



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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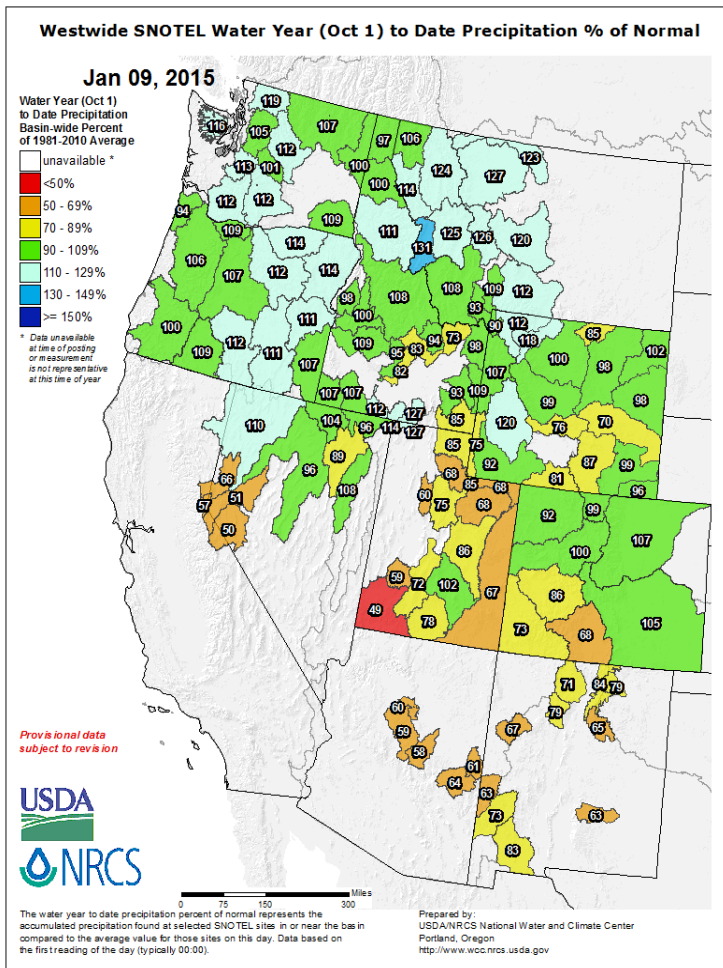
Western Snowpack and Water Supply Conditions January 2015

Overview

This report summarizes Snowpack Telemetry (SNOTEL) network data, streamflow forecasts, and reservoir storage data collected and analyzed by the [National Water and Climate Center](#).

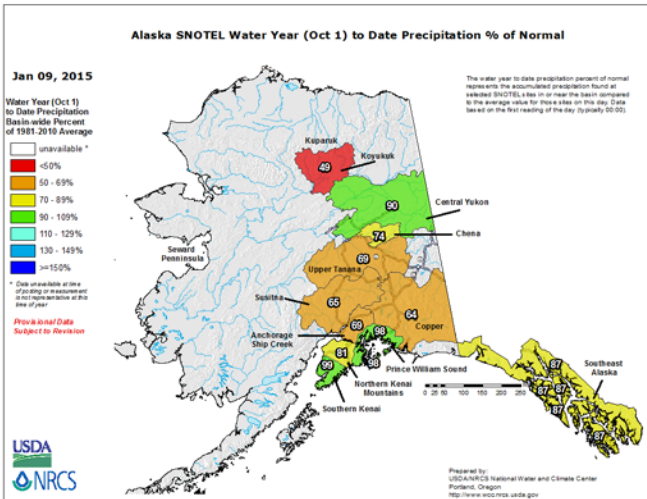
Precipitation thus far in the water year (beginning October 1, 2014) has been near or somewhat above normal in the northern and eastern parts of the West, with southwestern areas and Alaska being fairly dry. **Snowpack** shows sharp contrasts between the low levels in southwestern and far western areas and near to above normal levels elsewhere. **Streamflow forecasts** at this early point in the season are generally near normal, except for some areas in California and the Southwest, where the outlook is below normal. **Reservoir storage** is currently below normal for the Southwest and Oregon, and near to above normal elsewhere.

Water Year-To-Date Precipitation



[Precipitation for the 2015 water year-to-date](#) reflects the moisture patterns leading into the snow accumulation season this year.

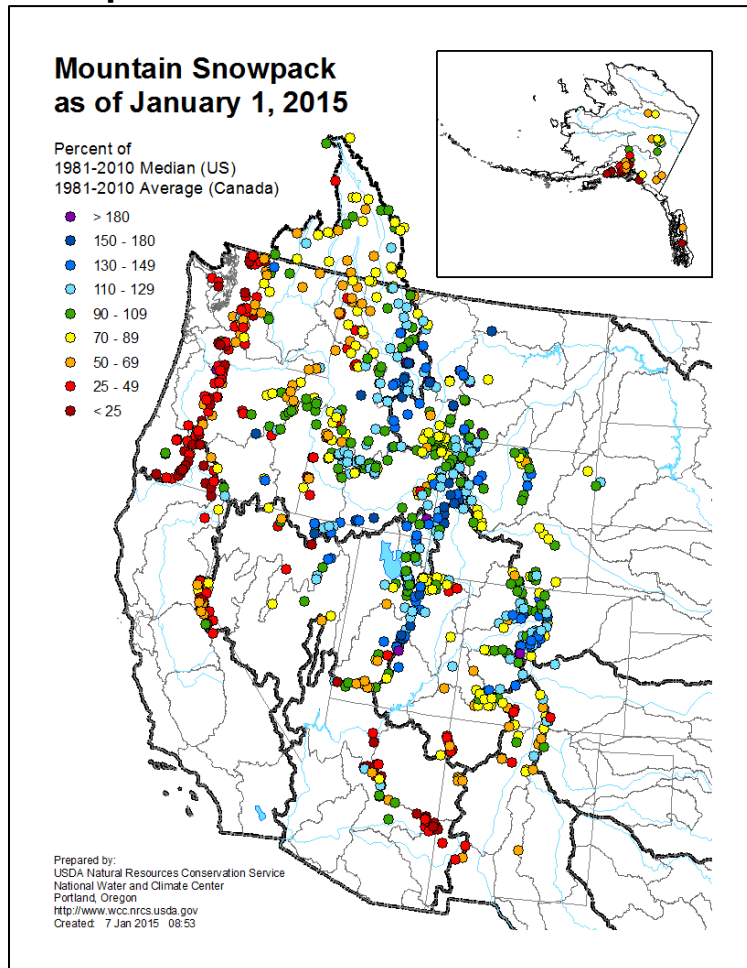
The southwestern areas -- including Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, parts of Colorado, and the Sierra Nevada -- have been notably dry. Elsewhere, there has been near to above normal precipitation during this three-month period.



[Precipitation in Alaska for the 2015 water year-to-date](#) has been below normal in most areas of the state.

Maps containing monthly and daily updates of SNOTEL precipitation are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/precip.html>

Snowpack



[Snowpack at SNOTEL sites and snowcourses as of January 1](#) in the western U.S. and the Columbia Basin in Canada shows some distinct regional contrasts.

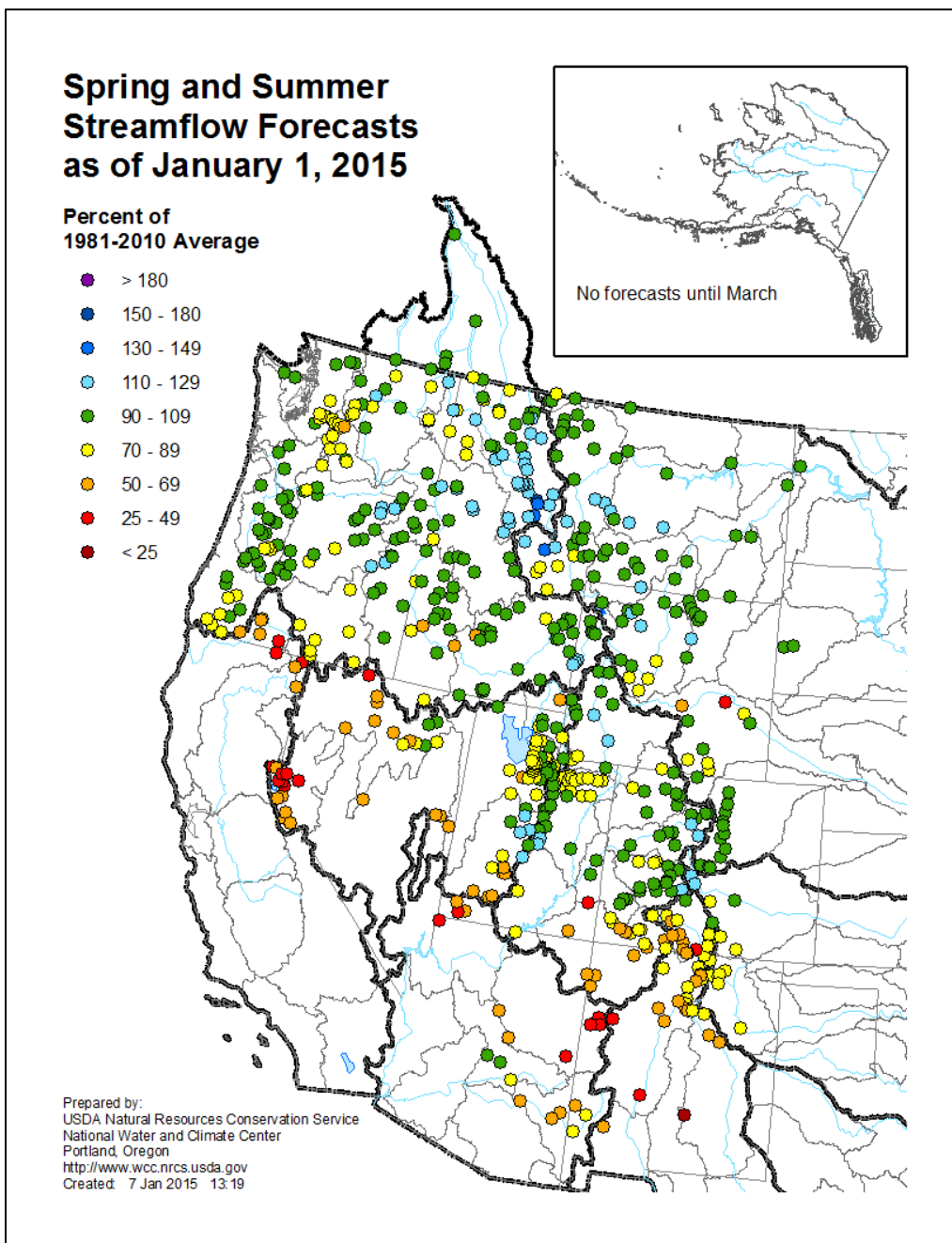
Well below normal snowpack dominates throughout the Cascades of Washington and Oregon, the Sierra Nevada of California, as well as in much of other southern parts of the West. Near to above normal snowpack is found in most of the Rocky Mountains, from Colorado and Utah north into British Columbia.

Snowpack in Alaska is below normal in most areas except for a few locations in the interior.

Maps with daily updates of the snowpack (SNOTEL data only) for the entire West, as well as for individual states, are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/snow.html>

Streamflow Forecasts

[Streamflow forecasts](#) this early in the season generally have only modest skill, because most of the snow accumulation season is yet to come. The current streamflow outlook is for somewhat below to near normal for most of the West. The exceptions to this are the areas of notable dryness, encompassing New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California.



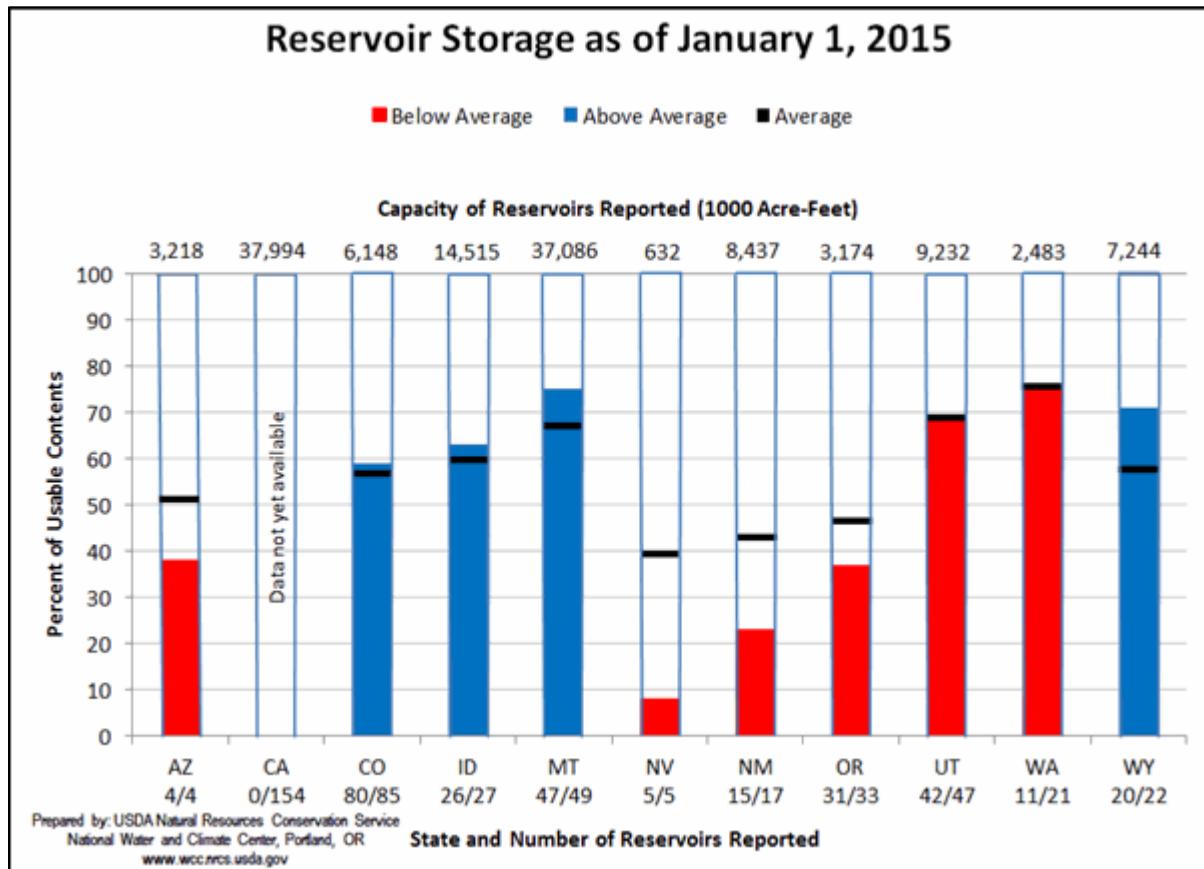
Trends in streamflow forecasts in basins for which daily water supply forecast models are available can be followed at: http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/wsf/daily_forecasts.html

Reservoir Storage

[Reservoir levels](#) are well below average in the Southwest and in Oregon, while they are near to above average elsewhere in the West.

Further data and charts are available at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/wsf/wsf-reservoir.html>

Data for California are summarized at: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/reservoirs/STORSUM>



State Reports

Click a state name to view the full report

Alaska: The snowpack across most of Alaska is well below normal, with most areas having less than half of normal snowpack. The exceptions are north of the Brooks Range and parts of the Tanana Valley, which are near normal. The first full report for Alaska will be available in February.

Arizona: The snowpack is getting a slow start and is currently extremely low. Fall precipitation was also well below normal. These are the primary drivers of the below median streamflow forecasts for the spring runoff period.

California: Significant rains in December have added much-needed moisture to soils and added some water to reservoirs, but drought conditions still hold due to low snowpack and low storage for this time of year. The full report for California will be available after mid-month.

Colorado: A few big storm systems brought significant snow accumulation to Colorado's mountains just in time for the Christmas holiday, and boosted the statewide snowpack totals to 99% of median as of January 1.

Idaho: Idaho's winter snow season is off to a normal start. Most streams are forecast in the 90-115% of average range. Irrigation supplies should be adequate in most areas, although only marginally so in the Big Wood, Big Lost, Little Lost, Oakley, and Salmon Falls basins.

Montana: Snowpack began accumulating in the mountains a few weeks later than normal this water year, but two storms at the end of November and December raised most areas in the state from well below normal snowpack conditions in mid-November to above normal on January 1.

Nevada: After three years of drought, this winter's snowpack across the state is variable. Parts of north central Nevada, such as the Upper Humboldt River basin, have near or above normal snow, while in the Sierra Nevada, which produces northwestern Nevada's water supplies, the dry cycle of the recent past is being repeated. Reservoir storage is very low across the state, making the need for more snow critical this winter.

New Mexico: Heading into the fifth consecutive year of below average precipitation, New Mexico continues to have both water supply and snowpack levels well below normal. Without much-needed storms in January, water users should be prepared for very low runoff totals again this year.

Oregon: A wide variety of snowpack and water supply conditions exist across Oregon. The fall and early winter has been unusually warm, and all regions of the state have experienced above average precipitation. Western and central Oregon received more rain than snow in many areas and currently have well below normal snowpack as a result. Eastern Oregon's temperatures remained cold enough to receive near normal amounts of snow in most areas, although there are some areas with below normal snowpack.

Utah: Water supply conditions in southern Utah are much below normal, whereas both central and northern Utah are near normal.

Washington: Warm and wet has been the pattern for most of the first three months of water year 2015, leading to more rain than snow. A couple of cold snaps in November and December brought some snow to the mountains but barely enough to open ski areas by Christmas.

Wyoming: First of the year forecasts suggest overall near normal water supply conditions in Wyoming.

For More Information

The USDA-NRCS National Water and Climate Center website provides the latest available snowpack and water supply information. Please visit us at: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>