

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

December 2025



Fresno Dam, November 2025

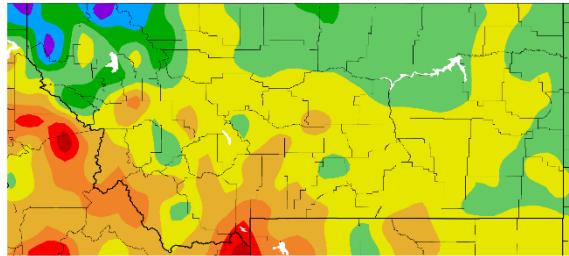
The December monthly operating plan covers actual operations from October 1, 2025, through November 30, 2025, and projected operations for December 1, 2025, through November 30, 2026. The projections are based on forecasted water supply and use.

Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
December Inflow Forecast (kaf)	3	0	-2
Percent of Average	80	13	-
December Release Forecast (cfs)	0	41	0
December 31 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4778.8	2555.9	2215.4

Climate Departure from Normal

November 1 through November 30

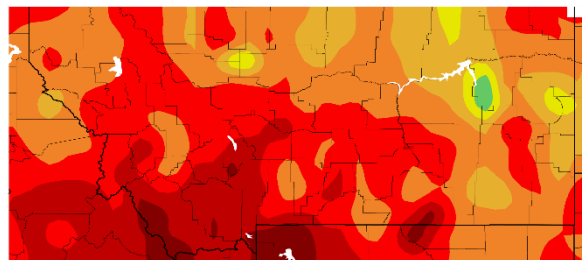
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

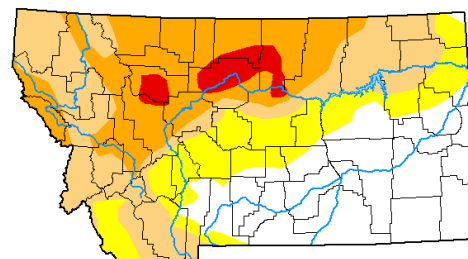
Precipitation and temperature were above average in the St. Mary and Milk River basins during November.

There is a 40-50% chance that precipitation will be above average during December in the St. Mary River basin. There is a 40-60% chance that precipitation will be above average during December in the Milk River basin. There is an equal chance that the temperature will be above, below, or near average during December in the St Mary and upper Milk River basins. There is a 33-40% chance that temperature will be below average in the lower Milk River basin.

The drought intensity in the St. Mary and Milk River basins range from moderate to extreme.

Montana Drought Monitor Map

November 25, 2025



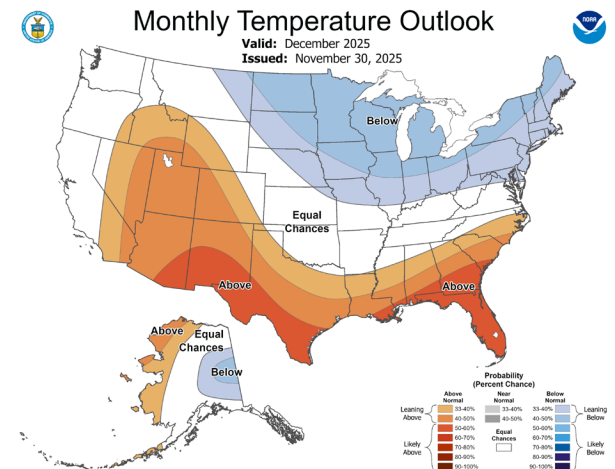
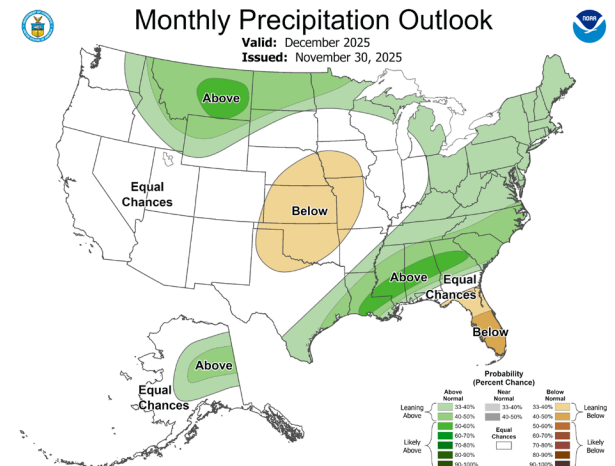
Intensity

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



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

December Climate Outlook



OPERATIONS REVIEW

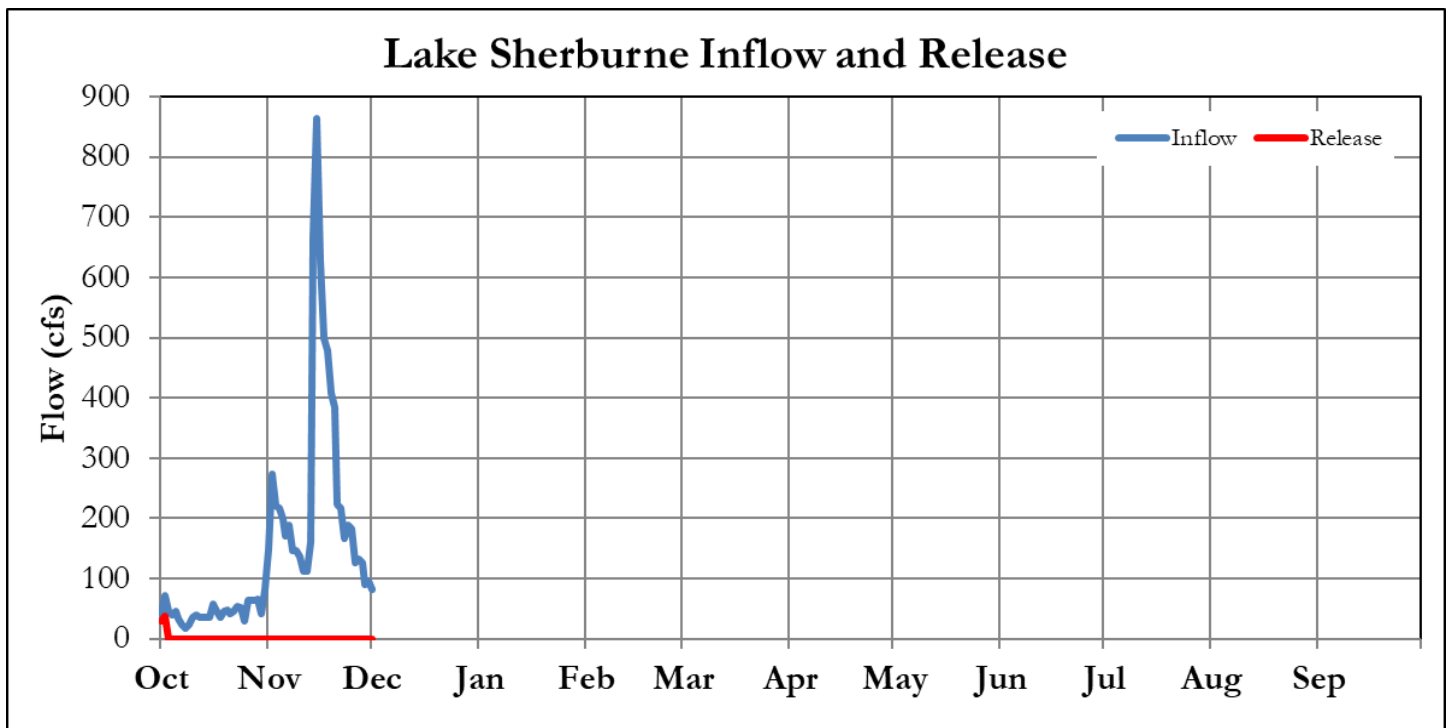
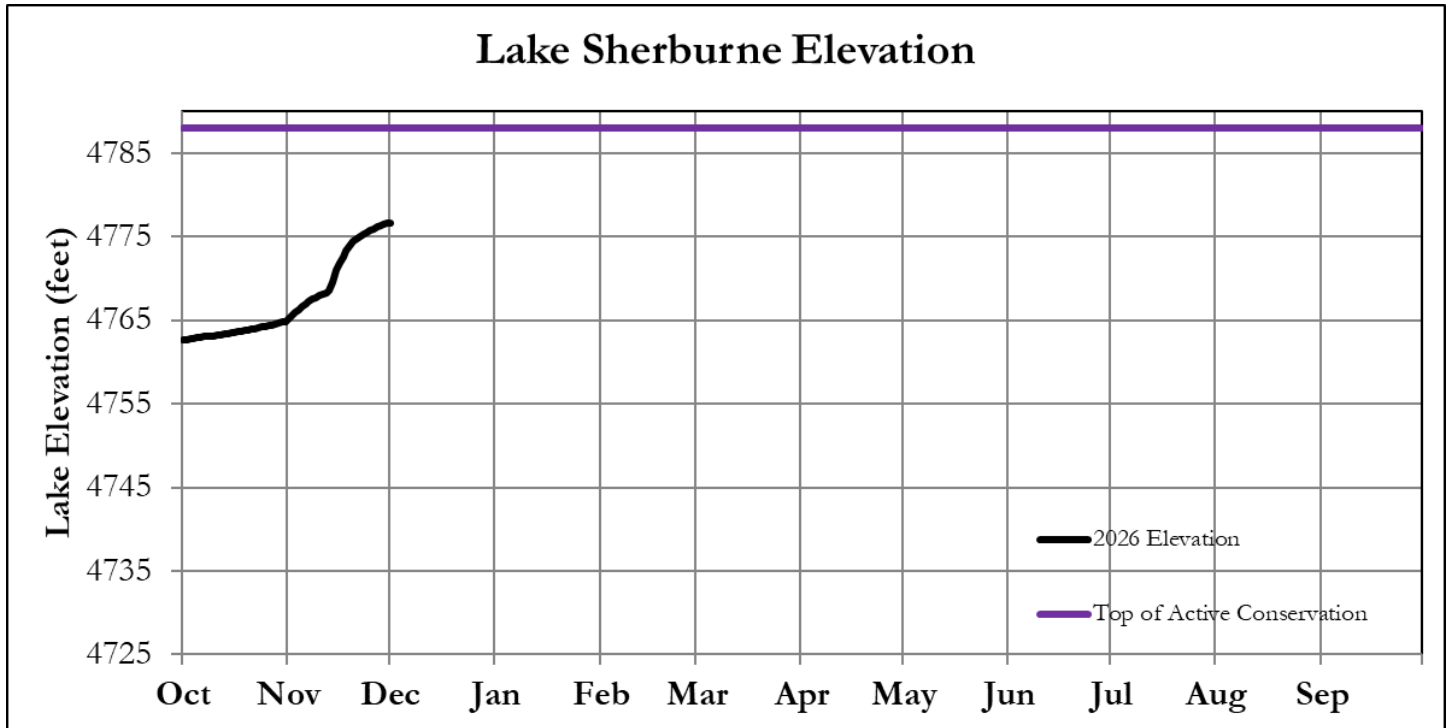
December 1 Elevation and Storage

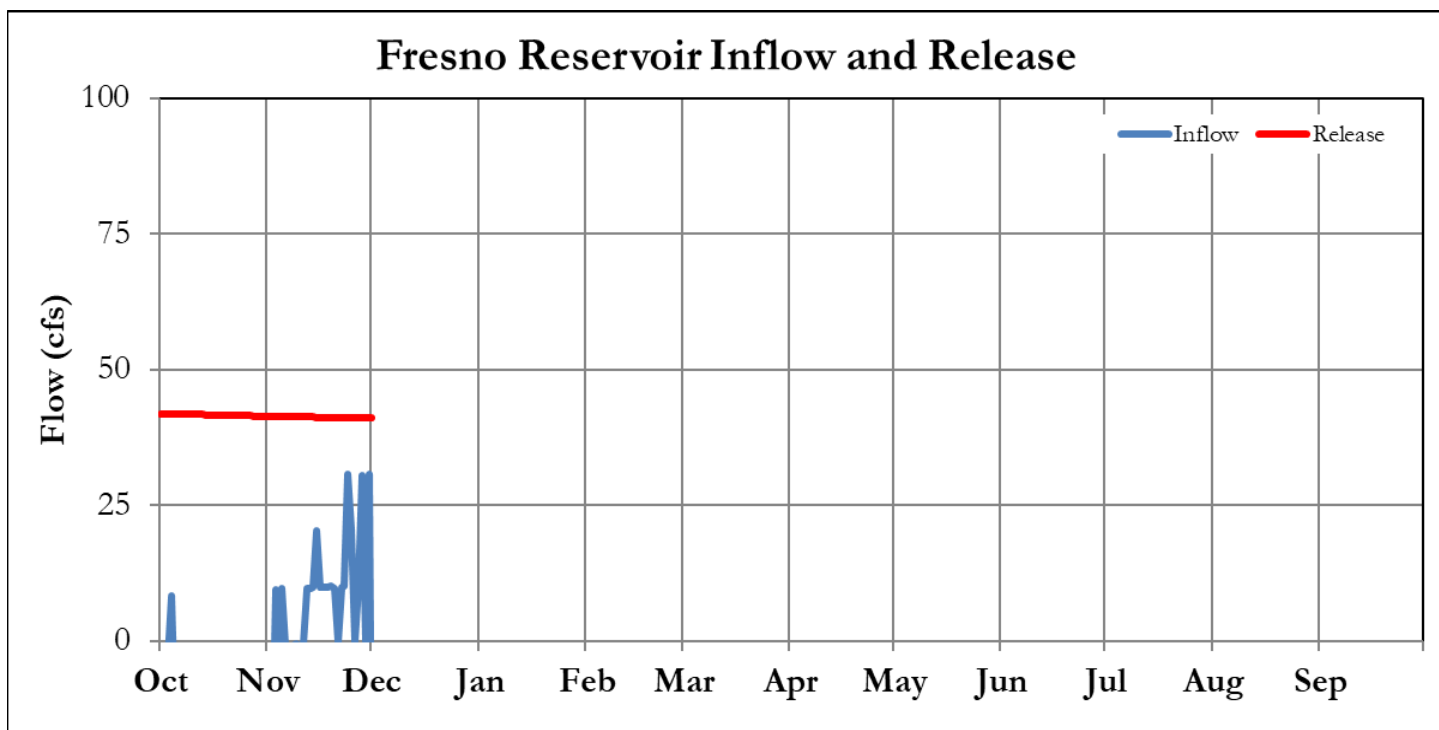
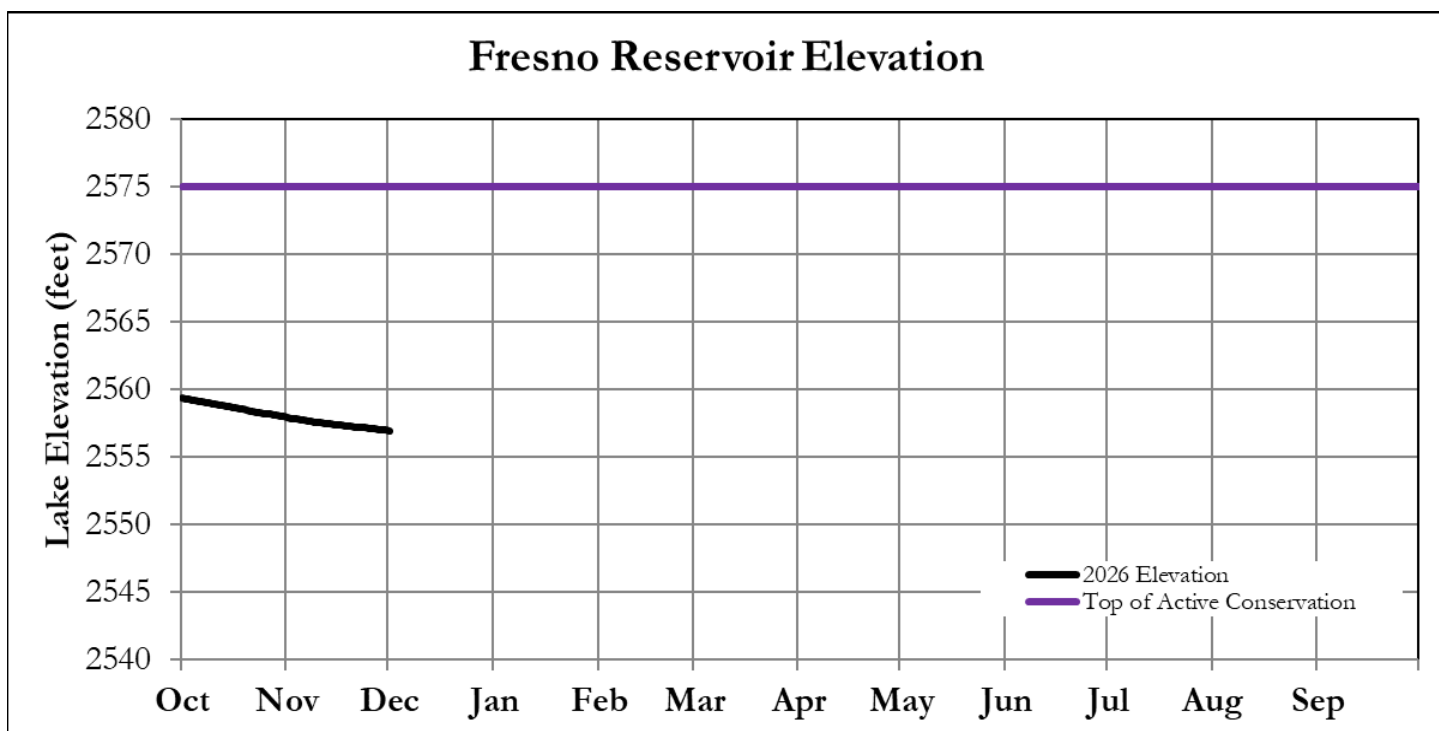
	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4776.57	47,814	186	72
Fresno Reservoir	2556.99	31,562	77	34
Nelson Reservoir	2215.89	56,419	101	71

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

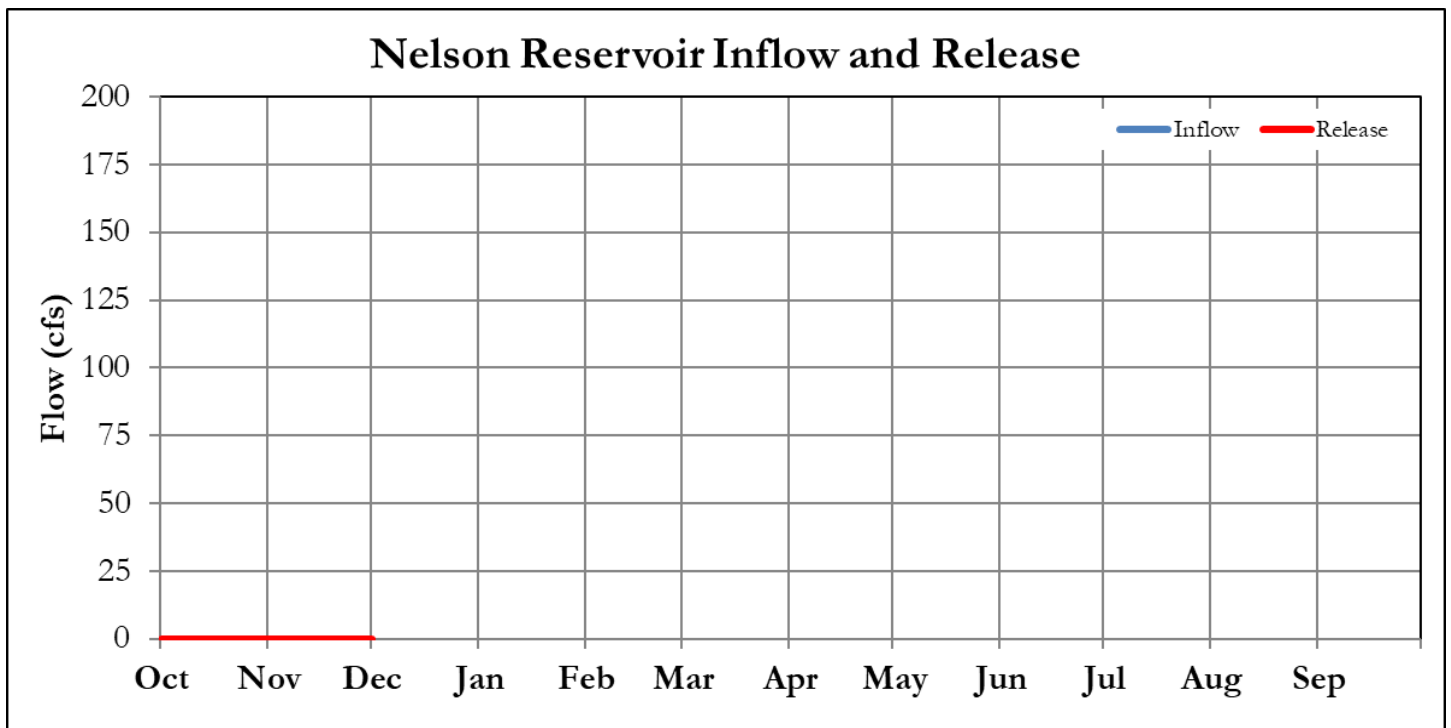
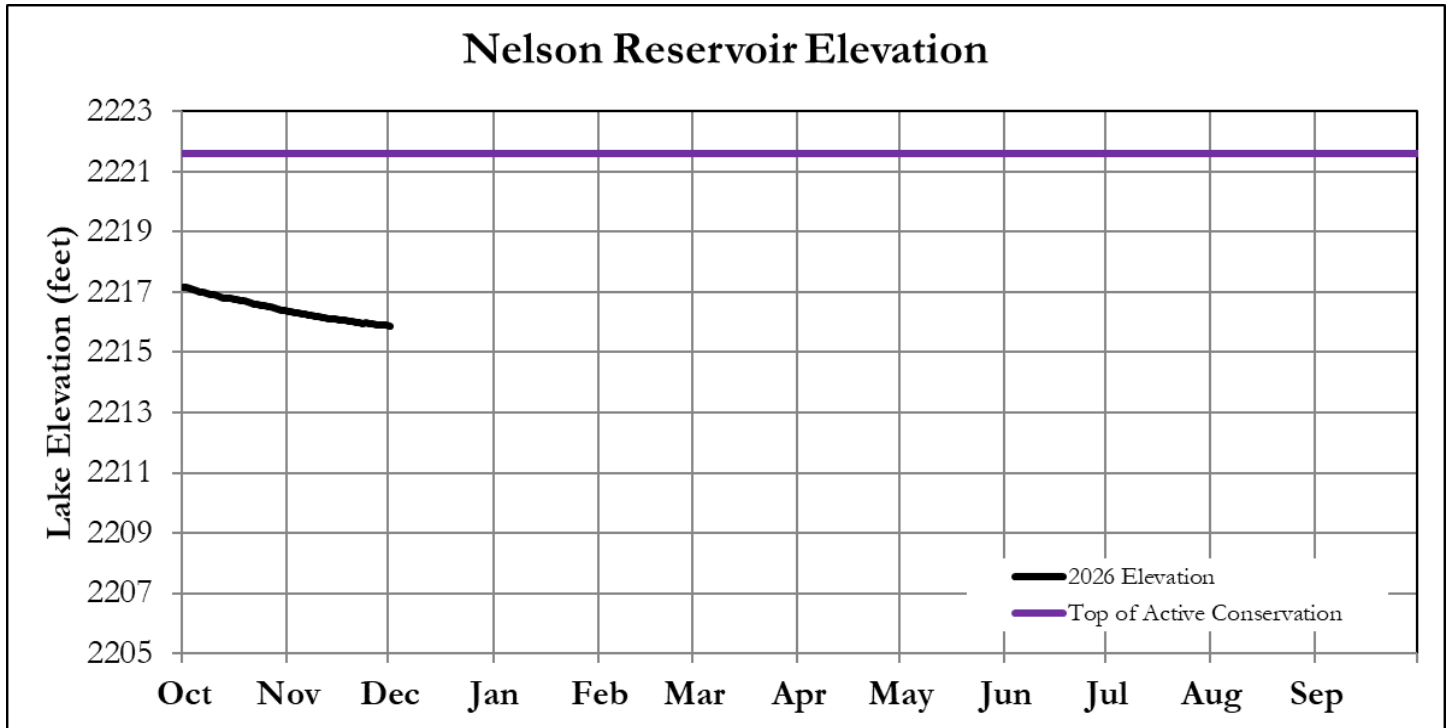
Month	Sherburne Reservoir		Fresno Reservoir	
	Inflow	% of Average	Inflow	% of Average
Water Year 2026				
October	2.8	41	-0.6	-
November	15.3	195	0.4	15
Water Year 2025				
October	2.6	40	-0.3	-
November	2.9	37	0.0	-
December	2.5	62	0.1	6
January	1.3	44	0.0	-
February	1.4	56	19.9	456
March	4.4	117	13.6	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: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (December 1, 2025 through November 30, 2026)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir													
	Initial Content		47,814	acre-feet									
	Elevation		4776.57	feet									
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.3	2.3	2.1	3.1	9.5	32.9	39.3	17.5	8.6	7.2	6.8	5.3	137.9
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	36.7	15.9	17.8	17.5	35.3	36.3	4.6	0.0	167.8
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	0	0	60	617	259	299	285	574	610	75	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	3.3	2.3	2.1	-0.6	-27.2	17.0	21.5	0.0	-26.7	-29.1	2.2	5.3	-29.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	51.1	53.4	55.5	54.9	27.7	44.7	66.2	66.2	39.5	10.4	12.6	17.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4778.8	4780.2	4781.6	4781.2	4760.7	4774.4	4788.0	4788.0	4770.6	4742.5	4745.2	4751.1	
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	6.0	5.7	5.7	7.9	24.5	95.5	135.0	80.6	32.3	19.0	18.7	12.9	443.8
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	9.3	8.0	7.8	11.0	34.0	128.4	174.3	98.1	40.9	26.2	25.5	18.2	581.7
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	600	600	99	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	6.1	0.0	230.0
Fresno Reservoir													
	Initial Content		31,603	acre-feet									
	Elevation		2557.01	feet									
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	0.2	0.7	2.8	12.0	15.1	7.3	5.0	0.4	0.6	2.8	4.2	3.4	54.5
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	28.6	15.3	0.0	187.8
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	0.2	0.7	2.8	12.0	41.9	36.8	33.6	29.9	30.1	31.4	19.5	3.4	242.3
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	28.5	46.3	61.2	61.6	6.0	2.5	2.4	220.6
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	41	40	41	40	464	778	995	1002	101	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-2.3	-1.8	0.6	9.5	39.5	8.3	-12.7	-31.3	-31.5	25.4	17.0	1.0	21.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	29.3	27.5	28.1	37.6	77.1	85.4	72.7	41.4	9.9	35.3	52.3	53.3	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2555.9	2554.9	2555.2	2559.8	2573.1	2575.0	2572.0	2561.4	2543.3	2558.8	2565.6	2566.0	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	55.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	185.3
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	18.2	12.6	16.4	6.8	2.0	5.4	2.0	0.0	80.8
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	17.5	8.8	14.5	6.8	2.0	5.4	2.0	0.0	74.4
Nelson Reservoir													
	Initial Content		56,419	acre-feet									
	Elevation		2215.89	feet									
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.7	15.8	7.9	13.1	6.1	1.8	4.9	1.8	0.0	67.1
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	13.9	14.0	0.0	0.0	-10.2	-13.4	3.1	0.0	-1.8	0.3
End of Month Content (kaf)	54.6	52.8	51.1	65.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	68.8	55.4	58.5	58.5	56.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.4	2214.9	2214.4	2218.2	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.2	2215.6	2216.5	2216.5	2216.0	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	11.3	14.5	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.3

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (December 1, 2025 through November 30, 2026)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

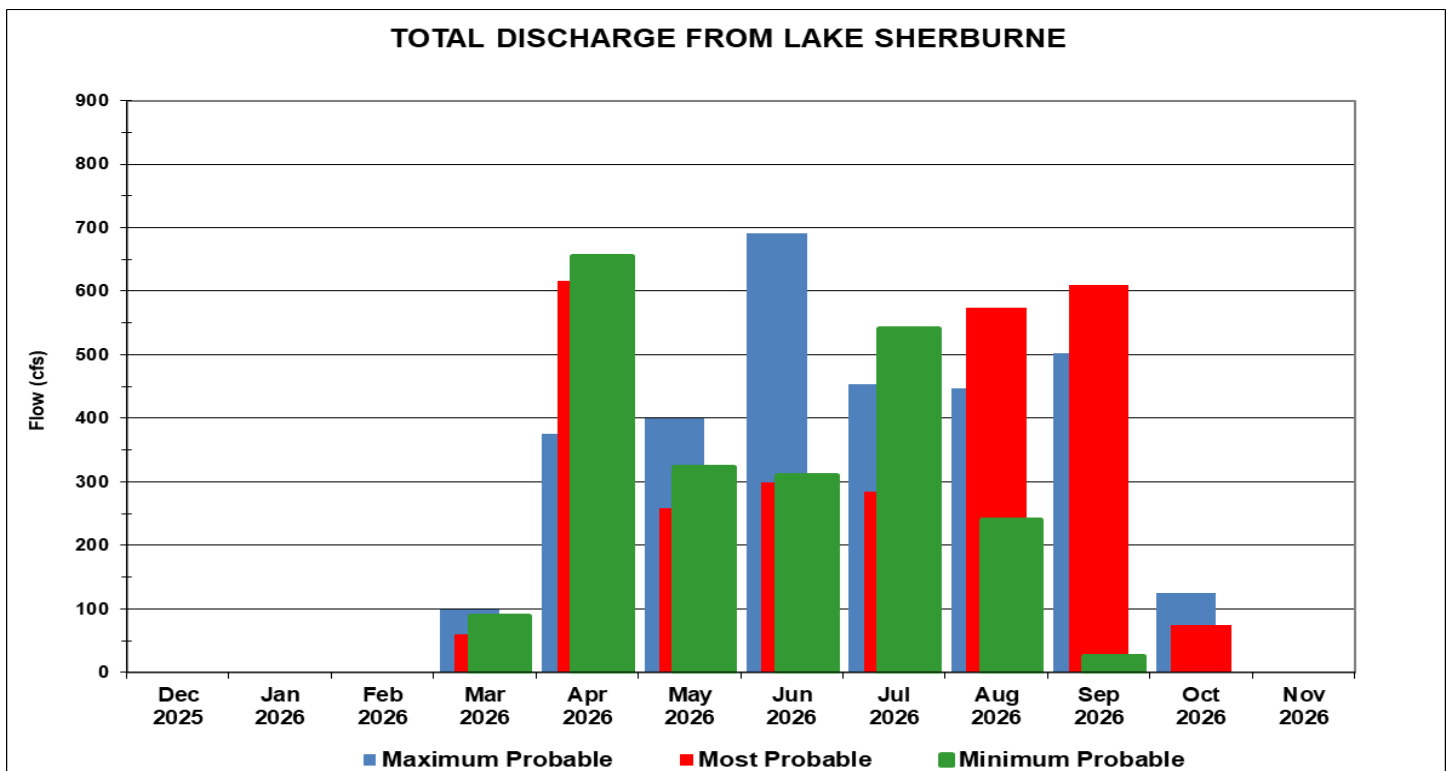
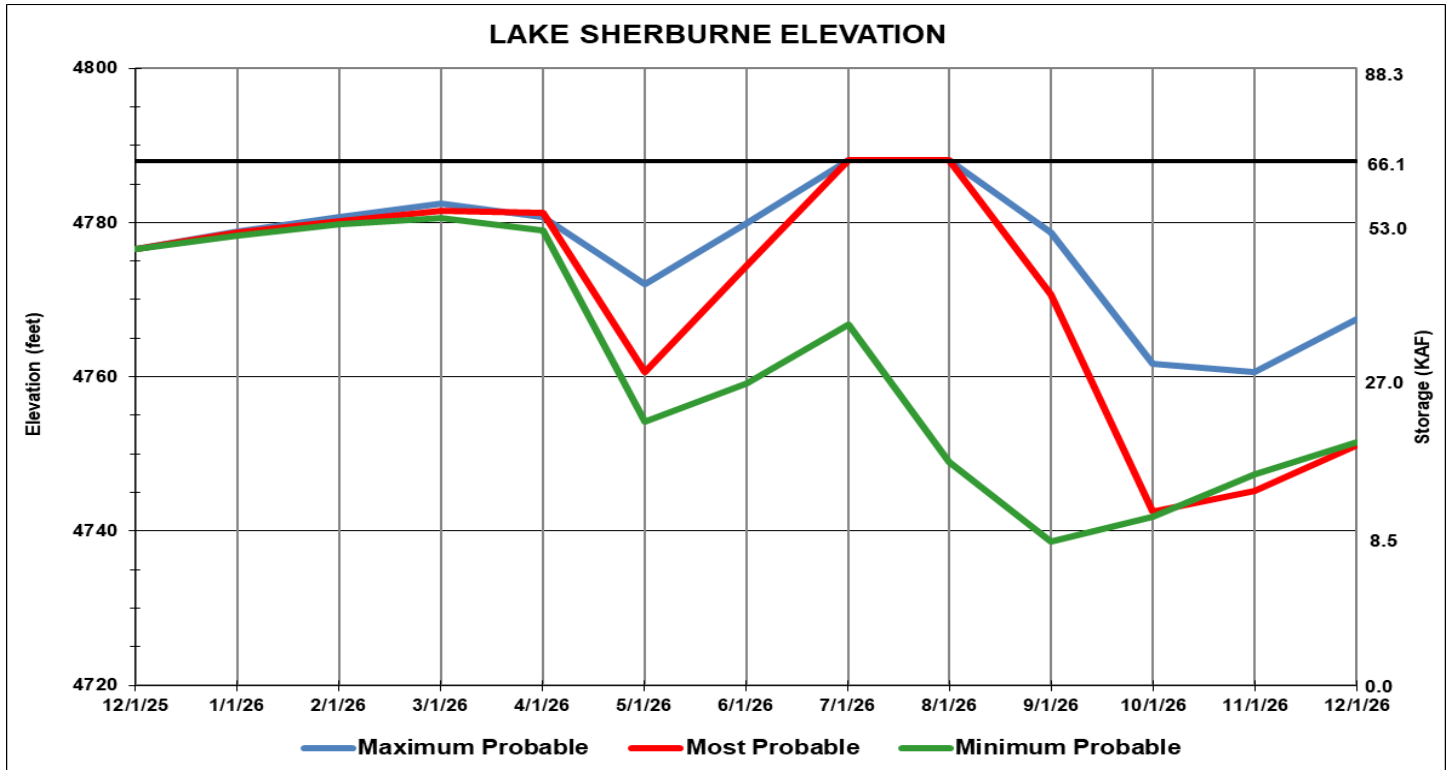
Sherburne Reservoir													
	Initial Content		47,814 acre-feet										
	Elevation		4776.57 feet										
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.6	2.2	1.4	2.9	8.5	25.1	27.2	14.4	6.4	3.9	4.5	3.9	103.0
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	39.0	19.9	18.5	33.3	14.8	1.5	0.0	0.0	132.5
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	0	0	89	655	324	311	542	241	25	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.6	2.2	1.4	-2.6	-30.5	5.2	8.7	-18.9	-8.4	2.4	4.5	3.9	-29.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	50.4	52.6	54.0	51.4	20.9	26.1	34.8	15.9	7.5	9.9	14.4	18.3	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4778.3	4779.7	4780.6	4779.0	4754.2	4759.2	4766.8	4749.0	4738.6	4741.9	4747.3	4751.5	
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	5.5	4.0	4.6	4.1	7.4	68.2	81.5	42.1	21.7	14.5	8.4	4.8	266.8
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	8.1	6.2	6.0	7.0	15.9	93.3	108.7	56.5	28.1	18.4	12.9	8.7	369.8
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	250	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	35.7	36.9	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	166.7
Fresno Reservoir													
	Initial Content		31,603 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2557.01 feet										
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	0.0	0.3	0.7	4.7	3.5	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.0	0.5	14.8
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	27.7	26.8	27.7	29.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	136.5
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	0.0	0.3	0.7	4.7	28.5	29.0	28.0	27.7	29.3	0.6	2.0	0.5	151.3
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	42.7	6.0	6.0	2.5	2.4	141.2
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	41	40	41	40	377	778	694	98	101	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-2.5	-2.2	-1.5	2.2	26.1	5.8	-18.3	-15.0	23.3	-5.4	-0.5	-1.9	10.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	29.1	26.9	25.4	27.6	53.7	59.5	41.2	26.2	49.5	44.1	43.6	41.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2555.8	2554.6	2553.8	2555.0	2566.1	2568.1	2561.4	2554.2	2564.6	2562.5	2562.3	2561.6	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.20
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	41.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	111.2
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	39.4
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)	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	39.4
Nelson Reservoir													
	Initial Content		56,419 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2215.89 feet										
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	8.2	5.7	7.4	3.1	0.9	2.4	0.0	0.0	35.5
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	6.0	6.4	-3.5	-8.3	-11.2	-0.9	0.6	-1.8	-1.8	-19.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	54.6	52.8	51.1	57.1	63.5	60.0	51.7	40.5	39.6	40.2	38.4	36.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.4	2214.9	2214.4	2216.1	2217.8	2216.9	2214.6	2210.9	2210.5	2210.7	2210.0	2209.3	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4	13.9	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (December 1, 2025 through November 30, 2026)

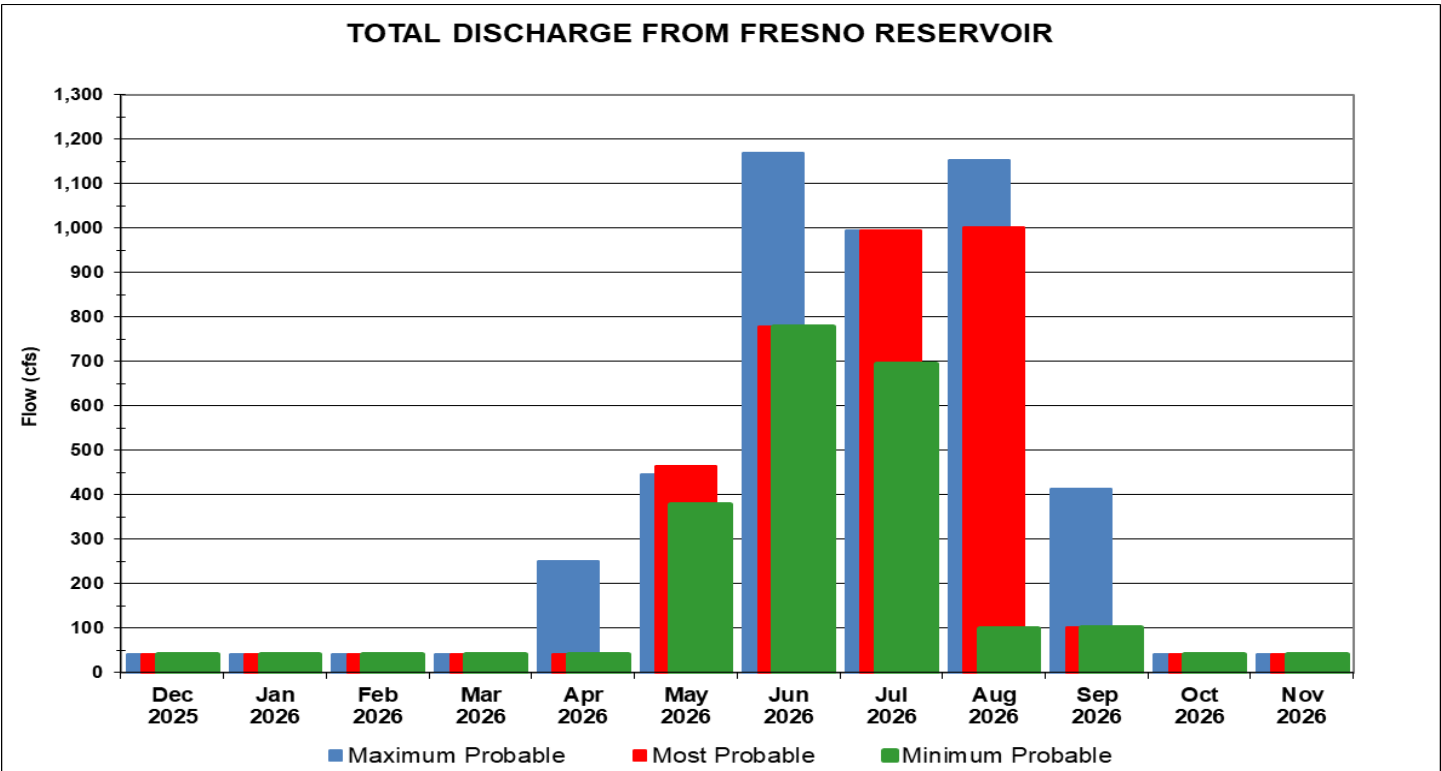
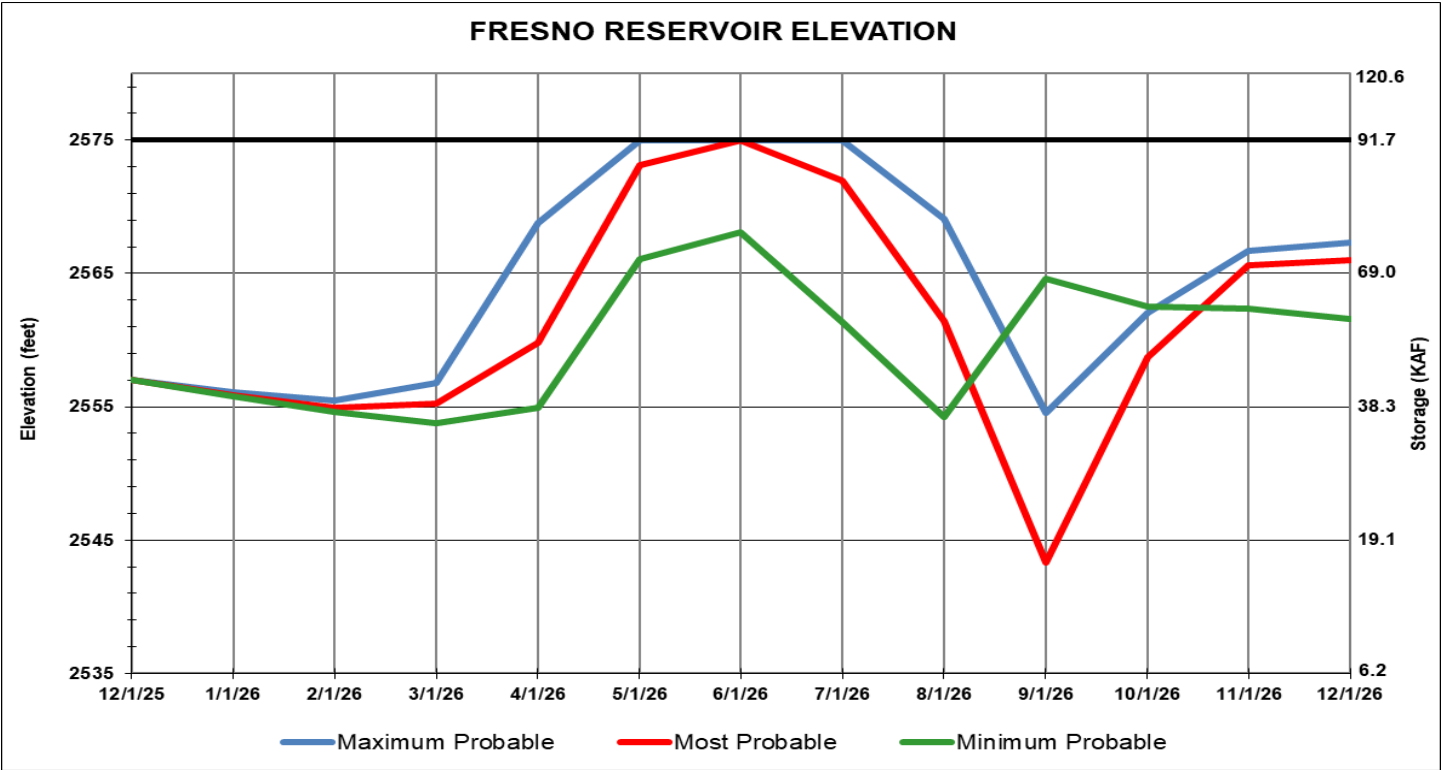
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content		47,814		acre-feet							
		Elevation		4776.57		feet							
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.5	2.9	2.8	3.2	9.5	36.1	54.5	27.9	12.3	7.8	6.4	8.0	174.9
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	22.3	24.6	41.1	27.9	27.5	29.9	7.7	0.0	187.1
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	0	0	99	375	400	691	454	447	502	125	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	3.5	2.9	2.8	-2.9	-12.8	11.5	13.4	0.0	-15.2	-22.1	-1.3	8.0	-12.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	51.3	54.2	57.0	54.1	41.3	52.8	66.2	66.2	51.0	28.9	27.6	35.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4778.9	4780.8	4782.5	4780.7	4772.0	4779.9	4788.0	4788.0	4778.7	4761.7	4760.6	4767.5	
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	8.7	9.0	10.1	18.2	46.1	147.5	215.6	130.5	51.7	39.3	46.3	34.6	757.6
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	12.2	11.9	12.9	21.4	55.6	183.6	270.1	158.4	64.0	47.1	52.7	42.6	932.5
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	99	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	6.1	0.0	157.4
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content		31,603		acre-feet							
		Elevation		2557.01		feet							
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	0.6	1.3	4.9	33.1	38.5	27.4	39.2	7.0	3.7	10.3	9.4	4.4	179.8
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3	31.4	31.4	30.3	5.5	0.0	128.9
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	0.6	1.3	4.9	33.1	38.5	27.4	69.5	38.4	35.1	40.6	14.9	4.4	308.7
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	14.9	27.4	69.5	61.2	70.9	24.5	2.5	2.4	283.0
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	41	40	41	250	446	1168	995	1153	412	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.9	-1.2	2.7	30.6	23.6	0.0	0.0	-22.8	-35.8	16.1	12.4	2.0	25.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	29.7	28.5	31.2	61.8	85.4	85.4	85.4	62.6	26.8	42.9	55.3	57.3	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2556.1	2555.4	2556.8	2568.8	2575.0	2575.0	2575.0	2569.1	2554.5	2562.1	2566.7	2567.4	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	0.00	0.00	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	0.0	0.0	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.6	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	111.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	20.0	7.1	17.9	5.0	2.4	7.0	5.2	0.0	79.6
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content		56,419		acre-feet							
		Elevation		2215.89		feet							
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5	18.0	6.4	16.1	4.5	2.2	6.3	4.7	0.0	71.7
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	11.7	16.2	0.0	0.0	-9.2	-18.4	-1.1	2.9	-1.8	-5.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	54.6	52.8	51.1	62.8	79.0	79.0	79.0	69.8	51.4	50.3	53.2	51.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.4	2214.9	2214.4	2217.6	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.4	2214.5	2214.1	2215.0	2214.5	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	14.3	11.9	18.8	5.6	0.0	0.0	55.2

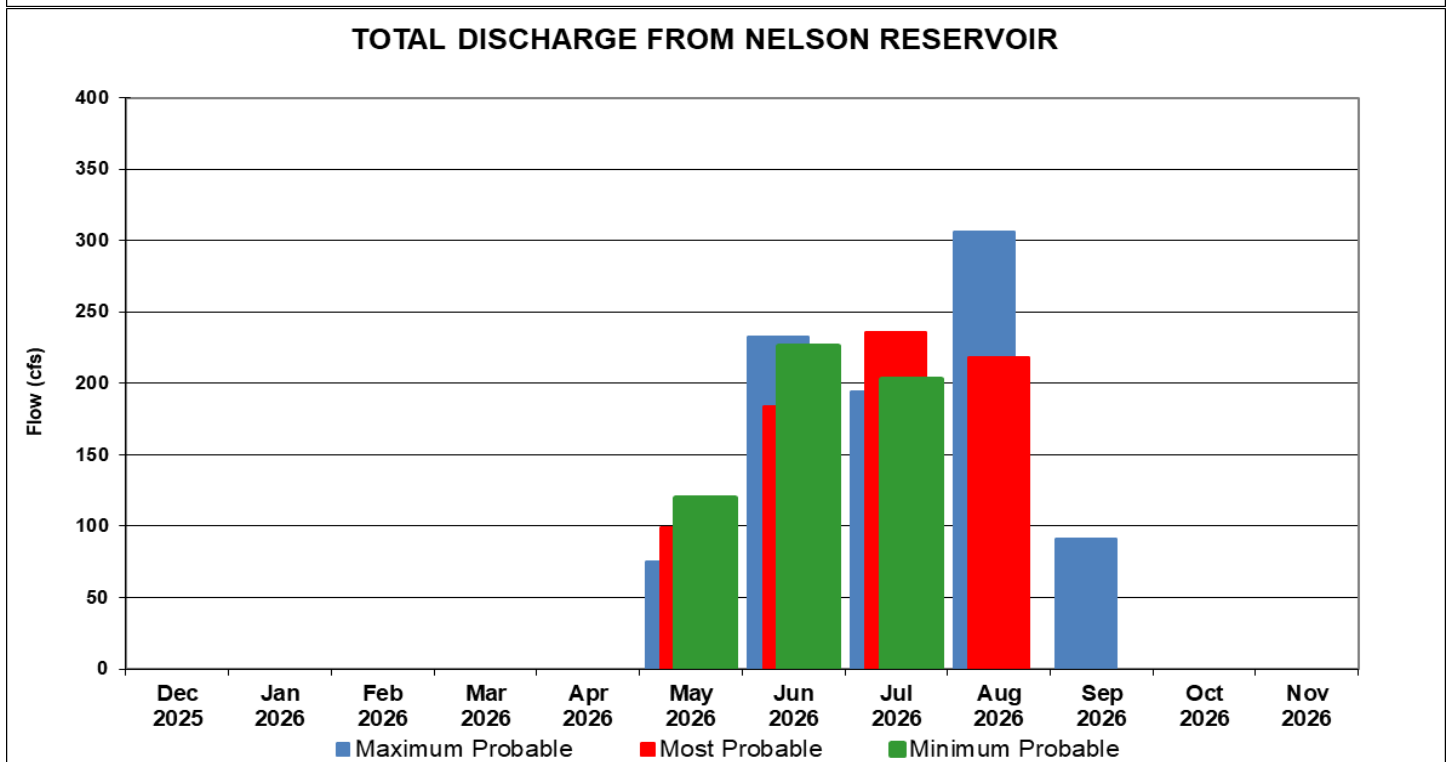
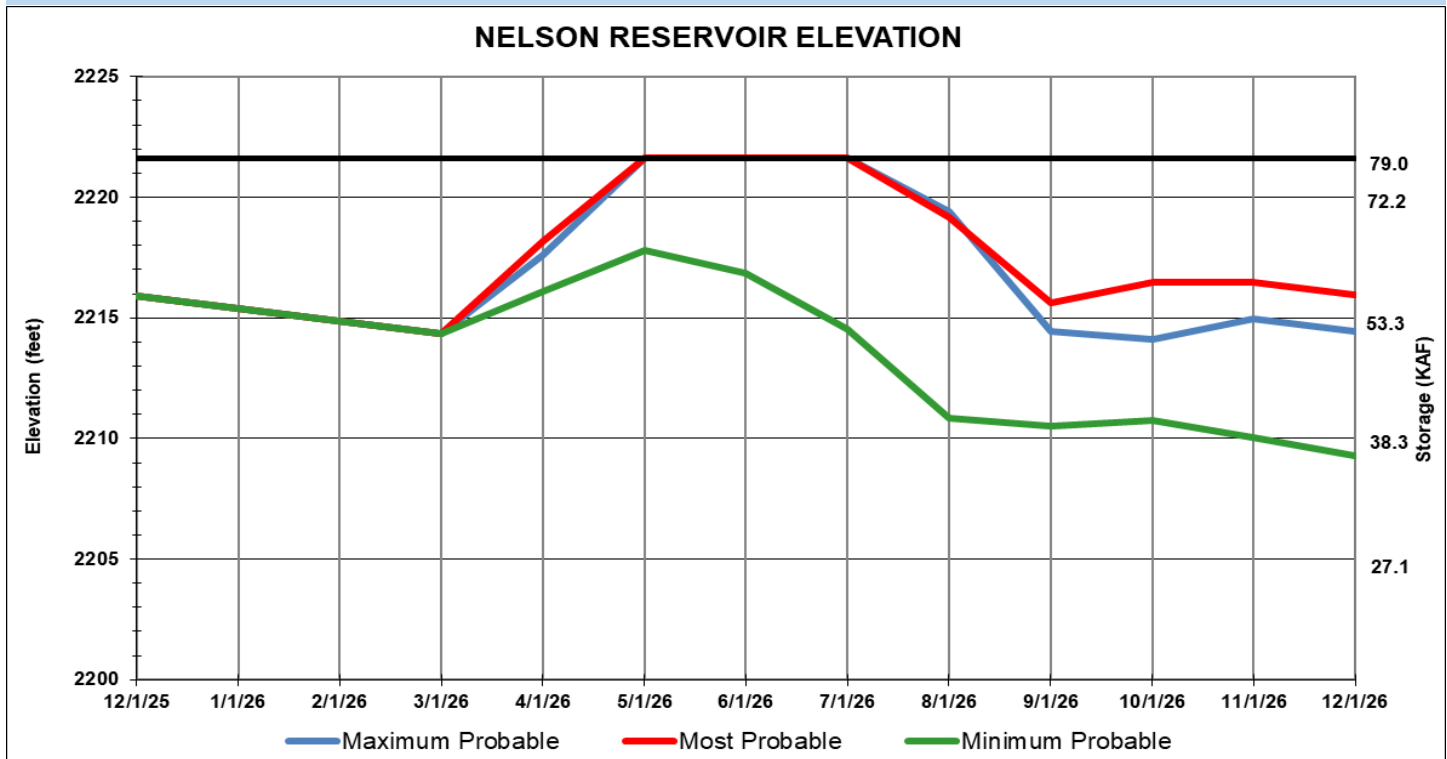
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



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

December 2025