

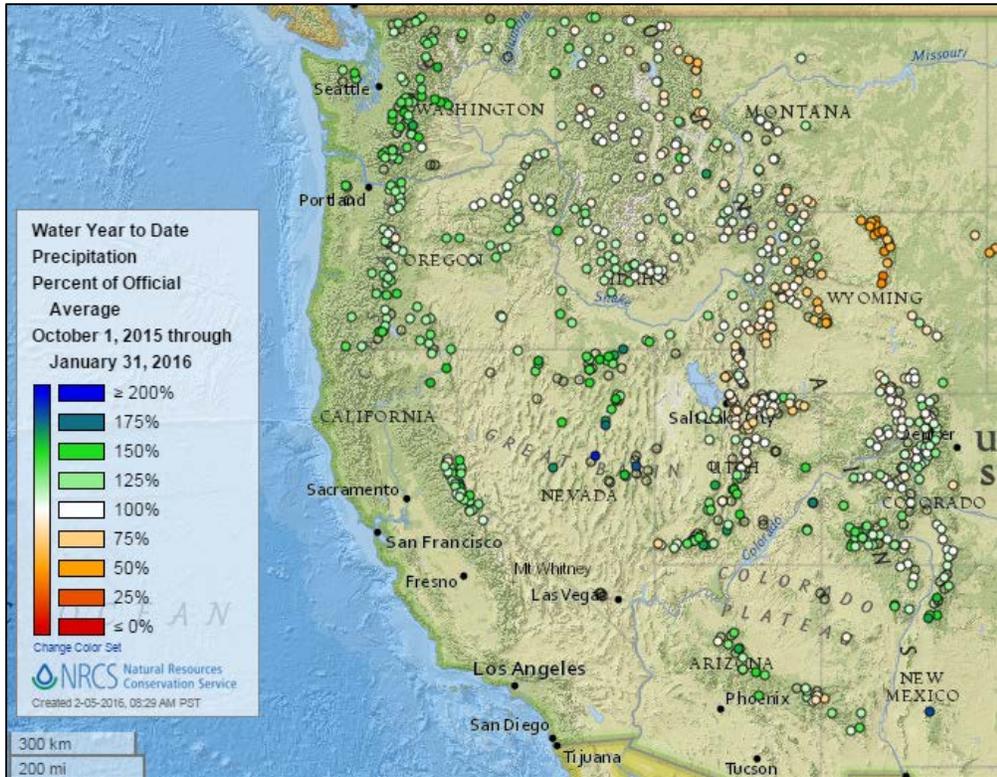
Western Snowpack and Water Supply Conditions February 2016

Overview

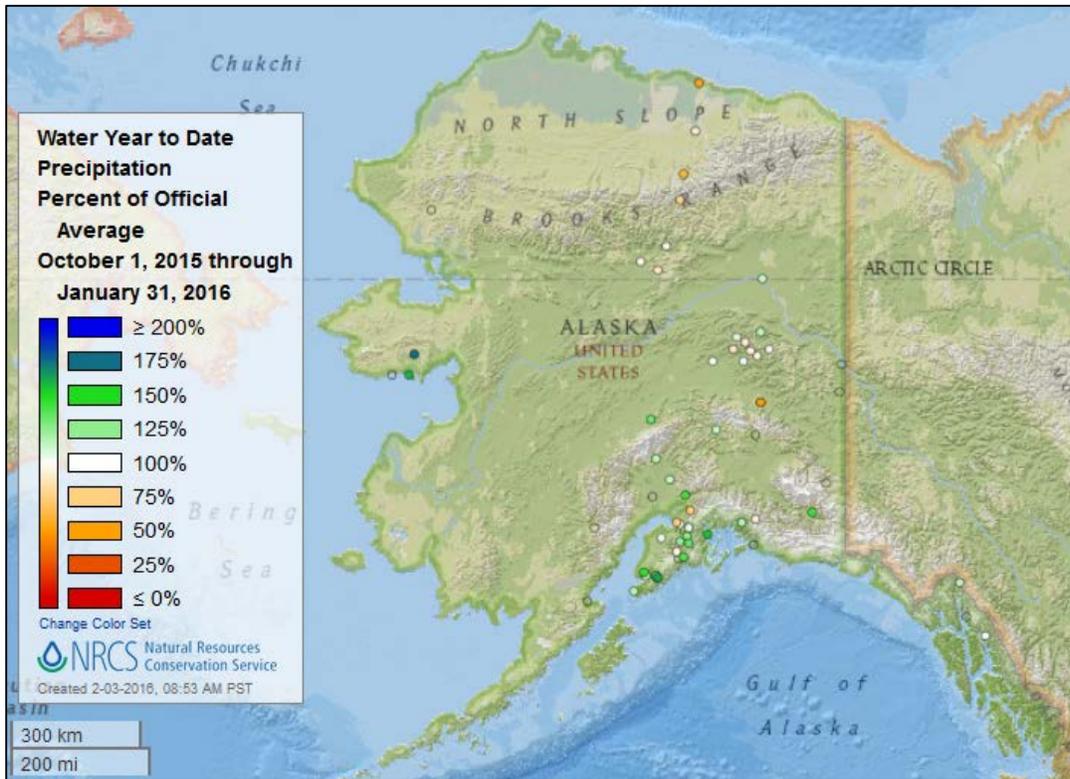
This report summarizes Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) and snow course network data, streamflow forecasts, and reservoir storage data collected and analyzed by the [National Water and Climate Center](#).

Precipitation thus far in the water year (beginning October 1, 2015) has been near or above normal in most of the West except for Wyoming, northeastern Utah, and a small area in northern Montana. **Snowpack** reflects this same pattern. **Streamflow forecasts** are near to above normal in most areas except for Wyoming, northern and eastern Montana, and northeast Utah, where the outlook is below normal. **Reservoir storage** is currently above average in Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming and below average elsewhere.

Water Year-To-Date Precipitation



[Precipitation for the 2016 water year-to-date](#) has been near to above average over most of the West. The only exception to this pattern is northcentral and southwest Wyoming, northeast Utah, and a small area in northern Montana, where precipitation has been significantly below average.



[Precipitation in Alaska for the 2016 water year-to-date](#) has been near to above normal in most areas of the state.

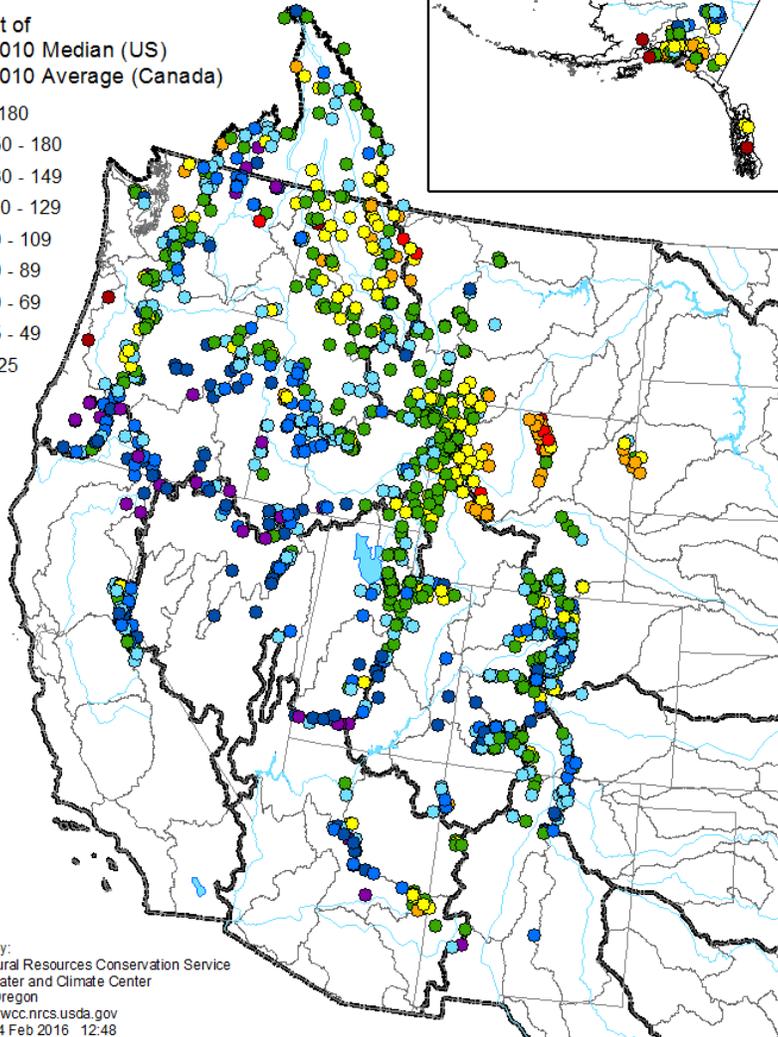
Basin-filled maps containing monthly and daily updates of SNOTEL precipitation are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/precip.html>

Snowpack

Mountain Snowpack as of February 1, 2016

Percent of
1981-2010 Median (US)
1981-2010 Average (Canada)

- > 180
- 150 - 180
- 130 - 149
- 110 - 129
- 90 - 109
- 70 - 89
- 50 - 69
- 25 - 49
- < 25



[Snowpack at SNOTEL sites and snow courses as of February 1](#) in the western U.S. and the Columbia Basin in Canada remains near to well above normal in most of the region.

The striking exception to this picture is in Wyoming, especially the northcentral area, where snowpacks are somewhat to well below normal. In addition, somewhat below normal snowpacks are seen in the northern Rockies of Montana and Idaho.

Snowpack in Alaska is above normal in the Interior and near or somewhat below normal in southern areas.

Maps with daily updates of the snowpack (SNOTEL data only) for the entire West, as well as for individual states, are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/snow.html>

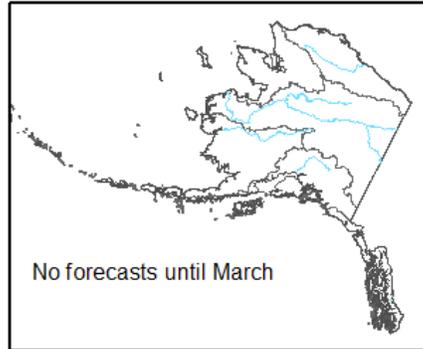
Streamflow Forecasts

[Streamflow forecasts](#) are near or above normal over most of the West. The exceptions, where forecasts are below normal, are found over most of Wyoming, northern and eastern Montana, and northeastern Utah.

Spring and Summer Streamflow Forecasts as of February 1, 2016

Percent of 1981-2010 Average

- > 180
- 150 - 180
- 130 - 149
- 110 - 129
- 90 - 109
- 70 - 89
- 50 - 69
- 25 - 49
- < 25



50% exceedance probability forecasts shown. For forecasts at other exceedance probabilities, see individual state reports.

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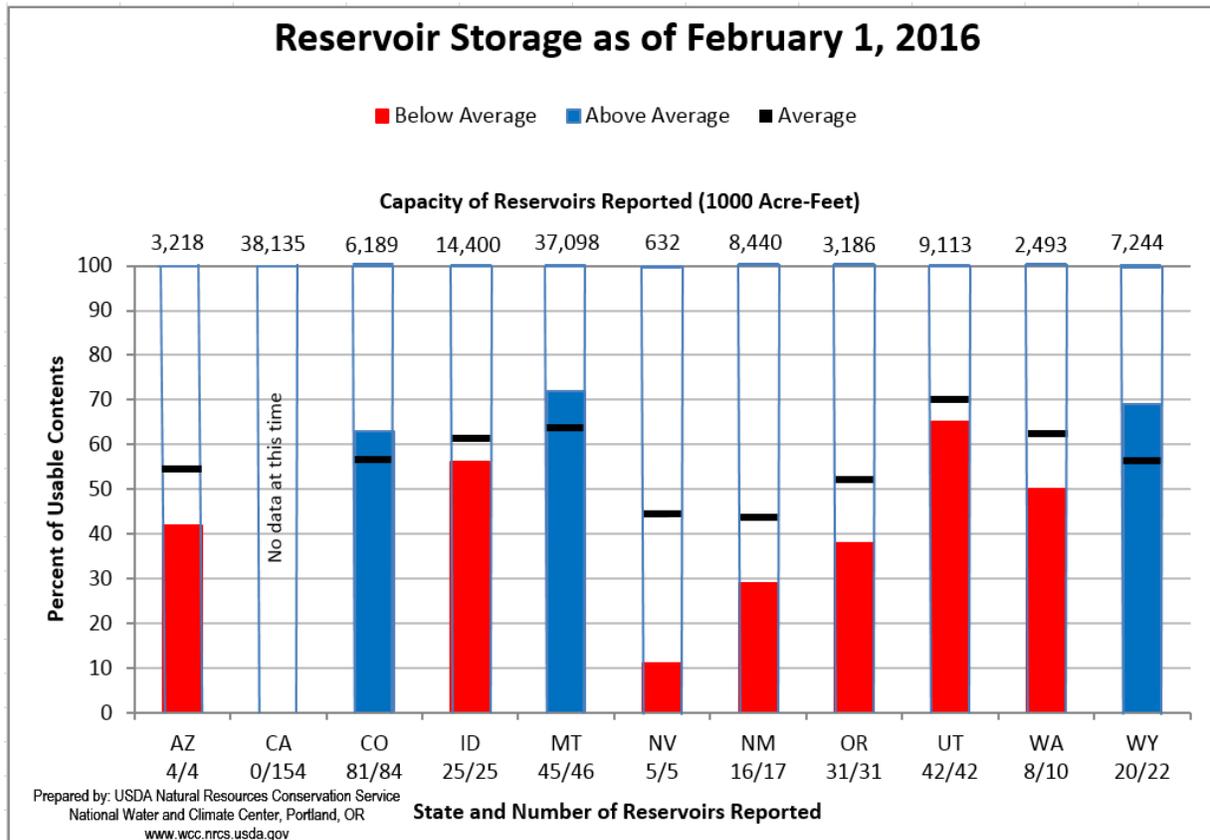
Trends in streamflow forecasts in basins for which daily water supply forecast models are available can be followed at: http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/wsf/daily_forecasts.html

Reservoir Storage

[Reservoir levels](#) are above average in Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming and below average elsewhere.

Further data and charts are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/wsf/wsf-reservoir.html>

Data for California are summarized at: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/reservoirs/STORSUM>



State Reports

Click a state name to view the full report

Alaska: While all of Alaska experienced above normal temperatures during the month of January, there was clear variability in regard to precipitation. Northern Alaska and the Interior saw very little new snow during the month, with many sites not reporting any new precipitation. The snowpack in these areas remains variably above and below normal. The southern coastal regions saw more precipitation, and many sites on the Kenai Peninsula reported twice normal precipitation. However, with above normal temperatures, much of this precipitation fell as rain on low-lying areas and further diminished snowpacks in those areas, while increasing snowpacks in the higher mountains.

Arizona: The mountains of Arizona received very little precipitation during the latter half of January. As a result, the streamflow forecasts are reduced but still call for above normal runoff in the spring.

California: January storms in California added much-needed moisture to soils and continued to develop the snowpack in the northern, central, and southern portions of the Sierra. Current snowpack levels are slightly above normal for this time of year. However, reservoir levels are still generally below normal for

this time of year as they continue to recover from low rainfall and snow amounts associated with previous years.

Colorado: Snowpack is down only slightly from last month but is still above normal in all major basins thanks to late January storms. To date, the combined San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basins have the best snowpack in the state at 122% of normal, which is 185% of last year at this time.

Idaho: Close to or better than average precipitation in January helped to maintain the snow levels from a month ago. Based on current conditions, irrigation water supplies should be adequate for most of the state, although some areas remain marginal. With 40% of the winter still to come, a few southern Idaho basins are about to exceed their normal April seasonal peaks with the next storm, while other basins still need near normal snowfall for the next two months to reach their typical seasonal peaks in early April.

Montana: The predominantly westerly and southwesterly atmospheric flow has favored basins in the southern half of the state, leading to snowpack conditions varying greatly from north to south. Northern basins west and east of the Continental Divide -- especially the Sun-Teton-Marias and the St. Mary-Milk Basins -- are experiencing below to well below normal snowpack for February 1st. Moving southward, conditions generally improve, where snowpack ranges from only slightly below normal to above normal in southwest Montana.

Nevada: Above average January precipitation boosted basin snowpacks across the state to 114-158% of median. Streamflow forecasts are very similar to last month, with most at 90-125% of average for the March–July period.

New Mexico: January proved to be much drier than hoped for. A late month storm track, which rolled into the northern mountains and dragged its heels into the beginning of February, delivered a nice round of snow to the area, rescuing it from an otherwise average month. The Upper Rio Grande, extending into southern Colorado, has received above average precipitation so far, however with a weakening El Niño signature, the basin may come up a bit short if future storms continue to stray north of Colorado and New Mexico.

Oregon: Storms continued to blanket Oregon's mountains with snow in January, with snow falling all the way down to valley floor levels early in the month. All but a handful of measurement sites in the state are reporting normal to above normal snowpack levels as of February 1. As a result, the streamflow forecasts are calling for near average to above average streamflow for the summer water supply season. Water managers should be cautiously optimistic about the current statewide snowpack and water supply outlook. The mountain temperatures for February and March will determine whether mountain precipitation continues to fall as snow or turns to rain, which will have a large impact on the summer water supply picture.

Utah: Snowpacks in southern Utah remain well above normal, and in the north they are near normal. Overall water supply conditions across the state are much improved compared to the past four years.

Washington: Despite El Niño, Washington has experienced above normal snowpack and precipitation thus far this year. Streamflow forecasts are for near to above normal runoff this summer.

Wyoming: The snow water equivalent across the state is below median for February 1st at 87%. Monthly precipitation for the basins was 42-165% of average for an overall average of 92%. The year-to-date precipitation average for the basins is now at 82%, varying from 53-116% of average. Forecasted runoff varies from 36-102% of average across the basins, for an overall average of 81%. Basin reservoir levels for Wyoming vary from 87-190% of average for an overall average of 120%.

For More Information

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