

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

March 2026



Fresno Dam, March 2026

The March monthly operating plan covers actual operations from October 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026, and projected operations for March 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027. The projections are based on forecasted water supply and use.

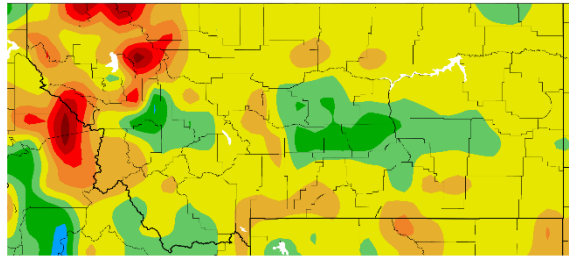
Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
March Inflow Forecast (kaf)	4	5	3
Percent of Average	119	22	71
March Release Forecast (cfs)	0	41	0
March 31 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4782.0	2556.5	2215.3

April-July Forecast	Sherburne
Inflow Forecast	70
Percent of Average	72

Climate Departure from Normal

February 1 through February 28

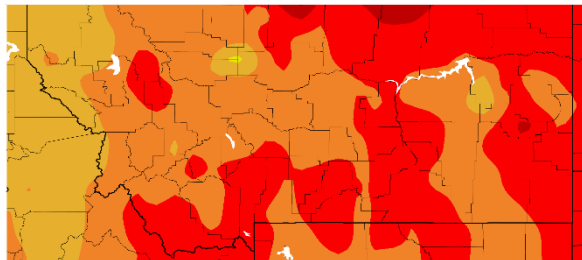
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

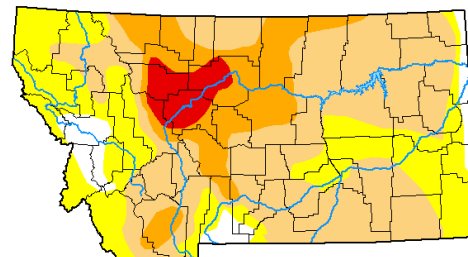
In February, precipitation in the St. Mary and Milk River basins was below average, while temperatures were above average.

In March, there is an equal chance that precipitation and temperatures will be 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 3, 2026

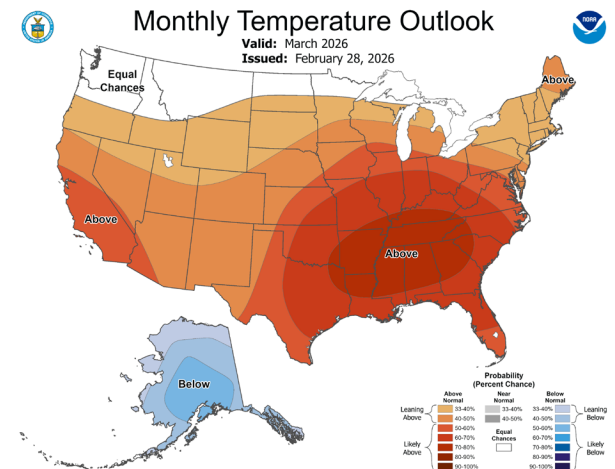
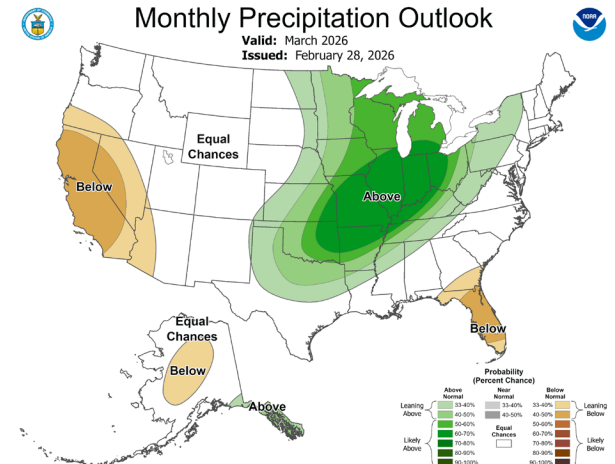


Intensity

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



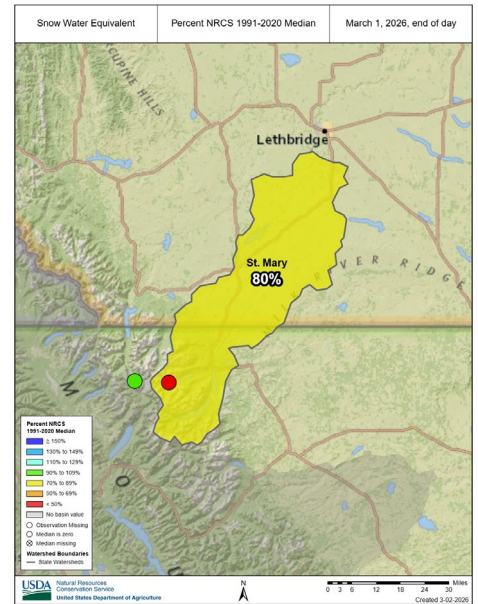
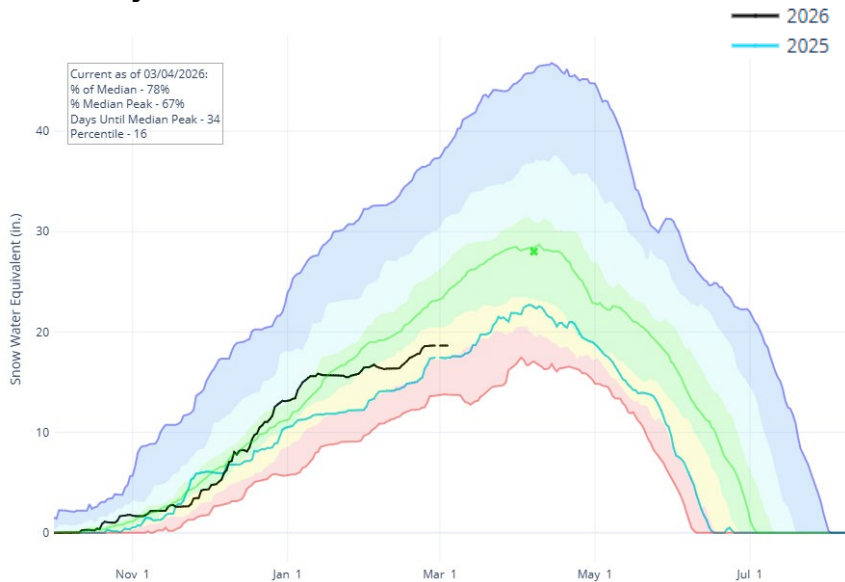
March Climate Outlook



SNOWPACK SUMMARY

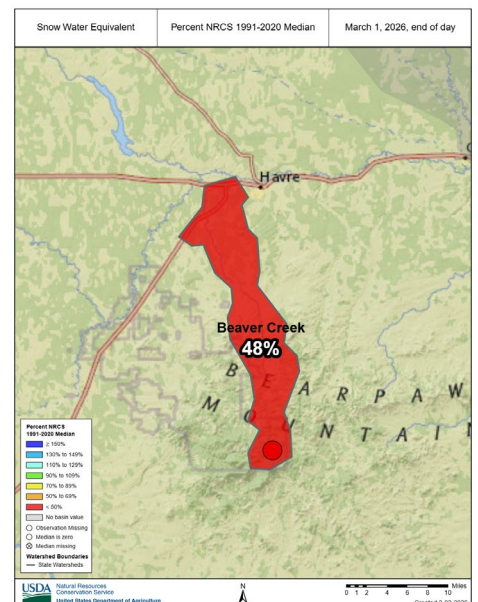
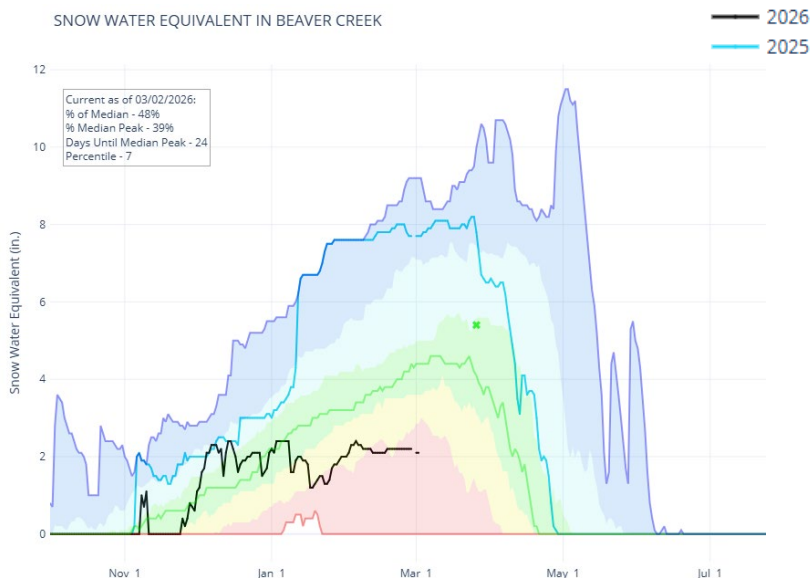
The snow water equivalent (SWE) graphs are a composite of SNOTEL sites within the St. Mary and Milk River Basins managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

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

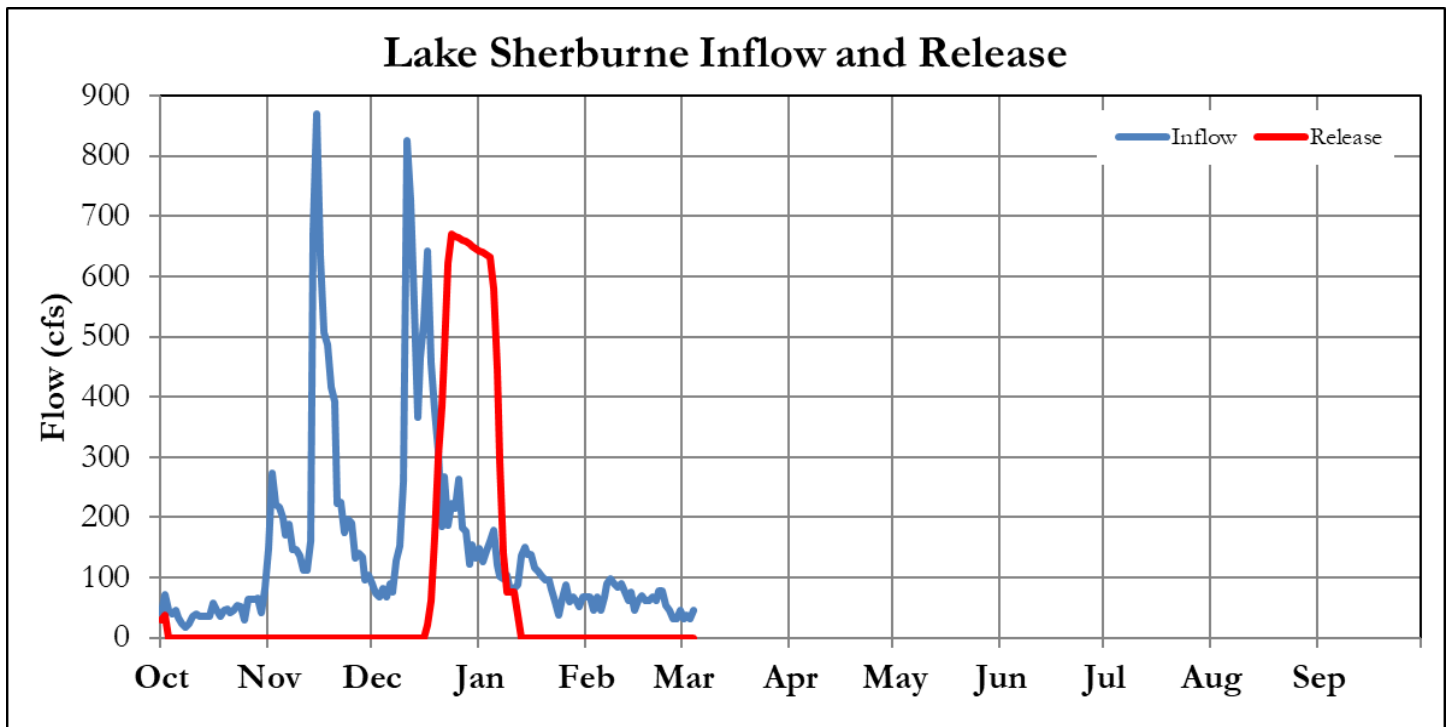
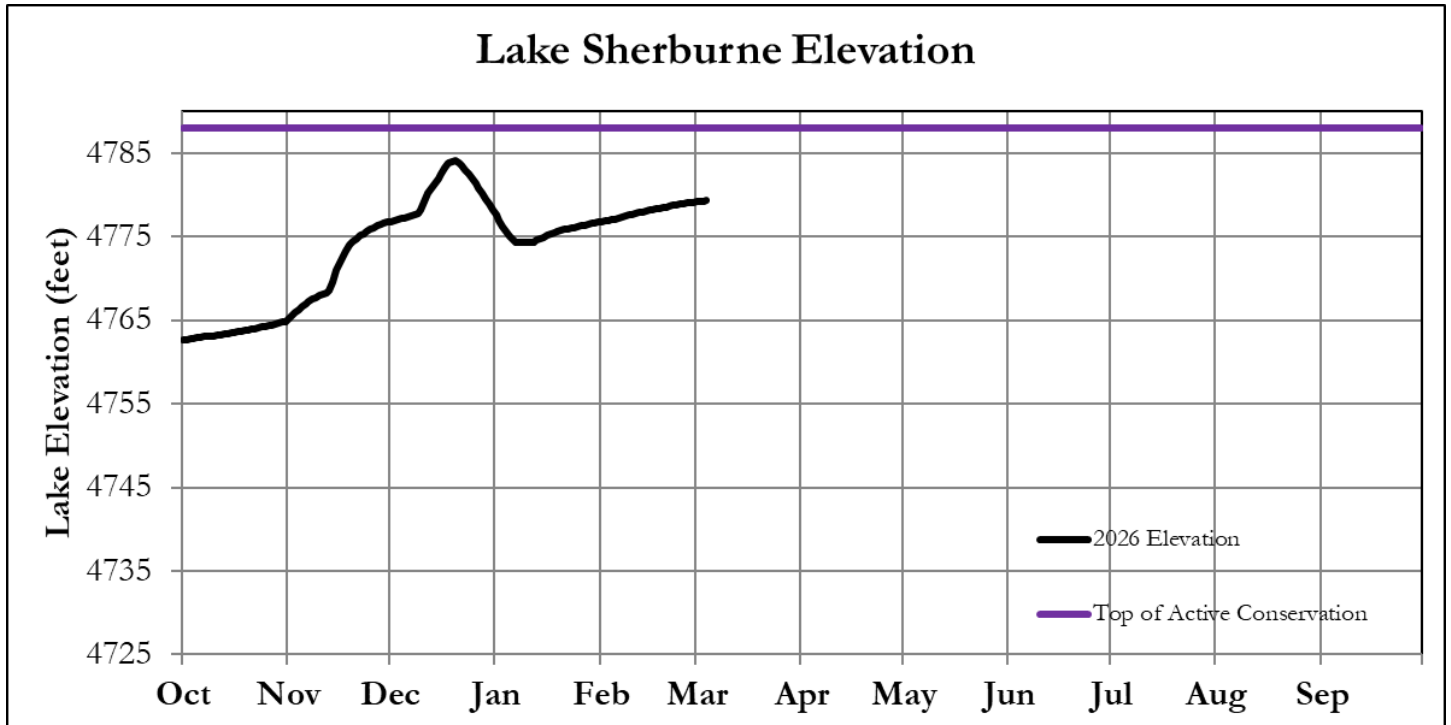
March 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4779.12	51,659	152	78
Fresno Reservoir	2555.45	28,512	73	31
Nelson Reservoir	2214.90	52,917	102	67

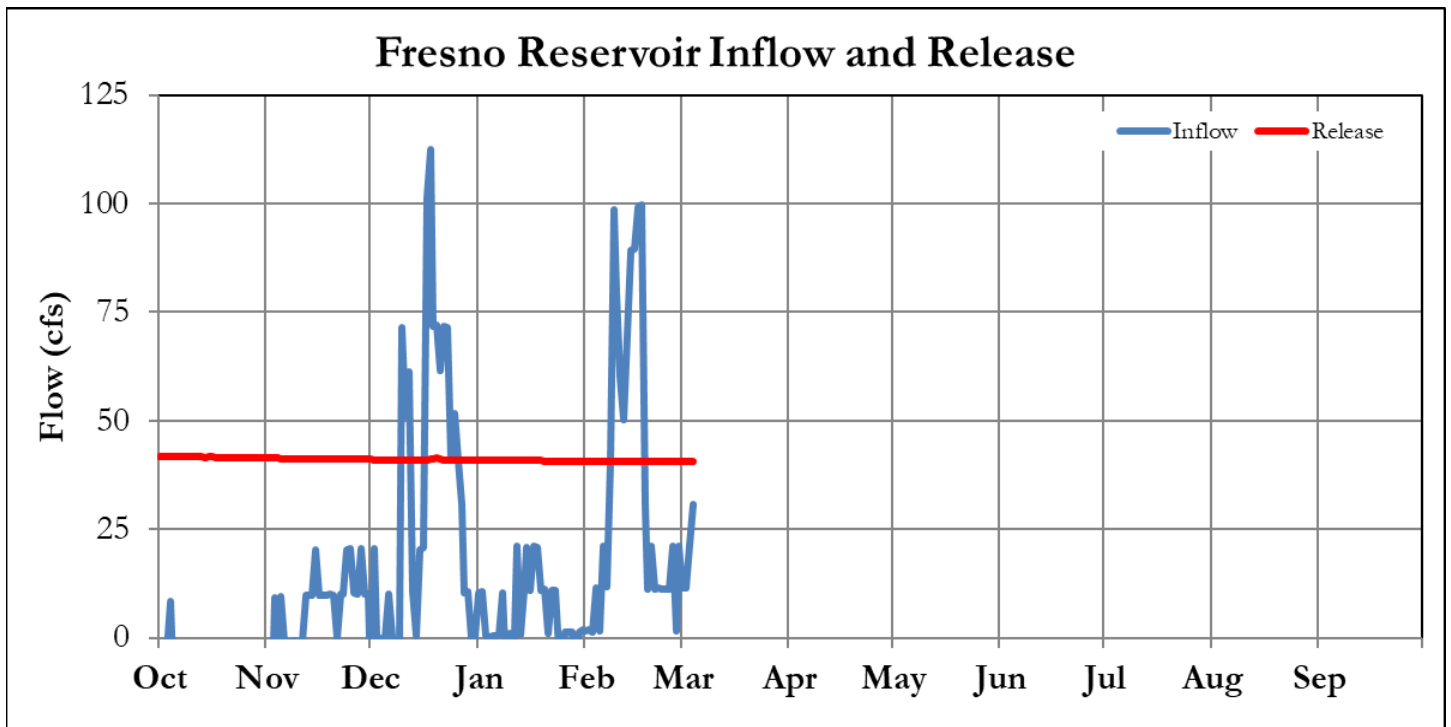
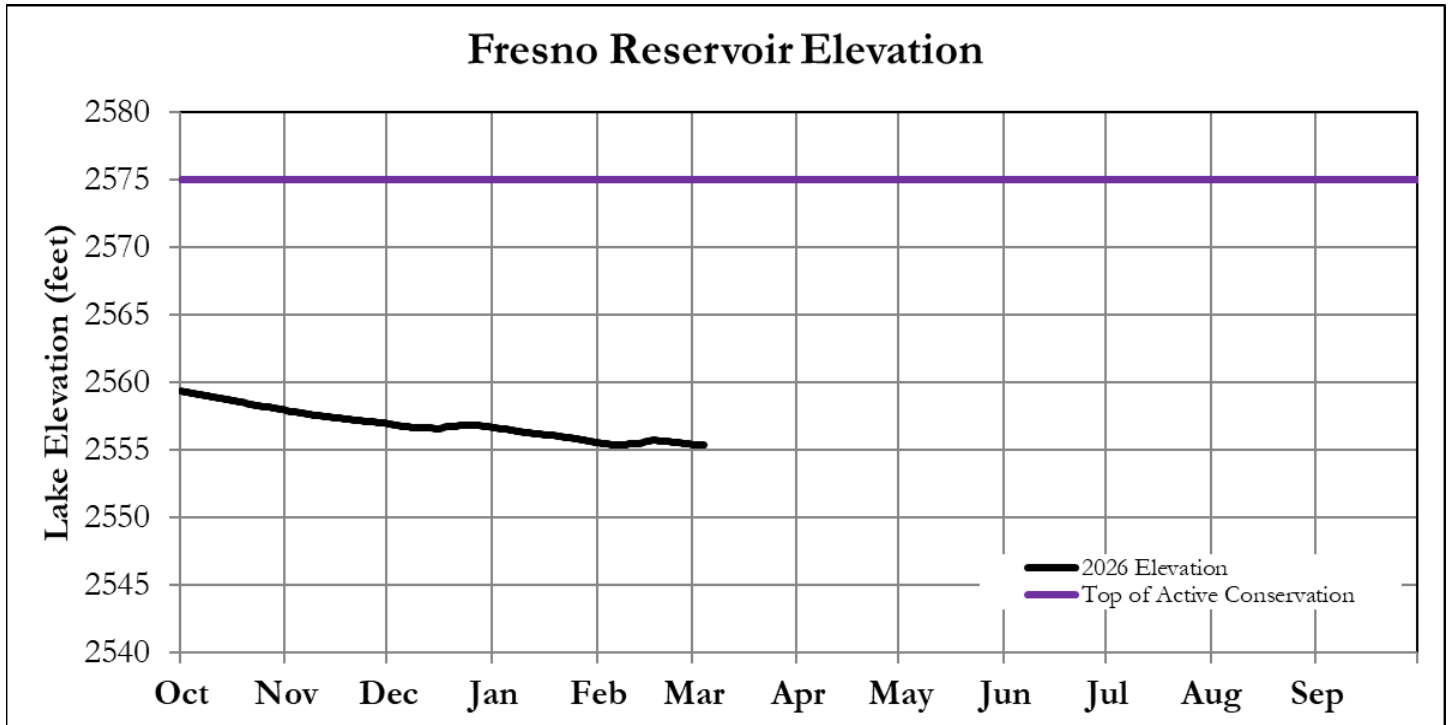
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

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
February	3.6	155	2.0	40
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

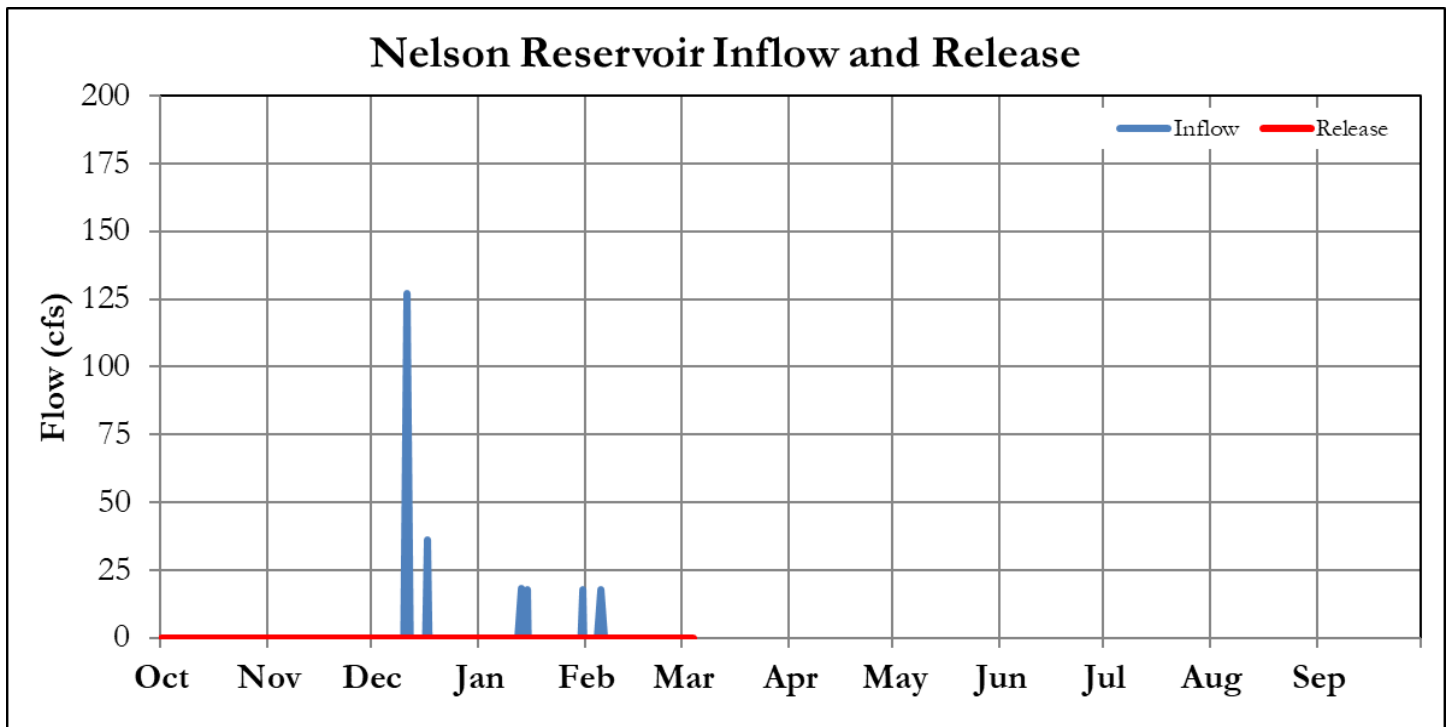
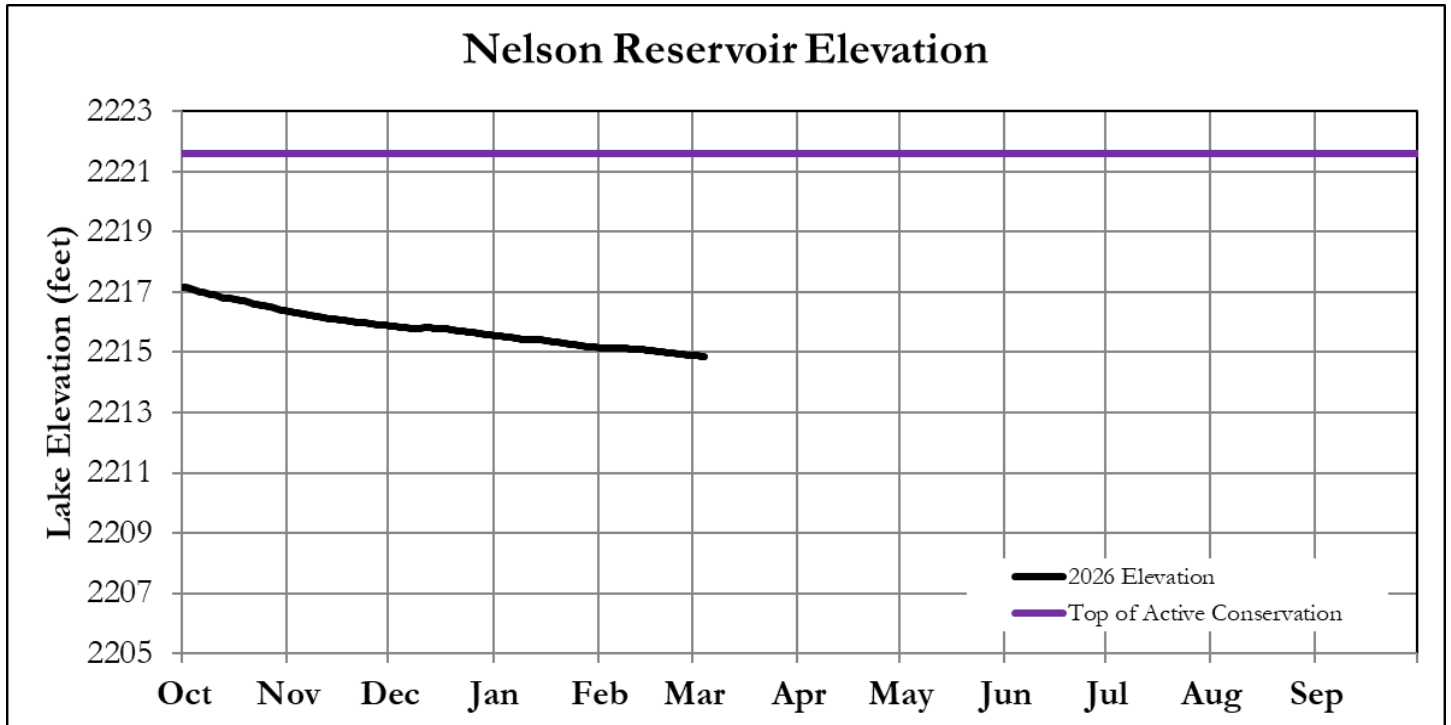
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	51,659	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4779.12	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	4.4	8.3	23.5	24.8	13.8	5.9	3.3	4.0	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.1	97.9
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	19.4	18.7	8.4	26.5	34.8	20.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	128.2
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	326	304	141	431	566	343	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	4.4	-11.1	4.8	16.4	-12.7	-28.9	-17.1	4.0	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.1	-30.3
End of Month Content (kaf)	56.1	45.0	49.8	66.2	53.5	24.6	7.5	11.5	15.1	18.3	20.3	21.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4782.0	4774.6	4777.9	4788.0	4780.3	4757.8	4738.6	4743.9	4748.1	4751.5	4753.6	4754.7	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	4.3	13.0	80.4	103.6	55.1	26.0	17.5	12.7	8.0	6.2	5.4	5.8	338.0
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	8.7	21.3	103.9	128.4	68.9	31.9	20.8	16.7	11.6	9.4	7.4	6.9	435.9
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	276	600	600	600	600	375	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	16.4	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	22.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	185.1
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	28,512	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2555.45	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	4.5	7.8	3.5	2.6	0.2	0.2	1.4	2.8	1.6	0.9	0.9	2.3	28.7
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	29.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	146.1
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	4.5	7.8	33.0	31.2	29.7	29.7	30.4	2.8	1.6	0.9	0.9	2.3	174.8
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	52.0	29.2	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	173.7
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	377	778	846	475	101	41	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.0	5.4	9.8	-15.1	-22.3	0.5	24.4	0.3	-0.8	-1.6	-1.6	0.1	1.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	30.5	35.9	45.7	30.6	8.3	8.8	33.2	33.5	32.7	31.1	29.5	29.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2556.5	2559.0	2563.2	2556.5	2542.0	2542.4	2557.8	2557.9	2557.5	2556.8	2556.0	2556.0	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.55	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.55
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	51.0	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	143.7
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	12.2	12.7	8.8	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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)	3.5	10.7	7.3	11.5	4.8	1.4	3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	52,917	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2214.90	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	3.2	9.6	6.6	10.4	4.3	1.3	3.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.1
Net Content Change (kaf)	1.4	7.8	0.2	-2.6	-9.8	-6.1	1.6	-0.5	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	-15.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	54.3	62.1	62.3	59.7	49.9	43.8	45.4	44.9	43.1	41.3	39.5	37.8	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.3	2217.4	2217.5	2216.8	2214.0	2212.1	2212.6	2212.4	2211.8	2211.2	2210.5	2209.8	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	4.6	11.2	12.3	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.7

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

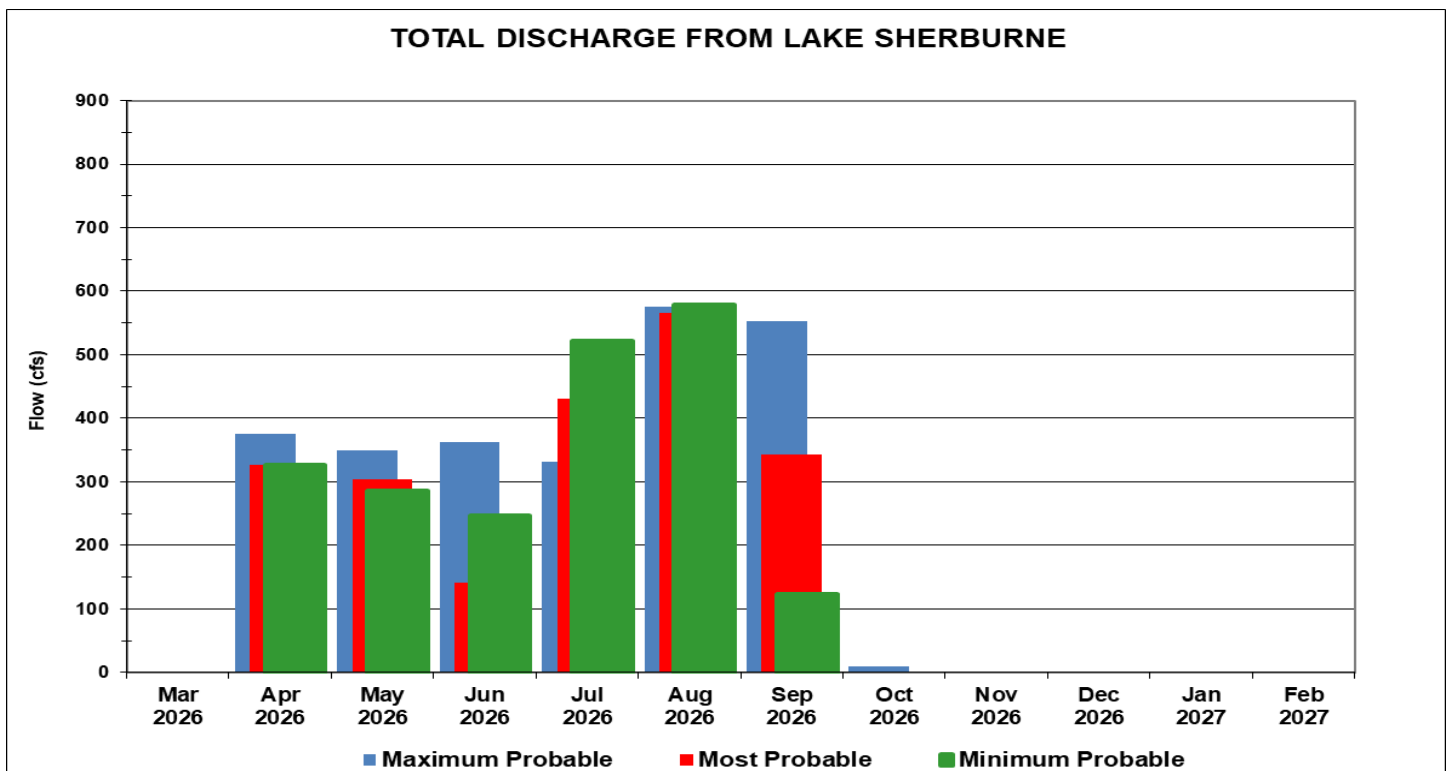
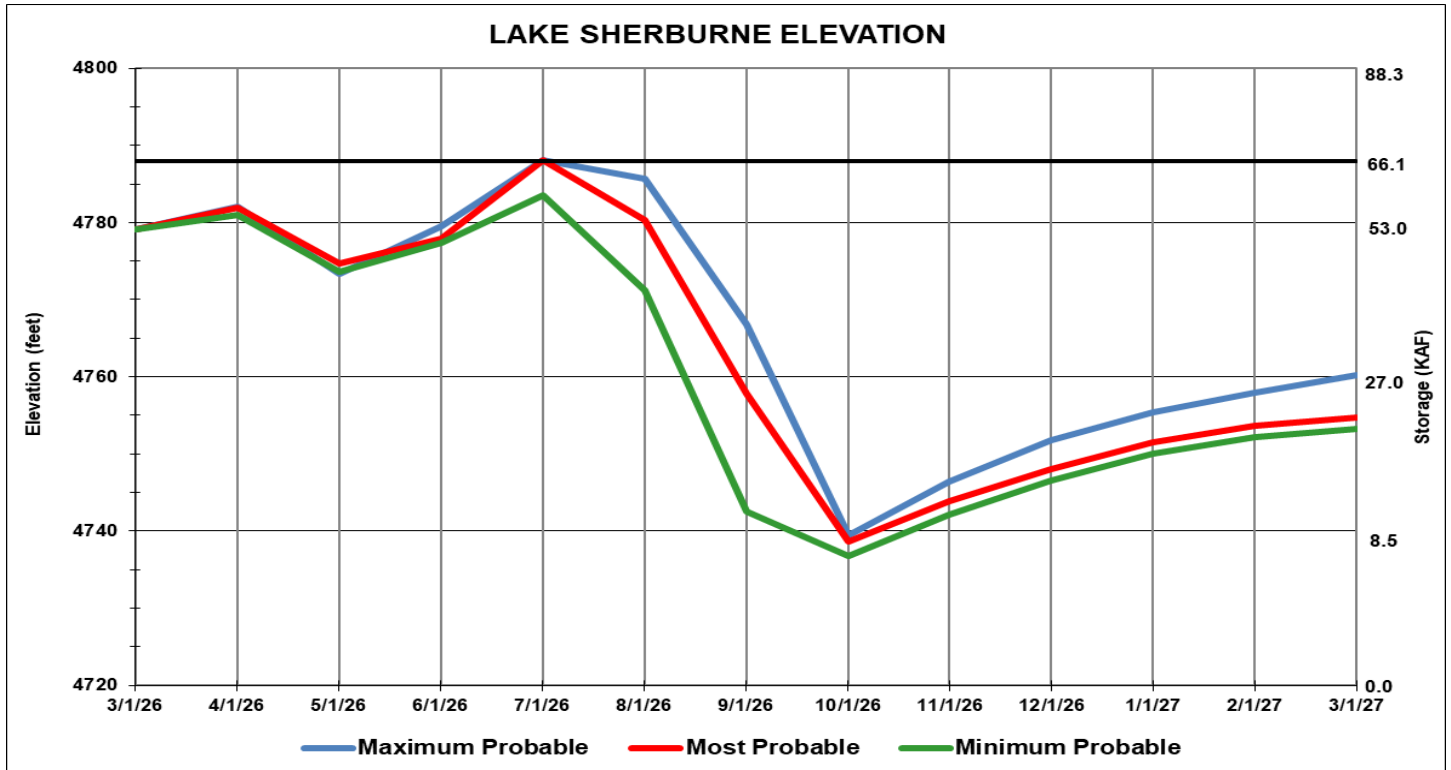
Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	51,659	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4779.12	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.9	8.3	23.2	24.2	13.7	5.8	3.1	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.0	94.9
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	19.4	17.6	14.7	32.1	35.6	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	126.7
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	326	286	247	522	579	123	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.9	-11.1	5.6	9.5	-18.4	-29.8	-4.2	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.0	1.0	-31.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	54.6	43.5	49.1	58.6	40.2	10.4	6.2	10.1	13.7	16.9	18.9	19.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4781.0	4773.6	4777.4	4783.5	4771.1	4742.5	4736.8	4742.1	4746.5	4750.1	4752.2	4753.2	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	4.2	8.0	71.0	86.1	43.8	22.6	15.5	9.3	5.3	5.0	4.3	5.1	280.2
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	7.1	16.3	94.2	110.3	57.5	28.4	18.6	13.2	8.9	8.2	6.3	6.1	375.1
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	276	600	600	600	600	150	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	16.4	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	171.7
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	28,512	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2555.45	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	1.7	4.4	1.7	1.5	0.0	0.1	0.8	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.0	14.7
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	27.7	26.8	27.7	27.7	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	125.9
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	1.7	4.4	29.4	28.3	27.7	27.8	16.8	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.0	140.6
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	4.7	17.7	11.2	12.0	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	129.6
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	377	778	76	288	188	195	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.8	2.0	6.2	-18.0	23.0	10.1	5.6	-9.9	-1.7	-2.2	-2.1	-1.2	11.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	27.7	29.7	35.9	17.9	40.9	51.0	56.6	46.7	45.0	42.8	40.7	39.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2555.0	2556.1	2559.0	2549.3	2561.2	2565.2	2567.1	2563.6	2562.9	2562.0	2561.1	2560.6	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.75
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	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	0.0	1.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.0	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)	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.3	1.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.0
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	52,917	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2214.90	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	2.2	2.3	1.6	2.1	0.9	10.8	10.8	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.5
Net Content Change (kaf)	0.4	0.5	-7.1	-13.6	-0.9	9.0	9.0	9.0	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	-0.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	53.3	53.8	46.7	33.1	32.2	41.2	50.2	59.2	57.4	55.6	53.8	52.1	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2215.0	2215.2	2213.0	2207.8	2207.4	2211.1	2214.1	2216.7	2216.2	2215.7	2215.2	2214.7	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	6.9	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027)

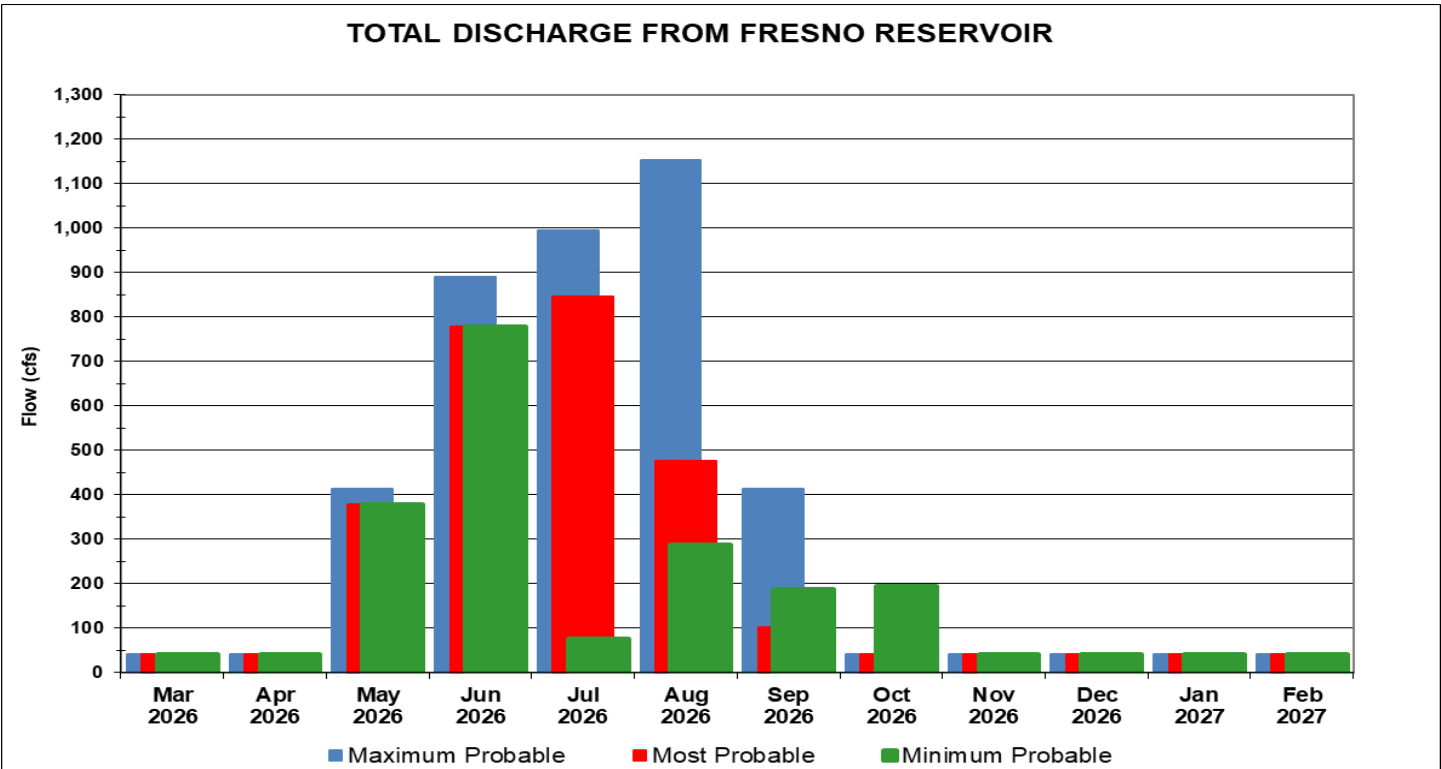
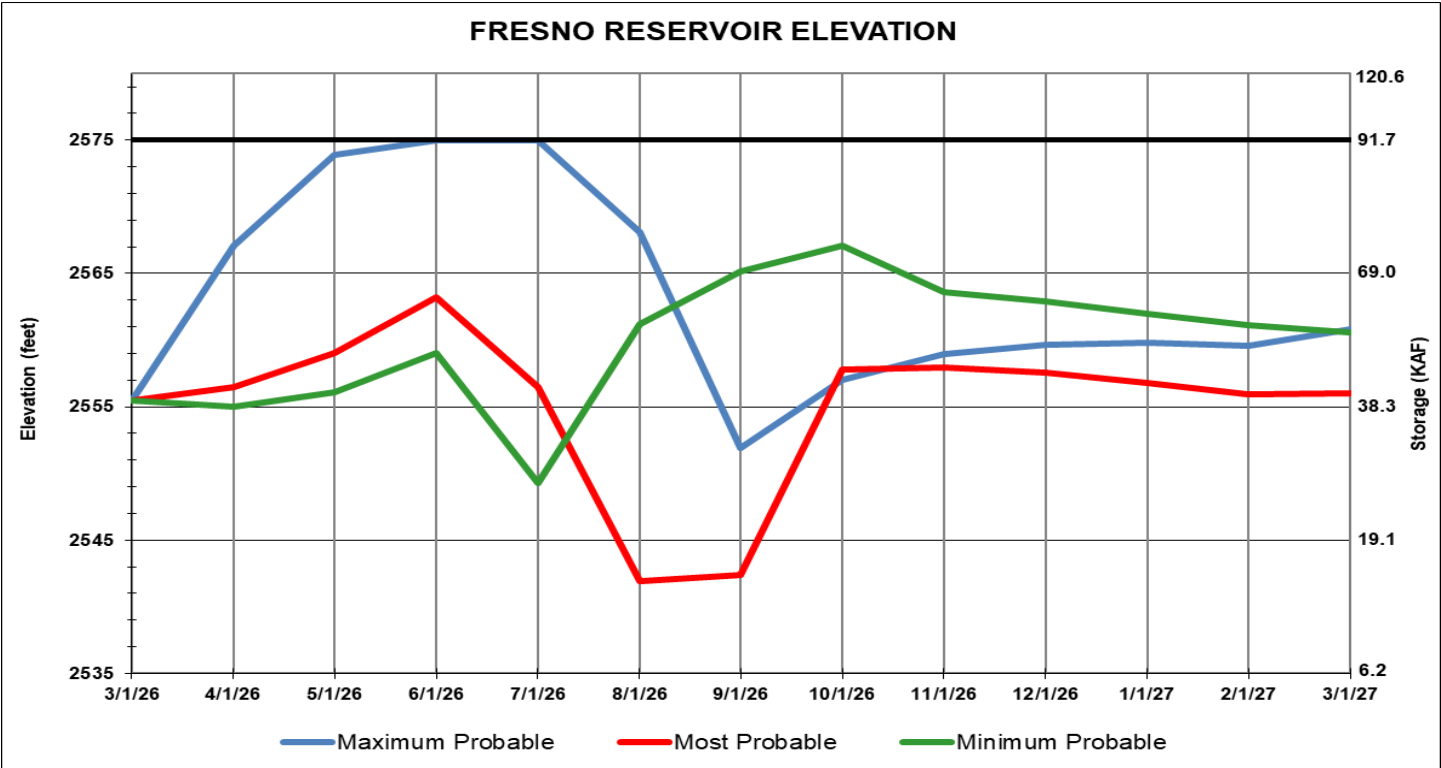
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	51,659	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4779.12	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	4.6	9.2	30.5	35.6	16.5	7.9	6.2	6.1	4.9	3.6	2.7	2.4	130.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	22.3	21.5	21.6	20.4	35.4	32.9	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	154.7
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	375	350	363	332	576	553	10	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	4.6	-13.1	9.0	14.0	-3.9	-27.5	-26.7	5.5	4.9	3.6	2.7	2.4	-24.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	56.3	43.2	52.2	66.2	62.3	34.8	8.1	13.6	18.5	22.1	24.8	27.2	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4782.1	4773.4	4779.5	4788.0	4785.7	4766.8	4739.5	4746.4	4751.8	4755.4	4758.0	4760.2	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	5.9	19.8	88.3	120.7	70.1	29.5	17.9	15.9	10.7	7.7	6.3	5.7	398.5
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	10.5	29.0	118.8	156.3	86.6	37.4	24.1	22.0	15.6	11.3	9.0	8.1	528.7
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	475	600	600	600	550	0	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	29.2	35.7	36.9	36.9	32.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	171.4
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	28,512	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2555.45	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	30.6	26.2	18.7	22.6	3.9	2.1	6.3	6.6	3.9	2.8	2.0	5.0	130.7
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	11.7	30.3	31.4	31.4	27.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	132.6
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	30.6	26.2	30.4	52.9	35.3	33.5	34.1	6.6	3.9	2.8	2.0	5.0	263.3
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	25.4	52.9	61.2	70.9	24.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	251.9
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	413	889	995	1153	412	41	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	28.1	23.8	5.0	0.0	-25.9	-37.4	9.6	4.1	1.5	0.3	-0.5	2.8	11.4
End of Month Content (kaf)	56.6	80.4	85.4	85.4	59.5	22.1	31.7	35.8	37.3	37.6	37.1	39.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2567.1	2573.9	2575.0	2575.0	2568.1	2551.9	2557.1	2559.0	2559.7	2559.8	2559.6	2560.8	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	22.6	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	111.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	8.0	21.7	10.4	17.9	5.9	3.0	5.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.1
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	52,917	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2214.90	feet									
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	7.2	19.5	9.4	16.1	5.3	2.7	4.5	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	69.4
Net Content Change (kaf)	5.4	17.7	3.0	0.0	-8.4	-18.5	-1.0	2.9	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	-6.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	58.3	76.0	79.0	79.0	70.6	52.1	51.1	54.0	52.2	50.4	48.6	46.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.4	2220.9	2221.6	2221.6	2219.6	2214.7	2214.4	2215.2	2214.7	2214.2	2213.6	2213.1	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	4.6	14.3	11.9	19.4	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.9

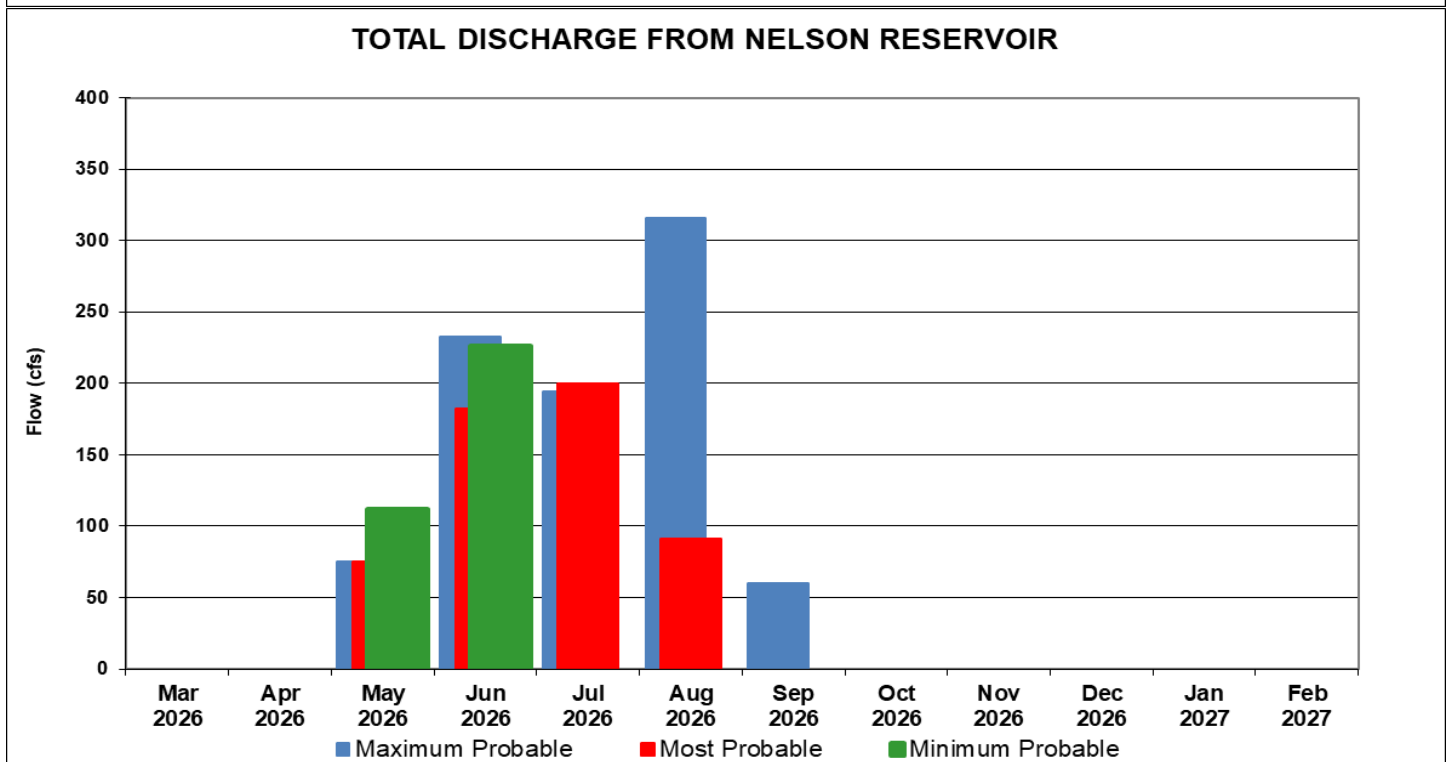
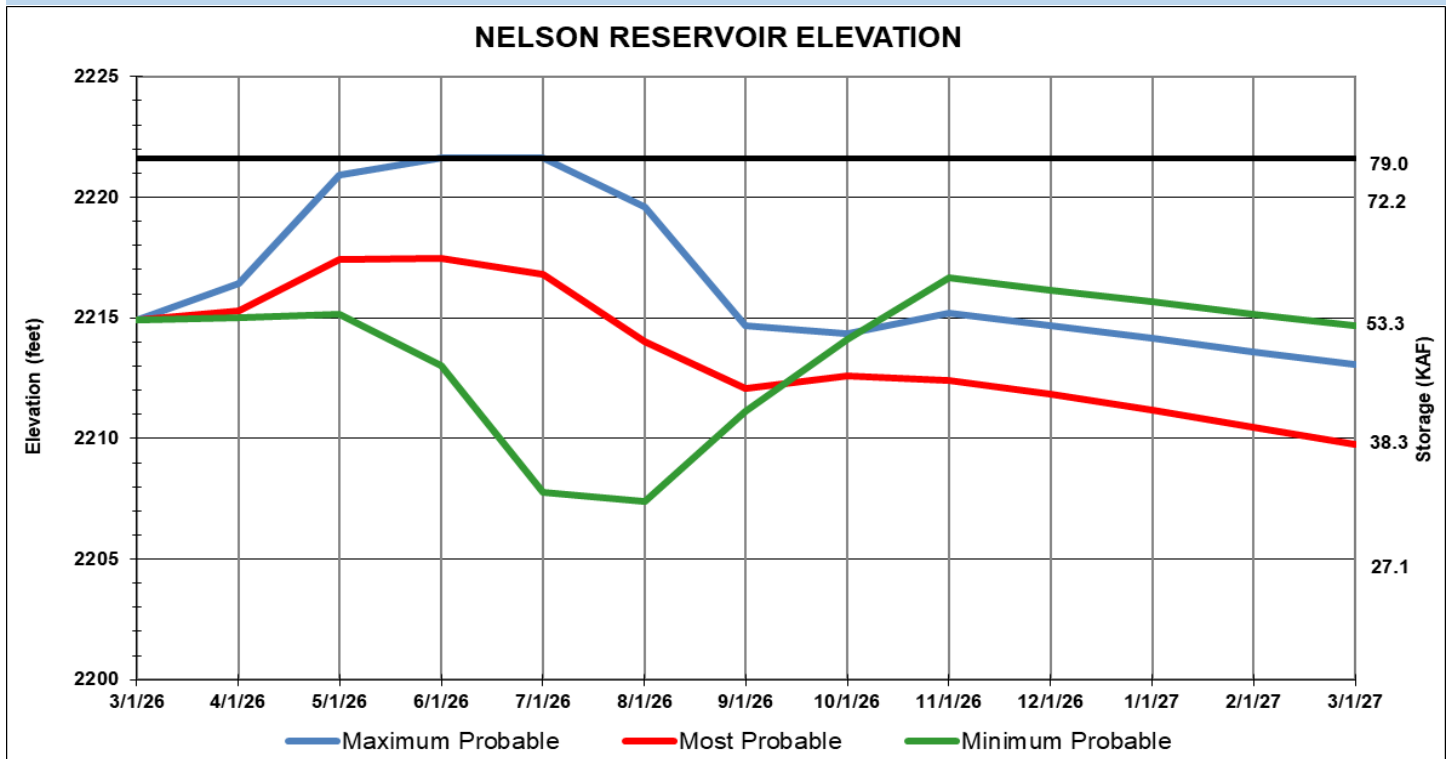
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



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

March 2026