



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation
Service

Arizona

Basin Outlook Report

March 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.



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ARIZONA Basin Outlook Report as of March 1, 2016

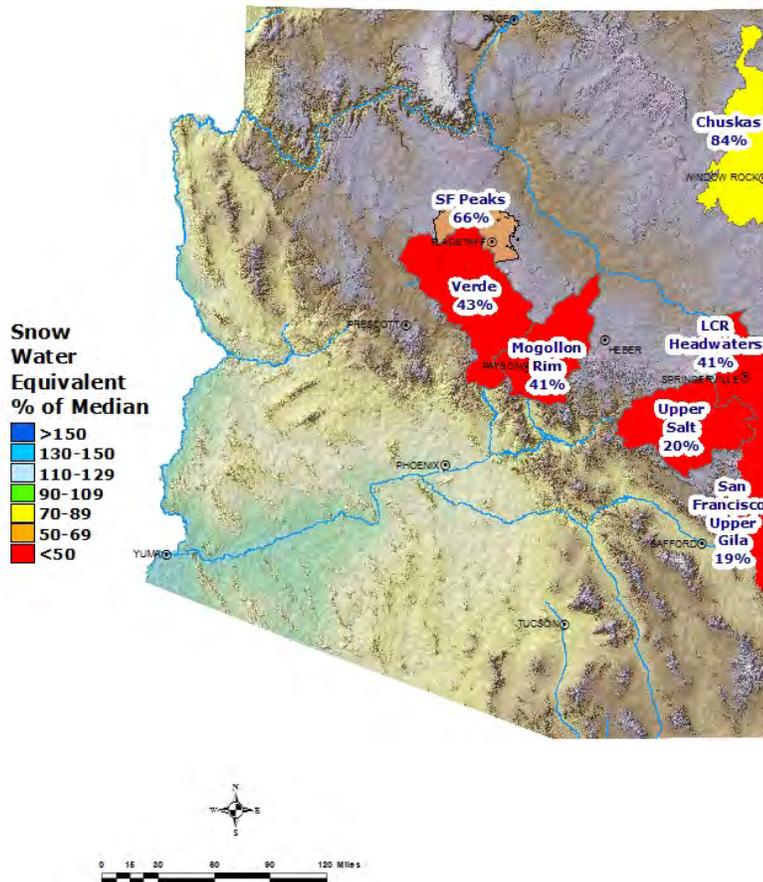
SUMMARY

As of March 1, snowpack levels are well below normal in all of the major basins. Precipitation for February was well below normal throughout the basins. The Salt and Verde River reservoir system stands at 57 percent of capacity, while San Carlos Reservoir is at 12 percent of capacity. The forecast now calls for below normal runoff in all basins for the spring runoff period.

SNOWPACK

Snow water equivalent levels are well below normal in the major basins, ranging from a low of 19 percent of median in the San Francisco – Upper Gila River Basin to a high of 43 percent of median in the Verde River Basin. The statewide snowpack, which includes the Chuska Mountains and San Francisco Peaks, is also well below normal at 44 percent of median.

**Arizona
Snow Water Equivalent
as of March 1, 2016**

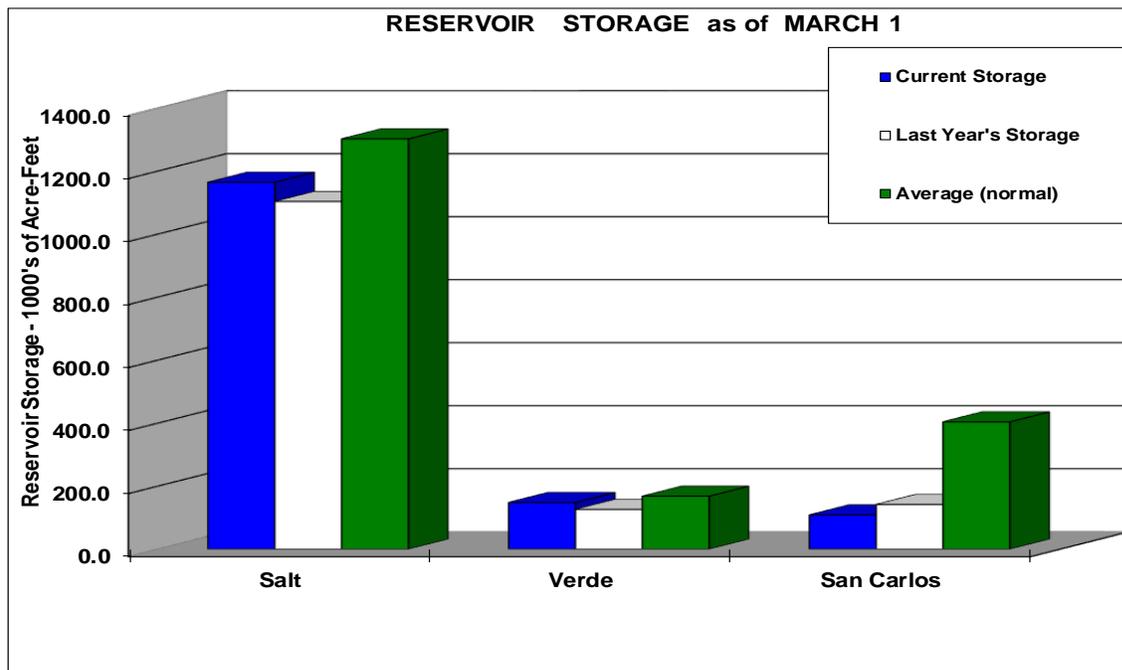


PRECIPITATION

Mountain data from NRCS SNOTEL sites and NWS Cooperator gages show that precipitation for the month of February was well below normal, ranging from a low of 26 percent of average in the Verde River Basin to a high of 42 percent of average in the San Francisco – Upper Gila River Basin. Cumulative precipitation since October 1 is now slightly below normal to slightly above normal in all of the basins for the water year. Please refer to the precipitation bar graphs found in this report for more information on precipitation levels in the basins.

RESERVOIR STORAGE

As of March 1, the Salt and Verde River reservoir system stands at 57 percent of capacity. San Carlos Reservoir remains well below normal at 12 percent of capacity.



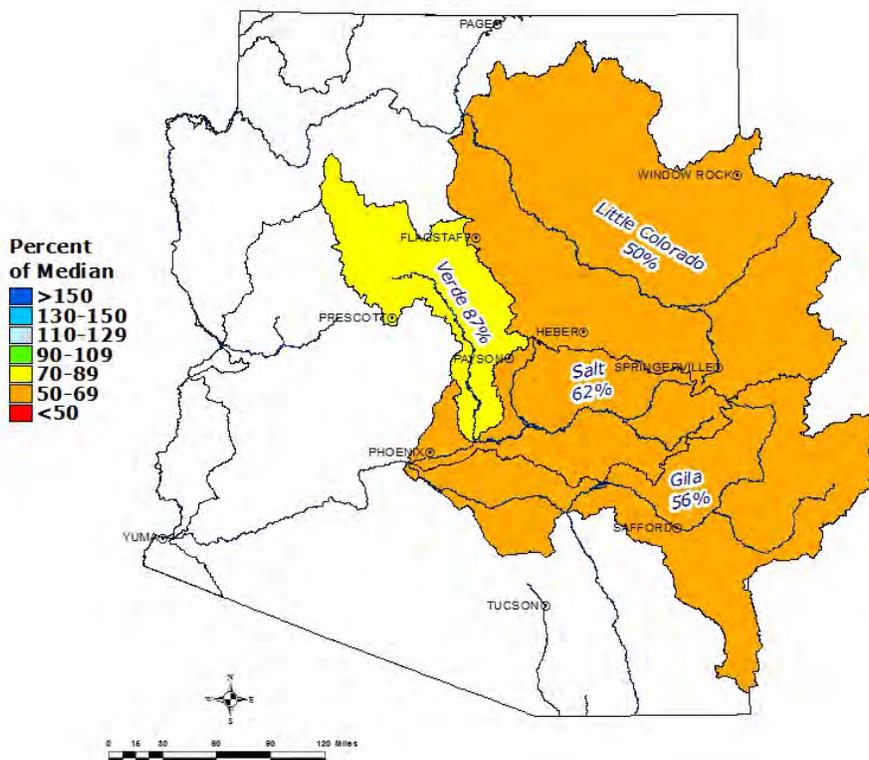
Key storage volumes displayed in thousands of acre-feet (x1000):

<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Current Storage</u>	<u>Last Year Storage</u>	<u>30-Year Average</u>	<u>Storage Capacity</u>
Salt River System	1164.5	1103.3	1302.0	2025.8
Verde River System	148.1	126.1	168.0	287.4
San Carlos Reservoir	108.6	141.7	404.1	875.0
Lyman Lake	10.4	4.2	12.9	30.0
Lake Havasu	552.6	578.0	560.2	619.0
Lake Mohave	1645.4	1658.1	1673.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	10360.0	10768.0	20575.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11224.0	11024.0	17055.0	24322.0

STREAMFLOW

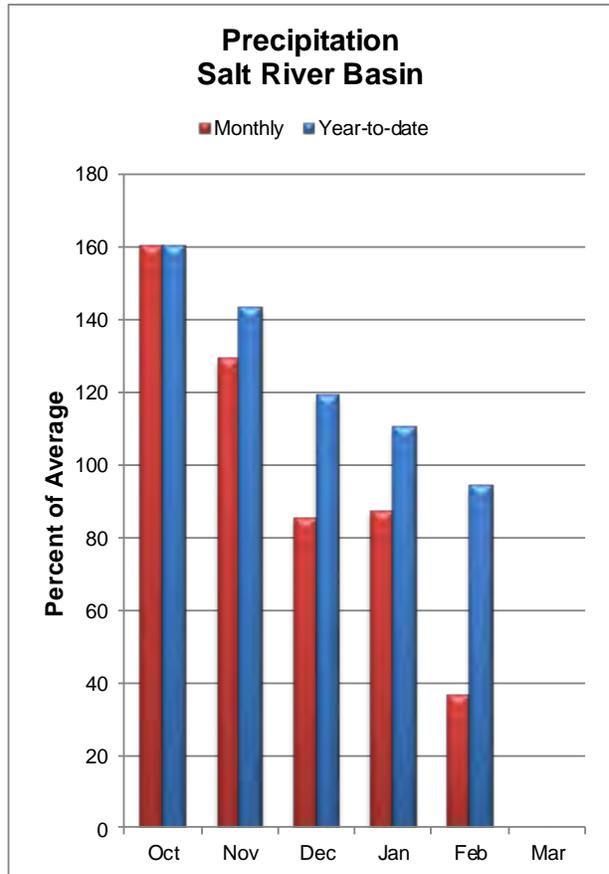
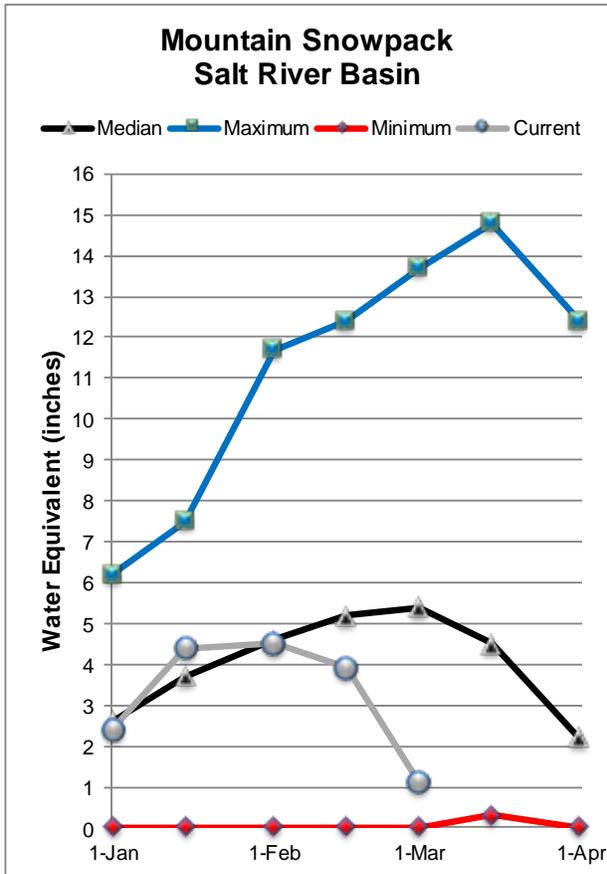
As of March 1, the forecast calls for well below normal to below normal streamflow in the basins for the spring runoff period. The revised streamflow forecasts range from 50 percent of median in the Little Colorado River above Lyman Lake to 87 percent of median in the Verde River above Horseshoe Dam. The streamflow forecasts for all of the major basins are significantly reduced from the previous report largely due to the severe lack of precipitation for the month of February.

Arizona Spring Streamflow Forecasts as of March 1, 2016



SALT RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2016

Well below normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Salt River, near Roosevelt, the forecast calls for 62% of median streamflow through May, while at Tonto Creek, the forecast calls for 86% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Salt snowpack to be at 20% of median.



**Salt River Basin
Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2016**

SALT RIVER BASIN	Forecast Period	Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast					30yr Avg (KAF)
		90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	
Salt R nr Roosevelt ³	MAR			60	53%		114
	MAR-MAY	70	112	148	62%	191	240
Tonto Ck ab Gun Ck nr Roosevelt ³	MAR			10	65%		15.4
	MAR-MAY	4.8	11.7	18.9	86%	29	22

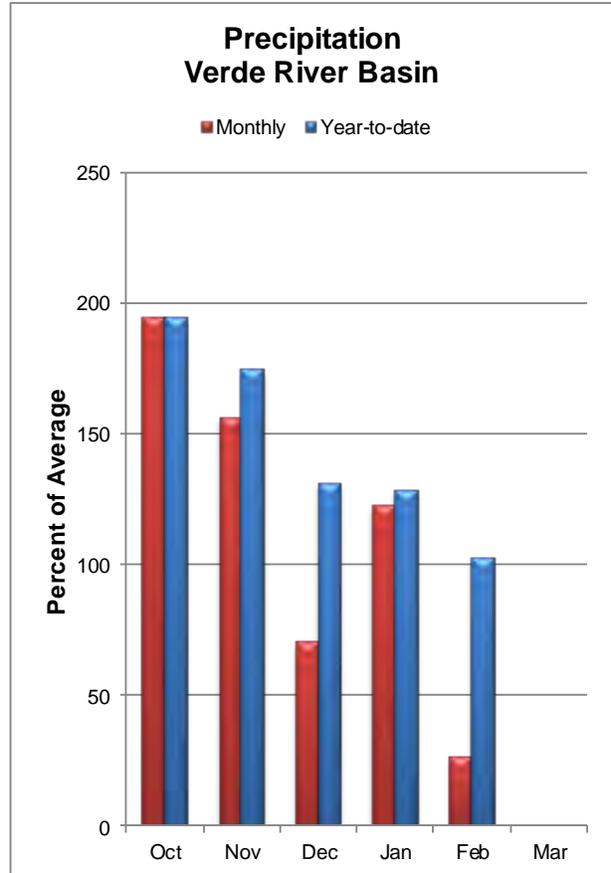
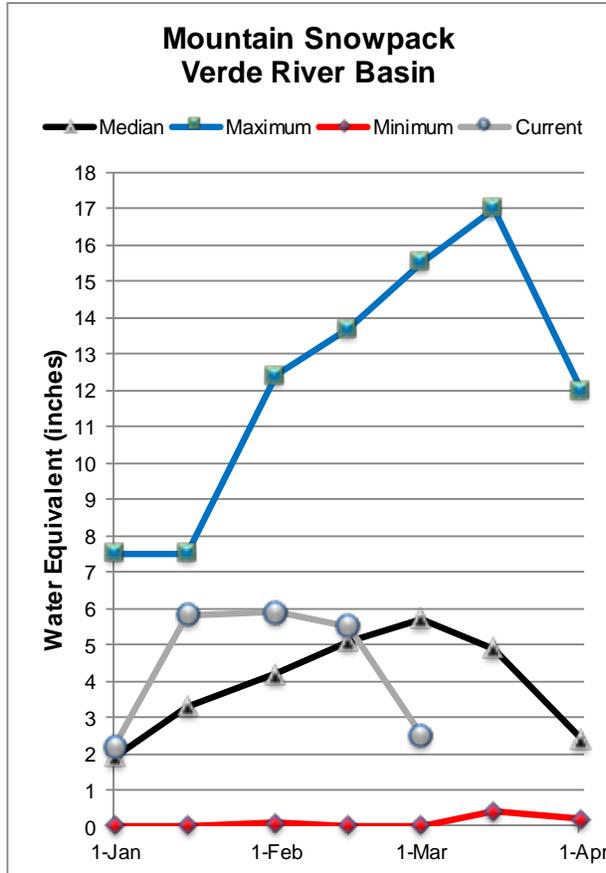
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2016	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Salt River Reservoir System	1164.5	1103.3	1302.0	2025.8
Basin-wide Total	1164.5	1103.3	1302.0	2025.8
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SALT RIVER BASIN	11	20%	31%

VERDE RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2016

Slightly below normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Verde River, at Horseshoe Dam, the forecast calls for 87% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Verde snowpack to be at 43% of median.



Verde River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 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								
	MAR			49	83%			59
	MAR-MAY	28	61	93	87%	136	220	107

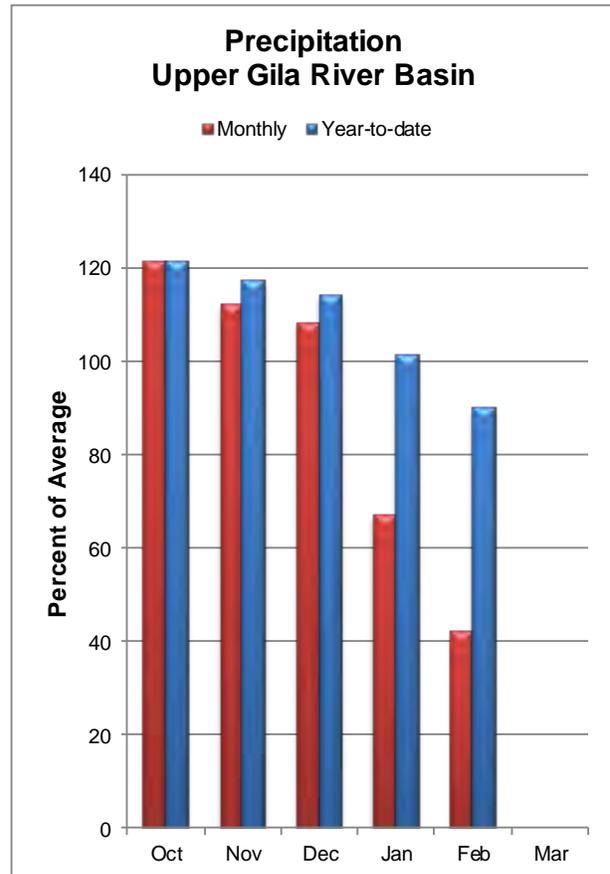
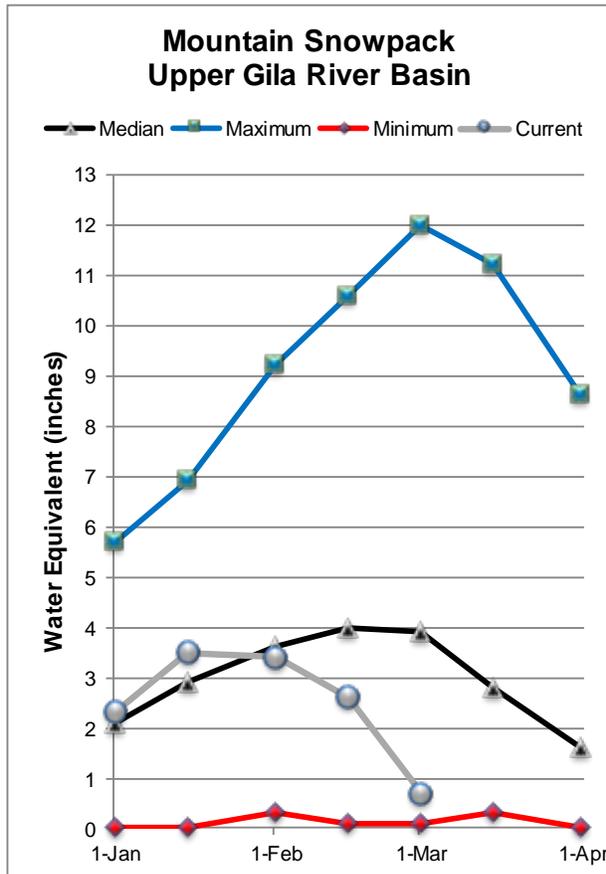
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2016	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Verde River Reservoir System	148.1	126.1	168.0	287.4
Basin-wide Total	148.1	126.1	168.0	287.4
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
VERDE RIVER BASIN	12	43%	24%

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

Well below normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the San Francisco River, at Clifton, the forecast calls for 58% of median streamflow levels through May. In the Gila River, near Solomon, the forecast calls for 56% of median streamflow levels through May. At San Carlos Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 35% of median through May. Snow survey measurements show the snowpack for this basin to be at 19% of median.



**San Francisco-Upper Gila River Basin
Streamflow Forecasts - March 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	MAR-MAY	12.3	18.6	24	71%	30	41	34
Gila R bl Blue Ck nr Virden ³	MAR-MAY	9.9	21	30	70%	42	62	43
San Francisco R at Glenwood ³	MAR-MAY	2.5	5.5	8.5	56%	12.5	20	15.2
San Francisco R at Clifton ³	MAR-MAY	5	13.7	22	58%	32	51	38
Gila R nr Solomon ³	MAR			26	68%			38
	MAR-MAY	12.2	31	50	56%	72	112	89
San Carlos Reservoir Inflow ³	MAR-MAY	0	5.7	18.7	35%	39	83	53

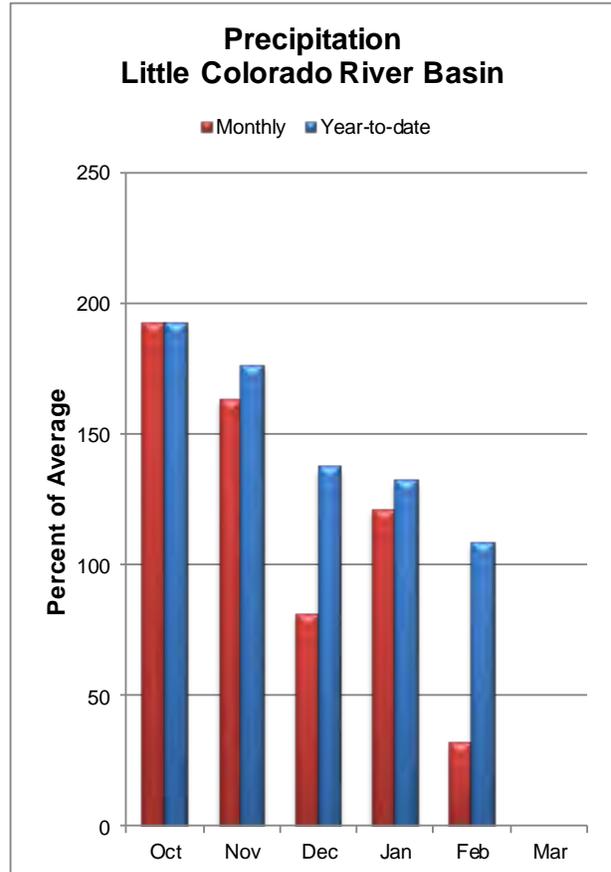
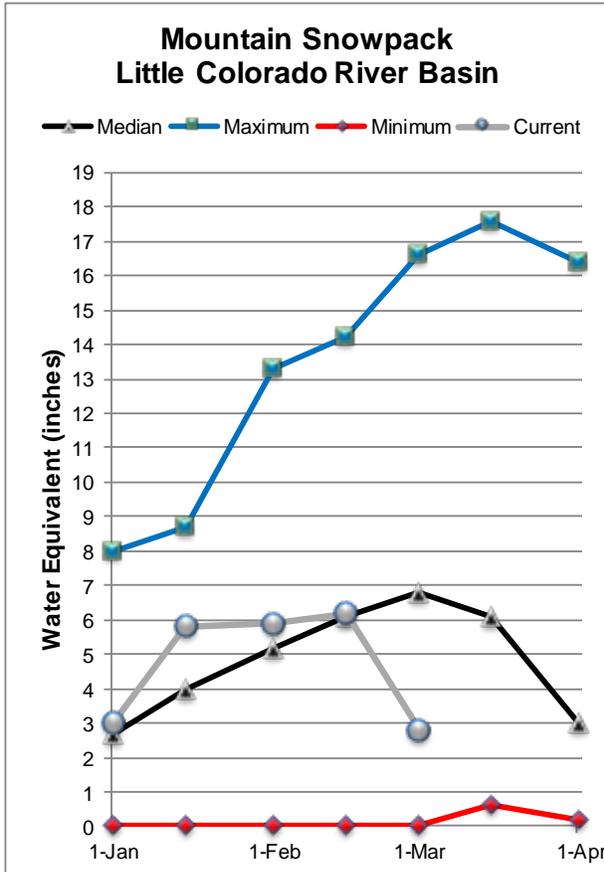
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2016	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
San Carlos Reservoir	108.6	141.4	404.1	875.0
Basin-wide Total	108.6	141.4	404.1	875.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN	10	19%	28%

LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2016

Well below normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Little Colorado River, above Lyman Lake, the forecast calls for 50% of median streamflow through June. At Blue Ridge (C.C. Cragin) Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 52% of median through May. Snowpacks along the southern headwaters of the Little Colorado River, and along the central Mogollon Rim, were both measured at 41% of median.



Little Colorado River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 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	MAR-JUN	0.99	2	3	50%	4.3	6.7	6
Rio Nutria nr Ramah ³	MAR-MAY	0	0.11	0.36	32%	0.82	2	1.12
Ramah Reservoir Inflow ³	MAR-MAY	0	0.02	0.2	32%	0.56	1.43	0.62
Zuni R ab Black Rock Reservoir ³	MAR-MAY	0	0	0.08	35%	0.47	2.2	0.23
Blue Ridge Reservoir Inflow ³	MAR-MAY	1.62	4.2	7	52%	10.8	18.6	13.5
Lake Mary Reservoir Inflow ³	MAR-MAY	0.55	1.27	2	69%	3	4.9	2.9

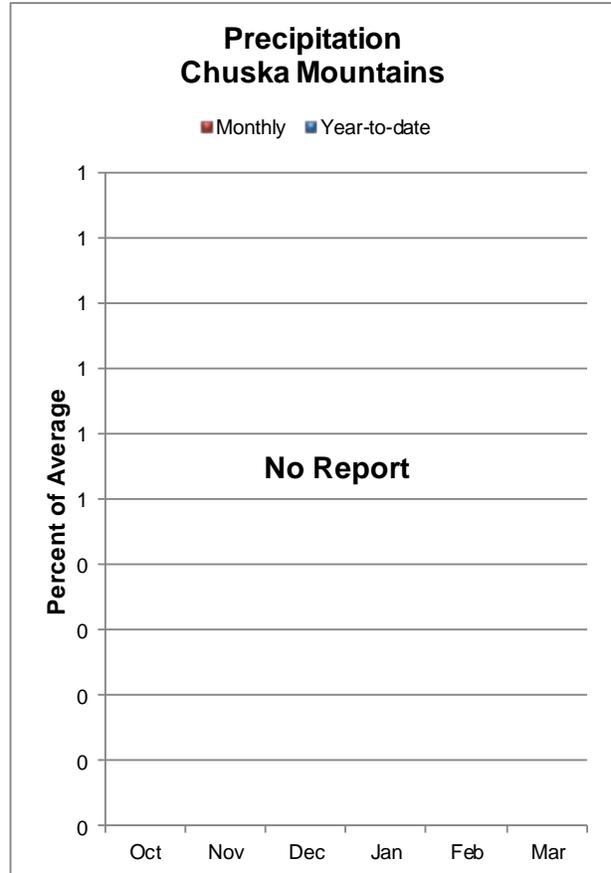
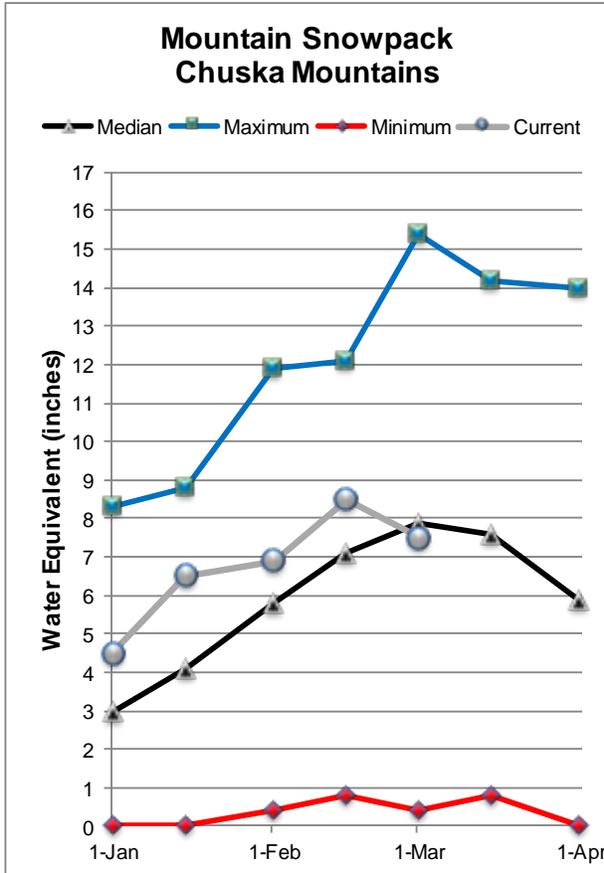
- 1) 90% and 10% exceedance probabilities are actually 95% and 5%
- 2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions
- 3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2016	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lyman Reservoir	10.4	4.2	12.9	30.0
Basin-wide Total	10.4	4.2	12.9	30.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN	10	41%	27%
CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM	4	41%	17%

CHUSKA MOUNTAINS as of March 1, 2016

Snow survey measurements conducted by staff of the Navajo Nation Water Management Branch show the Chuska snowpack to be at 84% of median. Slightly below normal runoff is forecast for Wheatfields Creek, Captain Tom Wash, and Bowl Canyon Creek.



Chuska Mountains Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2016

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

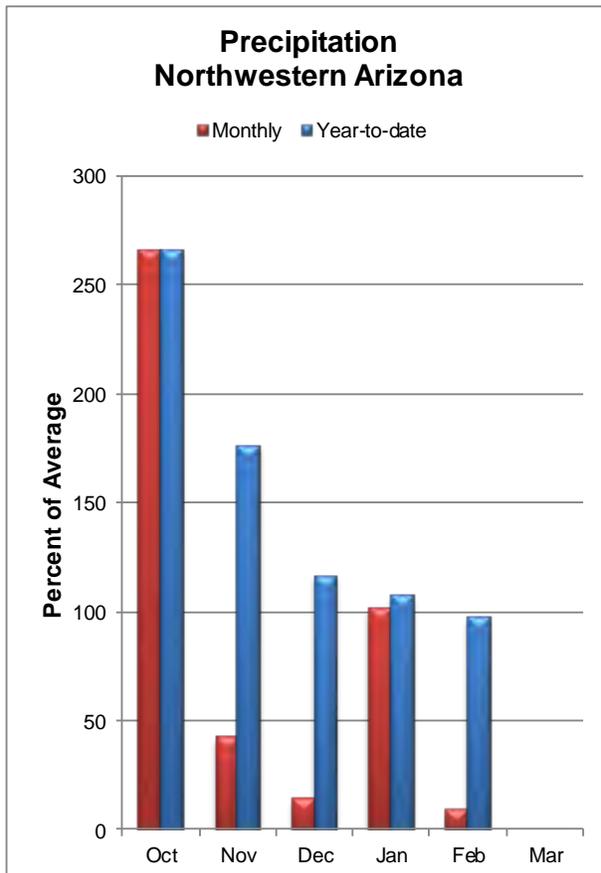
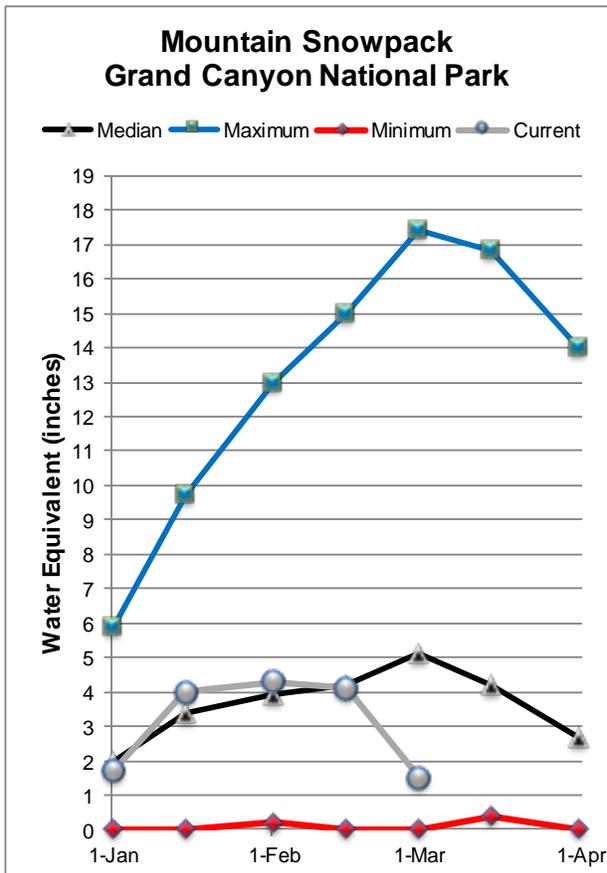
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS	Forecast Period	90% (KAF)	70% (KAF)	50% (KAF)	% Avg	30% (KAF)	10% (KAF)	30yr Avg (KAF)
Captain Tom Wash nr Two Gray Hills	MAR-MAY	0.82	1.56	2.2	85%	3.1	4.8	2.6
Wheatfields Ck nr Wheatfields	MAR-MAY	0.61	1.25	1.81	86%	2.5	3.7	2.1
Bowl Canyon Ck ab Asaayi Lake	MAR-MAY	0.52	0.84	1.09	84%	1.39	1.88	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 March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS	5	84%	44%
DEFIANCE PLATEAU	1	72%	11%

NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA as of March 1, 2016

On the Colorado River, below normal inflow to Lake Powell is forecast at 77% 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 30% of median.



Northwestern Arizona Streamflow Forecasts - March 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	21	42	60	92%	81	118	65
Lake Powell Inflow ²	APR-JUL	3210	4500	5500	77%	6600	8410	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 February, 2016	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lake Havasu	554.1	569.9	560.2	619.0
Lake Mohave	1647.0	1655.0	1673.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	10360.0	10768.0	20575.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11229.1	11023.6	17055.0	24322.0
Basin-wide Total	23790.2	24016.5	39863.2	52910.0
# of reservoirs	4	4	4	4

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2016	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA	2	30%	16%

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

Snowpack Summary for March 1, 2016

MAP NUMBER	SALT RIVER BASIN	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth	SWE	Median	%	Last Year	Last Year
				(in)	(in)	(in)	Median	SWE (in)	% Median
4	Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	0	0.0	8.1	0%	2.1	26%
6	Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	0	0.0	5.2	0%	0.2	4%
10	Buck Spring	SC	7400	0	0.0	2.2	0%	0.0	0%
14	Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	0	0.0	2.4	0%	0.0	0%
43	Hawley Lake	SNOTEL	8300	29	11.4				
15	Coronado Trail	SC	8350	0	0.0	1.8	0%	0.0	0%
17	Fort Apache	SC	9160	20	6.4	8.2	78%	4.3	52%
22	Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	3	1.3	10.3	13%	5.7	55%
27	Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	7	3.3	8.9	37%	4.8	54%
32	Nutrioso	SC	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.0	0%
33	Nutrioso	SNOTEL	8500	0	0.0			0.0	
40	Wildcat	SNOTEL	7850	0	0.0	3.2	0%	0.0	0%
42	Workman Creek	SNOTEL	6900	0	0.0	5.1	0%	0.0	0%
		Basin Index					20%		31%
		# of sites					11		11
VERDE RIVER BASIN		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth	SWE	Median	%	Last Year	Last Year
				(in)	(in)	(in)	Median	SWE (in)	% Median
1	Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	0	0.0	5.2	0%	1.9	37%
2	Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	19	6.3	10.5	60%	0.7	7%
3	Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	26	9.0			5.1	
5	Bar M	SNOTEL	6393	0	0.0			0.0	
11	Chalender	SC	7100	0	0.0	2.0	0%	0.1	5%
12	Chalender	SNOTEL	7100	1	0.2			0.1	
18	Fort Valley	SC	7350	0	0.0	1.9	0%	1.2	63%
19	Fort Valley	SNOTEL	7350	0	0.0			1.2	
20	Fry	SNOTEL	7200	7	3.2	7.0	46%	1.5	21%
23	Happy Jack	SNOTEL	7630	11	4.1	5.9	69%	2.5	42%
24	Happy Jack	SC	7630	0	0.0	4.0	0%	0.1	3%
28	Mormon Mountain	SNOTEL	7500	0	0.0	4.7	0%	2.0	43%
29	Mormon Mountain Summit #2	SC	8470	22	7.0	11.2	63%	4.5	40%
30	Mormon Mtn Summit	SNOTEL	8500	20	7.3			5.0	
31	Newman Park	SC	6750	0	0.0	2.0	0%	0.0	0%
39	White Horse Lake	SNOTEL	7180	0	0.0	3.9	0%	0.6	15%
41	Williams Ski Run	SC	7720	22	7.7	8.2	94%	0.8	10%
		Basin Index					43%		24%
		# of sites					12		12
SAN FRANCISCO PEAKS		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth	SWE	Median	%	Last Year	Last Year
				(in)	(in)	(in)	Median	SWE (in)	% Median
35	Snow Bowl #2	SC	11200	44	13.8	16.1	86%	9.6	60%
36	Snowslide Canyon	SNOTEL	9730	43	6.9	15.3	45%	11.3	74%
		Basin Index					66%		67%
		# of sites					2		2
SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth	SWE	Median	%	Last Year	Last Year
				(in)	(in)	(in)	Median	SWE (in)	% Median
6	Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	0	0.0	5.2	0%	0.2	4%
14	Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	0	0.0	2.4	0%	0.0	0%
15	Coronado Trail	SC	8350	0	0.0	1.8	0%	0.0	0%
	Frisco Divide	SNOTEL	8000	0	0.0	2.4	0%	0.1	4%
22	Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	3	1.3	10.3	13%	5.7	55%
	Hummingbird - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10550			11.9			
	Lookout Mountain	SNOTEL	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.0	0%
32	Nutrioso	SC	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.0	0%
33	Nutrioso	SNOTEL	8500	0	0.0			0.0	
	Signal Peak	SNOTEL	8360	0	0.0	4.3	0%	0.0	0%
	Silver Creek Divide	SNOTEL	9000	12	5.7	8.3	69%	4.4	53%
	State Line	SC	8000	0	0.0	1.4	0%	0.1	7%
	Whitewater - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10750			18.6			
		Basin Index					19%		28%
		# 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	0	0.0	5.2	0%	1.9	37%	
2 Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	19	6.3	10.5	60%	0.7	7%	
3 Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	26	9.0			5.1		
4 Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	0	0.0	8.1	0%	2.1	26%	
10 Buck Spring	SC	7400	0	0.0	2.2	0%	0.0	0%	
13 Cheese Springs	SC	8700	18	5.2	5.8	90%	2.0	34%	
17 Fort Apache	SC	9160	20	6.4	8.2	78%	4.3	52%	
25 Heber	SNOTEL	7640	0	0.0	4.5	0%	0.9	20%	
26 Lake Mary	SC	6930	0	0.0	3.4	0%	0.0	0%	
27 Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	7	3.3	8.9	37%	4.8	54%	
34 Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	15	6.6	11.3	58%	1.7	15%	
Basin Index							41%	27%	
# of sites							10	10	

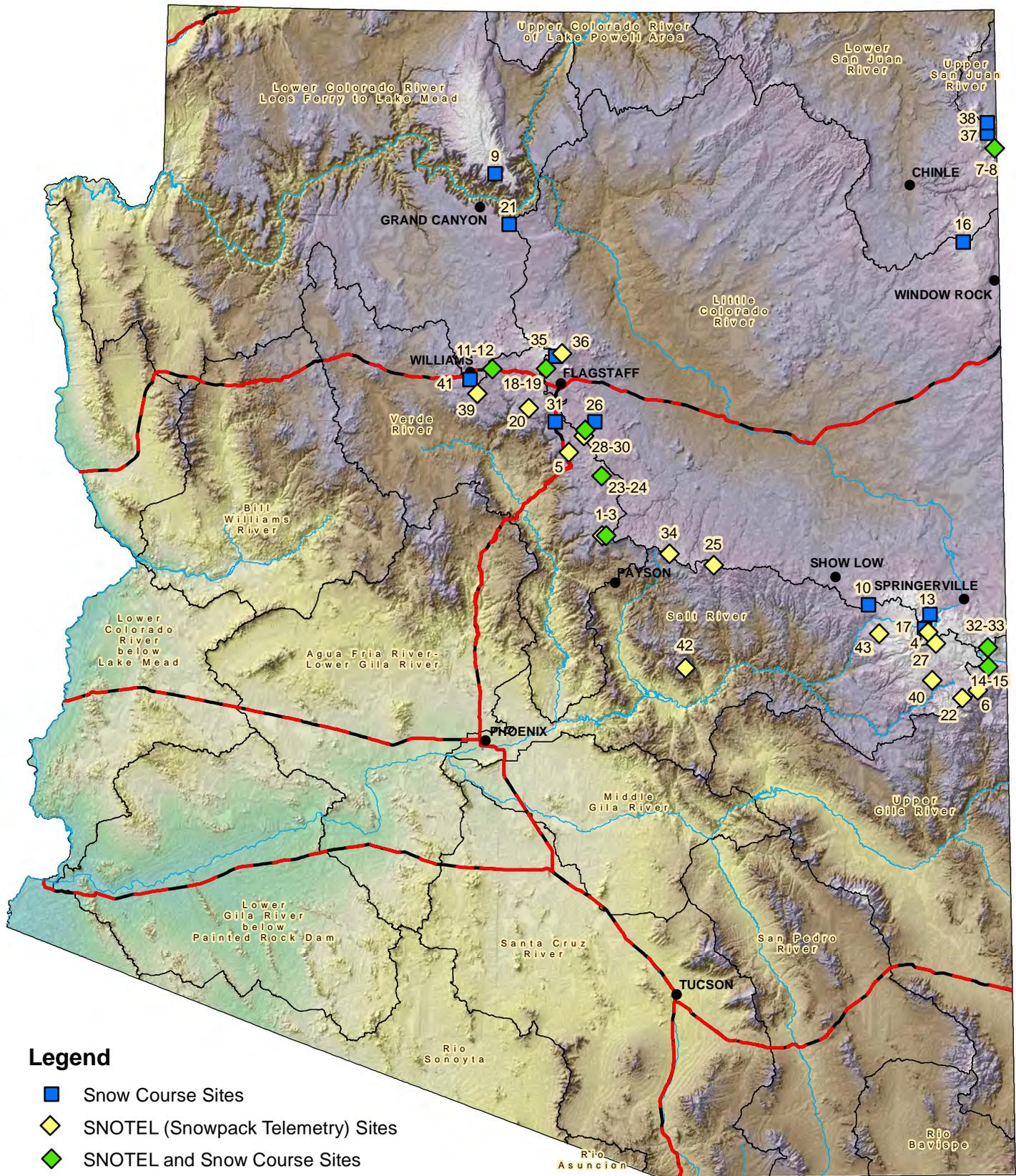
CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
1 Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	0	0.0	5.2	0%	1.9	37%	
2 Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700	19	6.3	10.5	60%	0.7	7%	
3 Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	26	9.0			5.1		
25 Heber	SNOTEL	7640	0	0.0	4.5	0%	0.9	20%	
34 Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	15	6.6	11.3	58%	1.7	15%	
Basin Index							41%	17%	
# 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			10.0		3.9	39%	
8 Beaver Spring	SNOTEL	9200	15	6.4			4.1		
Bowl Canyon	SC	8980	26	8.4	8.7	97%	4.5	52%	
Hidden Valley	SC	8480	20	5.6			3.2		
Missionary Spring	SC	7940	1	0.4	4.1	10%	1.1	27%	
37 Tsaille Canyon #1	SC	8160	18	5.9	6.4	92%	1.5	23%	
38 Tsaille Canyon #3	SC	8920	26	8.5	8.8	97%	4.5	51%	
Whiskey Creek	SC	9050	27	8.2	9.3	88%	4.8	52%	
Navajo Whiskey Ck	SNOTEL	9050	9	4.2			3.4		
Basin Index							84%	44%	
# of sites							5	5	

DEFIANCE PLATEAU		Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
16 Fluted Rock	SC	7800	7	2.6	3.6	72%	0.4	11%	
Basin Index							72%	11%	
# 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	10	3.0	8.7	34%	1.6	18%	
21 Grand Canyon	SC	7500	0	0.0	1.4	0%	0.0	0%	
Basin Index							30%	16%	
# of sites							2	2	

Arizona Snow Survey Data Sites



Legend

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

