

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

February 2026



Fresno Dam, January 2026

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

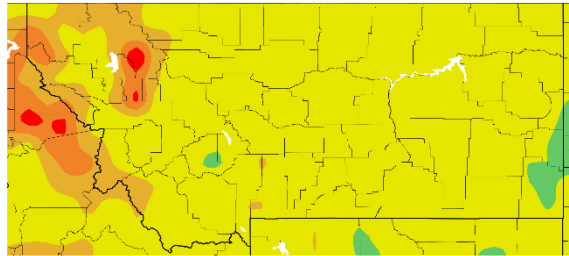
Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
February Inflow Forecast (kaf)	1	3	-2
Percent of Average	57	63	-
February Release Forecast (cfs)	0	40	0
February 28 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4777.6	2556.1	2214.7

April-July Forecast	Sherburne
Inflow Forecast	74
Percent of Average	76

Climate Departure from Normal

January 1 through January 31

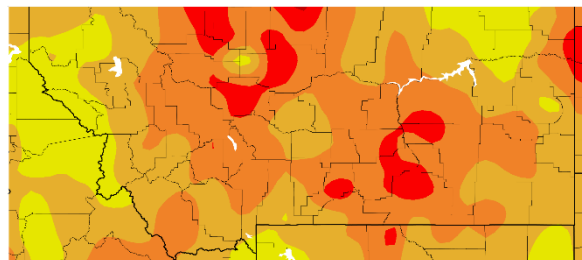
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

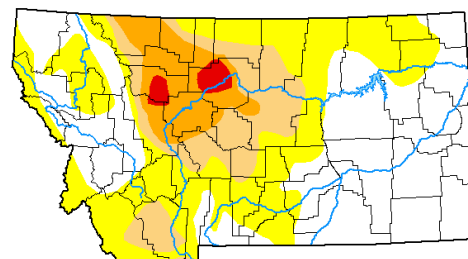
In January, precipitation in the St. Mary and Milk River basins was below average, while temperatures were above average.

In February, there is a 33-40% chance that precipitation in the St. Mary and Milk River basins will be above average, and an equal chance that temperatures will be above, below, or near average.

The drought intensity in the St. Mary and Milk River basins ranges from none to severe.

Montana Drought Monitor Map

January 27, 2026



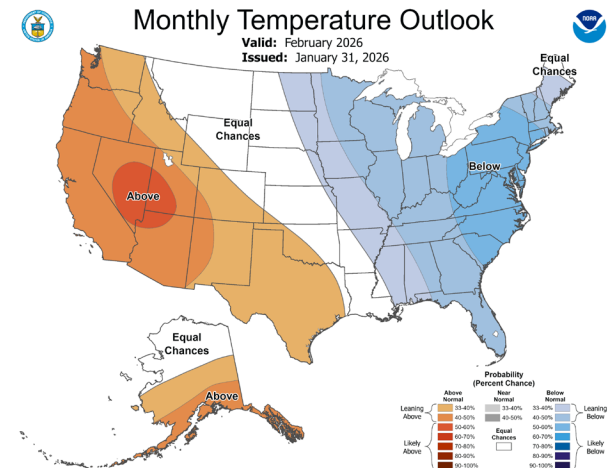
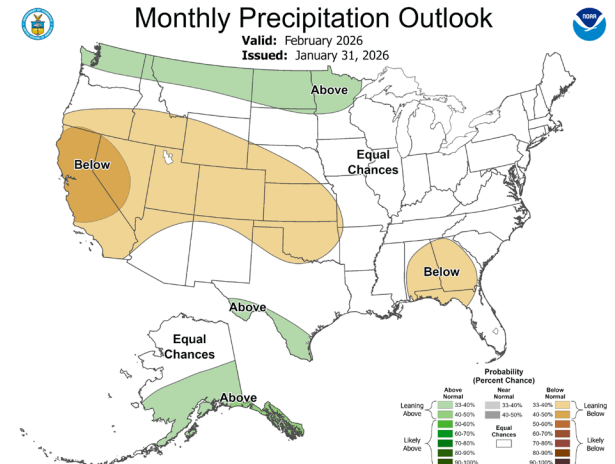
Intensity

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



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

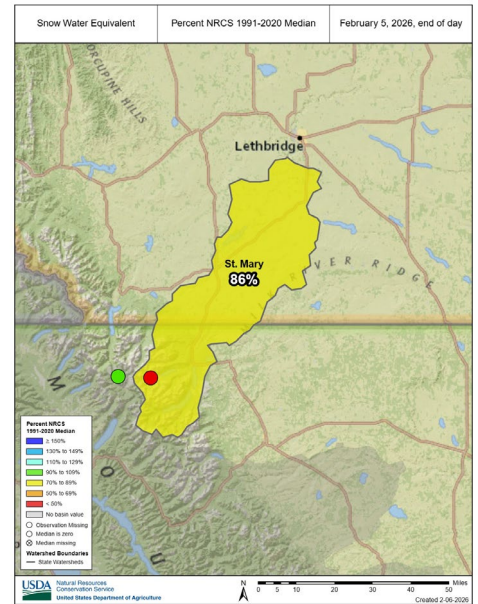
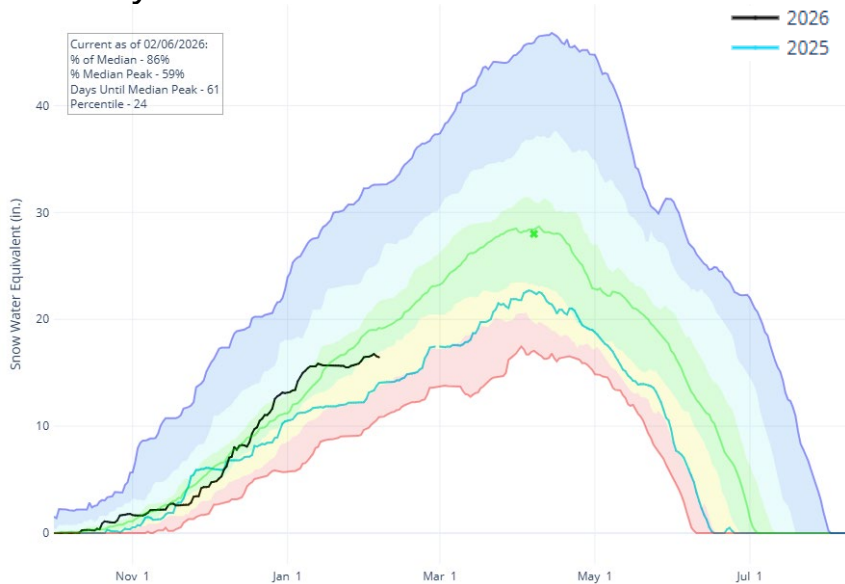
February Climate Outlook



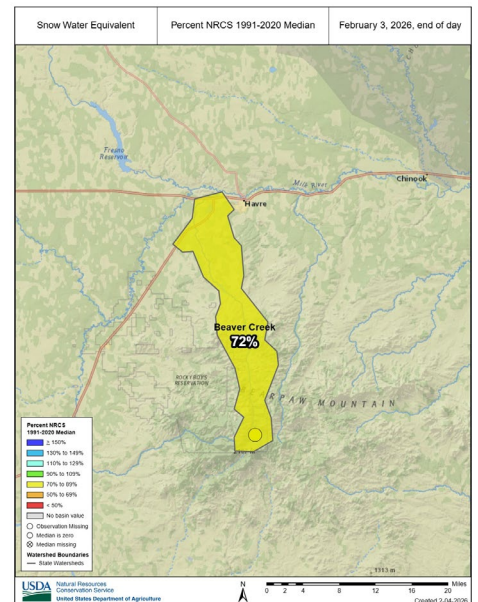
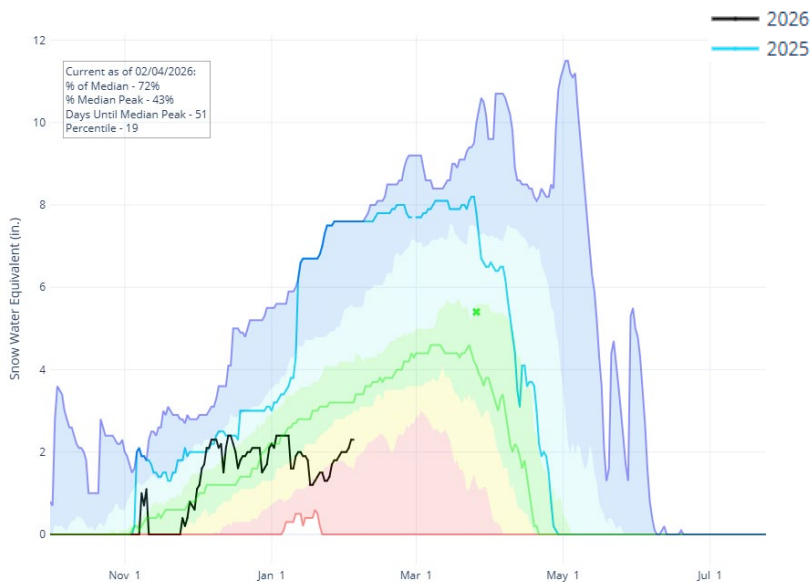
SNOWPACK SUMMARY

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



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

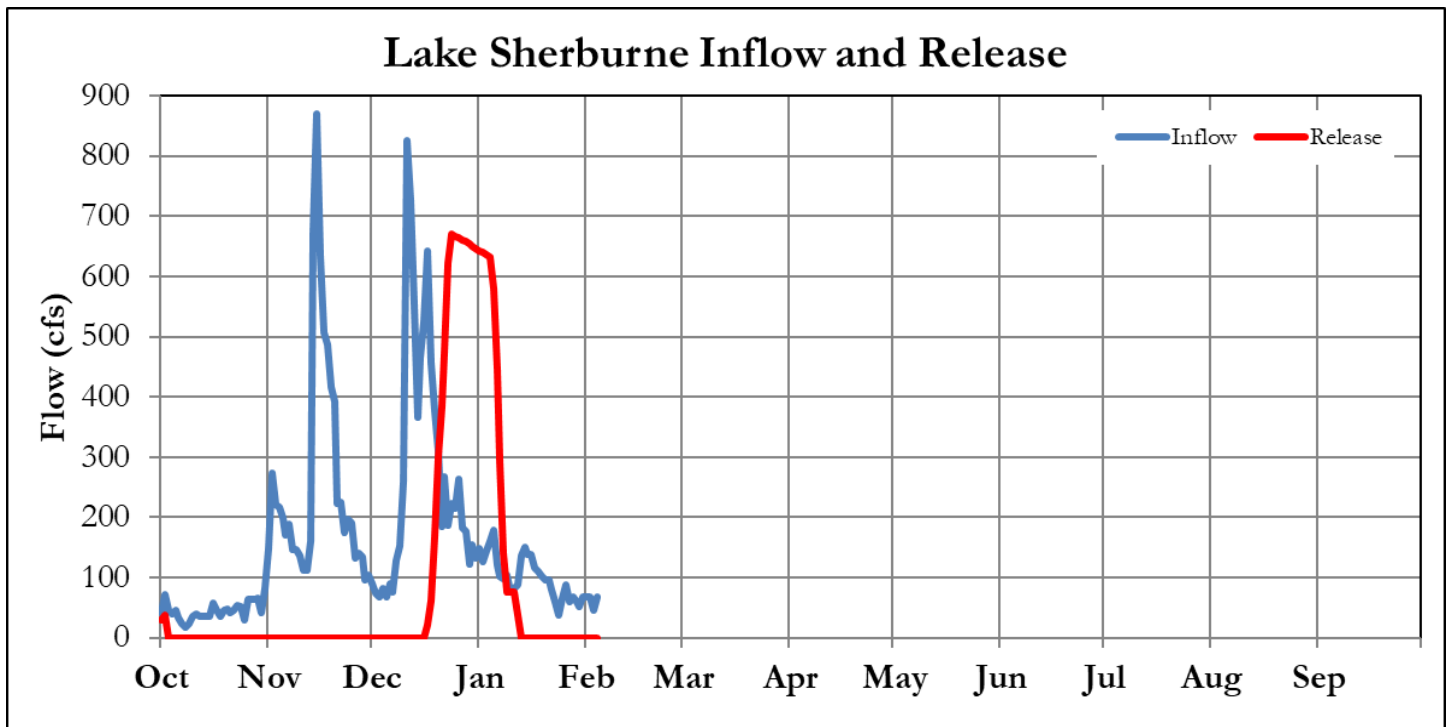
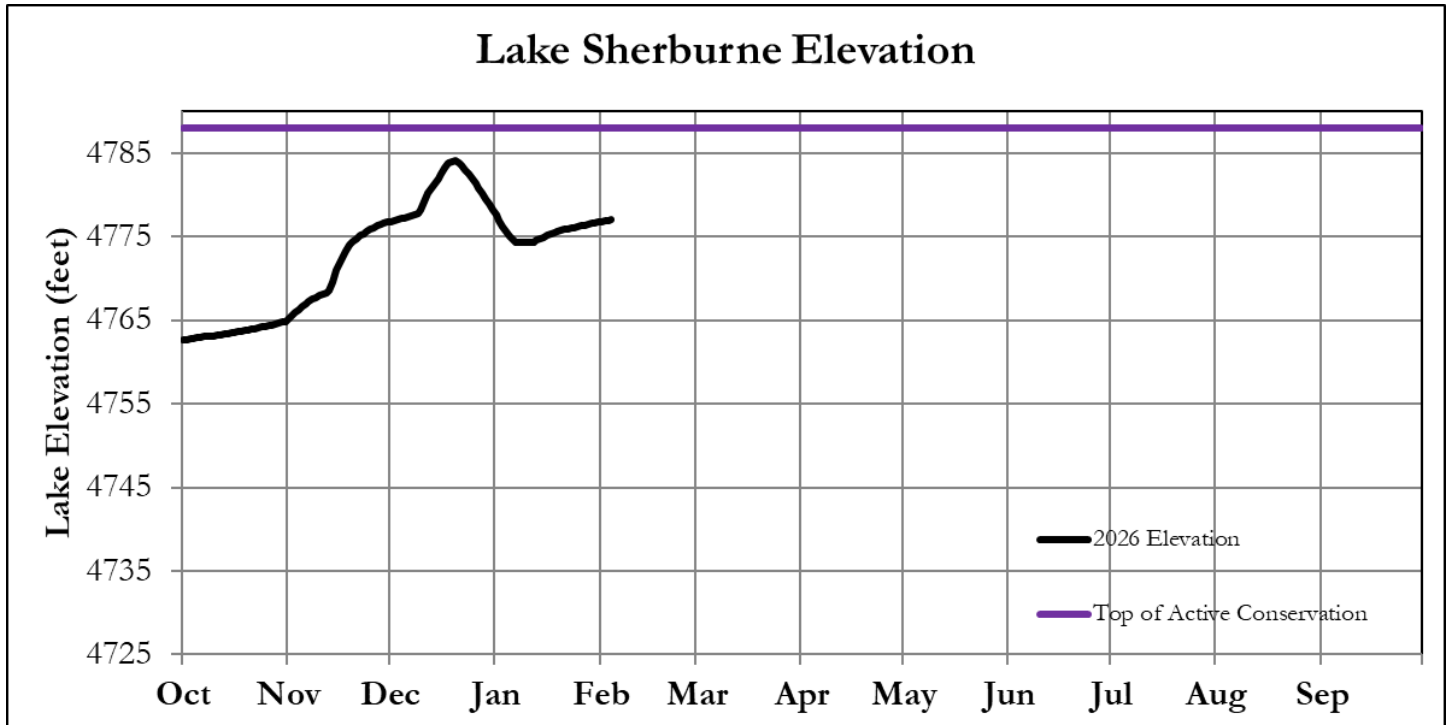
February 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4776.73	48,050	152	73
Fresno Reservoir	2555.60	28,801	76	31
Nelson Reservoir	2215.19	53,930	102	68

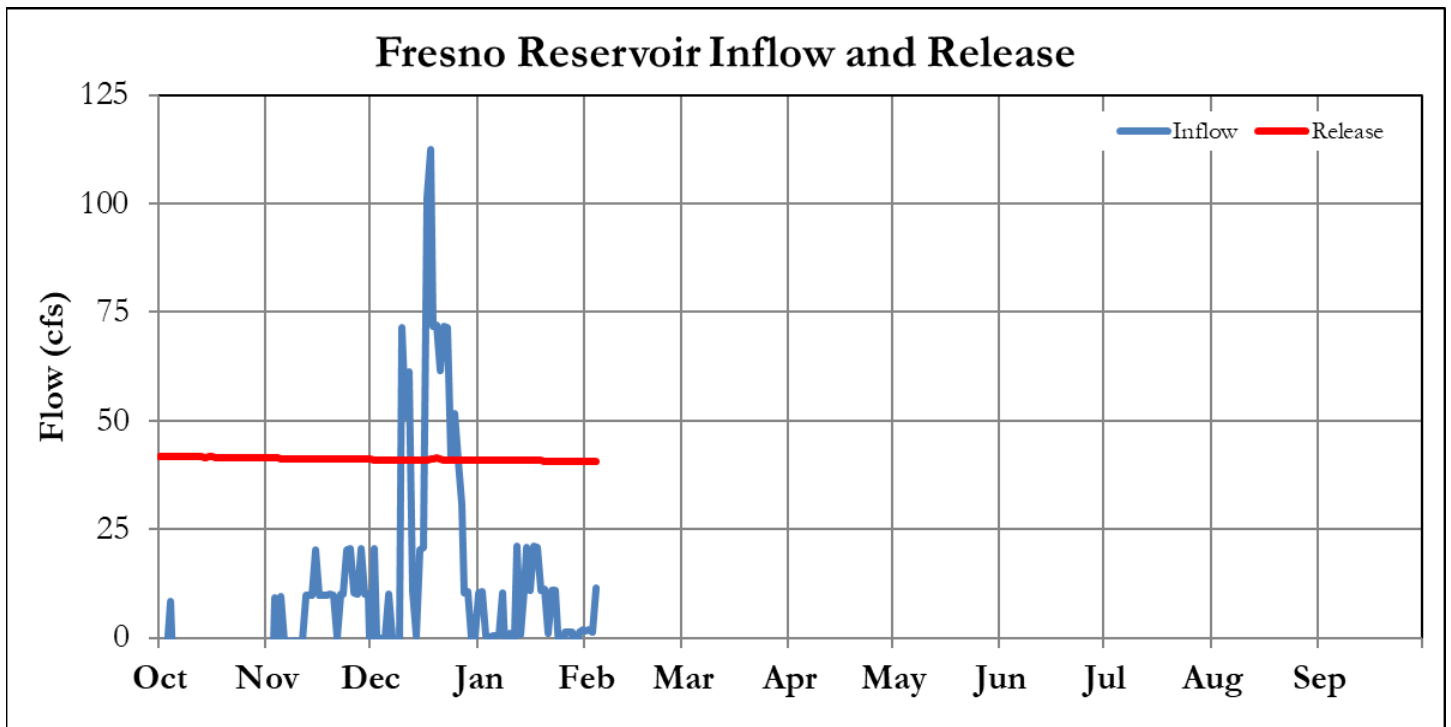
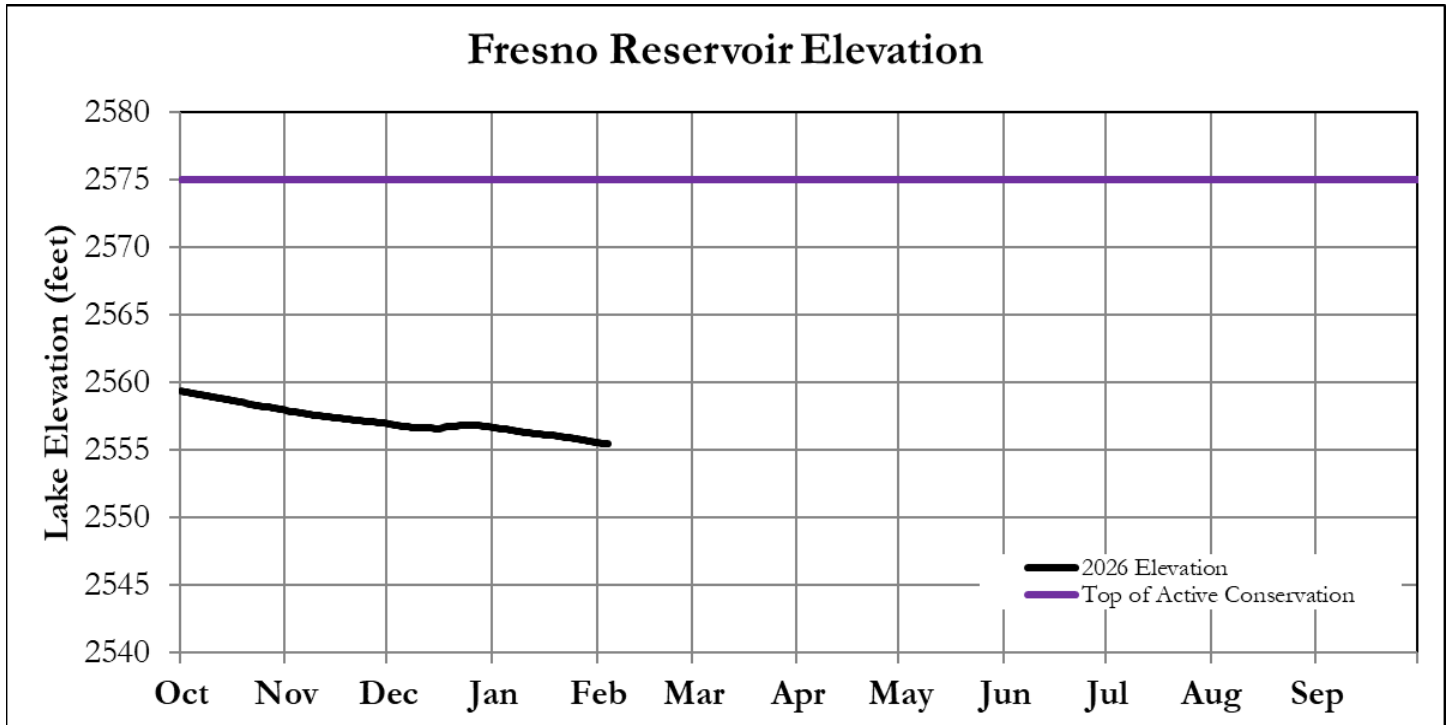
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

Month	Sherburne Reservoir		Fresno Reservoir	
	Inflow	% of Average	Inflow	% of Average
Water Year 2026				
October	2.8	41	-0.6	-
November	15.5	198	0.4	15
December	16.7	411	2.0	129
January	6.2	226	0.3	27
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

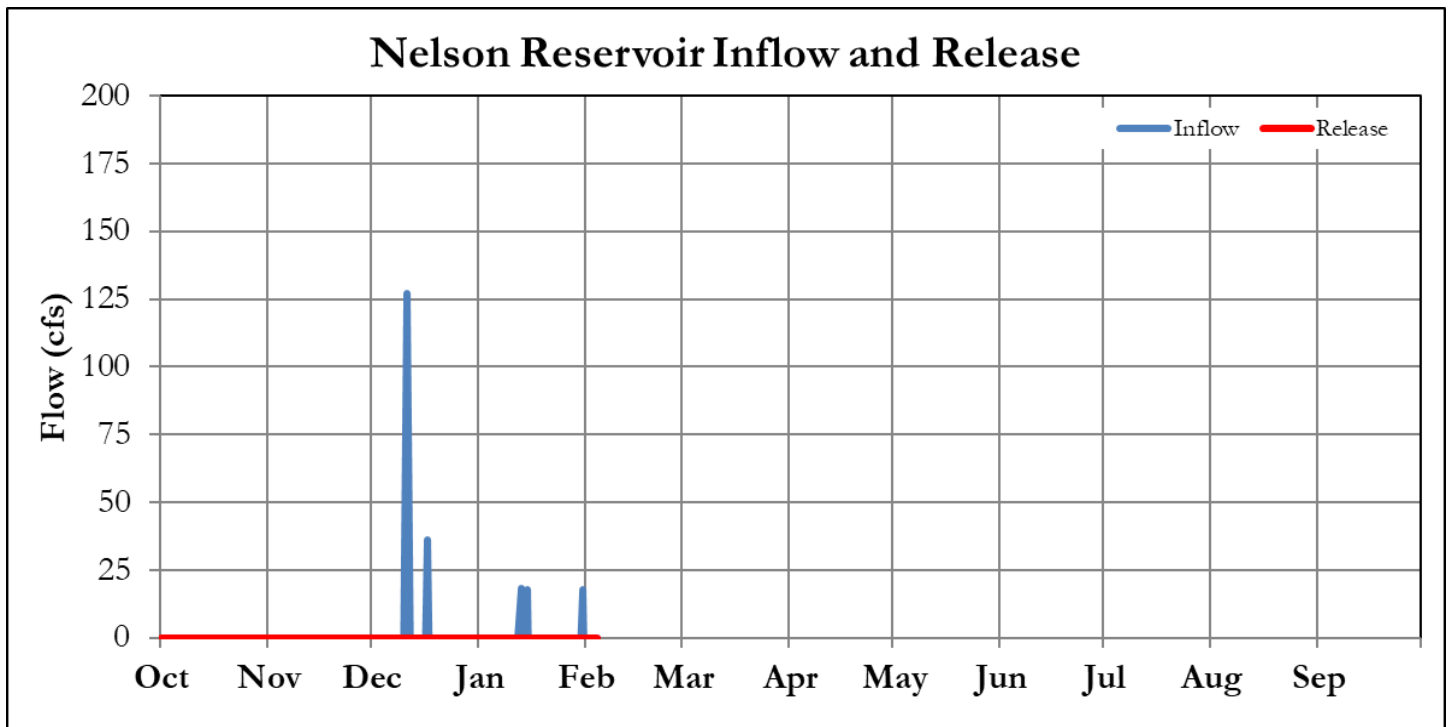
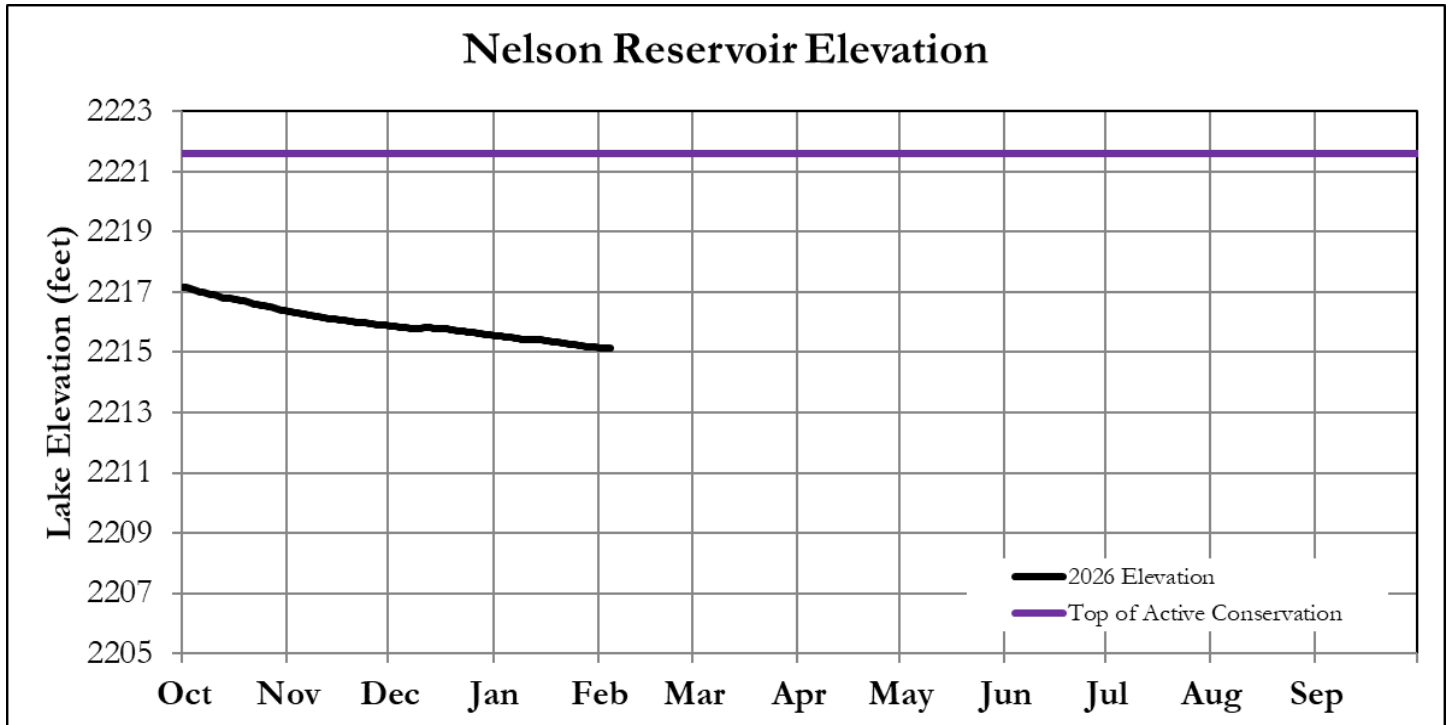
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (February 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	48,050	acre-feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	1.3	2.9	8.5	24.8	26.7	14.3	6.3	3.8	4.4	3.9	3.2	2.1	102.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	18.1	20.0	8.1	27.0	35.2	21.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	130.2
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	0	304	325	136	439	572	366	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	1.3	2.9	-9.6	4.8	18.6	-12.7	-28.9	-18.0	4.4	3.9	3.2	2.1	-28.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	49.3	52.2	42.6	47.4	66.0	53.3	24.4	6.4	10.8	14.7	17.9	20.0	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4777.6	4779.5	4772.9	4776.3	4787.9	4780.2	4757.6	4737.1	4743.0	4747.6	4751.1	4753.3	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	5.6	5.5	12.8	79.1	101.7	54.6	25.6	17.0	12.3	7.7	6.2	5.4	333.5
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	6.9	8.4	21.3	103.9	128.4	68.9	31.9	20.8	16.7	11.6	9.4	7.5	435.7
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	250	600	600	600	600	390	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	14.9	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	184.5
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	28,801	acre-feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	3.1	10.3	10.2	4.7	3.4	0.2	0.4	1.9	3.2	2.2	1.3	1.2	42.1
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	18.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	135.7
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	3.1	10.3	10.2	34.2	32.0	29.7	29.9	20.5	3.2	2.2	1.3	1.2	177.8
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	61.2	29.2	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	182.9
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	41	40	377	778	995	475	101	41	40	41	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	0.9	7.8	7.8	11.0	-14.3	-31.5	0.7	14.5	0.7	-0.2	-1.2	-1.3	-5.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	29.7	37.5	45.3	56.3	42.0	10.5	11.2	25.7	26.4	26.2	25.0	23.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2556.1	2559.8	2563.0	2567.0	2561.7	2543.8	2544.4	2554.0	2554.3	2554.2	2553.6	2552.8	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.65
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	152.9
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	12.2	12.7	8.8	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	56.6
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	12.2	10.7	7.3	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.1
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	53,930	acre-feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	11.0	9.6	6.6	10.4	4.3	1.3	3.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.9
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.7	9.2	7.8	-0.8	-2.6	-12.0	-6.1	1.6	-0.5	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-10.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	52.2	61.4	69.2	68.4	65.8	53.8	47.7	49.3	48.8	47.0	45.2	43.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2214.7	2217.2	2219.3	2219.1	2218.4	2215.2	2213.3	2213.8	2213.7	2213.1	2212.5	2211.9	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	11.2	14.5	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.9

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (February 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

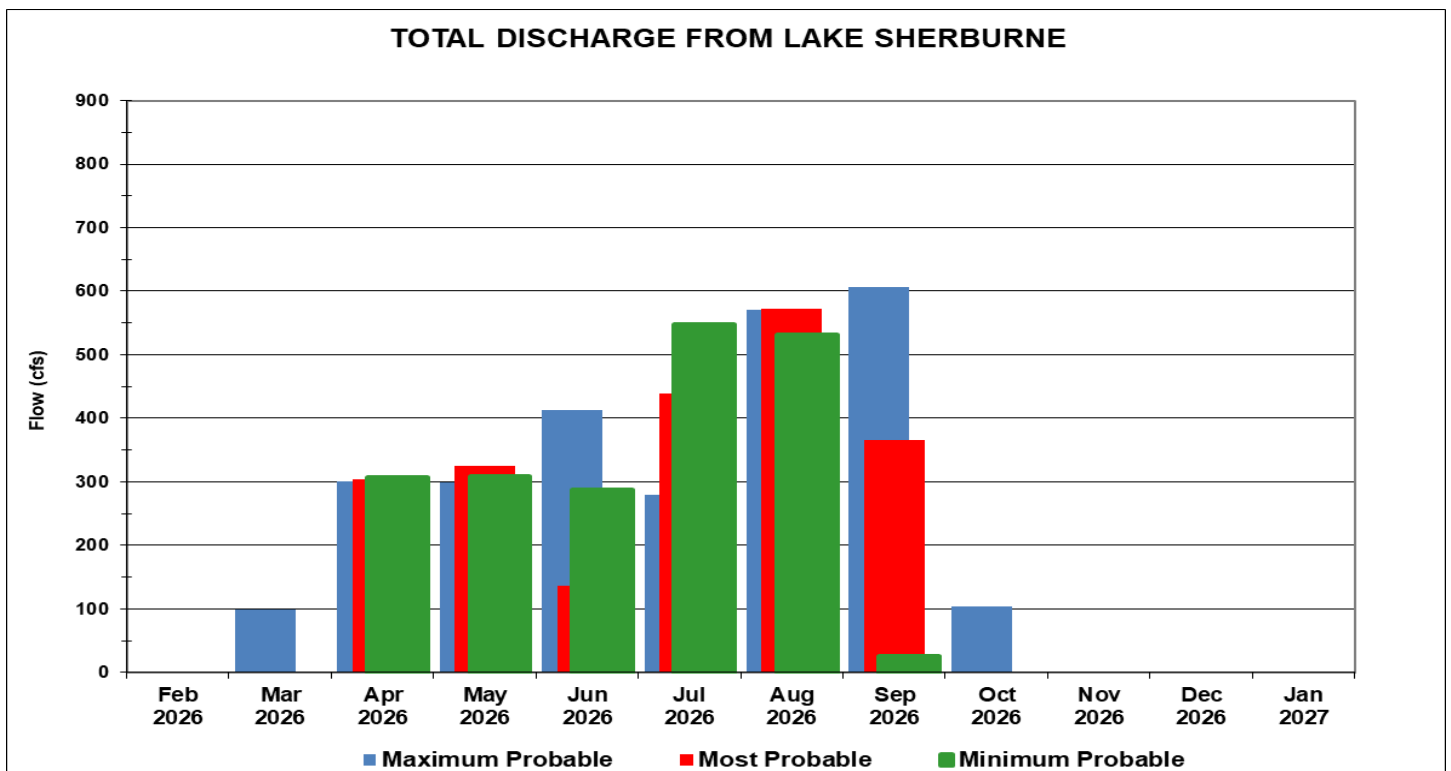
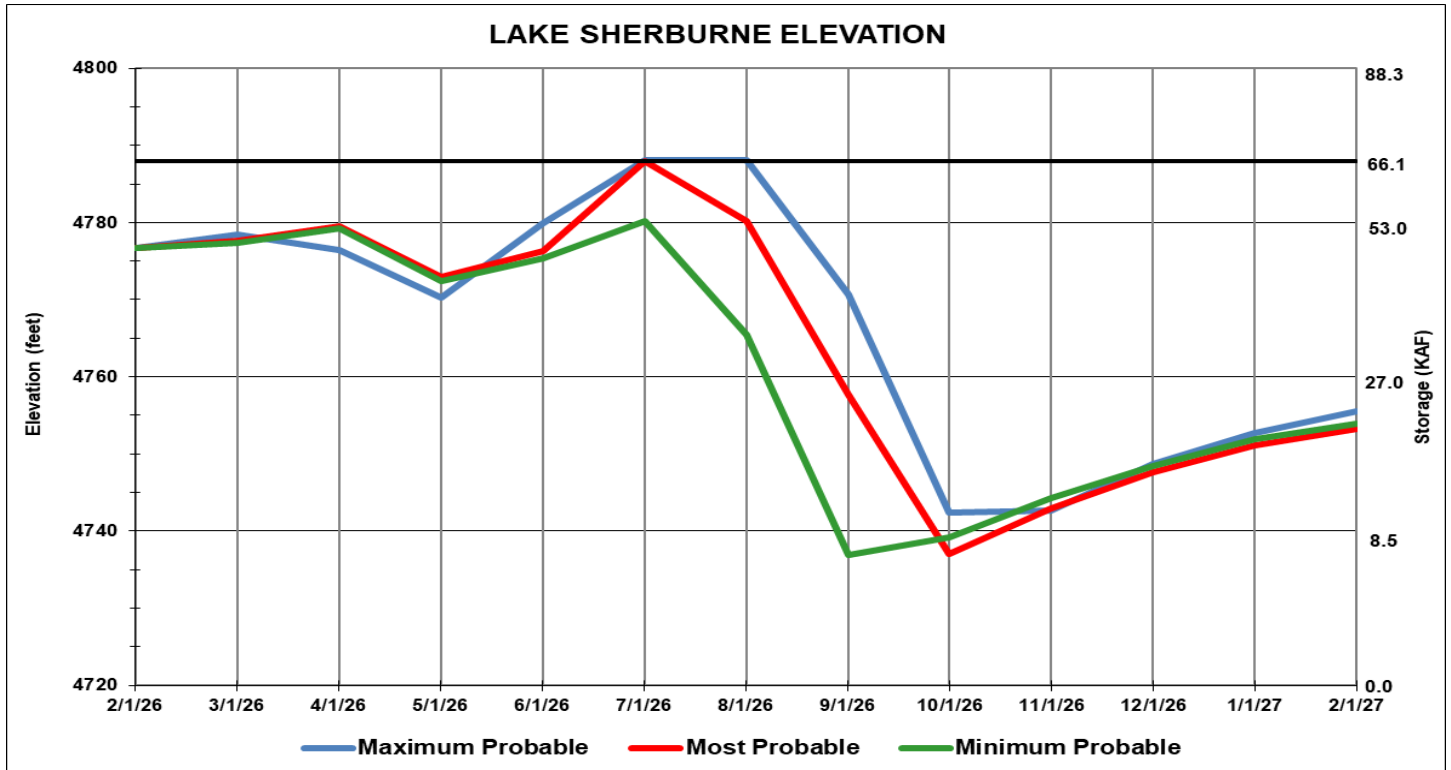
Sherburne Reservoir													
	Initial Content		48,050 acre-feet										
	Elevation		4776.73 feet										
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	1.0	2.9	8.3	23.2	24.2	13.7	5.8	3.1	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	94.9
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	18.3	19.0	17.1	33.7	32.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	122.3
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	0	308	309	287	548	532	25	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	1.0	2.9	-10.0	4.2	7.1	-20.0	-26.9	1.6	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	-27.4
End of Month Content (kaf)	49.0	51.9	41.9	46.1	53.2	33.2	6.3	7.9	11.8	15.4	18.6	20.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4777.4	4779.3	4772.4	4775.4	4780.1	4765.5	4736.9	4739.2	4744.2	4748.4	4751.9	4753.9	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	4.9	3.8	6.7	68.4	81.2	40.7	21.7	14.9	8.4	4.6	4.7	4.0	264.0
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	5.9	6.7	15.0	91.6	105.4	54.4	27.5	18.0	12.3	8.2	7.9	6.0	358.9
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	250	600	600	600	550	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	14.9	36.9	35.7	36.9	33.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	158.2
Fresno Reservoir													
	Initial Content		28,801 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2555.60 feet										
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	1.3	5.9	4.9	2.0	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.9	2.2	0.9	0.5	0.5	21.0
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.7	26.8	27.7	25.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	107.5
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	1.3	5.9	4.9	29.7	28.5	27.8	25.4	0.9	2.2	0.9	0.5	0.5	128.5
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	2.9	6.0	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	101.4
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	41	40	377	778	47	98	101	41	40	41	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.9	3.4	2.5	6.5	-17.8	24.9	19.4	-5.1	-0.3	-1.5	-2.0	-2.0	27.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	27.9	31.3	33.8	40.3	22.5	47.4	66.8	61.7	61.4	59.9	57.9	55.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2555.1	2556.9	2558.1	2561.0	2552.2	2563.9	2570.3	2568.8	2568.7	2568.2	2567.6	2566.9	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	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	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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)	0.0	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1
Nelson Reservoir													
	Initial Content		53,930 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2215.19 feet										
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	2.2	2.3	1.6	2.1	0.9	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.1
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.7	0.4	0.5	-7.1	-13.6	-0.9	-1.5	-1.1	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-32.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	52.2	52.6	53.1	46.0	32.4	31.5	30.0	28.9	27.1	25.3	23.5	21.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2214.7	2214.8	2215.0	2212.8	2207.5	2207.1	2206.4	2205.9	2205.0	2204.1	2203.1	2202.1	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (February 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027)

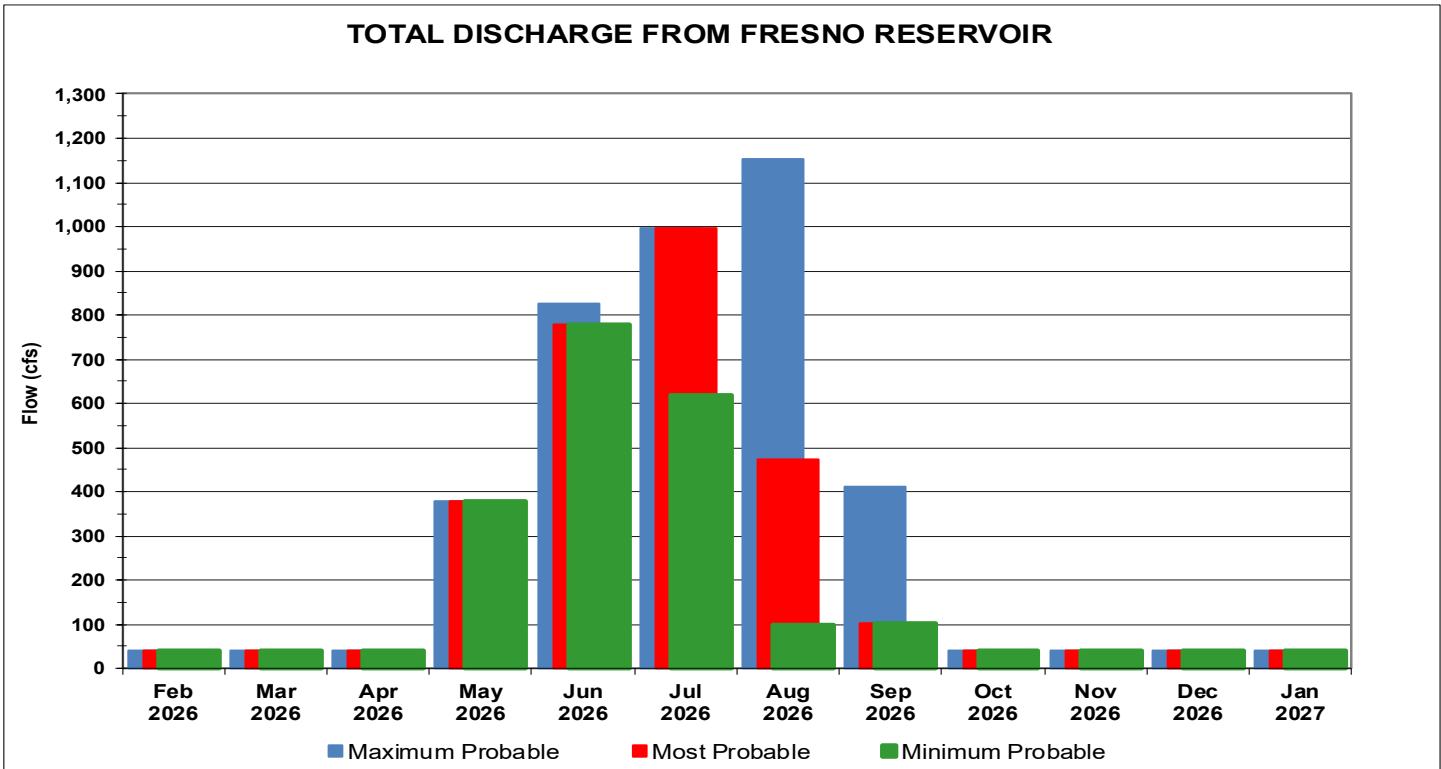
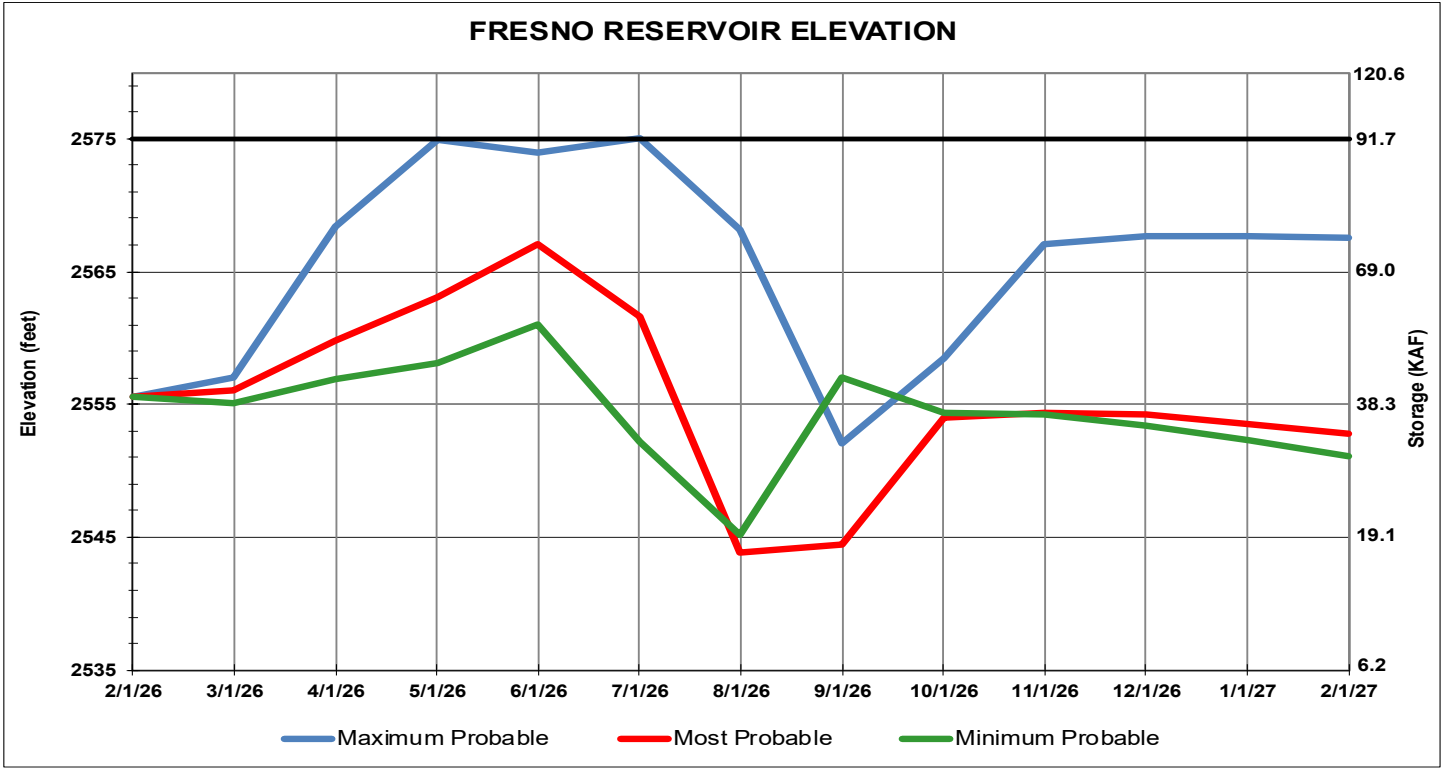
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content		48,050 acre-feet									
		Elevation		4776.73 feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.6	3.1	9.4	32.1	38.0	17.2	8.4	6.9	6.6	5.2	3.7	2.8	136.0
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	6.1	17.9	18.4	24.6	17.2	35.1	36.1	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	161.8
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	99	301	299	413	280	571	607	104	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.6	-3.0	-8.5	13.7	13.4	0.0	-26.7	-29.2	0.2	5.2	3.7	2.8	-25.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	50.6	47.6	39.1	52.8	66.2	66.2	39.5	10.3	10.5	15.7	19.4	22.2	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4778.4	4776.4	4770.3	4779.9	4788.0	4788.0	4770.6	4742.4	4742.6	4748.7	4752.7	4755.5	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	6.3	8.7	24.2	95.5	134.7	79.9	32.2	19.1	18.6	12.8	8.7	7.2	447.9
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	8.9	11.8	33.6	127.6	172.7	97.1	40.6	26.0	25.2	18.0	12.4	10.0	583.9
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	99	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	157.4
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content		28,801 acre-feet									
		Elevation		2555.60 feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	5.0	31.4	26.8	19.1	23.4	4.0	2.2	6.5	6.8	3.9	2.8	2.0	133.9
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3	31.4	31.4	30.3	17.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	141.1
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	5.0	31.4	26.8	19.1	53.7	35.4	33.6	36.8	24.5	3.9	2.8	2.0	275.0
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	49.1	61.2	70.9	24.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	245.9
Fresno Release (cfs)	40	41	40	377	825	995	1153	412	41	40	41	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.8	28.9	24.4	-4.1	4.6	-25.8	-37.3	12.3	22.0	1.5	0.3	-0.5	29.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	31.6	60.5	84.9	80.8	85.4	59.6	22.3	34.6	56.6	58.1	58.4	57.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2557.0	2568.4	2574.9	2574.0	2575.0	2568.1	2552.0	2558.4	2567.1	2567.6	2567.7	2567.6	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	22.6	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	111.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	15.0	18.8	7.1	17.9	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.0
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content		53,930 acre-feet									
		Elevation		2215.19 feet									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	13.5	16.9	6.4	16.1	10.8	2.7	6.3	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.4
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.7	11.7	15.1	0.0	0.0	-9.0	-18.5	-1.1	2.9	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-6.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	52.2	63.9	79.0	79.0	79.0	70.0	51.5	50.4	53.3	51.5	49.7	47.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2214.7	2217.9	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.5	2214.5	2214.2	2215.0	2214.5	2214.0	2213.4	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	14.3	18.0	19.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.9

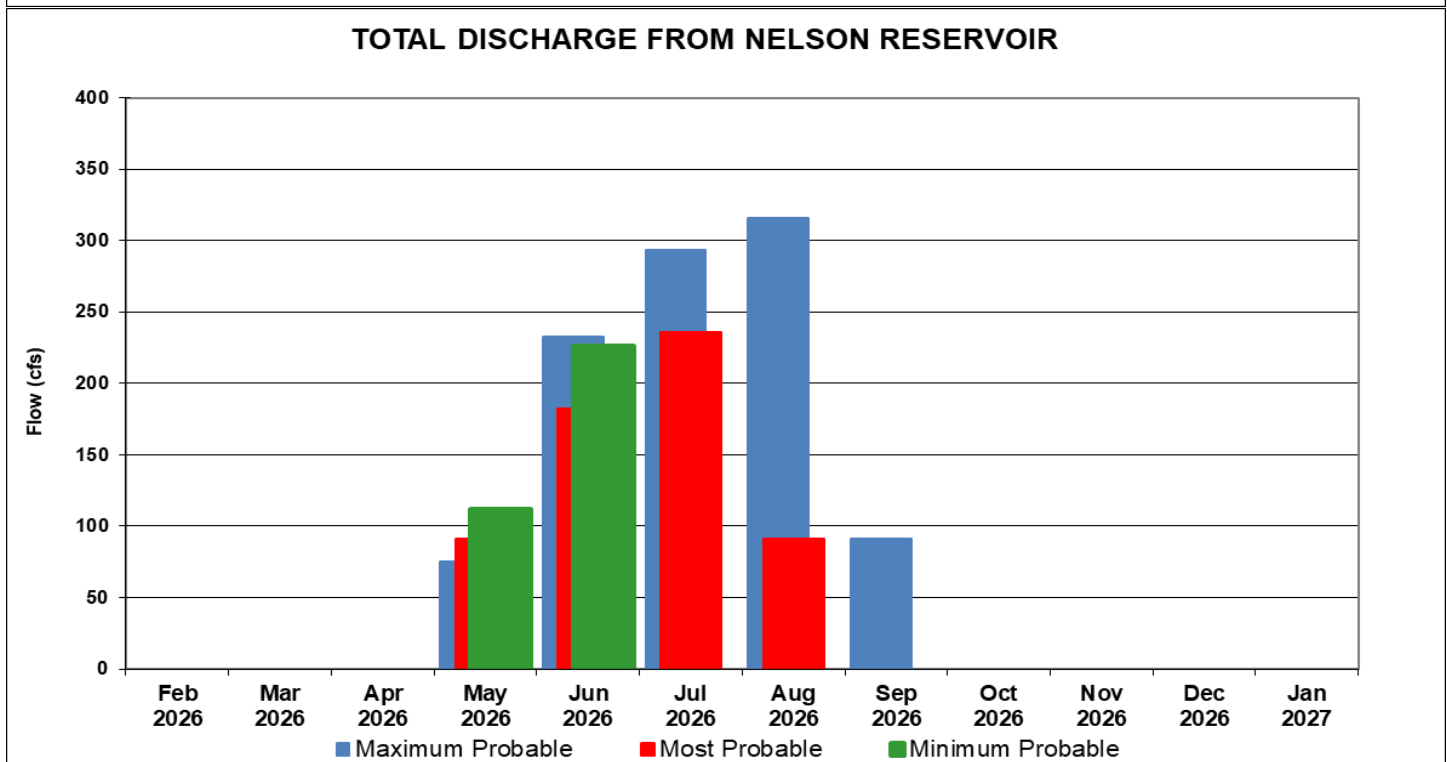
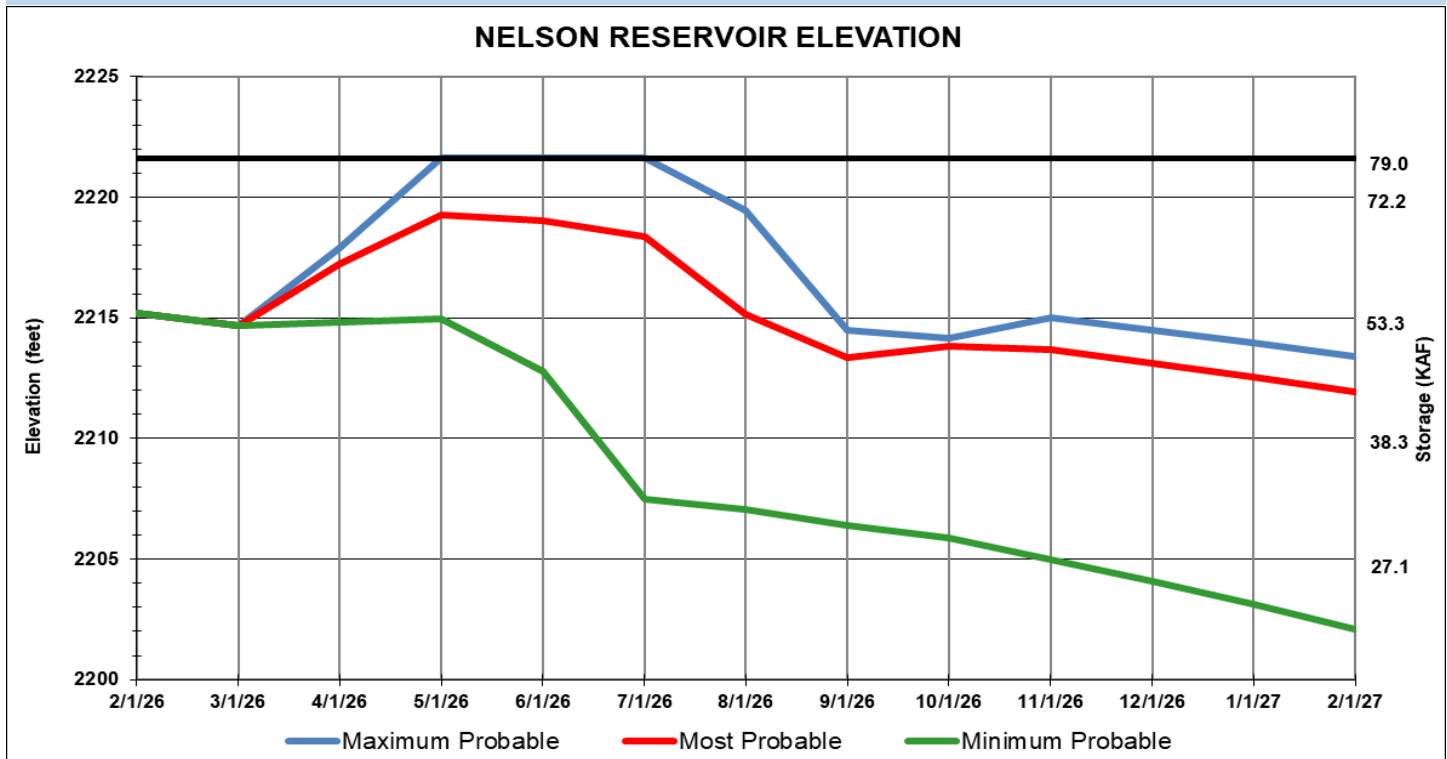
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



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

February 2026