

Milk River Project Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

March 2025



Fresno Reservoir, March 2025

The March monthly operating plan covers actual operations from October 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025, and projected operations for March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026. The projections are based on forecasted water supply and use.

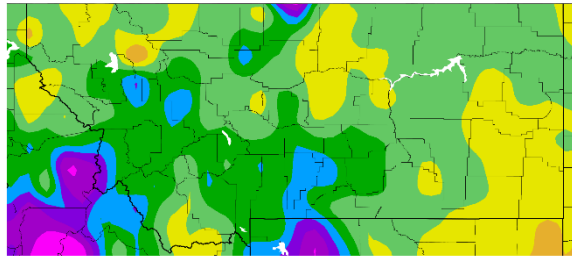
Median Forecasted Operations	Sherburne	Fresno	Nelson
March Inflow Forecast (kaf)	3	14	14
Percent of Average	80	68	326
March Release Forecast (cfs)	0	40	0
March 31 Elevation Forecast (feet)	4771.4	2561.1	2218.4

April-July Forecast	Sherburne
Inflow Forecast	90
Percent of Average	91

Climate Departure from Normal

February 1 through February 28

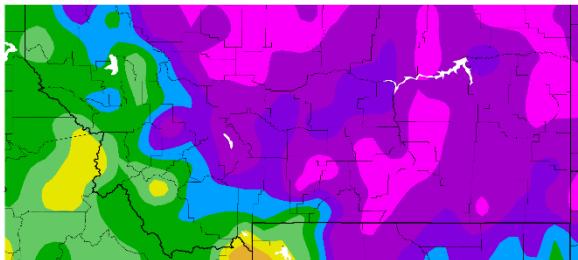
Precipitation



Departure from Normal (inches)

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

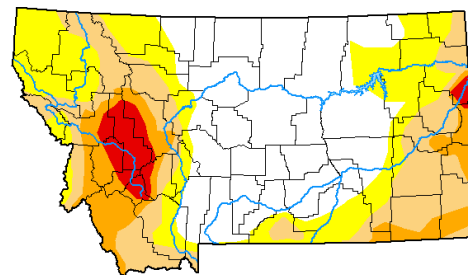
Precipitation was near average, and temperature was below average during February in the in St. Mary and Milk River basins.

There is a 33 to 40 percent chance that precipitation will be above average during March in the St. Mary River basin. There is an equal chance that the precipitation will either be below, near, or above average during March in the Milk River basin. There is an equal chance that the temperature will either be below, near, or above average in both basins.

The drought intensity in the St. Mary and Milk River basins range from no drought to moderate.

Montana Drought Monitor Map

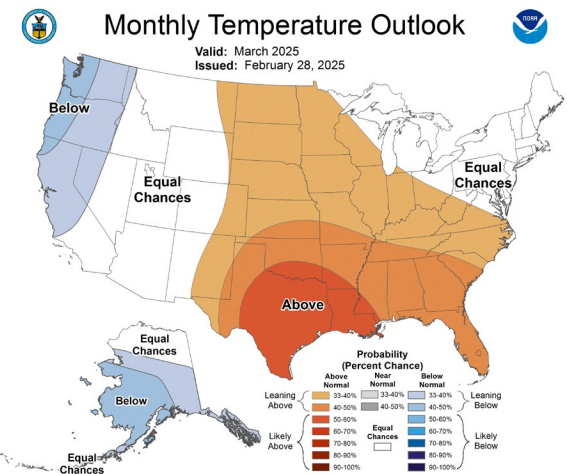
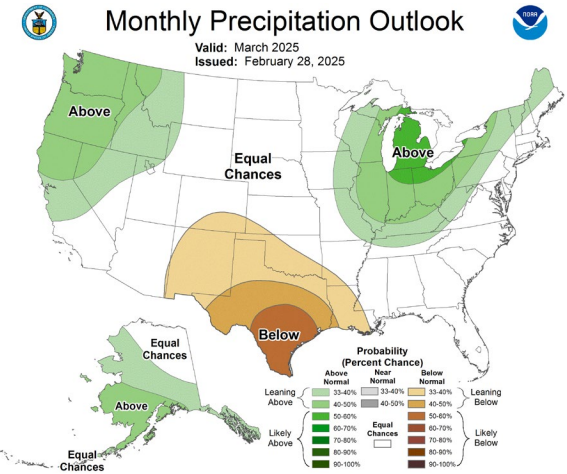
February 25, 2025



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



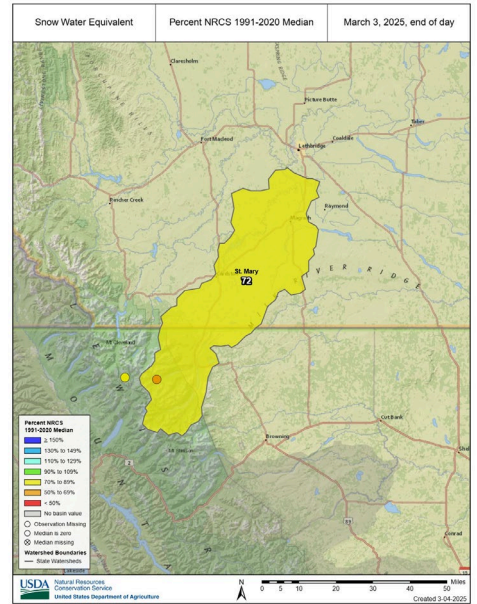
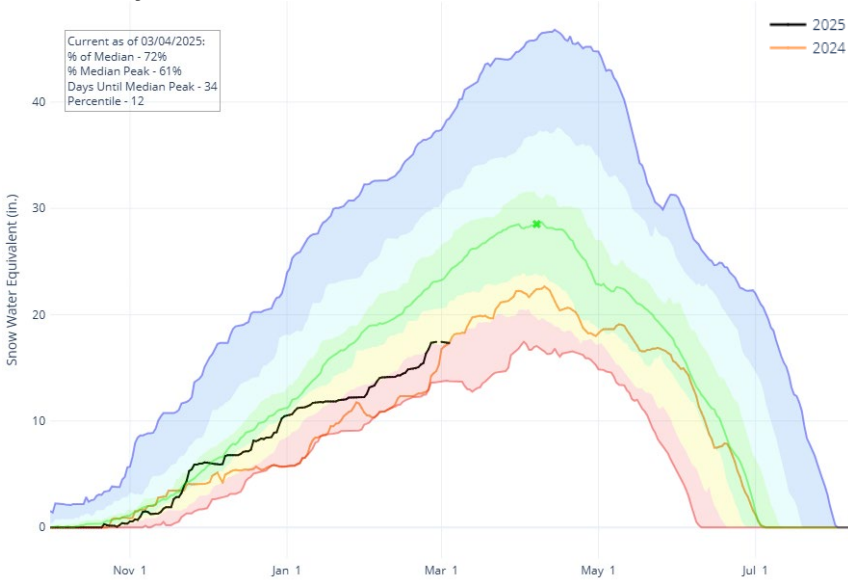
March Climate Outlook



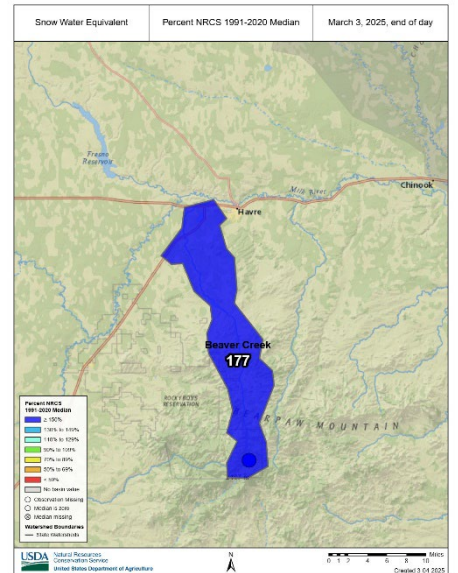
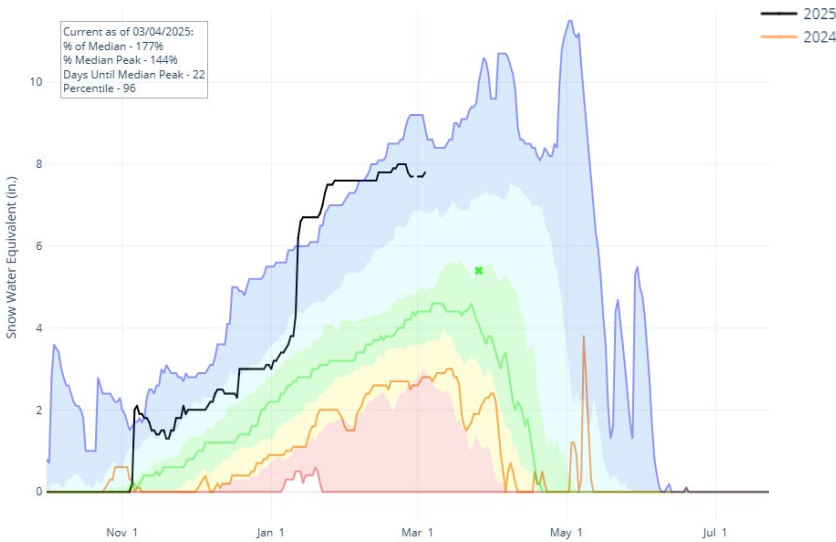
SNOWPACK SUMMARY

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



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

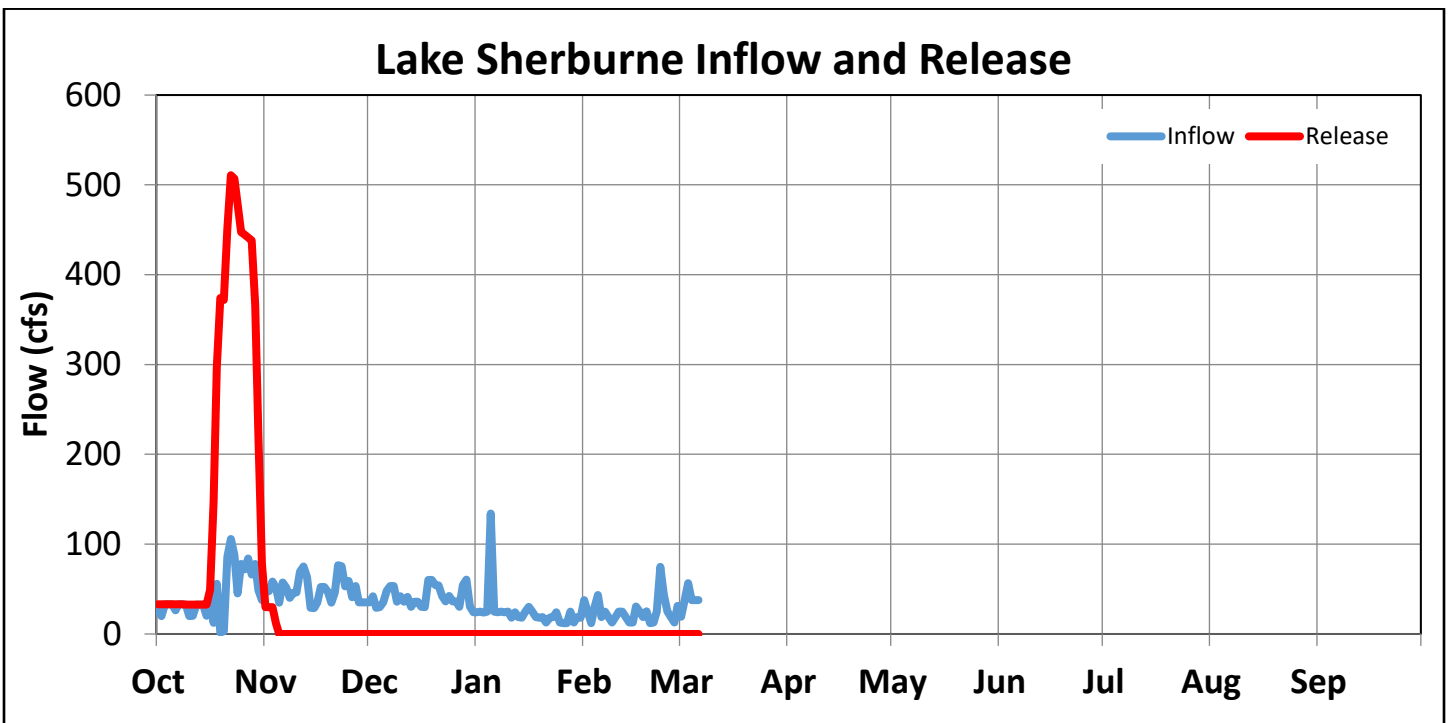
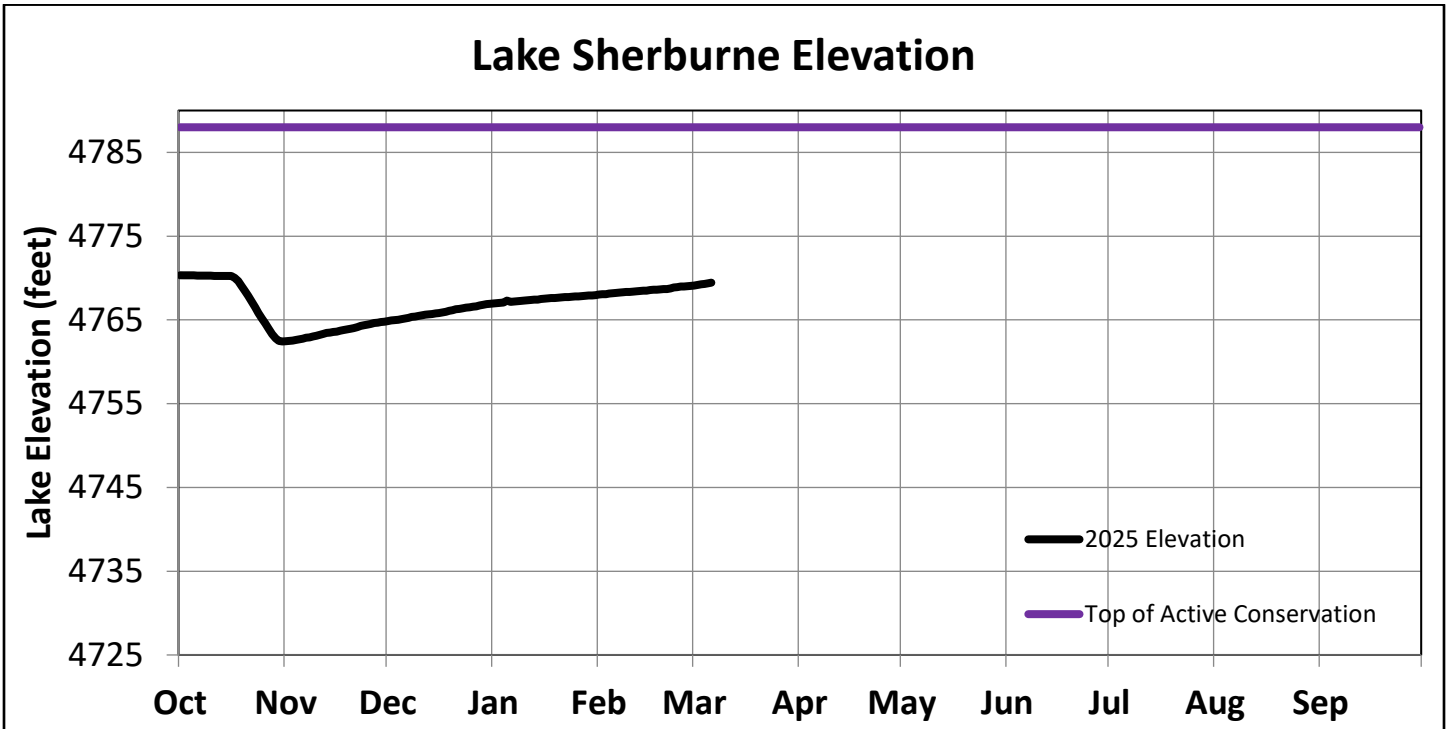
March 1 Elevation and Storage

	Elevation (feet)	Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Sherburne Reservoir	4769.07	37,569	113	57
Fresno Reservoir	2555.93	29,731	76	32
Nelson Reservoir	2215.26	54,176	106	69

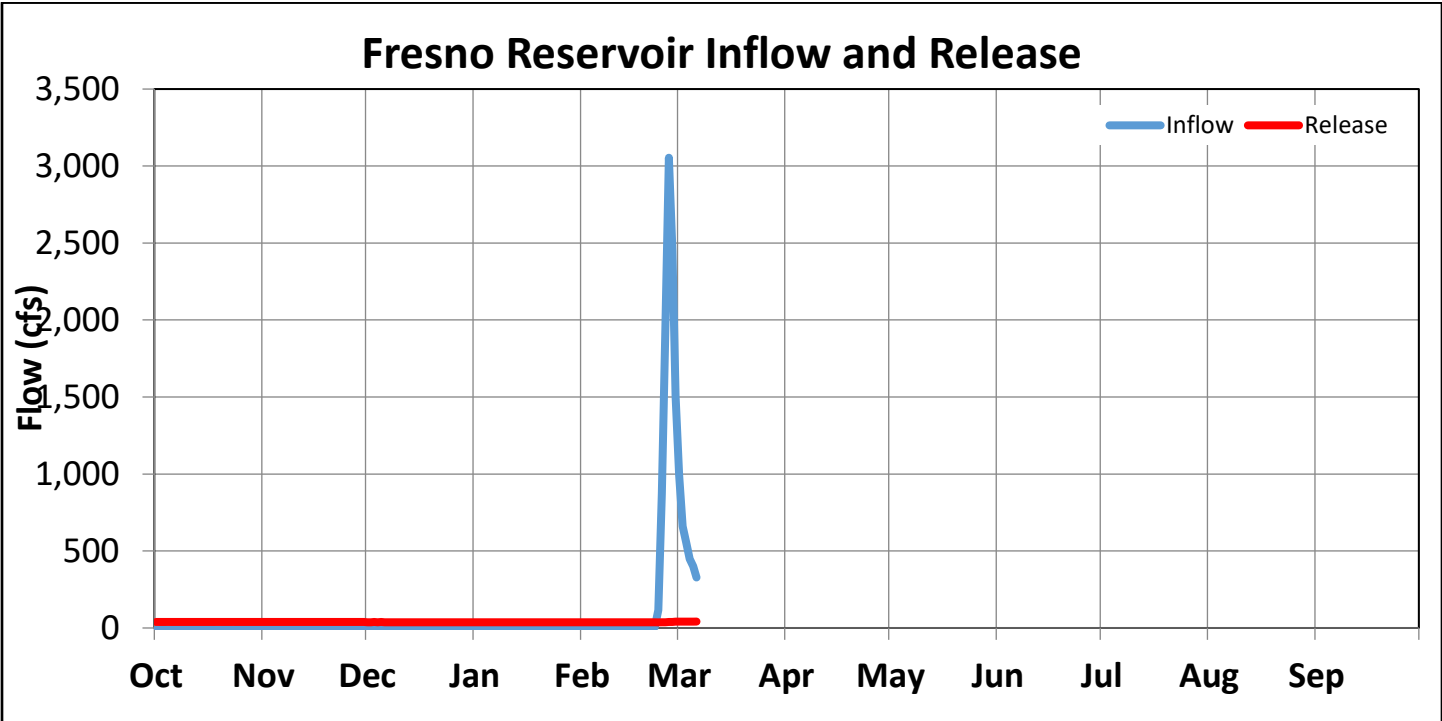
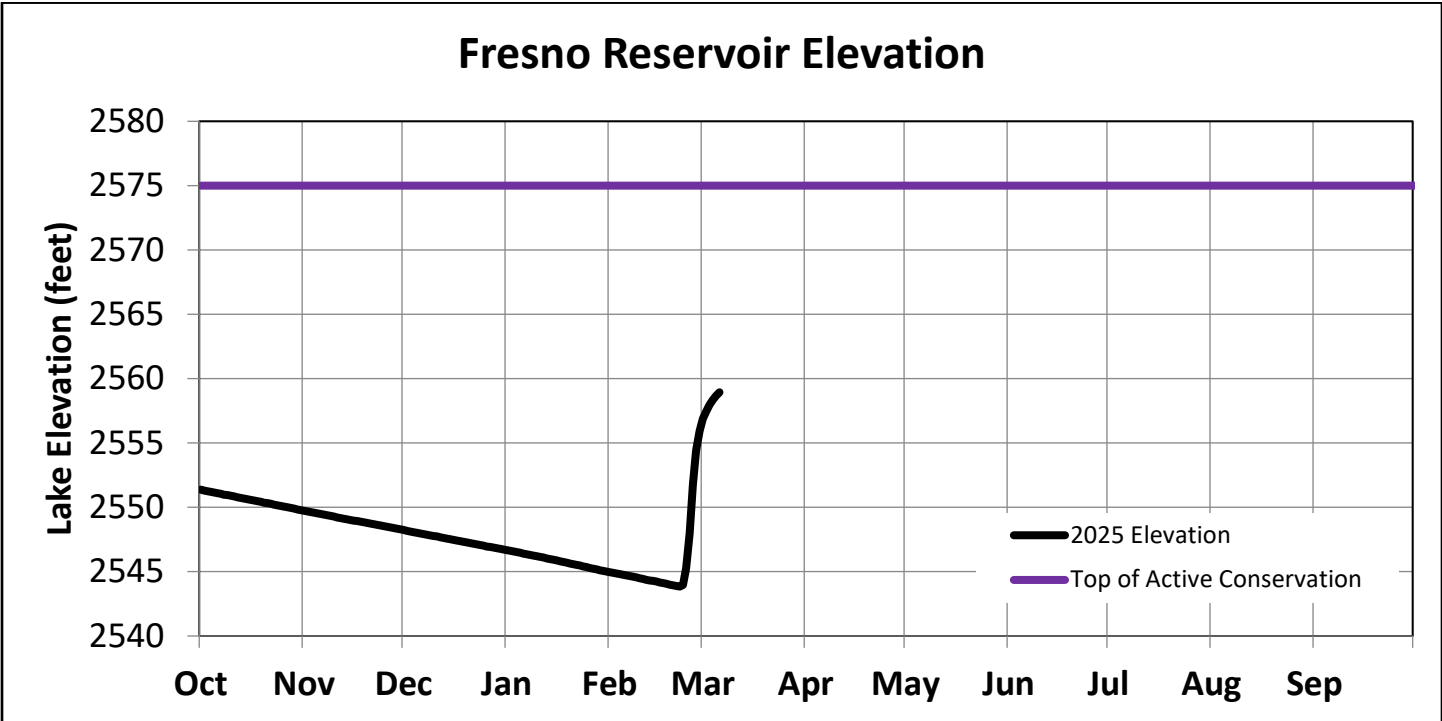
Past Inflows (1,000's of acre-feet)

Month	Sherburne Reservoir		Fresno Reservoir % of	
	Inflow	% of Average	Inflow	Average
<u>Water Year 2025</u>				
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
<u>Water Year 2024</u>				
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

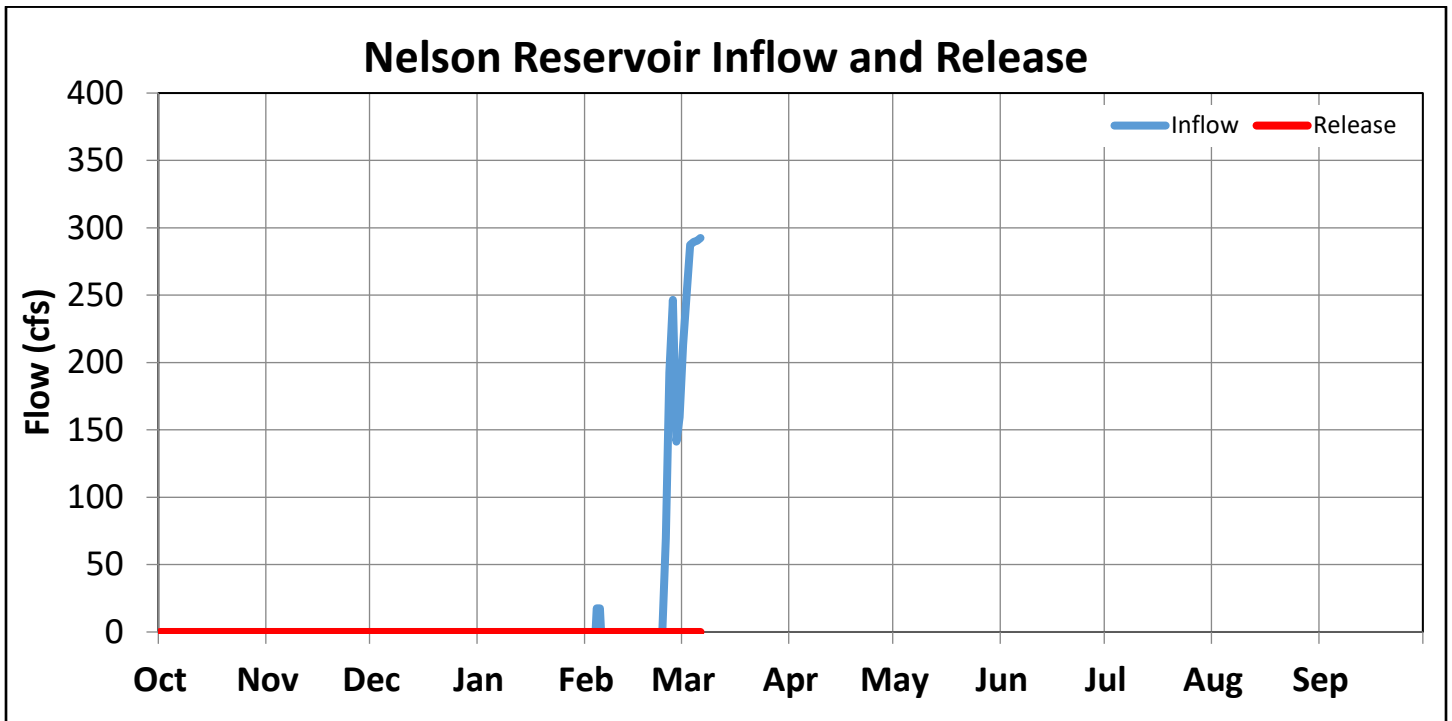
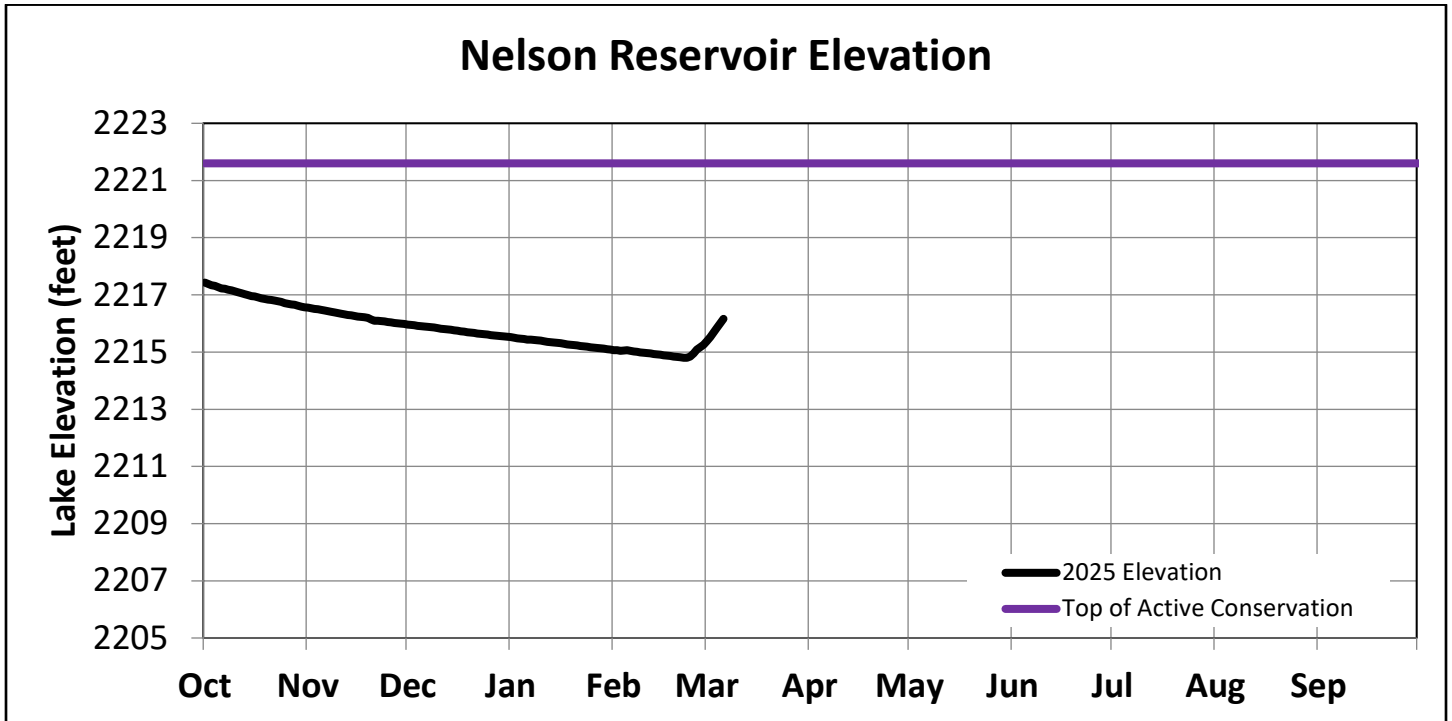
OPERATIONS REVIEW: LAKE SHERBURNE



OPERATIONS REVIEW: FRESNO RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS REVIEW: NELSON RESERVOIR



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026)

Median Inflow Conditions													
Sherburne Reservoir	Initial Content		37,569		acre-feet								
	Elevation		4769.07		feet								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.0	9.1	30.0	34.8	16.3	7.8	6.0	5.9	4.8	3.6	2.9	2.8	127.0
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	8.9	15.4	24.0	16.3	7.8	27.0	28.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	127.8
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	150	250	403	265	127	454	462	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	3.0	0.2	14.6	10.8	0.0	0.0	-21.0	-22.5	4.8	3.6	2.9	2.8	-0.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	40.6	40.8	55.4	66.2	66.2	66.2	45.2	22.7	27.5	31.1	34.0	36.8	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4771.4	4771.6	4781.5	4788.0	4788.0	4788.0	4774.8	4756.0	4760.5	4763.7	4766.1	4768.5	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	6.7	18.2	85.3	115.0	66.3	28.3	17.3	14.9	9.9	7.3	7.2	6.1	382.5
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	9.7	27.3	115.3	149.8	82.6	36.1	23.3	20.8	14.7	10.9	10.1	8.9	509.5
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	450	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	27.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.5
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Fresno Reservoir	Initial Content		29,731		acre-feet								
	Elevation		2555.93		feet								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	13.7	10.7	6.2	4.3	0.3	0.5	2.4	3.8	2.9	1.8	1.8	4.7	53.1
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	24.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	13.7	10.7	6.2	4.3	0.3	0.5	7.8	28.7	2.9	1.8	1.8	4.7	83.4
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	18.5	27.8	2.5	4.0	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	72.2
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	301	467	41	65	40	41	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	11.2	8.3	-12.3	-23.5	-2.2	-3.5	5.4	26.2	0.5	-0.7	-0.7	2.5	11.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	40.9	49.2	36.9	13.4	11.2	7.7	13.1	39.3	39.8	39.1	38.4	40.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2561.1	2564.3	2559.4	2546.1	2544.4	2541.5	2545.9	2560.4	2560.6	2560.3	2560.0	2561.1	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	18.5	27.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.3
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	17.4	18.2	12.6	16.4	6.8	2.0	5.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.8
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)	15.0	15.0	8.0	4.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.0
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Nelson Reservoir	Initial Content		54,176		acre-feet								
	Elevation		2215.26		feet								
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	13.5	13.5	7.2	3.6	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.3
Net Content Change (kaf)	11.7	11.7	1.4	-3.7	2.7	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	11.3
End of Month Content (kaf)	65.9	77.6	79.0	75.3	78.0	76.2	74.4	72.6	70.8	69.0	67.2	65.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2218.4	2221.3	2221.6	2220.7	2221.4	2221.0	2220.5	2220.1	2219.7	2219.2	2218.8	2218.3	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	4.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026)

Minimum Inflow Conditions

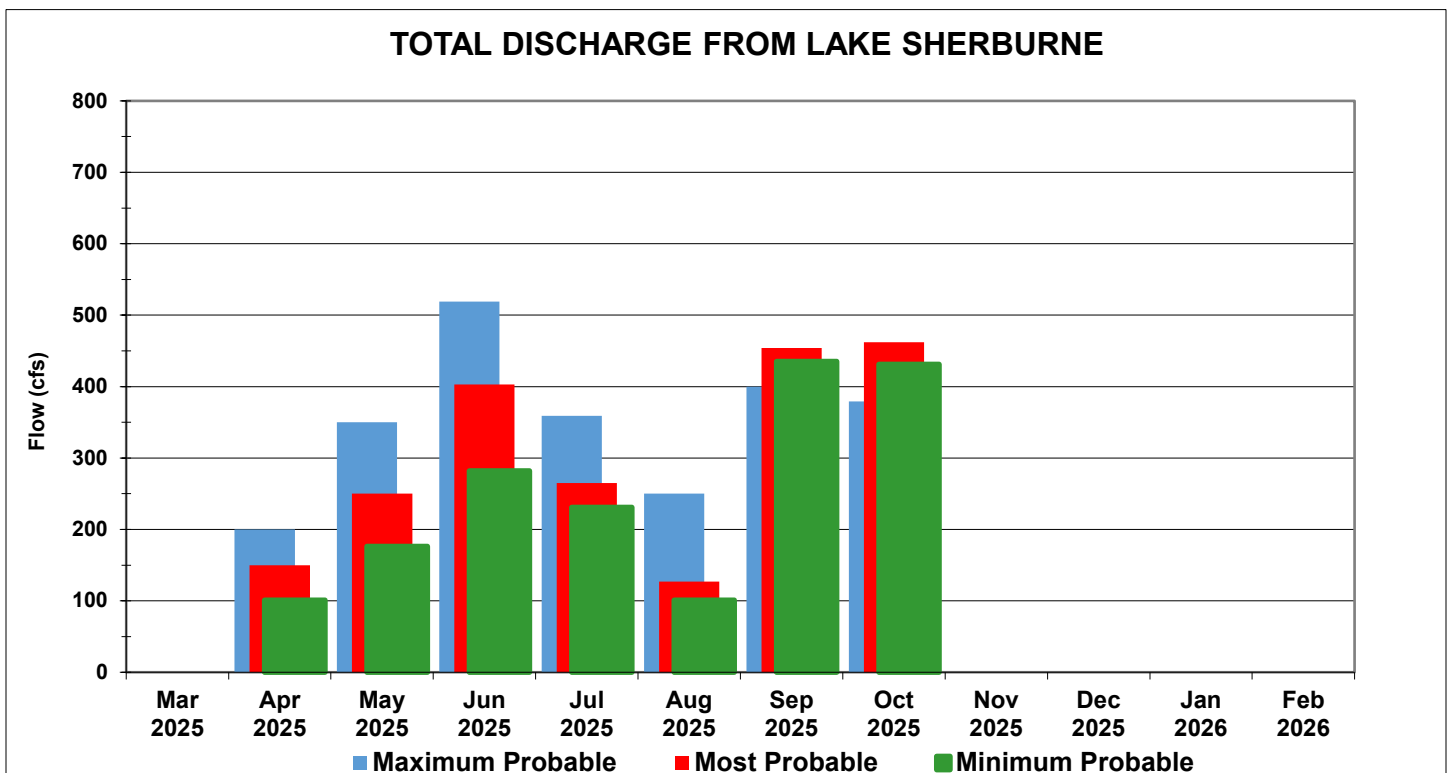
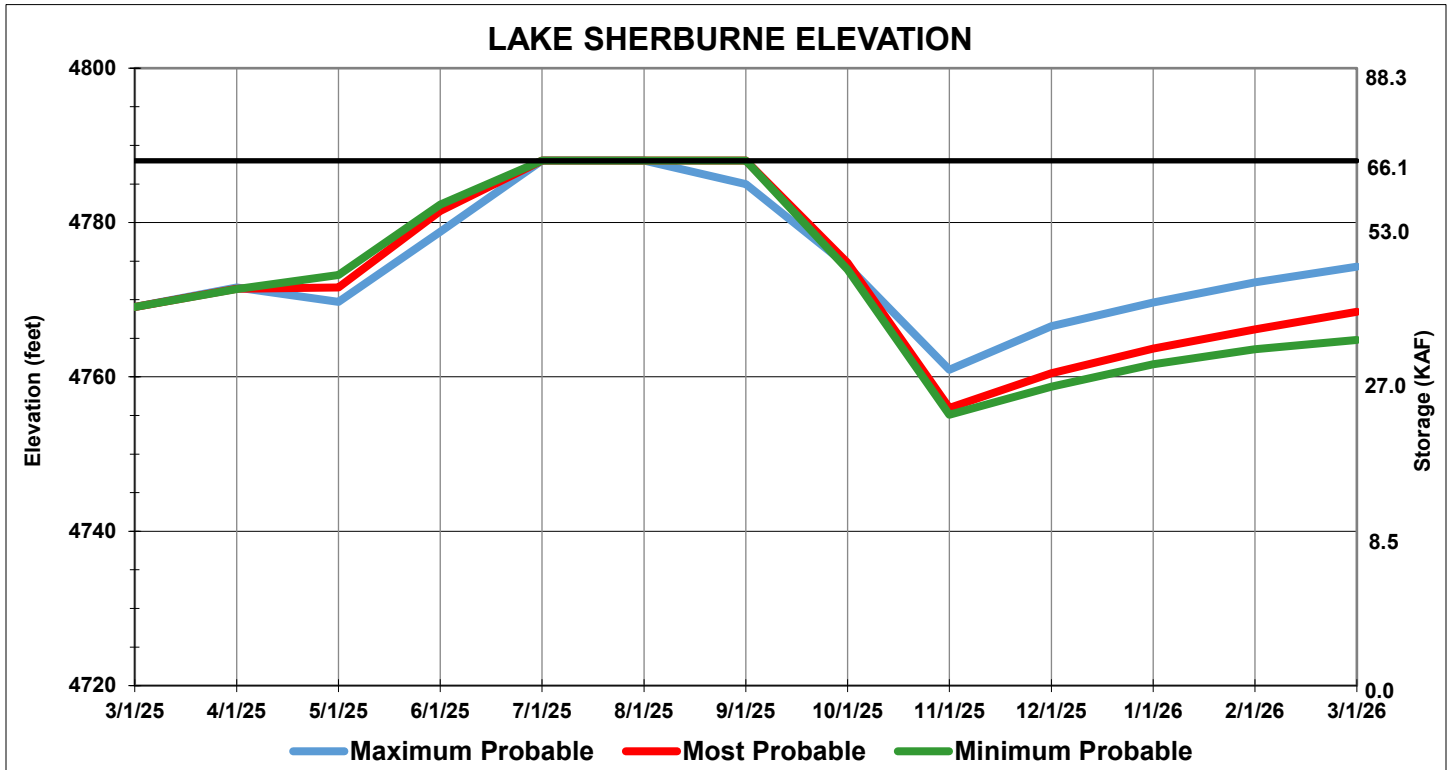
Sherburne Reservoir													
	Initial Content		37,569		acre-feet								
	Elevation		4769.07		feet								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	2.9	8.5	24.5	26.3	14.2	6.2	3.7	4.3	3.8	3.2	2.2	1.4	101.2
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	6.0	10.8	16.8	14.2	6.2	25.9	26.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	106.4
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	101	176	282	231	101	435	431	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	2.9	2.5	13.7	9.5	0.0	0.0	-22.2	-22.2	3.8	3.2	2.2	1.4	-5.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	40.5	43.0	56.7	66.2	66.2	66.2	44.0	21.8	25.6	28.8	31.0	32.4	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4771.4	4773.2	4782.3	4788.0	4788.0	4788.0	4773.9	4755.1	4758.7	4761.7	4763.6	4764.8	
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)													
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	4.1	6.9	67.9	80.6	41.1	21.6	14.5	8.3	4.6	4.8	4.0	4.6	263.0
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	7.0	15.4	92.4	106.9	55.3	27.8	18.2	12.6	8.4	8.0	6.2	6.0	364.2
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)													
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	450	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	27.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.5
Fresno Reservoir													
	Initial Content		29,731		acre-feet								
	Elevation		2555.93		feet								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	11.4	6.2	2.7	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.5	1.2	0.7	0.3	0.7	28.9
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	24.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	11.4	6.2	2.7	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.5	27.4	1.2	0.7	0.3	0.7	59.2
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	2.4	23.2	9.3	2.5	3.0	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	57.4
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	40	377	156	41	49	40	41	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	8.9	3.8	-20.5	-7.2	-2.5	-3.0	4.1	24.9	-1.2	-1.8	-2.2	-1.5	1.8
End of Month Content (kaf)	38.6	42.4	21.9	14.7	12.2	9.2	13.3	38.2	37.0	35.2	33.0	31.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2560.1	2561.7	2551.7	2547.1	2545.2	2542.8	2546.0	2560.0	2559.4	2558.6	2557.6	2556.8	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	23.2	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	32.5
FBIIP Demand (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Fresno to Dodson Gain (kaf)	8.7	9.1	6.3	8.2	3.4	1.0	2.7	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.4
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)	8.0	9.0	6.0	8.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	34.0
Nelson Reservoir													
	Initial Content		54,176		acre-feet								
	Elevation		2215.26		feet								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	7.2	8.1	5.4	7.2	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.6
Net Content Change (kaf)	5.4	6.3	-3.0	2.9	0.9	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	0.0
End of Month Content (kaf)	59.6	65.9	62.9	65.8	66.7	64.9	63.1	61.3	59.5	57.7	55.9	54.2	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2216.8	2218.4	2217.6	2218.4	2218.6	2218.2	2217.7	2217.2	2216.7	2216.2	2215.8	2215.3	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.0	6.6	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026)

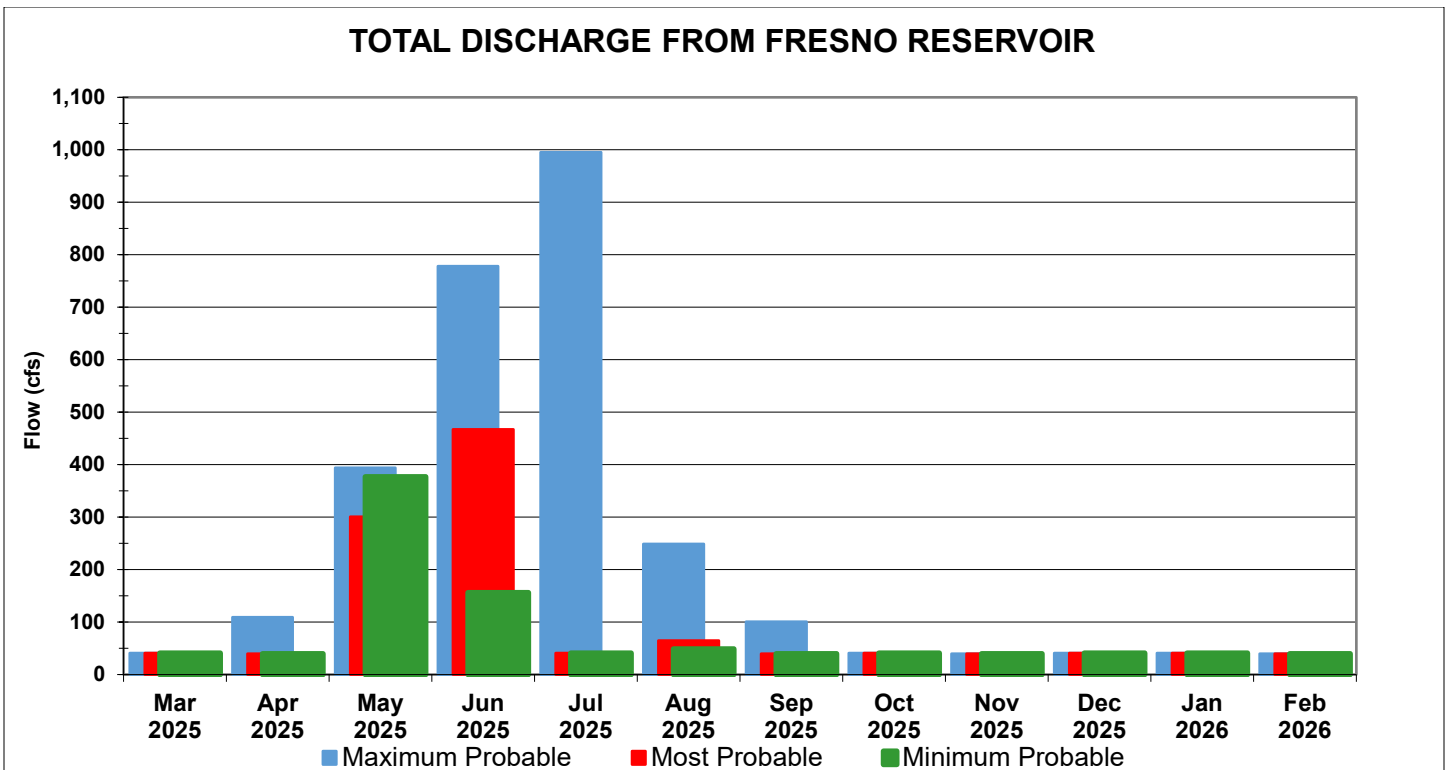
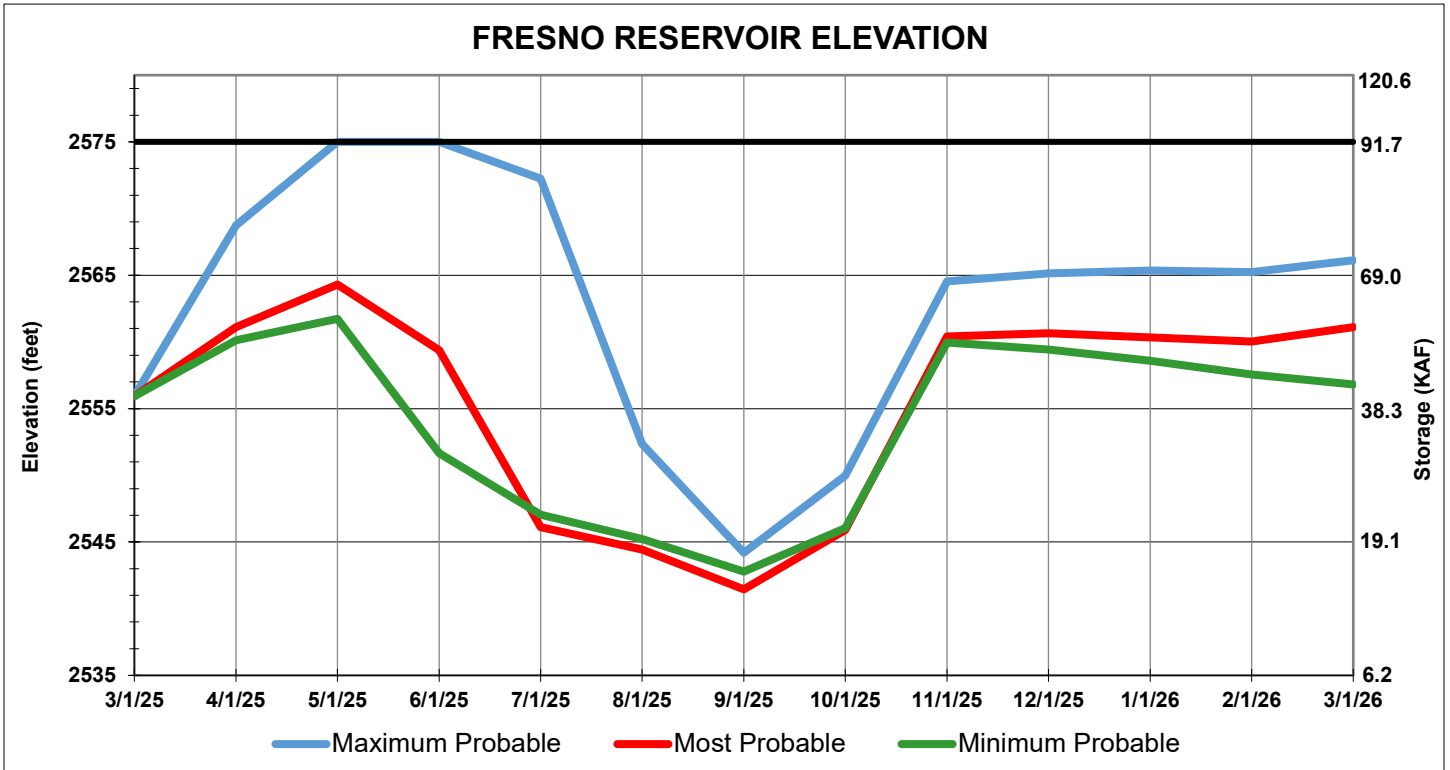
Maximum Inflow Conditions

Sherburne Reservoir	Initial Content												
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
			37,569	acre-feet									
			4769.07	feet									
Sherburne Inflow (kaf)	3.2	9.5	34.3	45.9	22.1	10.2	7.5	6.6	6.5	3.8	3.4	2.8	155.8
Sherburne Release (kaf)	0.0	11.9	21.5	30.9	22.1	15.4	23.8	23.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	148.9
Sherburne Release (cfs)	0	200	350	519	359	250	400	379	0	0	0	0	
Net Content Change (kaf)	3.2	-2.4	12.8	15.0	0.0	-5.2	-16.3	-16.7	6.5	3.8	3.4	2.8	6.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	40.8	38.4	51.2	66.2	66.2	61.0	44.7	28.0	34.5	38.3	41.7	44.5	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	4771.6	4769.7	4778.8	4788.0	4788.0	4785.0	4774.4	4760.9	4766.6	4769.7	4772.3	4774.3	
St. Mary River Runoff (kaf)	12.4	28.2	103.6	144.9	86.4	34.7	22.3	23.6	15.9	10.9	15.8	14.4	513.1
Natural Flow at Boundary (kaf)	15.6	37.7	137.9	190.8	108.5	44.9	29.8	30.2	22.4	14.7	19.2	17.2	668.9
St. Mary Canal Diversion (cfs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	450	450	0	0	0	0	
St. Mary Canal Diversion (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.8	27.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.5
Fresno Reservoir			29,731	acre-feet									
			2555.93	feet									
Milk River Runoff (kaf)	37.0	34.0	24.2	33.1	5.8	3.1	8.8	8.4	4.2	3.2	2.1	5.1	169.0
From St. Mary Canal (kaf)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	24.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.3
Fresno Inflow (kaf)	37.0	34.0	24.2	33.1	5.8	3.1	14.2	33.3	4.2	3.2	2.1	5.1	199.3
Fresno Release (kaf)	2.5	6.5	24.2	46.3	61.2	15.3	6.0	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	174.1
Fresno Release (cfs)	41	109	394	778	995	249	101	41	40	41	41	40	
Net Content Change (kaf)	34.5	27.5	0.0	-13.2	-55.4	-12.2	8.2	30.8	1.8	0.7	-0.4	2.9	25.2
End of Month Content (kaf)	64.2	91.7	91.7	78.5	23.1	10.9	19.1	49.9	51.7	52.4	52.0	54.9	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2568.7	2575.0	2575.0	2572.3	2552.4	2544.2	2550.0	2564.5	2565.1	2565.4	2565.2	2566.1	
Irrigation Allotment (ft/ac)	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.65	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.50
Irrigation Delivery (kaf)	0.0	0.0	23.2	46.3	60.2	9.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	139.0
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)	15.0	17.0	15.0	5.0	6.0	3.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.0
Nelson Reservoir			54,176	acre-feet									
			2215.26	feet									
Delivery to Nelson (kaf)	13.5	15.3	13.5	4.5	5.4	2.7	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	59.4
Net Content Change (kaf)	11.7	13.1	0.0	-6.5	-8.4	-1.8	2.7	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.8	-1.7	1.9
End of Month Content (kaf)	65.9	79.0	79.0	72.5	64.1	62.3	65.0	63.2	61.4	59.6	57.8	56.1	
End of Month Elevation (feet)	2218.4	2221.6	2221.6	2220.1	2218.0	2217.5	2218.2	2217.7	2217.2	2216.8	2216.3	2215.8	
Total Release (kaf)	0.0	0.4	11.7	9.2	12.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0

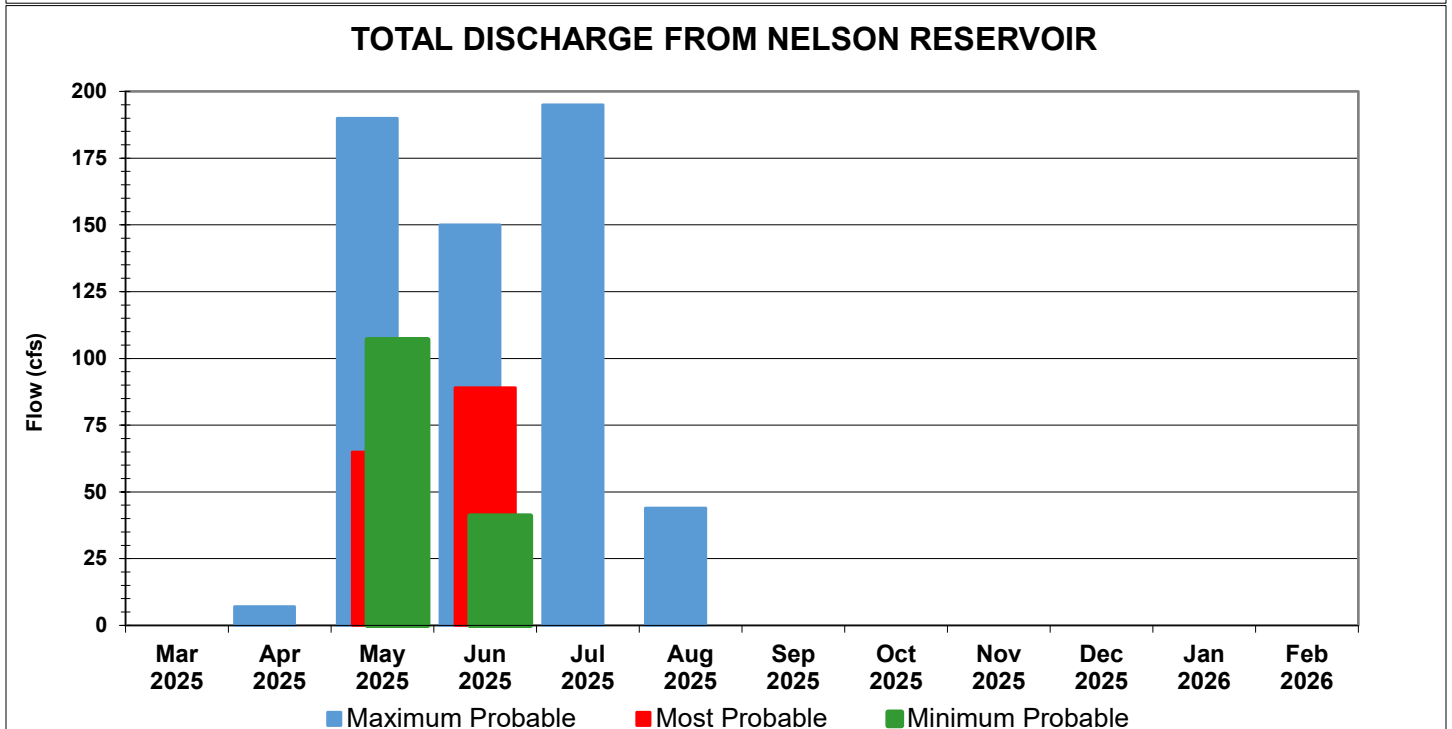
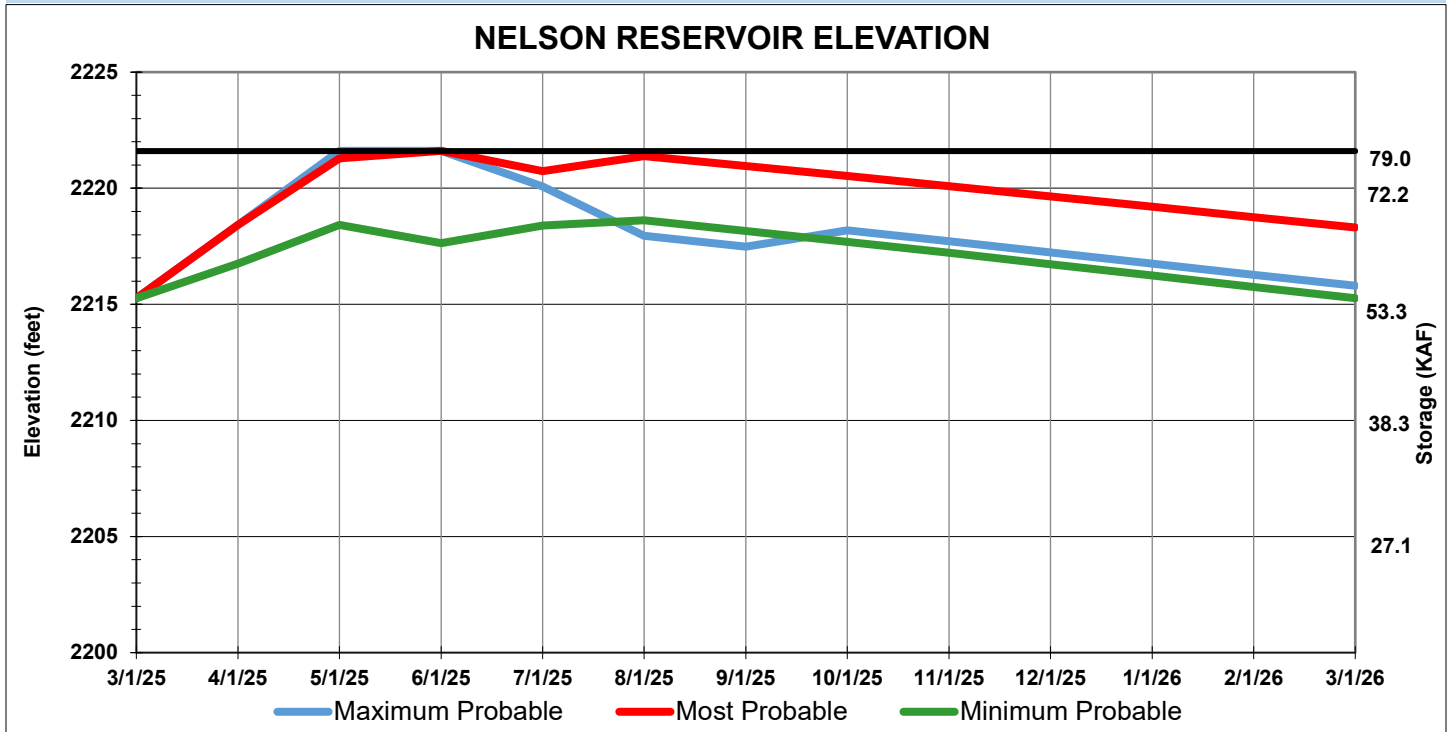
OPERATIONS OUTLOOK: LAKE SHERBURNE



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