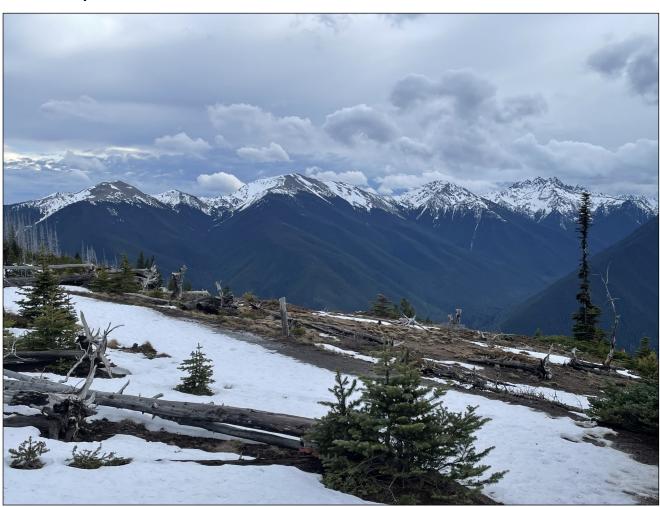




# **Washington Water Supply Outlook Report**

February 1, 2024



Above-freezing temperatures during the latter half of January contributed to a receding snowline at Hurricane Ridge on the Olympic Peninsula. As of February 1st, snowpack is 25% of normal at Waterhole SNOTEL station located in the Elwha watershed.

Photo taken by Bill Baccus, Olympic National Park (January 30, 2024)

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#### **Contact for Report**

Matt Warbritton
Supervisory Hydrologist
Portland Data Collection Office
USDA-NRCS Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program
matt.warbritton@usda.gov
Phone: (503) 307-2829

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## **Conditions Overview**

#### Summary

January was a month of stark contrast. While it began with low snowpack and higher-than-normal temperatures—historically characteristic of a strong El Niño, a destabilized polar jet stream swept across the region starting on 1/7. This brought unseasonably cold temperatures and much needed snow accumulation in the mountains. Stations in the Washington Cascades received nearly 5.2 ft of snow in the southern region and up to 2.8 ft in the north, in northeastern WA up to 1.3 ft, and in the Olympic Peninsula up to 2.6 ft.

However, in mid-January, El Niño once again dominated the weather pattern, with temperatures becoming anomalously warm and atmospheric rivers bringing rain to higher elevations in the mountains. Early in the 2nd half of January, notably at SNOTEL sites in the Puget Sound Basin, minor rain-on-snow events and above-freezing temperatures likely warmed the snowpack, increasing its susceptibility to melting. Then, on 1/26, a major storm impacted the state which result-ed in substantial melting of snowpack at several SNOTEL stations. Significant melting continued as a mid-winter heatwave proceeded the storm. Some higher elevation stations in the Washington Cascades lost as much as 8 inches of snow water equivalent (SWE; a measure of the water content stored in snowpack) during this period. A few stations in the Olympic Peninsula and along the western front of the Cascades recorded their largest or 2nd largest decline in snowpack on record for the 2nd half of January. Due to active storm patterns in January water year-to-date precipitation as percent of normal improved at most SNOTEL sites.

Water supply forecasts overall were marginally impacted by conditions in January, mostly due to the still comparatively low predictive skill of early season forecasts. The summer outlook for water supply will come into clearer focus, with predictive skill for forecasts improving, as the historic period of peak snowpack (between mid-March and early April) approaches.

\*Note that basin conditions outlined in this report include data from stations within the SNOTEL and SNOLITE network, and/or cooperator weather stations.



Kevin Johnson, Watershed Inspector, records manual snow measurements to groundtruth automated data produced by the Skookum Creek SNOTEL site located in the Tolt watershed.

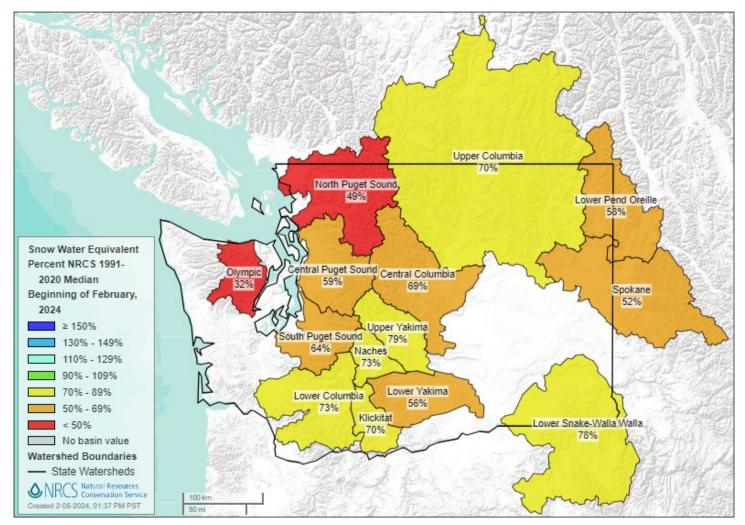
As of February 1st, snowpack is 38% of normal at Skookum Creek SNOTEL.

Photo taken by Mark Hopf, Seattle Public Utilities (January 29, 2023)

#### **Snowpack**

While colder storms in the first half of January provided a much needed boost to snowpack across the state, warmer temperatures and rain-on-snow in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half pared back some gains, and in some cases erased gains altogether. Substantial melting occurred across the western front of the Cascades, the Olympic Peninsula, and near Mt. Baker. Some other stations did experience some melting, but snowpack at those stations generally remained more stable.

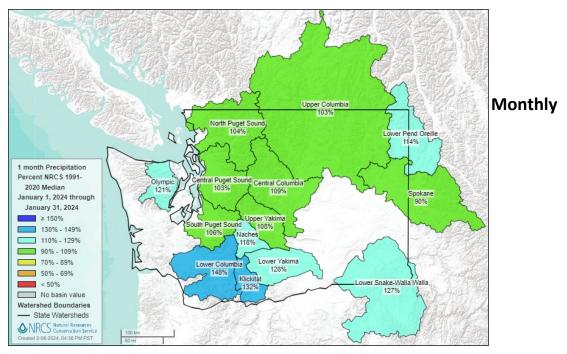
Snowpack at most SNOTEL stations in Washington is below to well-below normal, with only a few stations near normal. Several sites from the Olympic Peninsula, across the northern Cascades and toward the Idaho border, and including stations in the northern Blue Mountains, are experiencing a snow drought.



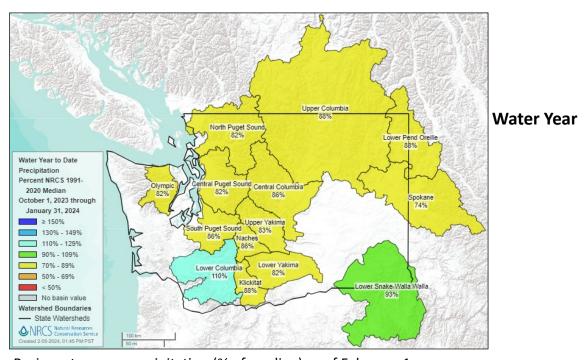
Basin snowpack (% of median) as of February 1.

#### Precipitation

January precipitation across Washington varied, with most sites near to above normal due to active storm patterns throughout much of the month. Near to above-normal monthly precipitation improved WYTD precipitation deficits across the central and northern Washington Cascades and the Olympic Peninsula; however, slight to moderate deficits still persist in those regions. WYTD precipitation is near to above normal for most of the southern Cascades, Wenatchee Mountains, and much of northeastern Washington.



Basin monthly precipitation (% of median) as of February 1

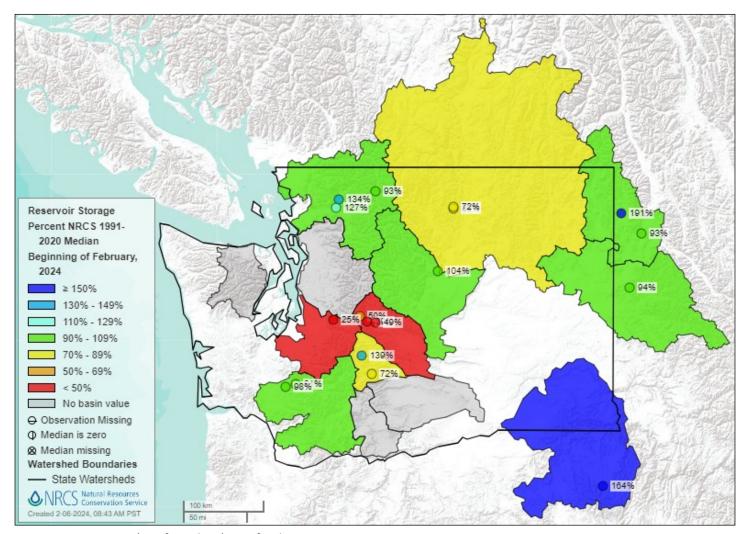


Basin water-year precipitation (% of median) as of February 1

#### **Reservoirs**

Volumetric storage for reservoirs across Washington is variable, ranging from 134% at Upper Baker to 25% of normal at Howard Hanson. Reservoir storage values, notably this early in the season, aren't necessarily reflective of water supply conditions.

Reservoir operators control for a variety of factors when choosing to store or release water, including flooding, irrigation, fisheries, and other water needs. These management needs may impact storage values for a reservoir.



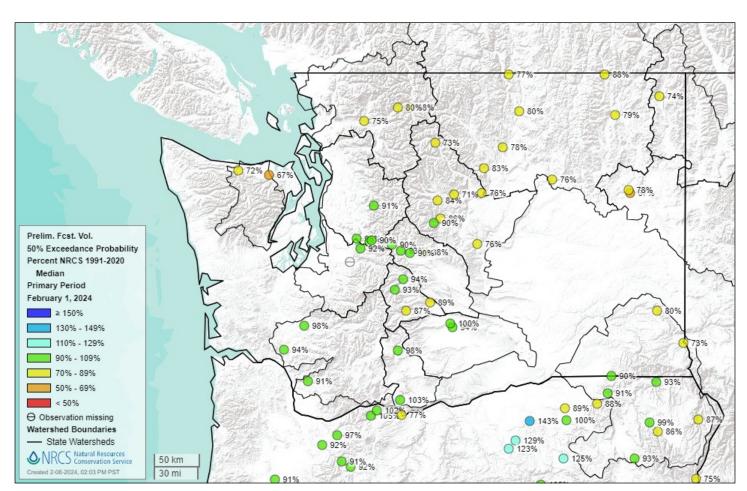
Reservoir storage (% of median) as of February 1

#### **Streamflow**

Volumetric streamflow across Washington varies. Streamflow at stream gage sites near the I-90 corridor in the Cascades is near to below normal, including lower-elevation stream gage sites in the Yakima watershed. Elsewhere, streamflow is generally near to above normal.

As of February 1st, water supply forecasts (WSF) have generally improved since January 1st across much of the central and southern Washington Cascades. Some WSFs have declined but remain mostly slightly below normal across the Olympic Peninsula and into northeastern Washington. While there have been some marginal improvements and degradation in regions, predictive skill for most WSFs remains comparatively low (i.e., current conditions are a poor predictor for summer water supply) this early in the season. The 50%-exceedance for WSFs tends nearer the climatological normal when predictive skill is sufficiently low, which may or may not be more inclusively reflective of conditions. As the season progresses, the predictive skill of most WSFs will improve as the historic period of peak snowpack (between mid-March and early April) approaches. Forecast-product users should bear this and any model uncertainty (quantitatively captured by exceedance intervals) in mind when interpreting WSFs for decision making.

View the map for January observed streamflow here.

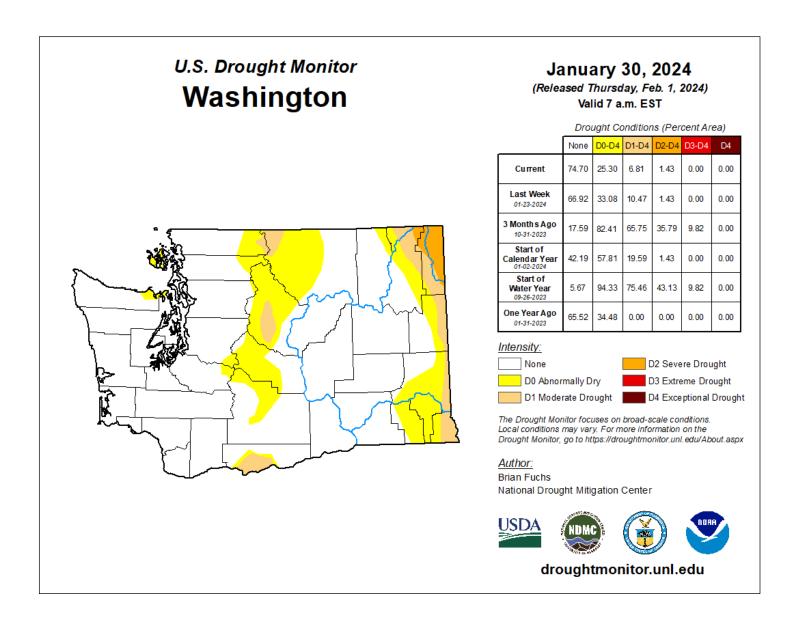


Streamflow forecasts (% of normal) for the primary period as of February 1

#### **Drought**

Drought distribution in Washington is primarily distributed along the Washington and Idaho border, with are-as of drought along the leeward side of the Cascades. As of January 30th, nearly 7% of the state is in some drought category (D1-D2, Moderate to Extreme Drought), with no extreme to exceptional drought.

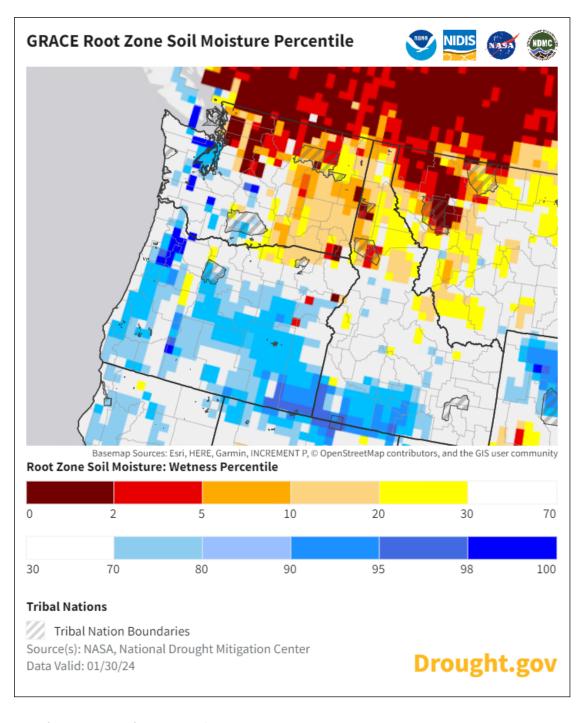
At the beginning of the water year, 75% of the state was in some drought category (D1-D4), and 43% of the state in severe to extreme drought (D2-D4).



#### **Soils**

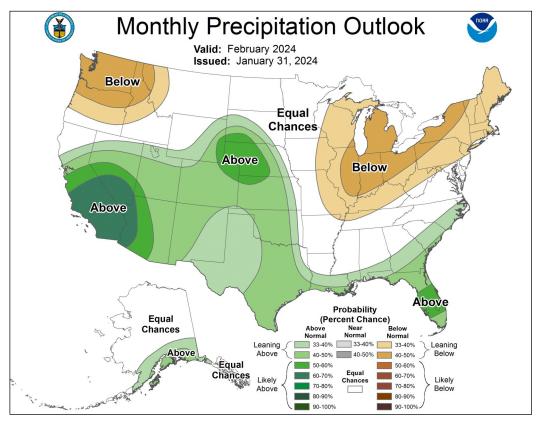
The NASA GRACE product for root-zone soil moisture indicates dry soil profiles in the northern Cascades and more moderately dry profiles across eastern Washington.

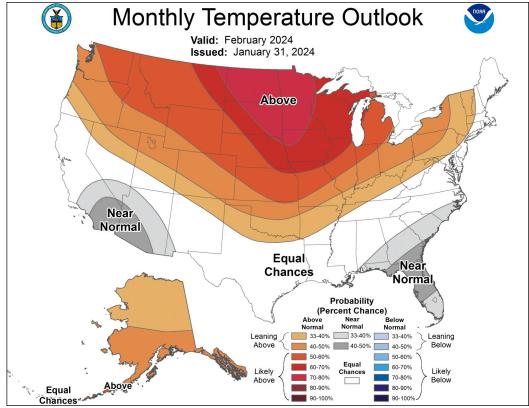
Soil moisture conditions are useful in assessing current drought and future drought potential. In addition, soil moisture is generally a good indicator of the efficiency of snowmelt runoff into streamflow in the spring. Drier soils tend to absorb more water from snowmelt than wetter soils, thus less melt is translated into streamflow (i.e. low efficiency). Soil moisture is generally restored each year during the late fall and early winter before precipitation falls predominantly as snow. Therefore, early-season soil moisture can be essential for increasing runoff efficiency in the spring.



#### 1-Month Outlook

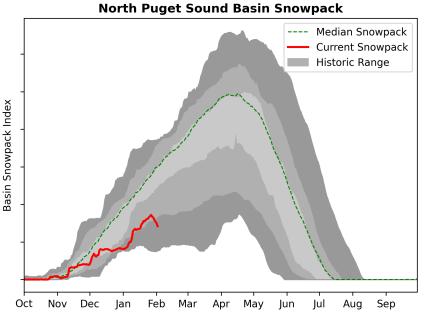
The Climate Prediction Center's 1-month climatic outlook calls for a greater chance of above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation across Washington.





# **North Puget Sound Basin Summary**

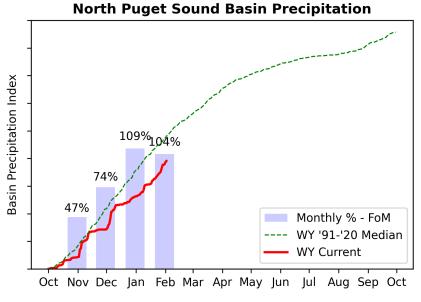
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 49% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 43% of median.

## **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

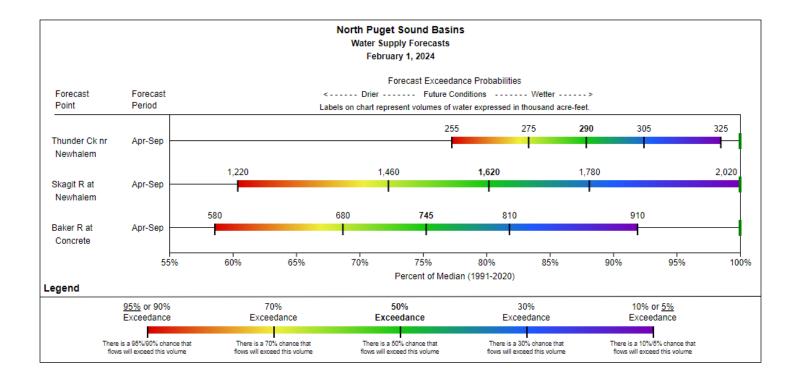
February precipitation is slightly above normal at 104% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 82% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Upper Baker Reservoir is 134% of median. Volumetric storage at Lake Shannon is 127% of median, and 93% of median at Ross Lake.

	North Puget Sound	Current	Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
	North Puget Sound		(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Upper Baker		134.7	90.1	100.2					134%	90%
Lake Shannon		127.4	74.0	100.0					127%	74%
Ross		922.4	848.4	995.6	1434.7	64%	59%	69%	93%	85%
	Basin Index	(				64%	59%	69%	99%	85%
	# of reservoirs	5				1	1	1	3	3

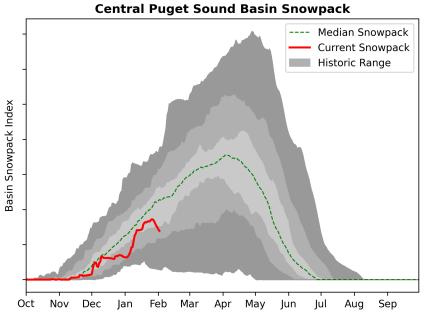
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 75% to 88% of median.



# **Central Puget Sound Basin Summary**

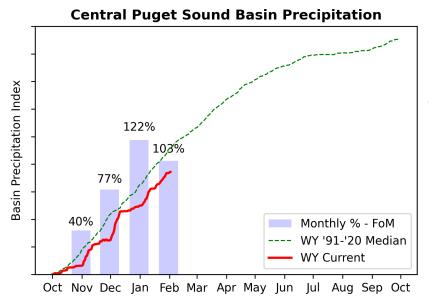
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 59% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 49% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



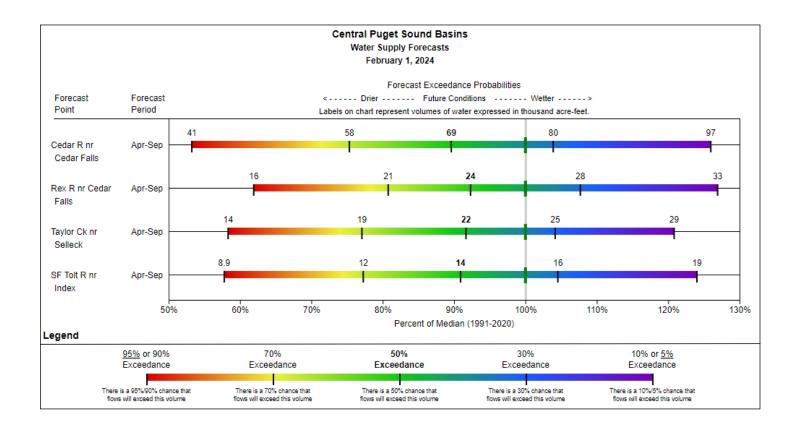
► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

February precipitation is slightly above normal at 103% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 82% of median.

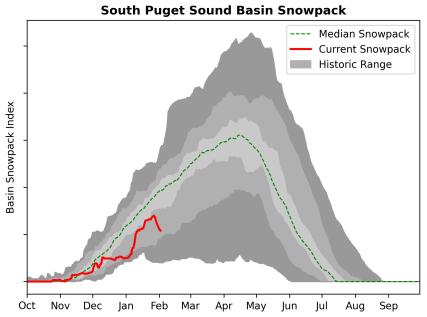
## **STREAMFLOW FORECAST**

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are near normal and range from 90% to 96% of median.



## **South Puget Sound Basin Summary**

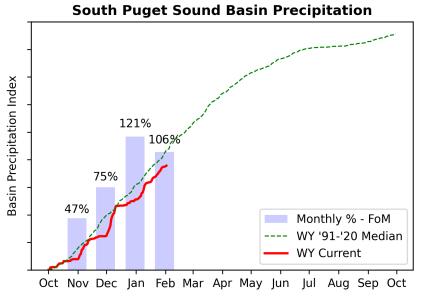
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 64% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 48% of median.

## **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

February precipitation is slightly above normal at 106% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 86% of median.

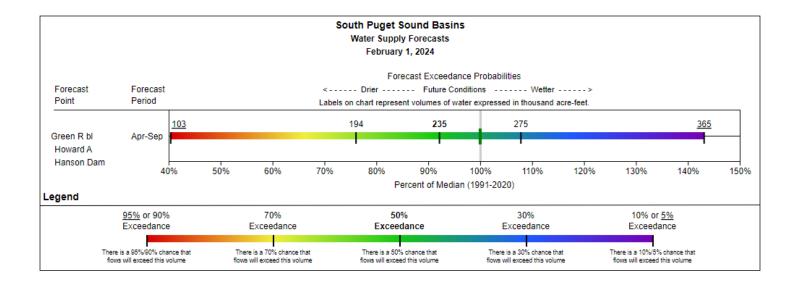
As of February 1, storage at Howard Hanson Reservoir is below normal at 25% of median.

South Puget Sound	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Median (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)	Current % Capacity	Last Year % Capacity	Median % Capacity	Current % Median	Last Year % Median
Howard Hansen	0.5	0.5	2.0					25%	23%
Basin Inde	ex				%	%	%	25%	23%
# of reservoi	rs				0	0	0	1	1

## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

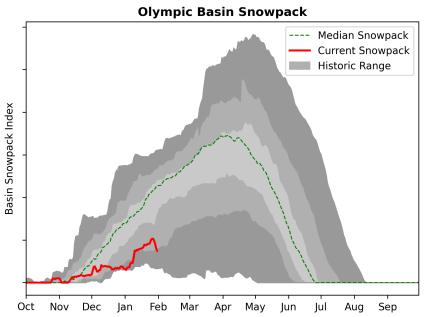
The April through September streamflow forecast for Green R bl Howard Hanson Dam is 92% of median.

For data in tabular format, non-primary period data, and data for the new forecast point above, please view the basin data reports <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>.



# **Olympic Basin Summary**

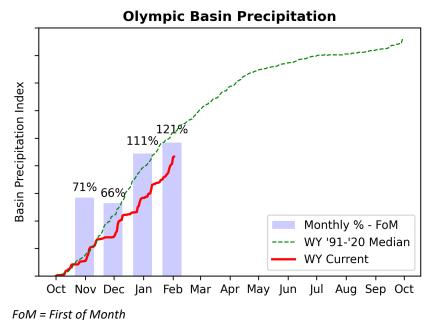
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <u>here</u>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 32% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 23% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**

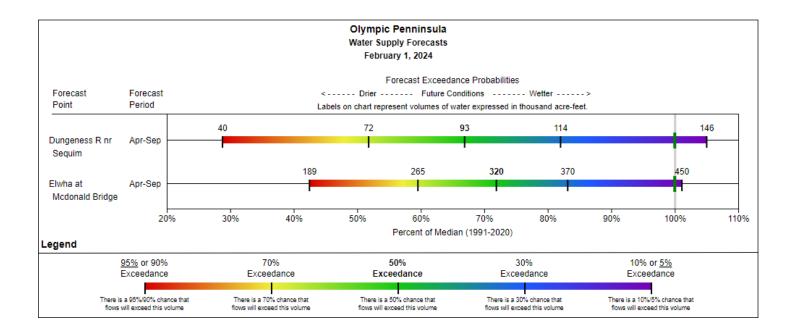


► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

February precipitation is above normal at 121% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 82% of median.

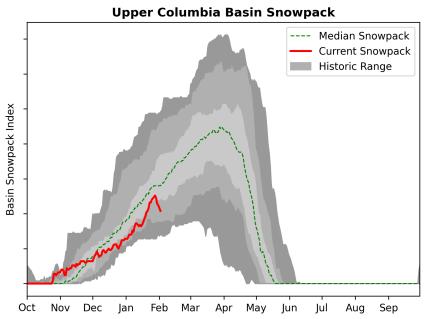
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin range from 67% to 72% of median.



# **Upper Columbia Basin Summary**

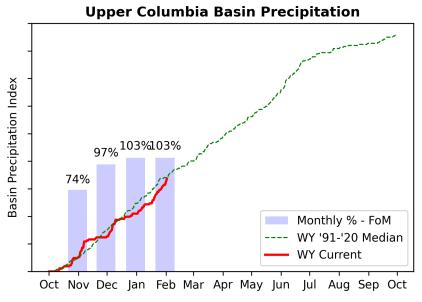
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 70% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 59% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

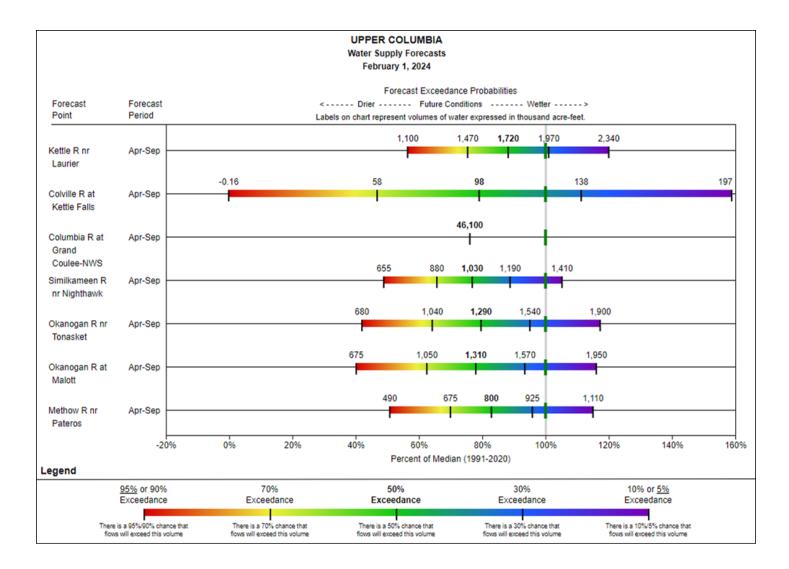
February precipitation is slightly above normal at 103% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 88% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Conconully Reservoir is below normal at 83% of median. Volumetric storage at Conconully Lake (Salmon Lake Dam) is 72% of median.

Hanar Calumbia	Current	Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
Upper Columbia	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Conconully Lake (Salmon Lake Dam)	5.6	6.5	7.8	10.5	54%	62%	74%	72%	83%
Conconully Reservoir	7.0	7.4	8.4	13.0	54%	57%	65%	83%	88%
	Basin Index				54%	59%	69%	78%	86%
#	# of reservoirs				2	2	2	2	2

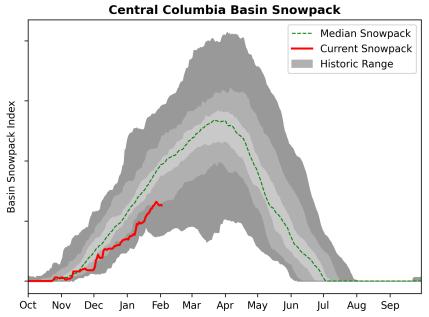
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 76% to 88% of median.



# **Central Columbia Basin Summary**

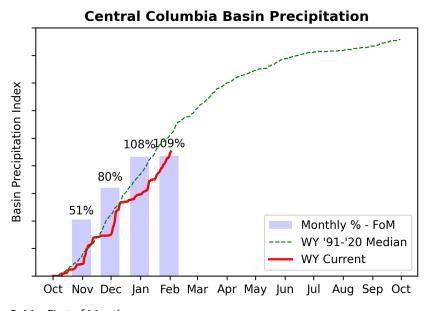
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 69% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 63% of median.

## **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

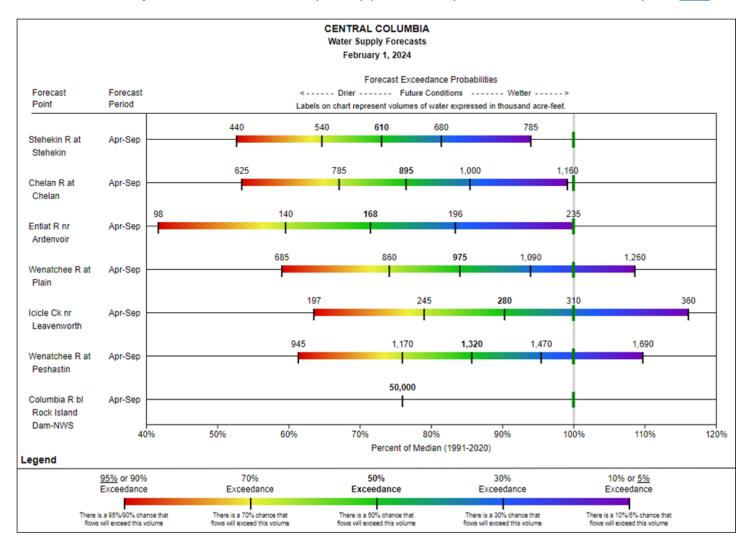
February precipitation is slightly above normal at 109% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 86% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Lake Chelan is slightly above normal at 104% of median.

	Central Columbia	Current	Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
	Central Columbia	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Lake Chelan		325.6	248.2	314.3	677.4	48%	37%	46%	104%	79%
	Basin Inde	ex				48%	37%	46%	104%	79%
	# of reservoi	rs				1	1	1	1	1

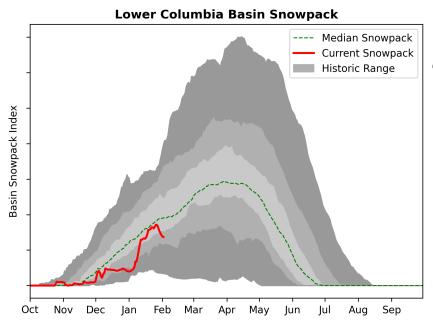
#### STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 71% to 90% of median.



# **Lower Columbia Basin Summary**

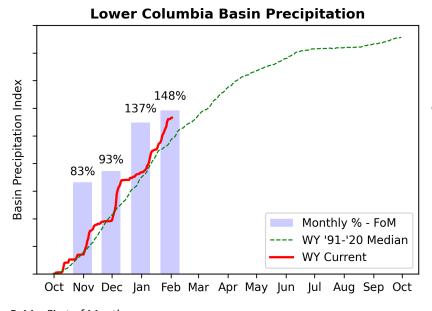
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 73% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 44% of median.

## **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report here.

FoM = First of Month

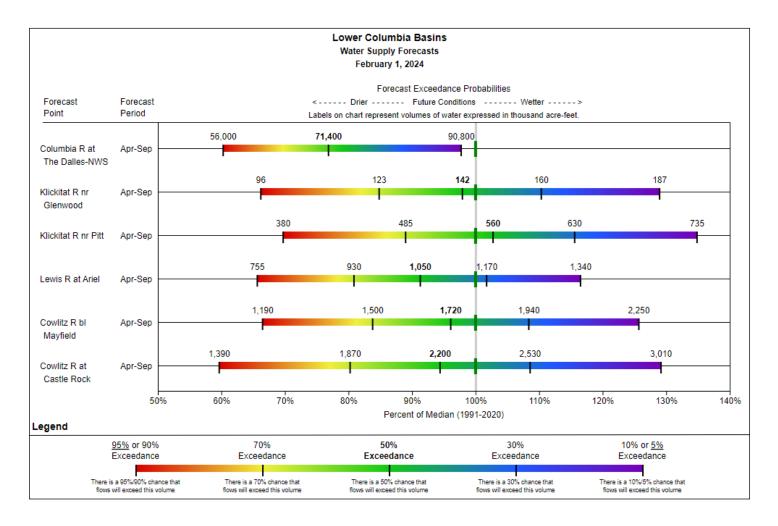
February precipitation is above normal at 148% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 110% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Mossyrock Dam (Riffe Lake) is below normal at 91% of median. Volumetric storage at Mayfield Lake is slightly below normal at 98% of median.

Lower Columbia	Current	Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
Lower Columbia	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Mayfield	125.1	129.6	128.2					98%	101%
Mossyrock Dam (Riffe Lk)	802.9	489.8	8.088					91%	56%
Basin Inde	X				%	%	%	92%	61%
# of reservoir	S				0	0	0	2	2

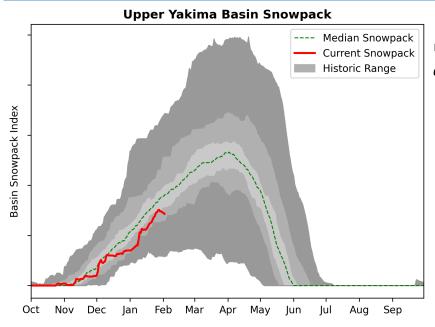
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are near normal and range from 91% to 98% of median.



# **Upper Yakima Basin Summary**

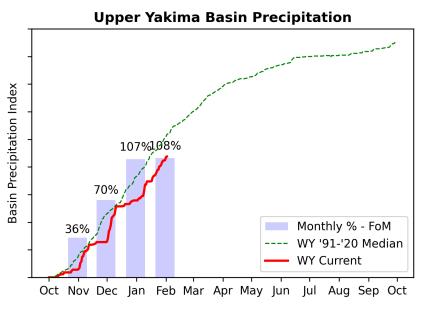
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 79% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 65% of median.

## **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <u>here</u>.

FoM = First of Month

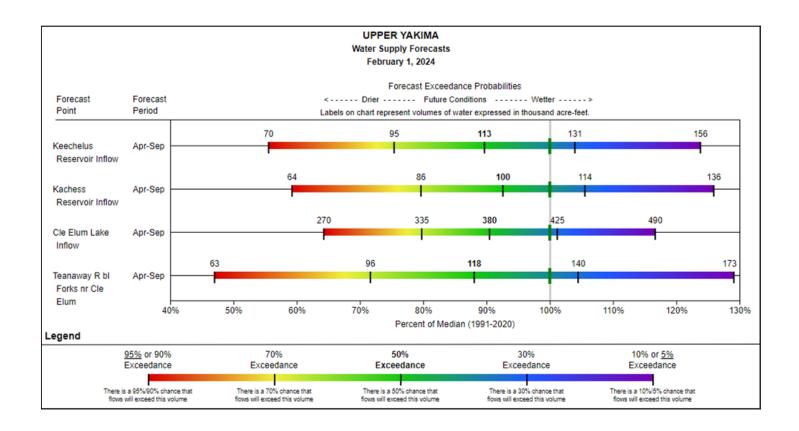
February precipitation is above slightly normal at 108% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 83% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Keechelus Reservoir is below normal at 59% of median. Volumetric storage at Cle Elum Reservoir is 49% of median, and 39% of median at Kachess Reservoir.

	Upper Yakima		Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
			(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Keechelus		49.7	58.9	84.3	157.8	31%	37%	53%	59%	70%
Cle Elum		101.8	175.6	208.1	436.9	23%	40%	48%	49%	84%
Kachess		56.5	134.7	143.5	239.0	24%	56%	60%	39%	94%
	Basin Index					25%	44%	52%	48%	85%
	# of reservoirs	3				3	3	3	3	3

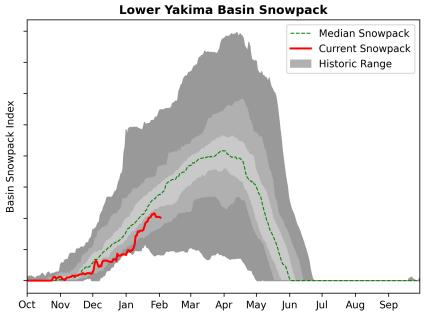
#### STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 88% to 93% of median.



# **Lower Yakima Basin Summary**

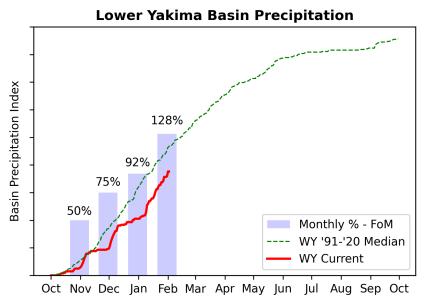
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 56% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 36% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



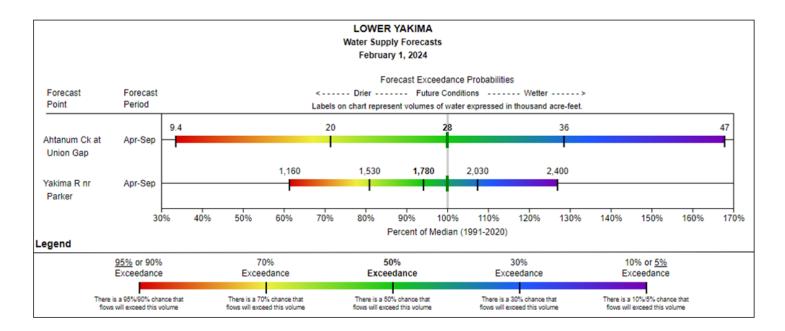
► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report here.

FoM = First of Month

February precipitation is above normal at 128% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 82% of median.

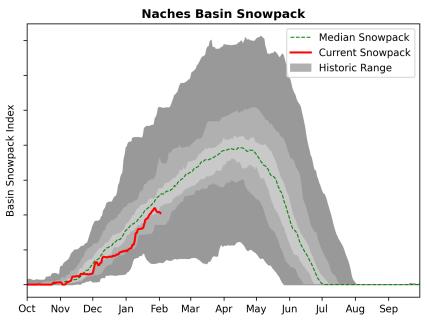
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are near normal and range from 94% to 100% of median.



# **Naches Basin Summary**

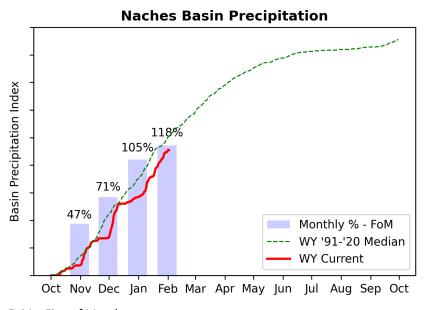
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 73% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 55% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <u>here</u>.

FoM = First of Month

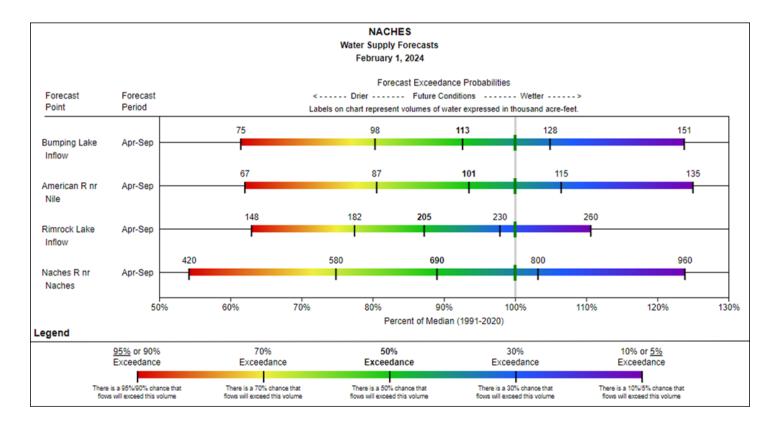
February precipitation is above normal at 118% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 86% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Bumping Lake is above normal at 139% of median. Volumetric storage at Rimrock Lake is below normal at 72% of median.

	Naches		Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
Nacnes		(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Rimrock		90.6	112.2	125.6	198.0	46%	57%	63%	72%	89%
Bumping Lake		20.9	15.9	15.1	33.7	62%	47%	45%	139%	105%
	Basin Index					48%	55%	61%	79%	91%
	# of reservoirs					2	2	2	2	2

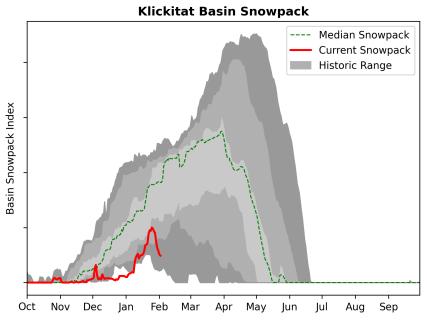
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 87% to 94% of median.



# **Klickitat Basin Summary**

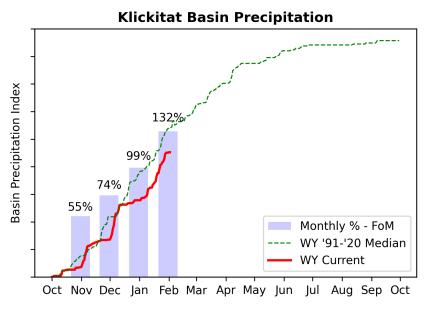
## SNOWPACK



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <u>here</u>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 70% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 46% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



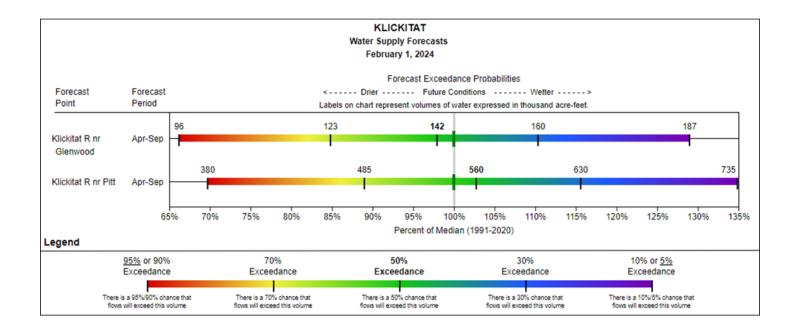
► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

February precipitation is above normal at 132% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 88% of median.

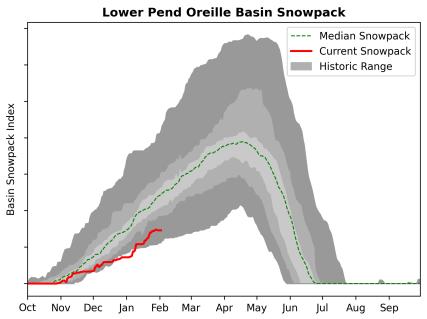
## **STREAMFLOW FORECAST**

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are near normal and range from 98% to 103% of median.



# **Lower Pend Oreille Basin Summary**

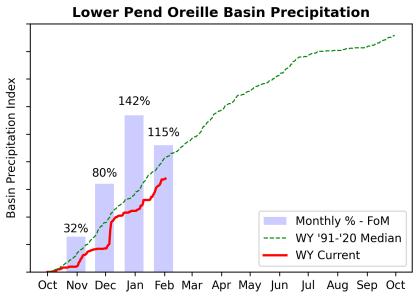
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 58% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 49% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

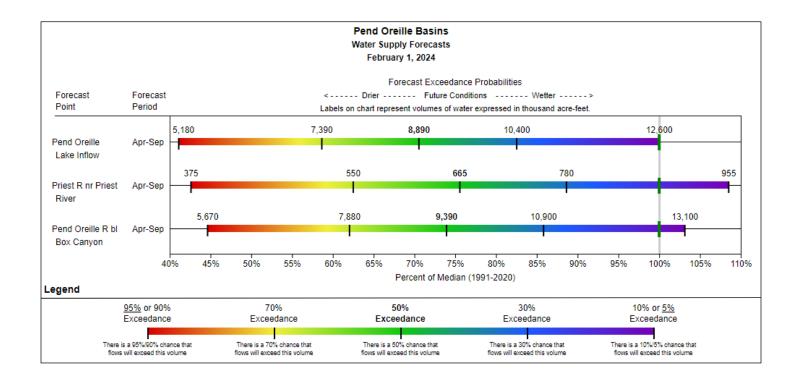
February precipitation is above normal at 114% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 88% of median.

As of February 1, storage at Priest Lake is above normal at 191% of median. Volumetric storage at Lower Pend Oreille Lake is slightly below normal at 93% of median.

Lower Pend Oreille	Current	Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
Lower Pend Orellie	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Lake Pend Oreille	584.0	611.1	630.8	1561.3	37%	39%	40%	93%	97%
Priest Lake	105.4	50.1	55.3	119.3	88%	42%	46%	191%	91%
Basin Inde	X				41%	39%	41%	100%	96%
# of reservoir	S				2	2	2	2	2

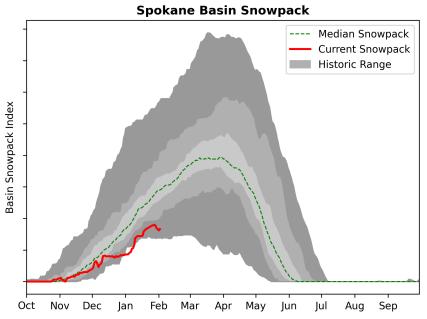
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 71% to 76% of median.



# **Spokane Basin Summary**

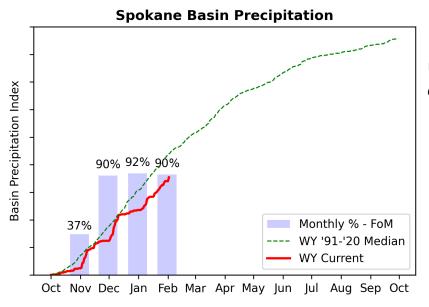
## **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 52% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 47% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

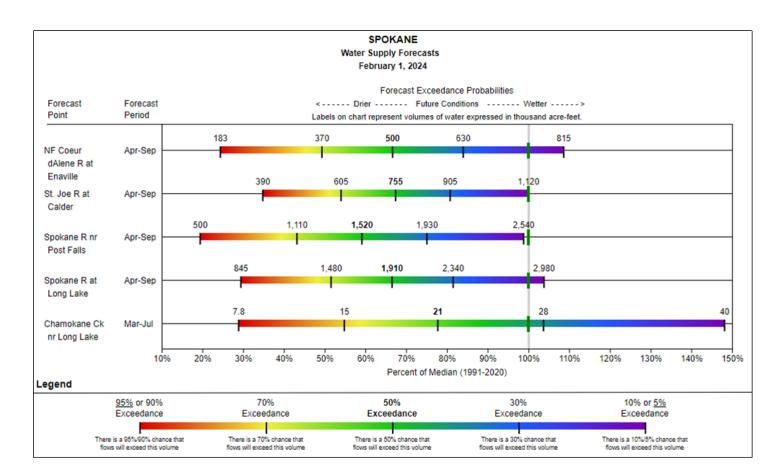
February precipitation is below normal at 90% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 74% of median.

As of February 1, volumetric storage at Lake Coeur d' Alene is slightly below normal at 94% of median.

	Spokane		Last Year	Median	Capacity	Current %	Last Year %	Median %	Current %	Last Year %
Spokane		(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	(KAF)	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Median	Median
Lake Coeur d' Alene		100.3	49.0	106.7	238.5	42%	21%	45%	94%	46%
	Basin Index					42%	21%	45%	94%	46%
	# of reservoirs					1	1	1	1	1

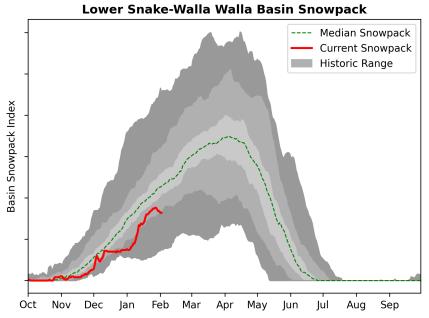
## STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 59% to 78% of median.



# **Lower Snake-Walla Walla Basin Summary**

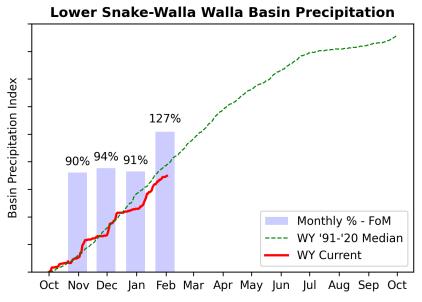
#### **SNOWPACK**



► View snowpack for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <u>here</u>.

As of February 1, the basin snowpack is 78% of median. This is slightly higher than January 1 when the basin snowpack was 54% of median.

#### **PRECIPITATION**



► View precipitation for individual sites by accessing the basin data report <a href="here">here</a>.

FoM = First of Month

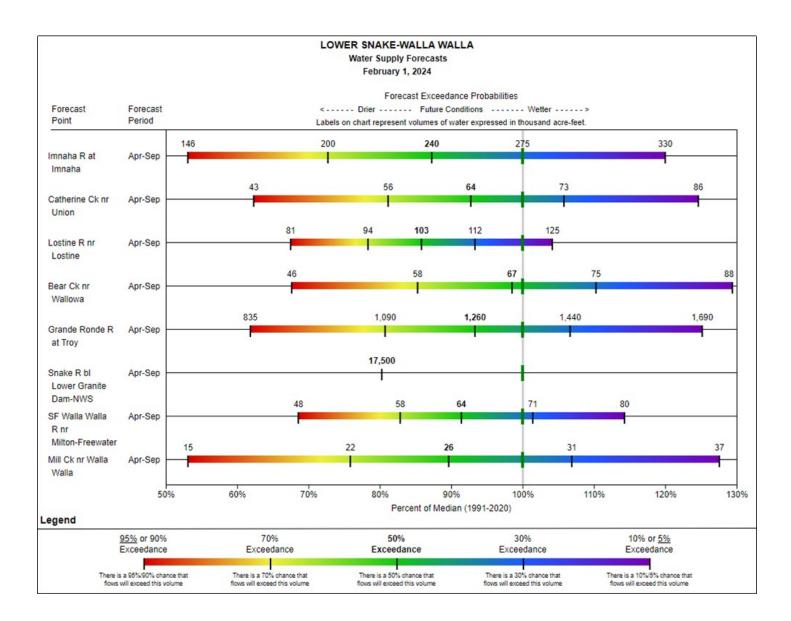
February precipitation is above normal at 127% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1 - February 1) is 93% of median.

As of February 1, volumetric storage at Wallowa Lake is above normal at 164% of median.

Lower Snake-Walla Walla	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Median (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)	Current % Capacity	Last Year % Capacity	Median % Capacity	Current % Median	Last Year % Median
Wallowa Lake	26.2	14.9	16.0	37.5	70%	40%	43%	164%	93%
Basin Index					70%	40%	43%	164%	93%
# of reservoirs					1	1	1	1	1

#### STREAMFLOW FORECAST

The April through September streamflow forecasts in the basin are below normal and range from 73% to 99% of median.



#### **Additional Resources**

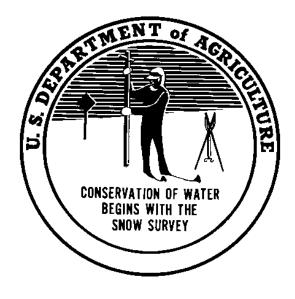
**Interpreting Water Supply Forecast Charts** 

**Water Supply Forecasting** 

**Development and Interpretation of Seasonal Water Supply Forecasts** 

For more water supply and resource management information, contact:

Matt Warbritton
Supervisory Hydrologist
Portland Data Collection Office
USDA-NRCS Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program
matt.warbritton@usda.gov
Phone: (503) 307-2829



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