



Subject: Western Snowpack Conditions and Water Supply Forecasts

Date: March 11, 2001

The following information is provided for your use in describing climate and water supply conditions in the West as of February 1, 2001. **The seasonal streamflow volume forecasts show a significant reduction in most of the West from the January 1, 2001 forecast.** A special snowpack discussion is included at the end of this report.

SNOWPACK

Much of the West continues to struggle with a weather pattern that continues to produce **well below average** seasonal snowpacks. Snowpacks in central California, southwest Oregon, northeastern Washington, northern Idaho and northwestern Montana are **less than 50% of average**. A large portion of the West reports **well below average snowpacks (<70%)**. These areas include northern Nevada, central and southeastern Oregon, the Oregon and Washington Cascades, northern Washington, British Columbia, most of Idaho, western Montana, northeastern Wyoming, northern Utah, and central Arizona. The snowpack index above Grand Coulee Reservoir is 51% of average, the lowest in the last 40 years. The previous record was 53% in 1977. The snowpack index above The Dalles is 52% of average, which is higher than the record minimum of 39.9% set in 1977. Basins reporting **near or slightly below average snowpacks (70% to 110%)** include central Utah, Colorado and New Mexico with the exception of northeastern New Mexico which is reporting an **above average (>110%)** snowpack. Western and northern Alaska report **well below average snowpacks (<70%)**, with eastern sections showing **near average (70% to 110%)** snowpack conditions. Southern sections of Alaska report **above average (>110%)** snowpacks.

SEASONAL PRECIPITATION

Similar to the snowpack, seasonal precipitation in central California, western Oregon, northeast Washington, northern Idaho and northwestern Montana is **less than 50% of average**. **Well below average seasonal precipitation (<70%)** conditions exist in western and northern Nevada, most of eastern Oregon, Washington, nearly all of Idaho, western Montana, and northeastern Wyoming. The Intermountain states are reporting seasonal precipitation totals that range from **slightly below to slightly above average (70% to 130%)**. **Well above seasonal precipitation (>130%)** is reported in southeastern Arizona and in nearly all of New Mexico. Alaska reports **near average (90-110%)** precipitation in the northern and southern sections and **well below average (<70%)** in eastern sections.

SPRING AND SUMMER STREAMFLOW

The scarcity of snowpack is reflected in the forecasted streamflow forecast volumes for much of the West.

Well below average (<70%) spring and summer streamflows are forecast for central California, northern Nevada, northern and southeast Idaho, south central, southeastern and parts of southwestern Oregon, the southern Washington Cascades, northern Washington, southern British Columbia, Canada, western and central Montana, central and southeastern Wyoming, central Utah and portions of Colorado, and central Arizona.

Slightly below average (70% to 90%) spring and summer streamflows are forecast for parts of northern California, southwestern, western and north central Oregon, the Washington Cascades, northern British Columbia, Canada, central Idaho, southeastern Montana, southeastern Wyoming, eastern and southern Utah, northern Colorado and portions of central Arizona.

Average (90% to 110%) spring and summer streamflow are forecast for portions of extreme southern Utah, south-central Colorado, and a portion of the Rio Grande in central New Mexico.

Above to much above (110% to > 130%) spring and summer streamflow are forecast for Pecos River, portions of the Canadian, and Mimbres River in New Mexico.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

Major western storage reservoirs in Montana, Oregon and Washington report **below average** storage level for this time of year. Arizona, California, Idaho, and Nevada report **slightly below average** storage levels for this time of year. **Near or above average** storage levels are reported for Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

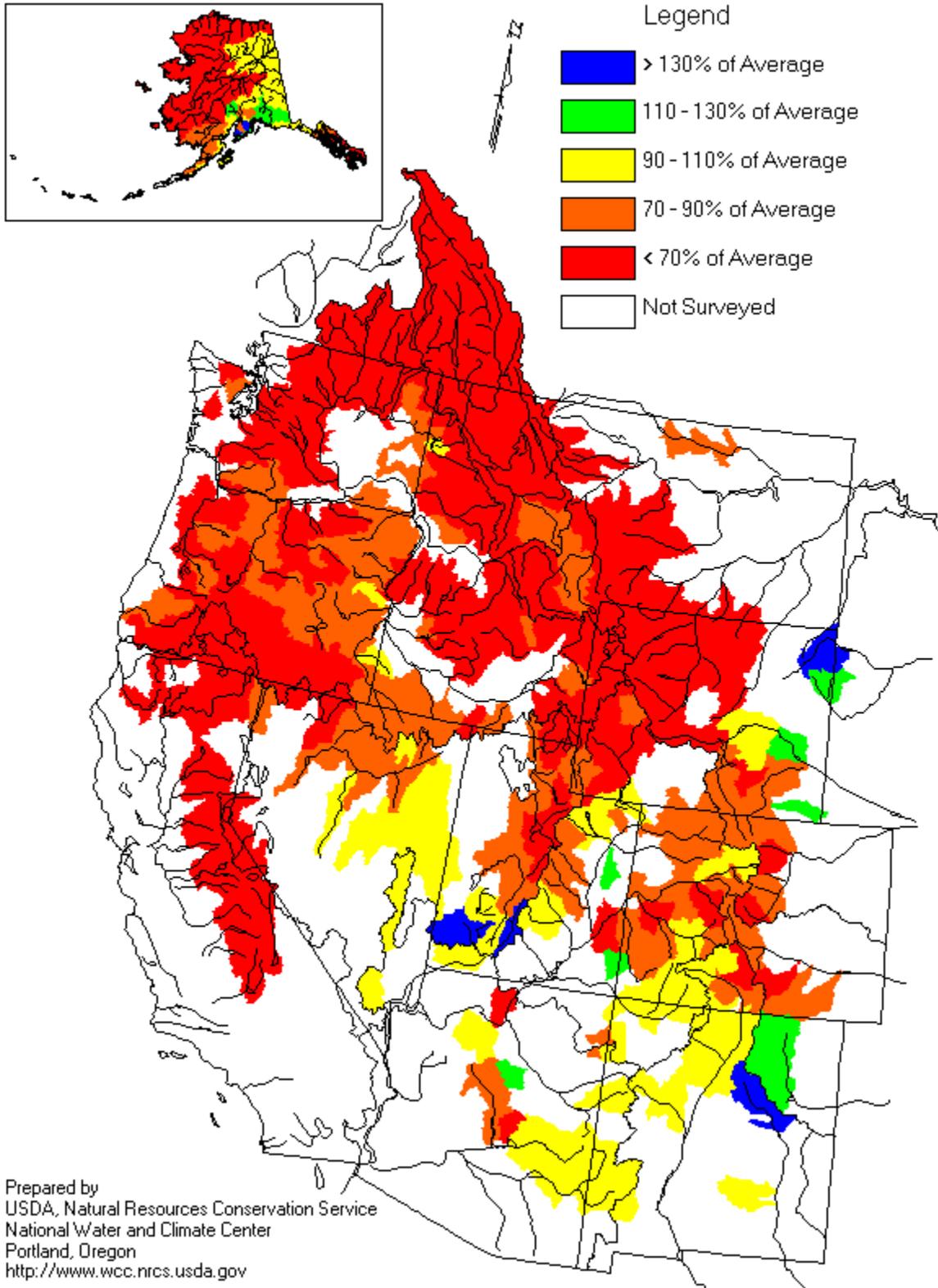
The National Water and Climate Center Homepage provides the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

/s/ PHIL PASTERIS

Team Leader, Water and Climate Services, National Water and Climate Center

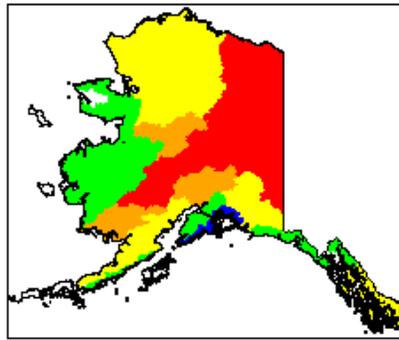
DIST: Deputy Chief, Science and Technology
Conservation Engineering Director
National Hydraulic Engineer
National Water and Climate Center Director
Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecast Program Data Collection Offices
Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecast Program Water Supply Specialists
National Water and Climate Center, Water and Climate Services Team

Mountain Snowpack as of February 1, 2001

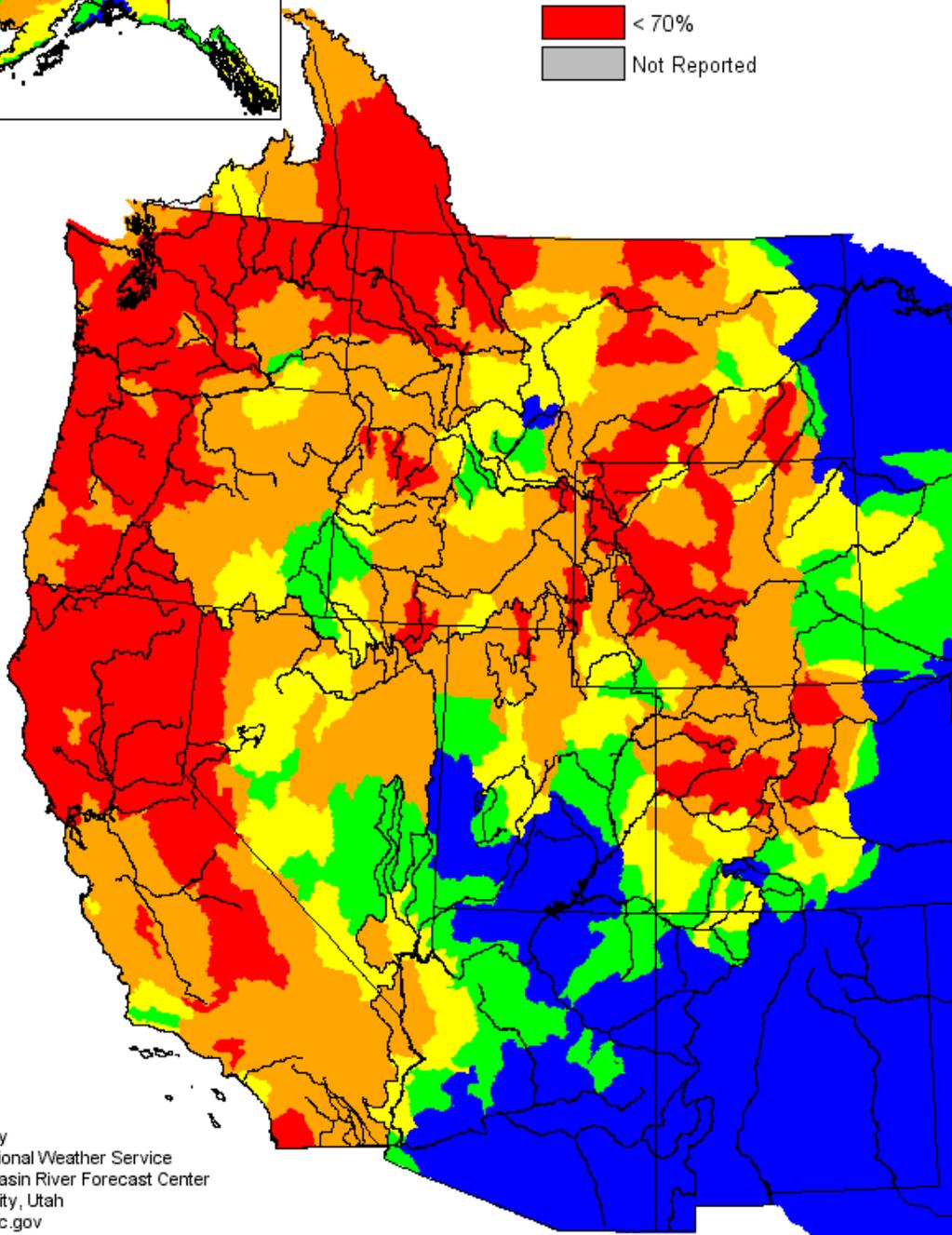
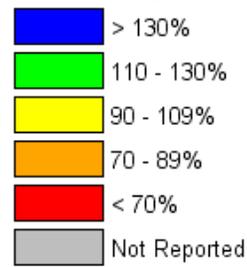


Seasonal Precipitation, October 2000 - January 2001

(Averaged by Hydrologic Unit)

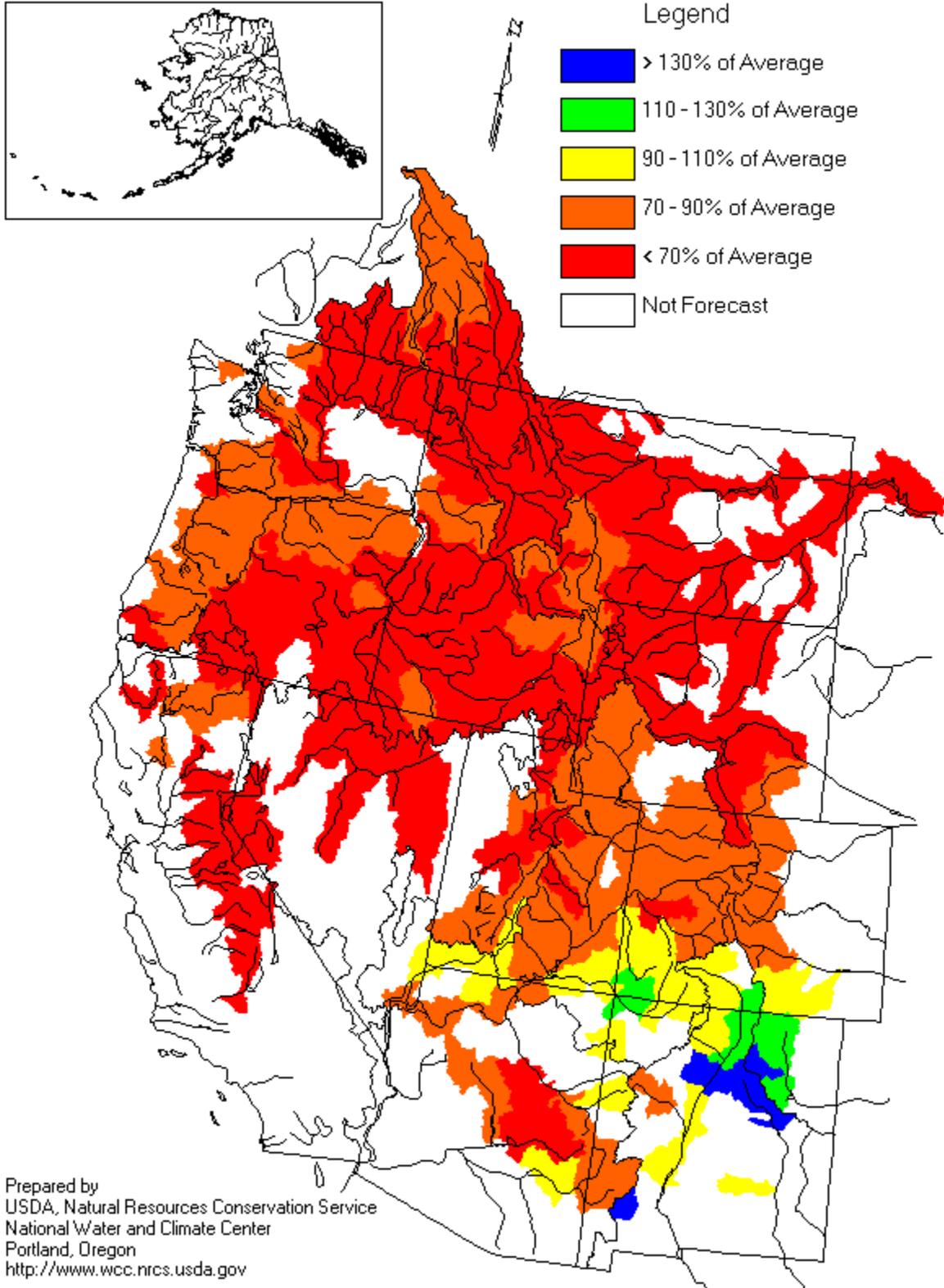


% Average

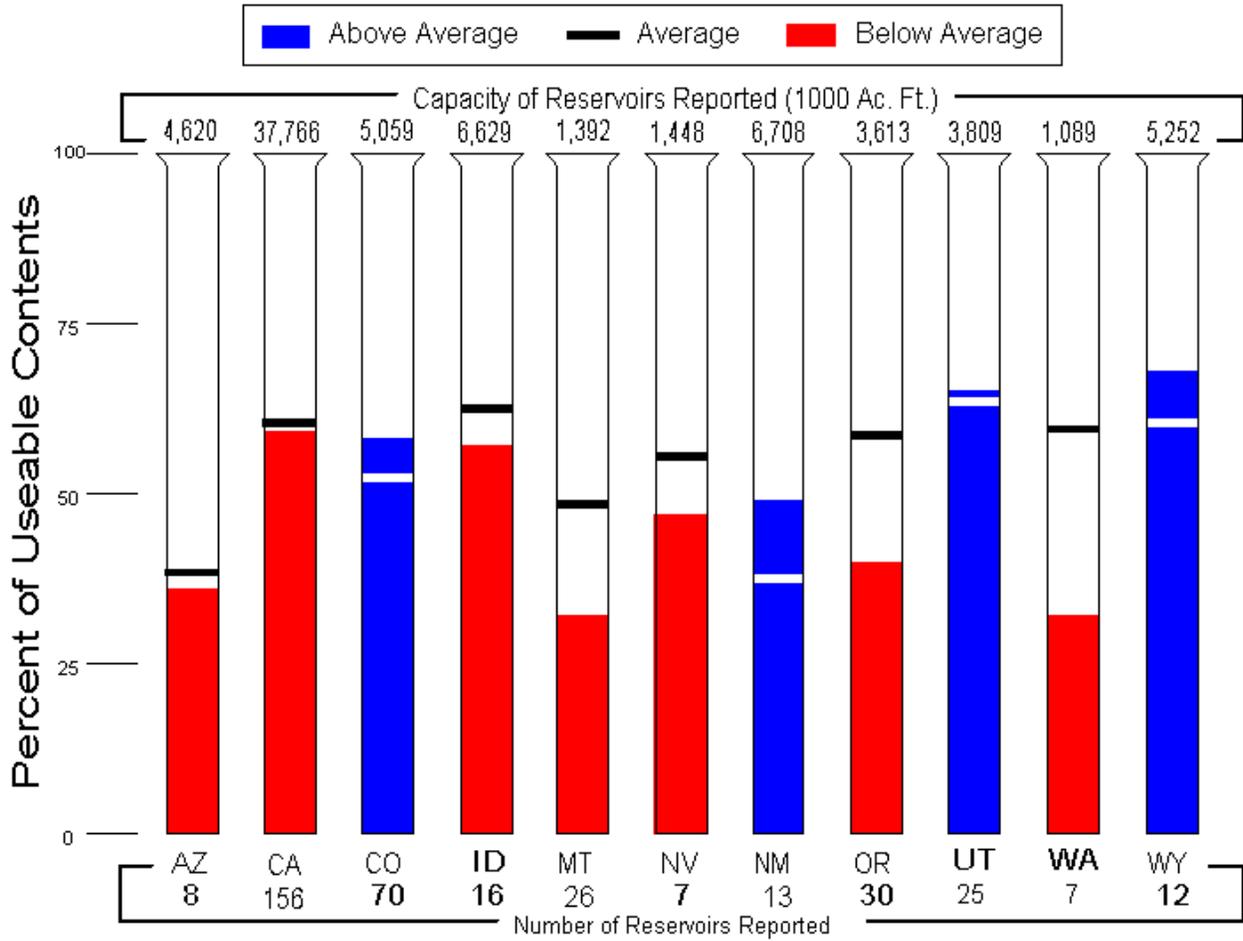


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Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts as of February 1, 2001



Reservoir Storage as of February 1, 2001



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Special Snowpack Summary Report

February, 2001 - Figures Follow This Narrative

The Columbia Basin snowpack remains very low on February 1, with all sub-basins dropping in percent of average, except Canada, which went up a mere 3%. With British Columbia at 55% and Montana under 50% the Columbia at Grand Coulee sets a new record low for February, as it did in January. February snowpack is 51% above Grand Coulee, down 4% from last month.

The biggest drop occurred in the Snake headwaters, which had been best in the Columbia last month at 79%. Dropping 22%, it now stands at 57%. That same percentage is held by the Central Idaho basins of the Boise and Payette.

Not a single sub-basin in the Columbia breaks 70% this month, and Oregon holds the best of the bad, with the Oregon Snake at 68%, John Day at 65%, and Deschutes at 69%.

Washington dropped 8% in the North Cascades to 54% and the Yakima lost 4% to its current 60%. The Clearwater and Salmon in Idaho dropped over 10% to 50%. These basins and the Pend Oreille are all near 50%, but the worst in the Columbia is held by the Kootenai, with 45%.

The overall situation is that 51% of the Columbia is at or below 50% of average snowpack, and all sub-basins are below 70%. The snowpack index for the Columbia above The Dalles is 52% of a normal 1 Feb. This snowpack season has managed to accumulate only 35% of a normal year's peak amount. Only 1977 was worse, with 27% accumulated by 1 Feb, and that year topped out at 58% of a normal peak. We have four to six weeks of possible build-up time remaining, and there will have to be well-above average accumulations during that time to avoid an overall near record low snowpack year.

