



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

Date: January 12, 2010

Subject: January 1, 2010 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 January 1, 2010.

OVERVIEW

Most indications show a moderate "El Nino" in place, which has the potential to lead to increased moisture throughout much of California and the Southwest. So far, we have not seen a real strong effect, but this has the potential to change. Current forecasts and prior "El Nino" patterns generally favor a wetter than average January through March time period, especially for the southern half of the Western States. Since it is now only early January, there is still lots of opportunity during prime snow season for this effect to materialize.

SNOWPACK

The 2010 Calendar opened with larger surpluses in snowpack over Arizona, New Mexico, and southwestern Utah. October and November were very dry but December's snowfall made up for these earlier deficits. Deficits dominated much of the Northern and Central Rockies, Intermountain West, and Alaska although the Upper Columbia River Basin is fairing pretty well considering El Nino usually fails to deliver moisture to this region (Fig. 1).

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.html>

SEASONAL PRECIPITATION

In a typical El Nino winter, the Western States usually experience above normal precipitation south of latitude of 41 degrees N and below normal north of 41N. However, thus far during the 2010 Water Year, this El Nino has not delivered excess moisture over much the West (Fig. 2). Southern California and much of the Northern High Plains have seen surplus moisture.

Monthly and seasonal precipitation maps are available from the following location - <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/precip.html> and <http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov/wsup/westwide/westwide.cgi>

SPRING AND SUMMER STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

The spring and summer streamflow forecasts as of January 1, 2010 are calling for below normal values over much of the West (Fig. 3). Parts of the 4-Corners States is expected to see above normal flows. State Basin Outlook Reports can be accessed at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cqibin/bor.pl>.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

Statewide (average) reservoir levels reflect near normal conditions over (AZ, CO, and WY) and well below normal values over (NV, NM, and OR) (Fig. 4). California data is not available.

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/ NOLLER HERBERT
Director, Conservation Engineering Division

Mountain Snowpack as of January 1, 2010

Legend

- percent
-  > 150
 -  130 - 150
 -  110 - 129
 -  90 - 109
 -  70 - 89
 -  50 - 69
 -  < 50
 -  No Survey

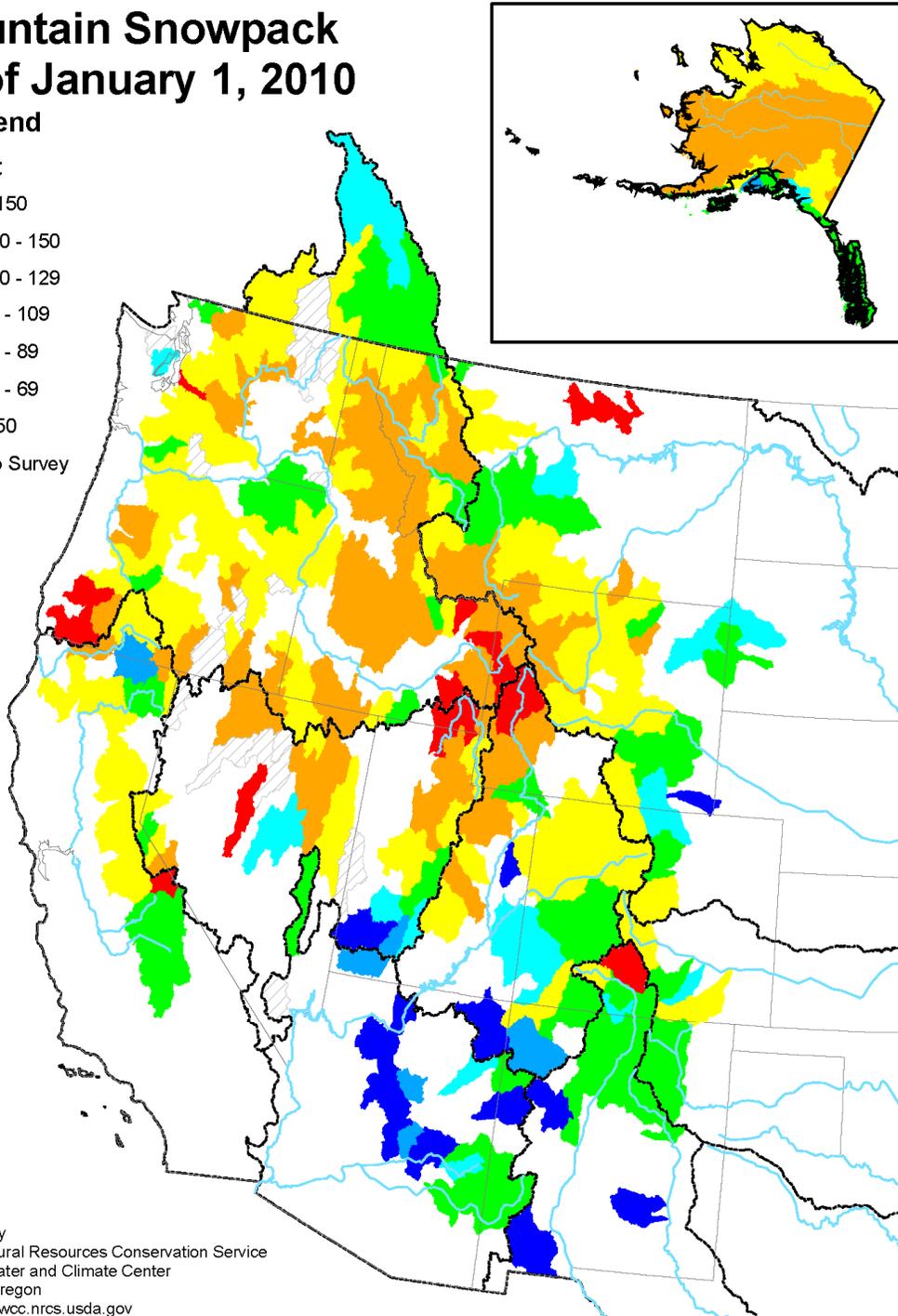


Figure 1. Mountain Snowpack, January 1, 2010

<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/snowpack/wy2010/snow0901.gif>

Seasonal Precipitation, October 2009 - December 2009

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

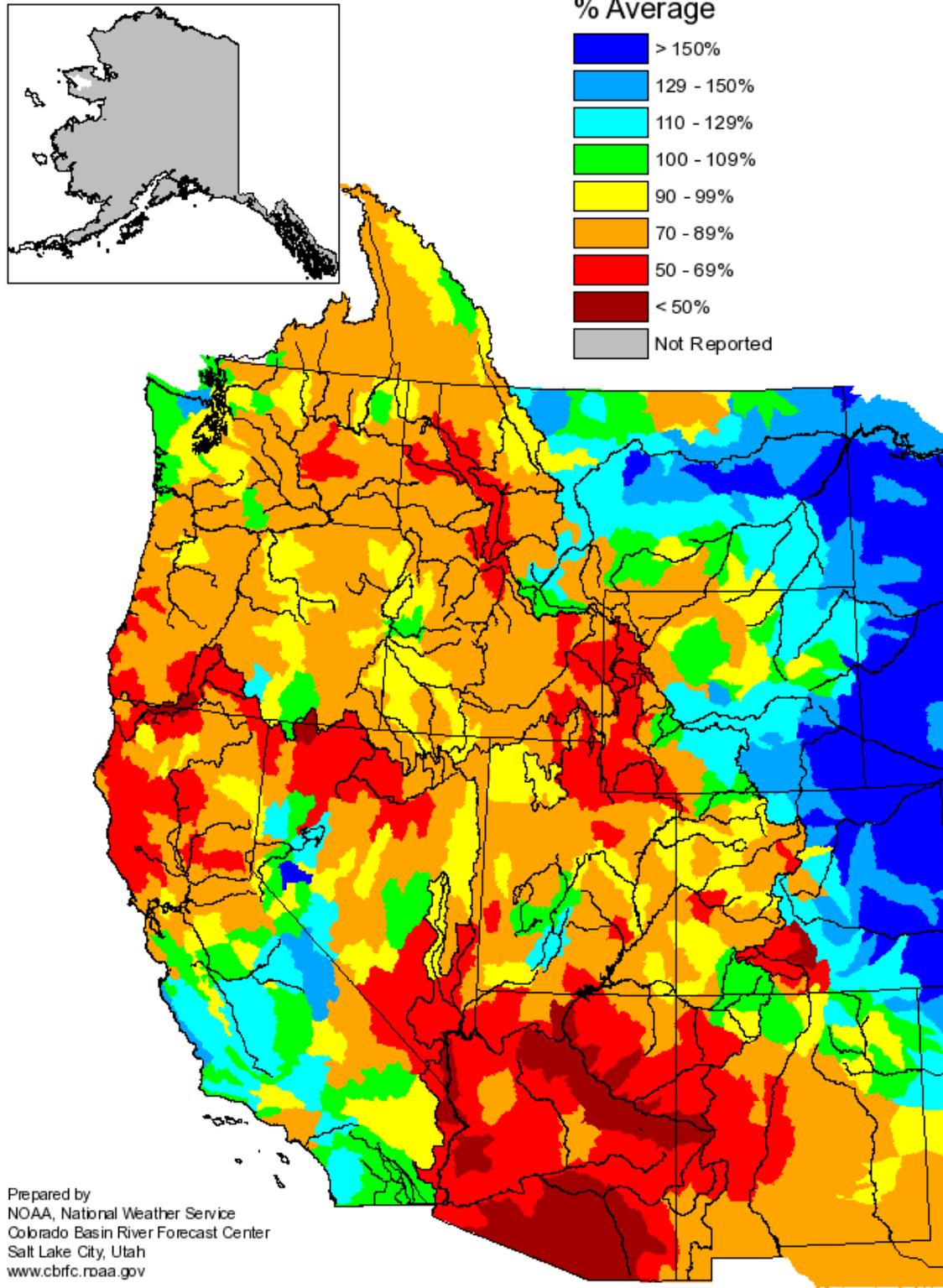
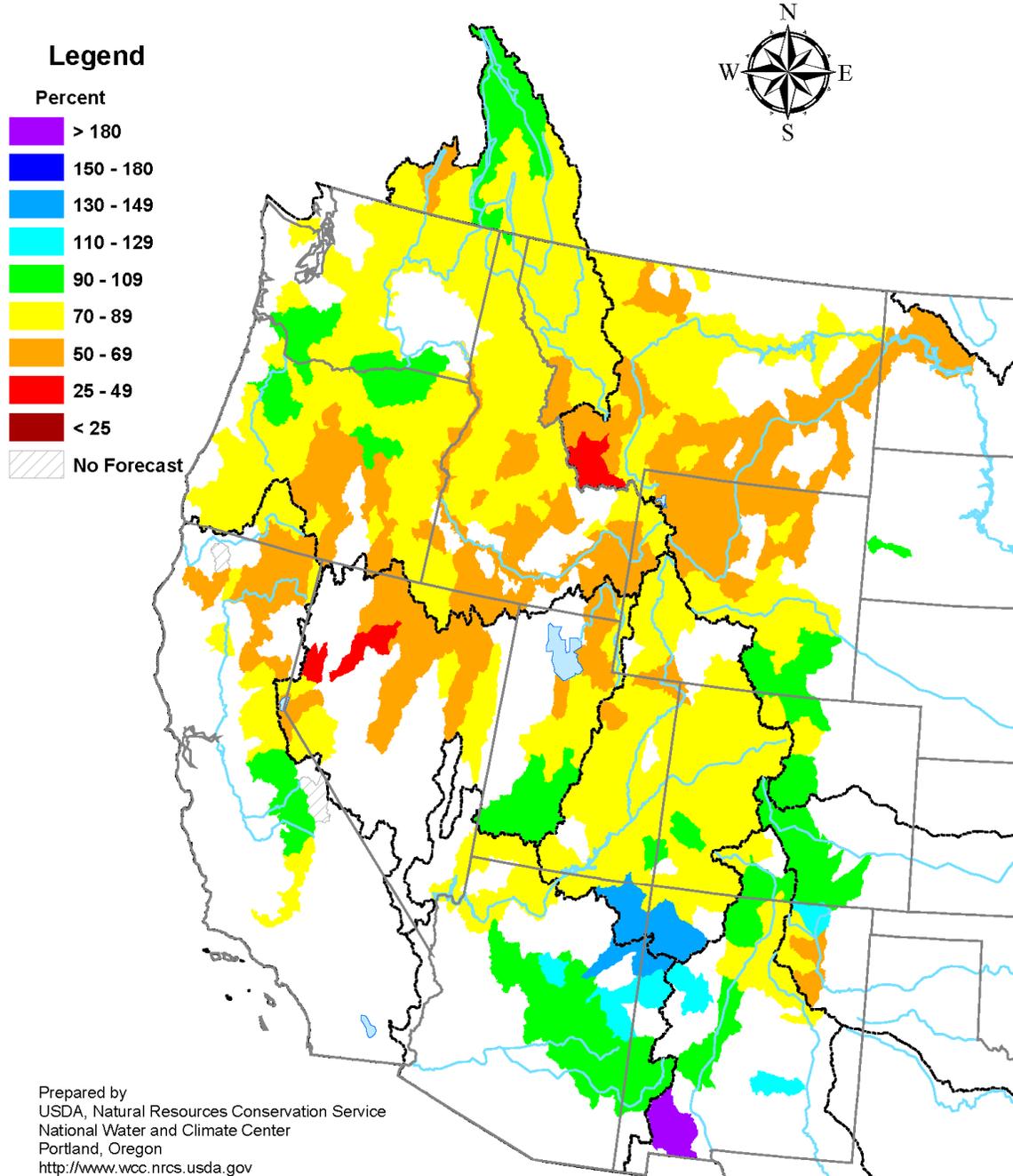


Figure 2. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2009 to December, 2009

<http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov/wsup/westwide/precip/westS200912.png>

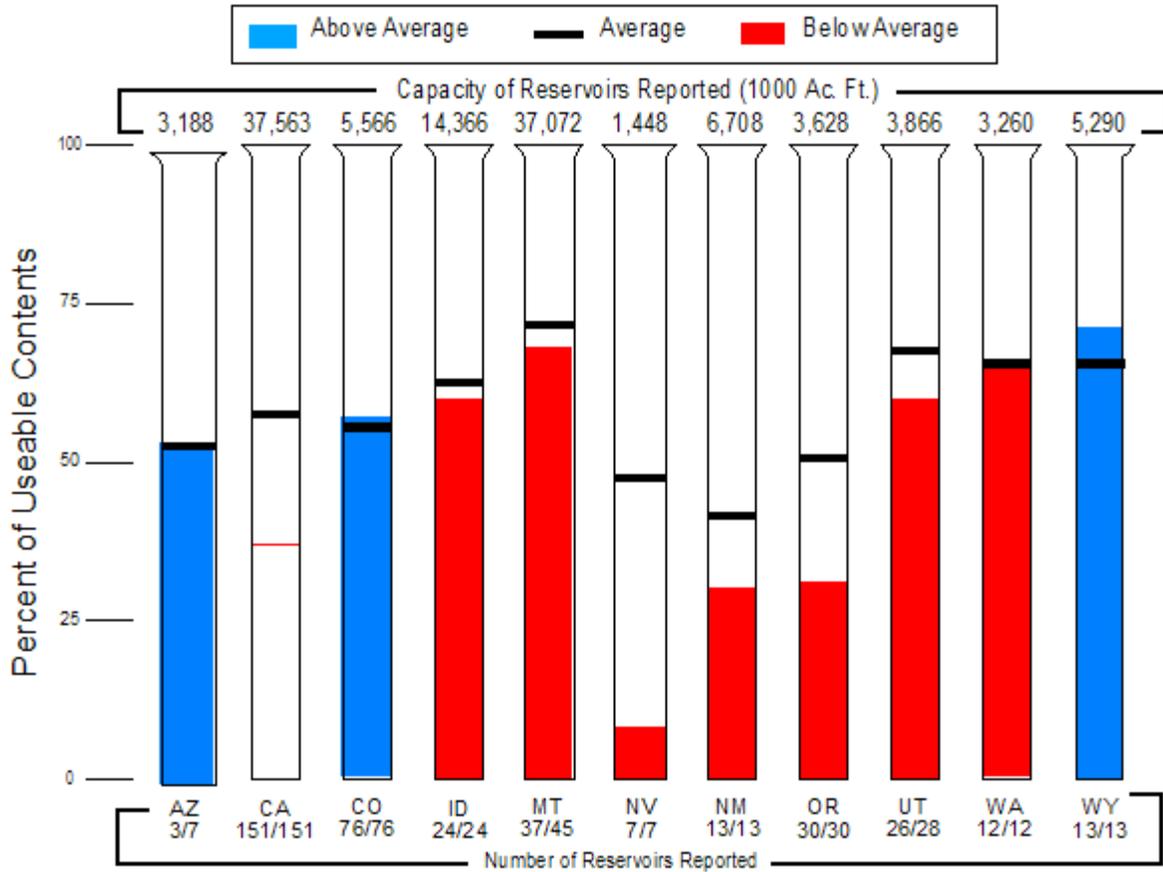
Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts as of January 1, 2010



**Figure 3. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - January 1, 2010
(Alaska not forecast in January)**

<http://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2010/strm0901.gif>

Reservoir Storage as of January 1, 2010



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

Fig. 4. Reservoir Storage - January 1, 2010

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/resvgrph2.pl?area=west&year=2010&month=01>