

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

April 2026



Fresno Dam, March 2026

The April monthly operating plan covers actual operations from October 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026, and projected operations for April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027. The projections are based on forecasted water supply and use.

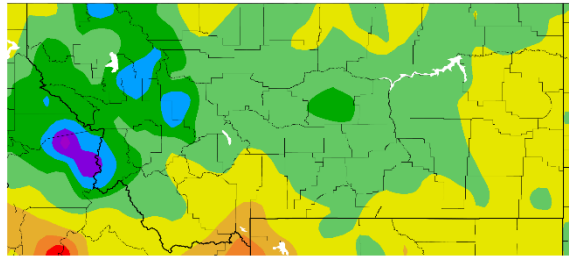
Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
April Inflow Forecast (kaf)	9	18	6
Percent of Average	87	54	60
April Release Forecast (cfs)	467	40	0
April 30 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4772.4	2564.0	2218.2

April-July Forecast	Sherburne
Inflow Forecast	75
Percent of Average	76

Climate Departure from Normal

March 1 through March 31

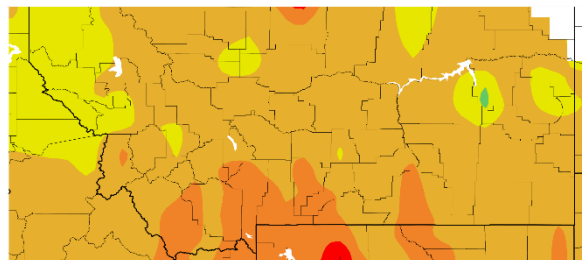
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

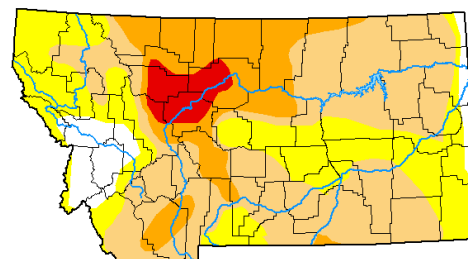
In March, precipitation in the St. Mary basin was above average. In the Milk River basin precipitation was near average. In both basins temperature was above average.

In April, there is an equal chance that precipitation will be above, below, or near average. In the St. Mary and western part of the Milk River basin, there is a 33-40% chance that temperatures will be above average. The remainder of the Milk River basin has an equal chance of being above, below, or near average.

The drought intensity in the St. Mary and Milk River basins ranges from abnormally dry to severe.

Montana Drought Monitor Map

March 31, 2026



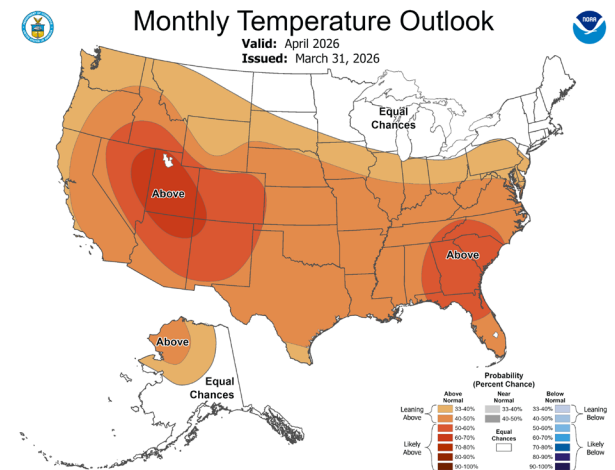
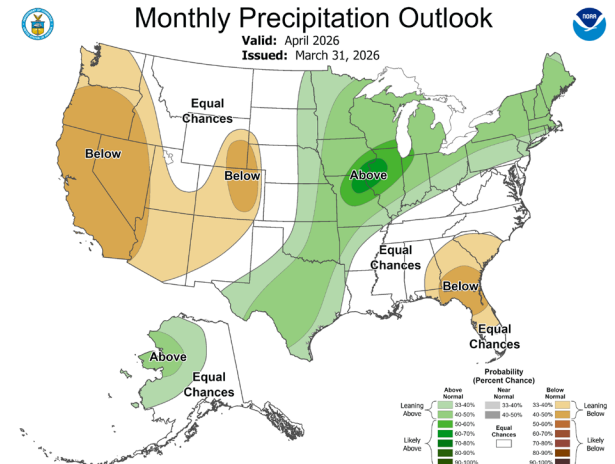
Intensity

None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

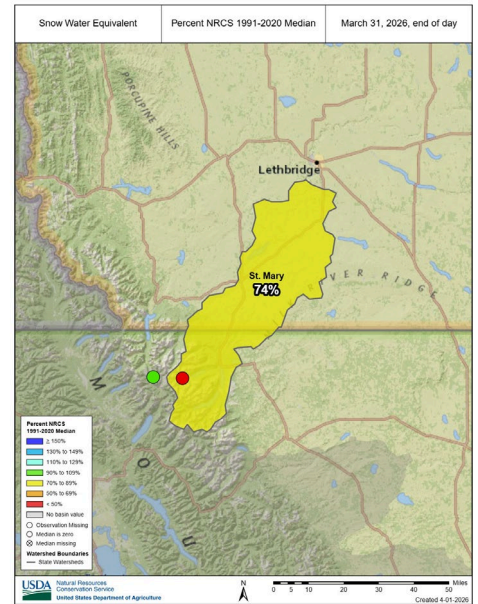
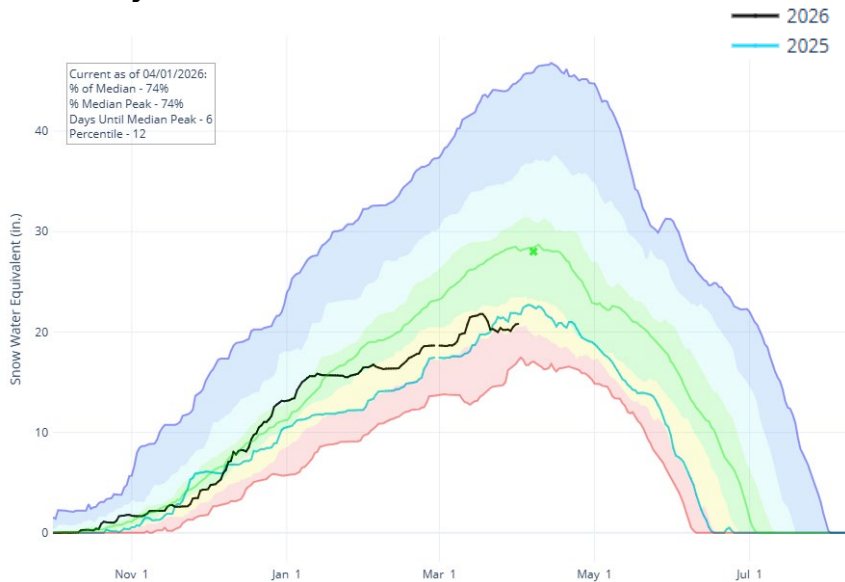
April Climate Outlook



SNOWPACK SUMMARY

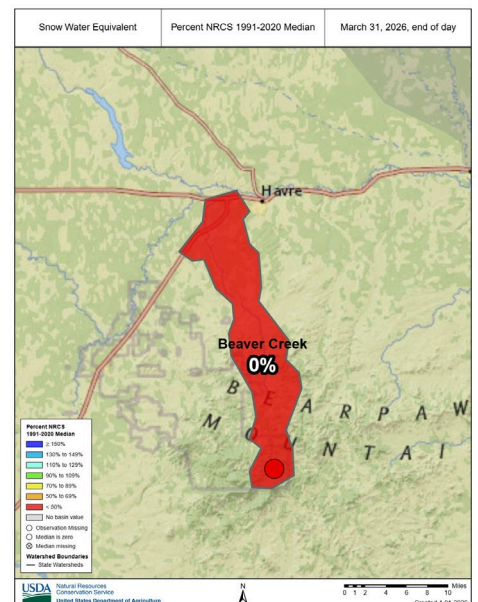
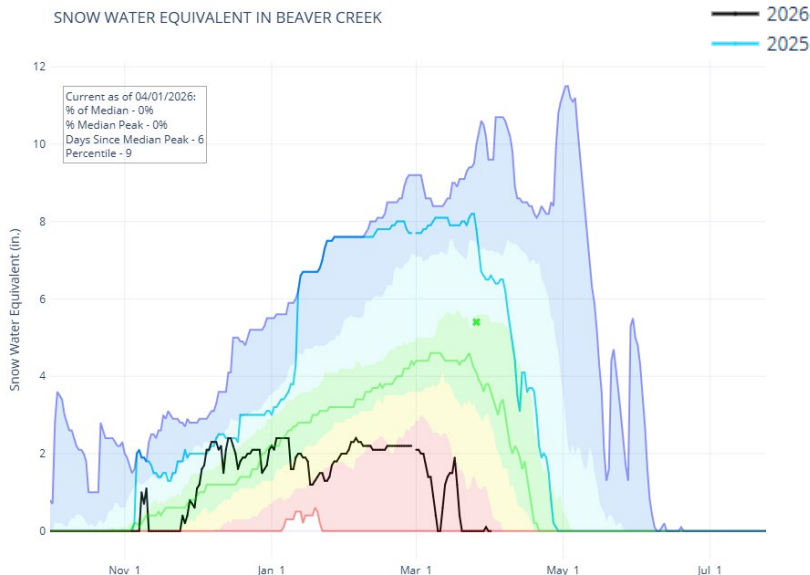
The snow water equivalent (SWE) graphs are a composite of SNOTEL sites within the St. Mary and Milk River Basins managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

St. Mary River Basin



Milk River Basin

SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN BEAVER CREEK



NRCS Montana Snow Survey Website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mt/snow/>

Statistical shading breaks at 10th, 30th, 50th, 70th, and 90th Percentiles
 Normal ('91-'20) – Official median calculated from 1991-2020 data
 Normal (POR) – Unofficial mean calculated from Period of Record data

OPERATIONS REVIEW

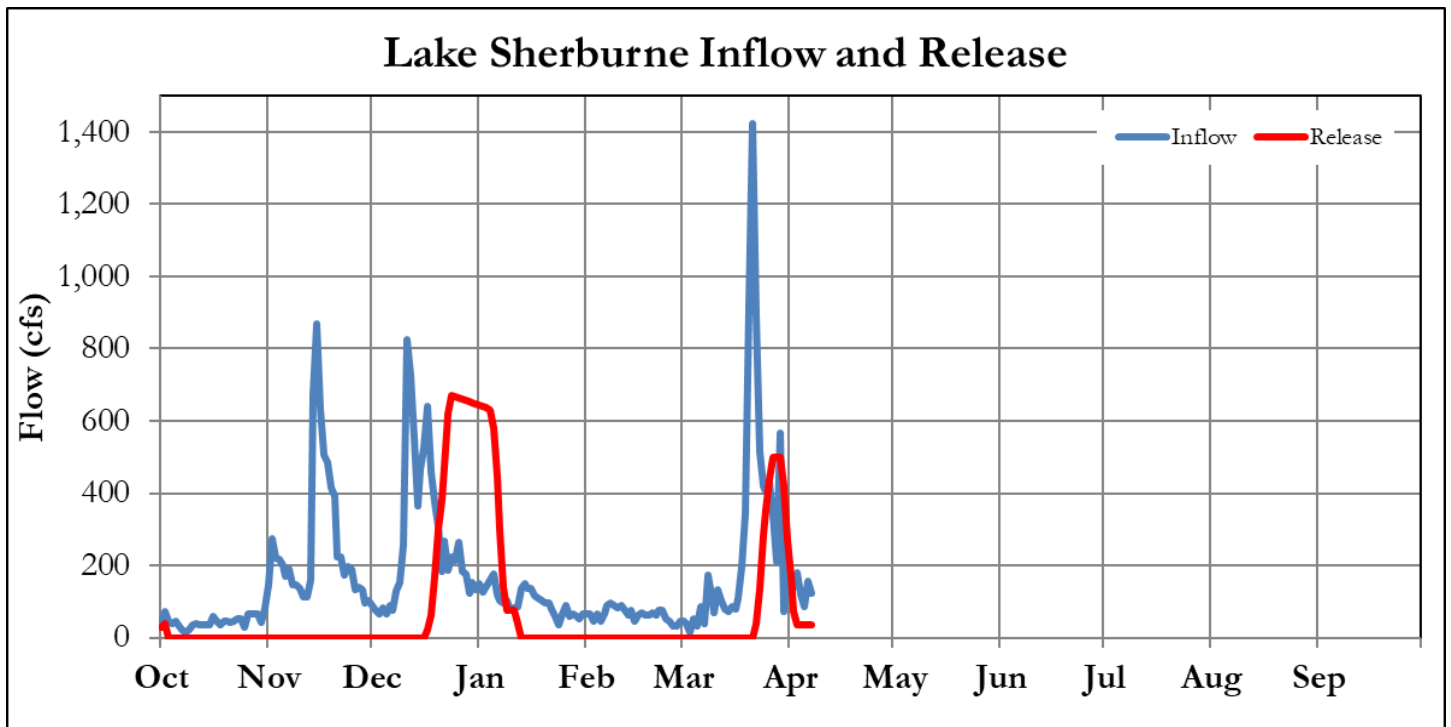
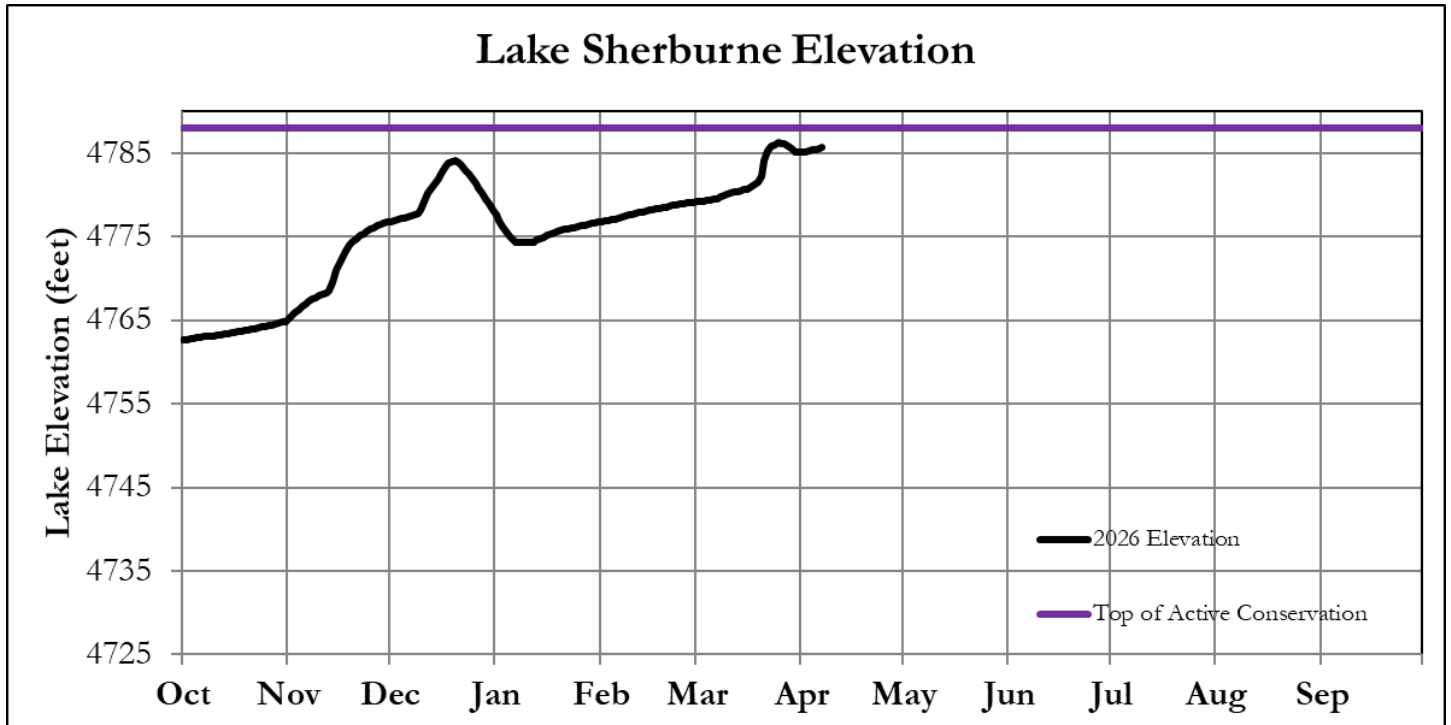
April 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4785.10	61,239	184	93
Fresno Reservoir	2557.31	32,219	66	35
Nelson Reservoir	2215.57	55,274	99	70

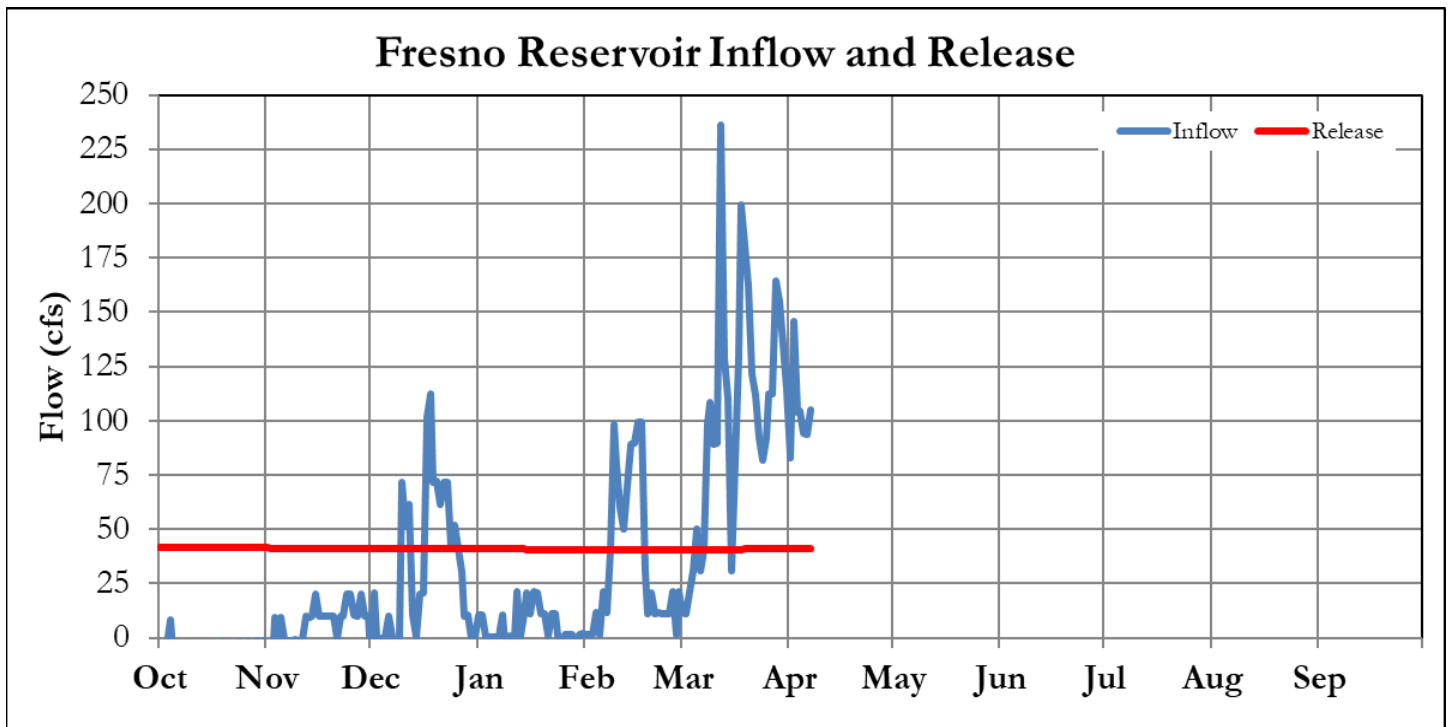
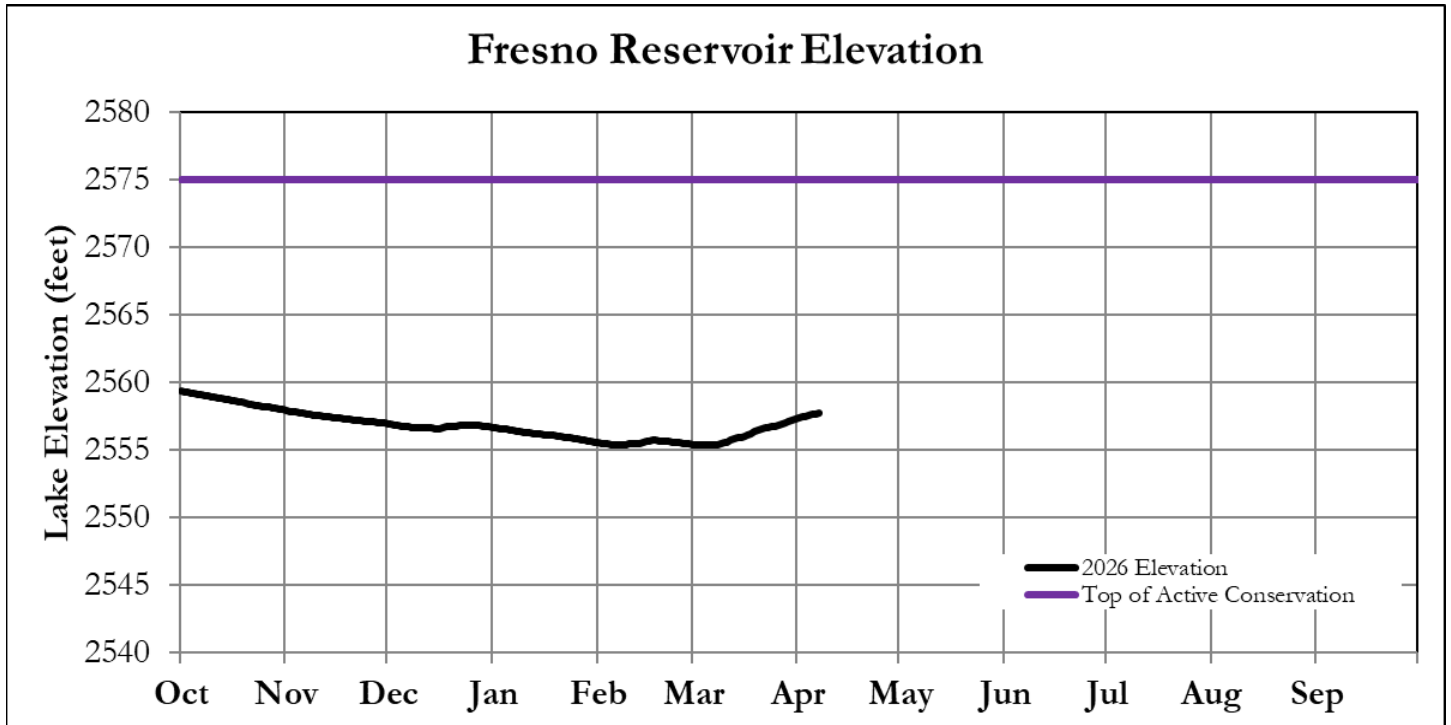
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

Month	Sherburne Reservoir		Fresno Reservoir	
	Inflow	% of Average	Inflow	% of Average
<u>Water Year 2026</u>				
October	2.8	41	-0.6	-
November	15.5	198	0.4	15
December	16.7	411	2.0	129
January	6.2	226	0.3	27
February	3.6	155	2.0	40
March	16.4	444	6.2	31
<u>Water Year 2025</u>				
October	2.6	40	-0.3	-
November	2.9	37	0.0	-
December	2.5	62	0.1	6
January	1.3	44	0.0	-
February	1.4	56	19.9	456
March	4.4	117	13.6	67
April	9.9	102	4.8	14
May	31.6	101	1.6	4
June	20.5	52	1.9	4
July	14.8	80	14.9	55
August	6.2	73	24.9	90
September	1.5	28	0.7	4

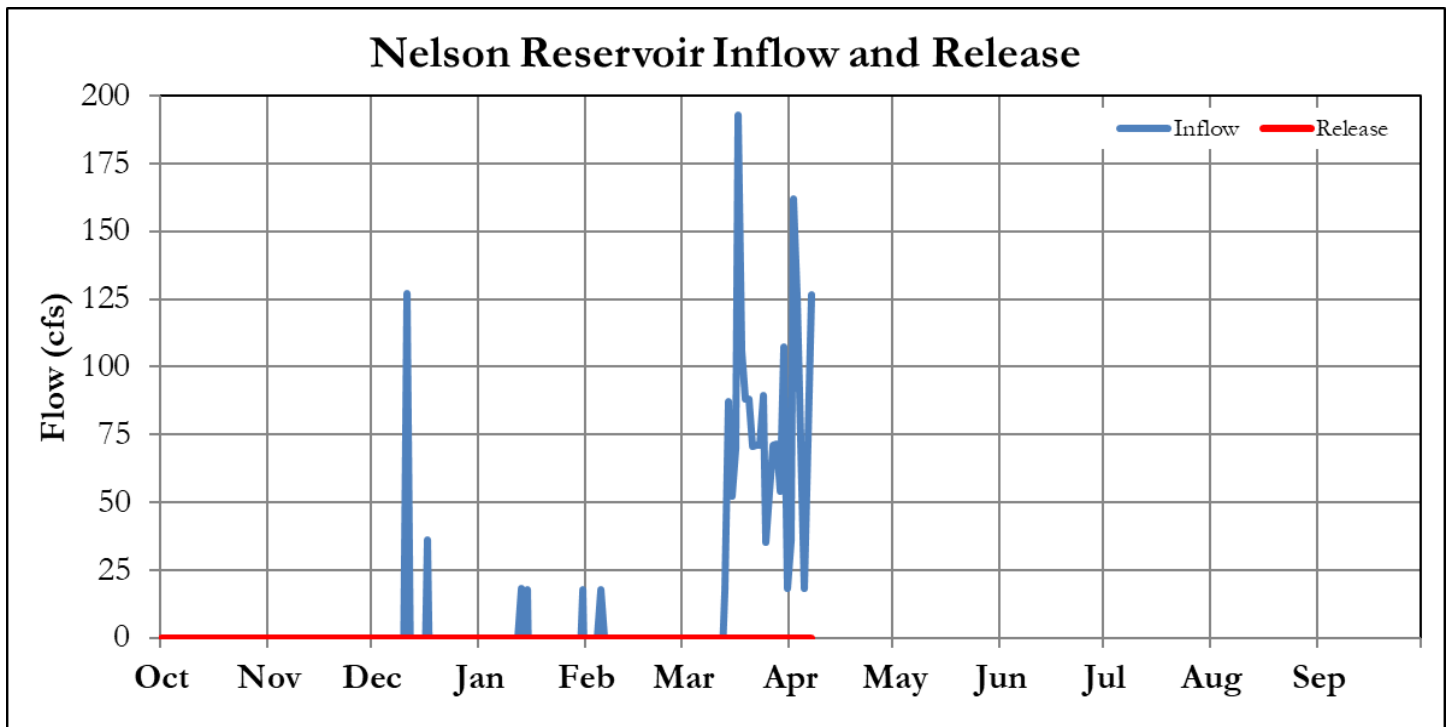
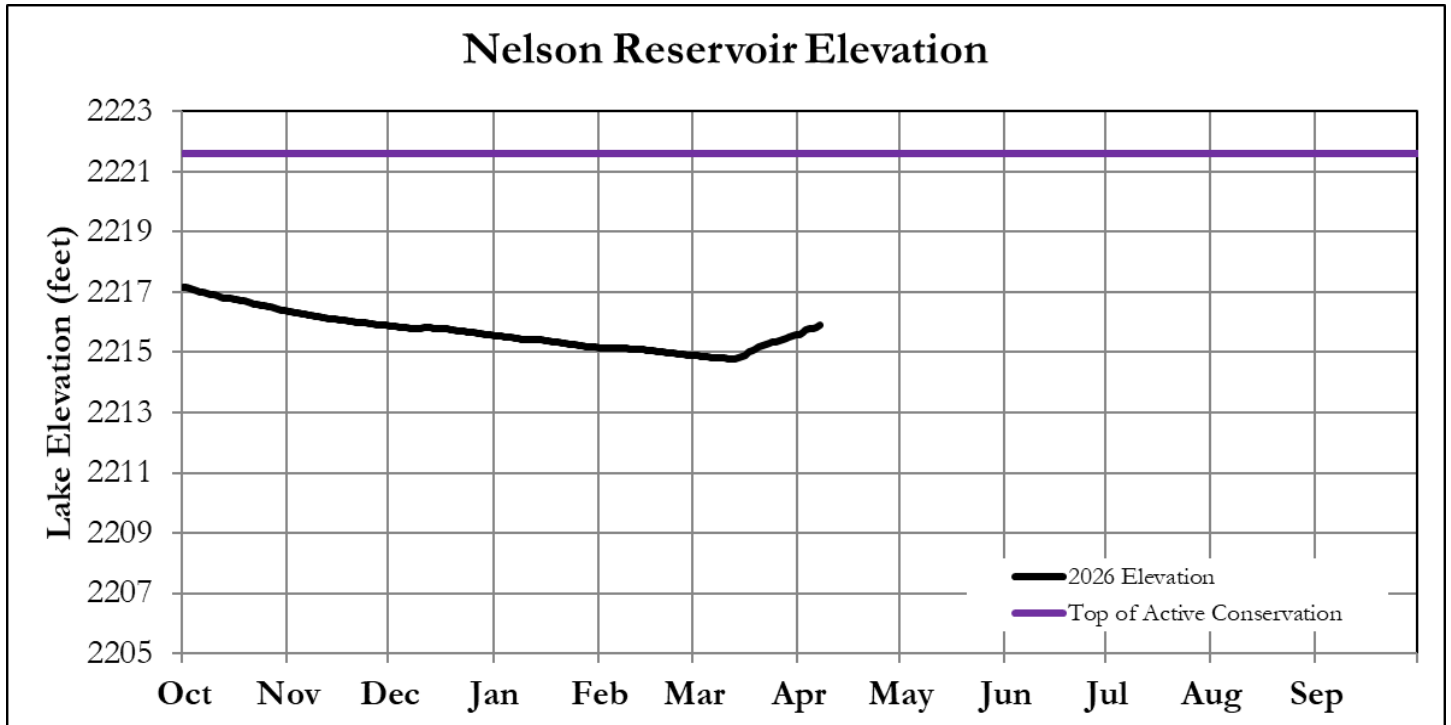
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	61,239	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4785.10	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	8.5	24.9	26.8	14.3	6.3	3.8	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.1	1.3	2.9	102.5
Sherburne Release (kaf)	27.8	17.7	9.7	24.1	34.8	25.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	139.2
Sherburne Release (cfs)	467	288	163	392	566	422	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-19.3	7.2	17.1	-9.8	-28.5	-21.3	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.1	1.3	2.9	-36.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	41.9	49.1	66.2	56.4	27.9	6.6	11.0	14.9	18.2	20.3	21.6	24.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4772.4	4777.4	4788.0	4782.1	4760.8	4737.4	4743.2	4747.8	4751.4	4753.6	4754.9	4757.7	
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	15.4	83.9	110.8	60.5	27.4	18.1	14.0	9.0	6.7	5.8	6.0	6.2	363.8
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	23.9	108.8	137.6	74.8	33.7	21.9	18.4	12.9	10.0	7.9	7.3	9.1	466.3
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	425	600	600	600	600	450	0	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	25.3	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	26.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	198.5
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	32,219	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2557.31	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	7.8	3.5	2.6	0.2	0.2	1.4	2.8	1.6	0.9	0.9	2.3	8.4	32.6
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	10.1	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	29.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	156.7
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	17.9	33.0	31.2	29.7	29.7	30.9	2.8	1.6	0.9	0.9	2.3	8.4	189.3
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.4	23.2	46.3	61.2	29.2	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	182.9
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	377	778	995	475	101	41	40	41	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	15.5	9.8	-15.1	-31.5	0.5	24.9	0.3	-0.8	-1.6	-1.6	0.1	5.9	6.4
End of Month Content (kaf)	47.7	57.5	42.4	10.9	11.4	36.3	36.6	35.8	34.2	32.6	32.7	38.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2564.0	2567.4	2561.9	2544.2	2544.6	2559.2	2559.4	2559.0	2558.3	2557.5	2557.5	2560.2	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.65
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	152.9
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	12.7	8.8	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.2	56.6
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	6.7	8.8	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.2	50.6
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	55,274	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2215.57	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	6.0	7.9	10.4	4.3	1.3	3.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0	45.6
Net Content Change (kaf)	4.2	0.5	-2.6	-12.0	-6.1	1.6	-0.5	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	9.2	-12.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	59.5	60.0	57.4	45.4	39.3	40.9	40.4	38.6	36.8	35.0	33.3	42.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.7	2216.9	2216.2	2212.6	2210.4	2211.0	2210.8	2210.1	2209.4	2208.6	2207.9	2211.6	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	5.6	11.2	14.5	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.9

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

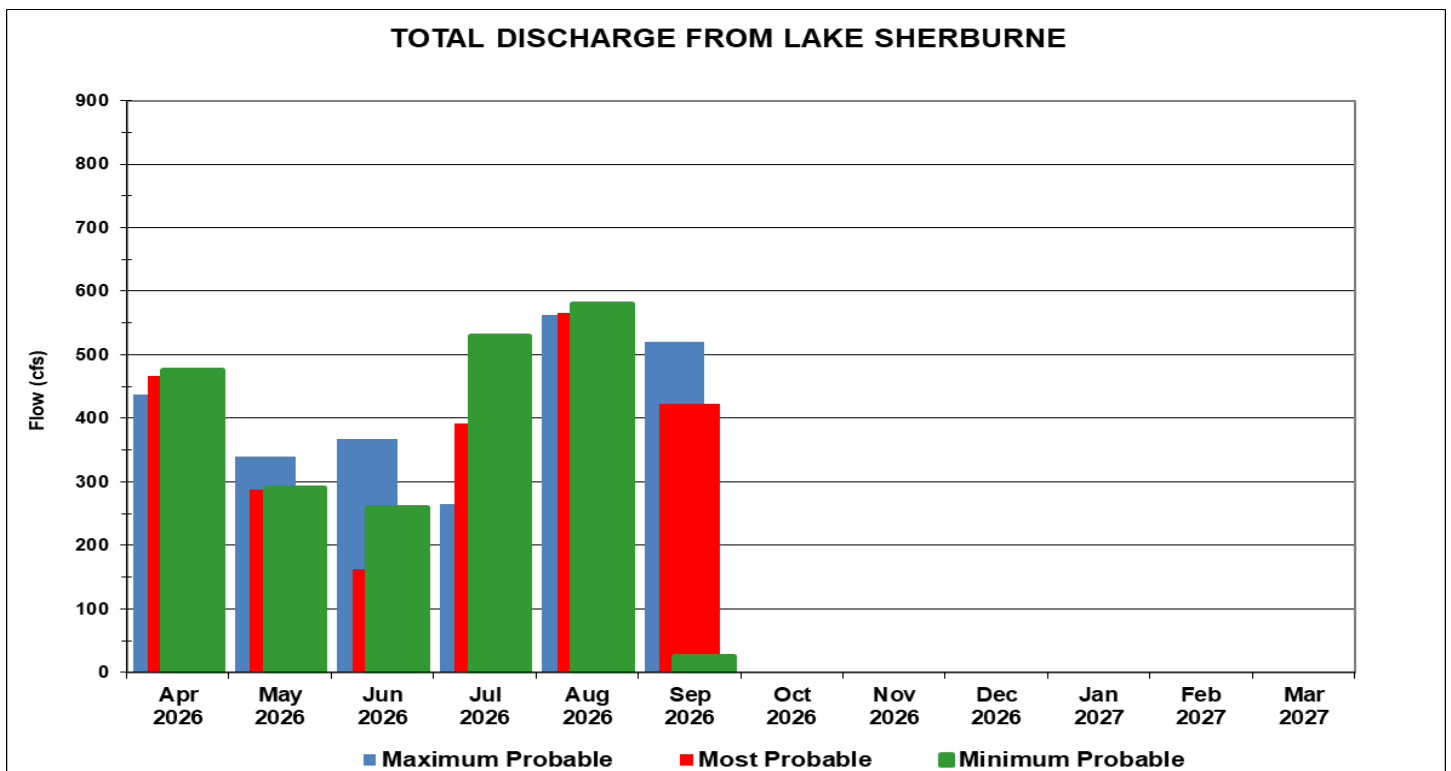
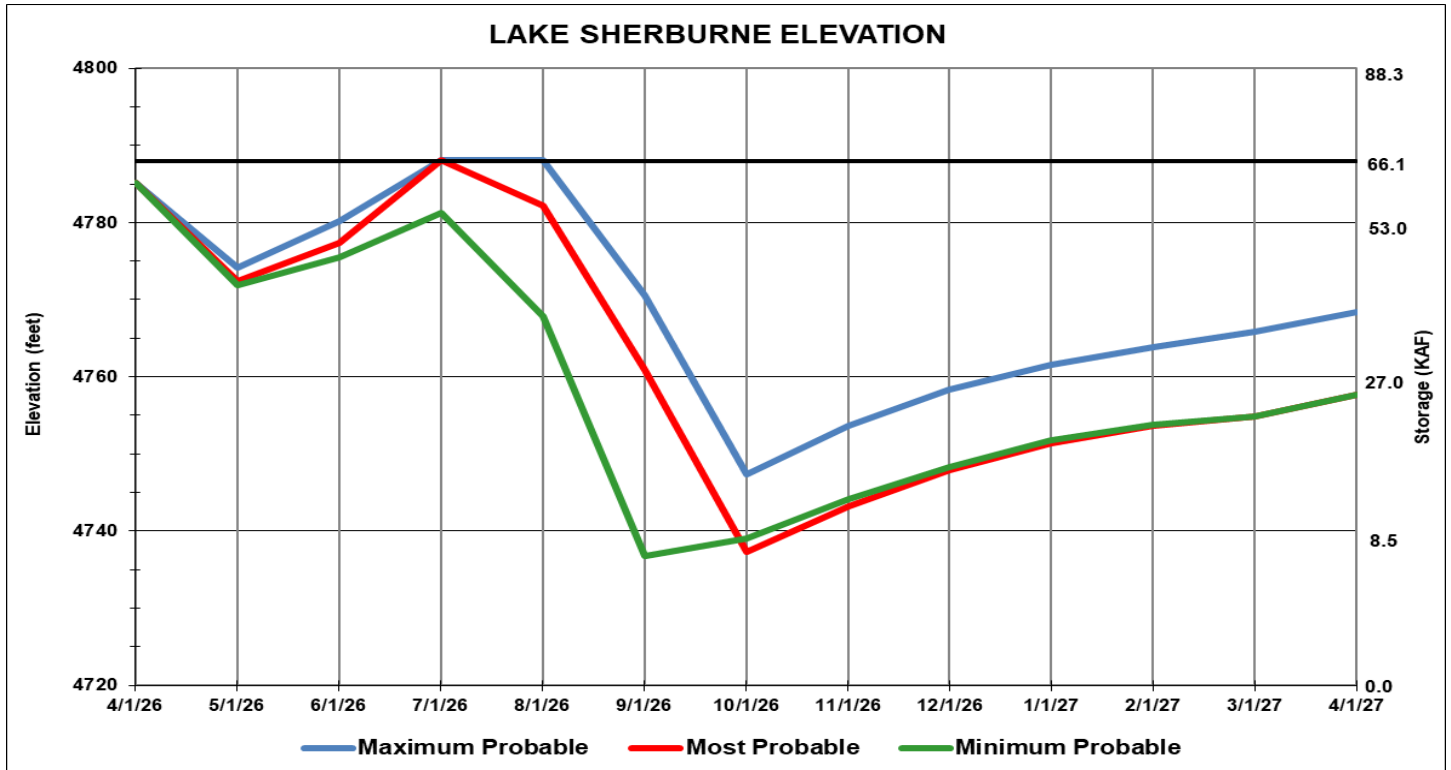
Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	61,239	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4785.10	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	8.3	23.1	24.2	13.7	5.8	3.1	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.0	2.9	94.8
Sherburne Release (kaf)	28.4	17.9	15.5	32.6	35.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	131.6
Sherburne Release (cfs)	477	291	260	530	581	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-20.1	5.2	8.7	-18.9	-29.9	1.6	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.0	2.9	-36.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	41.1	46.3	55.0	36.1	6.2	7.8	11.7	15.3	18.5	20.5	21.5	24.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4771.8	4775.5	4781.3	4767.9	4736.8	4739.1	4744.1	4748.3	4751.8	4753.8	4754.8	4757.6	
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	7.6	70.2	84.5	42.8	22.3	15.3	9.0	5.1	4.9	4.2	5.0	4.1	275.0
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	15.9	93.3	108.7	56.5	28.1	18.4	12.9	8.7	8.1	6.2	6.0	7.0	369.8
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	425	600	600	600	600	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	25.3	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	174.7
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	32,219	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2557.31	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	4.4	1.7	1.5	0.0	0.1	0.8	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.0	5.4	18.4
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	7.6	27.7	26.8	27.7	27.7	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	130.7
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	12.0	29.4	28.3	27.7	27.8	14.0	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.0	5.4	149.1
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.4	23.2	49.0	8.0	17.7	11.2	12.0	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	135.6
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	377	823	130	288	188	195	40	41	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	9.6	6.2	-20.7	19.7	10.1	2.8	-9.9	-1.7	-2.2	-2.1	-1.2	2.9	13.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	41.8	48.0	27.3	47.0	57.1	59.9	50.0	48.3	46.1	44.0	42.8	45.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2561.6	2564.1	2554.8	2563.7	2567.3	2568.2	2564.8	2564.2	2563.3	2562.5	2562.0	2563.2	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	23.2	46.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	69.5
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	11.1
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	2.5	1.8	5.0	8.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	55.7
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	55,274	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2215.57	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	2.3	1.6	4.5	7.2	10.8	10.8	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	50.2
Net Content Change (kaf)	0.5	-7.1	-11.2	5.4	9.0	9.0	9.0	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	0.4	7.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	55.8	48.7	37.5	42.9	51.9	60.9	69.9	68.1	66.3	64.5	62.8	63.2	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.7	2213.6	2209.7	2211.8	2214.6	2217.1	2219.4	2219.0	2218.5	2218.1	2217.6	2217.7	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	6.9	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

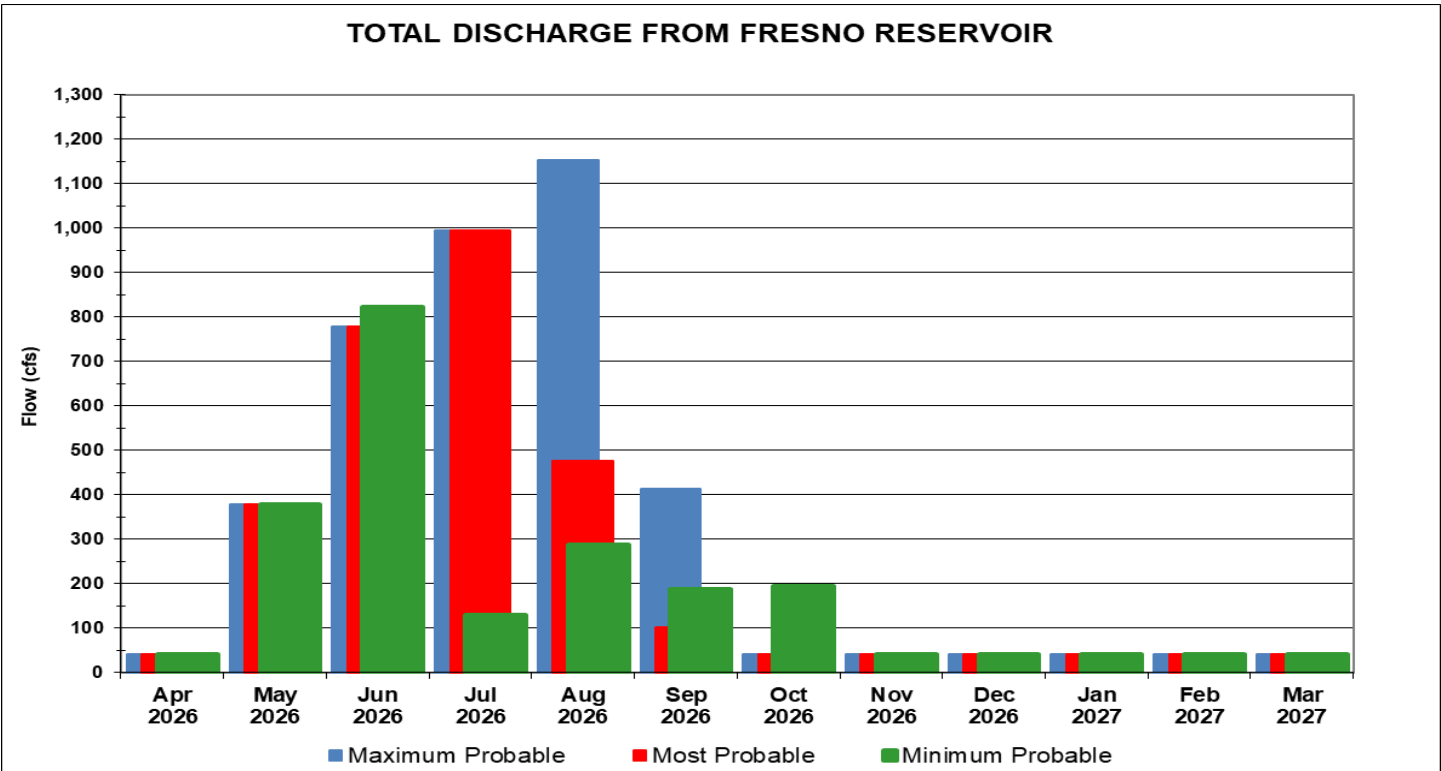
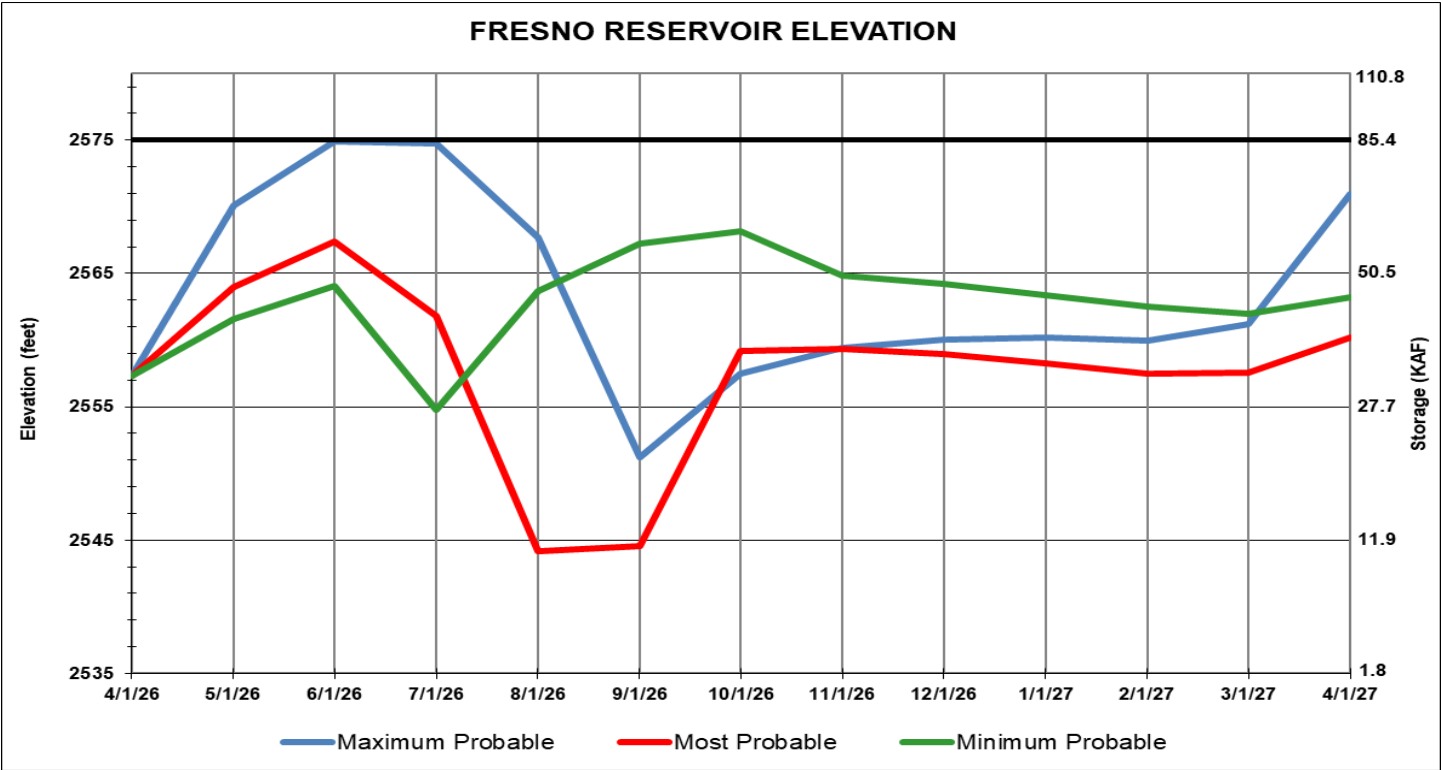
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	61,239	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4785.10	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	9.1	30.0	34.7	16.3	7.8	6.0	5.9	4.8	3.6	2.6	2.3	3.1	126.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	26.0	20.9	21.9	16.3	34.6	31.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	150.7
Sherburne Release (cfs)	437	340	368	265	563	521	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-16.9	9.1	12.8	0.0	-26.8	-25.0	5.9	4.8	3.6	2.6	2.3	3.1	-24.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	44.3	53.4	66.2	66.2	39.4	14.4	20.3	25.1	28.7	31.3	33.6	36.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4774.1	4780.2	4788.0	4788.0	4770.5	4747.3	4753.6	4758.3	4761.6	4763.8	4765.8	4768.4	
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	24.4	97.4	137.6	80.5	32.7	20.0	19.2	13.1	8.8	7.4	6.5	8.7	456.3
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	33.5	127.4	172.3	96.8	40.5	26.0	25.1	17.9	12.4	10.0	8.8	11.8	582.5
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	425	450	450	600	600	529	0	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	25.3	27.7	26.8	36.9	36.9	31.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	185.1
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	32,219	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2557.31	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	26.2	18.7	22.6	3.9	2.1	6.3	6.6	3.9	2.8	2.0	5.0	30.6	130.7
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	10.1	23.5	22.8	31.4	31.4	29.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	149.1
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	36.3	42.2	45.4	35.3	33.5	36.2	6.6	3.9	2.8	2.0	5.0	30.6	279.8
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.4	23.2	46.3	61.2	70.9	24.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	243.1
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	377	778	995	1153	412	41	40	41	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	33.9	19.0	-0.9	-25.9	-37.4	11.7	4.1	1.5	0.3	-0.5	2.8	28.1	36.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	66.1	85.1	84.2	58.3	20.9	32.6	36.7	38.2	38.5	38.0	40.8	68.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2570.1	2574.9	2574.7	2567.7	2551.2	2557.5	2559.4	2560.1	2560.2	2560.0	2561.2	2570.9	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.6	111.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	10.0	14.9	18.0	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	78.1
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	55,274	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2215.57	feet									
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	9.0	13.4	16.2	10.8	2.7	6.3	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	70.3
Net Content Change (kaf)	7.2	4.7	0.1	-9.0	-18.5	-1.1	2.9	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	5.4	-15.4
End of Month Content (kaf)	62.5	67.2	67.3	58.3	39.8	38.7	41.6	39.8	38.0	36.2	34.5	39.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2217.5	2218.8	2218.8	2216.4	2210.6	2210.2	2211.3	2210.6	2209.9	2209.1	2208.4	2210.6	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	6.9	14.3	18.0	19.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.2

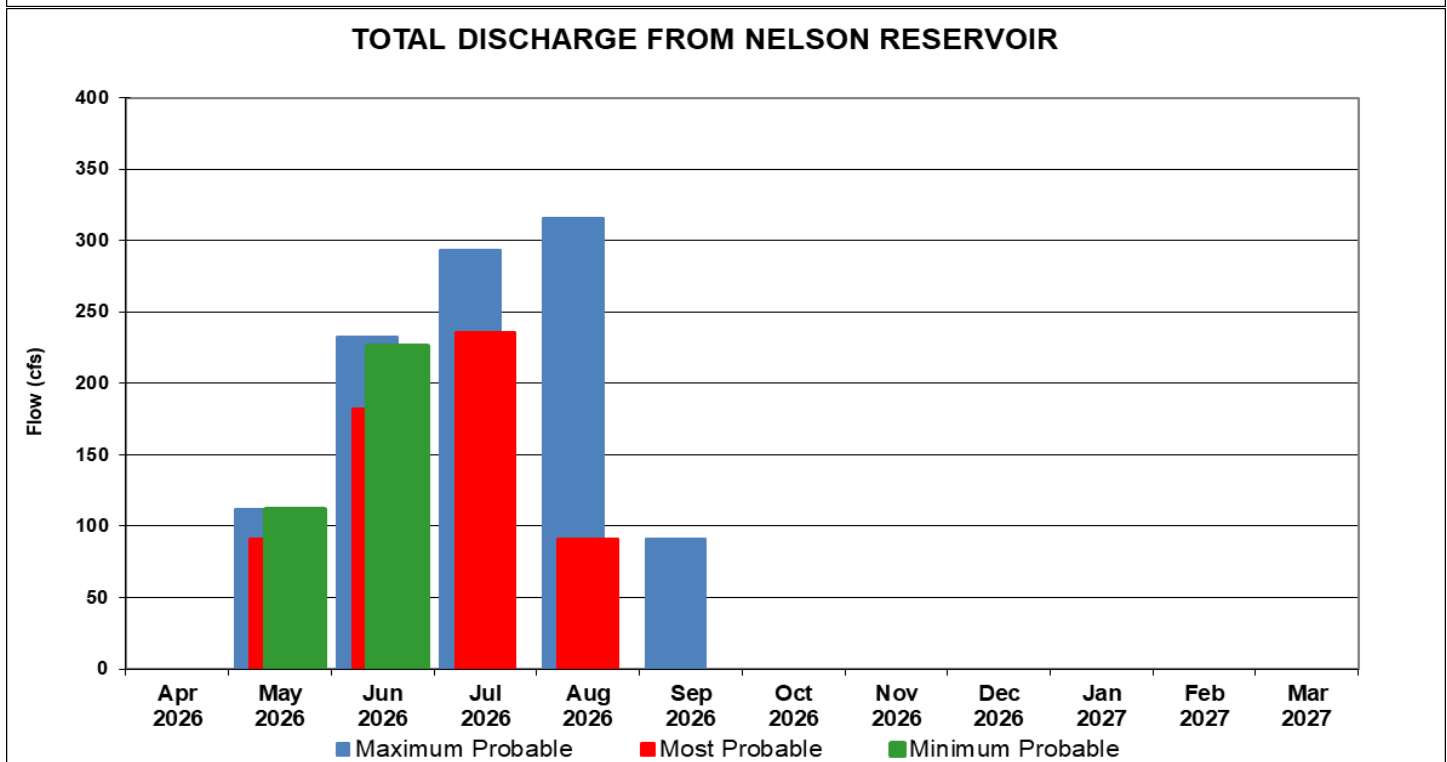
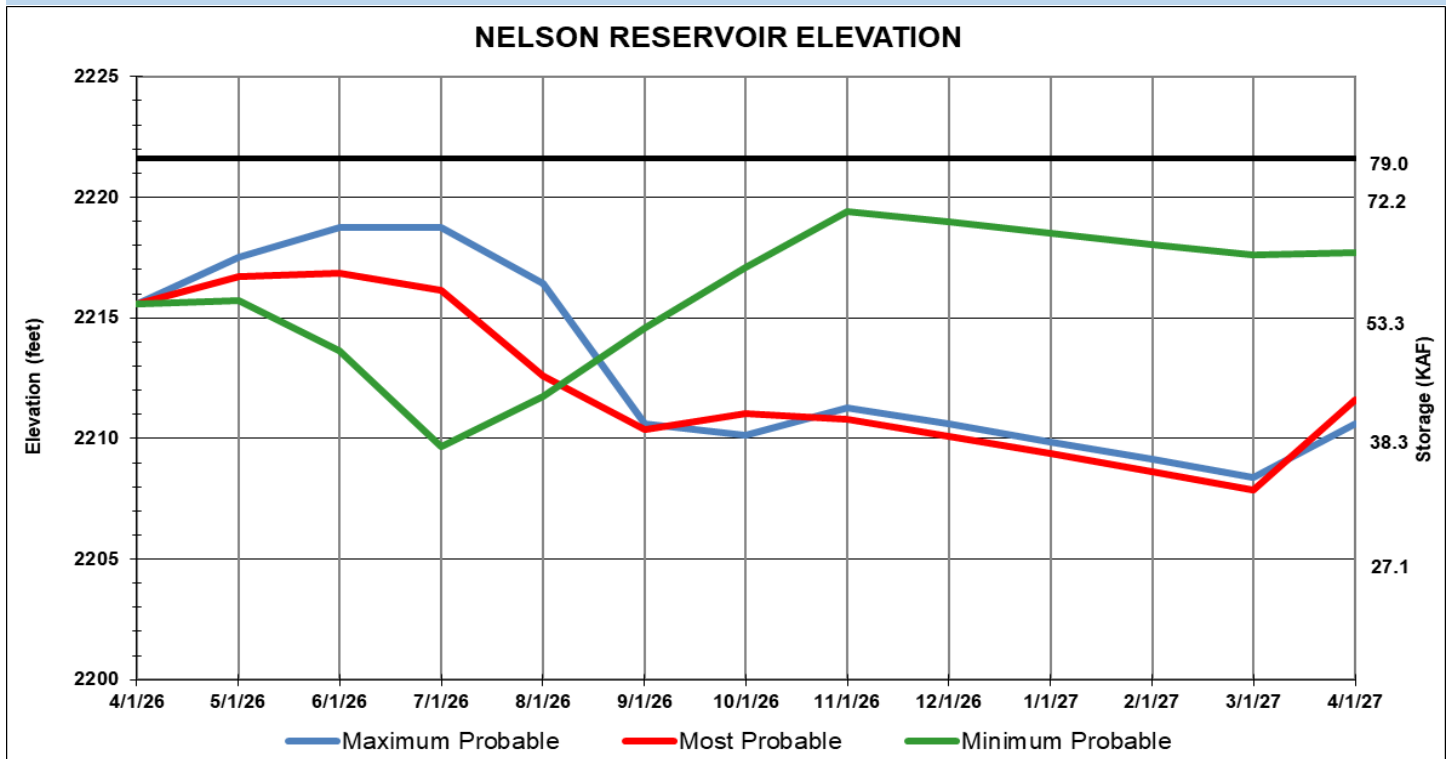
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: NELSON RESERVOIR



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Monthly Operating Plans, Current Conditions, Snowpack, and Other Water Management Information
https://www.usbr.gov/gp/lakes_reservoirs/wareprts/main_menu.html

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations

April 2026