

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



October 2025



Fresno Reservoir, October 2025

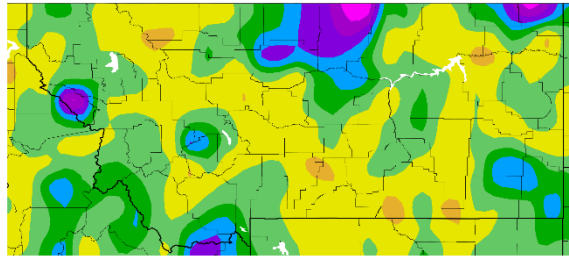
The October monthly operating plan covers actual operations from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, and projected operations for October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. The projections are based on forecasted water supply and use.

Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
October Inflow Forecast (kaf)	5	2	0
Percent of Average	67	35	-
October Release Forecast (cfs)	2	41	0
October 31 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4766.4	2559.3	2216.8

Climate Departure from Normal

September 1 through September 30

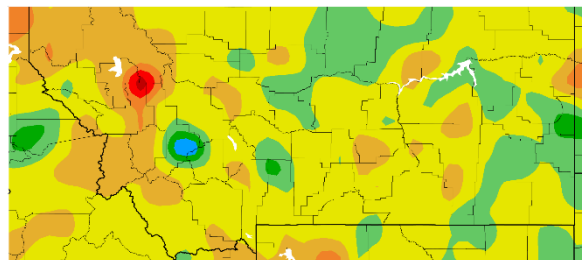
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

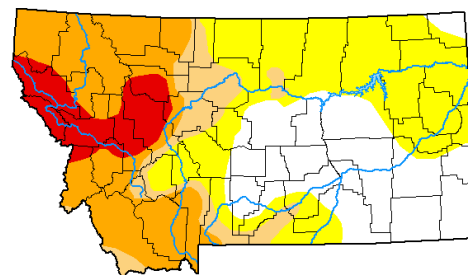
Precipitation was below average in the St. Mary basin and above average in the Milk River basin during September. Temperature was near average during September in both basins.

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

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

Montana Drought Monitor Map

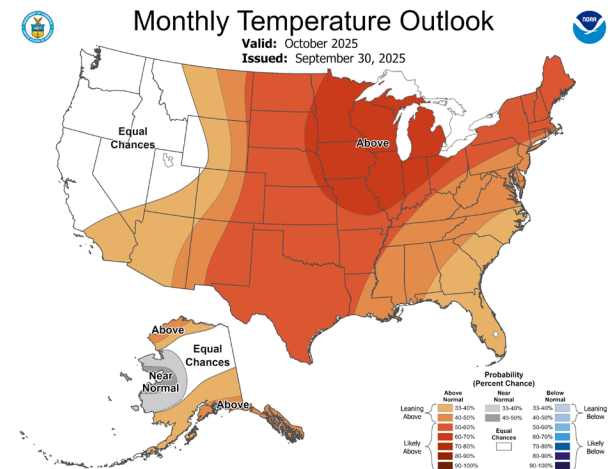
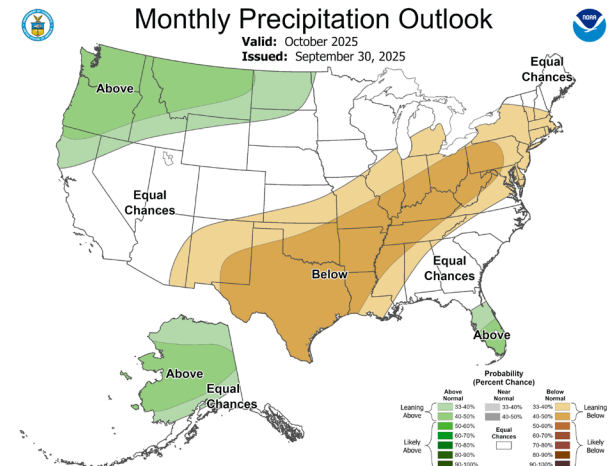
September 30, 2025



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

USDA
 NDMC
 droughtmonitor.unl.edu

October Climate Outlook



OPERATIONS REVIEW

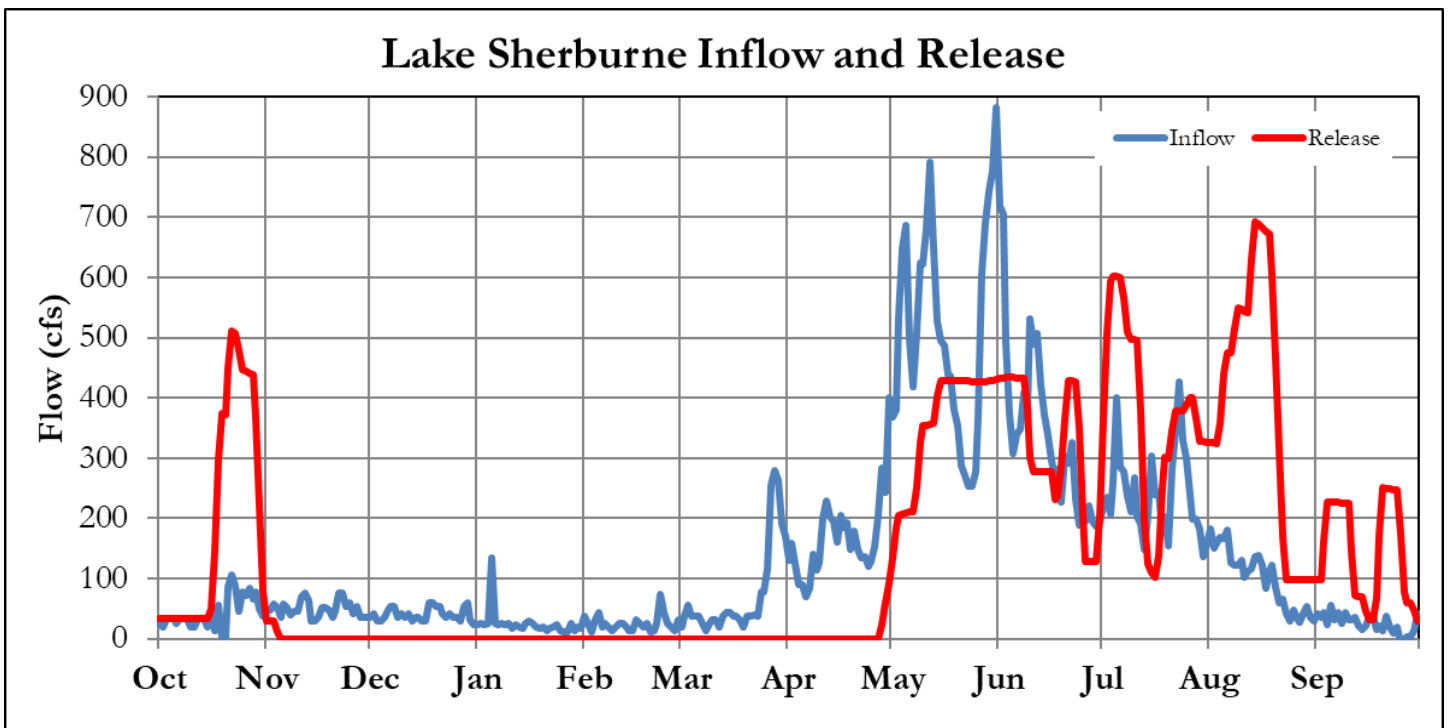
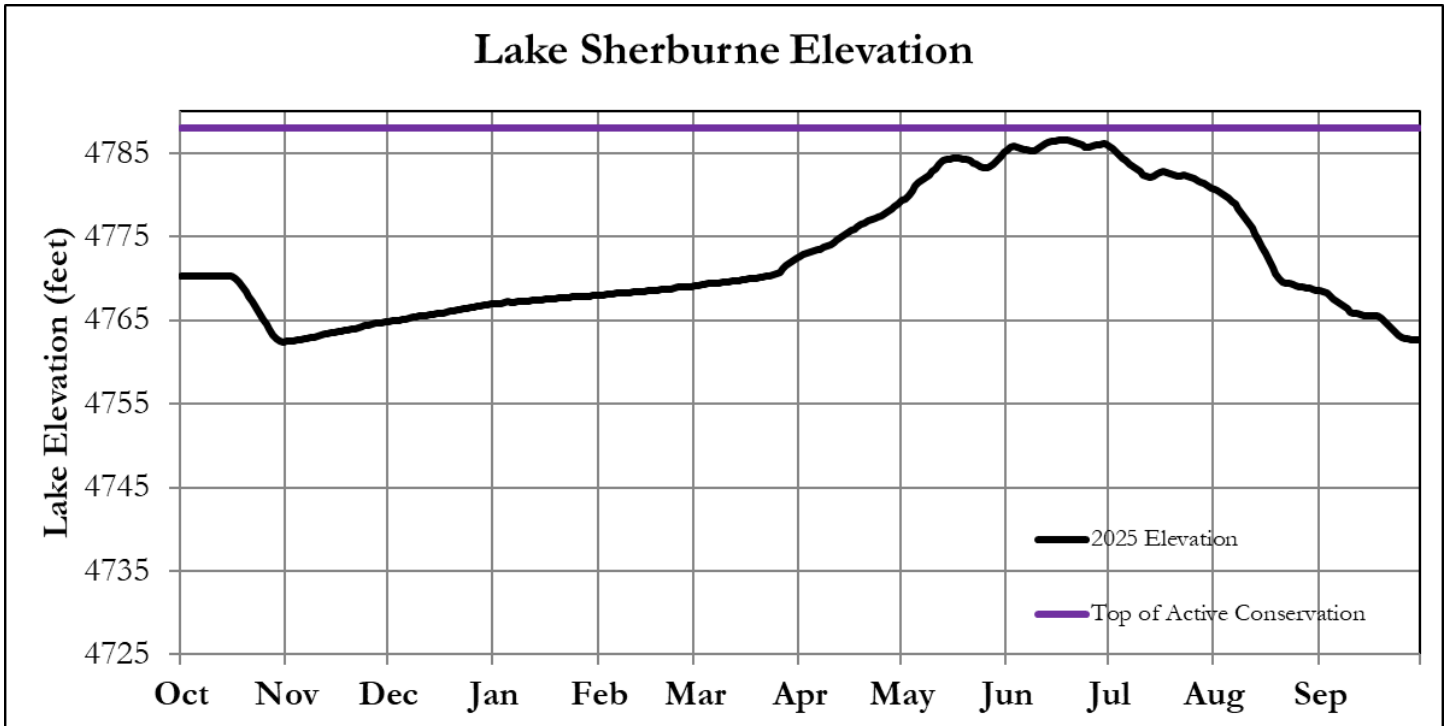
October 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4762.61	29,886	183	45
Fresno Reservoir	2559.40	36,708	90	40
Nelson Reservoir	2217.23	61,356	108	78

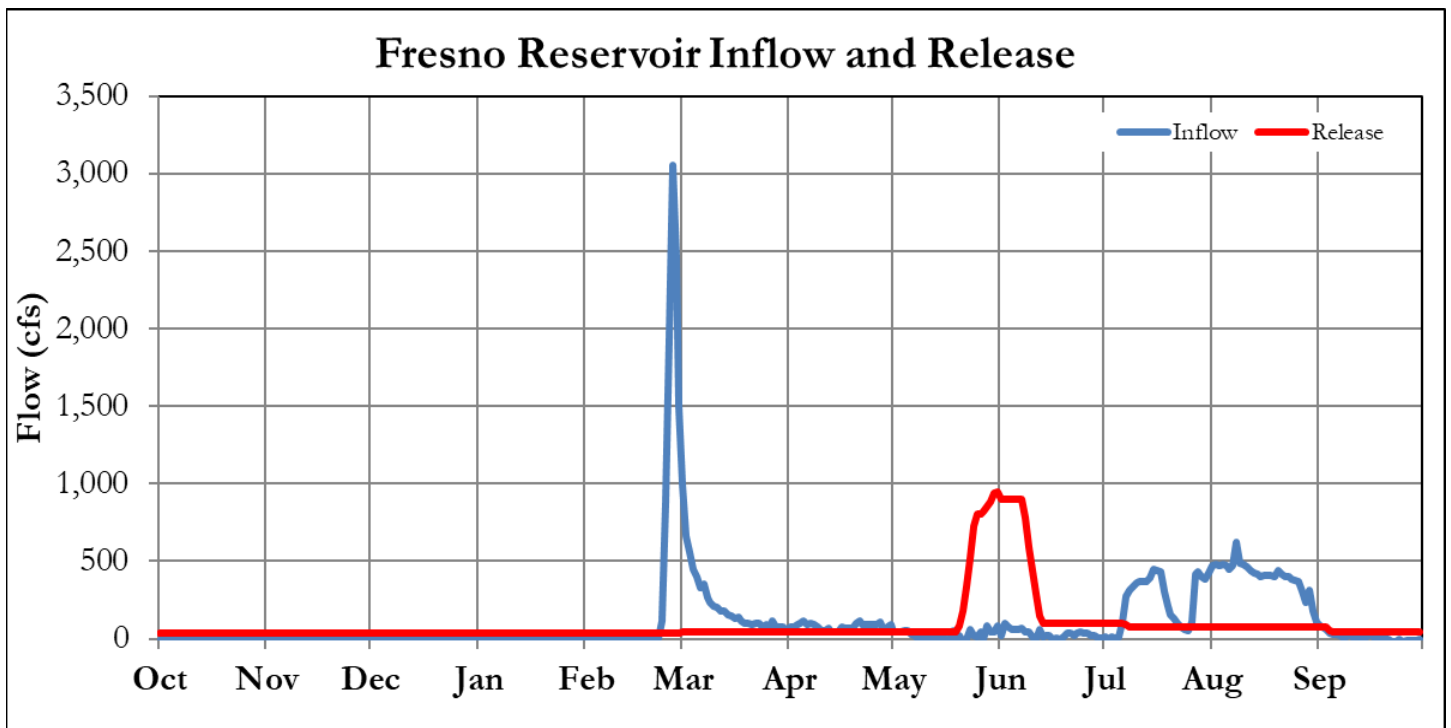
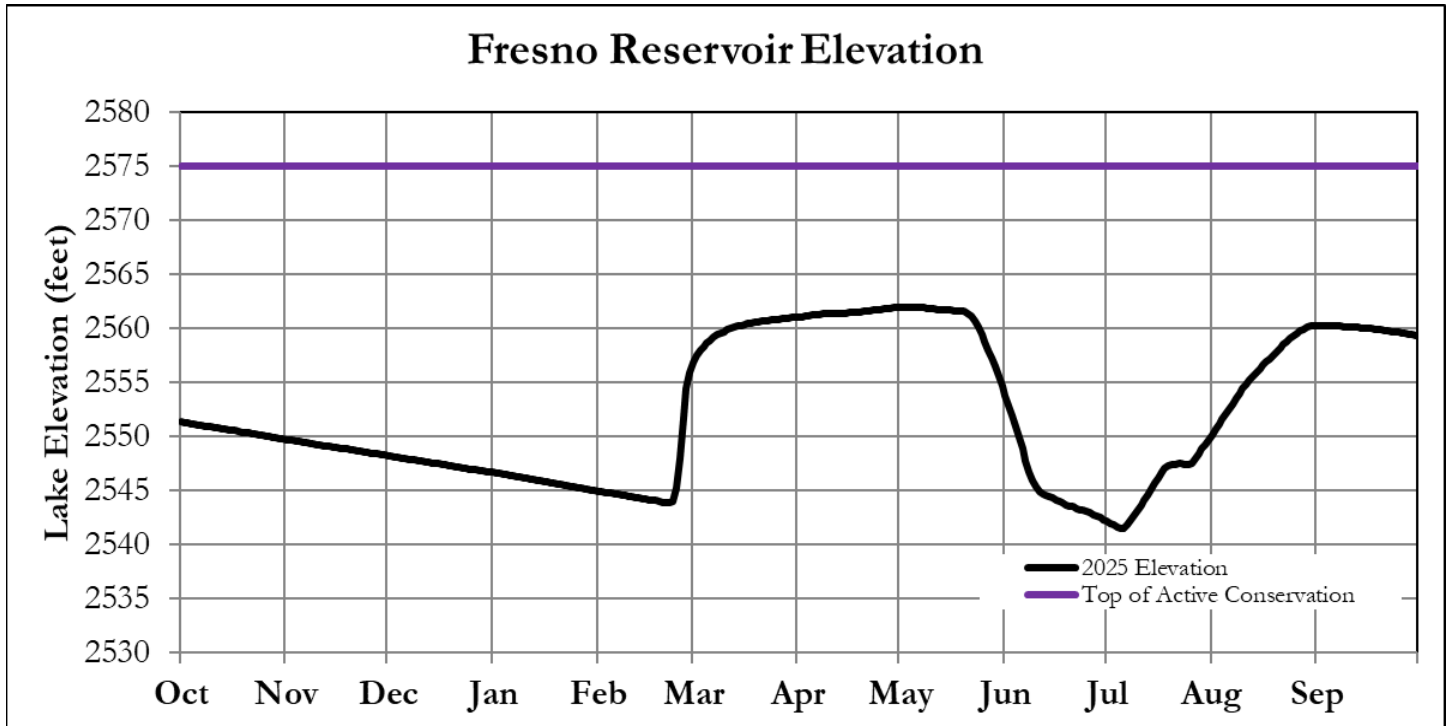
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

Month	Sherburne Reservoir		Fresno Reservoir	
	Inflow	% of Average	Inflow	% of Average
Water Year 2025				
October	2.6	40	-0.3	-
November	2.9	37	0.0	-
December	2.5	62	0.1	6
January	1.5	53	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
Water Year 2024				
October	5.2	78	1.9	29
November	6.5	84	2.0	68
December	8.4	216	1.3	75
January	3.4	124	0.3	23
February	4.9	205	3.7	86
March	3.7	97	10.6	47
April	10.5	107	17.2	51
May	26.6	85	60.1	144
June	29.3	74	20.6	42
July	16.2	89	-5.9	-
August	7.8	94	-0.1	-
September	3.7	69	1.0	5

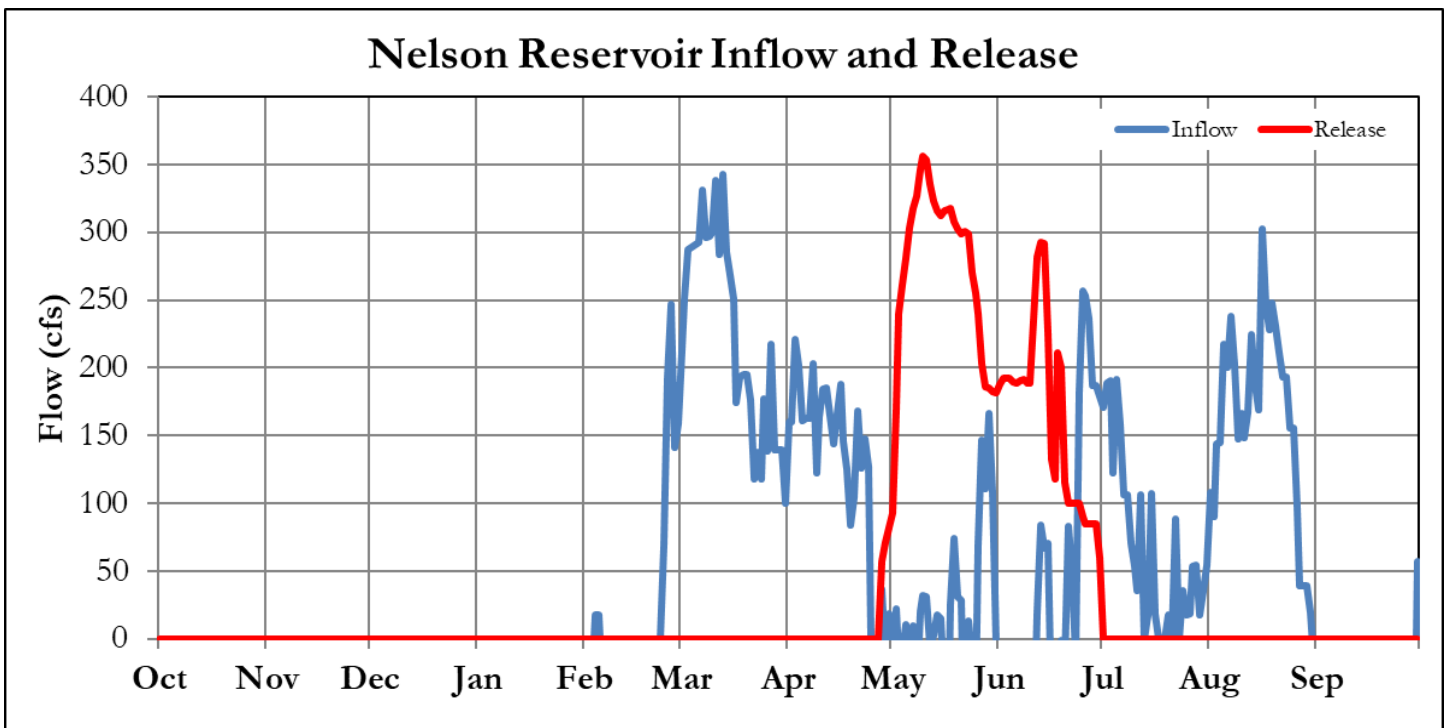
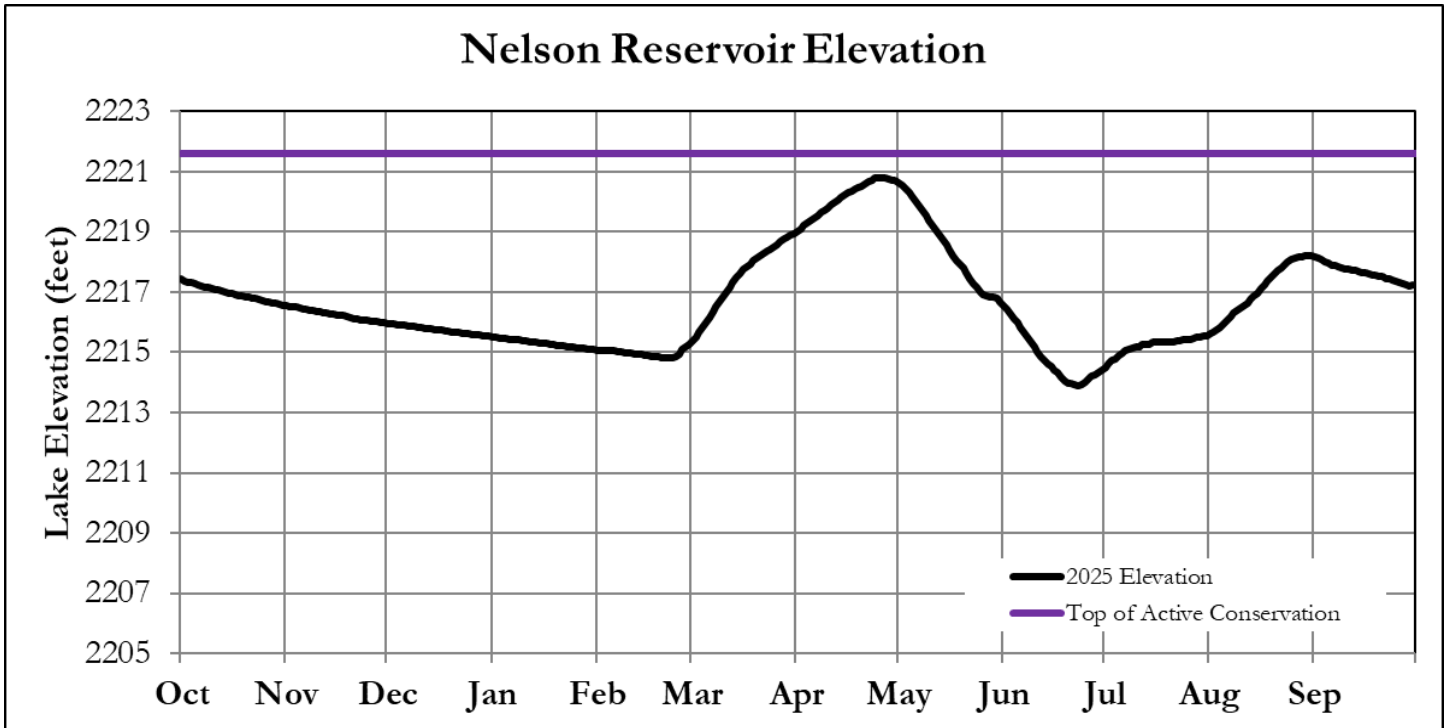
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026)

Median Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	29,886	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4762.61	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	4.5	3.9	3.3	2.3	2.1	3.1	9.5	32.9	39.3	17.5	8.6	7.2	134.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	36.7	15.9	8.2	17.5	35.3	36.3	153.7
Sherburne Release (cfs)	2	0	0	0	0	60	617	259	138	285	574	610	
Net Content Change (kaf)	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.3	2.1	-0.6	-27.2	17.0	31.1	0.0	-26.7	-29.1	-19.5
End of Month Content (kaf)	34.3	38.2	41.5	43.8	45.9	45.3	18.1	35.1	66.2	66.2	39.5	10.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4766.4	4769.6	4772.1	4773.8	4775.3	4774.8	4751.3	4767.1	4788.0	4788.0	4770.6	4742.5	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	11.9	7.4	6.0	5.7	5.7	7.9	24.5	95.5	135.0	80.6	32.3	19.0	431.5
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	16.4	11.3	9.3	8.0	7.8	11.0	34.0	128.4	174.3	98.1	40.9	26.2	565.7
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	600	600	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	223.9
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	36,708	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2559.40	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	2.0	0.5	0.2	0.7	2.8	12.0	15.1	7.3	5.0	0.4	0.6	2.8	49.4
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	29.5	28.6	29.5	29.5	28.6	172.5
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	2.0	0.5	0.2	0.7	2.8	12.0	41.9	36.8	33.6	29.9	30.1	31.4	221.9
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	31.5	46.3	61.2	61.6	6.0	223.6
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	41	41	40	41	40	512	778	995	1002	101	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.5	-1.9	-2.3	-1.8	0.6	9.5	39.5	5.3	-12.7	-31.3	-31.5	25.4	-1.7
End of Month Content (kaf)	36.5	34.6	32.3	30.5	31.1	40.6	80.1	85.4	72.7	41.4	9.9	35.3	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2559.3	2558.4	2557.3	2556.5	2556.8	2561.1	2573.8	2575.0	2572.0	2561.4	2543.3	2558.8	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.60	0.00	2.00
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	55.6	0.0	185.3
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	18.2	12.6	16.4	6.8	2.0	5.4	78.8
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.0	18.0	10.0	16.4	6.8	2.0	5.4	75.6
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	61,356	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2217.23	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.3	16.2	9.0	14.8	6.1	1.8	4.9	68.1
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	13.5	13.0	0.0	0.0	-10.2	-13.4	3.1	-2.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	59.6	57.8	56.0	54.2	52.5	66.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	68.8	55.4	58.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.8	2216.3	2215.8	2215.3	2214.8	2218.4	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.2	2215.6	2216.5	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	7.2	13.0	14.5	13.4	0.0	49.5

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

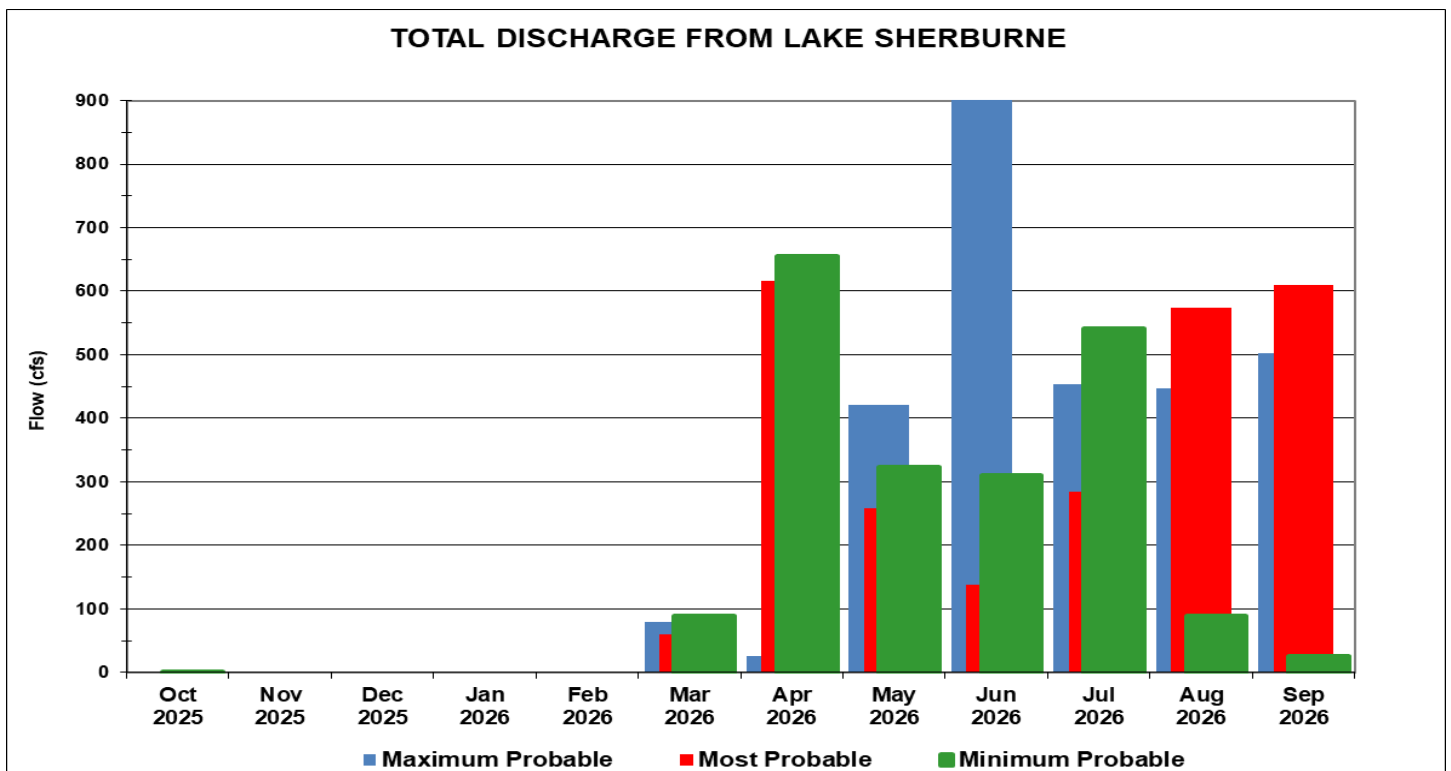
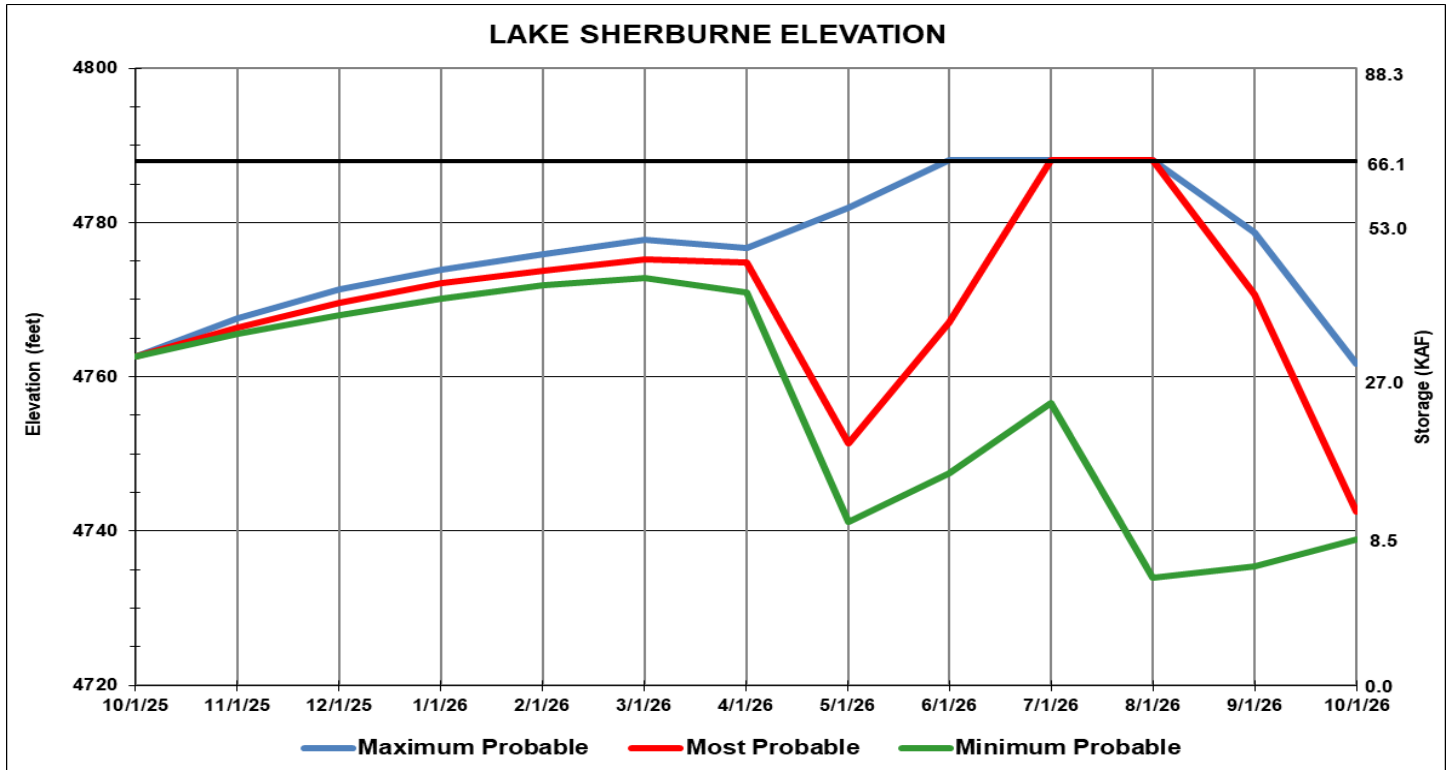
Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	29,886	acre-feet										
	Oct	Nov	Elevation	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.5	3.0		2.6	2.2	1.4	2.9	8.5	25.1	27.2	14.4	6.4	3.9	101.1
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.1	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	39.0	19.9	18.5	33.3	5.5	1.5	123.3
Sherburne Release (cfs)	2	0		0	0	0	89	655	324	311	542	89	25	
Net Content Change (kaf)	3.4	3.0		2.6	2.2	1.4	-2.6	-30.5	5.2	8.7	-18.9	0.9	2.4	-22.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	33.3	36.3		38.9	41.1	42.5	39.9	9.4	14.6	23.3	4.4	5.3	7.7	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4765.6	4768.0		4770.1	4771.8	4772.9	4770.9	4741.2	4747.5	4756.6	4734.0	4735.4	4738.9	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total	
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	9.4	5.7		5.5	4.0	4.6	4.1	7.4	68.2	81.5	42.1	21.7	14.5	268.7
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	12.9	8.7		8.1	6.2	6.0	7.0	15.9	93.3	108.7	56.5	28.1	18.4	369.8
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	35.7	36.9	6.1	0.0	157.4
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	36,708	acre-feet										
	Oct	Nov	Elevation	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.3	0.7	4.7	3.5	1.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	12.3
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	27.7	26.8	27.7	9.1	0.0	116.3
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.3	0.7	4.7	28.5	29.0	28.0	27.7	9.1	0.6	128.6
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4		2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	23.2	46.3	42.7	6.0	6.0	141.2
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40		41	41	40	41	40	377	778	694	98	101	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-2.5	-2.4		-2.5	-2.2	-1.5	2.2	26.1	5.8	-18.3	-15.0	3.1	-5.4	-12.6
End of Month Content (kaf)	34.5	32.1		29.6	27.4	25.9	28.1	54.2	60.0	41.7	26.7	29.8	24.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2558.4	2557.3		2556.0	2554.9	2554.1	2555.2	2566.3	2568.2	2561.6	2554.5	2556.1	2553.2	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.00	0.00	1.20
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	41.7	0.0	0.0	111.2
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	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	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	39.4
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	61,356	acre-feet										
	Oct	Nov	Elevation	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	7.8	8.2	5.7	7.4	3.1	0.9	2.4	35.5
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8		-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	6.0	6.4	-3.5	-8.3	-11.2	-0.9	0.6	-19.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	59.6	57.8		56.0	54.2	52.5	58.5	64.9	61.4	53.1	41.9	41.0	41.6	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.8	2216.3		2215.8	2215.3	2214.8	2216.5	2218.2	2217.2	2215.0	2211.4	2211.1	2211.3	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4	13.9	12.5	0.0	0.0	33.8

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026)

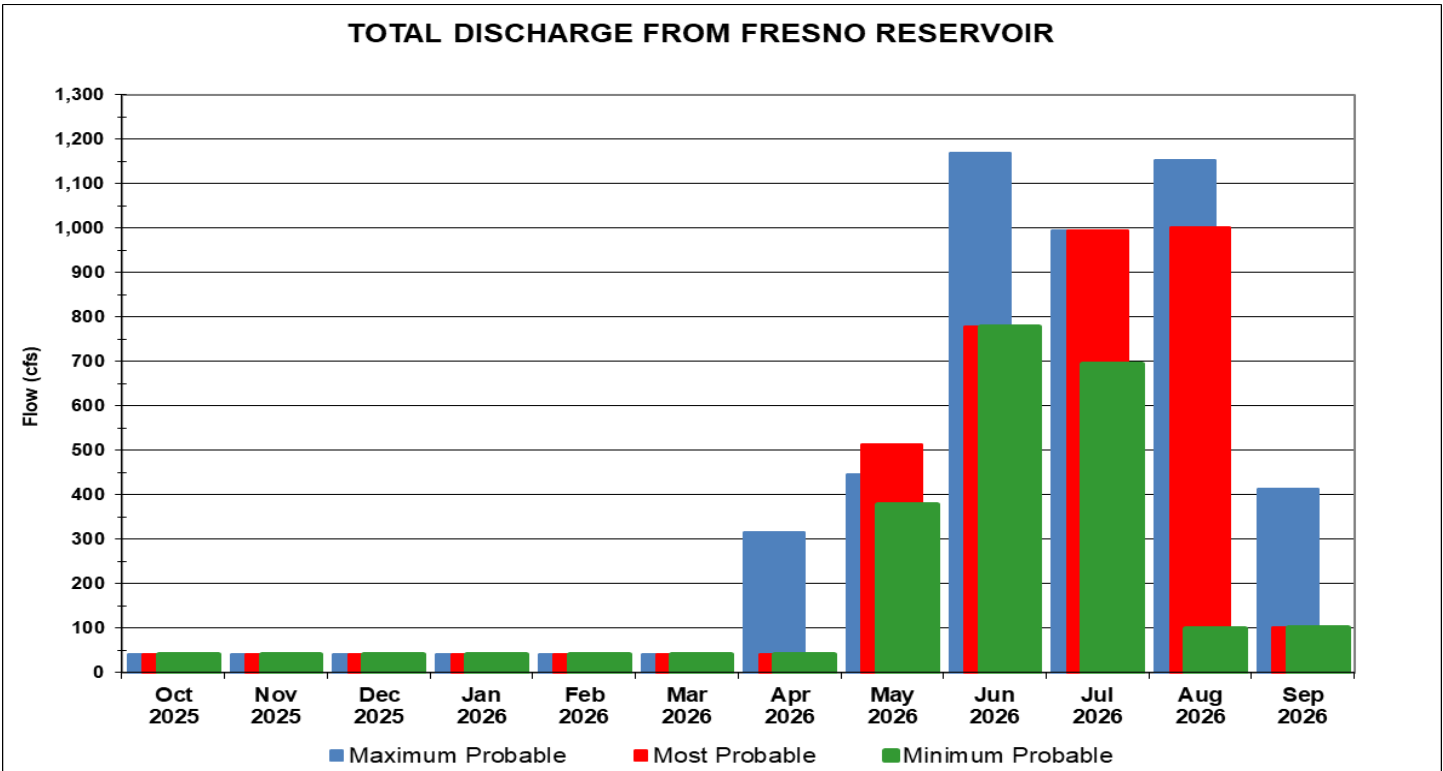
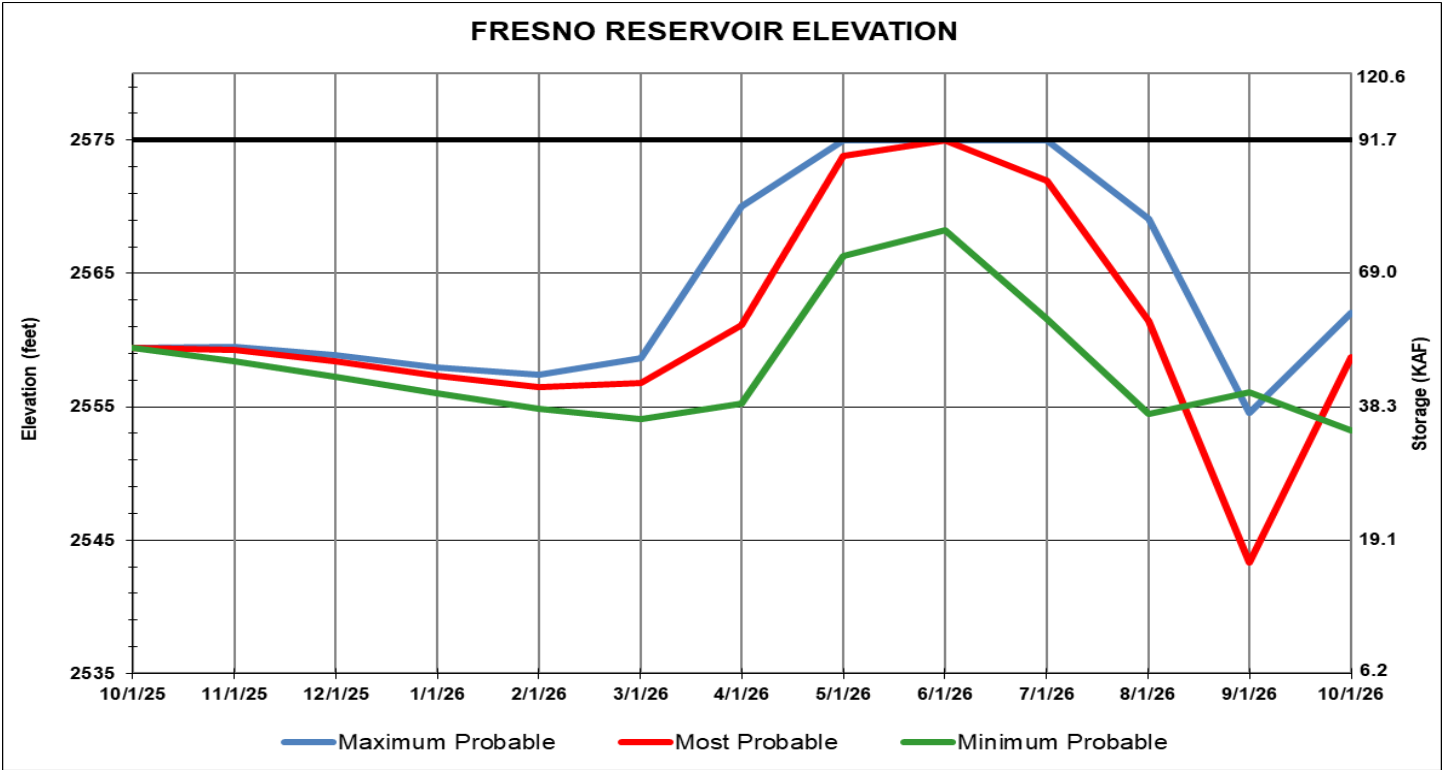
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir		Initial Content	29,886	acre-feet									
		Elevation	4762.61	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	5.9	4.8	3.5	2.9	2.8	3.2	9.5	36.1	54.5	27.9	12.3	7.8	171.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	1.5	25.9	54.5	27.9	27.5	29.9	172.2
Sherburne Release (cfs)	2	0	0	0	0	80	25	421	916	454	447	502	
Net Content Change (kaf)	5.8	4.8	3.5	2.9	2.8	-1.7	8.0	10.2	0.0	0.0	-15.2	-22.1	-1.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	35.7	40.5	44.0	46.9	49.7	48.0	56.0	66.2	66.2	66.2	51.0	28.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4767.6	4771.4	4773.9	4776.0	4777.8	4776.7	4781.9	4788.0	4788.0	4788.0	4778.7	4761.7	
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	18.7	12.8	8.7	9.0	10.1	18.2	46.1	147.5	215.6	130.5	51.7	39.3	708.2
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	24.6	17.6	12.2	11.9	12.9	21.4	55.6	183.6	270.1	158.4	64.0	47.1	879.4
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99	600	600	600	600	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	35.7	36.9	36.9	35.7	151.3
Fresno Reservoir		Initial Content	36,708	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2559.40	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	2.4	1.0	0.6	1.3	4.9	33.1	38.5	27.4	39.2	7.0	3.7	10.3	169.4
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3	31.4	31.4	30.3	123.4
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	2.4	1.0	0.6	1.3	4.9	33.1	38.5	27.4	69.5	38.4	35.1	40.6	292.8
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	18.8	27.4	69.5	61.2	70.9	24.5	286.9
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	41	41	40	41	316	446	1168	995	1153	412	
Net Content Change (kaf)	-0.1	-1.4	-1.9	-1.2	2.7	30.6	19.7	0.0	0.0	-22.8	-35.8	16.1	5.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	36.9	35.5	33.6	32.4	35.1	65.7	85.4	85.4	85.4	62.6	26.8	42.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2559.5	2558.9	2558.0	2557.4	2558.7	2570.0	2575.0	2575.0	2575.0	2569.1	2554.5	2562.1	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.70	0.20	2.30
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	64.9	18.5	213.1
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	6.0	13.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.6	23.7	16.4	21.3	12.0	3.0	7.0	110.2
Bowdoin Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Transfer to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	17.9	5.0	2.4	7.0	82.3
Nelson Reservoir		Initial Content	61,356	acre-feet									
		Elevation	2217.23	feet									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5	18.0	13.5	16.1	4.5	2.2	6.3	74.1
Net Content Change (kaf)	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	11.7	14.8	0.0	0.0	-9.2	-18.4	-1.1	-11.1
End of Month Content (kaf)	59.6	57.8	56.0	54.2	52.5	64.2	79.0	79.0	79.0	69.8	51.4	50.3	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.8	2216.3	2215.8	2215.3	2214.8	2218.0	2221.6	2221.6	2221.6	2219.4	2214.5	2214.1	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	11.7	14.3	11.9	18.8	5.6	63.7

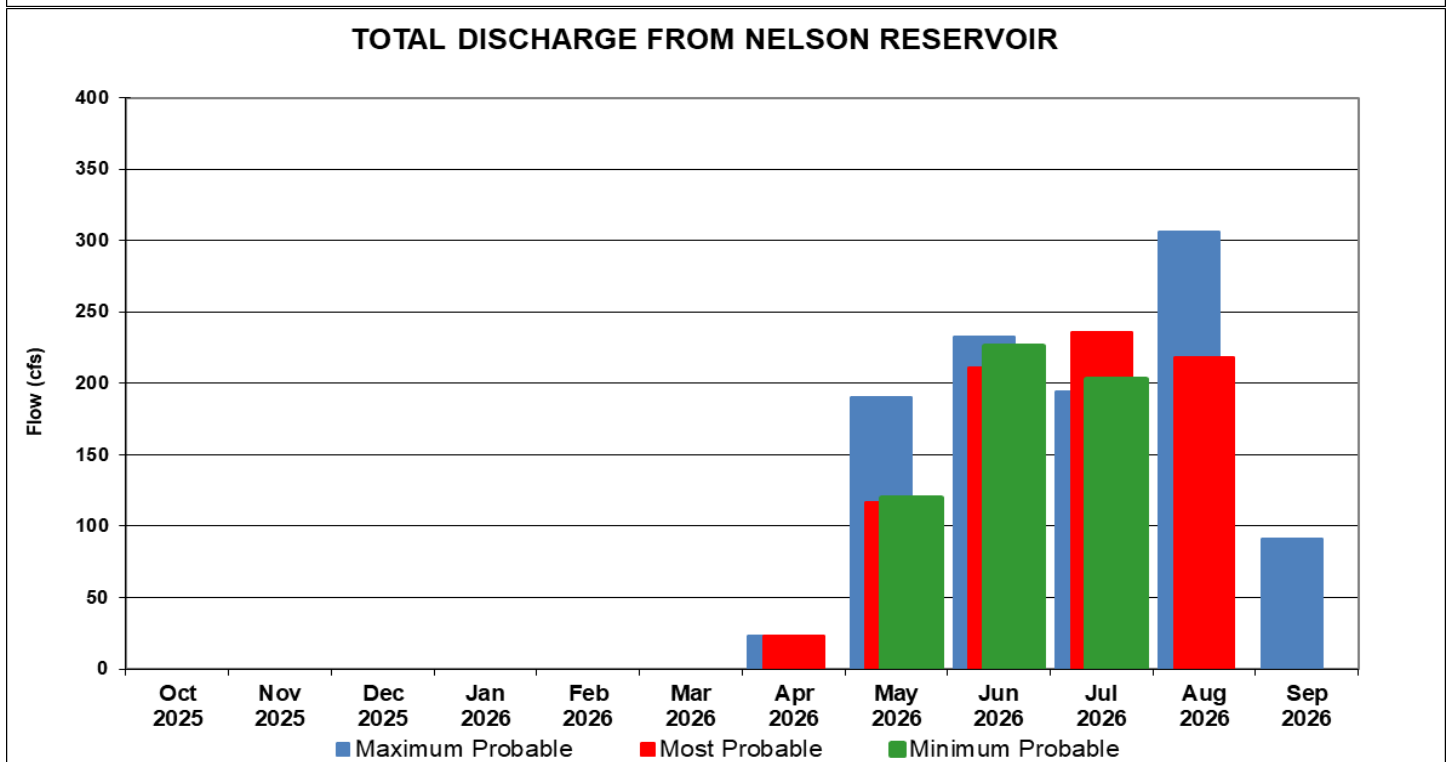
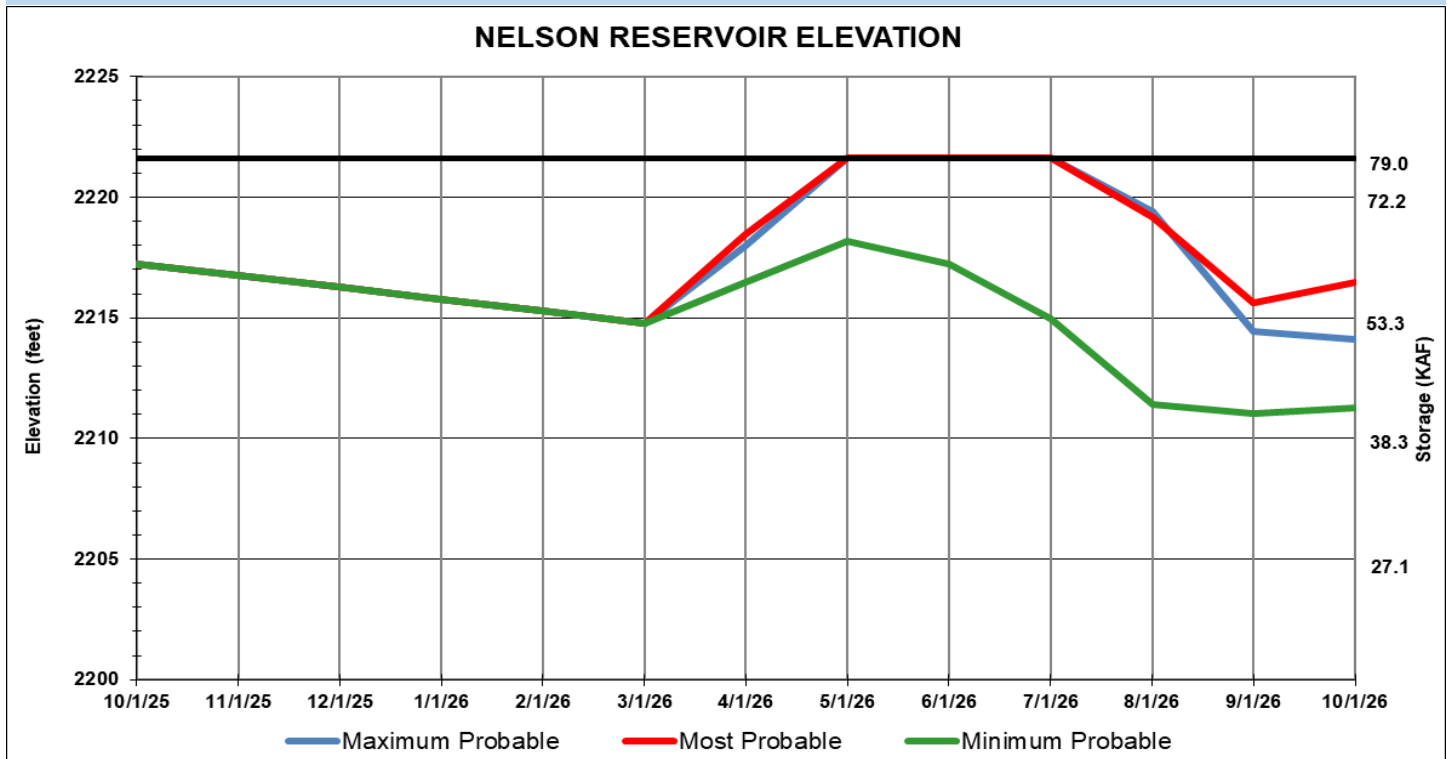
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: NELSON RESERVOIR



Contact Us

J. Brooks Stephens
jbstephens@usbr.gov
 406-247-7318

Clayton Jordan
cjordan@usbr.gov
 406-247-7334

Chris Gomer
cgomer@usbr.gov
 406-247-7307

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

October 2025