United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

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

Date: **January 10, 2011**

Subject: **January 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 January 1, 2011.

OVERVIEW

Most indications show a moderately strong "La Niña" in place, which has the potential to lead to increased moisture throughout much of Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies. However, thus far, we have not seen this pattern unfold since the start of the 2011 Water-Year (i.e., 1 October 2010). Most of the abundant precipitation has fallen further south from California to Utah. Current forecasts and prior "La Niña" patterns generally favor a wetter than average January through March time period, especially for the Northern Tier States. Since it is now only early January, there is still lots of opportunity during the snow season for this to materialize.

SNOWPACK

The 2011 Calendar opened with the driest regions over the extreme Northern and Southern Tier States (Fig. 1). Conditions improve over the middle sections of the Western States.

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 not delivered excess moisture over the Upper Columbia River (in Canada) and over the southern region of New Mexico and eastern plains of Colorado (Fig. 2). California and much of the Great Basin 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, 2011 are calling for below normal values over the southern stretches of the Southwest (Fig. 3). Much of the Great Basin is expected to see above normal flows. State Basin Outlook Reports can be accessed at: http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/bor.pl.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

Statewide (average) reservoir levels reflect near normal conditions over (CO, ID, MT, and WA) and below normal values over (NV, NM, OR, and MT) (Fig. 4). AZ and WY are experiencing above normal reservoir levels. California data is currently unavailable.

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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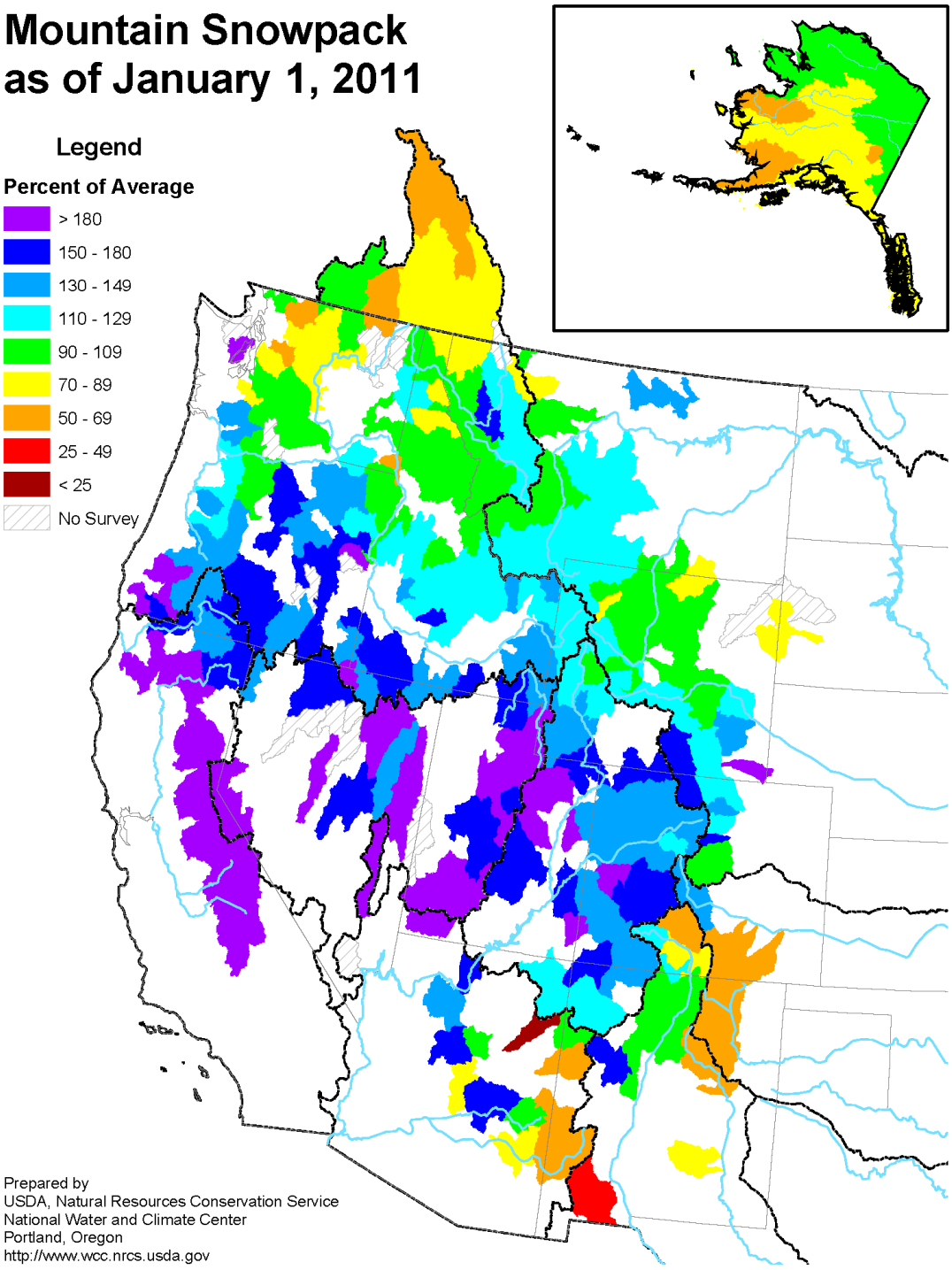

Figure 1. Mountain Snowpack, January 1, 2011
ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/snowpack/wy2011/snow1101.gif

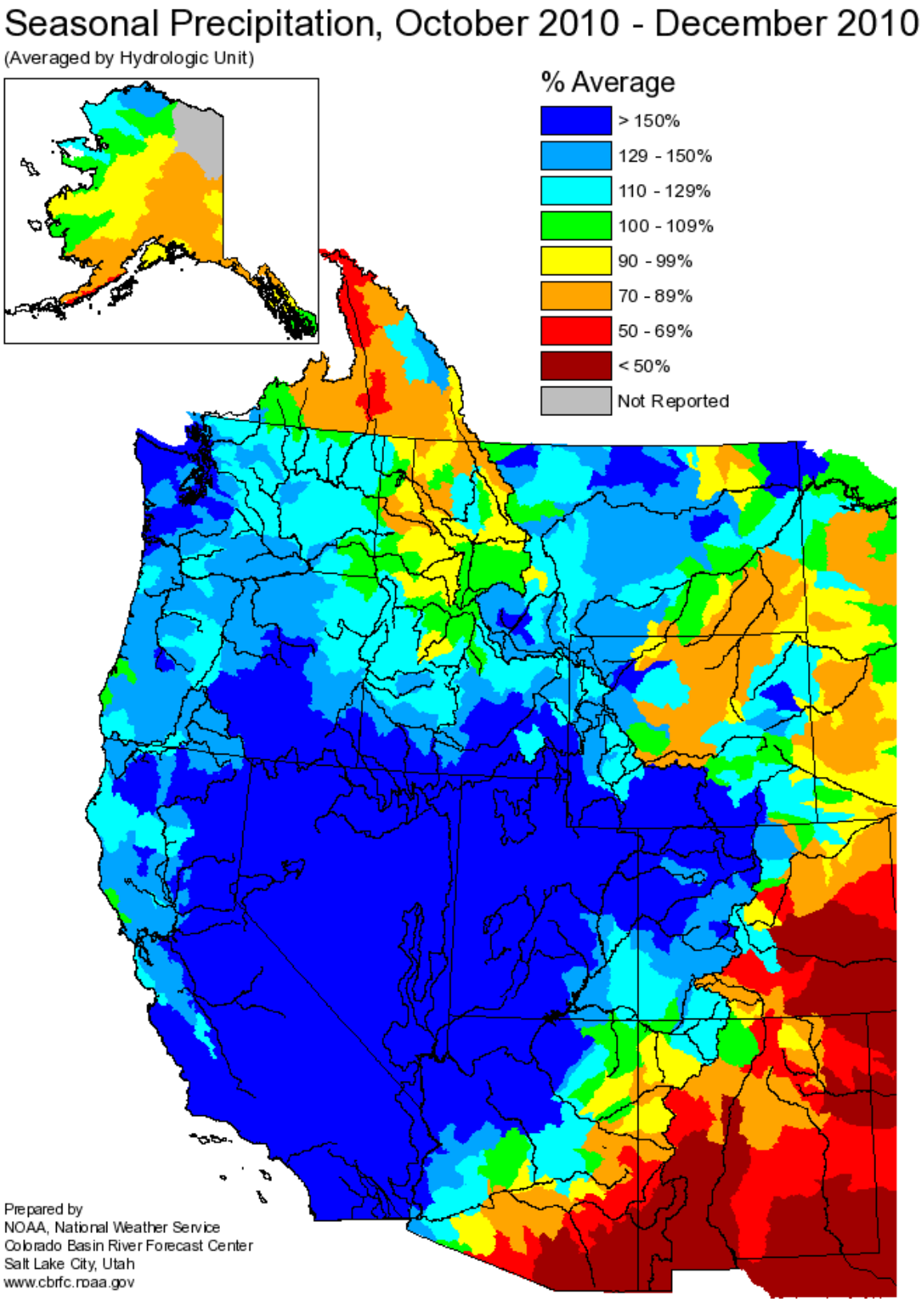

Figure 2. Seasonal Precipitation, October 1, 2010 to December, 2010
http://www.cbrfc.noaa.gov/wsup/westwide/precip/westS201012.png

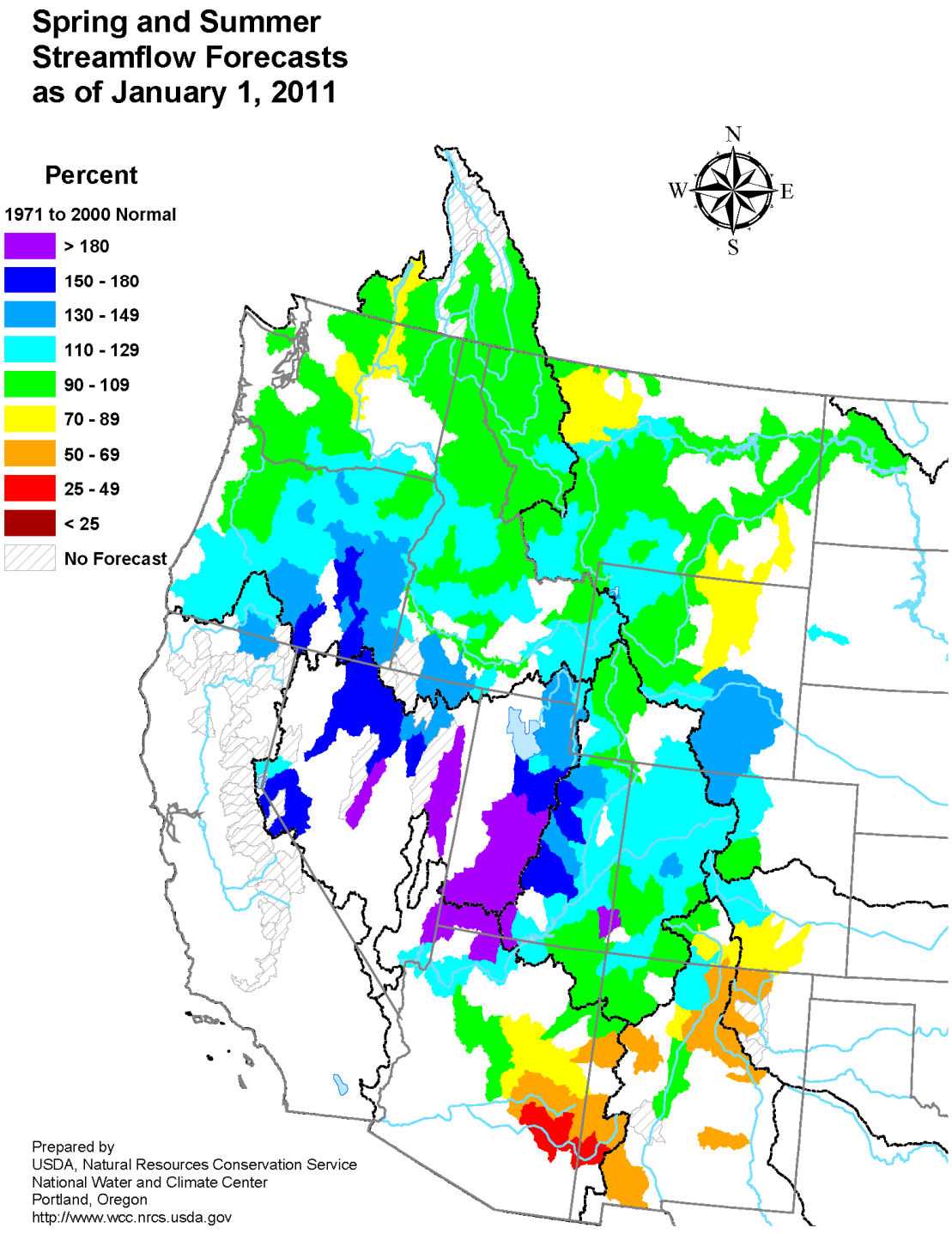

Figure 3. Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts - January 1, 2011
(Alaska not forecast in January)
ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/streamflow/wy2011/strm1101.gif

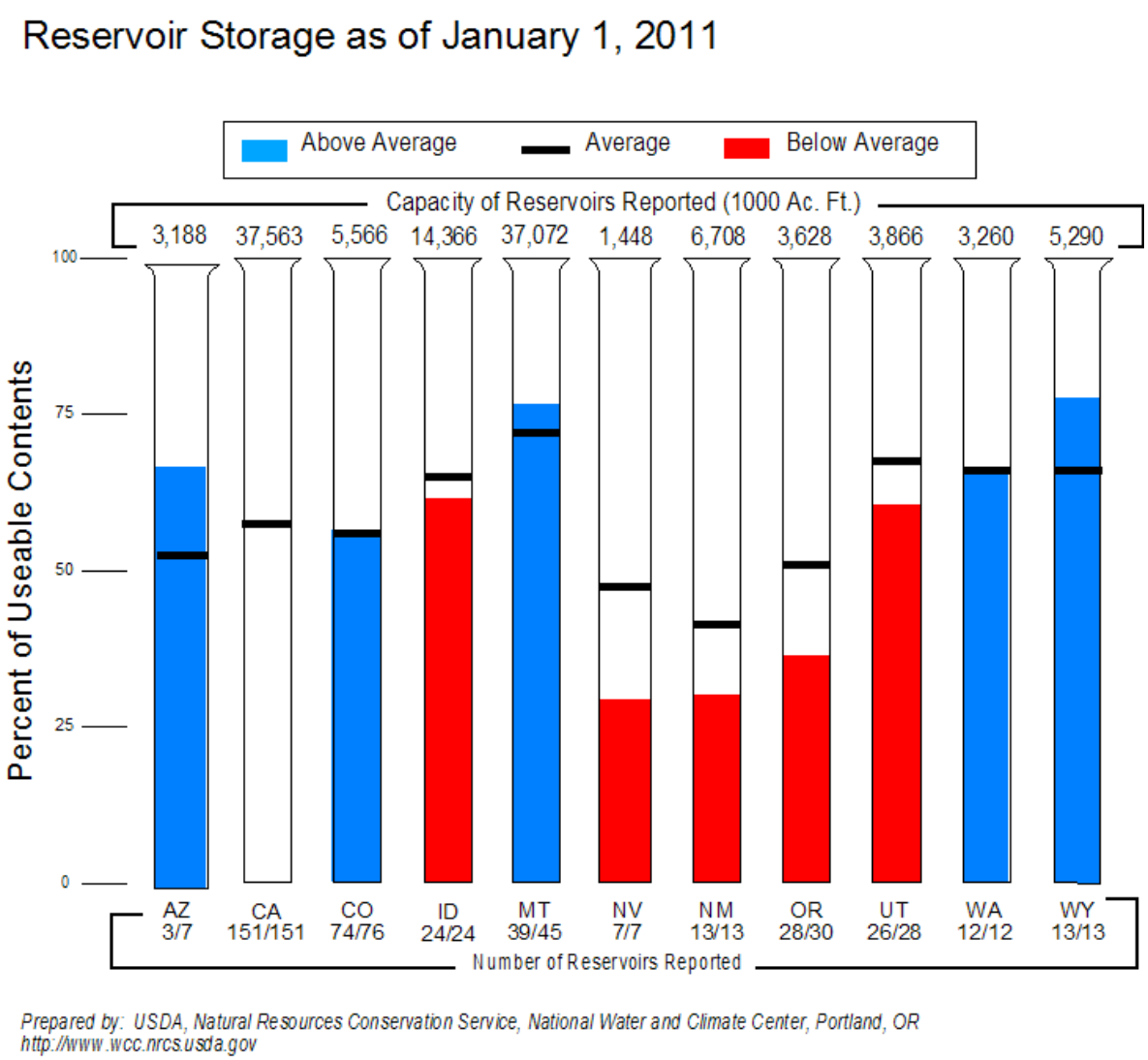

Figure. 4. Reservoir Storage - January 1, 2011
ftp://ftp.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/support/water/westwide/reservoir/wy2011/resv1101.gif