



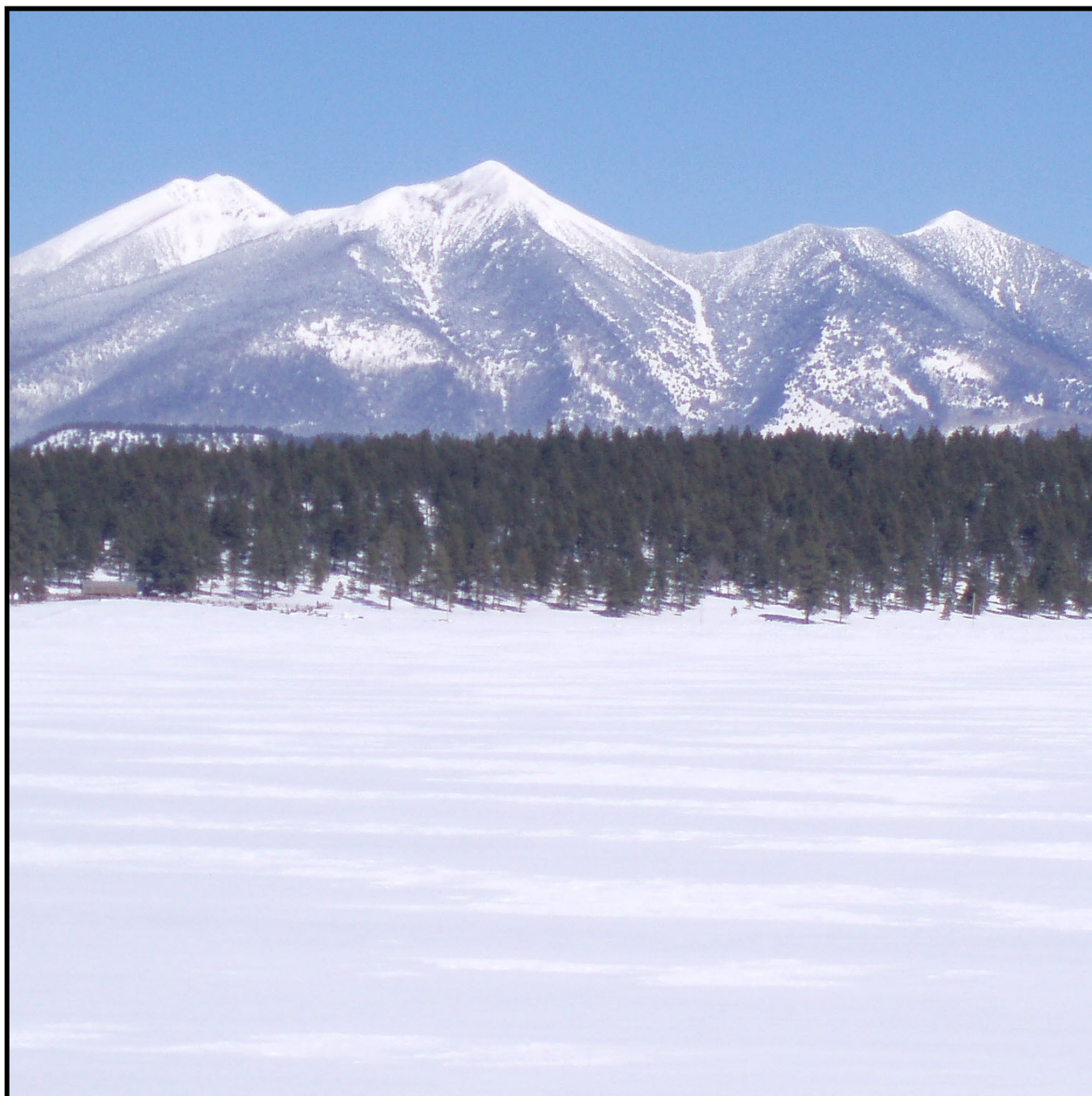
United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

# Arizona

## Basin Outlook Report

### March 1, 2020



**Issued by**

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

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### ***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, 2020

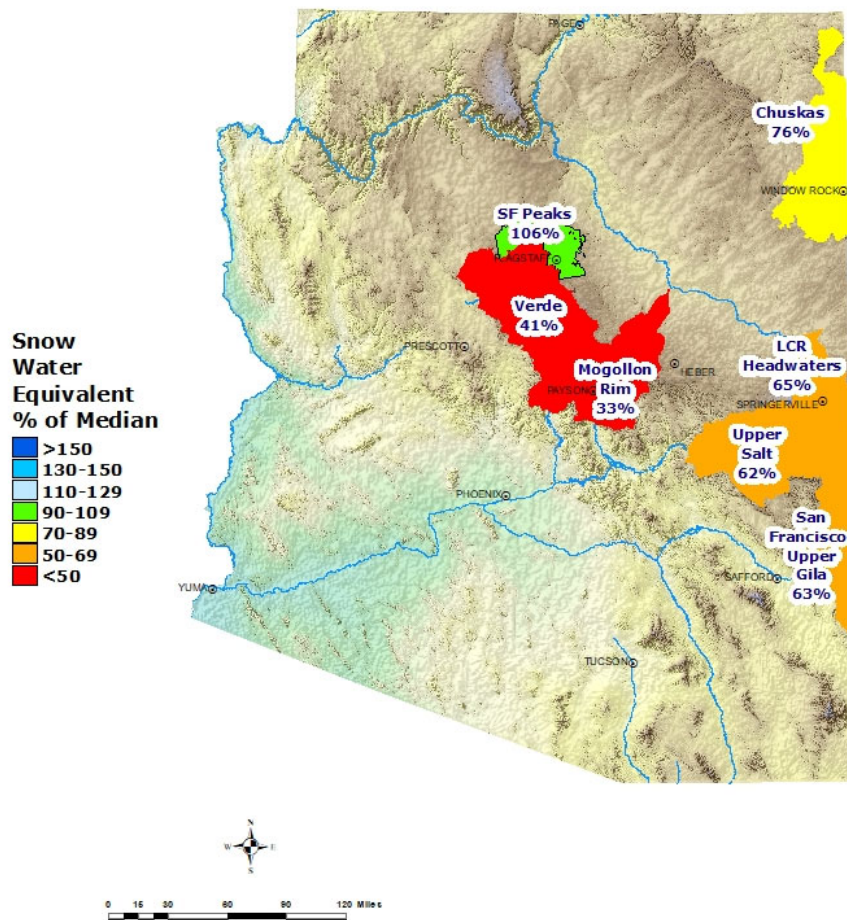
## SUMMARY

As of March 1, snowpack levels are well below normal throughout the major basins of the state. Precipitation for the month of February was well below normal to above normal in the major river basins. The Salt and Verde River reservoir system stands at 81 percent of capacity, while San Carlos Reservoir is at 14 percent of capacity. The forecast calls for normal runoff in all basins for the spring runoff period.

## SNOWPACK

Snow water equivalent levels in the state's major river basins are well below normal , ranging from 65 percent of median in the Little Colorado River Basin to 41 percent of median in the Verde River Basin. The statewide snowpack is well below normal at 65 percent of median.

### Arizona Snow Water Equivalent as of March 1, 2020

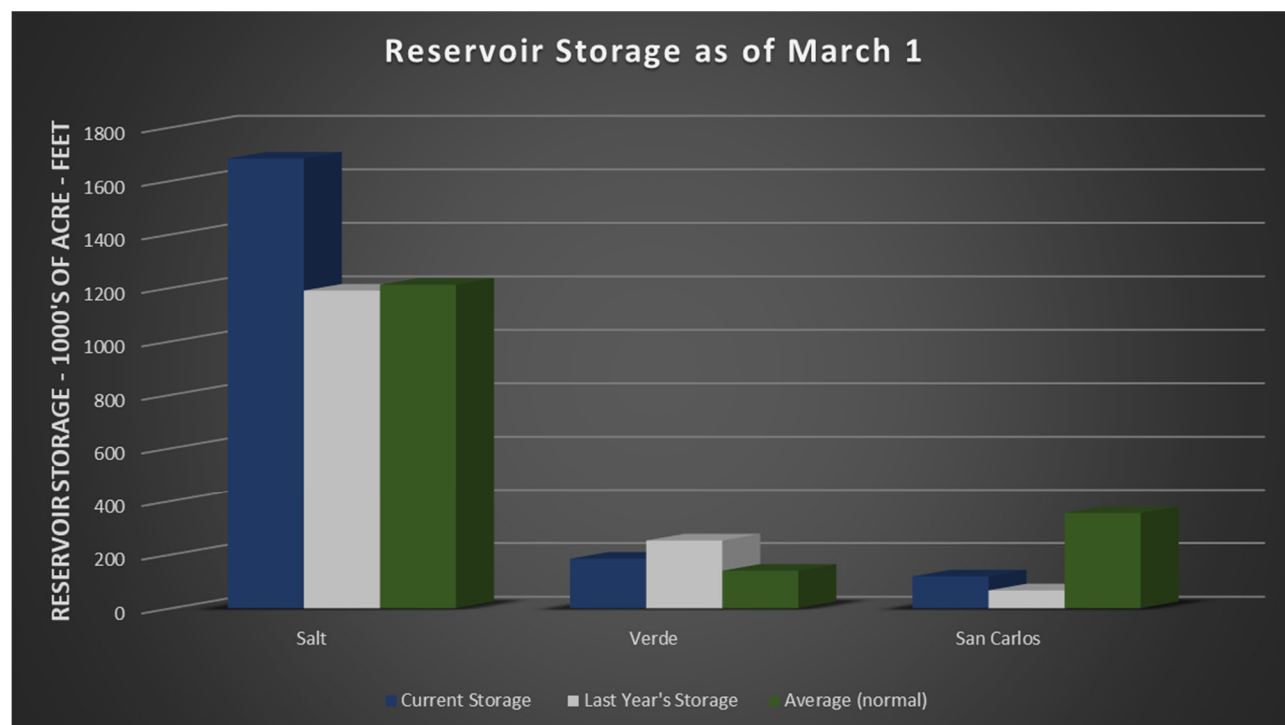


## PRECIPITATION

Mountain data from NRCS SNOTEL sites and NWS Cooperator gages show that precipitation for February was well below average to above average in the major river basins. Cumulative precipitation since October 1 is normal throughout the basins. 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 81 percent of capacity. San Carlos Reservoir is currently at 14 percent of capacity.



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

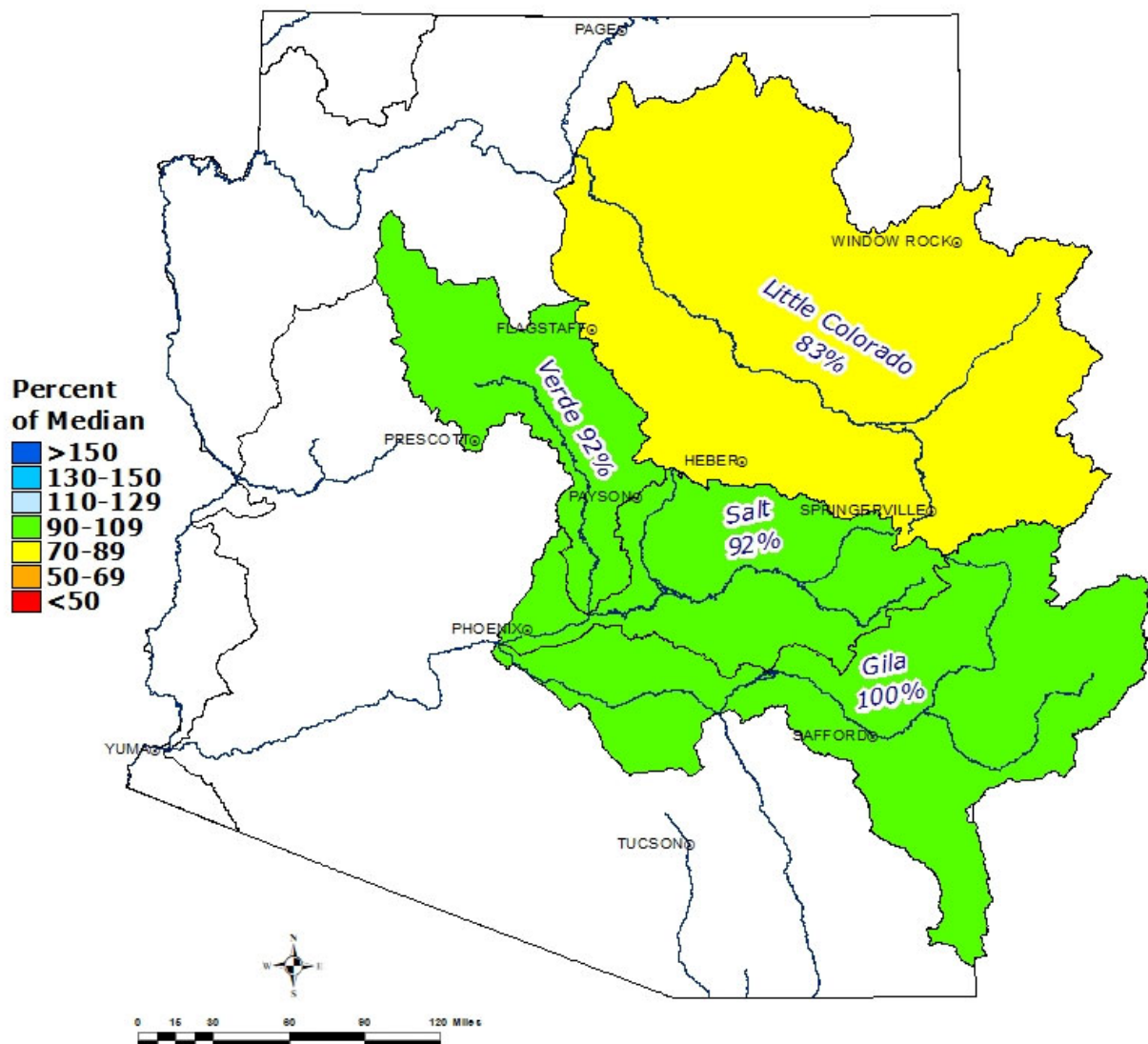
<u>Reservoir</u>	<u>Current Storage</u>	<u>Last Year Storage</u>	<u>30-Year Average</u>	<u>Storage Capacity</u>
Salt River System	1683.5	1190.0	1181.0	2025.8
Verde River System	184.9	252.6	135.7	287.4
San Carlos Reservoir	118.9	66.9	324.9	875.0
Lyman Lake	8.8	3.7	11.8	30.0
Lake Havasu	584.6	573.4	562.7	619.0
Lake Mohave	1675.0	1704.0	1602.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	11414.0	10682.0	20297.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11997.0	13335.0	17745.0	24322.0



## STREAMFLOW

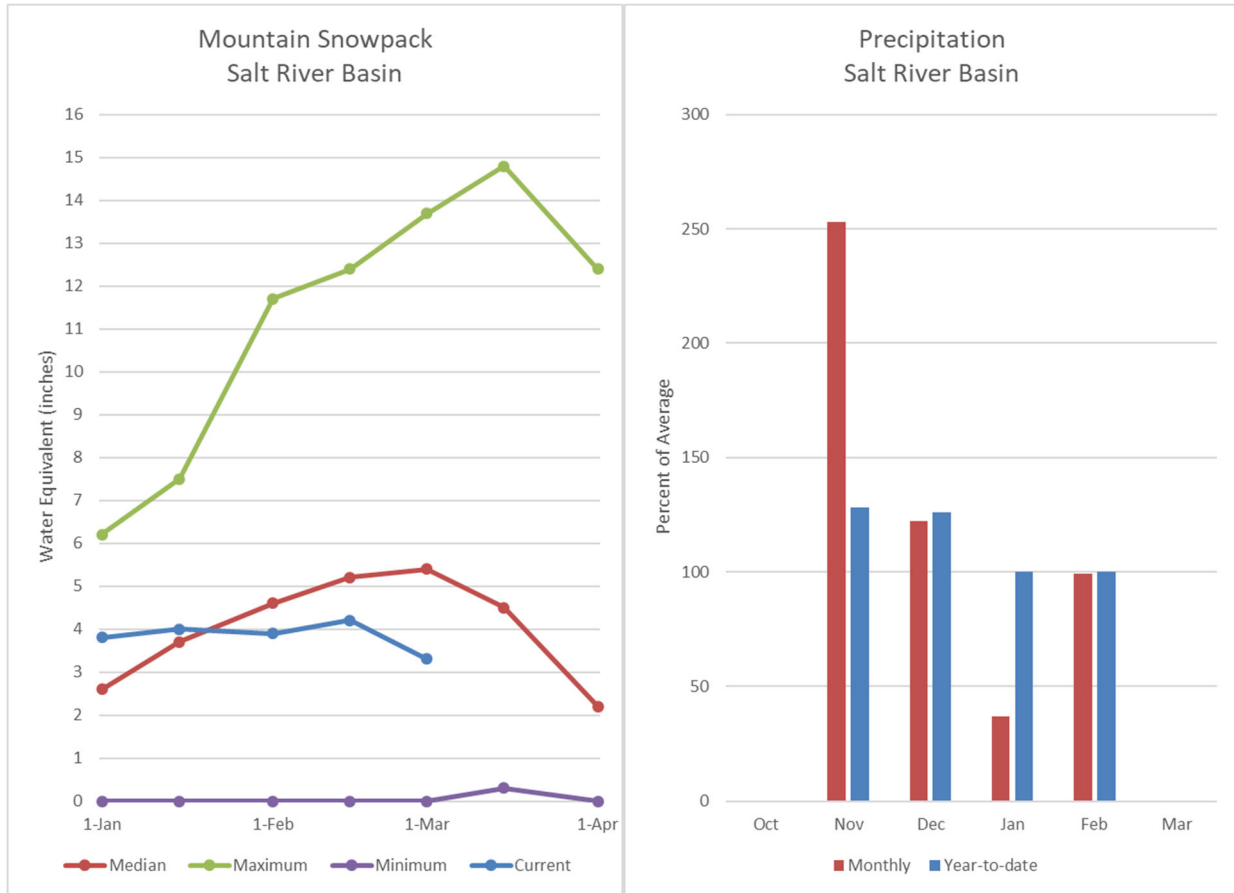
As of March 1, the forecast calls for below normal to normal streamflow for the spring runoff period, ranging from 83 percent of median in the Little Colorado River above Lyman Lake to 100 percent of median in the Gila River near Solomon. Total precipitation since the beginning of the water year has been near average for the state, producing more favorable conditions for runoff this spring. Please refer to the basin forecast tables found in this report for more information regarding water supply forecasts.

### Arizona Spring Streamflow Forecasts as of March 1, 2020



## SALT RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2020

Normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Salt River, near Roosevelt, the forecast calls for 92% of median streamflow through May, while at Tonto Creek, the forecast calls for 95% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Salt snowpack to be at 62% of median.



## Salt River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

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)	10% (KAF)	
Salt R nr Roosevelt <sup>3</sup>	MAR			160	140%			114
	MAR-MAY	115	172	220	92%	275	375	240
Tonto Ck ab Gun Ck nr Roosevelt <sup>3</sup>	MAR			18	117%			15.4
	MAR-MAY	5.7	13.2	21	95%	31	52	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

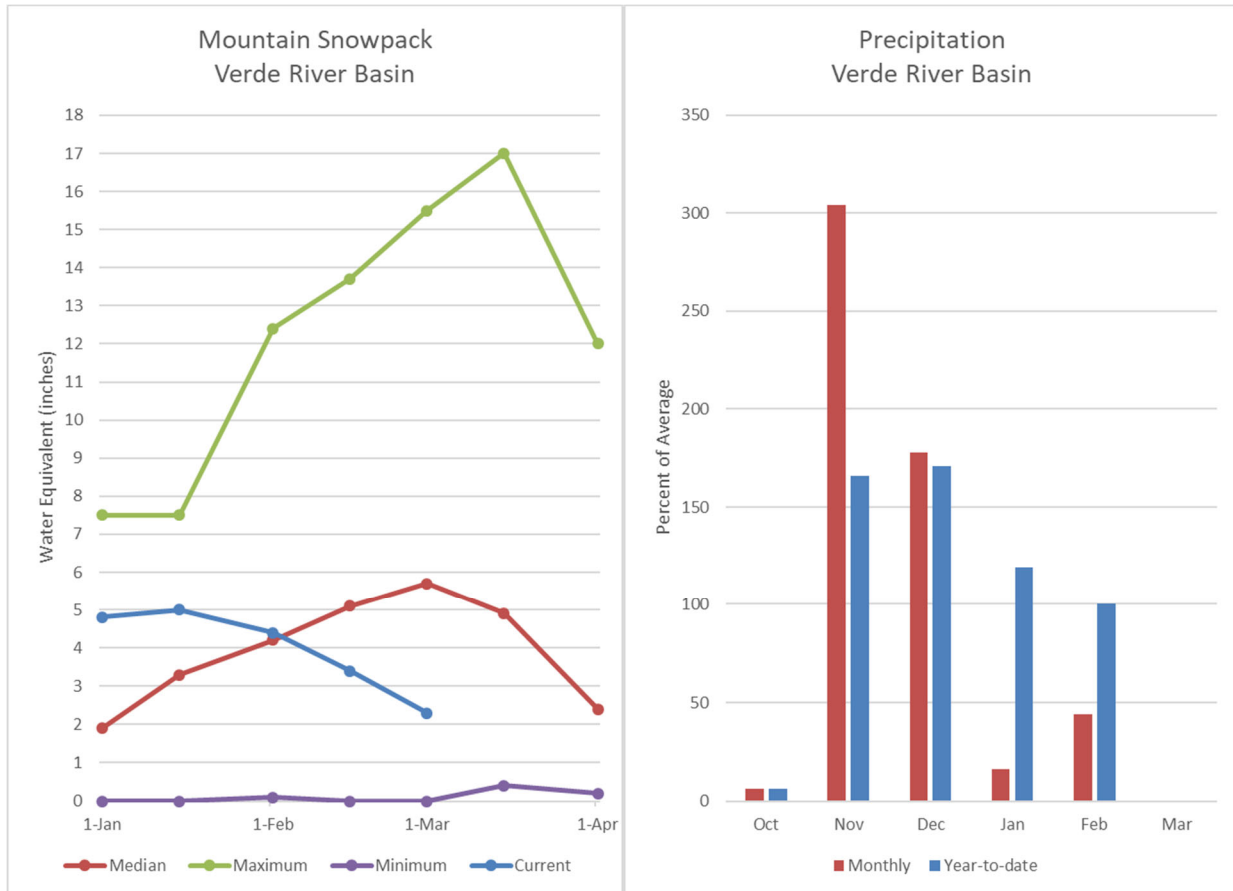
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2020	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Salt River Reservoir System	1683.5	1190.0	1302.0	2025.8
Basin-wide Total	1683.5	1190.0	1302.0	2025.8
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SALT RIVER BASIN	11	62%	104%

## VERDE RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2020

Normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Verde River above Horseshoe Dam, the forecast calls for 92% of median streamflow through May. Snow survey measurements show the Verde snowpack to be at 41% of median.





## Verde River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

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 <sup>3</sup>	MAR			62	105%			59
	MAR-MAY	30	64	98	92%	142	230	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

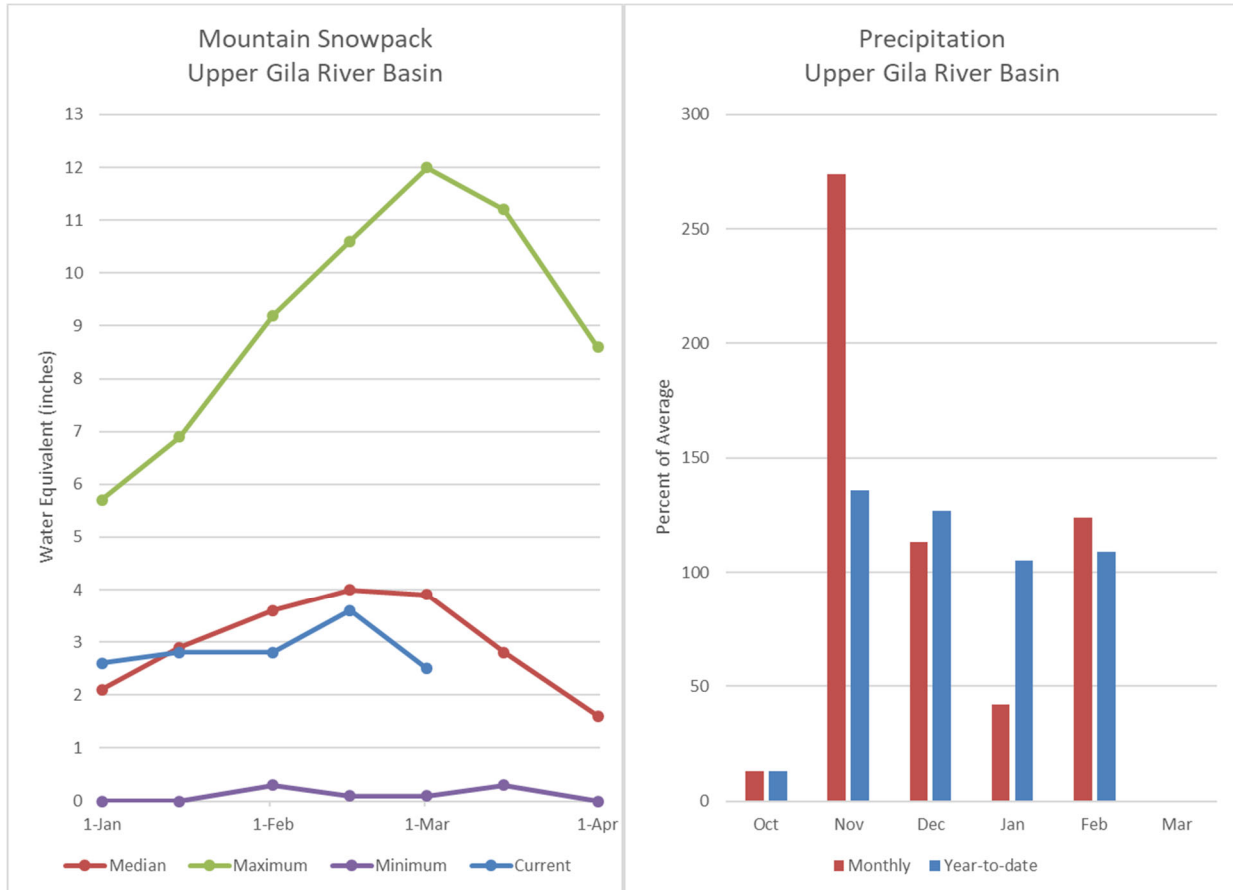
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2020	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Verde River Reservoir System	184.9	252.6	168.0	287.4
Basin-wide Total	184.9	252.6	168.0	287.4
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
VERDE RIVER BASIN	9	41%	140%

## SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2020

Normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the San Francisco River, at Clifton, the forecast calls for 111% of median streamflow levels through May. In the Gila River, near Solomon, the forecast calls for 100% of median streamflow levels through May. At San Carlos Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 111% of median through May. Snow survey measurements show the snowpack for this basin to be at 63% of median.



### San Francisco-Upper Gila River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast
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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 <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	16.2	24	30	88%	37	50	34
Gila R bl Blue Ck nr Virden <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	15.3	28	39	91%	52	75	43
San Francisco R at Glenwood <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	6.7	12.1	17	112%	23	35	15.2
San Francisco R at Clifton <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	16.3	30	42	111%	56	80	38
Gila R nr Solomon <sup>3</sup>	MAR			46	121%			38
	MAR-MAY	35	64	89	100%	118	169	89
San Carlos Reservoir Inflow <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	9.9	32	59	111%	97	179	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

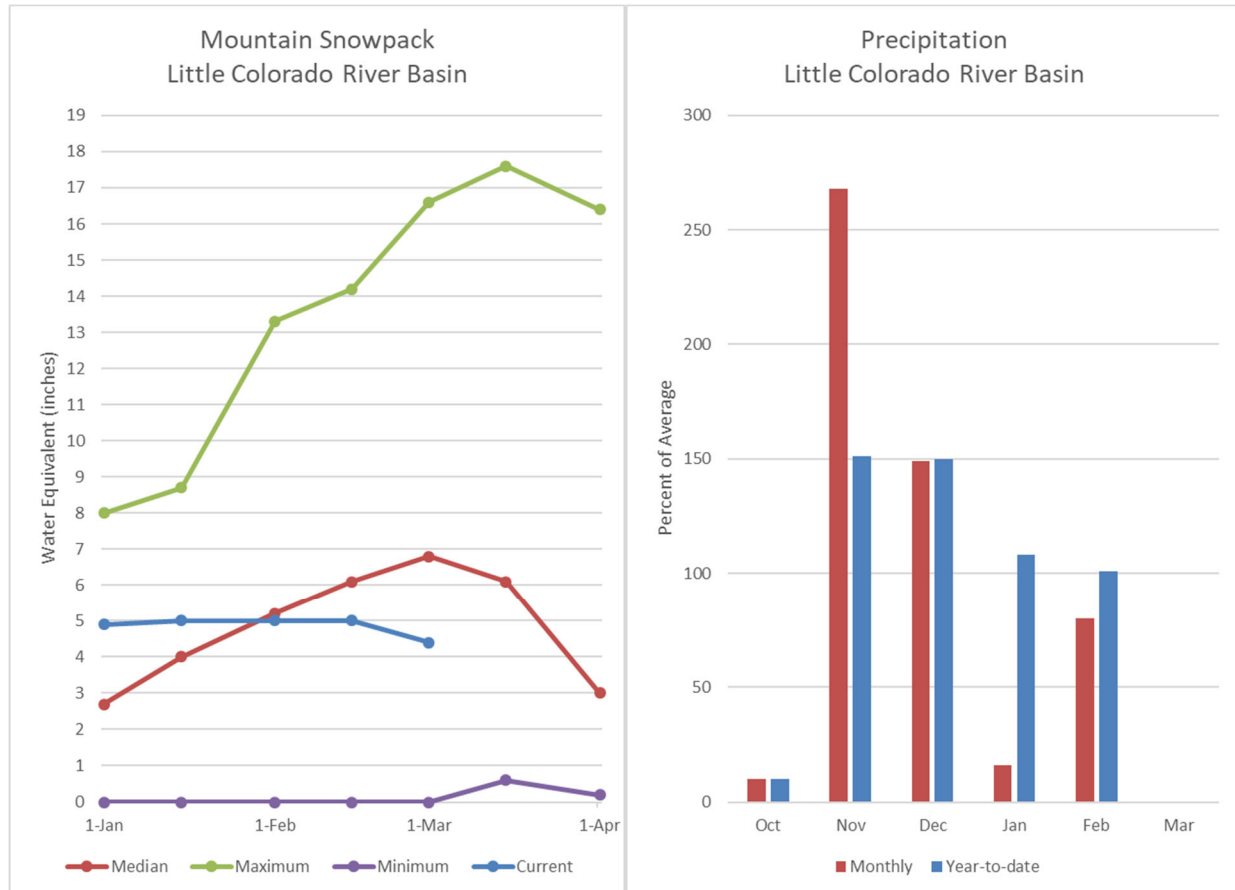
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2020	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
San Carlos Reservoir	118.9	67.7	404.1	875.0
Basin-wide Total	118.9	67.7	404.1	875.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN	9	63%	84%

## LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN as of March 1, 2020

Below normal streamflow levels are forecast for the basin. In the Little Colorado River, above Lyman Lake, the forecast calls for 83% of median streamflow through June. At Blue Ridge (C.C. Cragin) Reservoir, inflow to the lake is forecast at 72% of median through May. Snowpacks along the southern headwaters of the Little Colorado River, and along the central Mogollon Rim, were measured at 65% and 33% of median, respectively.



### Little Colorado River Basin Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

 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 <sup>3</sup>	MAR-JUN	2.1	3.6	5	83%	6.8	10.1	6
Rio Nutria nr Ramah <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	0.18	0.71	1.4	125%	2.4	4.7	1.12
Zuni R ab Black Rock Reservoir <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	0	0.02	0.22	96%	0.86	3.1	0.23
Blue Ridge Reservoir Inflow <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	2.7	6.2	9.7	72%	14.4	24	13.5
Lake Mary Reservoir Inflow <sup>3</sup>	MAR-MAY	1.06	2.1	3.1	107%	4.4	6.8	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

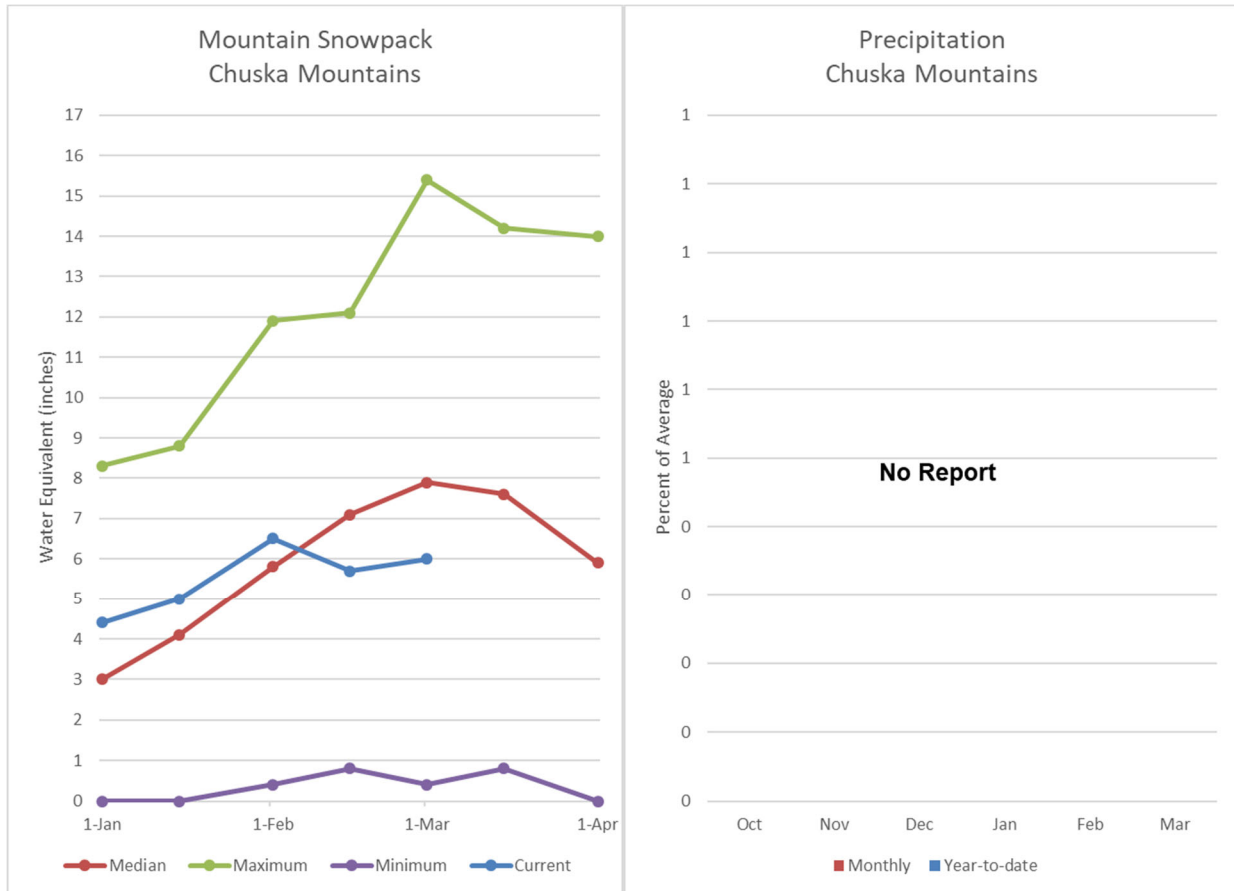
3) Median value used in place of average

Reservoir Storage End of February, 2020	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lyman Reservoir	8.8	3.7	12.9	30.0
Basin-wide Total	8.8	3.7	12.9	30.0
# of reservoirs	1	1	1	1

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN	9	65%	120%
CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM	3	33%	131%

## CHUSKA MOUNTAINS as of March 1, 2020

Snow survey measurements conducted by staff of the Navajo Nation Water Management Branch show the Chuska snowpack to be at 76% of median. The forecast calls for below normal runoff for Wheatfields Creek, Captain Tom Wash, and Bowl Canyon Creek.





## Chuska Mountains Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

Forecast Exceedance Probabilities for Risk Assessment Chance that actual volume will exceed forecast
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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	0.79	1.52	2.2	85%	3.1	4.7	2.6
Wheatfields Ck nr Wheatfields	MAR-MAY	0.6	1.24	1.8	86%	2.5	3.6	2.1
Bowl Canyon Ck ab Asaayi Lake	MAR-MAY	0.52	0.84	1.1	85%	1.39	1.89	1.3

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

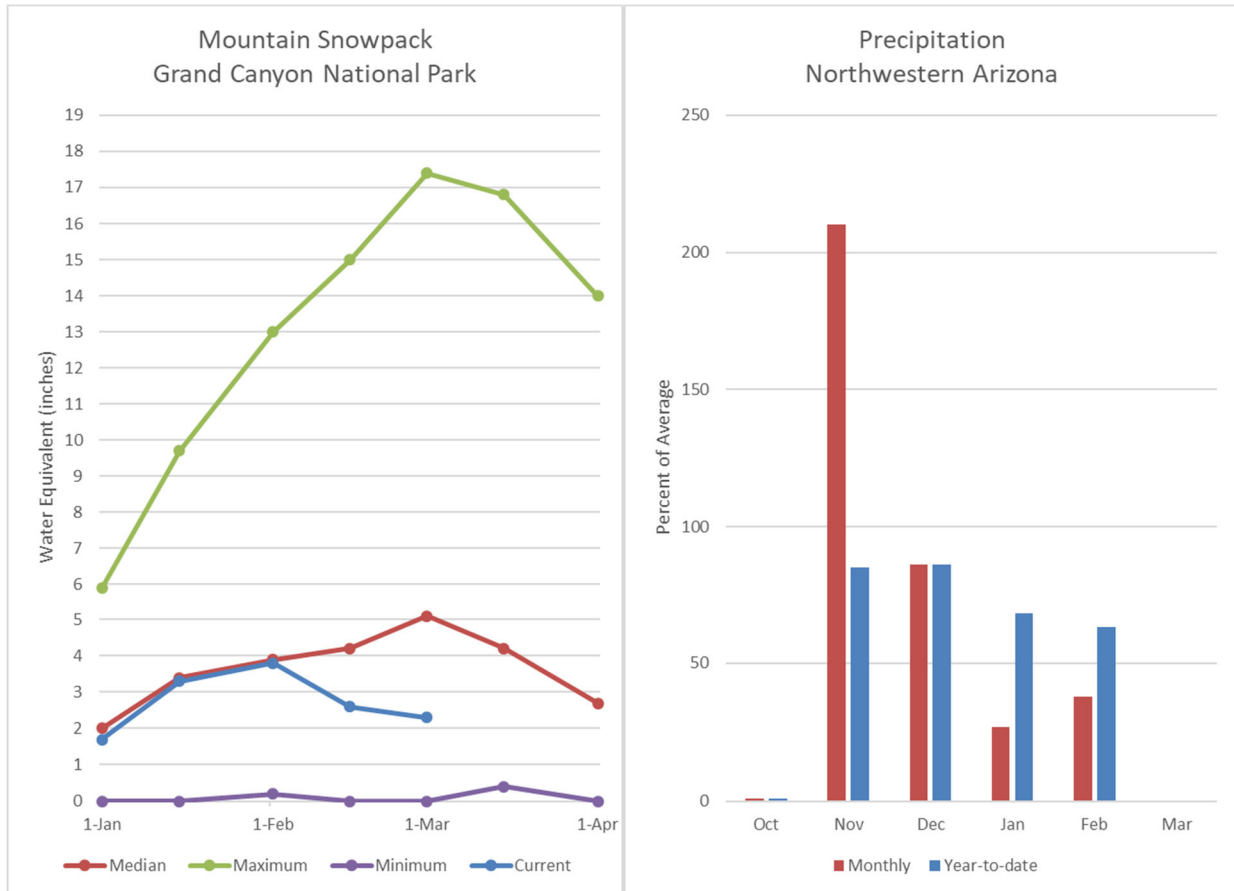
2) Forecasts are for unimpaired flows. Actual flow will be dependent on management of upstream reservoirs and diversions

3) Median value used in place of average

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
CHUSKA MOUNTAINS	5	76%	127%
DEFIANCE PLATEAU	1	67%	175%

## NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA as of March 1, 2020

On the Colorado River, below normal inflow to Lake Powell is forecast at 78% 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 46% of median.



## Northwestern Arizona Streamflow Forecasts - March 1, 2020

 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	15.2	26	37	57%	49	72	65
Lake Powell Inflow <sup>2</sup>	APR-JUL		4590	5600	78%	6710		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, 2020	Current (KAF)	Last Year (KAF)	Average (KAF)	Capacity (KAF)
Lake Havasu	584.6	573.4	560.2	619.0
Lake Mohave	1675.0	1704.0	1673.0	1810.0
Lake Mead	11414.0	10682.0	20575.0	26159.0
Lake Powell	11997.0	9260.7	17055.0	24322.0
Basin-wide Total	25670.6	22220.1	39863.2	52910.0
# of reservoirs	4	4	4	4

Watershed Snowpack Analysis March 1, 2020	# of Sites	% Median	Last Year % Median
NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA	2	46%	128%

**Basinwide Summary: March 1, 2020**  
**(Averages/Medians based on 1981-2010 reference period)**

**Snowpack Summary for March 1, 2020**

<b>SALT RIVER BASIN</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	16	7.1	8.1	88%	9.4	116%
Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	1	0.1	5.2	2%	2.2	42%
Buck Spring	SC	7400	0	0.0	2.2	0%	2.2	100%
Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	0	0.0	2.4	0%	2.1	88%
Hawley Lake	SNOTEL	8300	28	11.6			14.7	
Coronado Trail	SC	8350	0	0.0	1.8	0%	2.0	111%
Fort Apache	SC	9160	27	8.0	8.2	98%	9.7	118%
Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	23	9.9	10.3	96%	12.2	118%
Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	24	9.8	8.9	110%	11.1	125%
Nutriosio	SC	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.7	117%
Nutriosio	SNOTEL	8500	1	0.1			0.1	
Wildcat	SNOTEL	7850	0	0.0	3.2	0%	2.5	78%
Workman Creek	SNOTEL	6900	0	0.0	5.1	0%	4.4	86%
<b>Basin Index</b>						<b>62%</b>		<b>104%</b>
<b># of sites</b>						11		11
<b>VERDE RIVER BASIN</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	2	1.0	5.2	19%	6.8	131%
Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700			10.5		12.1	115%
Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	30	11.0			15.2	
Bar M	SNOTEL	6393	0	0.0			2.8	
Chalender	SC	7100	1	0.4	2.0	20%	3.5	175%
Chalender	SNOTEL	7100	7	3.5			5.7	
Fort Valley	SC	7350	0	0.0	1.9	0%	2.3	121%
Fort Valley	SNOTEL	7350	0	0.0			2.0	
Fry	SNOTEL	7200	17	8.0	7.0	114%	9.3	133%
Happy Jack	SNOTEL	7630	8	4.7	5.9	80%	9.2	156%
Happy Jack	SC	7630	0	0.0	4.0	0%	5.1	128%
Mormon Mountain	SNOTEL	7500	2	0.7	4.7	15%	6.1	130%
Mormon Mountain Summit #2	SC	8470			11.2		15.0	134%
Mormon Mtn Summit	SNOTEL	8500	23	6.9			11.5	
Newman Park	SC	6750	0	0.0	2.0	0%	3.3	165%
White Horse Lake	SNOTEL	7180	1	0.3	3.9	8%	5.5	141%
Williams Ski Run	SC	7720			8.2		12.1	148%
<b>Basin Index</b>						<b>41%</b>		<b>140%</b>
<b># of sites</b>						9		9
<b>SAN FRANCISCO PEAKS</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Snow Bowl #2	SC	11200	50	16.4	16.1	102%	16.8	104%
Snowslide Canyon	SNOTEL	9730	49	16.9	15.3	110%	23.9	156%
<b>Basin Index</b>						<b>106%</b>		<b>130%</b>
<b># of sites</b>						2		2
<b>SAN FRANCISCO-UPPER GILA RIVER BASIN</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Beaver Head	SNOTEL	7990	1	0.1	5.2	2%	2.2	42%
Coronado Trail	SNOTEL	8400	0	0.0	2.4	0%	2.1	88%
Coronado Trail	SC	8350	0	0.0	1.8	0%	2.0	111%
Frisco Divide	SNOTEL	8000	5	2.4	2.4	100%	2.1	88%
Hannagan Meadows	SNOTEL	9020	23	9.9	10.3	96%	12.2	118%
Hummingbird - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10550			11.9			
Lookout Mountain	SNOTEL	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.0	0%

Nutriosio	SC	8500	0	0.0	0.6	0%	0.7	117%
Nutriosio	SNOTEL	8500	1	0.1			0.1	
Signal Peak	SNOTEL	8360	1	0.0	4.3	0%	0.0	0%
Silver Creek Divide	SNOTEL	9000	21	10.1	8.3	122%	8.9	107%
State Line	SC	8000			1.4		2.1	150%
Whitewater - Aerial And Snow Course	SC	10750			18.6			

**Basin Index** **63%** **84%**  
# of sites 9 9

<b>LITTLE COLORADO RIVER BASIN</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	2	1.0	5.2	19%	6.8	131%
Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700			10.5		12.1	115%
Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	30	11.0			15.2	
Baldy	SNOTEL	9125	16	7.1	8.1	88%	9.4	116%
Buck Spring	SC	7400	0	0.0	2.2	0%	2.2	100%
Cheese Springs	SC	8700	17	5.5	5.8	95%	6.6	114%
Fort Apache	SC	9160	27	8.0	8.2	98%	9.7	118%
Heber	SNOTEL	7640	2	0.6	4.5	13%	6.7	149%
Lake Mary	SC	6930	0	0.0	3.4	0%	2.7	79%
Maverick Fork	SNOTEL	9200	24	9.8	8.9	110%	11.1	125%
Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	12	5.4	11.3	48%	14.1	125%

**Basin Index** **65%** **120%**  
# of sites 9 9

<b>CENTRAL MOGOLLON RIM</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Baker Butte	SNOTEL	7300	2	1.0	5.2	19%	6.8	131%
Baker Butte No. 2	SC	7700			10.5		12.1	115%
Baker Butte Smt	SNOTEL	7700	30	11.0			15.2	
Heber	SNOTEL	7640	2	0.6	4.5	13%	6.7	149%
Promontory	SNOTEL	7930	12	5.4	11.3	48%	14.1	125%

**Basin Index** **33%** **131%**  
# of sites 3 3

<b>CHUSKA MOUNTAINS</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Beaver Spring	SC	9220	20	8.3	10.0	83%	11.2	112%
Beaver Spring	SNOTEL	9200	21	8.5			12.7	
Bowl Canyon	SC	8980	22	7.7	8.7	89%	11.3	130%
Hidden Valley	SC	8480	15	6.2			9.8	
Missionary Spring	SC	7940	0	0.0	4.1	0%	5.6	137%
Tsaile Canyon #1	SC	8160	14	4.8	6.4	75%	9.7	152%
Tsaile Canyon #3	SC	8920	22	8.0	8.8	91%	10.6	120%
Whiskey Creek	SC	9050			9.3		13.4	144%
Navajo Whiskey Ck	SNOTEL	9050	23	9.7			13.0	

**Basin Index** **76%** **127%**  
# of sites 5 5

<b>DEFIANCE PLATEAU</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Fluted Rock	SC	7800	9	2.4	3.6	67%	6.3	175%

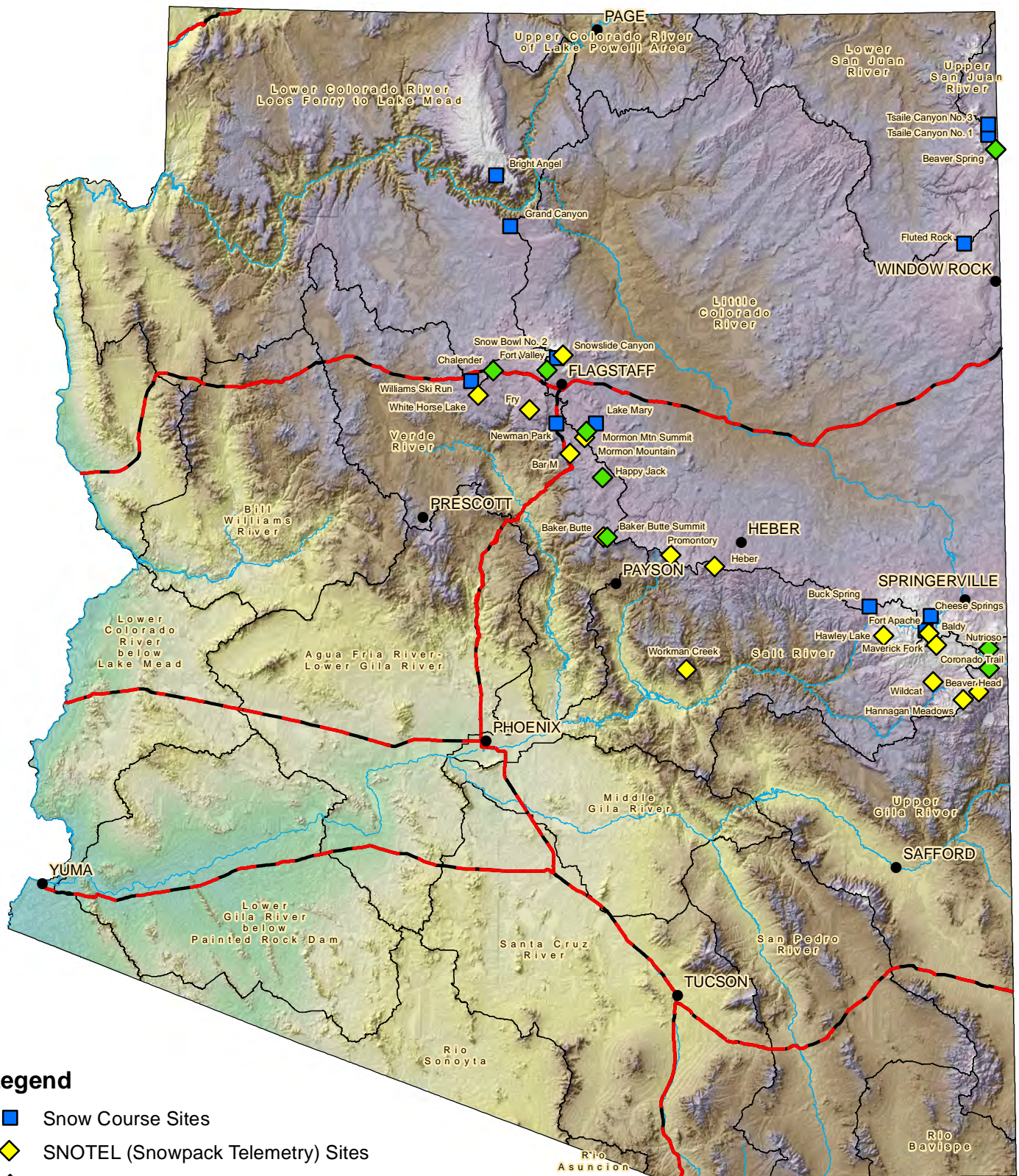
**Basin Index** **67%** **175%**  
# of sites 1 1

<b>NORTHWESTERN ARIZONA</b>	Network	Elevation (ft)	Depth (in)	SWE (in)	Median (in)	% Median	Last Year SWE (in)	Last Year % Median
Bright Angel	SC	8400	15	4.6	8.7	53%	9.4	108%
Grand Canyon	SC	7500	0	0.0	1.4	0%	3.5	250%

**Basin Index** **46%** **128%**  
# of sites 2 2



# Arizona Snow Survey Data Sites



## Legend

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