



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

Date: February 11, 2011

Subject: February 1, 2011 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, 2011.

OVERVIEW

A moderately strong "La Niña" continues, however, thus far, we have not seen excessive precipitation during January across much of the West. Most of the abundant precipitation has fallen over the Upper Columbia River Basin in Canada and western Alaska. The current weather forecast and prior "La Niña" patterns generally favor a wetter than average February and March; especially for the Northern Tier States. Since it is nearly mid-February, there is still some opportunity during the snow season for this moisture to materialize.

SNOWPACK

February opened with the driest regions over much of the Pacific Northwest and Southwest (Fig. 1). Conditions worsened by over 80 percent of the West during January (Fig. 2). Areas that have improved during the past month include the Northern Rockies (into Canada) and the western half of 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.html>

SEASONAL PRECIPITATION

In a typical La Niña winter, the Western States usually experience above normal precipitation north of latitude of 41°N and below normal south of 41°N. However, thus far during the 2011 Water Year, this La Niña has delivered excess moisture from California to Montana while moisture deficits dominate the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern States (Fig. 3).

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/wsups/westwide/westwide.cgi>

SPRING AND SUMMER STREAMFLOW FORECASTS

The spring and summer streamflow forecasts as of February 1, 2011 are calling for above normal flows over all but portions of the Pacific Northwest and Southwest (Fig. 4). However, much of the West has seen a significant drop in the predicted flows since early January with the exception of the Upper Columbia River Basin and Montana Rockies, Wyoming Bighorn Mountains, and Black Hills in South Dakota (Fig. 5). State Basin Outlook Reports can be accessed at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/bor.pl>.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

Statewide (average) reservoir levels (Fig. 6) shows that about half the states have above normal totals and half below normal. Arizona and Wyoming have the largest surpluses while Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon have the greatest deficits.

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/

Jeff Goebel

Acting Director, Resource Inventory Division

Mountain Snowpack as of February 1, 2011

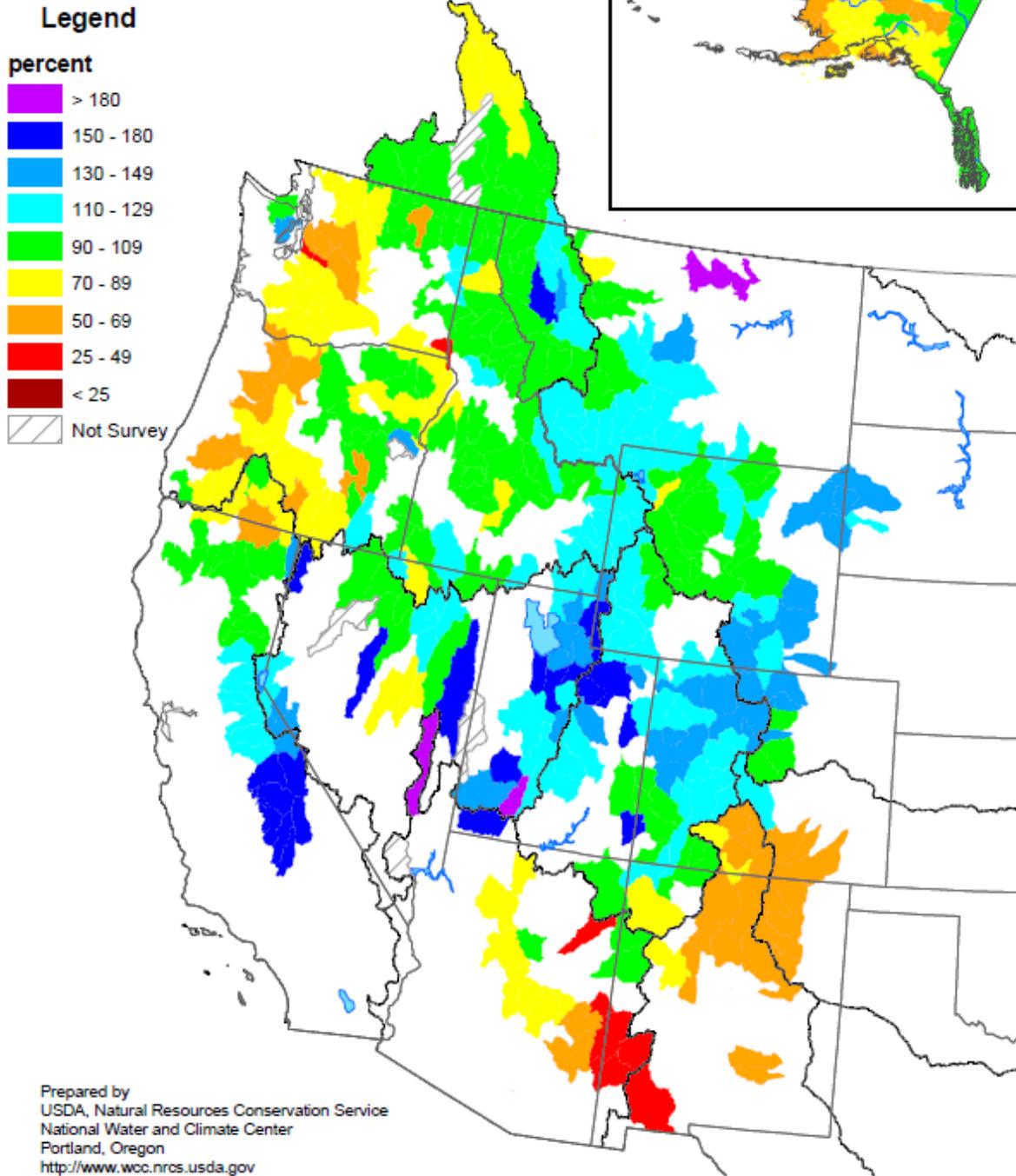


Figure 1. Mountain Snowpack, February 1, 2011

<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/snowpack/wy2011/snow1102.gif>

2011 Mountain Snowpack Change between January 1 and February 1

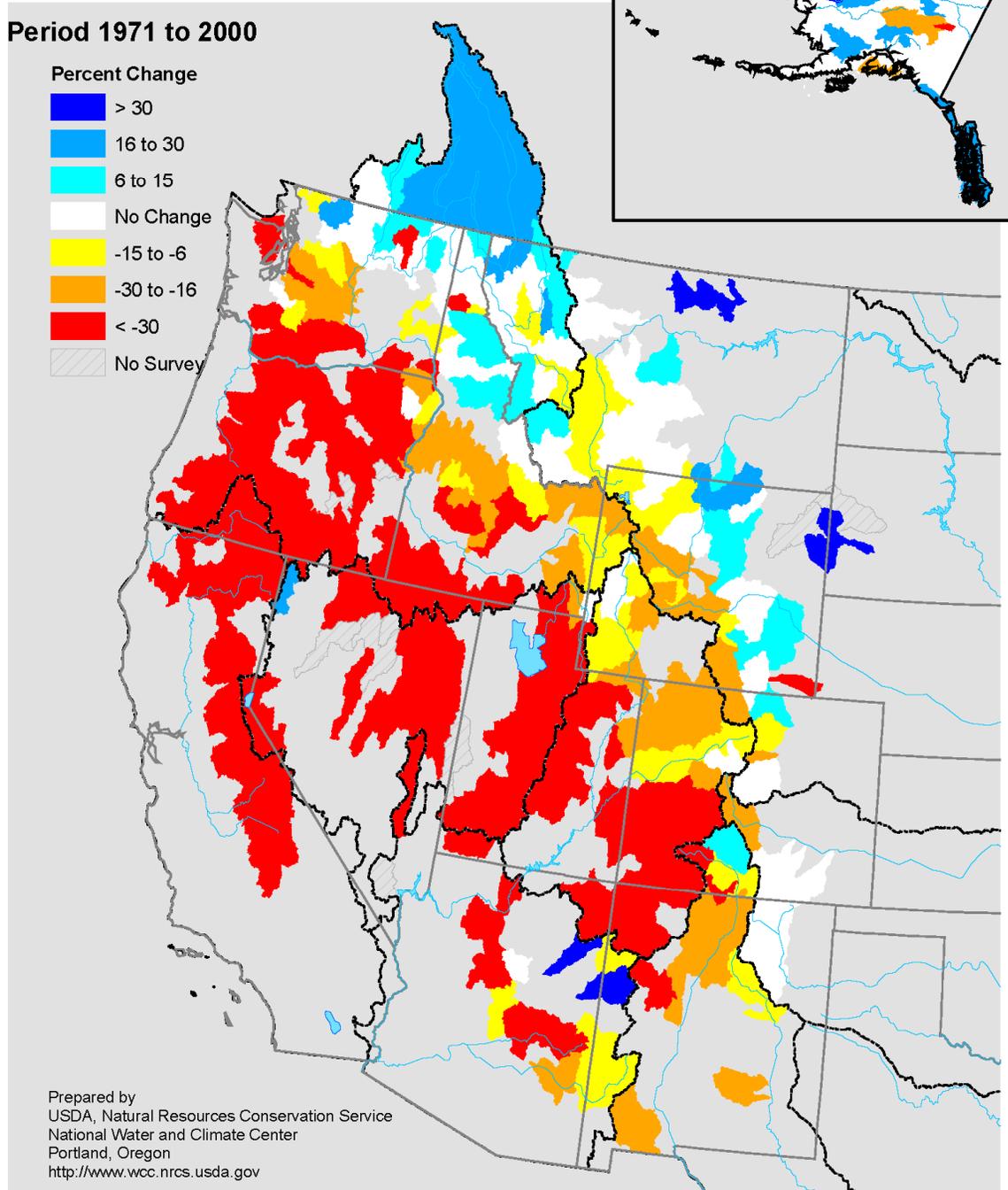


Fig. 2. Mountain Snowpack Difference between, January 1 to February 1, 2011
<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/snowpack/wy2011/difsnow0211.gif>

Seasonal Precipitation, October 2010 - January 2011

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

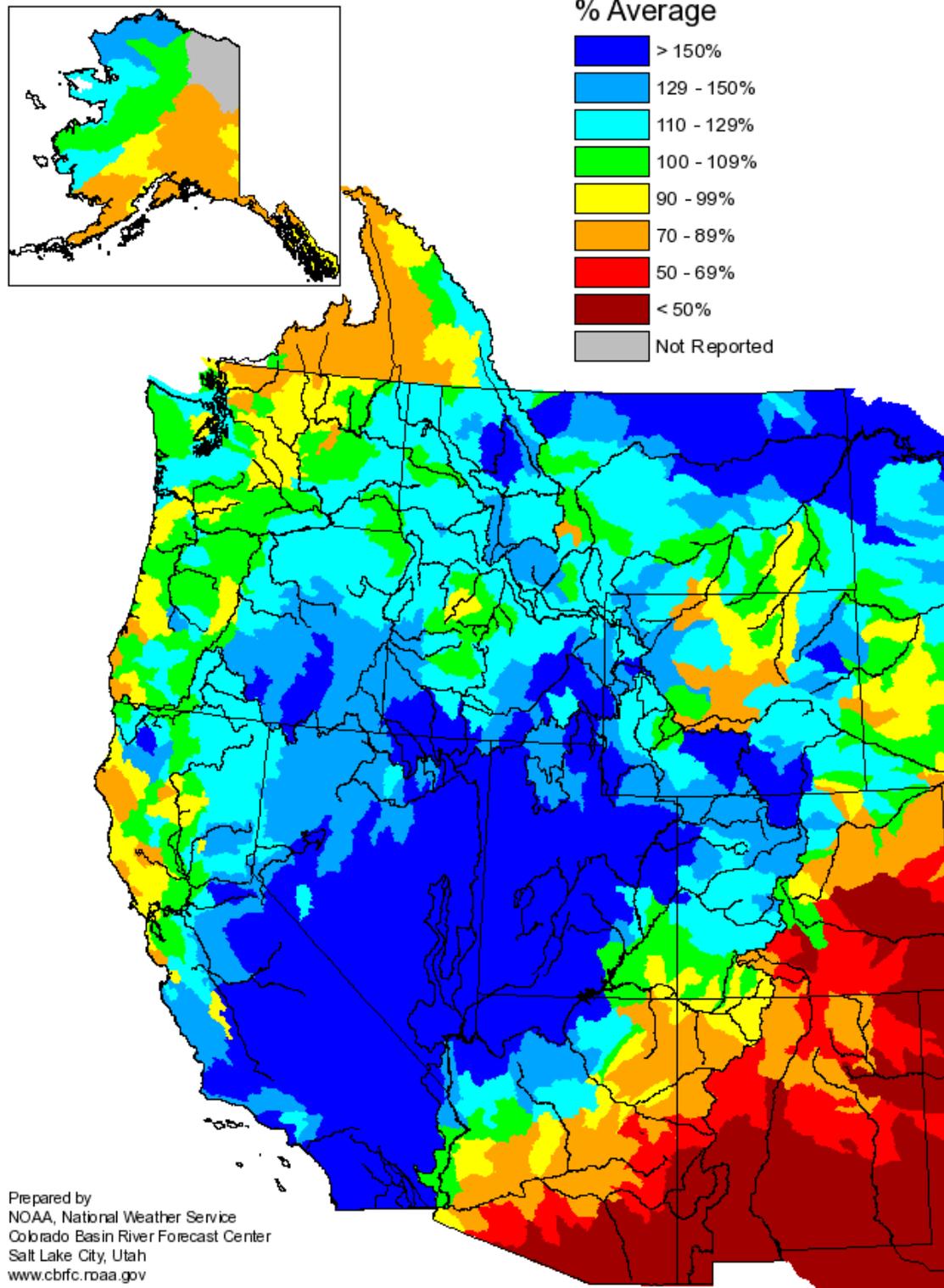
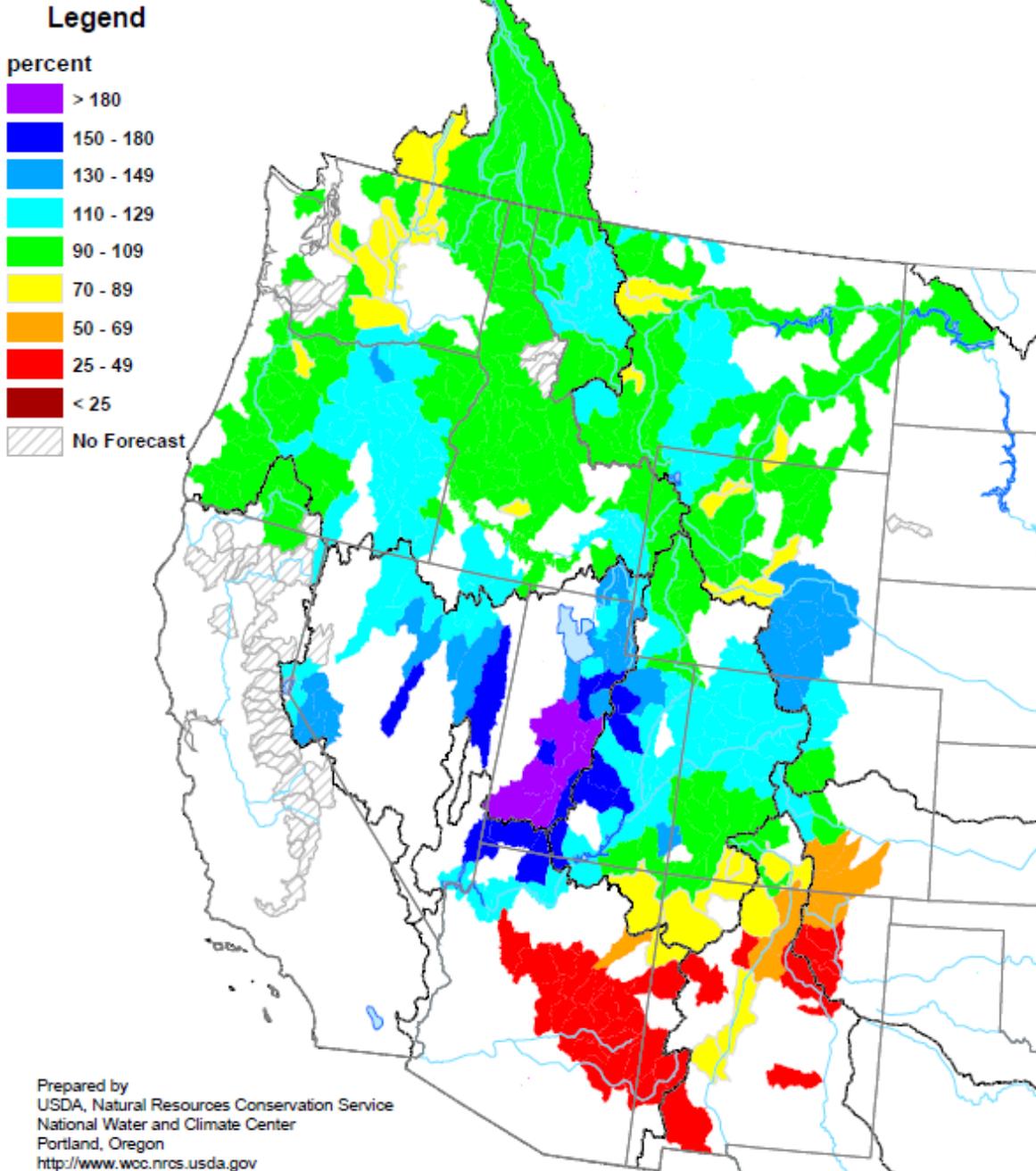


Figure 3. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2010 to January 2011
<http://www.cbafc.noaa.gov/wsup/westwide/precip/westS201101.png>

Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts as of February 1, 2011



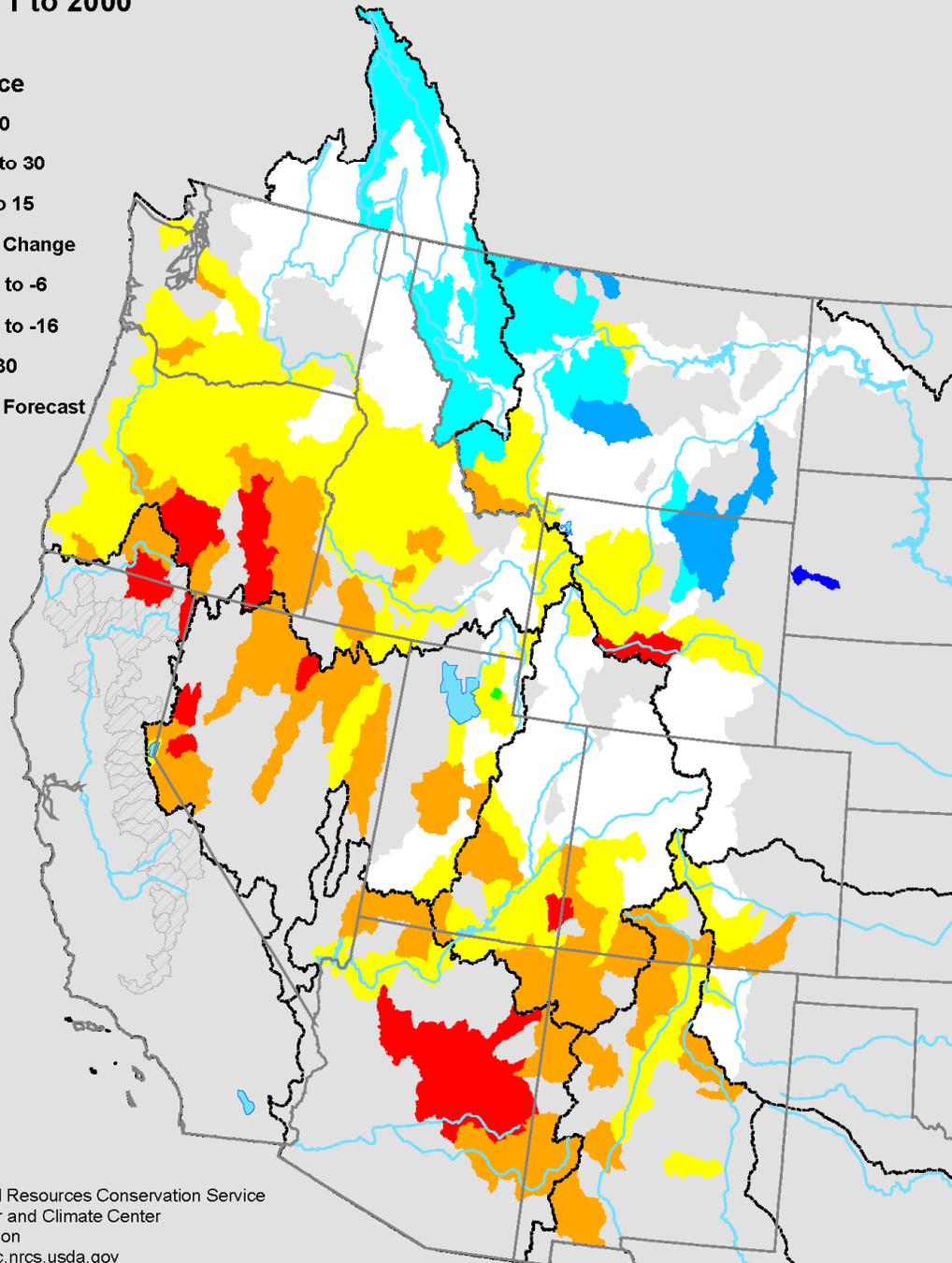
**Figure 4. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - February 1, 2011
(Alaska not forecast in February)**

Ref: <ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2011/strm1102.gif>

Change in Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts from January 1 to February 1, 2011

Period 1971 to 2000

Percent
Difference



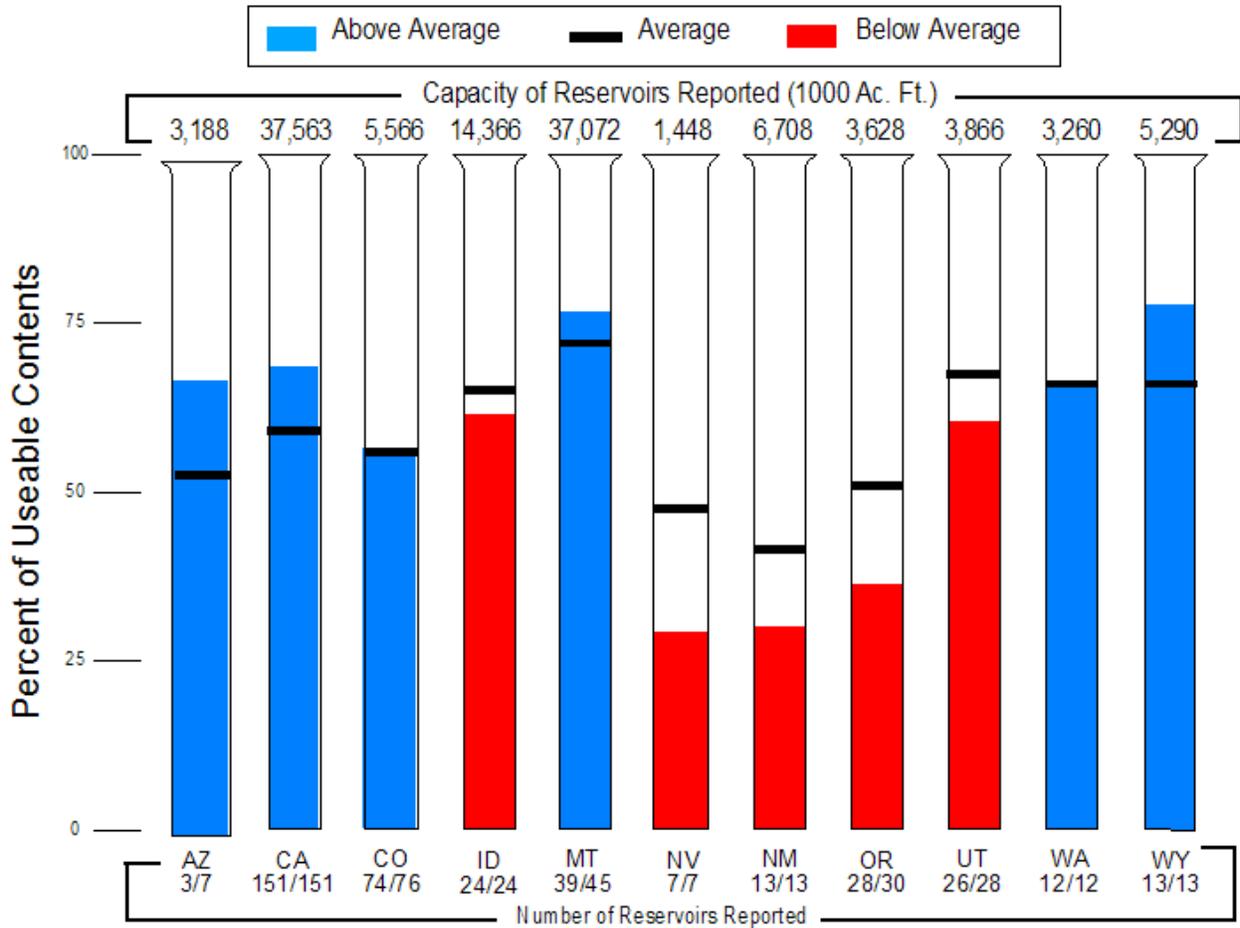
Prepared by
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<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Fig. 5. Change in streamflow forecast between January 1 and February 1, 2011.

Note: California will be available later.

Ref: <ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2011/difstrm0211.gif>

Reservoir Storage as of January 1, 2011



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

Figure 6. Reservoir Storage - February 1, 2011.

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/resvgrph2.pl?area=west&year=2011&month=02>