

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

January 2026



Fresno Dam, January 2026

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

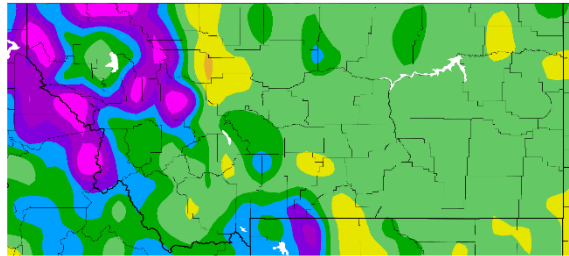
Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
January Inflow Forecast (kaf)	3	2	-2
Percent of Average	104	133	-
January Release Forecast (cfs)	140	41	0
January 31 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4774.4	2556.3	2215.1

April-July Forecast	Sherburne
Inflow Forecast	98
Percent of Average	101

Climate Departure from Normal

December 1 through December 31

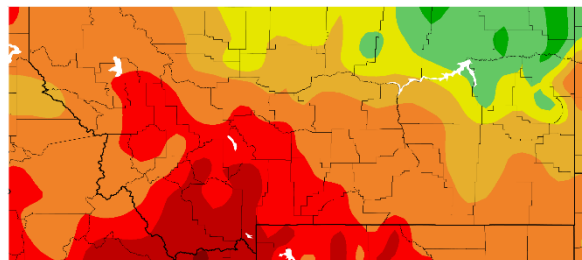
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

Precipitation in the St. Mary and Milk River basins was above average during December except for portions of the upper Milk River basin, which was below average.

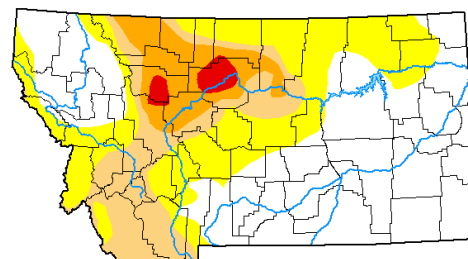
Temperature in both basins was above average except for portions of the lower Milk River basin, which was below average.

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

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

Montana Drought Monitor Map

December 30, 2025



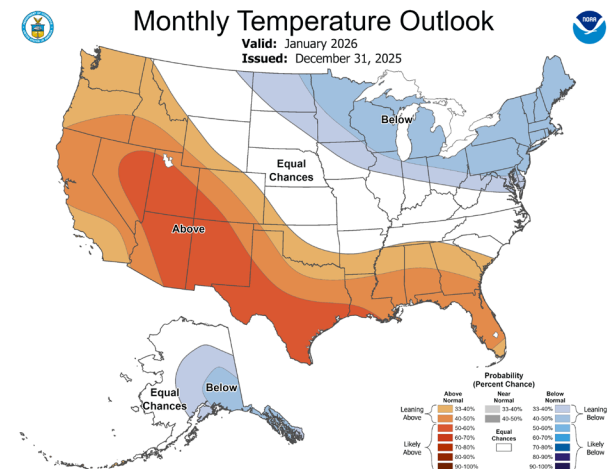
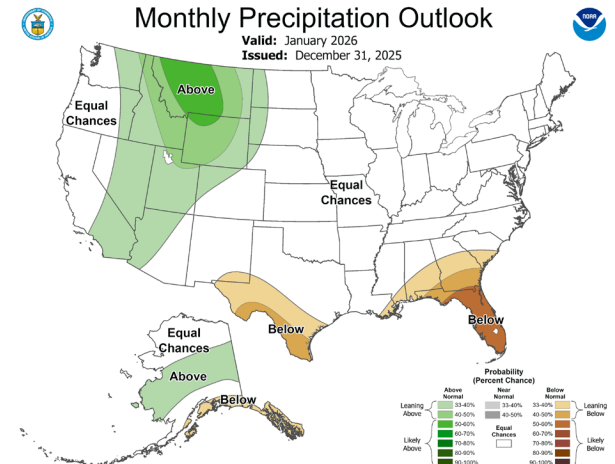
Intensity

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



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

December Climate Outlook



OPERATIONS REVIEW

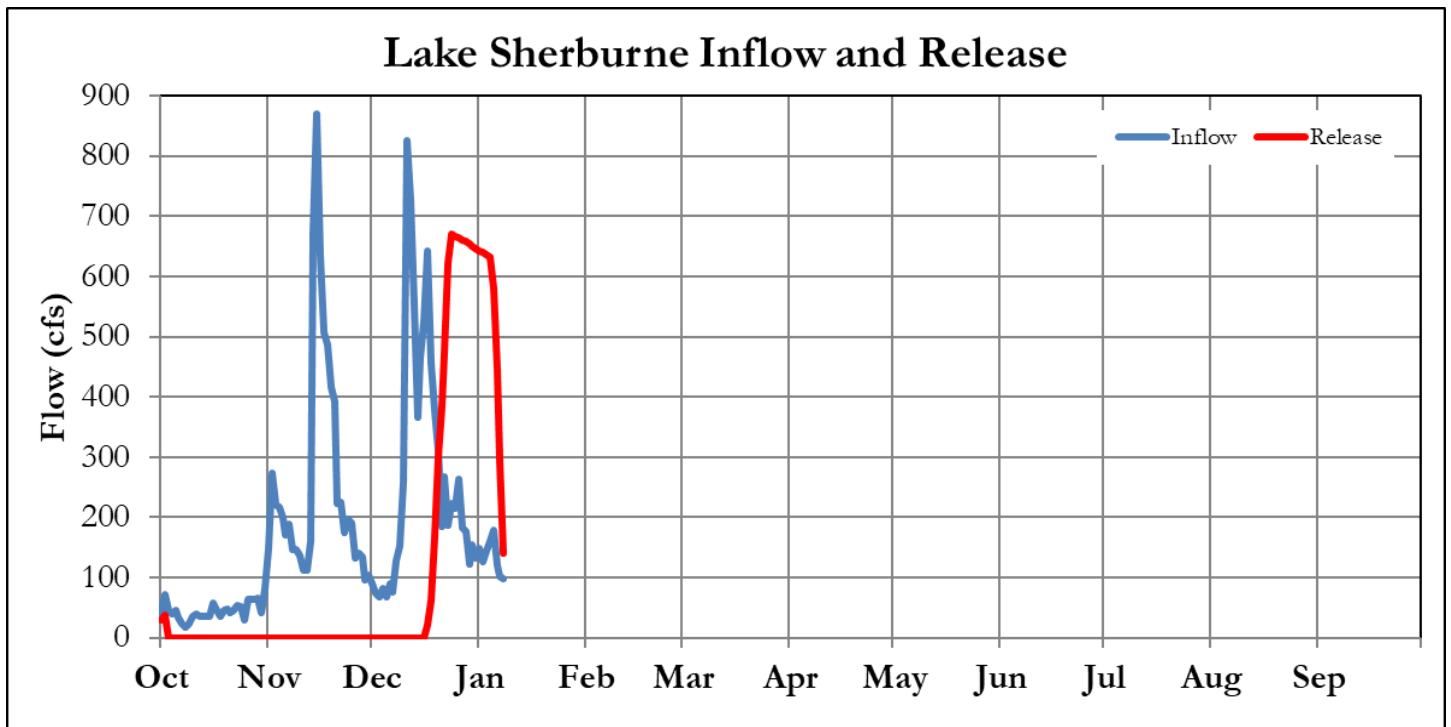
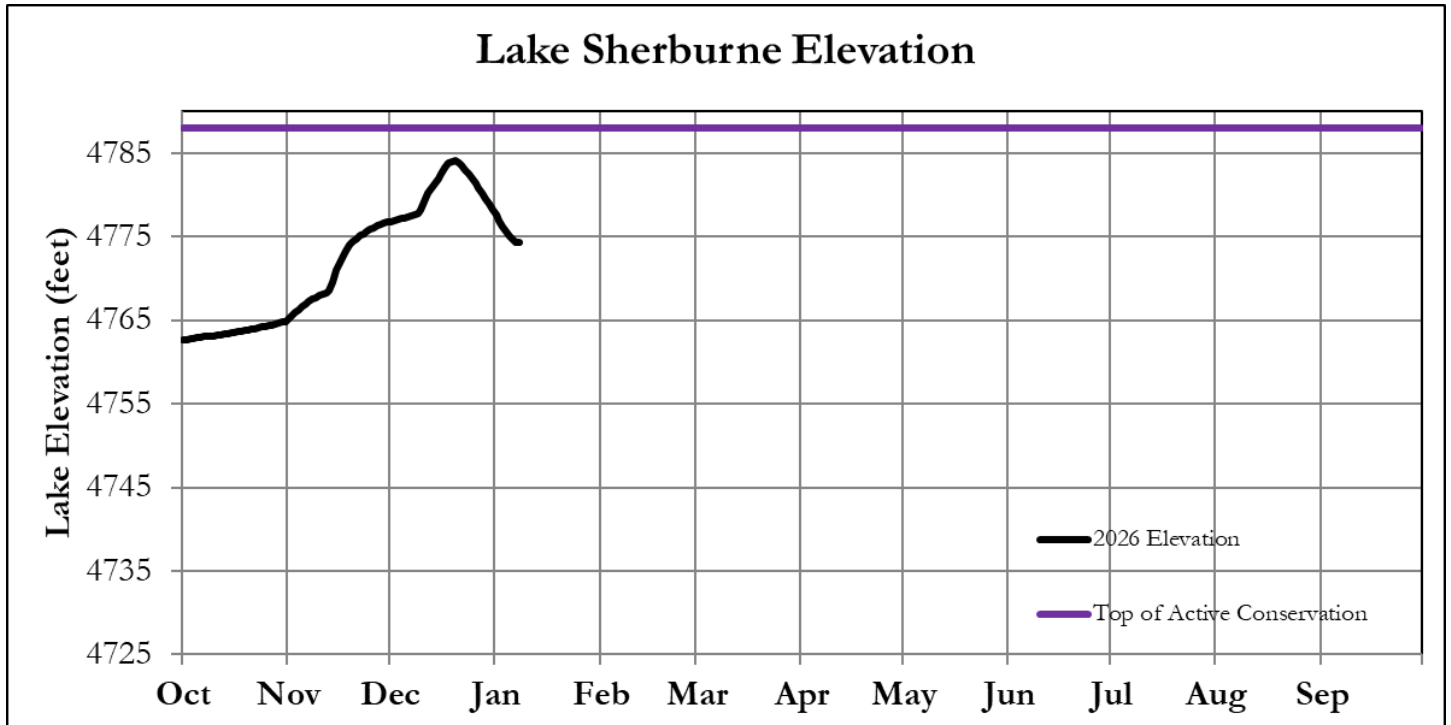
January 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4778.23	50,299	174	76
Fresno Reservoir	2556.71	30,994	78	34
Nelson Reservoir	2215.57	55,274	102	70

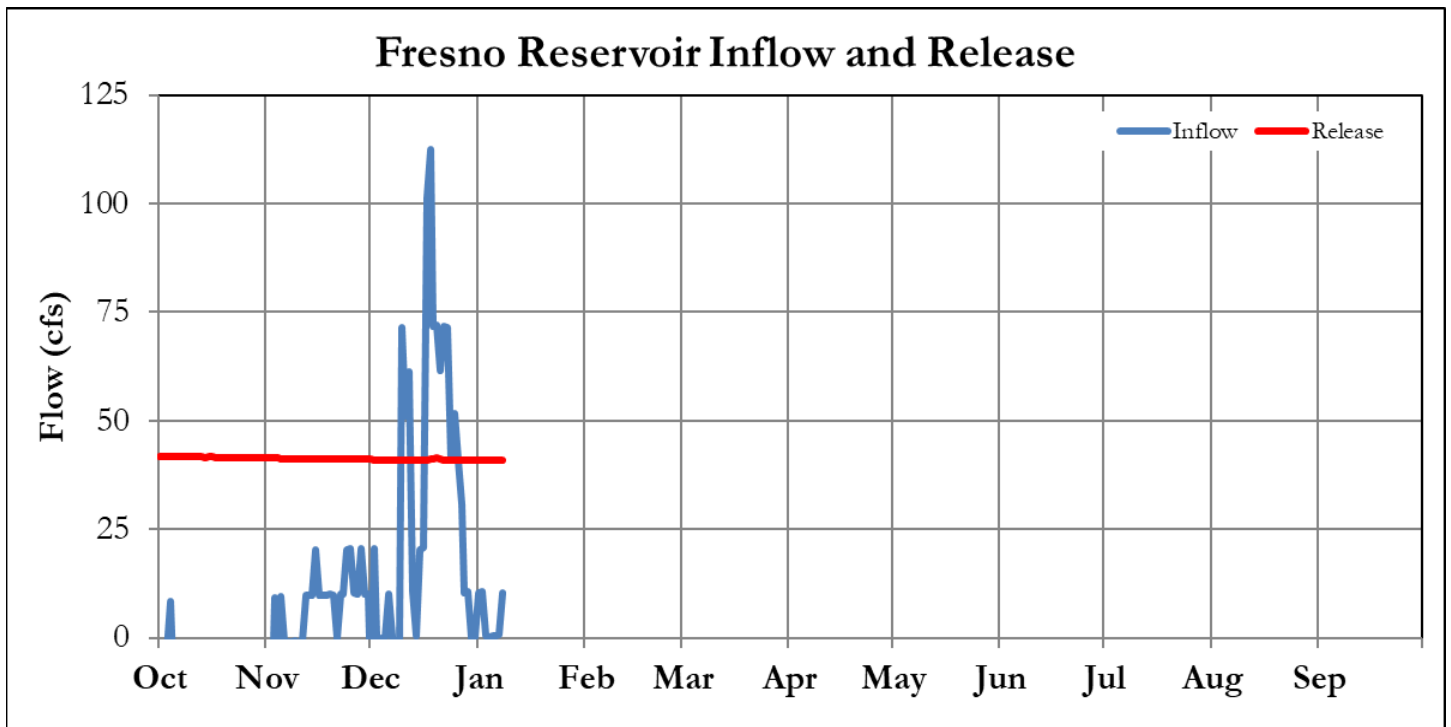
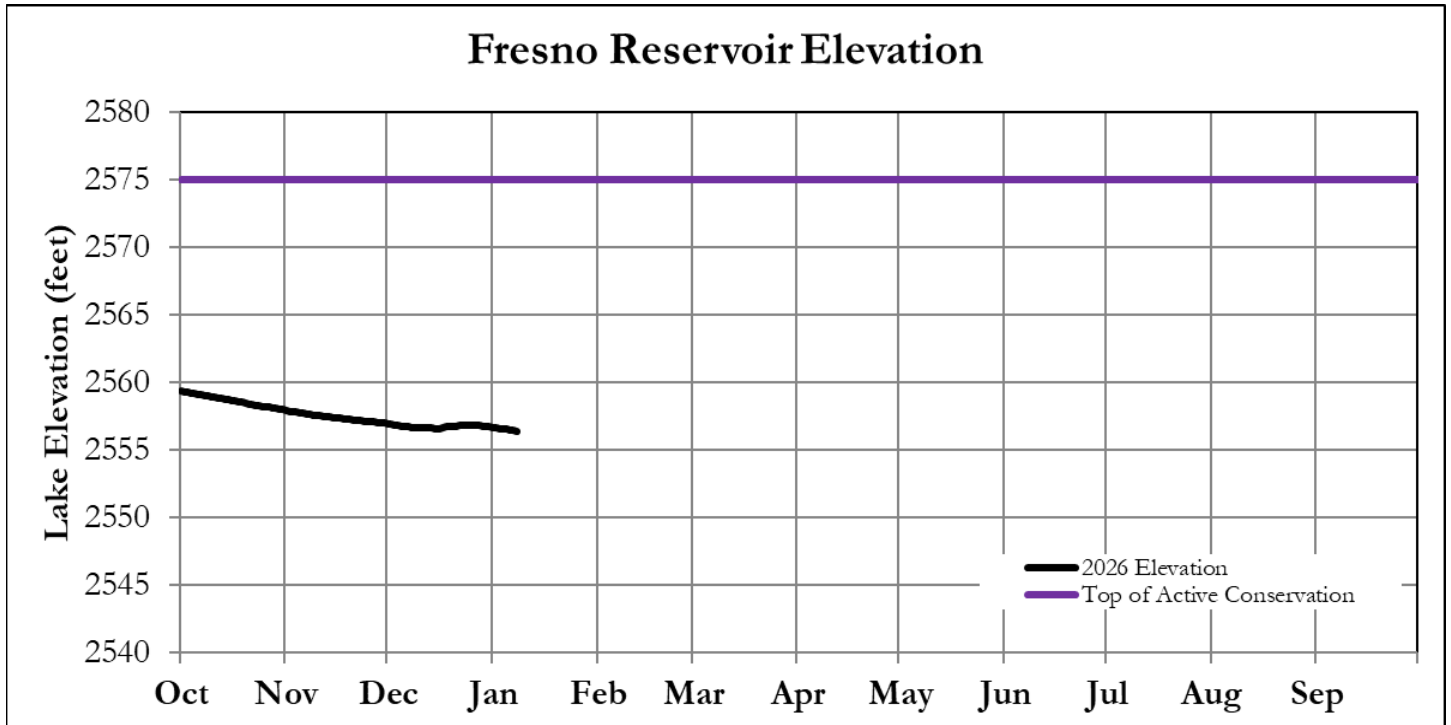
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

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
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

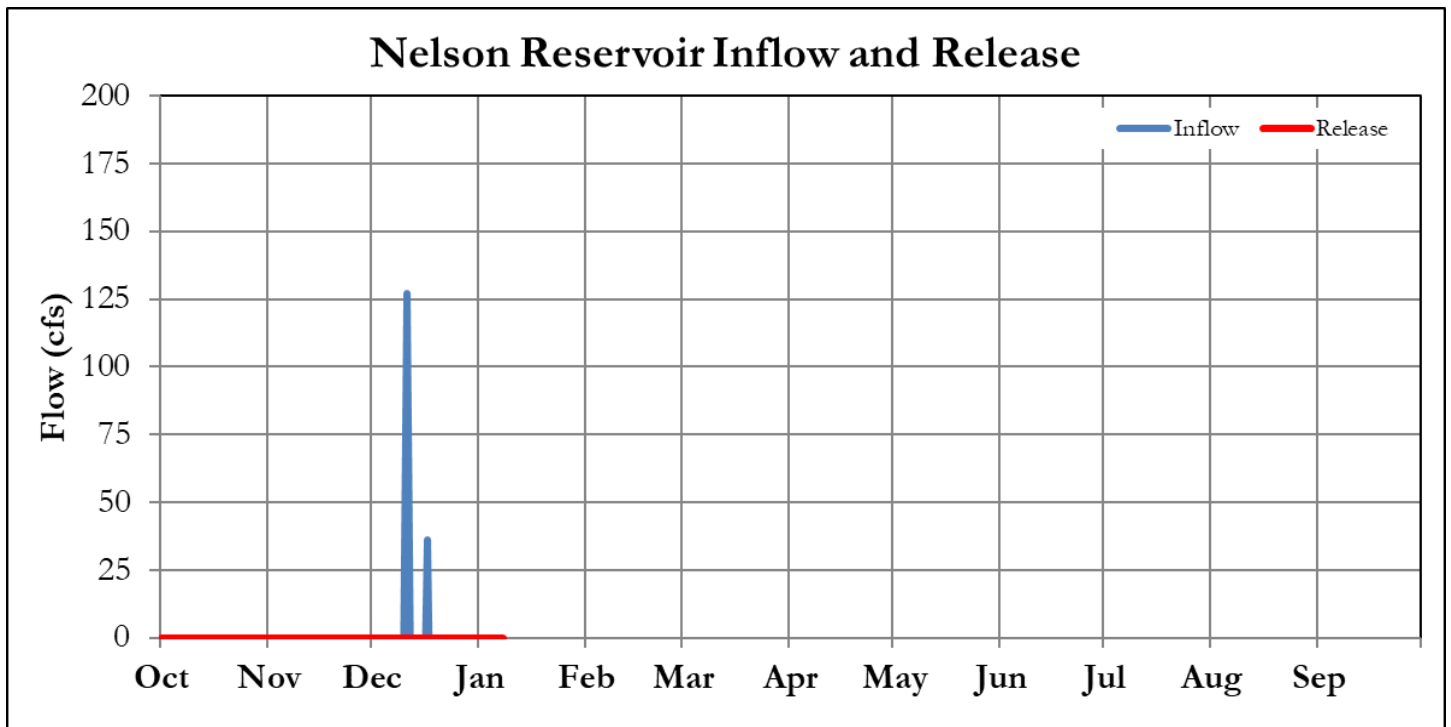
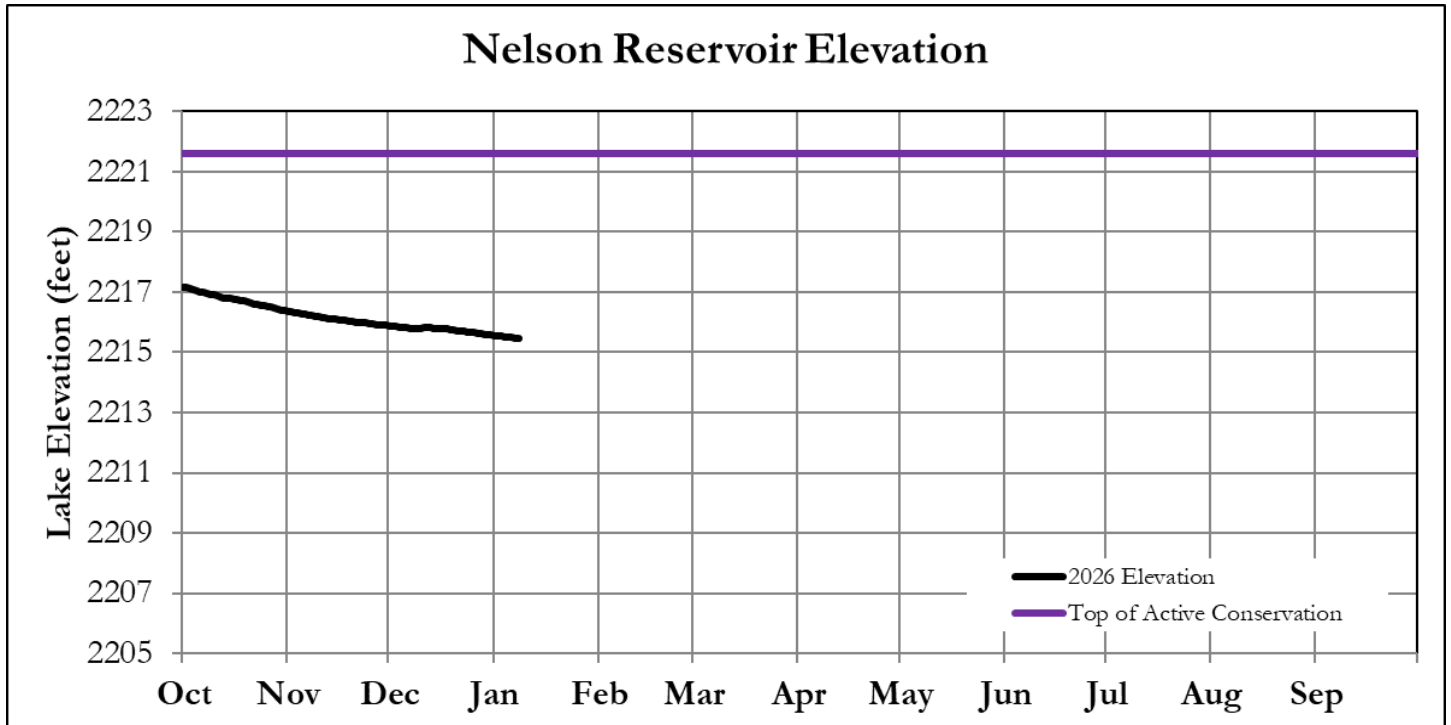
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content		50,299 acre-feet									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.9	2.7	3.2	9.4	32.6	38.8	17.4	8.5	7.1	6.7	5.3	3.7	138.3
Sherburne Release (kaf)	8.6	0.0	4.1	38.1	21.3	7.9	22.3	36.2	28.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	166.5
Sherburne Release (cfs)	140	0	67	640	346	133	363	589	471	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-5.7	2.7	-0.9	-28.7	11.3	30.9	-4.9	-27.7	-20.9	6.7	5.3	3.7	-28.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	44.6	47.3	46.4	17.7	29.0	59.9	55.0	27.3	6.4	13.1	18.4	22.1	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4774.4	4776.2	4775.6	4750.9	4761.8	4784.3	4781.3	4760.3	4737.1	4745.8	4751.6	4755.4	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	5.9	5.3	7.1	18.7	84.4	114.2	67.2	28.2	16.6	14.7	9.8	7.4	379.5
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	8.8	8.0	10.3	28.1	117.0	153.0	84.6	36.7	23.7	21.4	15.1	11.1	517.8
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	600	450	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	26.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	215.0
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content		30,994 acre-feet									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	1.6	4.1	12.5	12.8	6.0	4.3	0.3	0.5	2.3	3.7	2.8	1.8	52.7
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	181.4
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	1.6	4.1	12.5	39.6	35.5	32.9	29.8	30.0	39.8	3.7	2.8	1.8	234.1
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	29.3	46.3	61.2	61.6	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	221.4
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	41	40	477	778	995	1002	101	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.9	1.9	10.0	37.2	6.2	-13.4	-31.4	-31.6	33.8	1.2	0.4	-0.7	12.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	30.1	32.0	42.0	79.2	85.4	72.0	40.6	9.0	42.8	44.0	44.4	43.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2556.3	2557.2	2561.7	2573.6	2575.0	2571.8	2561.1	2542.6	2562.0	2562.5	2562.7	2562.4	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	55.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	185.3
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	17.4	18.2	12.6	16.4	6.8	2.0	5.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	80.8
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	17.4	16.8	7.1	14.5	4.2	2.0	5.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	69.4
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content		55,274 acre-feet									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	15.7	15.1	6.4	13.1	3.8	1.8	4.9	1.8	0.0	0.0	62.6
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.7	13.9	13.3	0.0	0.0	-9.9	-13.4	3.1	0.0	-1.8	-1.8	-0.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	53.5	51.8	65.7	79.0	79.0	79.0	69.1	55.7	58.8	58.8	57.0	55.2	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.1	2214.6	2218.4	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.2	2215.7	2216.5	2216.5	2216.1	2215.6	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	11.3	11.9	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.2

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

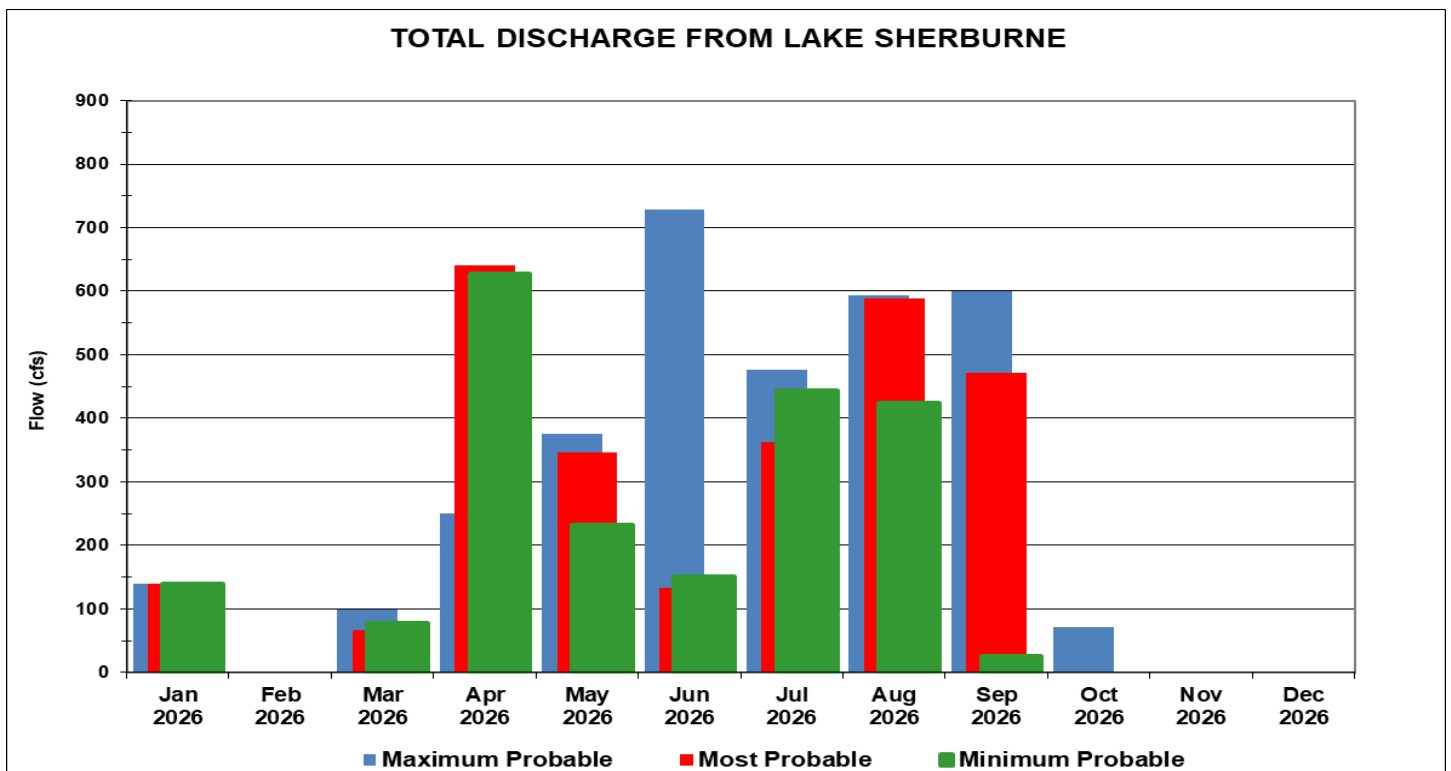
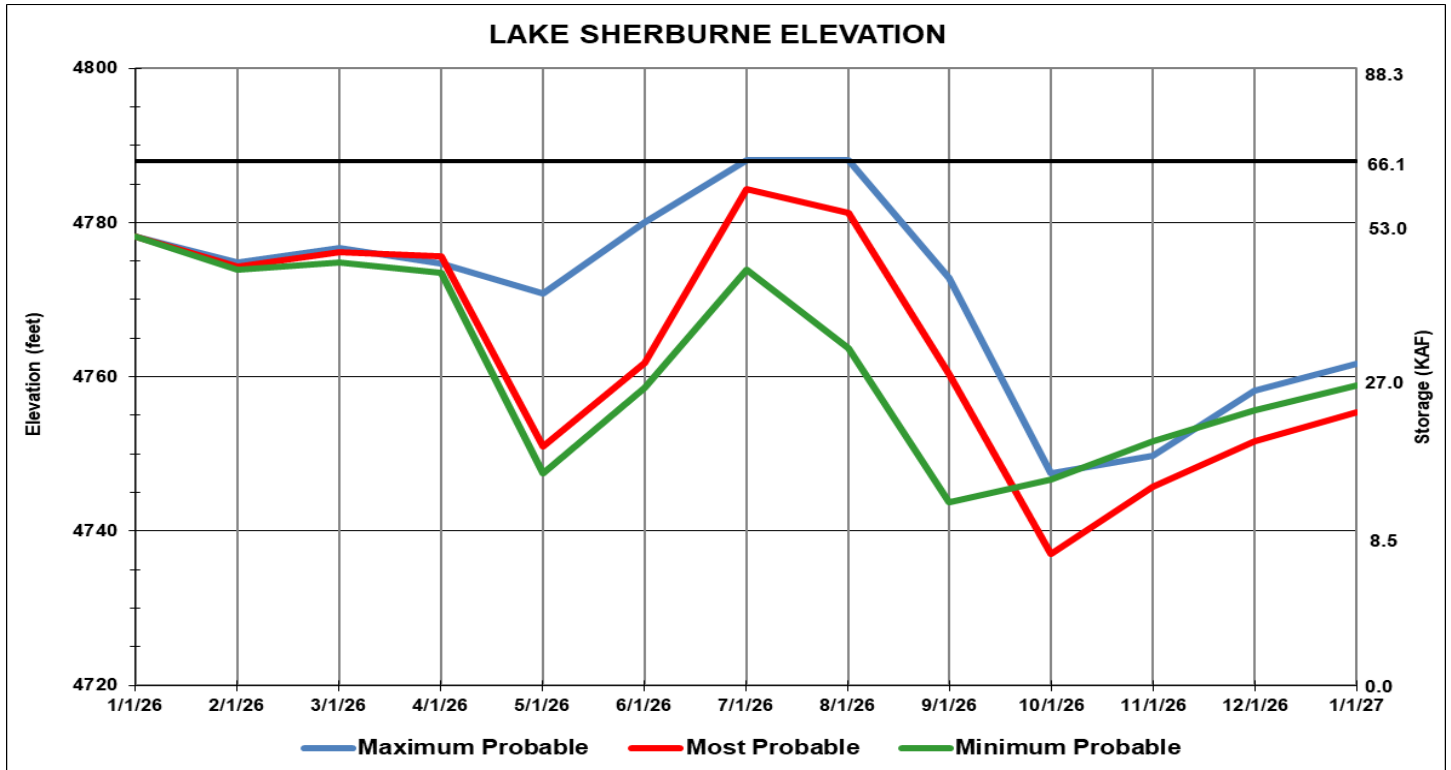
Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content		50,299	acre-feet								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.2	1.4	2.9	8.5	25.2	27.4	14.5	6.4	4.0	4.5	4.0	3.3	104.3
Sherburne Release (kaf)	8.6	0.0	4.8	37.3	14.3	9.0	27.3	26.1	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	128.9
Sherburne Release (cfs)	140	0	78	627	233	151	444	424	25	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-6.4	1.4	-1.9	-28.8	10.9	18.4	-12.8	-19.7	2.5	4.5	4.0	3.3	-24.6
End of Month Content (kaf)	43.9	45.3	43.4	14.6	25.5	43.9	31.1	11.4	13.9	18.4	22.4	25.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4773.9	4774.8	4773.5	4747.5	4758.6	4773.9	4763.7	4743.7	4746.7	4751.6	4755.7	4758.8	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	5.2	5.5	5.5	12.8	78.6	100.8	54.3	25.5	16.7	12.1	7.5	6.1	330.6
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	7.4	6.9	8.4	21.3	103.8	128.2	68.8	31.9	20.7	16.6	11.5	9.4	434.9
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	450	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	35.7	36.9	27.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	179.0
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content		30,994	acre-feet								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	0.7	1.8	7.2	6.5	2.8	2.2	0.1	0.2	1.2	2.5	1.3	0.7	27.2
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	27.7	26.8	27.7	36.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	143.2
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	0.7	1.8	7.2	31.5	30.5	29.0	27.8	36.2	1.2	2.5	1.3	0.7	170.4
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	61.2	6.0	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	159.7
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	41	40	377	778	995	98	101	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-0.4	4.7	29.1	7.3	-17.3	-33.4	30.2	-4.8	0.0	-1.1	-1.8	10.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	29.2	28.8	33.5	62.6	69.9	52.6	19.2	49.4	44.6	44.6	43.5	41.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2555.8	2555.6	2557.9	2569.1	2571.2	2565.7	2550.2	2564.6	2562.7	2562.7	2562.3	2561.6	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.40
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	129.7
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	0.0	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	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.4
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content		55,274	acre-feet								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	7.8	8.2	5.7	7.4	3.1	0.9	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.5
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.7	6.0	6.4	-3.0	-8.3	-16.7	-0.9	0.6	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-24.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	53.5	51.8	57.8	64.2	61.2	52.9	36.2	35.3	35.9	34.1	32.3	30.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.1	2214.6	2216.3	2218.0	2217.2	2214.9	2209.1	2208.7	2209.0	2208.2	2207.4	2206.6	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.9	13.9	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026)

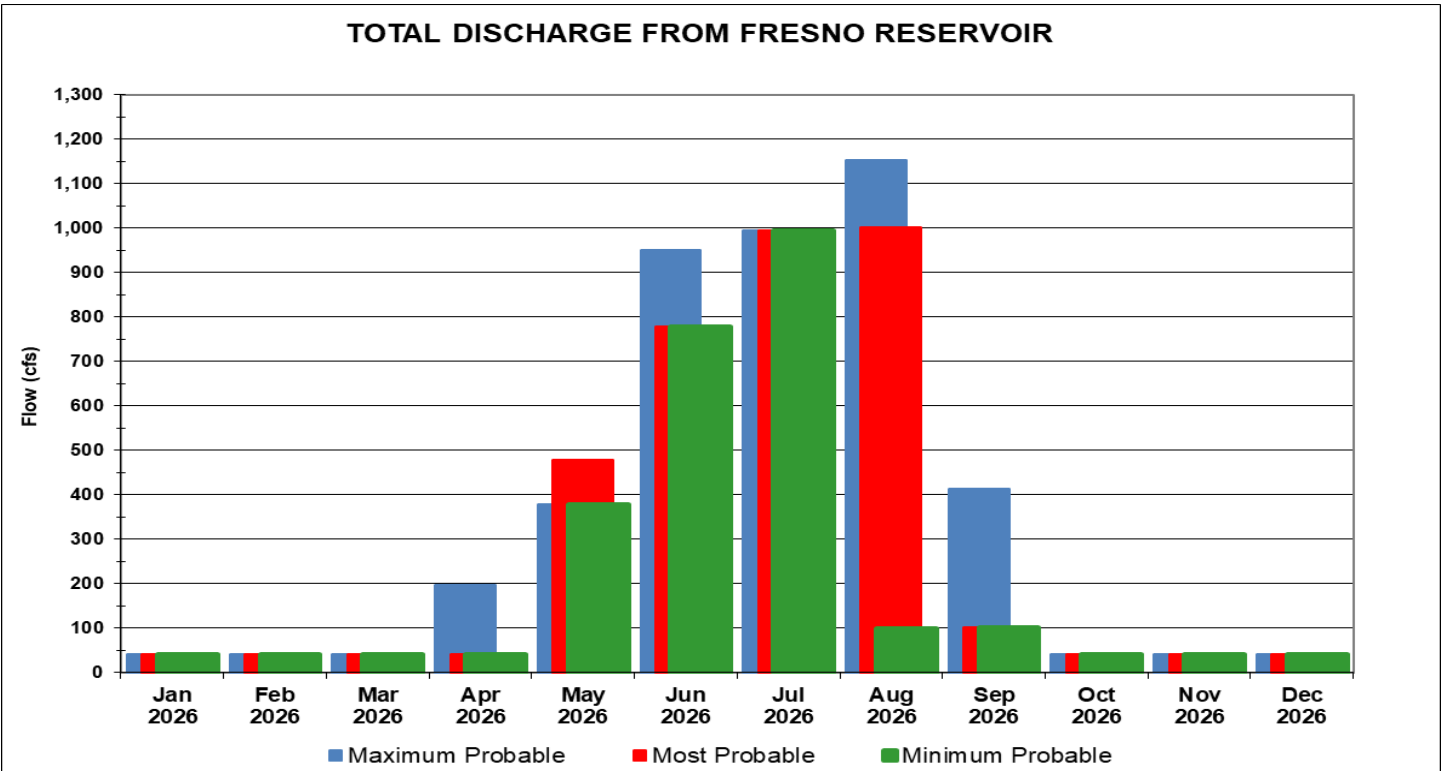
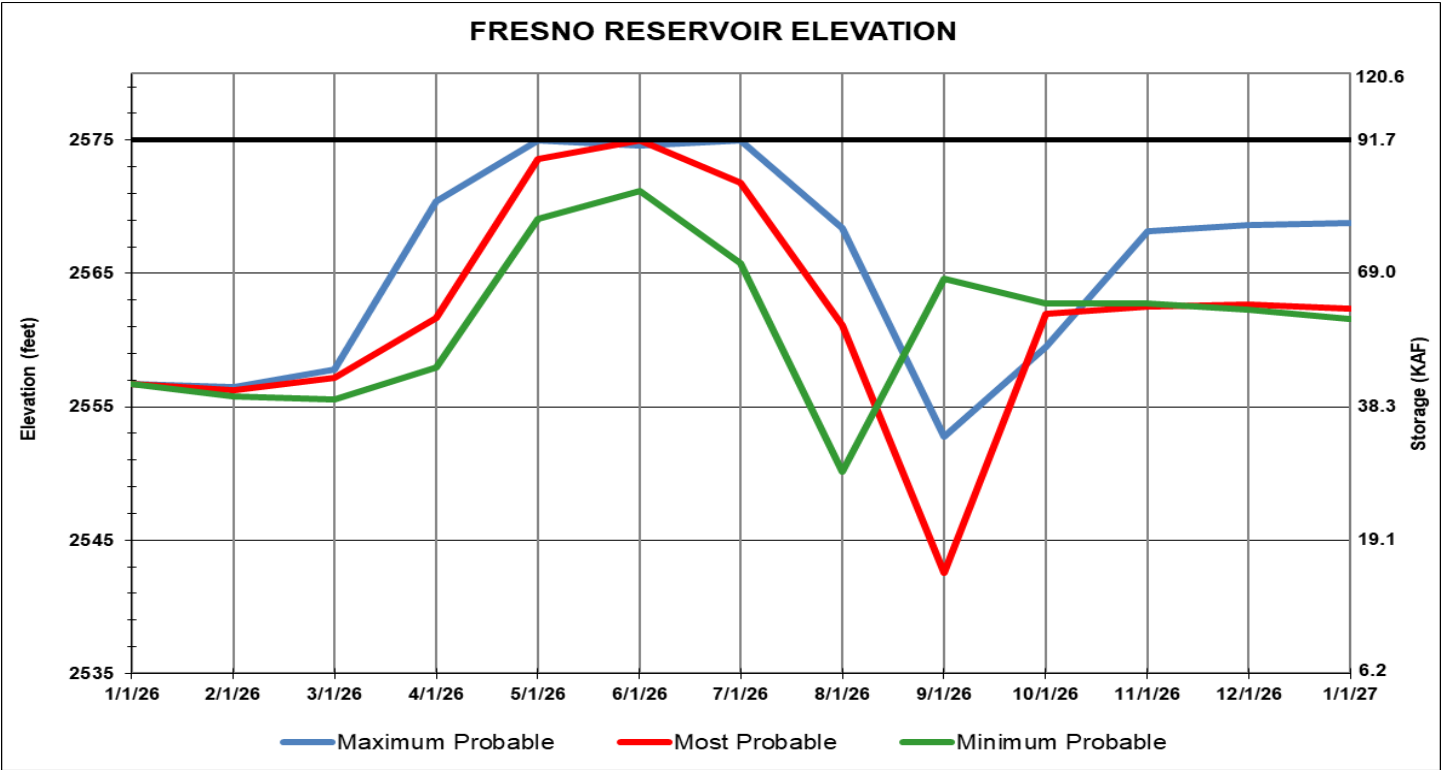
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir													
	Initial Content		50,299 acre-feet										
	Elevation		4778.23 feet										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.5	2.8	3.2	9.5	36.5	56.4	29.3	12.7	7.9	6.4	8.4	3.8	180.4
Sherburne Release (kaf)	8.6	0.0	6.1	14.9	23.1	43.3	29.3	36.5	35.7	4.4	0.0	0.0	201.9
Sherburne Release (cfs)	140	0	99	250	376	728	477	594	600	72	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-5.1	2.8	-2.9	-5.4	13.4	13.1	0.0	-23.8	-27.8	2.0	8.4	3.8	-21.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	45.2	48.0	45.1	39.7	53.1	66.2	66.2	42.4	14.6	16.6	25.0	28.8	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4774.8	4776.7	4774.7	4770.8	4780.1	4788.0	4788.0	4772.8	4747.5	4749.7	4758.2	4761.7	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	8.9	8.2	12.0	29.9	105.7	141.8	83.8	34.0	23.5	25.9	15.9	11.8	501.4
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	12.4	11.0	15.2	39.4	142.2	198.2	113.1	46.7	31.4	32.3	24.3	15.6	681.8
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	99	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	6.1	0.0	0.0	157.4
Fresno Reservoir													
	Initial Content		30,994 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2556.71 feet										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	2.0	5.0	36.2	30.1	21.5	27.9	4.9	2.6	7.6	7.5	4.0	3.0	152.3
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3	31.4	31.4	30.3	17.7	0.0	0.0	141.1
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	2.0	5.0	36.2	30.1	21.5	58.2	36.3	34.0	37.9	25.2	4.0	3.0	293.4
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.2	2.5	11.7	23.2	56.5	61.2	70.9	24.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	262.6
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	41	197	377	950	995	1153	412	41	40	41	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.5	2.8	33.7	18.4	-1.7	1.7	-24.9	-36.9	13.4	22.7	1.6	0.5	30.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	30.5	33.3	67.0	85.4	83.7	85.4	60.5	23.6	37.0	59.7	61.3	61.8	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2556.5	2557.8	2570.4	2575.0	2574.6	2575.0	2568.4	2552.8	2559.5	2568.1	2568.7	2568.8	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	22.6	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	111.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	15.0	19.2	7.1	17.9	5.0	2.4	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	78.8
Nelson Reservoir													
	Initial Content		55,274 acre-feet										
	Elevation		2215.57 feet										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	13.5	17.3	6.4	16.1	4.5	2.2	6.3	4.7	0.0	0.0	71.0
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.7	11.7	15.5	0.0	0.0	-9.2	-18.4	-1.1	2.9	-1.8	-1.8	-5.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	53.5	51.8	63.5	79.0	79.0	79.0	69.8	51.4	50.3	53.2	51.4	49.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.1	2214.6	2217.8	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.4	2214.5	2214.1	2215.0	2214.5	2213.9	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	14.3	11.9	18.8	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.2

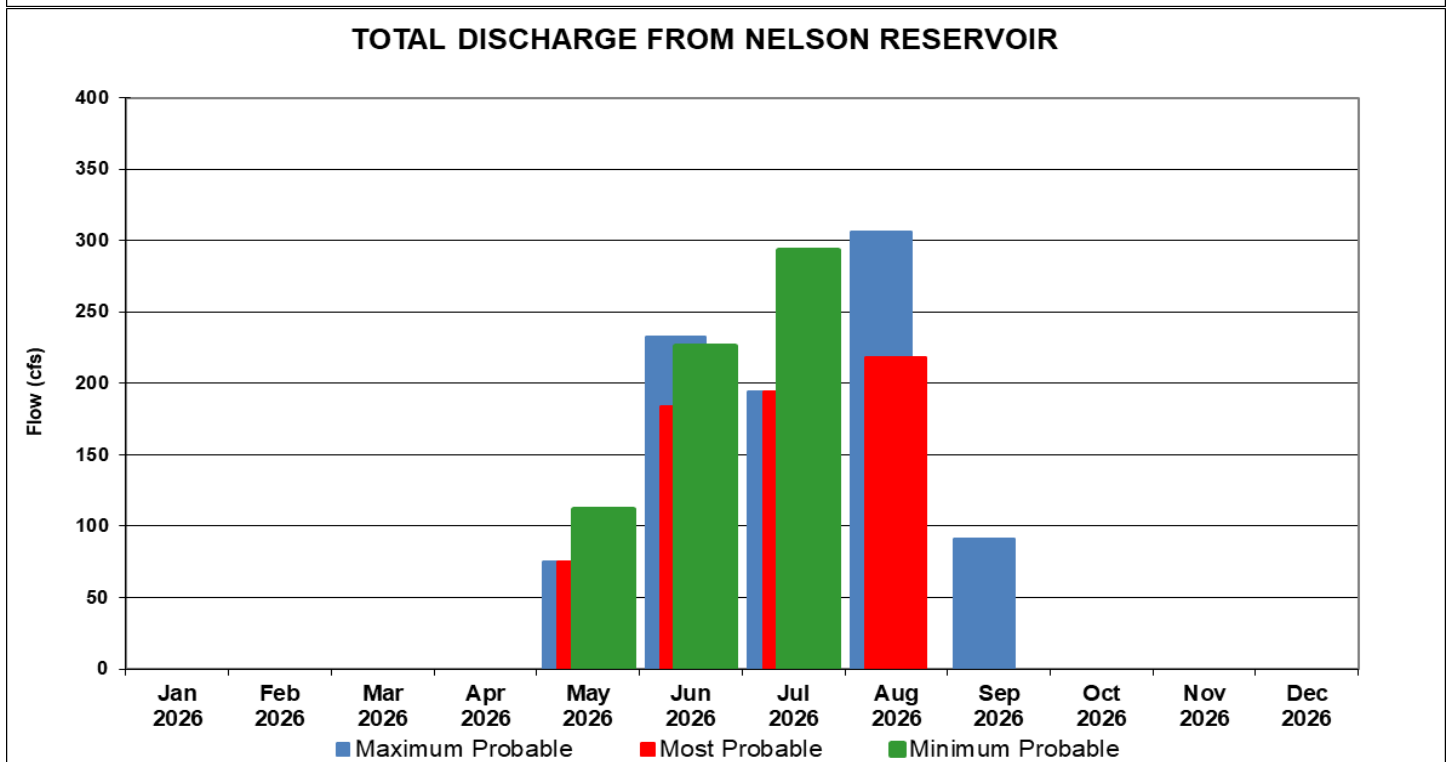
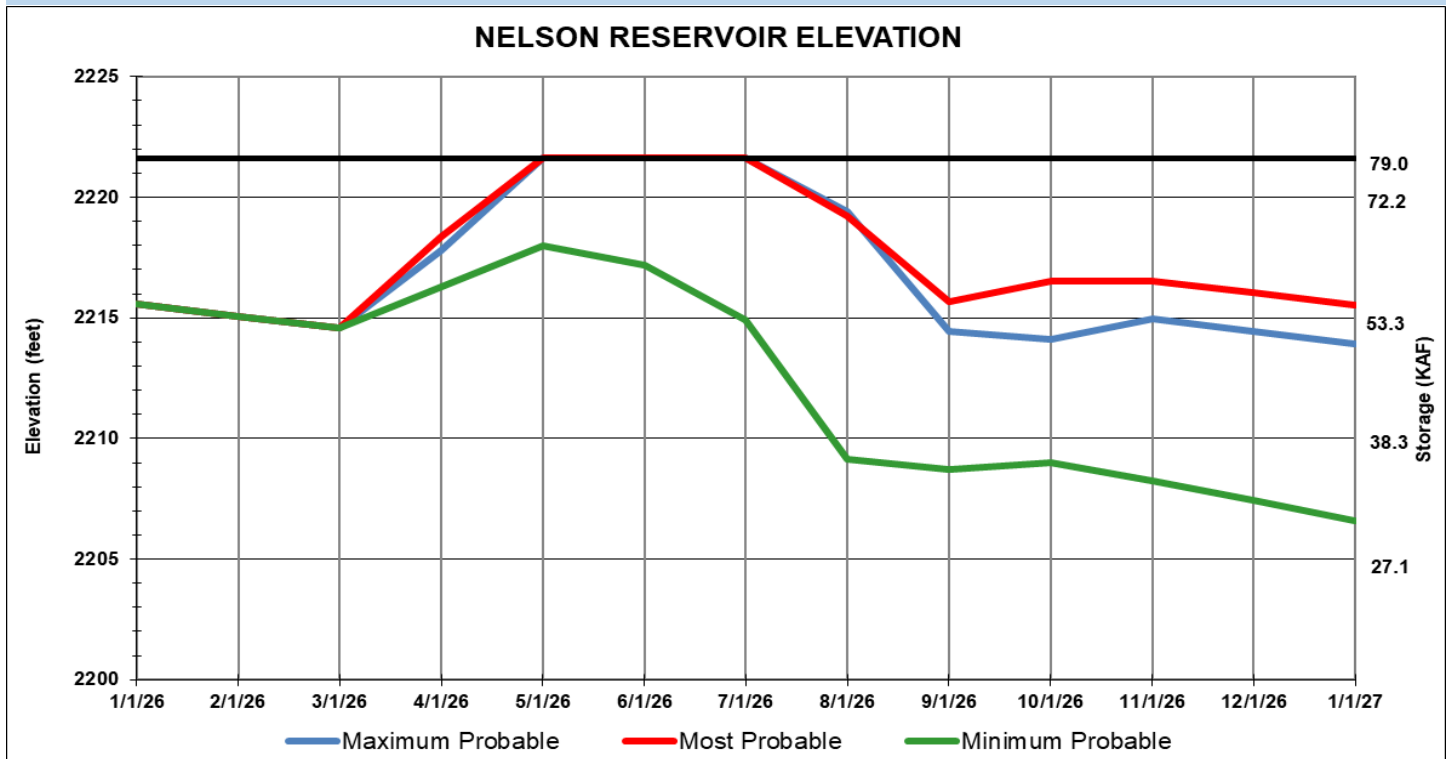
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



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

January 2026