



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

Date: **January 12, 2012**

Subject: **January 1, 2012 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, 2012.

OVERVIEW

Despite a moderate “La Niña”, this winter season has been a letdown in terms of excessive moisture over much of the Northern Tier States of the West. A series of unexpected storms marched through the Southwest during the middle of December providing the region with much needed moisture. Most of Alaska is also experiencing normal or well above normal moisture so far this winter.

SNOWPACK

January opened with the driest regions over the Sierra, Great Basin, and Upper Snake River Drainage (Fig. 1). The wettest regions are found over the southern mountains of Arizona and New Mexico.

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 (excluding Interior Alaska) and below normal amounts south of 41°N. However, thus far during the 2012 Water Year, this La Niña has delivered excess moisture over the Upper Snake and Upper Columbia Rivers (in Canada) and over the Southwest (Fig. 2). California, the Cascades, and much of the Great Basin have seen extremely dry conditions.

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, 2012 are calling for below normal values much of the West (Fig. 3). Much of the Interior West is expected to be the hardest hit areas with well below normal flows. State Basin Outlook Reports can be accessed at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/bor.pl>.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

The Statewide (average) reservoir levels map shows most states at or above average storage (Fig. 4). More detailed [Tea Cup](#) diagrams are available for the [Upper Colorado](#), [Upper Snake](#), and the [Pacific Northwest](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

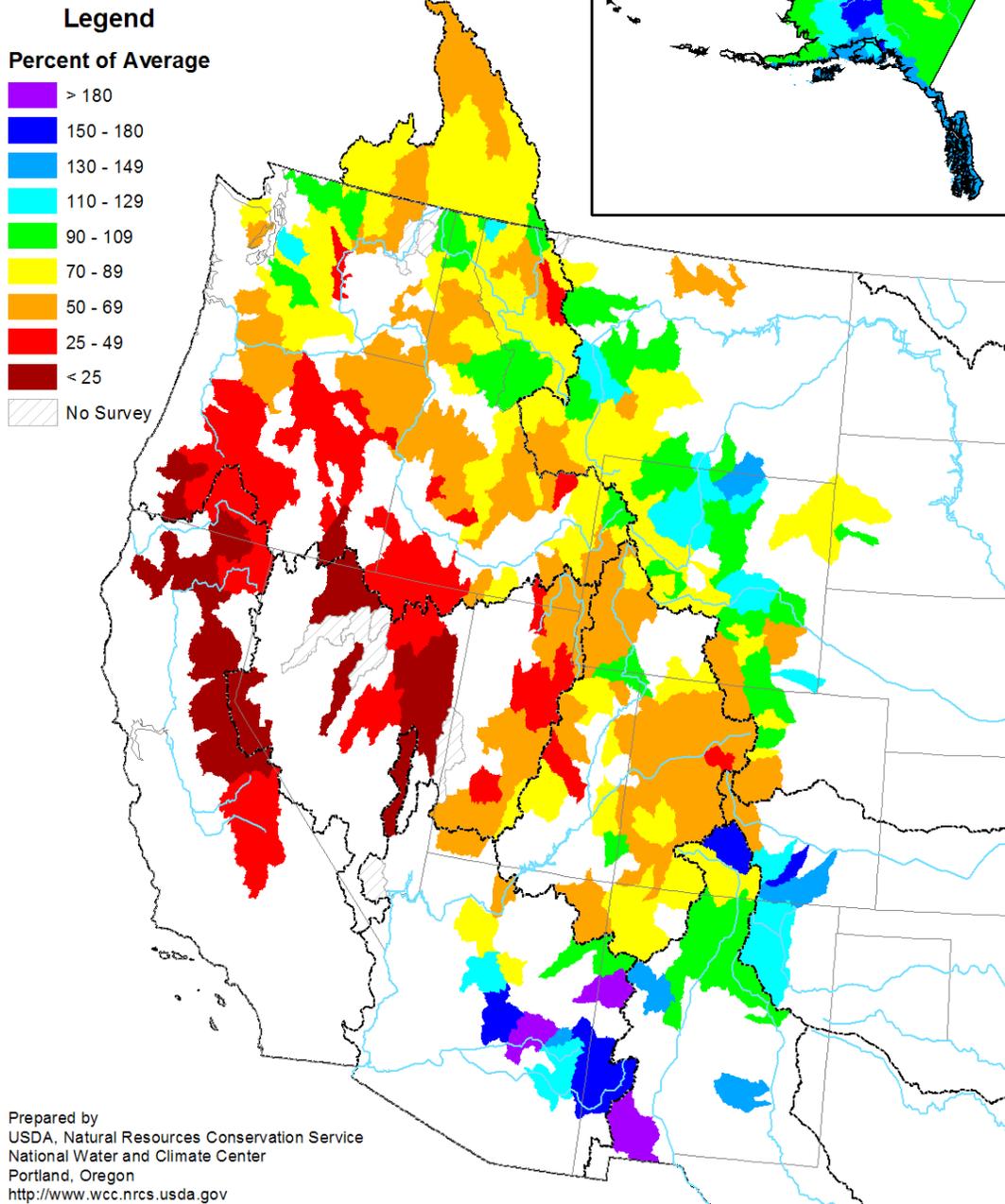
The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provides the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

/s/

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Mountain Snowpack as of January 1, 2012



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

Figure 1. Mountain Snowpack, January 1, 2012

<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/snowpack/wy2012/snow1101.gif>

Seasonal Precipitation, October 2011 - December 2011

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

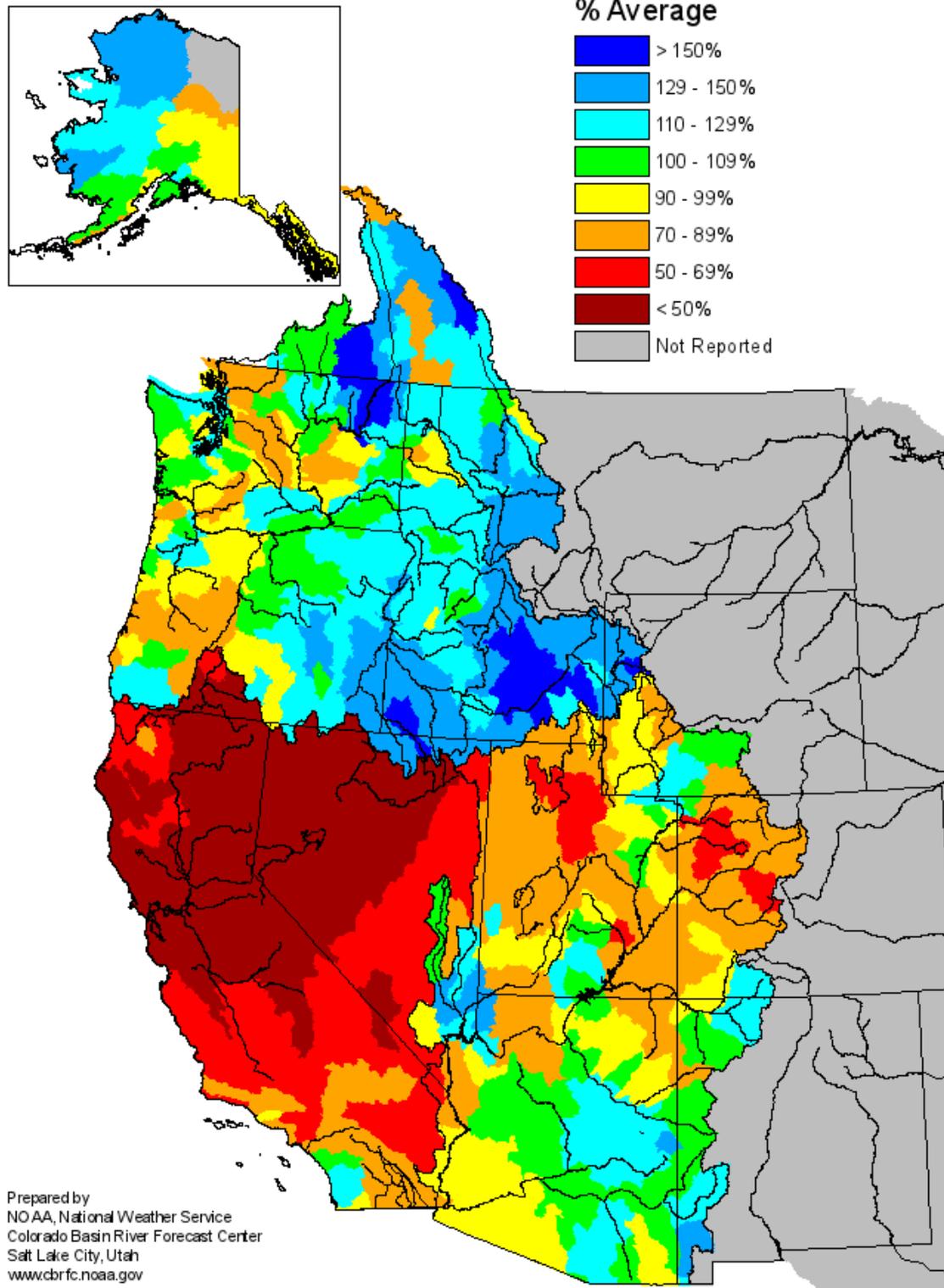
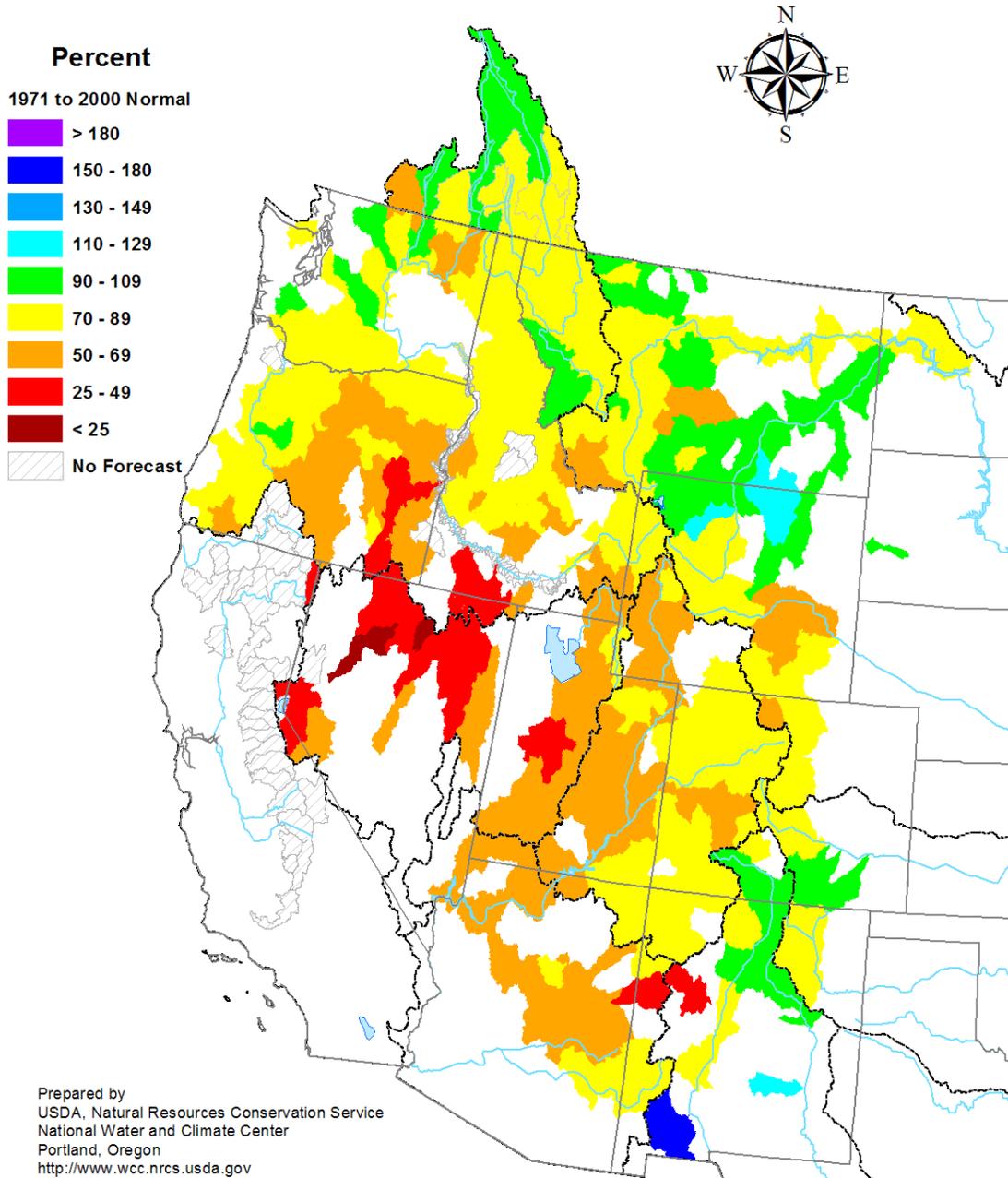


Figure 2. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2011 to December, 2011
<http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov/wsup/westwide/precip/westS201112.png>

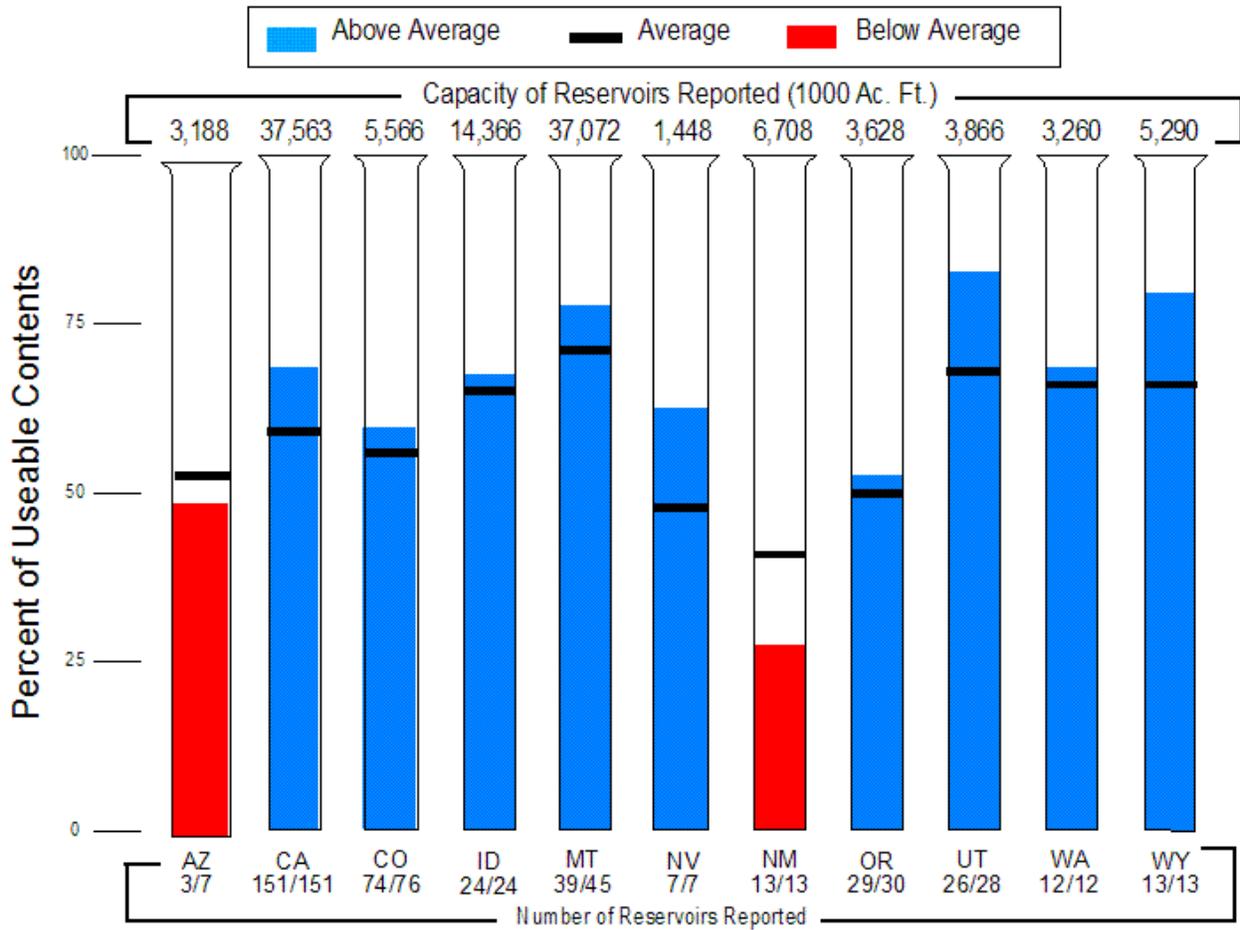
Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts as of January 1, 2012



**Figure 3. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - January 1, 2012
(Alaska not forecast in January)**

<http://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2012/strm1101.gif>

Reservoir Storage as of January 1, 2012



Prepared by: USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Water and Climate Center, Portland, OR
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Figure 4. Statewide average reservoir storage - January 1, 2012

<ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2012/strm1101.gif>