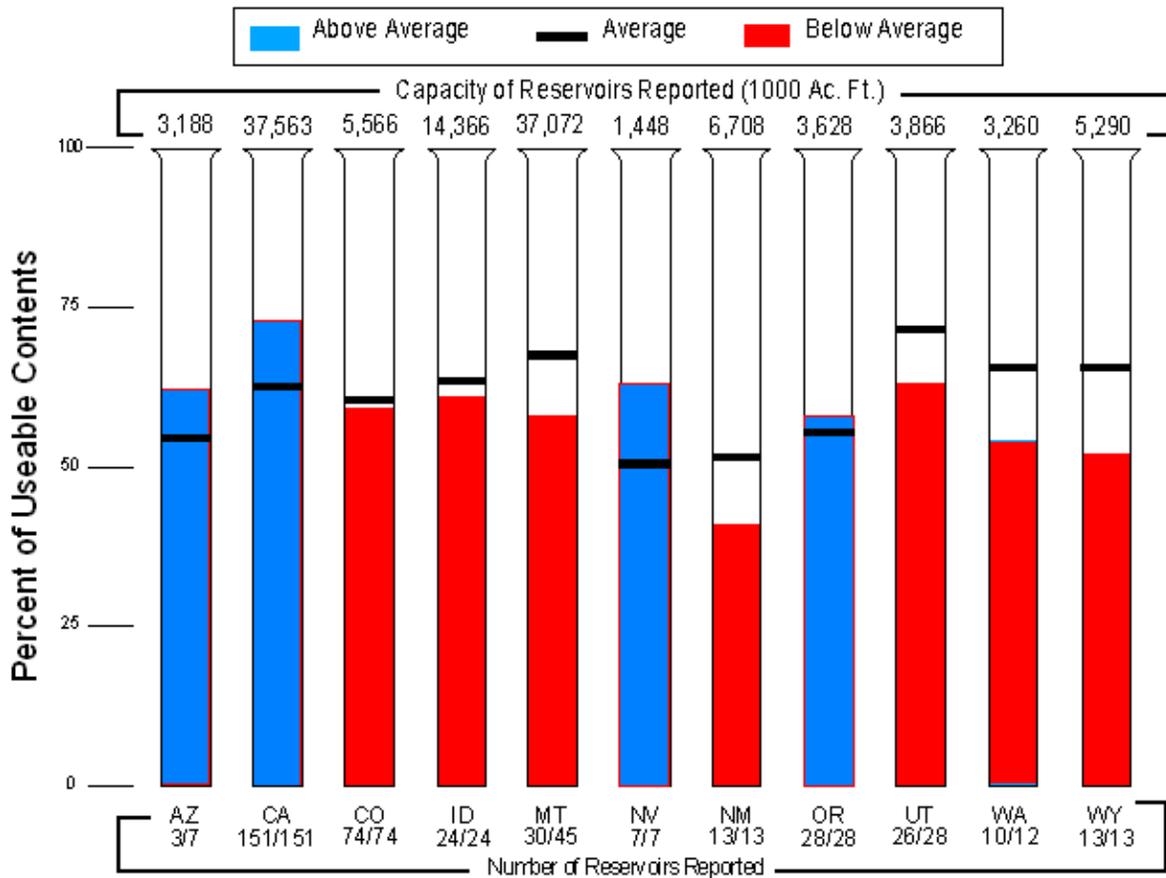
### Spring and Summer Preliminary Streamflow Forecasts as of February 1, 2006



Prepared by  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
National Water and Climate Center  
Portland, Oregon  
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

**Figure 5. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - February 1, 2006**

### Reservoir Storage as of February 1, 2006



Prepared by: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Water and Climate Center, Portland, OR  
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

**Fig. 6. Reservoir Storage - January 1, 2006**