



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Arizona Basin Outlook Report January 1, 2016



Issued by

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Basin Outlook Reports And Federal – State – Private Cooperative Snow Surveys

How forecasts are made

Most of the annual streamflow in Arizona originates as snowfall that has accumulated in the mountains during the winter and early spring. As the snowpack accumulates, hydrologists estimate the runoff that will occur when it melts. Measurements of snow water equivalent at selected manual snow courses and automated Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) sites, along with precipitation and streamflow values, are used in statistical and simulation models to prepare runoff forecasts. These forecasts are coordinated between hydrologists in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) the National Weather Service, and the Salt River Project.

Forecasts of any kind are not perfect. Streamflow forecast uncertainty arises from three primary sources: (1) uncertainty of future weather conditions, (2) uncertainty in the forecasting procedure, and (3) errors in the data. The forecast, therefore, must be interpreted not as a single value but rather as a range of values with specific probabilities of occurrence. The middle of the range is expressed by the 50% exceedance probability forecast, for which there is a 50% chance that the actual flow will be above, and a 50% chance that the actual flow will be below, this value. To describe the expected range around this 50% value, four other forecasts are provided, two smaller values (90% and 70% exceedance probability) and two larger values (30%, and 10% exceedance probability). For example, there is a 90% chance that the actual flow will be more than the 90% exceedance probability forecast.

The wider the spread among these values, the more uncertain the forecast. As the season progresses, forecasts become more accurate, primarily because a greater portion of the future weather conditions become known. This is reflected by a narrowing of the range around the 50% exceedance probability forecast. Users should take this uncertainty into consideration when making operational decisions by selecting forecasts corresponding to the level of risk they are willing to assume about the amount of water to be expected. If users anticipate receiving a lesser supply of water, or are concerned about having an adequate water supply, they may want to base their decisions on the 90% or 70% exceedance probability forecasts. On the other hand, if users anticipate receiving too much water, or are concerned about the threat of flooding, they may want to base their decisions on the 30% or 10% exceedance probability forecasts. Regardless of the forecast value users choose, they should be prepared to deal with either more or less water.



For more water supply and resource management information, contact:

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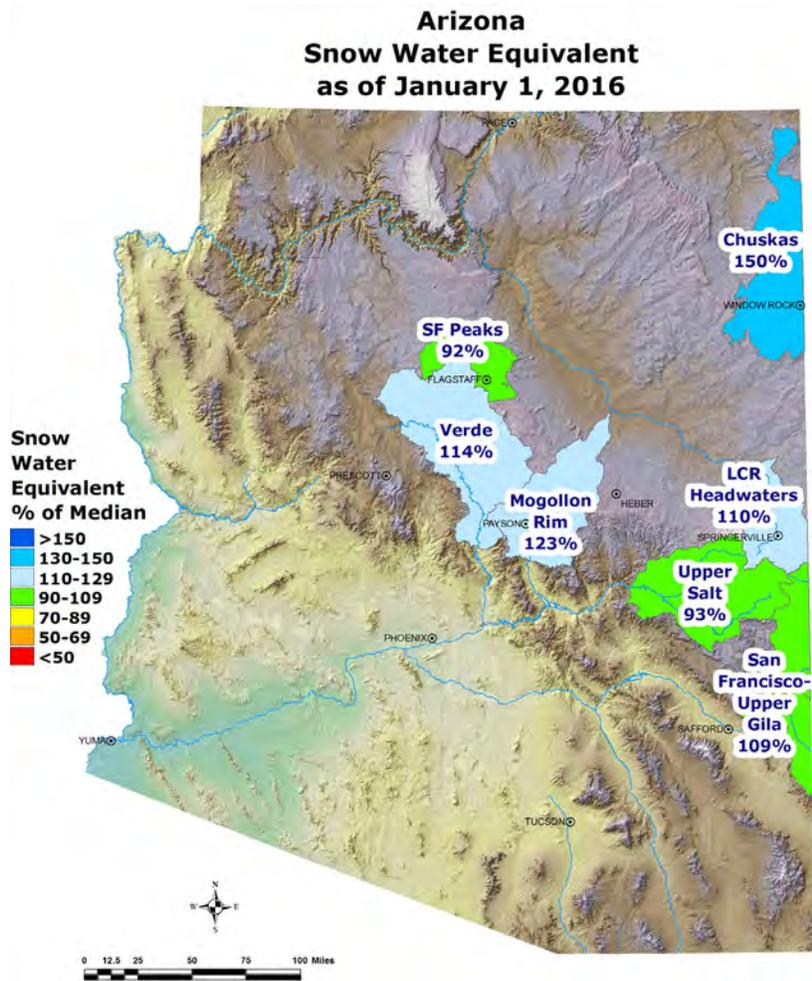
ARIZONA Basin Outlook Report as of January 1, 2016

SUMMARY

As of January 1, snowpack levels are near normal to above normal throughout the state. Precipitation for the month of December was generally below average in the major river basins. The Salt and Verde River reservoir system stands at 50 percent of capacity, while San Carlos Reservoir is at 7 percent of capacity. The first forecast of the season calls for above normal to well above normal streamflow for the spring runoff period.

SNOWPACK

Snow water equivalent levels in the state's major river basins are near normal to above normal, ranging from 93 percent of median in the Salt River Basin to 114 percent of median in the Verde River Basin. Statewide, the snowpack is above normal at 111 percent of median.

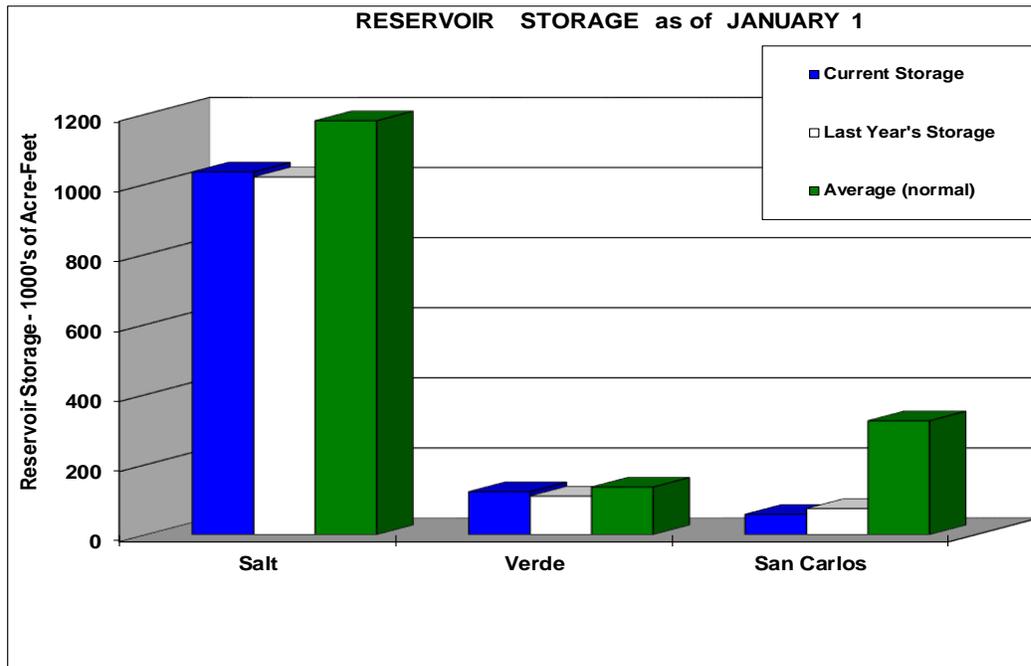


PRECIPITATION

Mountain data from NRCS SNOTEL sites and NWS Cooperator gages show that December precipitation was below normal to slightly above normal throughout the basins, ranging from 69 percent of average in the Verde River Basin to 107 percent of average in the San Francisco – Upper Gila River Basin. However, the months of October and November were exceptionally wet. As a result, cumulative precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1) is above normal in all major basins.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

As of January 1, the Salt and Verde River reservoir system stands at 50 percent of capacity. San Carlos Reservoir is currently at 7 percent of capacity.



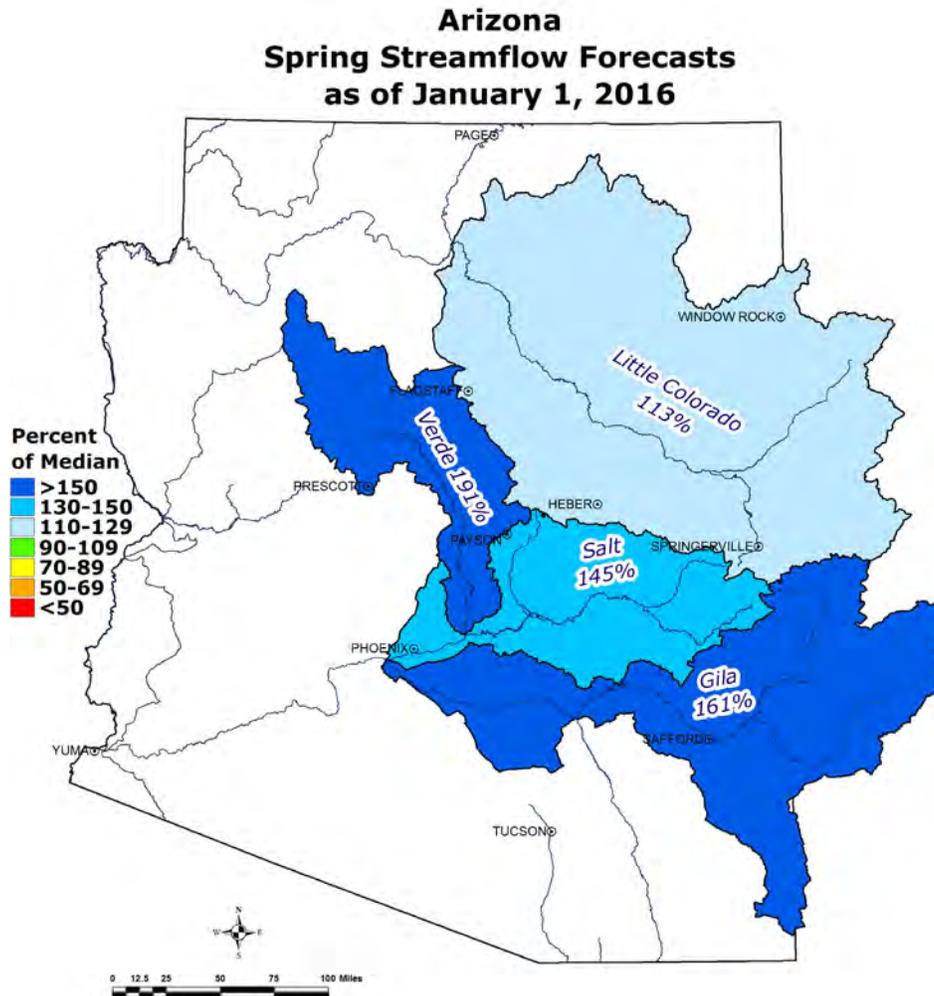
Key storage volumes displayed in thousands of acre-feet (x1000):

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Current Storage</u>	<u>Last Year Storage</u>	<u>30-Year Average</u>	<u>Storage Capacity</u>
Salt River System	1034.9	1020.5	1181.0	2025.8
Verde River System	122.4	110.0	135.7	287.4
San Carlos Reservoir	58.0	74.3	324.9	875.0
Lyman Lake	7.1	4.0	11.8	30.0
Lake Havasu	562.6	511.0	562.7	619.0
Lake Mohave	1580.3	1559.7	1602.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	10095.0	10676.0	20297.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11812.0	11536.7	17745.0	24322.0

STREAMFLOW

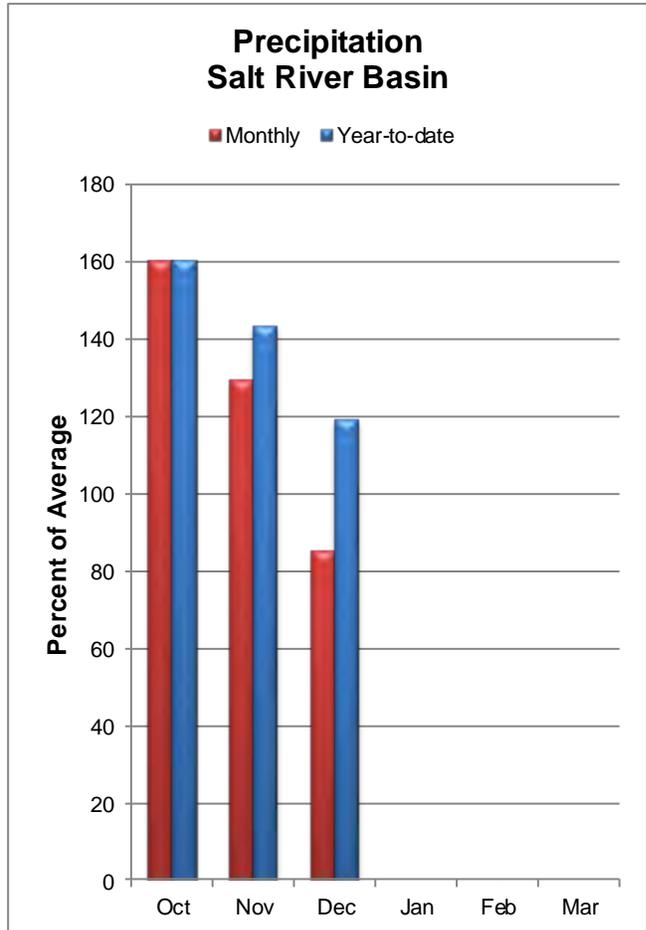
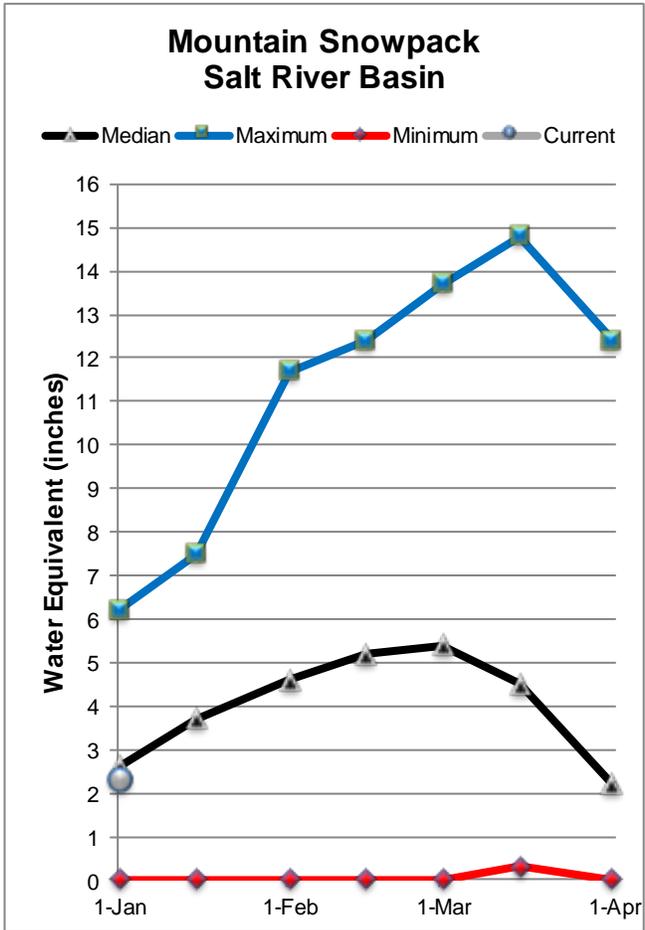
As of January 1, the forecast calls for above normal to well above normal streamflow for the spring runoff period, ranging from 113 percent of median in the Little Colorado River above Lyman Lake to 191 percent of median in the Verde River above Horseshoe Dam.

The initial forecasts for the season are based on several factors. Total precipitation since the beginning of the water year (October 1) has been above average. The current snowpack is near normal to above normal. Finally, meteorologists continue to predict a strong El Nino, which signals a greater likelihood of wet conditions for the remainder of the winter.



SALT RIVER BASIN as of January 1, 2016

Well above normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Salt River, near Roosevelt, the forecast calls for 145% of median streamflow through May, while at Tonto Creek, the forecast calls for 179% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Salt snowpack to be at 93% of median.



Salt River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

SALT RIVER BASIN	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
<hr/>								
Salt R nr Roosevelt ³	JAN	10.6	29	50	208%	79	138	24
	MAR-MAY	171	265	350	146%	450	625	240
	JAN-MAY	198	330	450	145%	595	855	310
Tonto Ck ab Gun Ck nr Roosevelt ³	JAN			8.2	216%			3.8
	JAN-MAY	16.5	44	75	179%	117	205	42

1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%

2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions

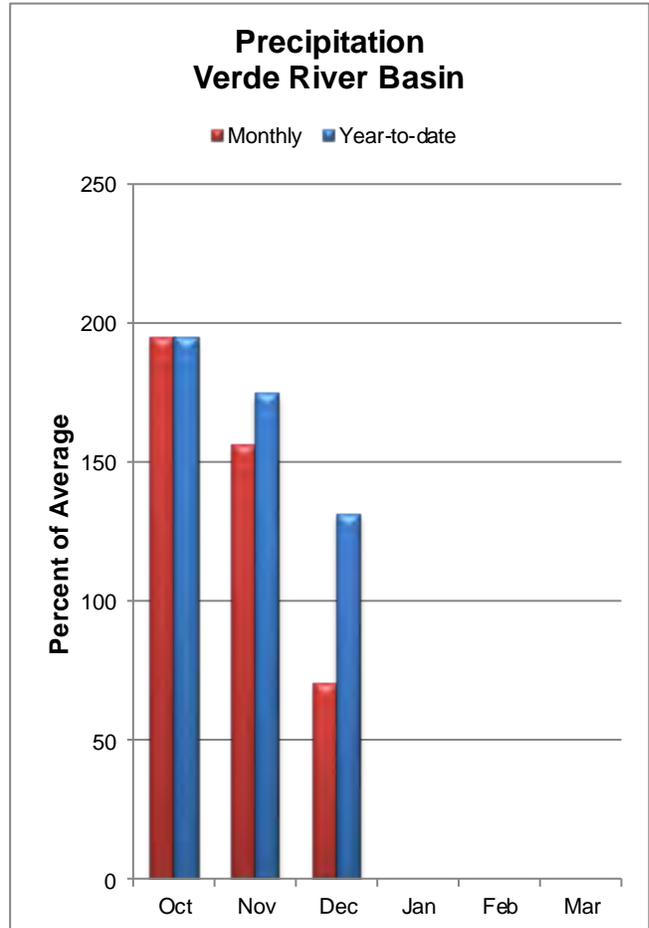
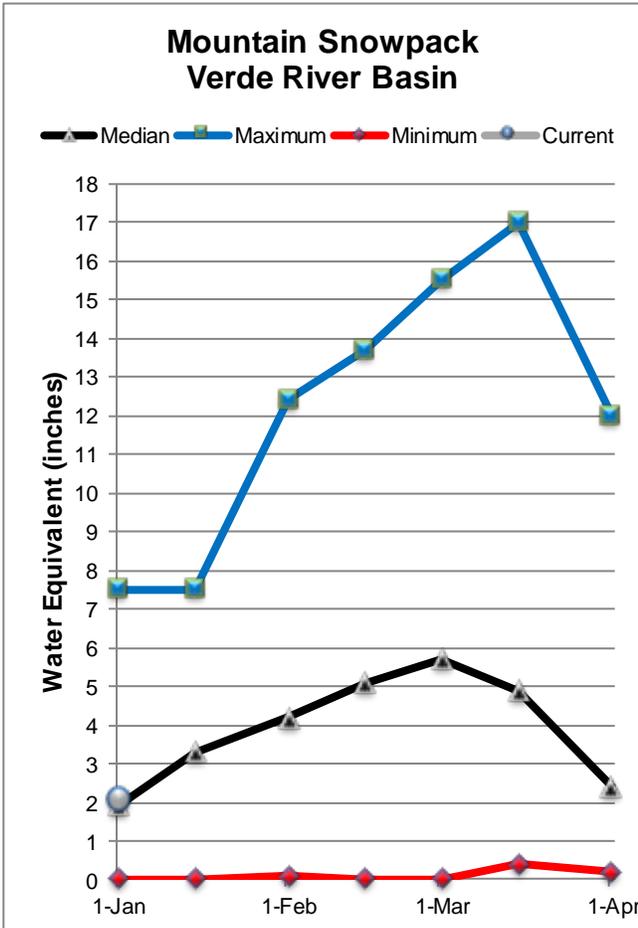
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of December, 2015	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Salt River Reservoir System	1034.9	1020.5	1181.0	2025.8
Basin-wide Total	1034.9	1020.5	1181.0	2025.8
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SALT RIVER BASIN	11	93%	33%

VERDE RIVER BASIN as of January 1, 2016

Well above normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Verde River, at Horseshoe Dam, the forecast calls for 191% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Verde snowpack to be at 114% of median.



Verde River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

VERDE RIVER BASIN	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Verde R bl Tangle Ck ab Horseshoe Dam ³	JAN			42	183%			23
	JAN-MAY	118	215	300	191%	410	610	157

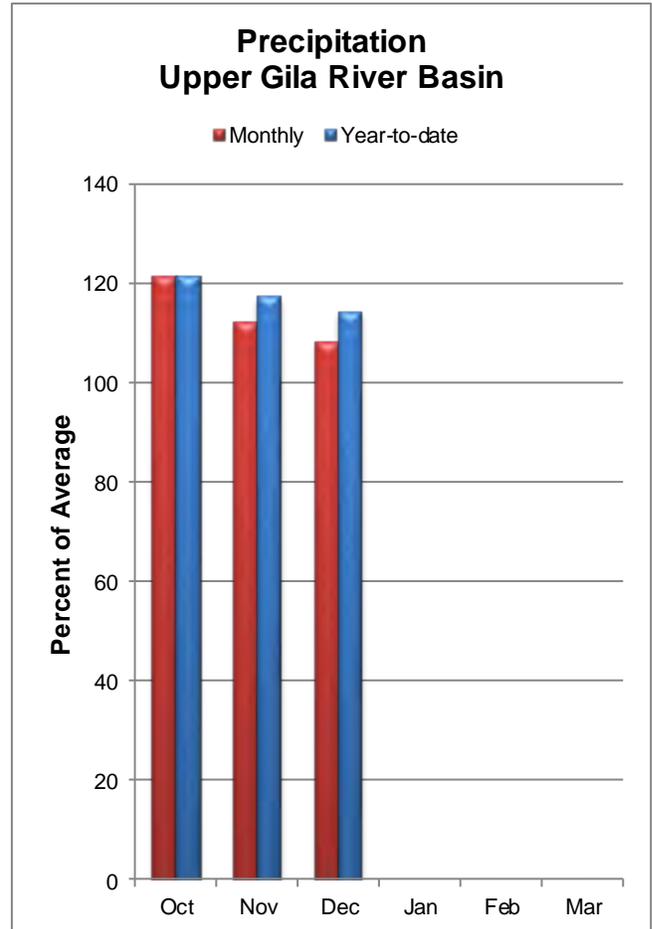
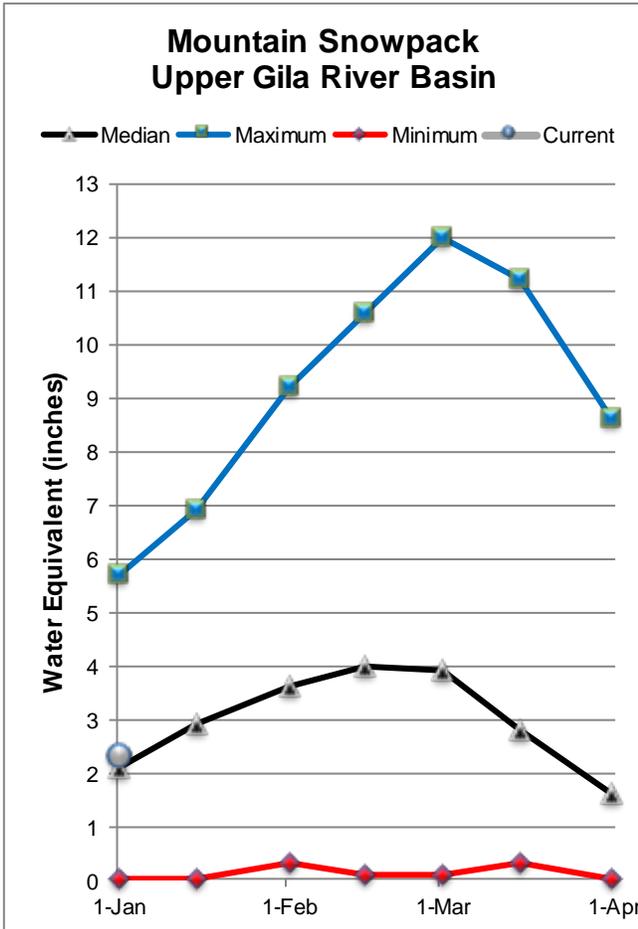
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of December, 2015	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Verde River Reservoir System	122.4	110.0	135.7	287.4
Basin-wide Total	122.4	110.0	135.7	287.4
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
VERDE RIVER BASIN	12	114%	48%

SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN as of January 1, 2016

Above normal to well above normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the San Francisco River, at Clifton, the forecast calls for 116% of median streamflow levels through May. In the Gila River, near Solomon, the forecast calls for 161% of median streamflow levels through May. At San Carlos Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 205% of median through May. Snow survey measurements show the snowpack for this basin to be at 109% of median.



San Francisco-Upper Gila River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Gila R at Gila ³	JAN-MAY	39	61	80	143%	102	142	56
Gila R bl Blue Ck nr Virden ³	JAN-MAY	53	90	122	161%	158	220	76
San Francisco R at Glenwood ³	JAN-MAY	11.2	21	31	148%	43	66	21
San Francisco R at Clifton ³	JAN-MAY	22	48	71	116%	99	149	61
Gila R nr Solomon ³	JAN	13.9	24	33	168%	43	60	19.7
	JAN-MAY	77	152	220	161%	295	430	137
San Carlos Reservoir Inflow ³	JAN-MAY	50	125	195	205%	280	435	95

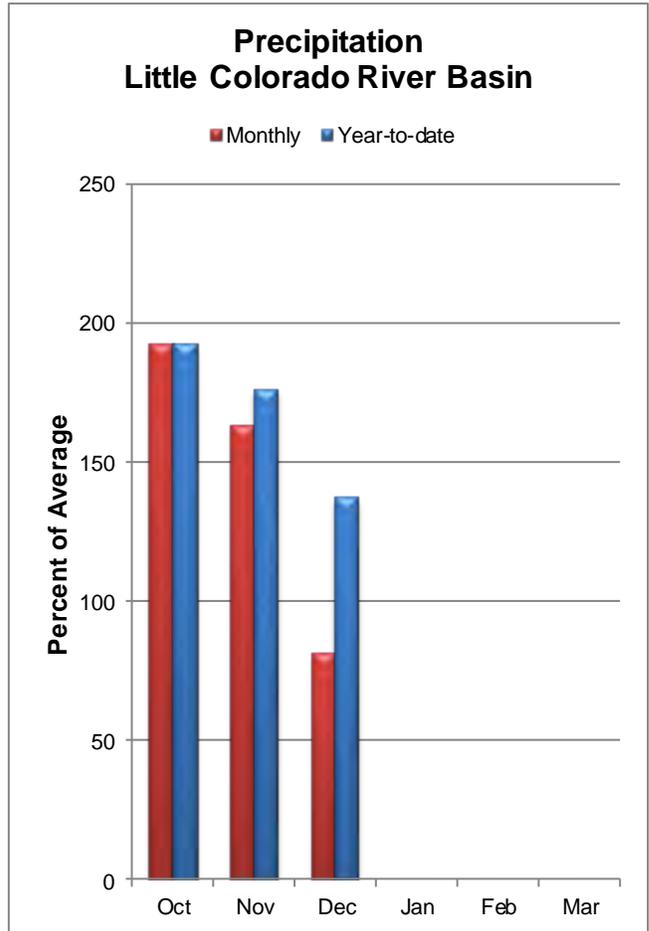
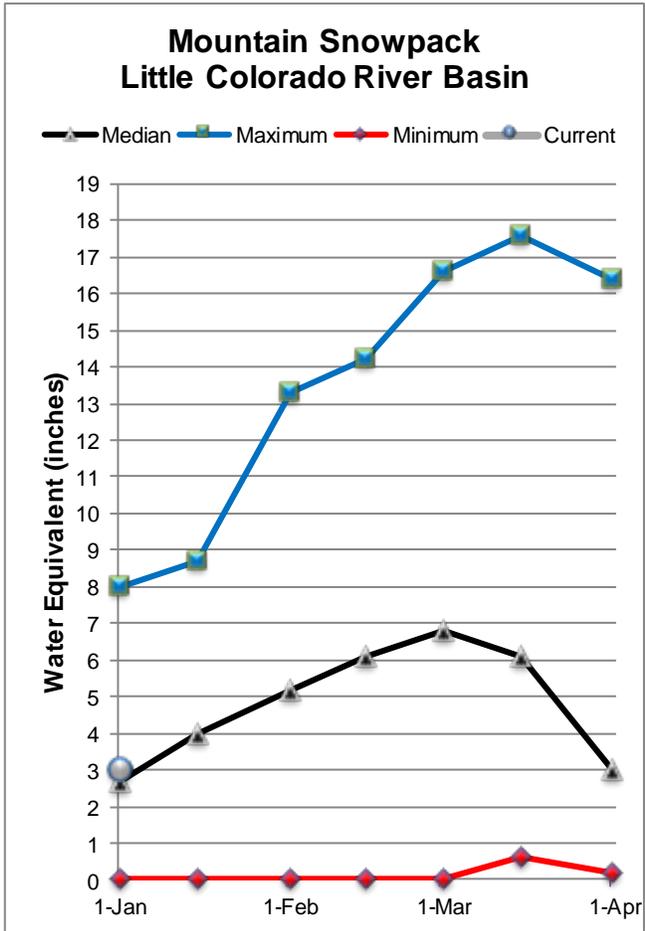
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of December, 2015	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
San Carlos Reservoir	58.0	74.3	324.9	875.0
Basin-wide Total	58.0	74.3	324.9	875.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN	10	109%	33%

LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN as of January 1, 2016

Above normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Little Colorado River, above Lyman Lake, the forecast calls for 113% of median streamflow through June. At Blue Ridge (C.C. Cragin) Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 120% of median through May. Snowpacks along the southern headwaters of the Little Colorado River, and along the central Mogollon Rim, were measured at 110% and 123% of median, respectively.



Little Colorado River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Little Colorado R ab Lyman Lake ³	JAN-JUN	3.2	5.7	8	113%	10.8	16	7.1
Rio Nutria nr Ramah ³	JAN-MAY	0.19	0.92	1.95	137%	3.5	7.2	1.42
Ramah Reservoir Inflow ³	JAN-MAY	0.08	0.53	1.07	137%	1.8	3.2	0.78
Zuni R ab Black Rock Reservoir ³	JAN-MAY	0	0.1	0.55	117%	1.64	5	0.47
Blue Ridge Reservoir Inflow ³	JAN-MAY	4.6	11.6	20	120%	29	49	16.6
Lake Mary Reservoir Inflow ³	JAN-MAY	2.1	4.1	6	125%	8.5	13.2	4.8

1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%

2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions

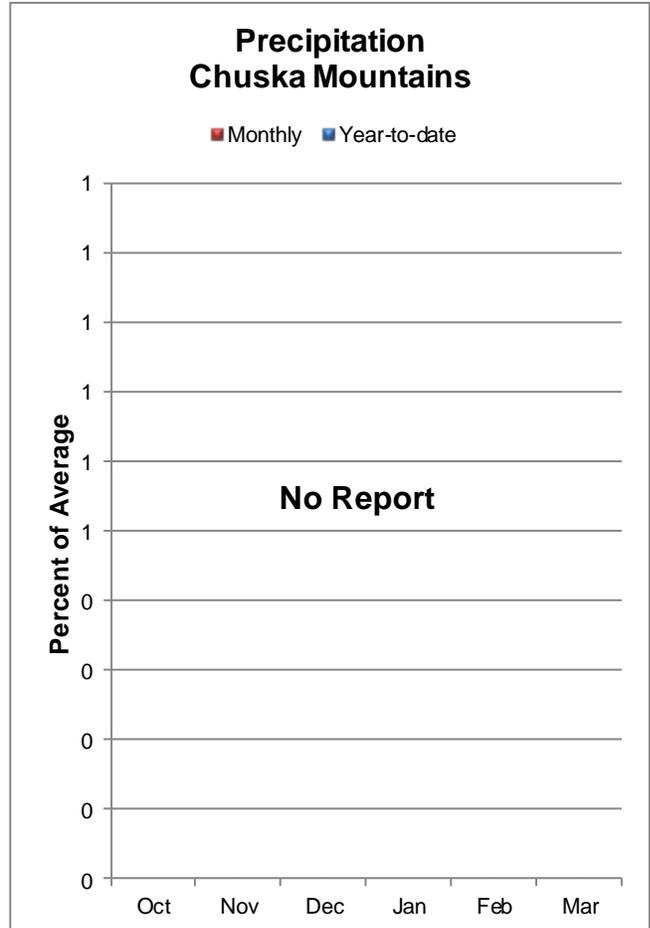
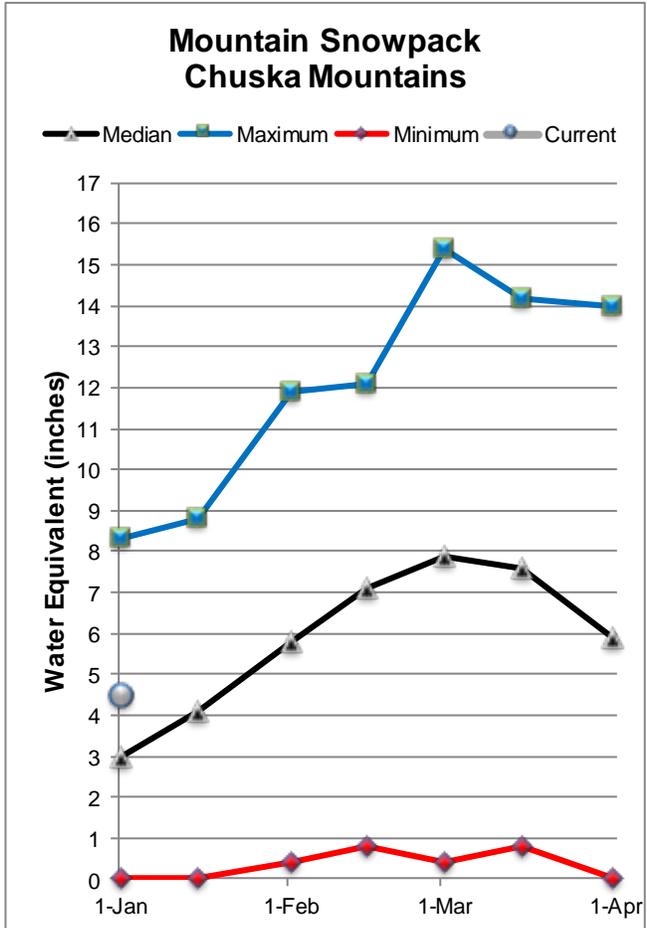
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of December, 2015	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lyman Reservoir	7.1	4.0	11.8	30.0
Basin-wide Total	7.1	4.0	11.8	30.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN	10	110%	36%
CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM	4	123%	59%

CHUSKA MOUNTAINS as of January 1, 2016

Snow survey measurements conducted by staff of the Navajo Nation Water Management Branch show the Chuska snowpack to be at 150% of median. The forecast calls for well above normal runoff for Bowl Canyon Creek, Captain Tom Wash, and Wheatfields Creek.



Chuska Mountains Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

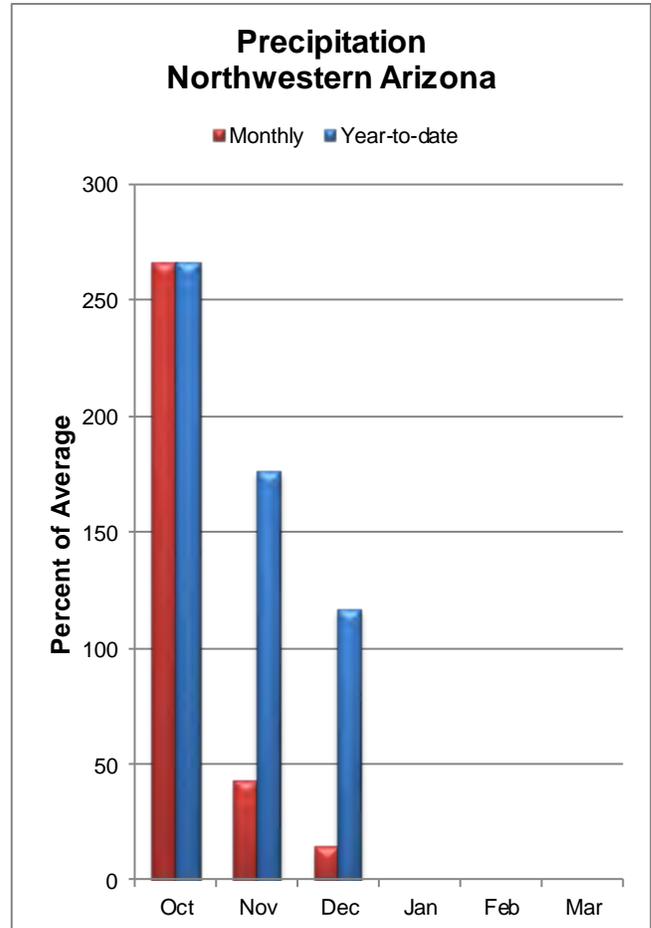
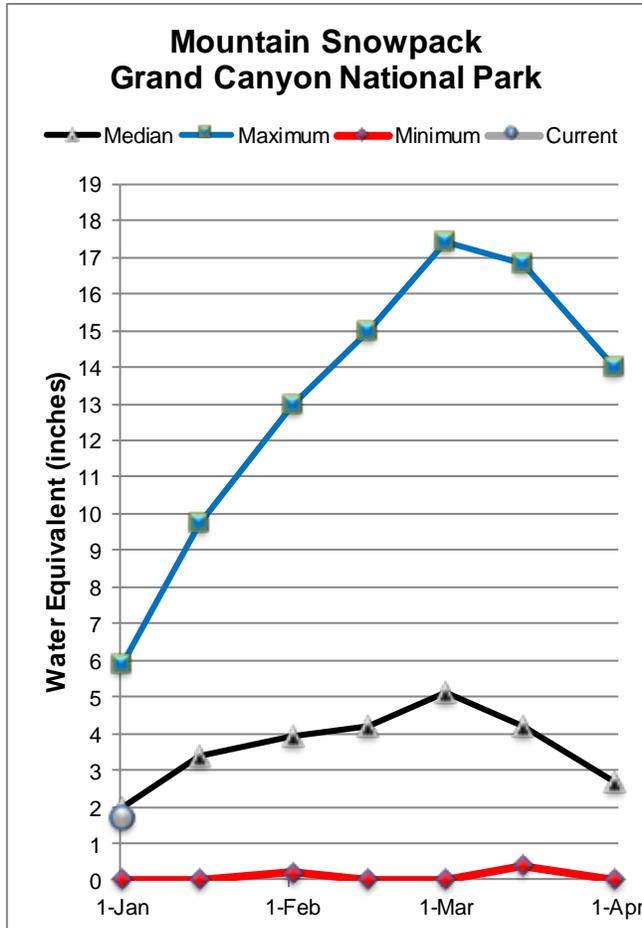
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Captain Tom Wash nr Two Gray Hills	MAR-MAY	0.1	1.46	3.5	135%	8.5	19.9	2.6
Wheatfields Ck nr Wheatfields	MAR-MAY	0.47	1.6	2.8	133%	4.2	6.9	2.1
Bowl Canyon Ck ab Asaayi Lake	MAR-MAY	0.43	1.11	1.75	135%	2.5	4	1.3

- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS	6	150%	41%
DEFIANCE PLATEAU	1	170%	80%

NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA as of January 1, 2016

On the Colorado River, near normal inflow to Lake Powell is forecast at 95% of the 30-year average for the forecast period April-July. At the Grand Canyon, measurements conducted by park rangers show the snowpack to be at 87% of median.



Northwestern Arizona Streamflow Forecasts - January 1, 2016

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment
Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast

NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Virgin R at Littlefield	APR-JUL	23	49	73	112%	102	152	65
Lake Powell Inflow ²	APR-JUL	3420	5300	6800	95%	8490	11300	7160

- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of December, 2015	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lake Havasu	562.6	5511.0	562.7	619.0
Lake Mohave	1580.3	1559.7	1602.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	10095.0	10676.0	20297.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11812.0	11536.7	17745.0	24322.0
Basin-wide Total	24049.9	29283.4	40206.7	52910.0
# of reservoirs	4	4	4	4

Watershed Snowpack Analysis January 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA	2	87%	21%

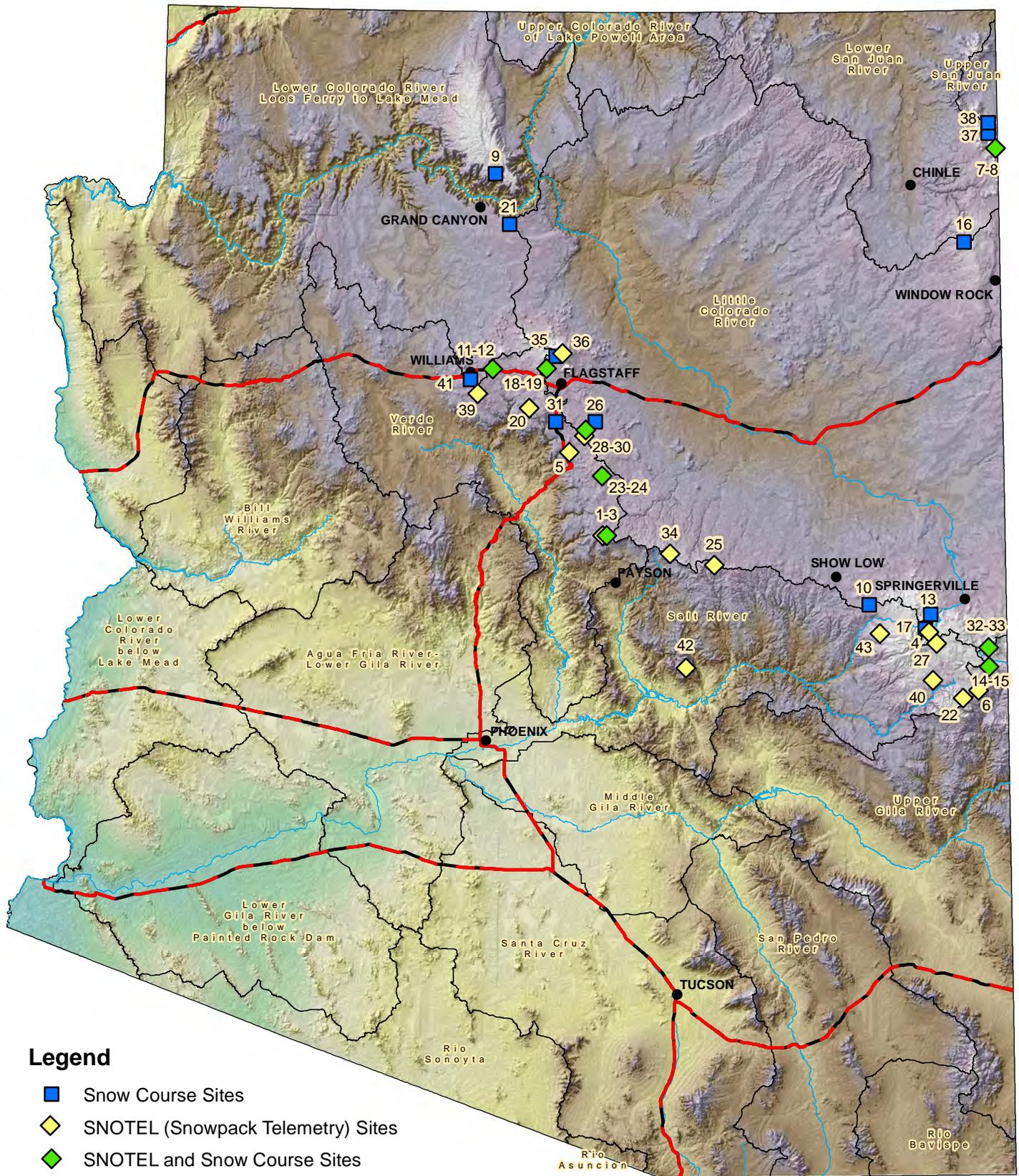
Basinwide Summary: January 1, 2016
(Averages/Medians based on 1981-2010 reference period)

Snowpack Summary for January 1, 2016

MAP NUMBER	SALT RIVER BASIN	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
4	Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	11	2.4	3.7	65%	1.2	32%
6	Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	5	2.1	2.7	78%	1.0	37%
10	Buck Spring	SC	7400	9	2.2	1.5	147%	0.0	0%
14	Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	5	1.4	1.8	78%	0.4	22%
43	Hawley Lake	SNOTEL	8300	25	6.6				
15	Coronado Trail	SC	8350	7	1.4	0.7	200%	0.0	0%
17	Fort Apache	SC	9160	21	4.4	3.7	119%	0.9	24%
22	Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	14	3.2	5.0	64%	1.7	34%
27	Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	12	3.0	4.0	75%	1.2	30%
32	Nutrioso	SC	8500	5	1.1	0.4	275%	0.0	0%
33	Nutrioso	SNOTEL	8500	2	0.8			0.3	
40	Wildcat	SNOTEL	7850	6	1.3	1.3	100%	0.5	38%
42	Workman Creek	SNOTEL	6900	10	2.2	1.9	116%	2.0	105%
Basin Index							93%		33%
# of sites							11		11
VERDE RIVER BASIN									
		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
1	Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	10	2.5	1.6	156%	1.6	100%
2	Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	13	2.2	3.4	65%	0.6	18%
3	Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	14	4.1			3.5	
5	Bar M	SNOTEL	6393	6	1.8			1.2	
11	Chalender	SC	7100	4	1.0	0.6	167%	0.0	0%
12	Chalender	SNOTEL	7100	5	1.2			0.9	
18	Fort Valley	SC	7350	4	0.4	0.8	50%	0.0	0%
19	Fort Valley	SNOTEL	7350	3	0.4			0.5	
20	Fry	SNOTEL	7200	9	2.5	2.8	89%	1.9	68%
23	Happy Jack	SNOTEL	7630	8	2.3	1.7	135%	1.9	112%
24	Happy Jack	SC	7630	6	1.7	1.0	170%	0.3	30%
28	Mormon Mountain	SNOTEL	7500	11	2.3	1.8	128%	1.4	78%
29	Mormon Mountain Summit #2	SC	8470	17	4.6	3.6	128%	1.2	33%
30	Mormon Mtn Summit	SNOTEL	8500	15	4.2			1.5	
31	Newman Park	SC	6750	6	1.5	0.6	250%	0.0	0%
39	White Horse Lake	SNOTEL	7180	4	1.2	1.4	86%	1.7	121%
41	Williams Ski Run	SC	7720	10	2.7	2.6	104%	0.0	0%
Basin Index							114%		48%
# of sites							12		12
SAN FRANCISCO PEAKS									
		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
35	Snow Bowl #2	SC	11200	32	8.2	8.0	103%	1.8	23%
36	Snowslide Canyon	SNOTEL	9730	32	6.6	8.1	81%	3.8	47%
Basin Index							92%		35%
# of sites							2		2
SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN									
		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
6	Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	5	2.1	2.7	78%	1.0	37%
14	Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	5	1.4	1.8	78%	0.4	22%
15	Coronado Trail	SC	8350	7	1.4	0.7	200%	0.0	0%
	Frisco Divide	SNOTEL	8000	7	1.3	1.5	87%	0.3	20%
22	Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	14	3.2	5.0	64%	1.7	34%
	Hummingbird - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10550			4.4			
	Lookout Mountain	SNOTEL	8500	8	2.2	1.4	157%	0.4	29%
32	Nutrioso	SC	8500	5	1.1	0.4	275%	0.0	0%
33	Nutrioso	SNOTEL	8500	2	0.8			0.3	
	Signal Peak	SNOTEL	8360	12	3.2	1.9	168%	0.9	47%
	Silver Creek Divide	SNOTEL	9000	18	4.4	3.5	126%	1.7	49%
	State Line	SC	8000	5	1.0	0.6	167%	0.1	17%
	Whitewater - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10750			9.5			
Basin Index							109%		33%
# of sites							10		10

LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
1 Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	10	2.5	1.6	156%	1.6	100%	
2 Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	13	2.2	3.4	65%	0.6	18%	
3 Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	14	4.1			3.5		
4 Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	11	2.4	3.7	65%	1.2	32%	
10 Buck Spring	SC	7400	9	2.2	1.5	147%	0.0	0%	
13 Cheese Springs	SC	8700	15	3.1	2.8	111%	0.5	18%	
17 Fort Apache	SC	9160	21	4.4	3.7	119%	0.9	24%	
25 Heber	SNOTEL	7640	10	2.5	1.6	156%	1.5	94%	
26 Lake Mary	SC	6930	8	2.0	1.0	200%	0.0	0%	
27 Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	12	3.0	4.0	75%	1.2	30%	
34 Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	18	5.0	3.3	152%	2.1	64%	
Basin Index							110%		36%
# of sites							10		10
CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
1 Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	10	2.5	1.6	156%	1.6	100%	
2 Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	13	2.2	3.4	65%	0.6	18%	
3 Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	14	4.1			3.5		
25 Heber	SNOTEL	7640	10	2.5	1.6	156%	1.5	94%	
34 Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	18	5.0	3.3	152%	2.1	64%	
Basin Index							123%		59%
# of sites							4		4
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
7 Beaver Spring	SC	9220	26	6.3	3.9	162%	1.3	33%	
8 Beaver Spring	SNOTEL	9200	23	6.5			1.3		
Bowl Canyon	SC	8980	22	4.9	3.5	140%	1.6	46%	
Hidden Valley	SC	8480	17	3.7			1.0		
Missionary Spring	SC	7940	8	1.8	1.1	164%	0.3	27%	
37 Tsaille Canyon #1	SC	8160	17	3.4	2.3	148%	0.9	39%	
38 Tsaille Canyon #3	SC	8920	26	5.8	3.8	153%	1.5	39%	
Whiskey Creek	SC	9050	23	5.0	3.5	143%	1.9	54%	
Navajo Whiskey Ck	SNOTEL	9050	22	5.8			1.4		
Basin Index							150%		41%
# of sites							6		6
DEFIANCE PLATEAU		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
16 Fluted Rock	SC	7800	8	1.7	1.0	170%	0.8	80%	
Basin Index							170%		80%
# of sites							1		1
NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
9 Bright Angel	SC	8400	11	2.0	3.0	67%	0.8	27%	
21 Grand Canyon	SC	7500	6	1.4	0.9	156%	0.0	0%	
Basin Index							87%		21%
# of sites							2		2

Arizona Snow Survey Data Sites



Legend

- Snow Course Sites
- ◆ SNOTEL (Snowpack Telemetry) Sites
- ◆ SNOTEL and Snow Course Sites
- Basin Boundaries

