

Snow: Idaho's Frozen Liquid Gold (Hybrid) Part II February 18, 2026

Where's the Snow ?

April 6, 2023 **February 9, 2026**



**Cat Creek
Summit
Highway 20**

Topics:

How Did We Get Here ?

- **Teleconnections & Analog Years for this Winter**
- **Fall and Early Winter Precipitation**
- **December 18 - Brought a Change in Weather - What Happened ?**
- **February 14 start of 2nd Half of Winter ??**
- **Current Snow Conditions**
- **Chance for Snow to Recover by April 1**
- **Water Supply Outlook**

February 8, 2026 Sun Valley Resort



Snow: Idaho's Frozen Liquid Gold (Hybrid)

This course will discuss the building of Idaho's mountain snowpack as it reaches its peak in early April and current water supply outlook.

We'll examine the history of snow surveys and the usefulness of water supply information as well as current snow levels and water supply outlook.

We also will explore the importance of understanding your watershed and what makes it flow, current snow levels, water supply outlook, and key snow, flow and weather relationships to watch as our rivers rise.

PLEASE NOTE: *The first session of this course will meet on February 18, and the second session will meet on April 22.*

Presenter: Ron Abramovich, retired Water Supply Specialist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

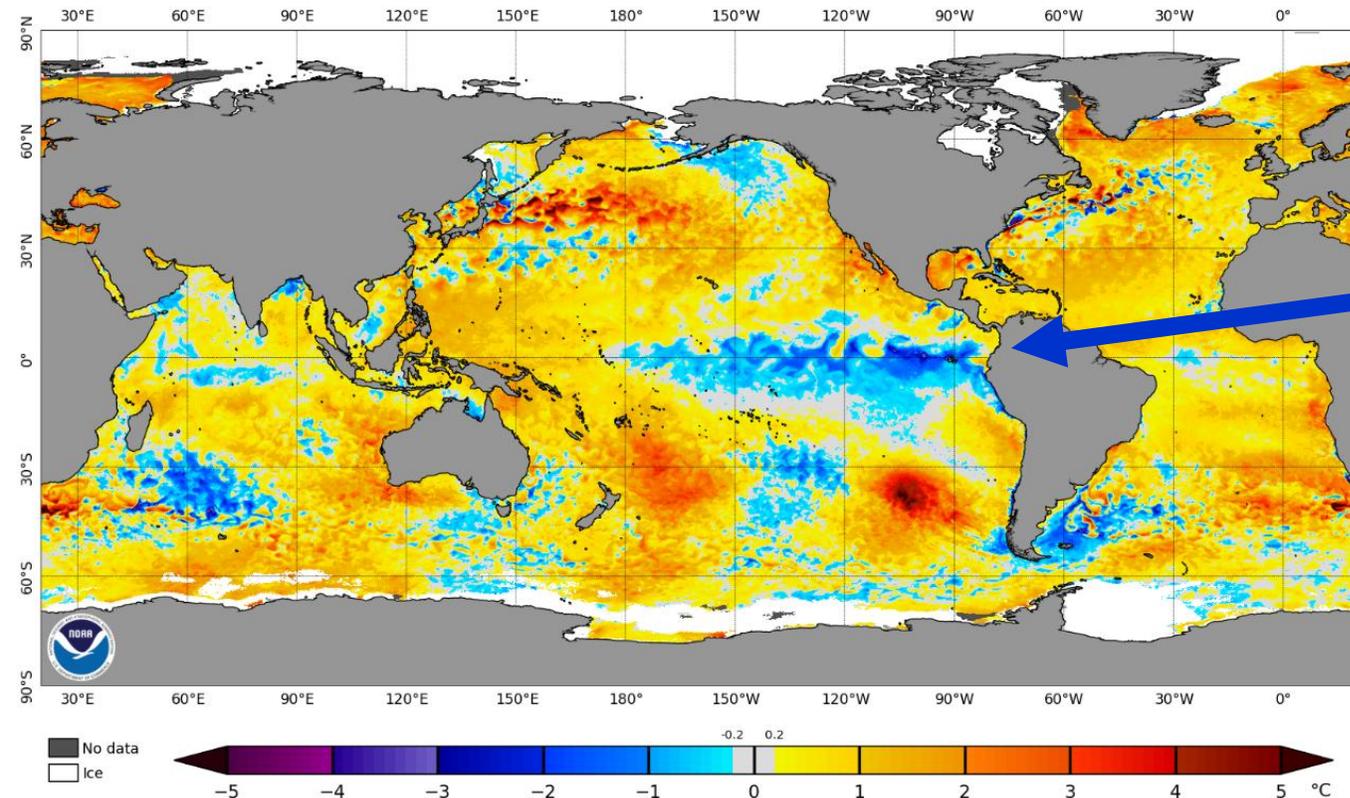
Dates and time: **Session One:** Wed., Feb. 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Session Two: Wed., Apr. 22, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$25

Watch a preview of this program here: [**Snow: Idaho's Frozen Liquid Gold**](#)

SST Anomaly Charts

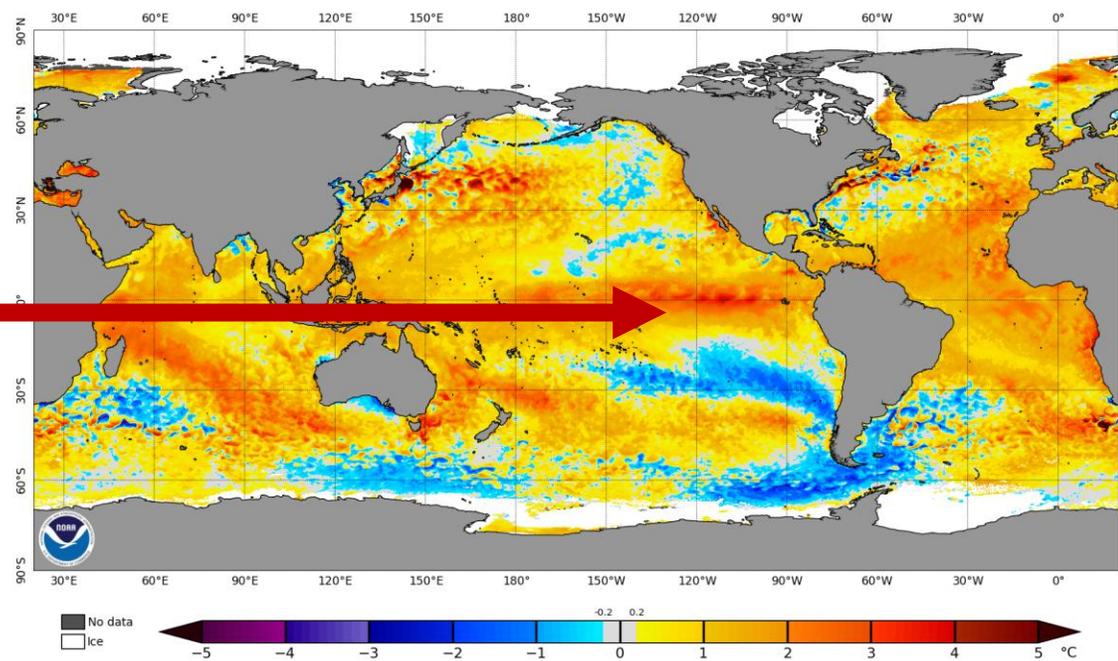
NOAA Coral Reef Watch Daily 5km SST Anomalies (v3.1) 4 Jan 2026



Sea Surface Temperatures

**La Nina Conditions
Jan 4, 2026**

NOAA Coral Reef Watch Daily 5km SST Anomalies (v3.1) 1 Jan 2024

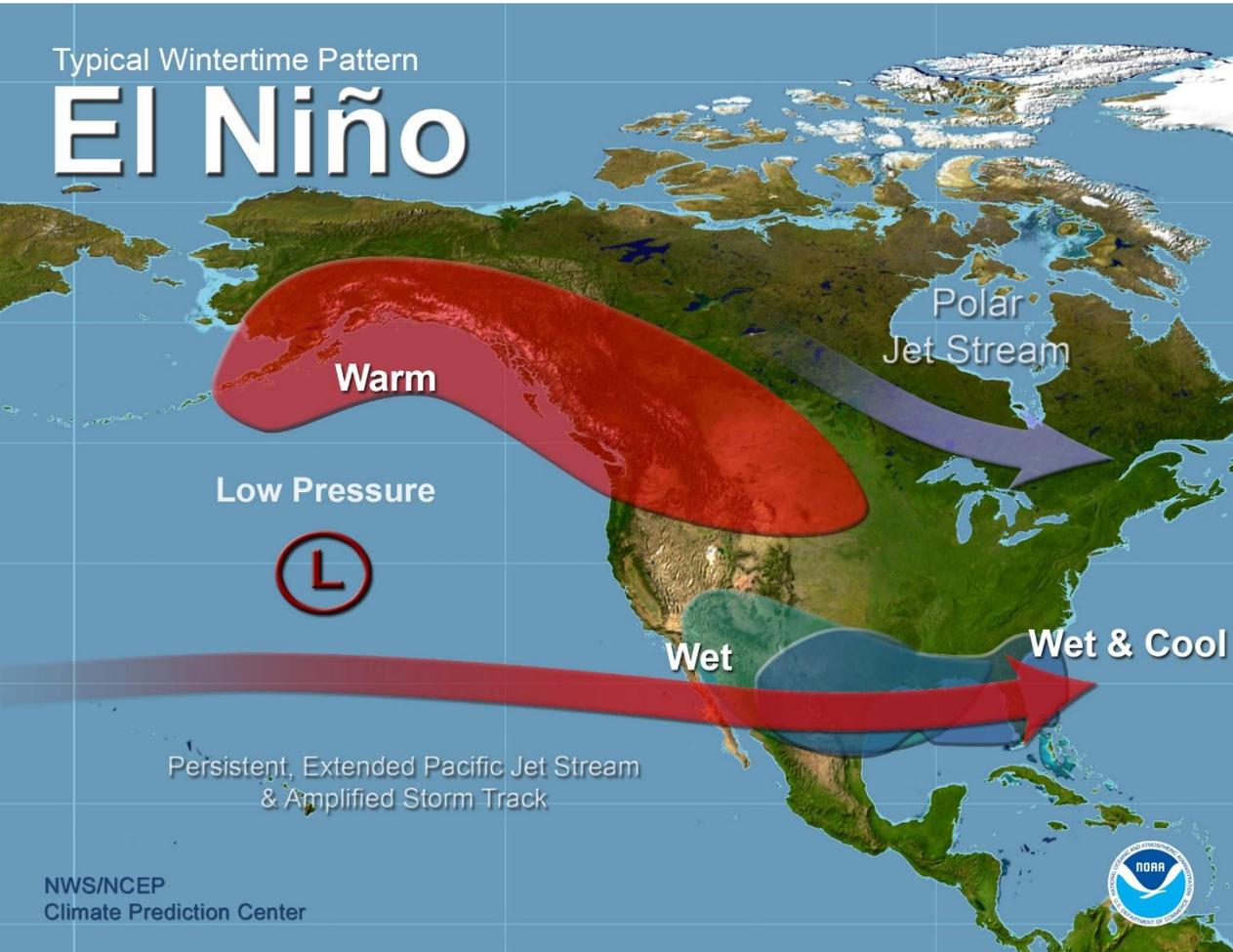


**El Nino Conditions
Jan 1, 2024**

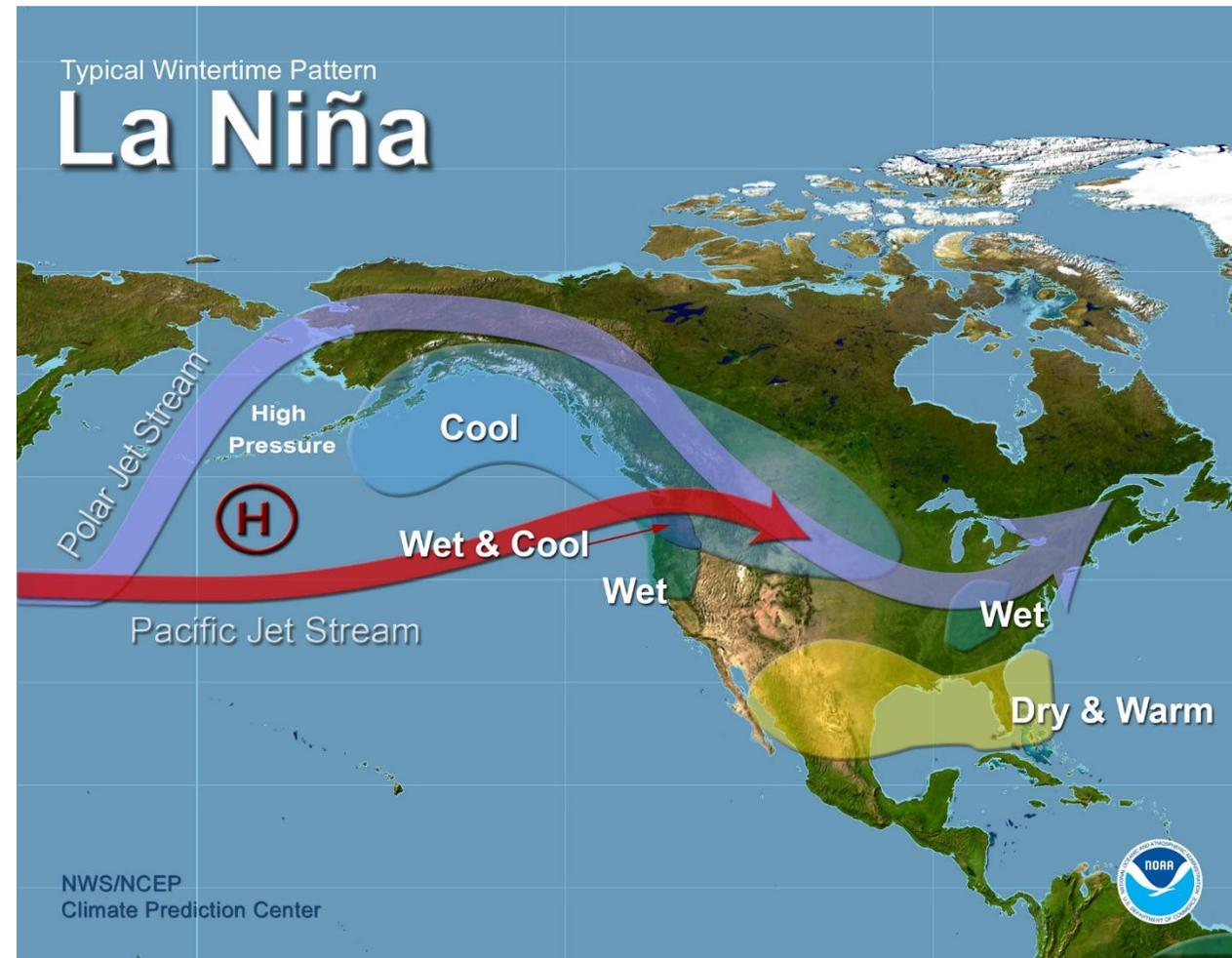
**El Nino Brewing for
2026-27 Winter**

Quick Review

El Niño



La Niña

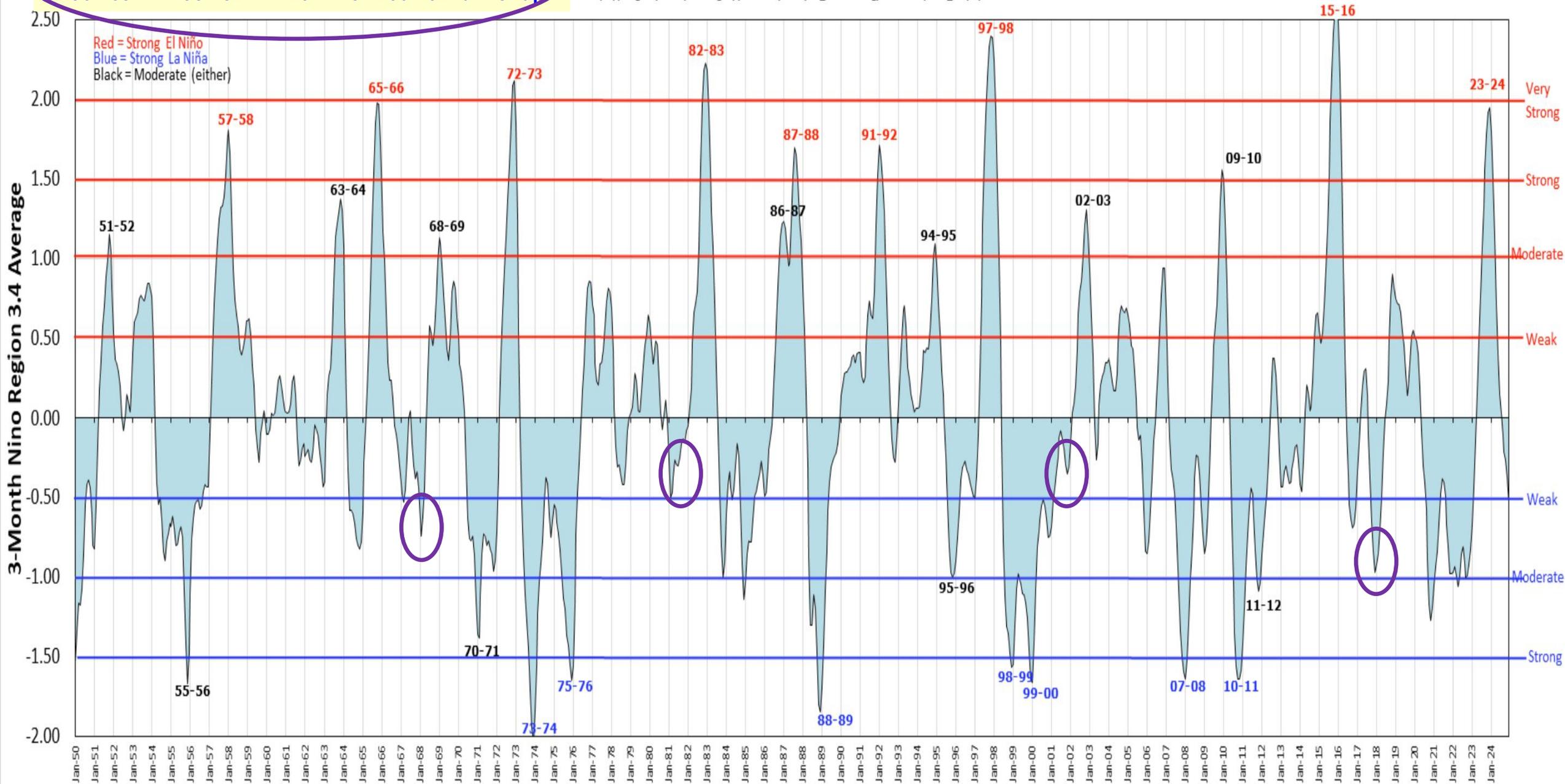


Good visual to view current analog years and their strengths with other years:

1967-68 1981-82 2017-18 2001-02 runner up

Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

https://origin.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/ensostuff/ONI_v5.php





The Earth is almost never shown like this. This is our planet from the side of the Pacific Ocean.



Why we study the Pacific Ocean ? It's Huge!

A view of the Pacific Ocean that you don't always see.

Southern Oscillation Index (SOI)
measure of the Pacific Atmosphere

Correlation Map of SOI
with Spring-Summer Streamflow

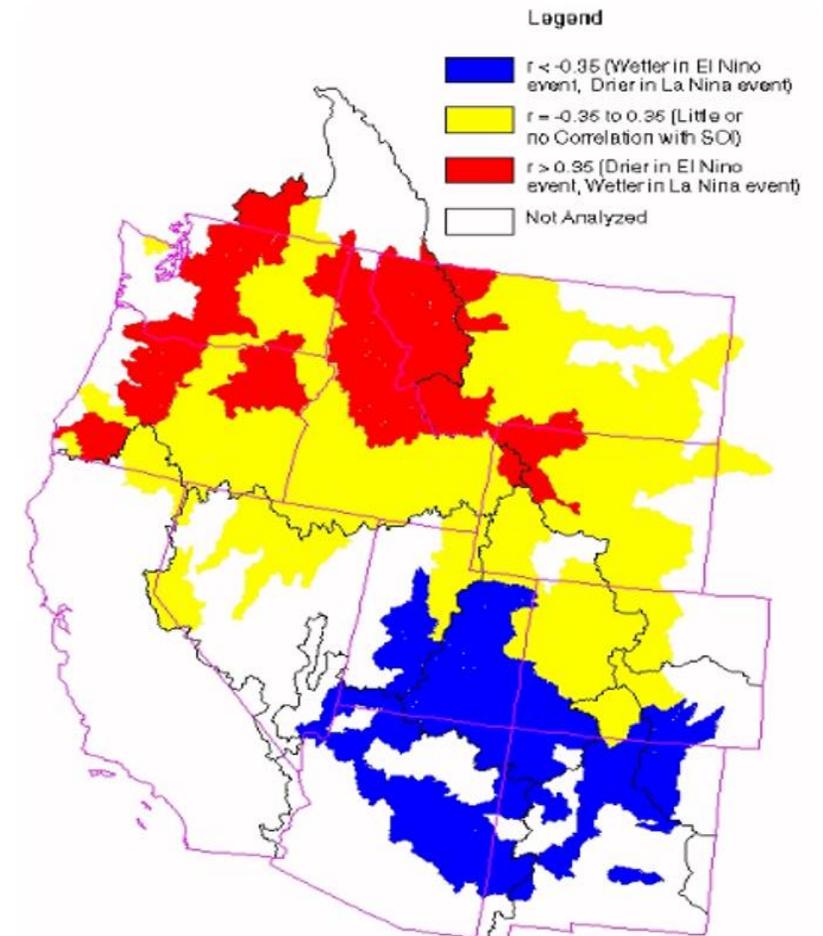
Red wetter in La Nina years.

Blue wetter in El Nino years.

Key is – what happens July-Nov in
Pacific correlates with snowfall
and summer streamflow in
Western US.

Clearwater Basin has correlation
value of 0.67

Figure 1. Correlation Map of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) with spring and summer streamflow in the Western US.



Seasonal Climate Forecast

February – April 2026

Issued: January 16, 2026

Contact: ODF Lead Meteorologist Pete Parsons
503-945-7448 or peter.gj.parsons@odf.oregon.gov

ODA Team: Andy Zimmerman; Jenn Ambrose; Laura Passage; Weston Hustace
ODF Team: Julie Vondrachek; Kristin Cody; Sherni Pugh; Gary Votaw

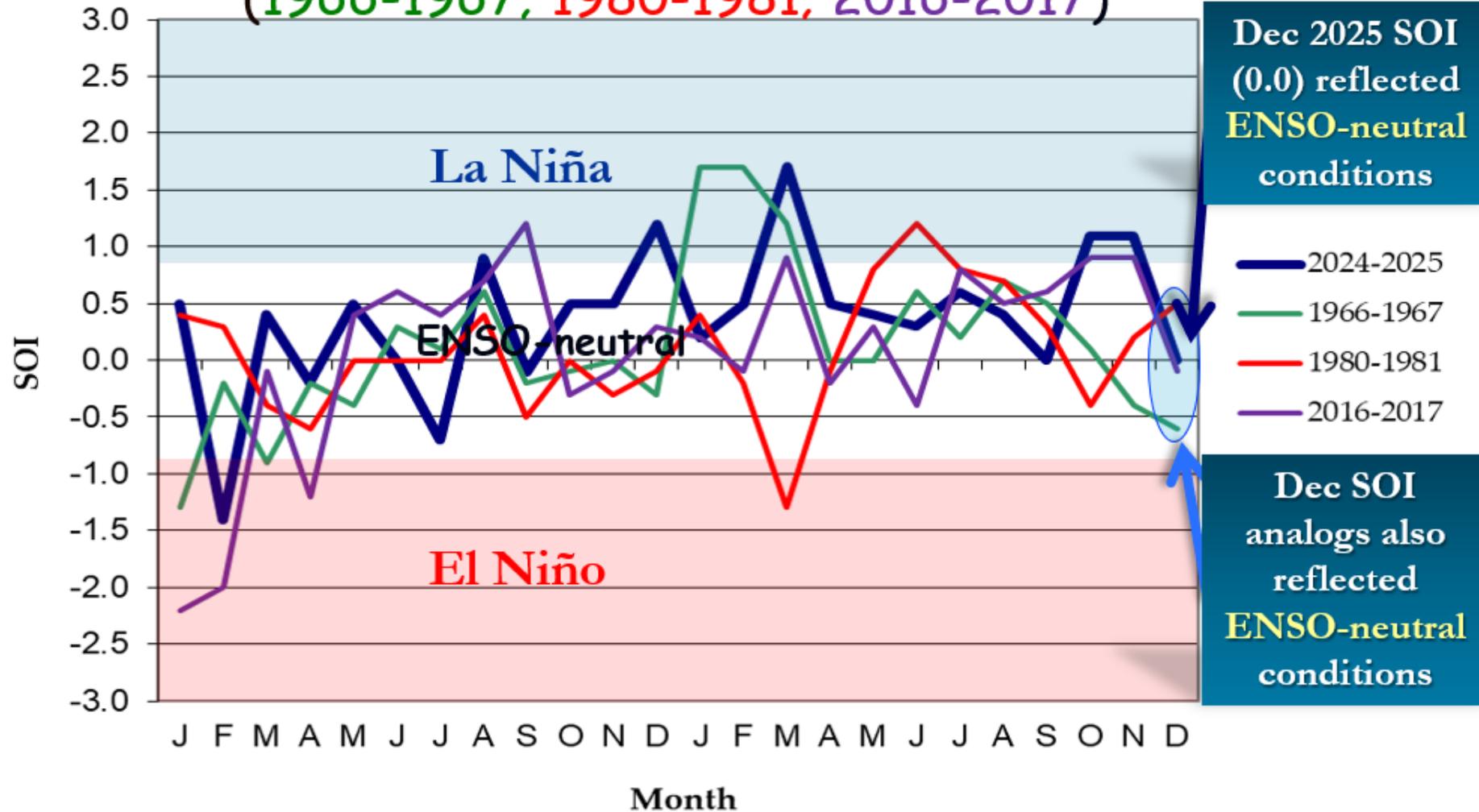
Forecast Highlights

- This forecast is based on weather that occurred during the 1968, 1982, & 2018 analog years. No changes to these years from last month.

Current Analog Years Based on Current SOI, ONI and PDO conditions:
1967-68 1981-82 2017-18 2001-02 is/was a runner up

Southern Oscillation Index (SOI)

SOI values from the top "analog years" compared with the current period (2024-2025)
(1966-1967; 1980-1981; 2016-2017)



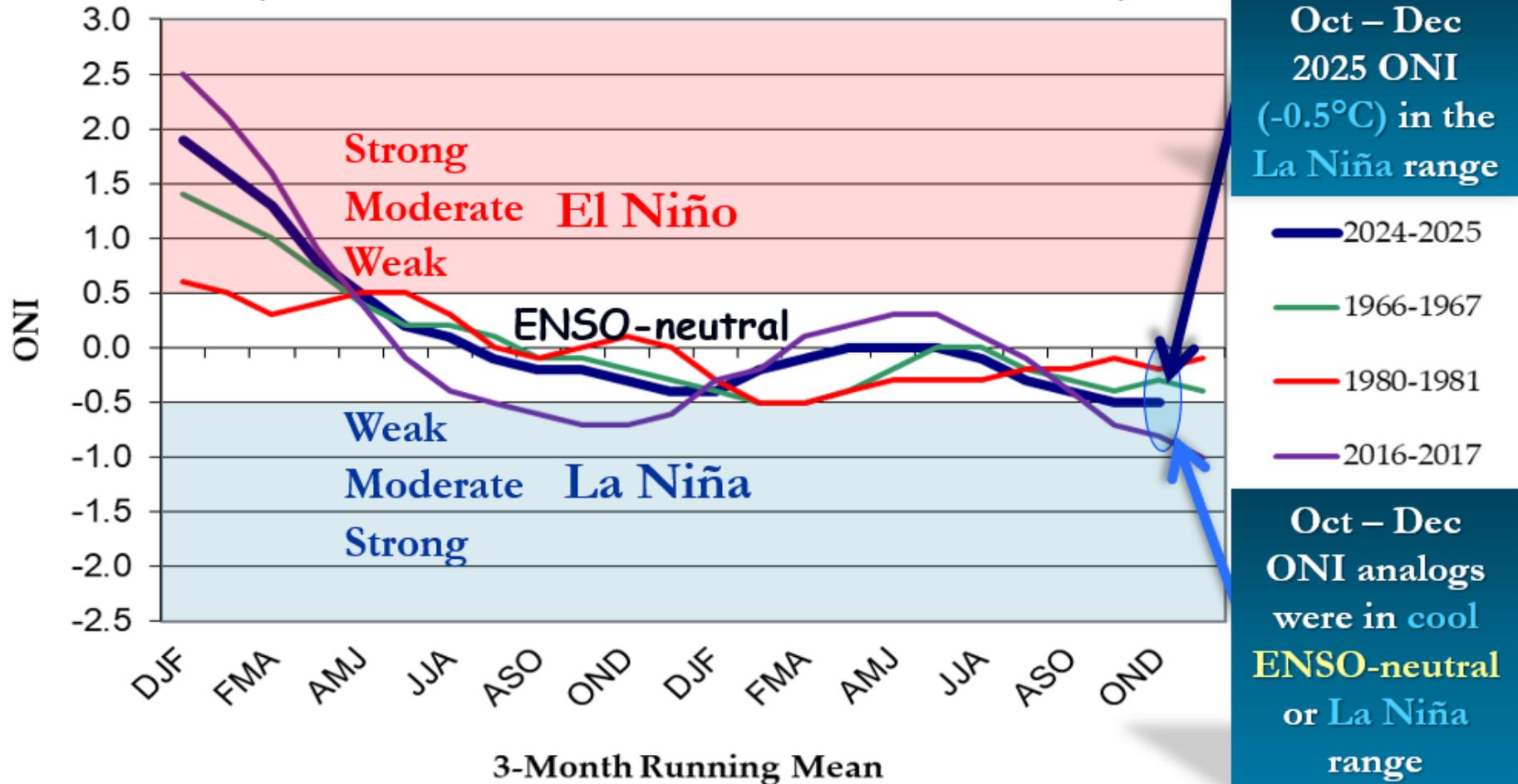
Dec 2025 SOI (0.0) reflected ENSO-neutral conditions

2024-2025
1966-1967
1980-1981
2016-2017

Dec SOI analogs also reflected ENSO-neutral conditions

Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

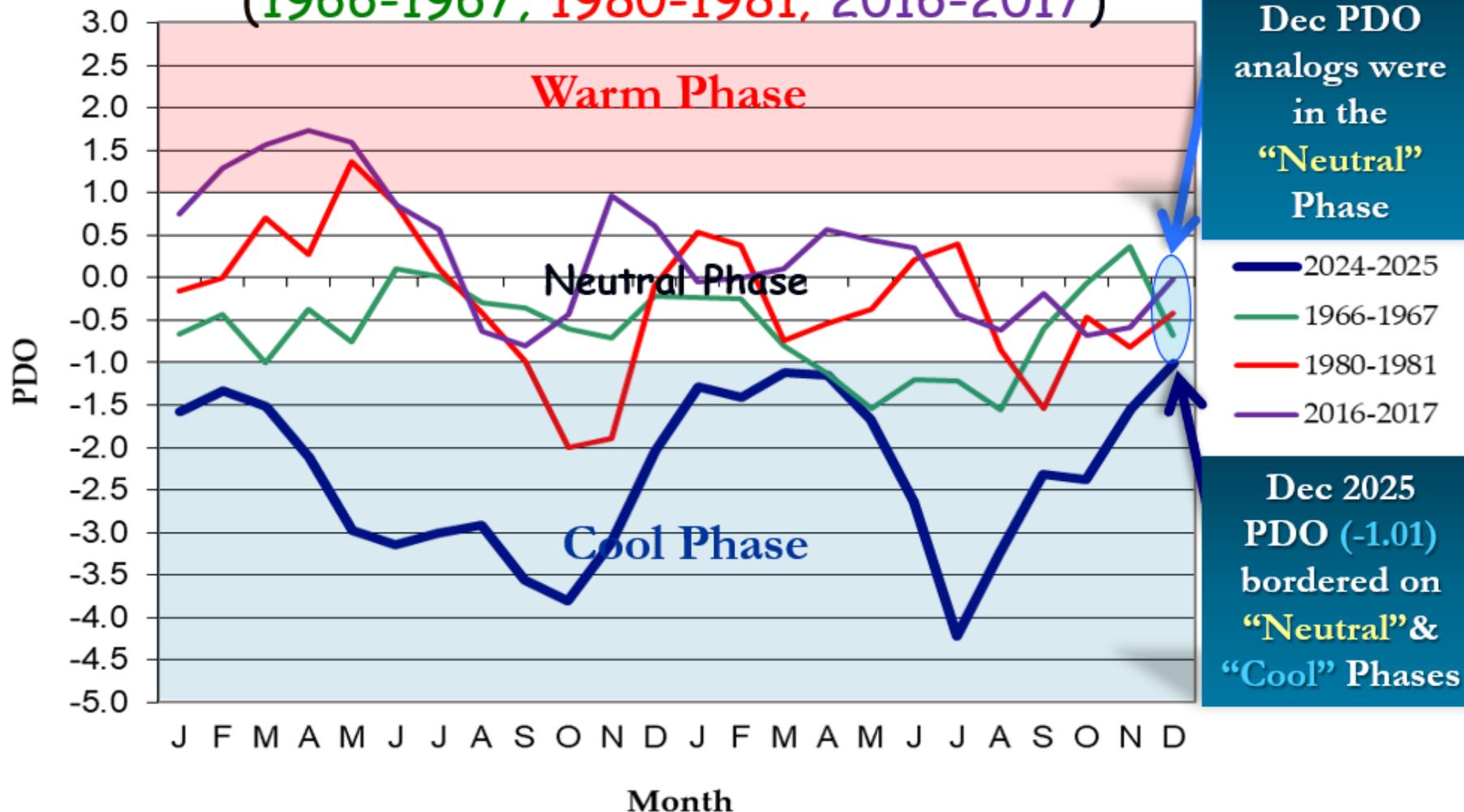
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compared with the current period (2024-2025)
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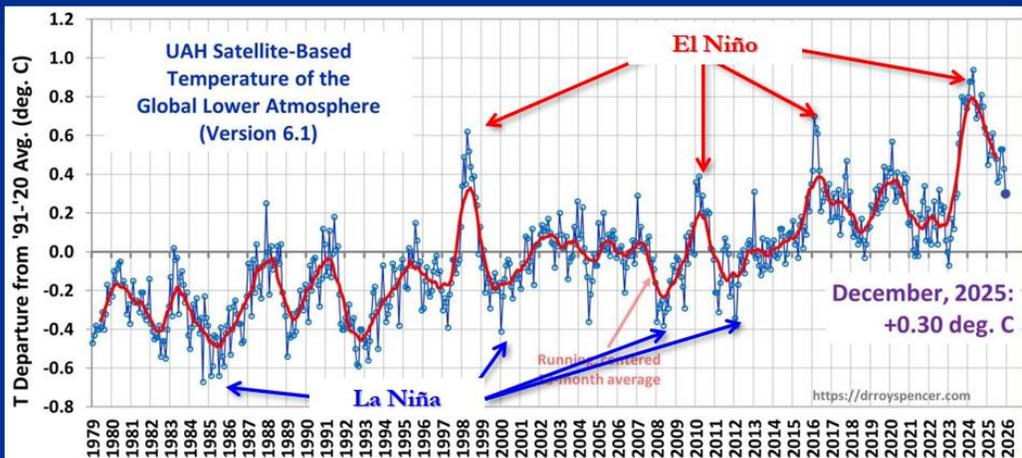
North Pacific Ocean

(Poleward of 20°N Latitude)

PDO values from the top "analog years" compared
with the current period (2024-2025)
(1966-1967; 1980-1981; 2016-2017)

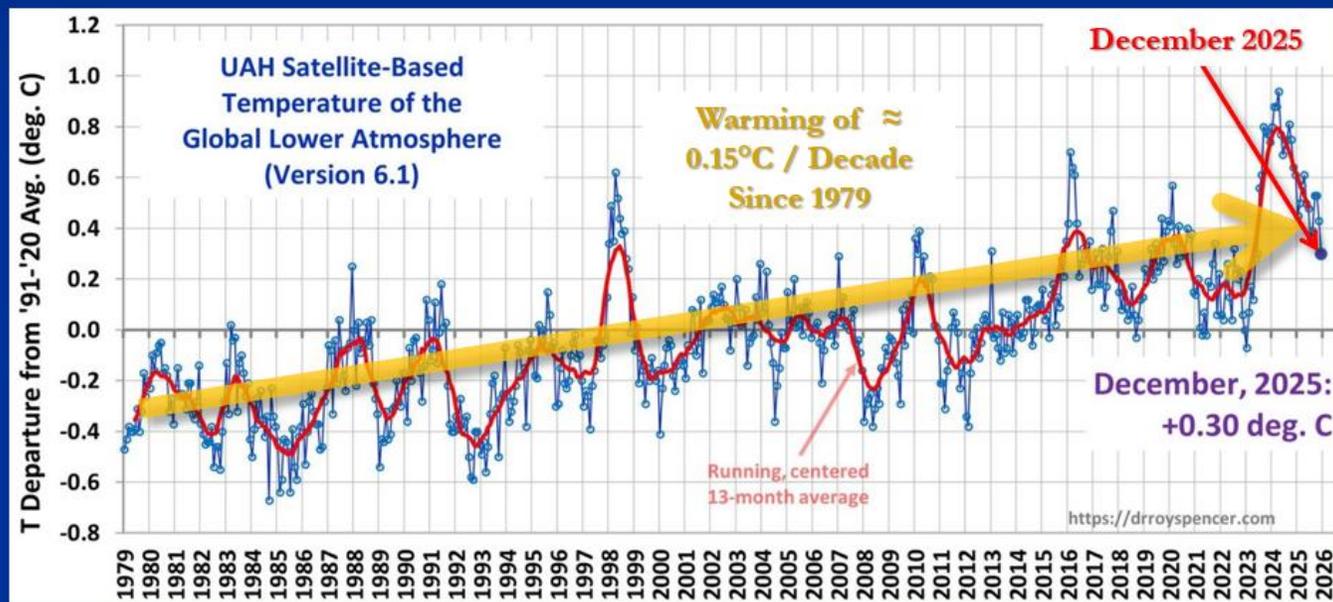


El Niño & La Niña Impact Global Temperatures...



Courtesy: <http://www.drroyspencer.com/latest-global-temperatures/>

Global Temperature Changes Increase Error in Analog Forecasts!



Courtesy: <http://www.drroyspencer.com/latest-global-temperatures/>

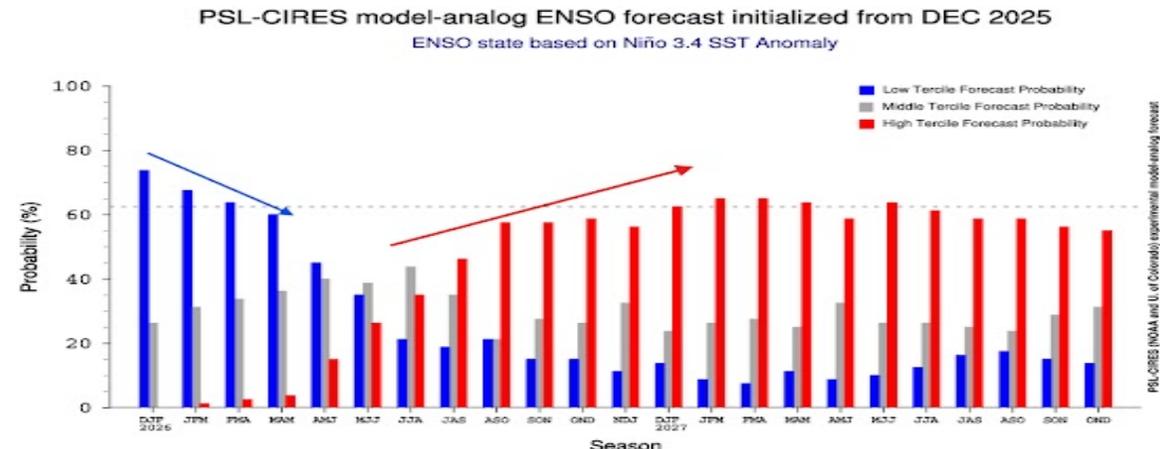
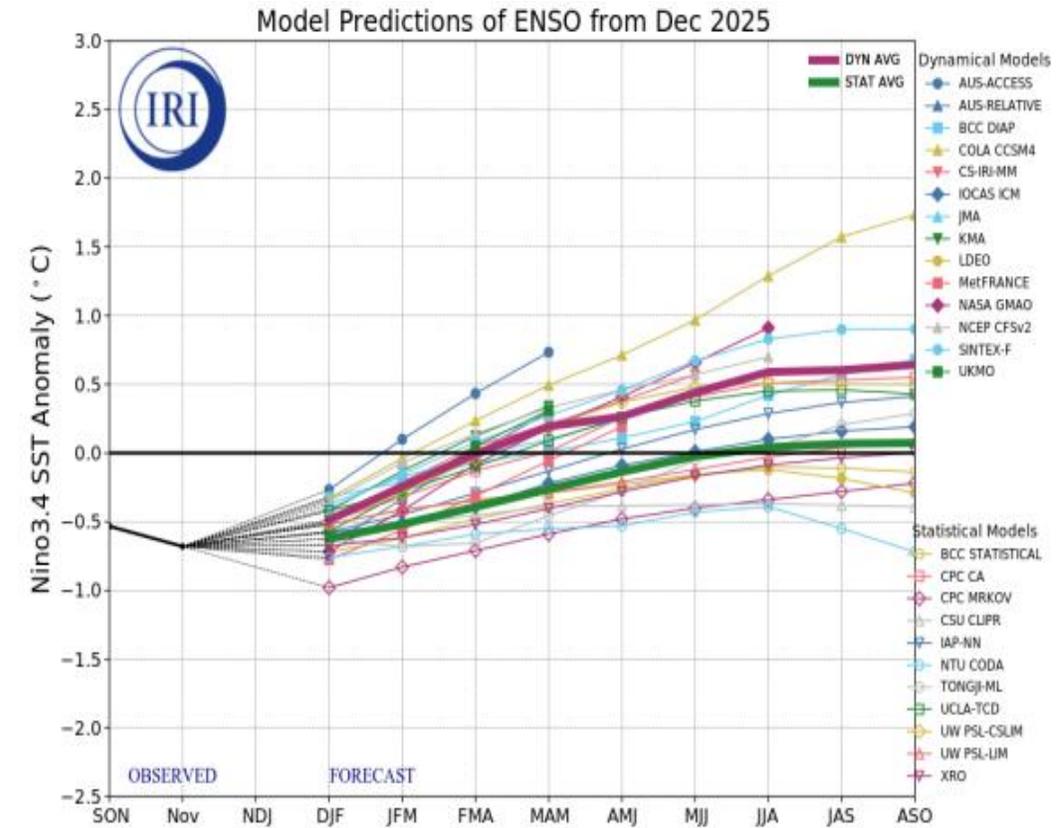
EL NINO 2026 IS COMING

The first hint of a possible El Niño is already visible in the latest extended range ocean forecasts for 2025/2026. These calculations show a rather rapid reversal in the oceans, which is usually fueled by significant global weather changes.

The long-range ensemble forecast below shows the forecast for the main ENSO region. The La Niña conditions (with a value of -0.5 or lower) will begin to dissipate during winter. But the extended forecast shows that most calculations shift into the warm anomalies and are also well above the 0.5 threshold of the El Niño event.

**Sep 2025 - Maybe we'll see an El Niño sooner than later...
El Niño is setting up for Winter 2026-27. I've never seen them calling this out so early, so must be feeling confident.**

The CPC official probabilistic ENSO forecast shows a clear shift into El Niño mode for 2026/2027, giving a full El Niño state by early Fall 2026. This shows the event peaking during Winter, potentially lasting for a second year. You can also see the rapid decline of the current La Niña event.



PSL-CIRES (NOAA and U. of Colorado) experimental model-analog forecast

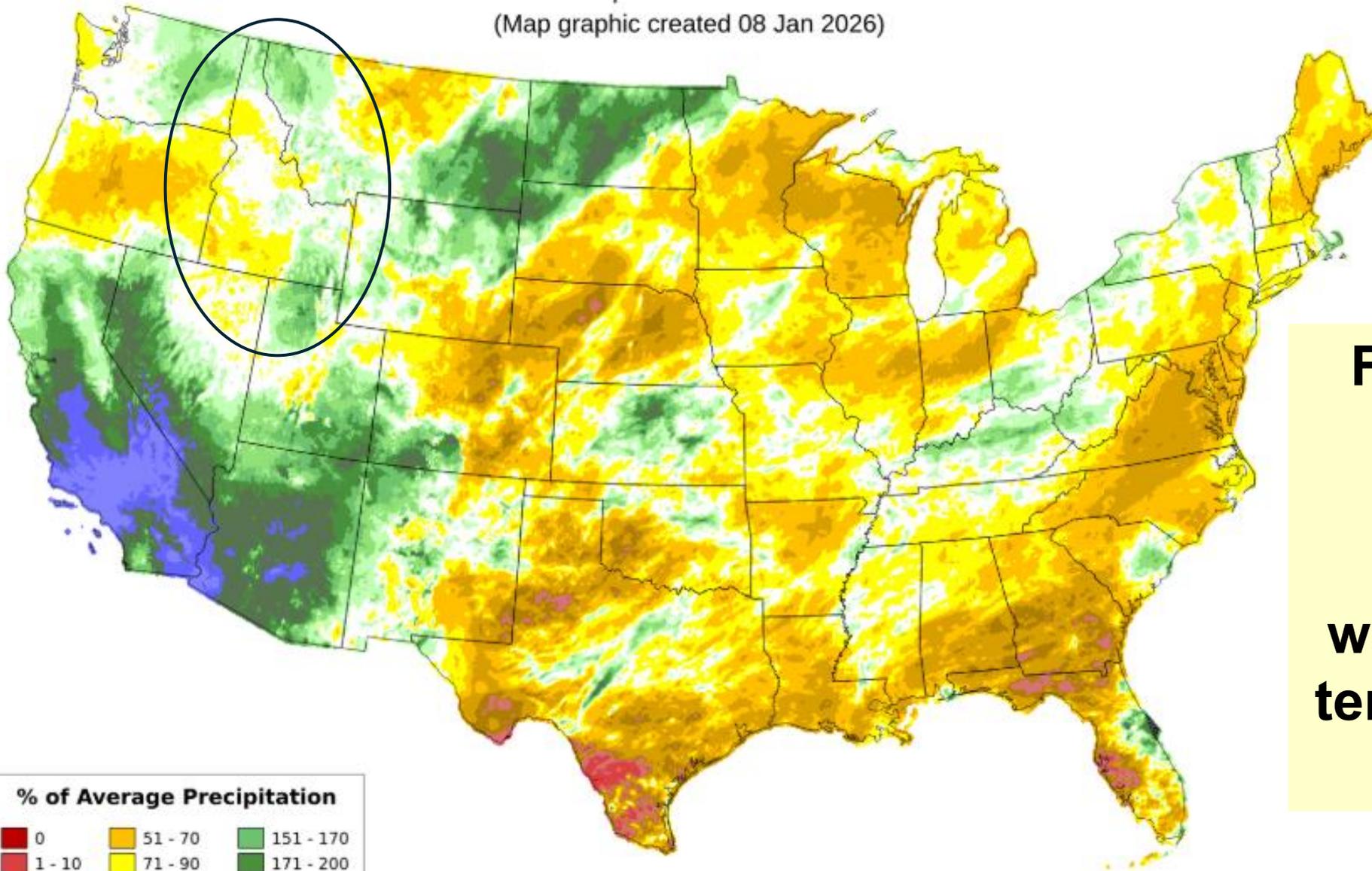
Total Precipitation Anomaly: Oct 2025 - Nov 2025

Period ending 7 AM EST 30 Nov 2025

Base period: 1991 - 2020

(Map graphic created 08 Jan 2026)

How Did We Get Here ?



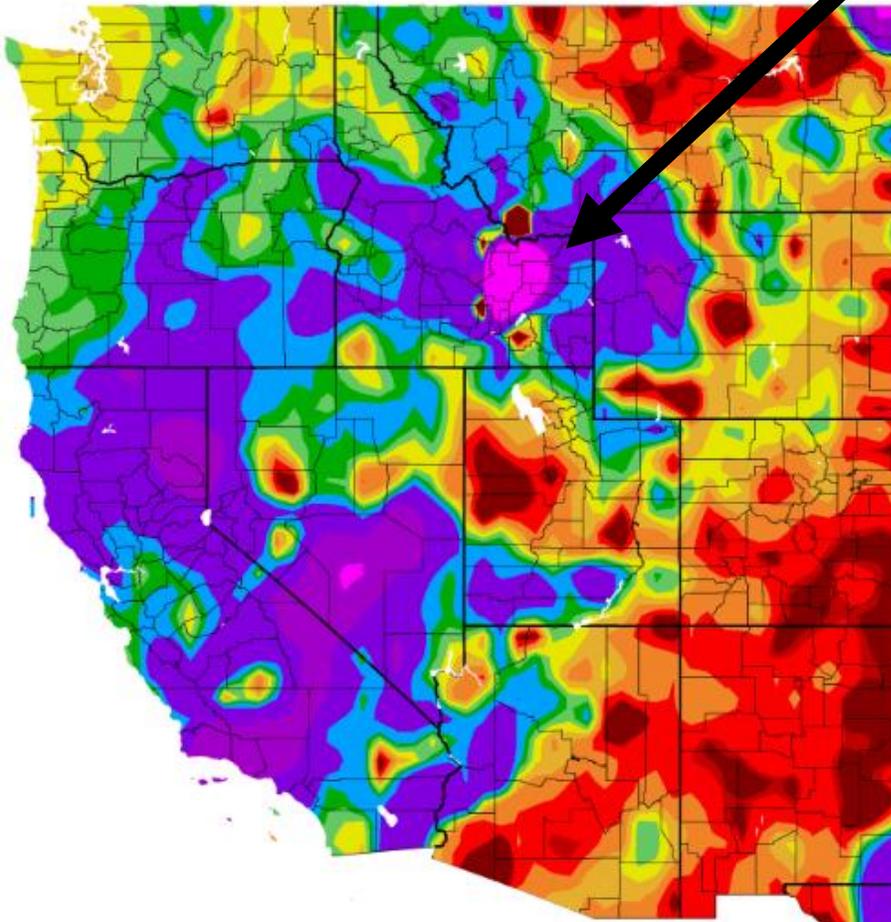
Fall Precipitation

Idaho Oct-Nov
Precipitation
was dry with warm
temps as we waited
for snow.

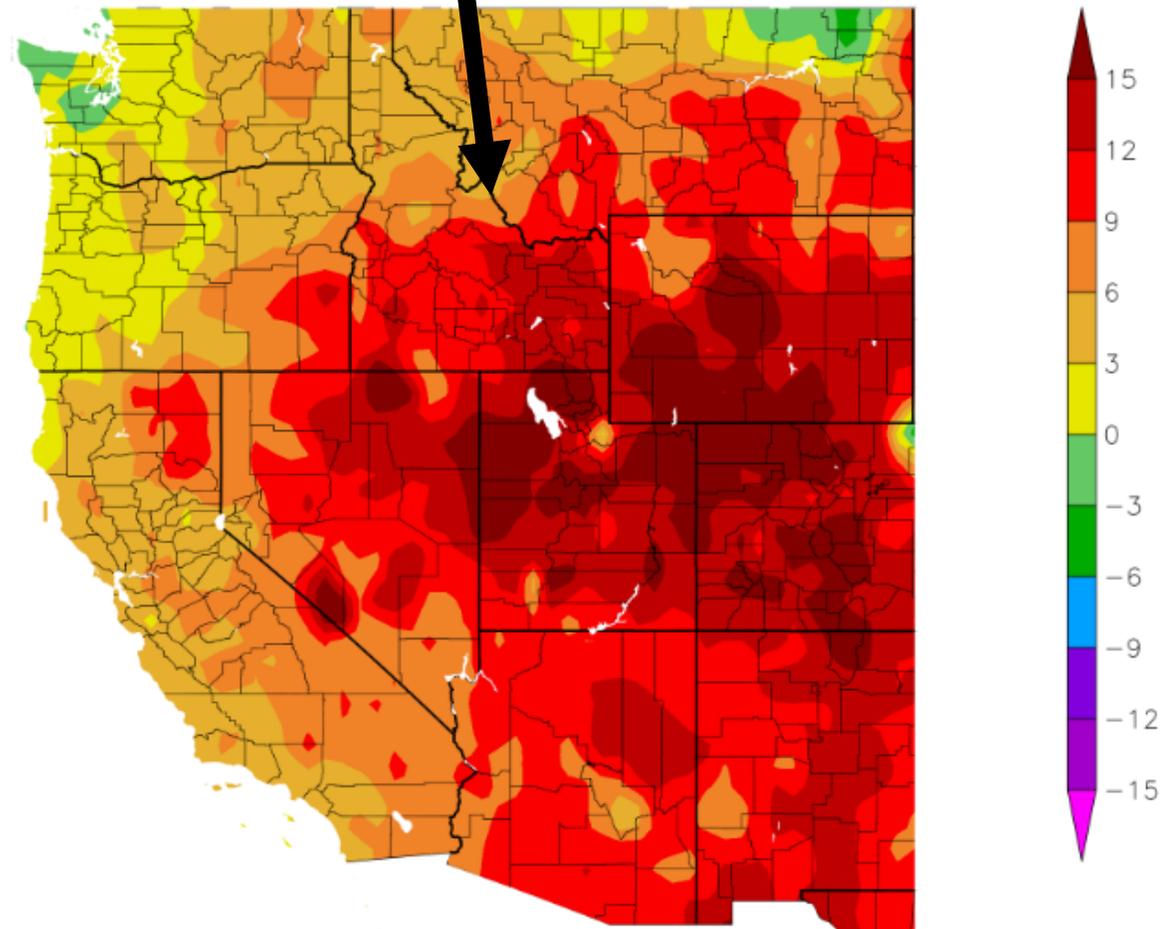
% of Average Precipitation		
0	51 - 70	151 - 170
1 - 10	71 - 90	171 - 200
11 - 20	91 - 110	201 - 300
21 - 30	111 - 130	301 - 400
31 - 50	131 - 150	> 400

Then weather pattern changed Dec 18 → Warm temps brought rain locations.
Pockets of well above normal precipitation fell across central Idaho Dec 18 - 31.
Big/Little Lost Basins pushing 800% of normal. But temps were above normal.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
12/18/2025 - 12/31/2025



Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
12/18/2025 - 12/31/2025

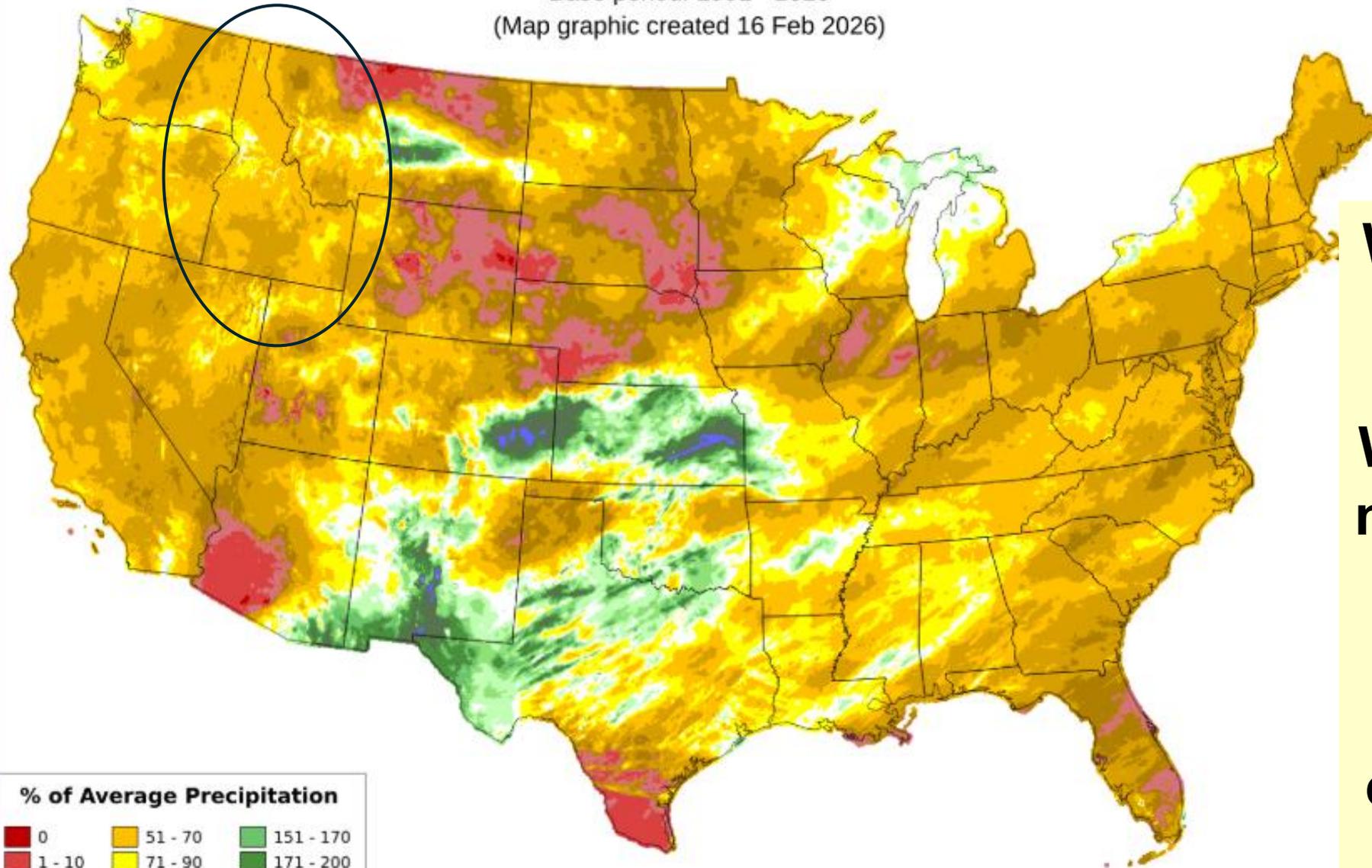


Total Precipitation Anomaly: Jan 2026 - 15 Feb 2026

Period ending 7 AM EST 15 Feb 2026

Base period: 1991 - 2020

(Map graphic created 16 Feb 2026)

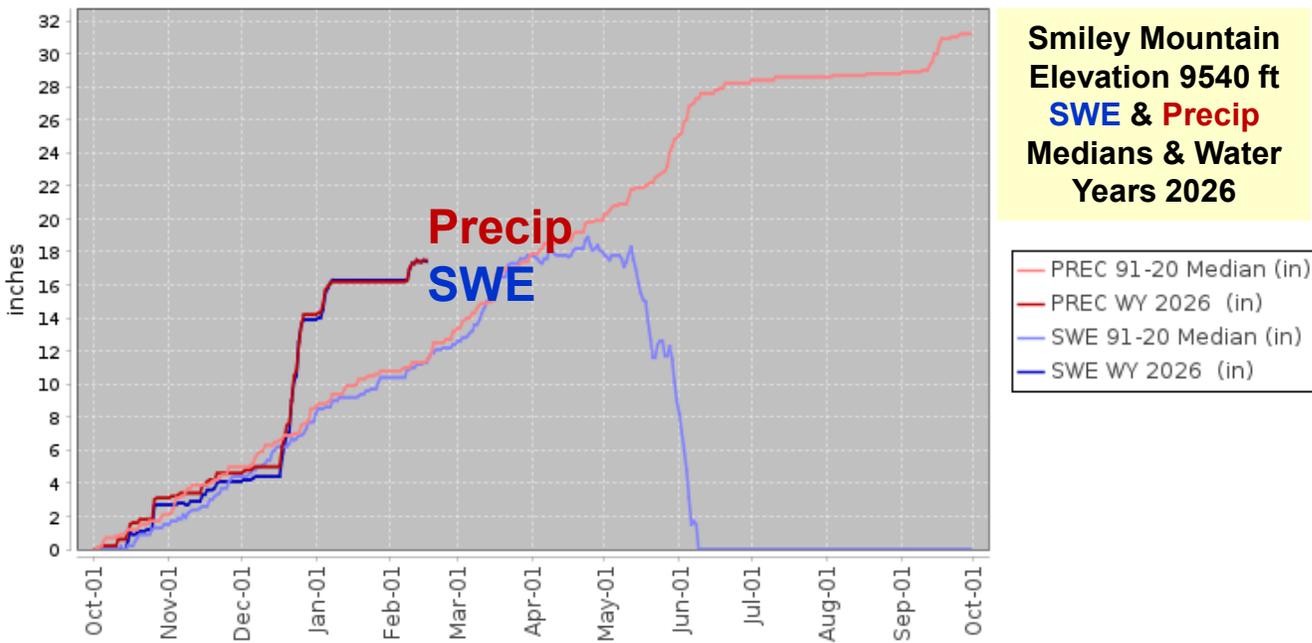
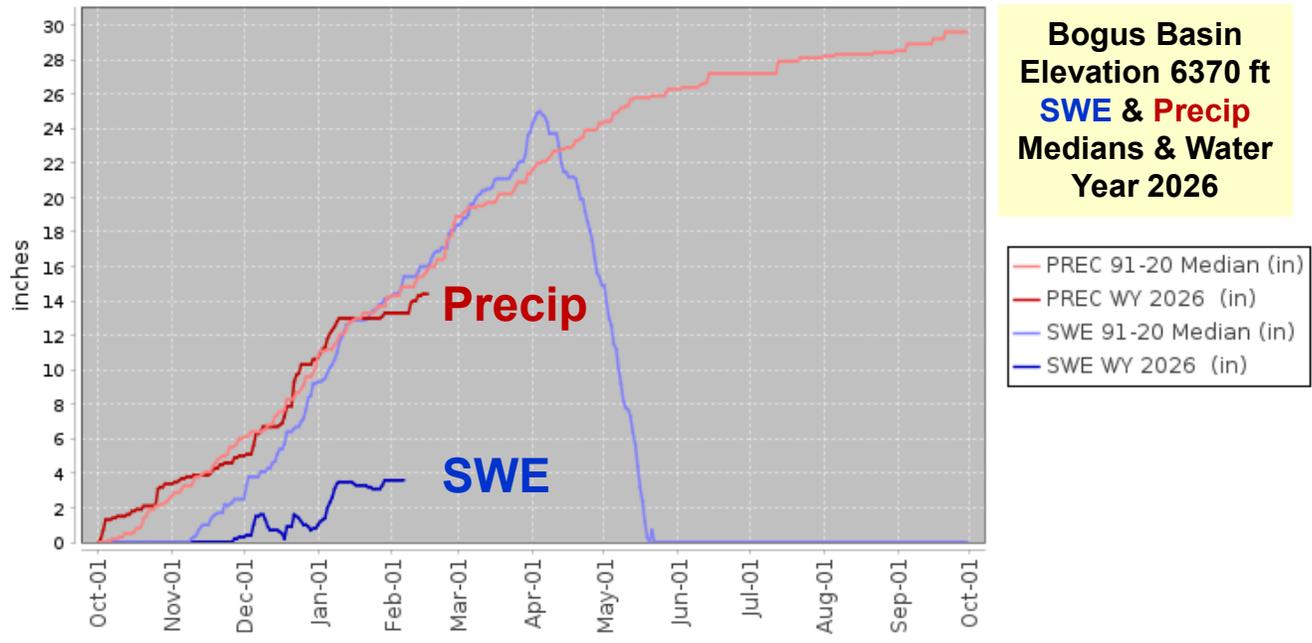


% of Average Precipitation

0	51 - 70	151 - 170
1 - 10	71 - 90	171 - 200
11 - 20	91 - 110	201 - 300
21 - 30	111 - 130	301 - 400
31 - 50	131 - 150	> 400

Winter Precipitation

Jan 1 - Feb 15
Was only 30-90 % of normal in Idaho with warm temps as we waited for the weather pattern to change again and it did on Feb 14.



Summary A Temperature Driven Snow Drought

Here's a summary of the warmer Bogus Basin temperatures that allowed precipitation to fall as rain rather than snow compared to a few other higher elevations site in across central Idaho.

Interesting graphs, with warmer temps at Bogus Basin, elevation 6370 feet, top graph, most of precipitation fell as rain instead of snow. Normal precip with little snow to show. **Temperature Driven Snow Drought.**

While Smiley Mountain, elevation 9540 feet in the Big Lost River Basin, had nearly all precipitation since mid-October fall as snow and remain on the ground. SWE is 171%, highest in the state/region. **No Snow Drought here.**

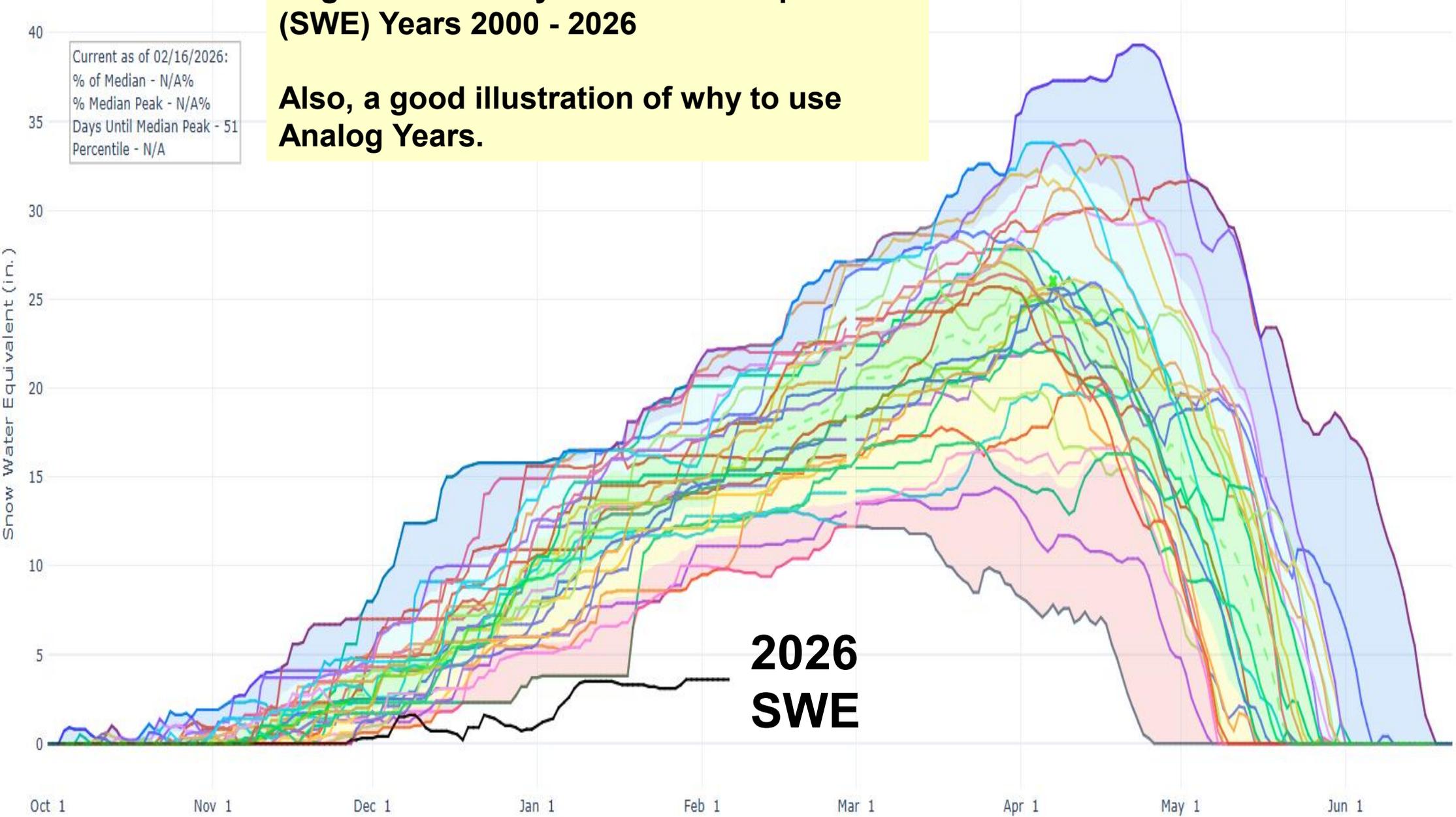
Bogus Basin Daily Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) Years 2000 - 2026

Also, a good illustration of why to use Analog Years.

Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - N/A%
% Median Peak - N/A%
Days Until Median Peak - 51
Percentile - N/A

**2026
SWE**

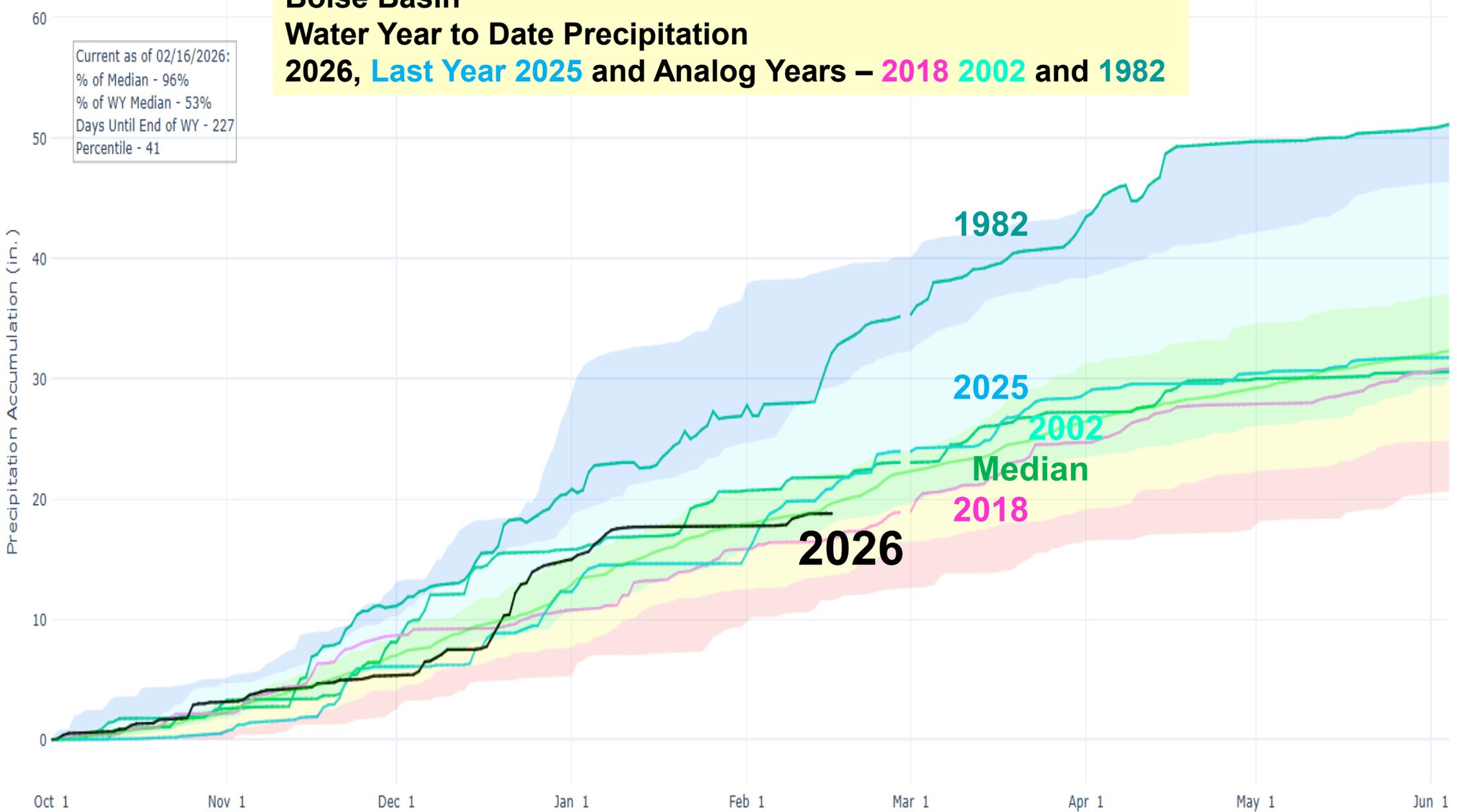
- Median Peak SWE
- Max
- Median (POR)
- Median ('91-'20)
- Min
- Stats. Shading
- 2026
- 2025
- 2024
- 2023
- 2022
- 2021
- 2020
- 2019
- 2018
- 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013
- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009
- 2008
- 2007
- 2006
- 2005



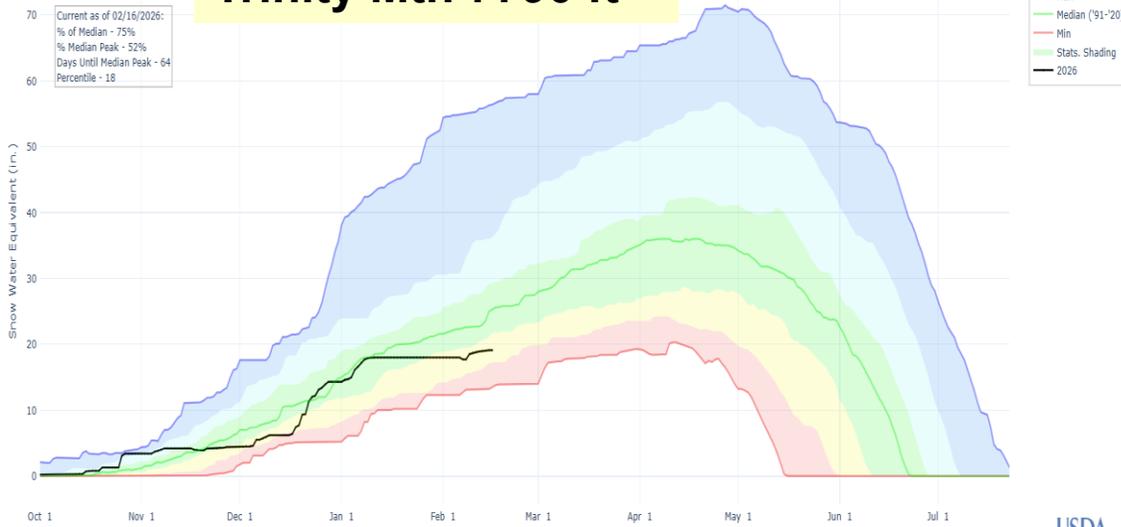
Boise Basin
Water Year to Date Precipitation
2026, Last Year 2025 and Analog Years – 2018 2002 and 1982

Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - 96%
% of WY Median - 53%
Days Until End of WY - 227
Percentile - 41

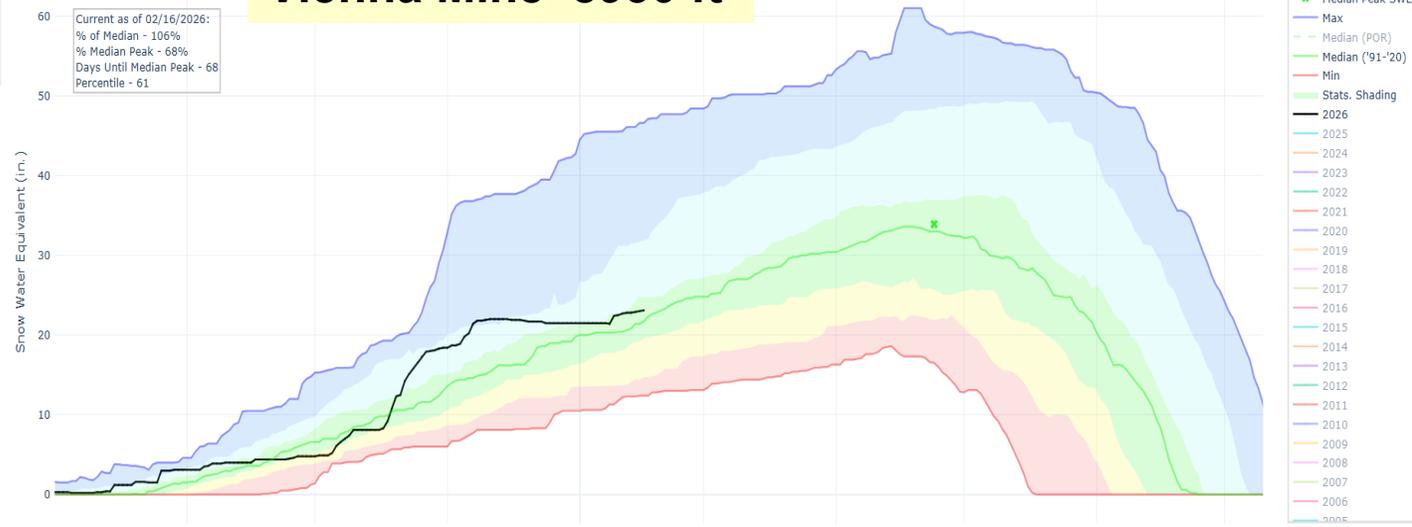
- Median ('91-'20)
- Stats. Shading
- 2026 (10 sites)
- 2025 (10 sites)
- 2018 (10 sites)
- 2002 (10 sites)
- 1982 (8 sites)



Trinity Mtn 7790 ft



Vienna Mine 8930 ft



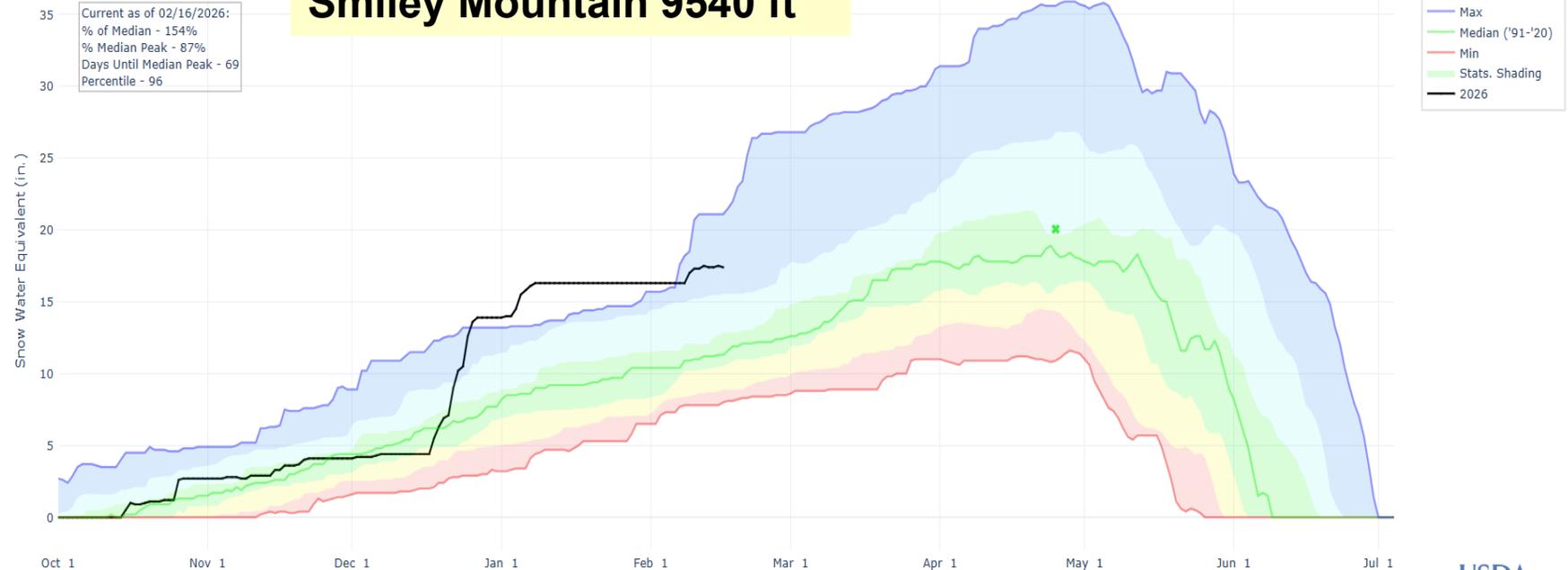
Where's the Snow ? Feb 16, 2026

Colder higher elevation temps allowed precip to fall as snow in higher elevations. Flat line is Jan Dry Spell.

Elevations of sites in feet:

- Bogus Basin 6370**
- Trinity Mtn 7790**
- Vienna Mine 8930**
- Smiley Mountain 9540**

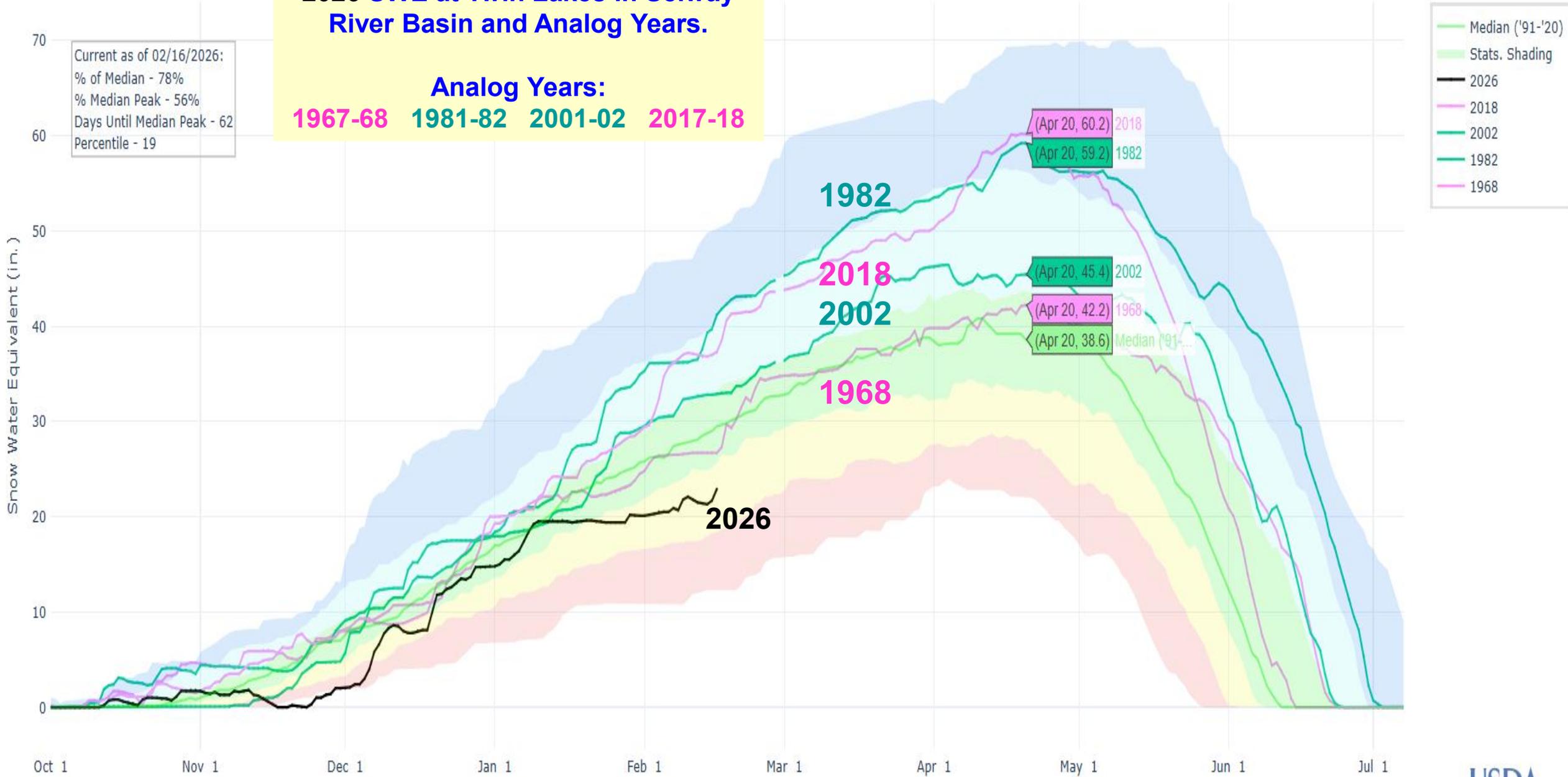
Smiley Mountain 9540 ft



2026 SWE at Twin Lakes in Selway River Basin and Analog Years.

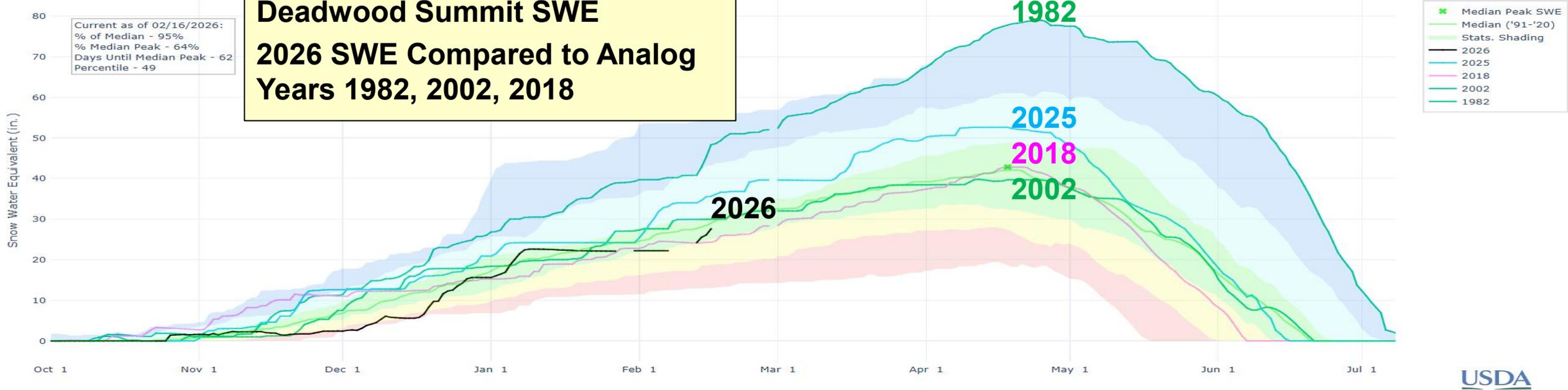
Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - 78%
% Median Peak - 56%
Days Until Median Peak - 62
Percentile - 19

Analog Years:
1967-68 1981-82 2001-02 2017-18



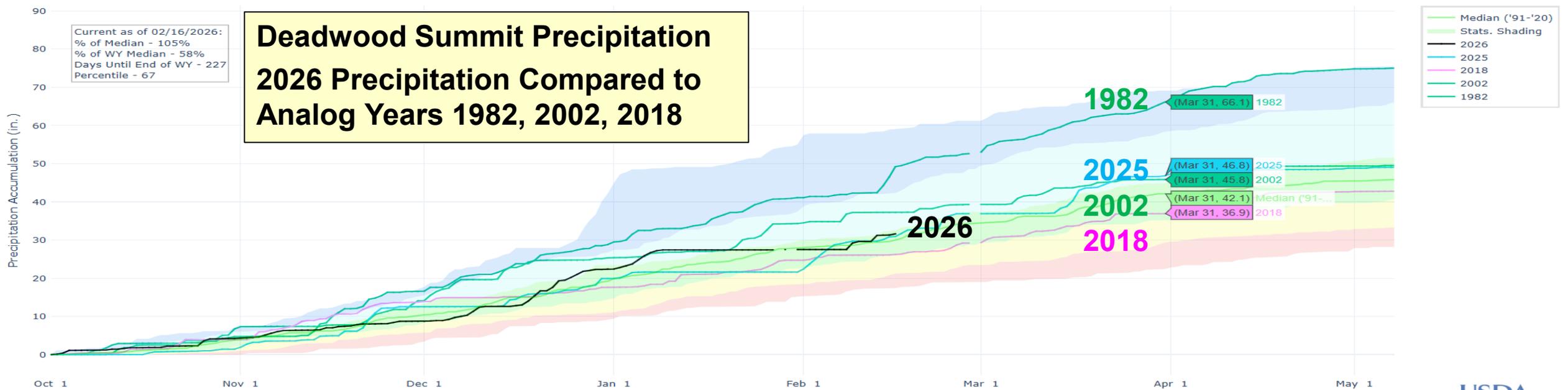
**Deadwood Summit SWE
2026 SWE Compared to Analog
Years 1982, 2002, 2018**

Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - 95%
% Median Peak - 64%
Days Until Median Peak - 62
Percentile - 49



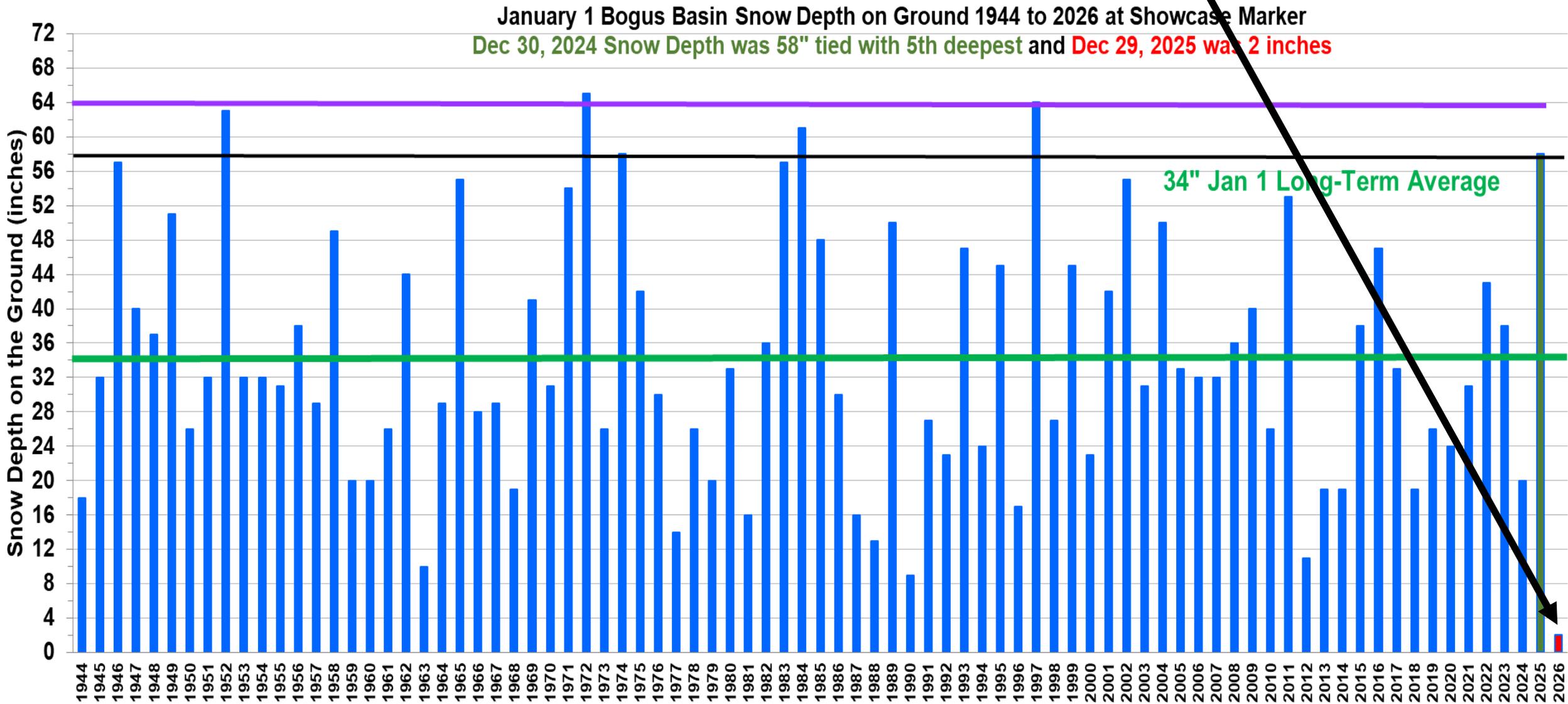
**Deadwood Summit Precipitation
2026 Precipitation Compared to
Analog Years 1982, 2002, 2018**

Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - 105%
% of WY Median - 58%
Days Until End of WY - 227
Percentile - 67



April 2025 - Bogus Basin reached 100" of snow depth for the 8th time since 1942.

What a difference a year makes – Jan 2026 Bogus Basin Snow Depth was 2 Inches

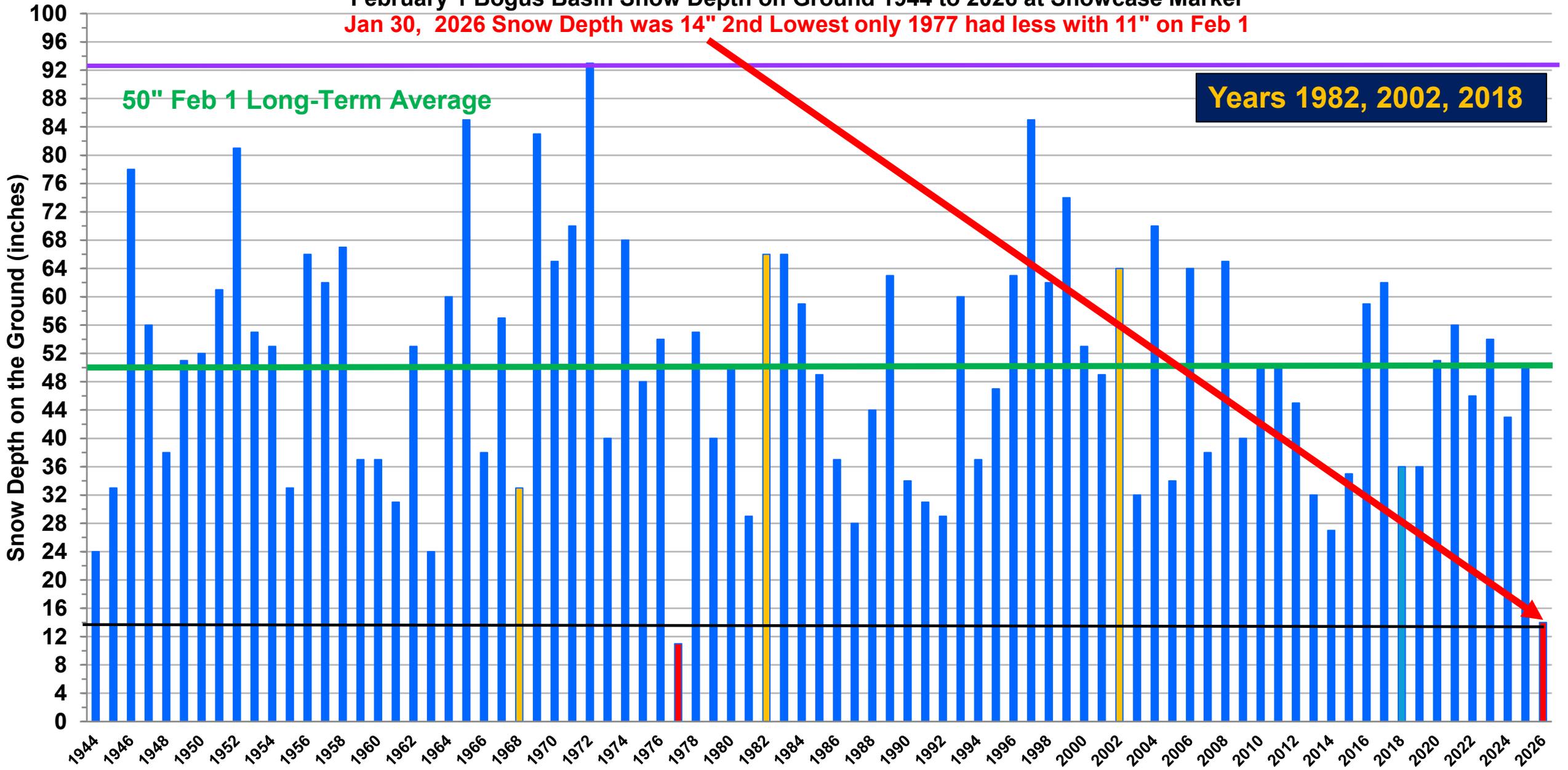


February 1 Bogus Basin Snow Depth on Ground 1944 to 2026 at Showcase Marker

Jan 30, 2026 Snow Depth was 14" 2nd Lowest only 1977 had less with 11" on Feb 1

Years 1982, 2002, 2018

50" Feb 1 Long-Term Average

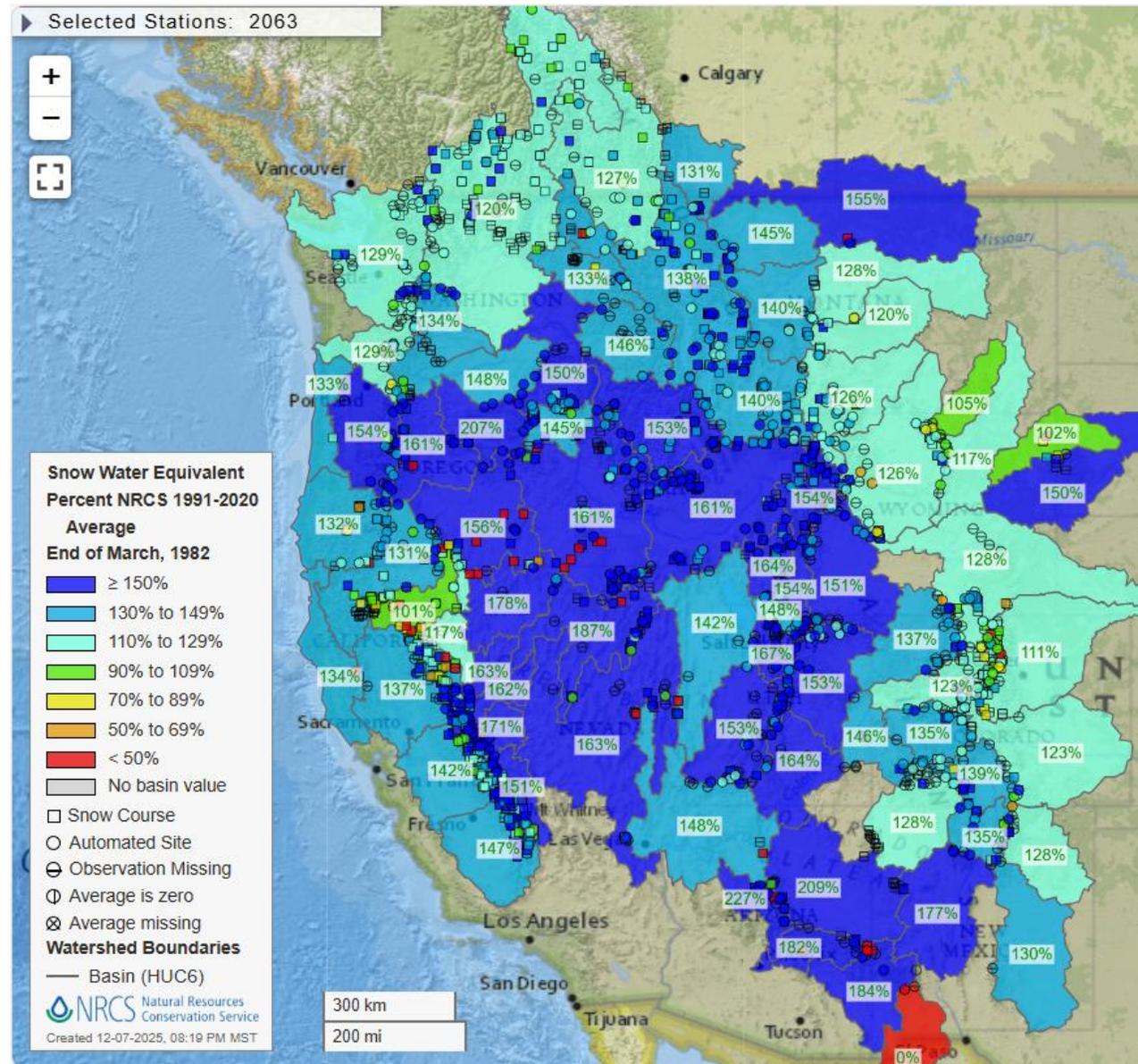
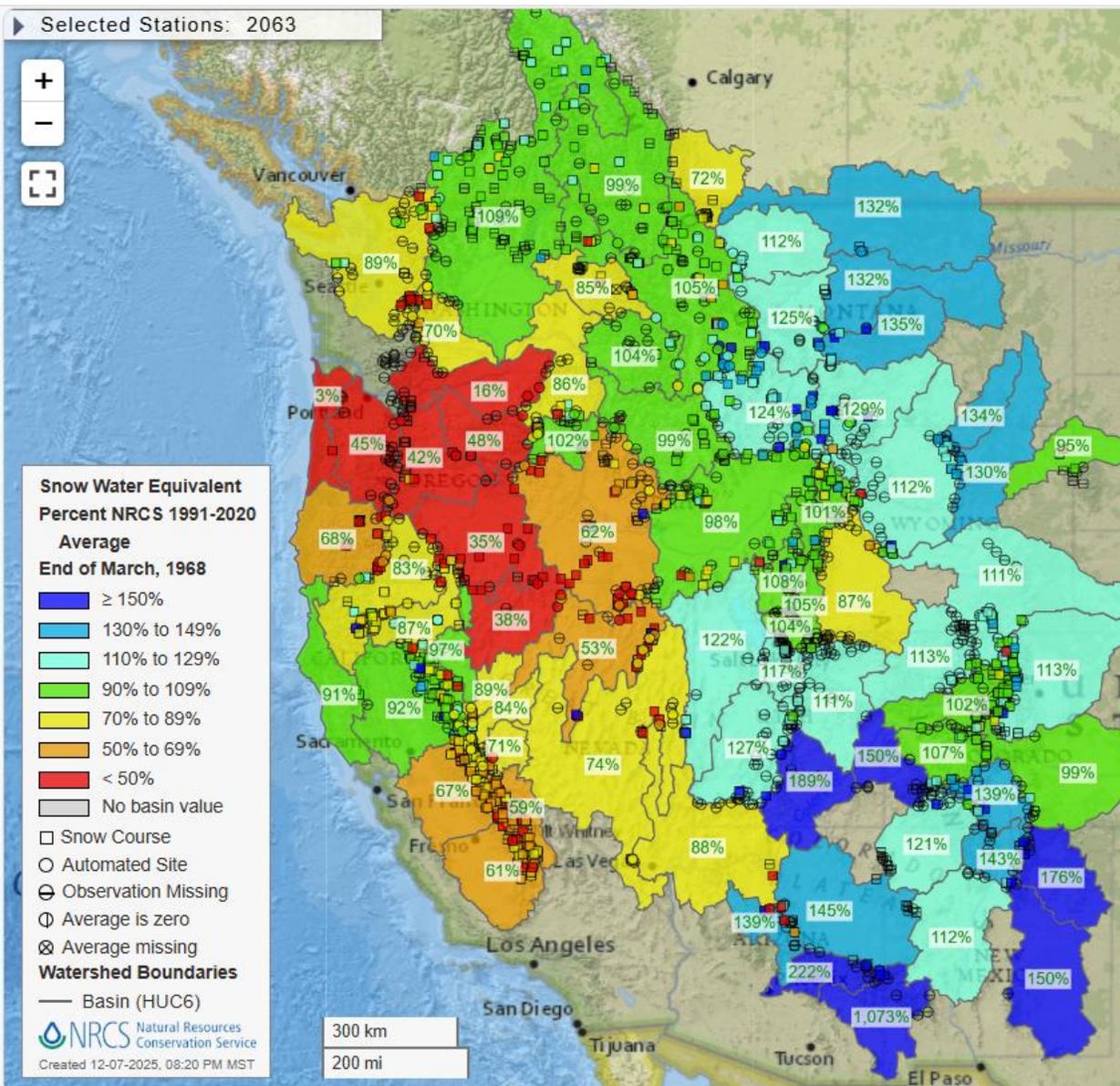


Westwide Snowpack % of Average for April 1 for Analog Years.

April 1 1968 Snowpack

Based on SNOTEL & Snow Course

April 1 1982

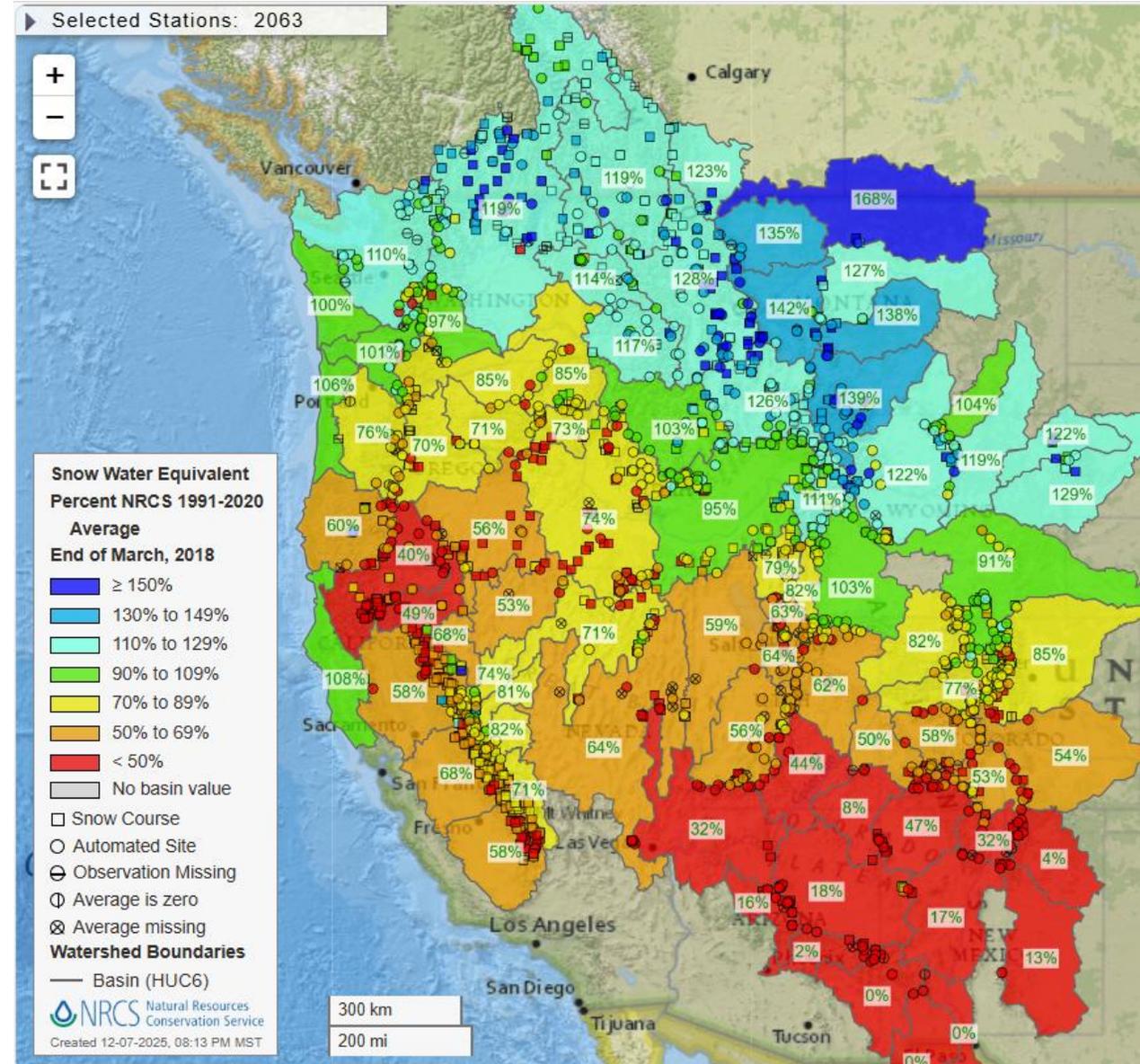
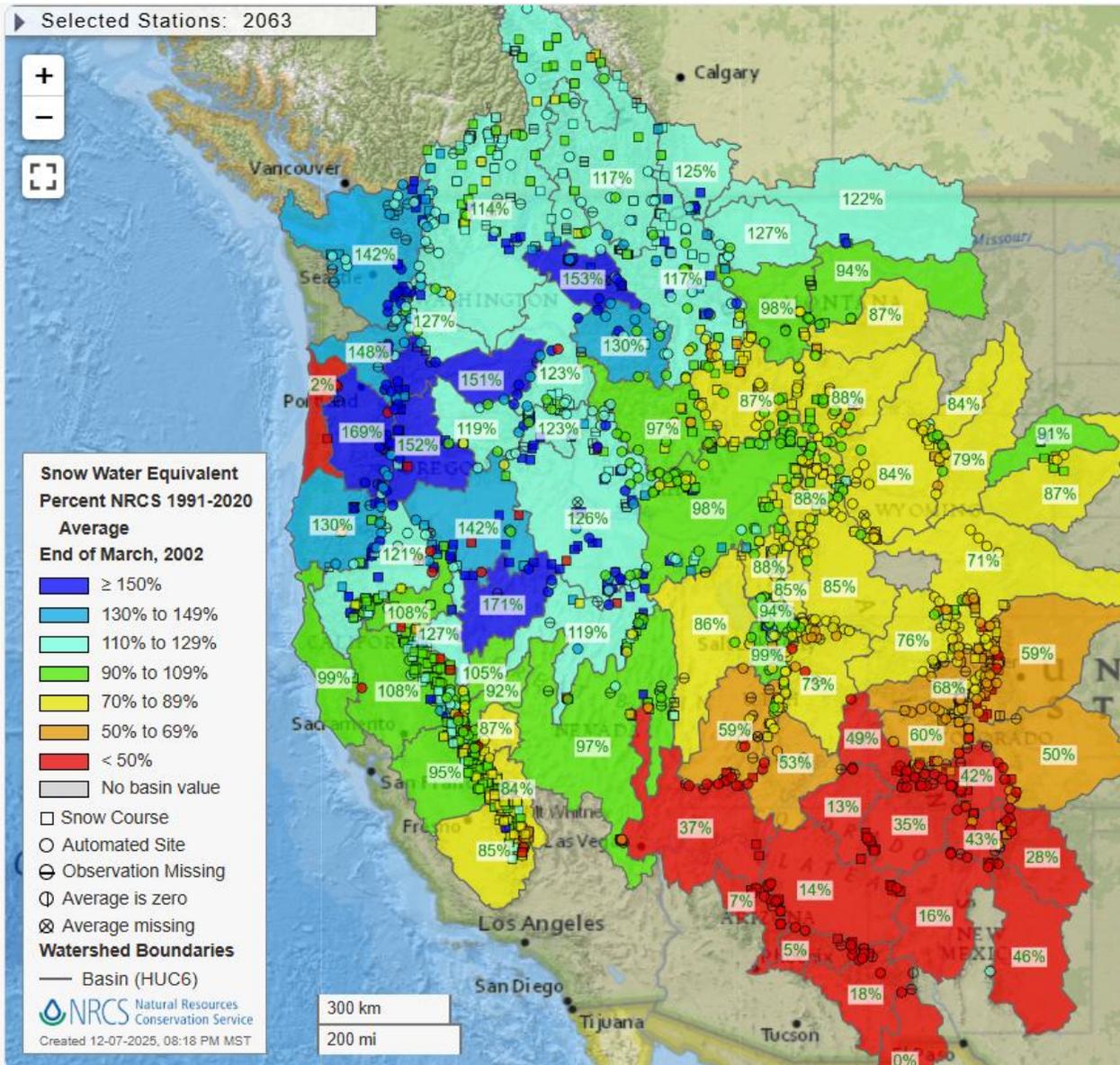


Westwide Snowpack % of Average for April 1 for Analog Years.

April 1 2002 Snowpack

Based on SNOTEL & Snow Course

April 1 2018



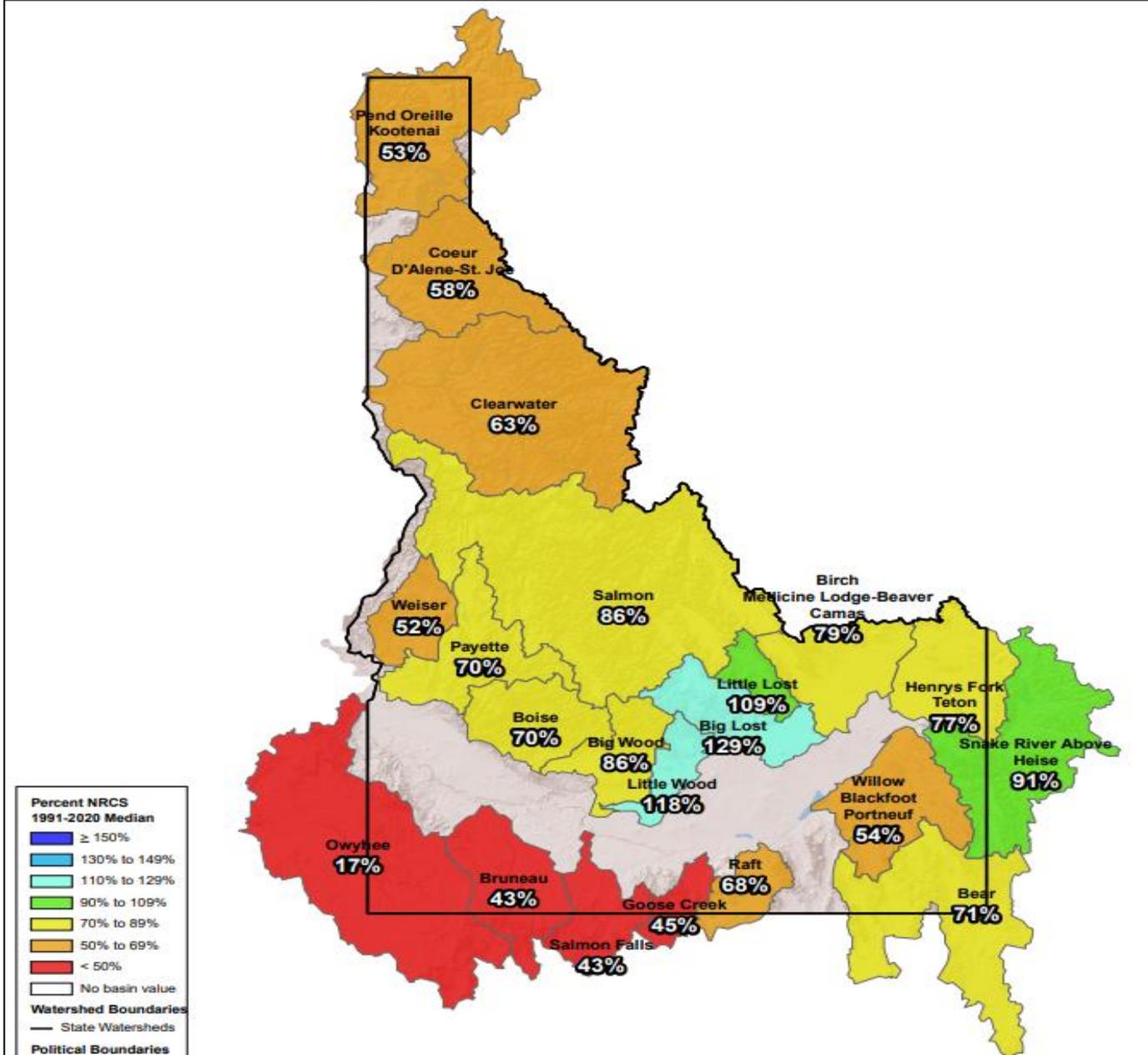
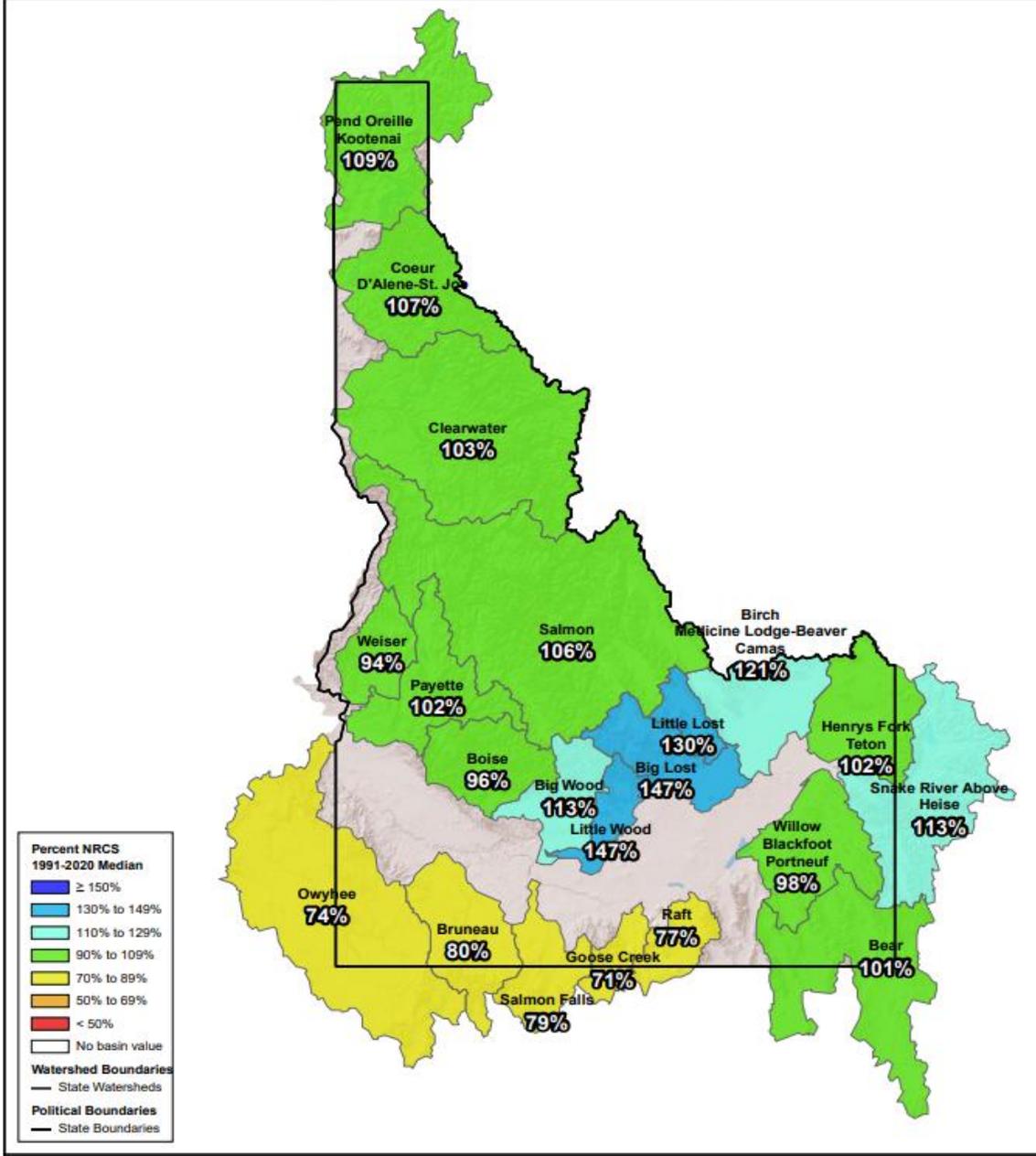
Water Year to Date Precipitation Oct 1 - Feb 15

Idaho

Snowpack Feb 15, 2026

Water Year to Date Precipitation | Idaho SNOTEL
Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median | October 1, 2025 - February 15, 2026

Snow Water Equivalent | Idaho SNOTEL
Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median | February 15, 2026, end of day



Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median

- ≥ 150%
- 130% to 149%
- 110% to 129%
- 90% to 109%
- 70% to 89%
- 50% to 69%
- < 50%
- No basin value

Watershed Boundaries

- State Watersheds

Political Boundaries

- State Boundaries

Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median

- ≥ 150%
- 130% to 149%
- 110% to 129%
- 90% to 109%
- 70% to 89%
- 50% to 69%
- < 50%
- No basin value

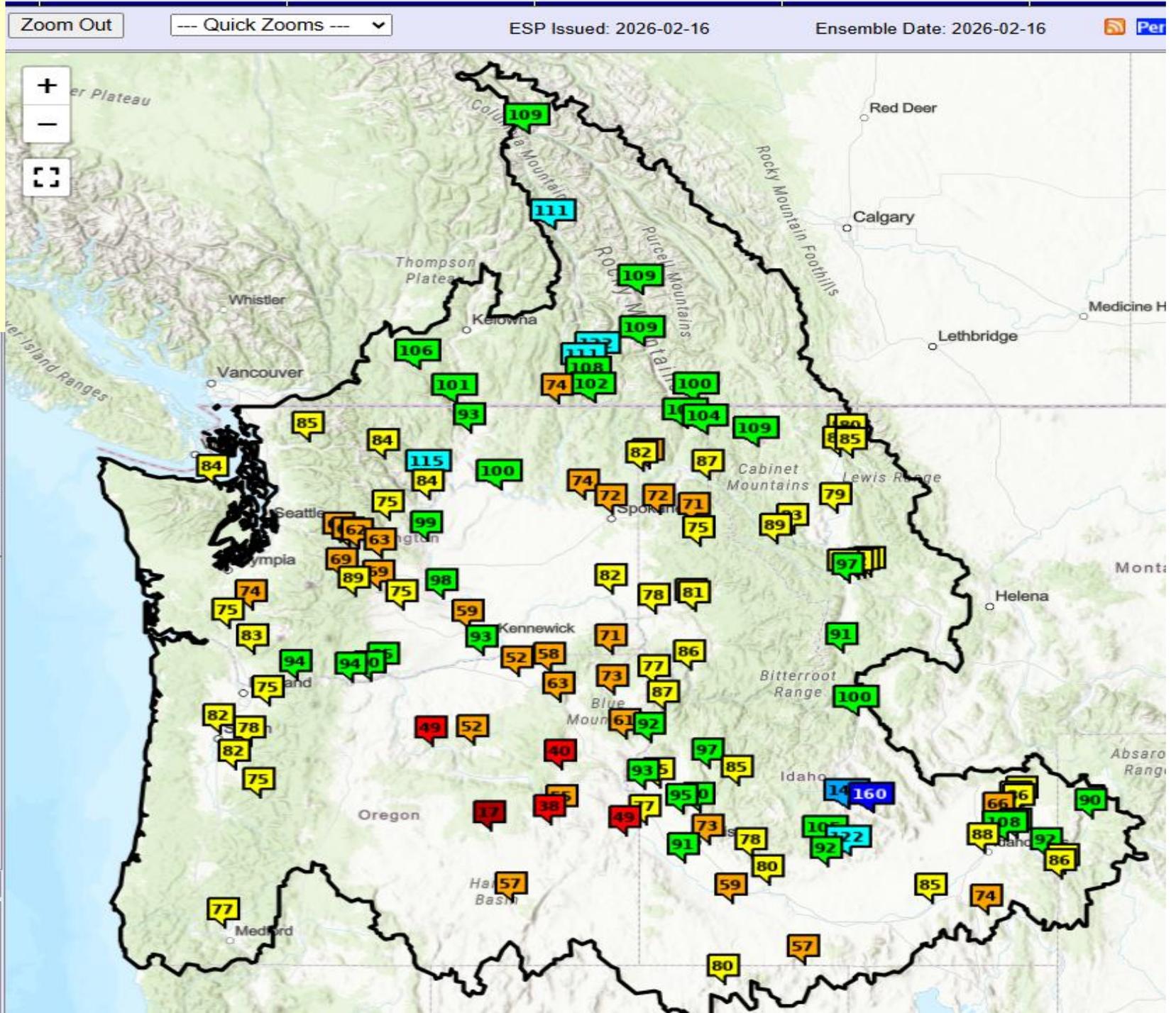
Watershed Boundaries

- State Watersheds

Political Boundaries

- State Boundaries

NWS Water Supply Forecast Feb 16, 2026 % of Normal



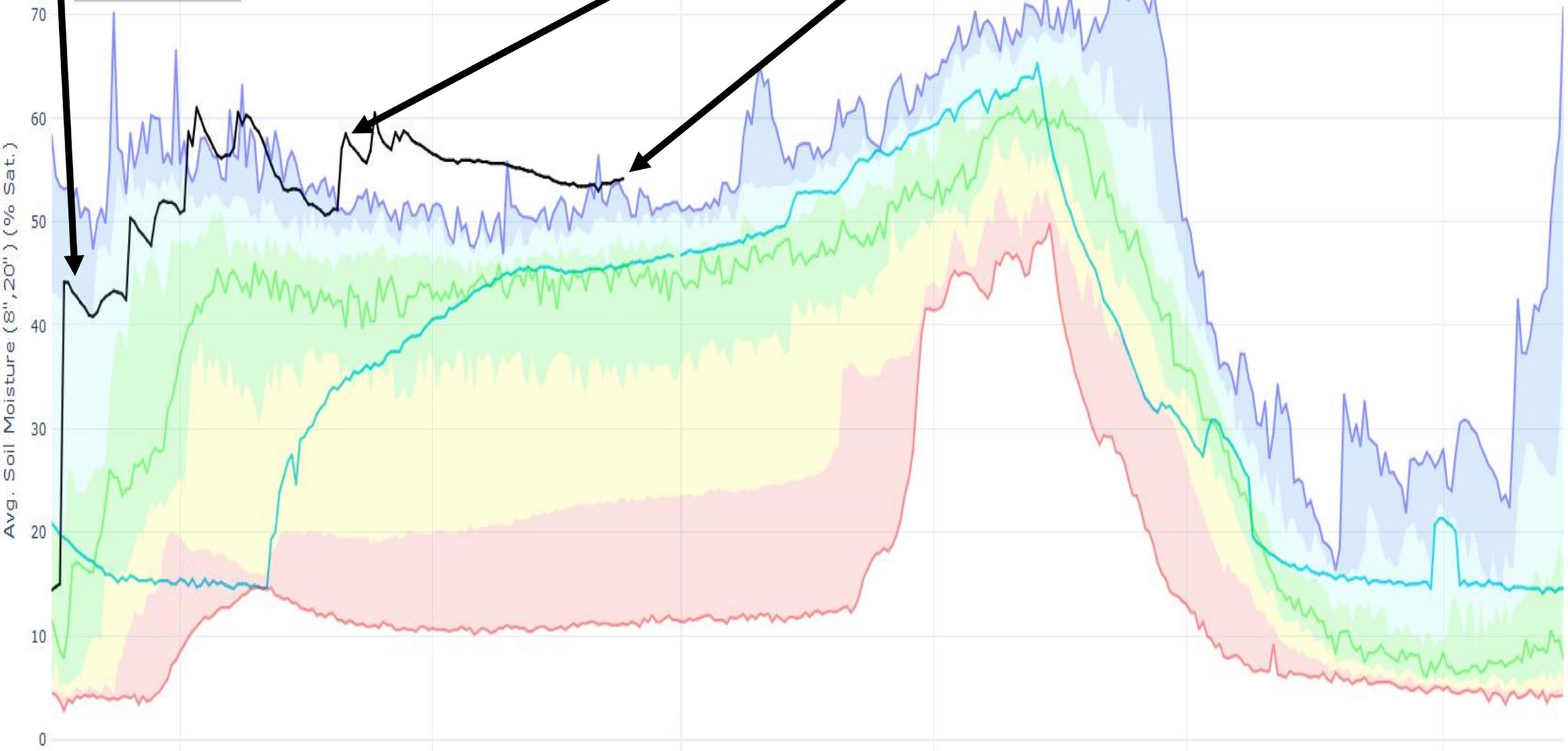
Banner Summit Soil Moisture Increases

Early October rains benefitted soil moisture in the mountains around Banner Summit.

Dec 18 Rains

Feb 16 Soil Moisture still the highest for today since sensors installed in 2008.

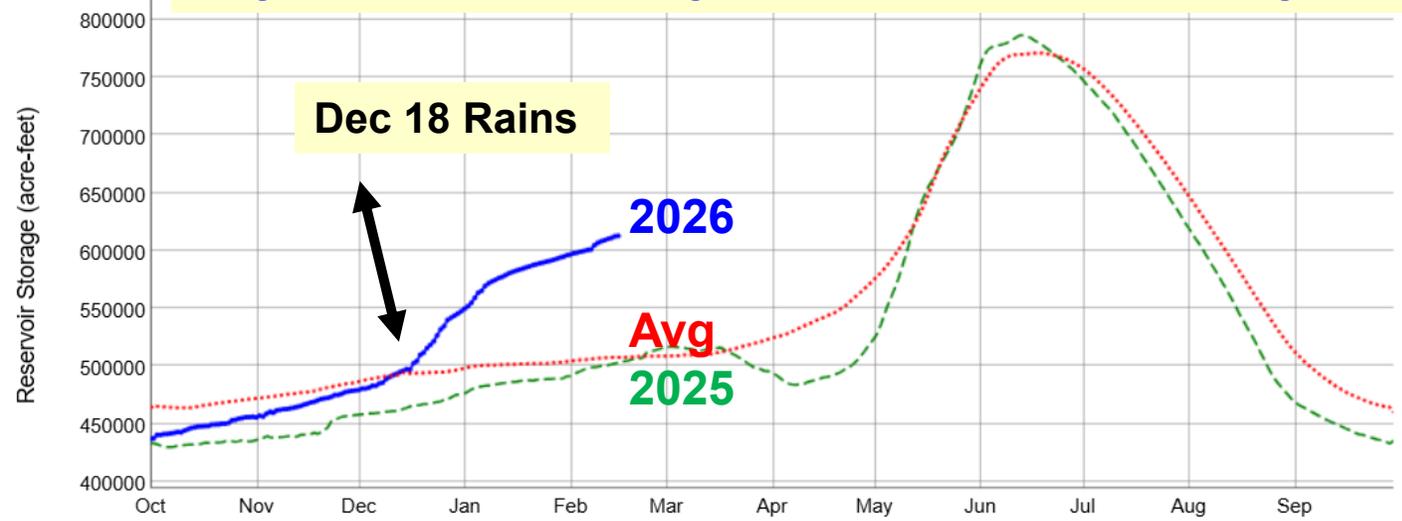
Current as of 02/16/2026



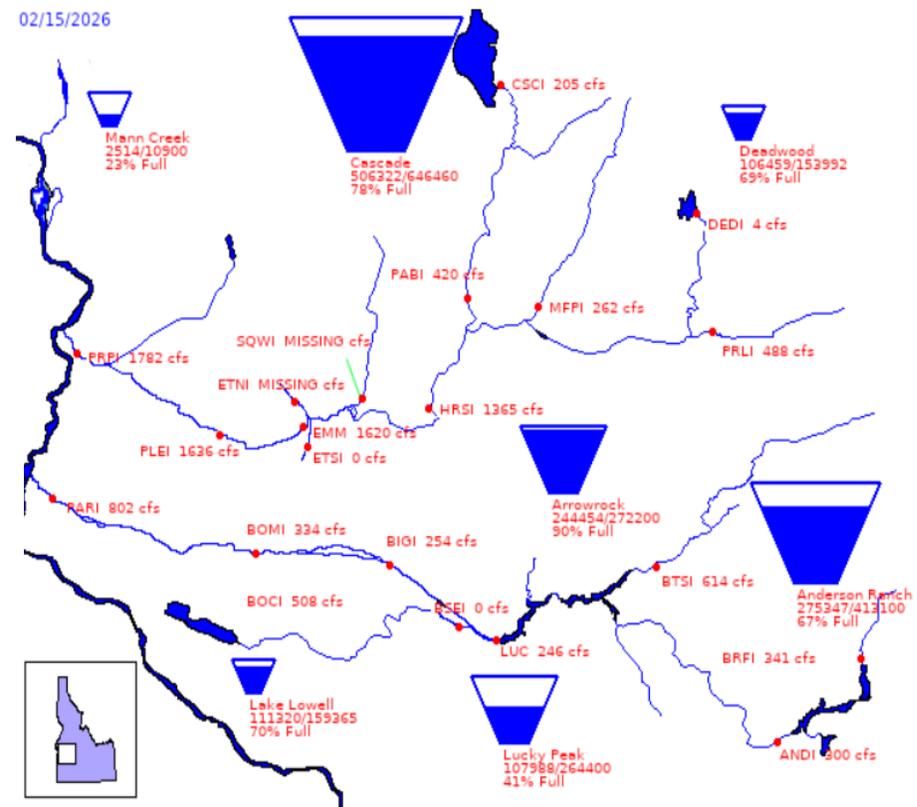
- Max
- Median (POR)
- Min
- Stats. Shading
- 2026
- 2025

Payette River bump in flows captured in reservoirs

Payette Reservoir System 77% of Capacity

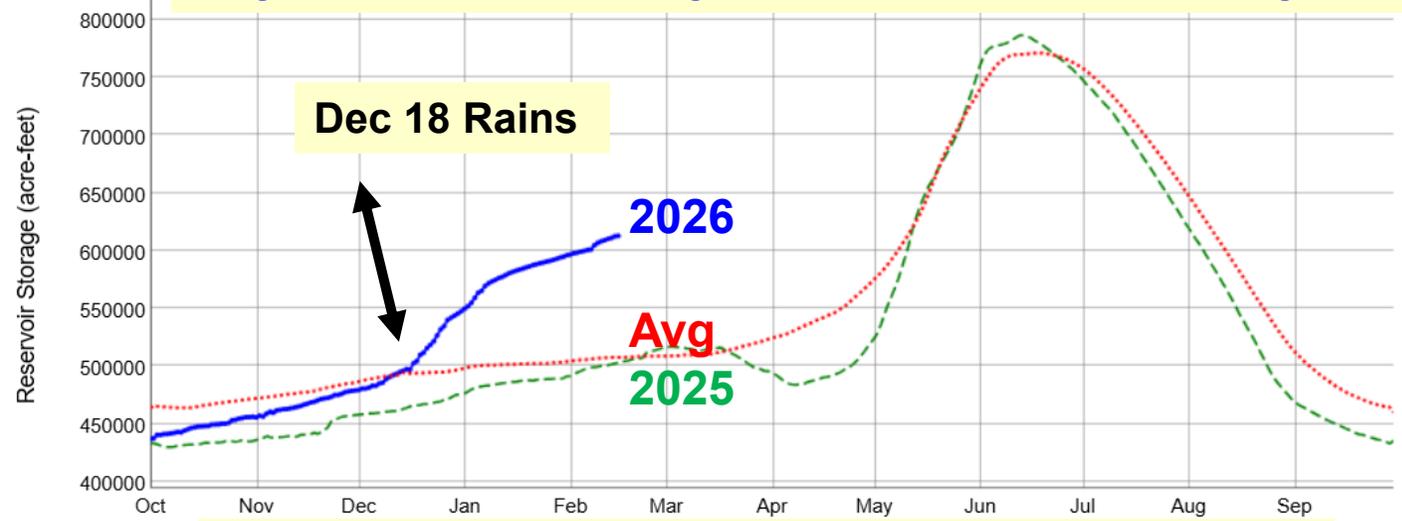


Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region Major Storage Reservoirs in the Boise & Payette River Basins



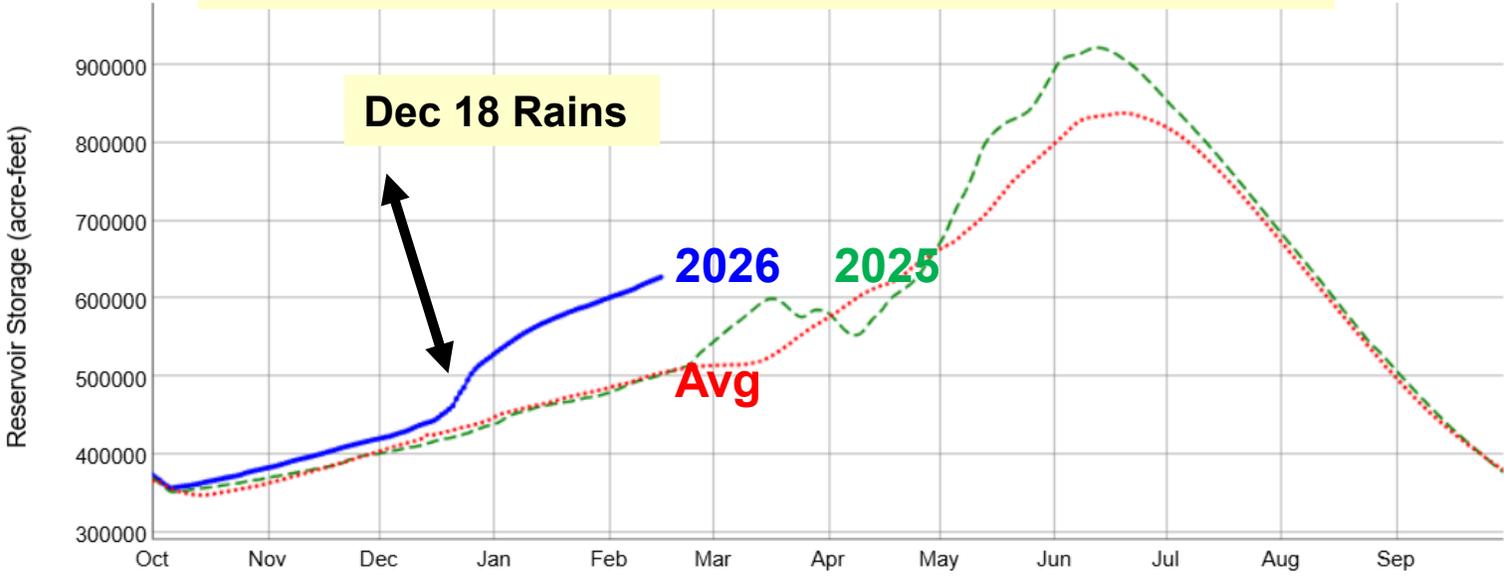
Payette River bump in flows captured in reservoirs

Payette Reservoir System 77% of Capacity

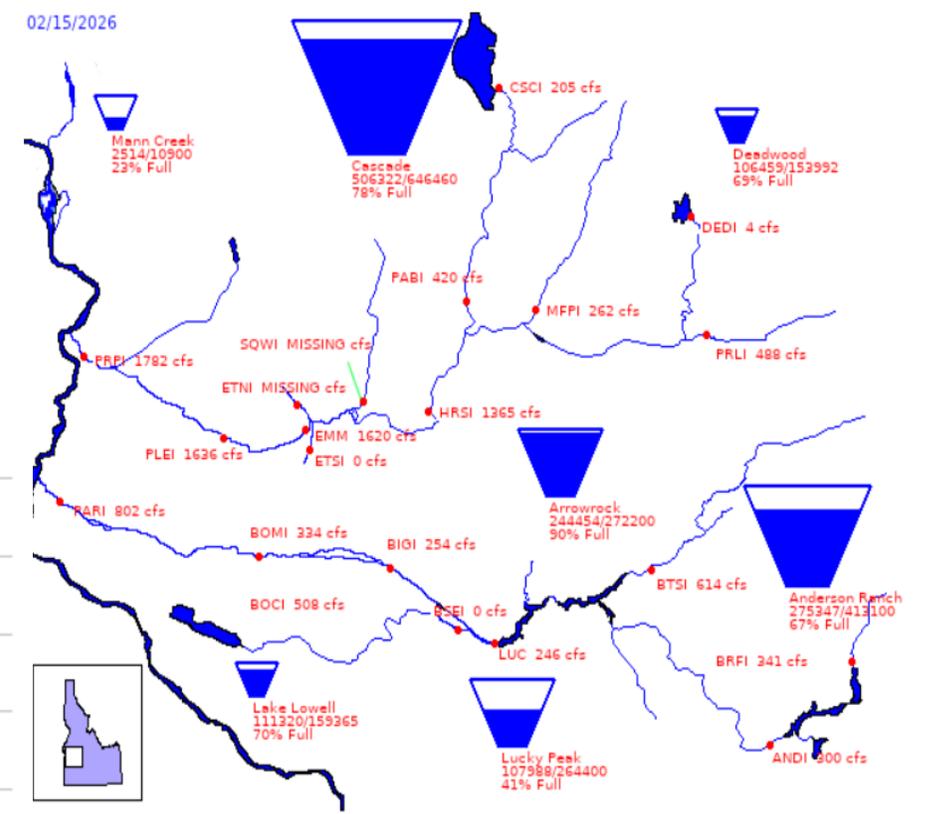


Boise bump in flows captured in reservoirs

Reservoir System 66% of Capacity



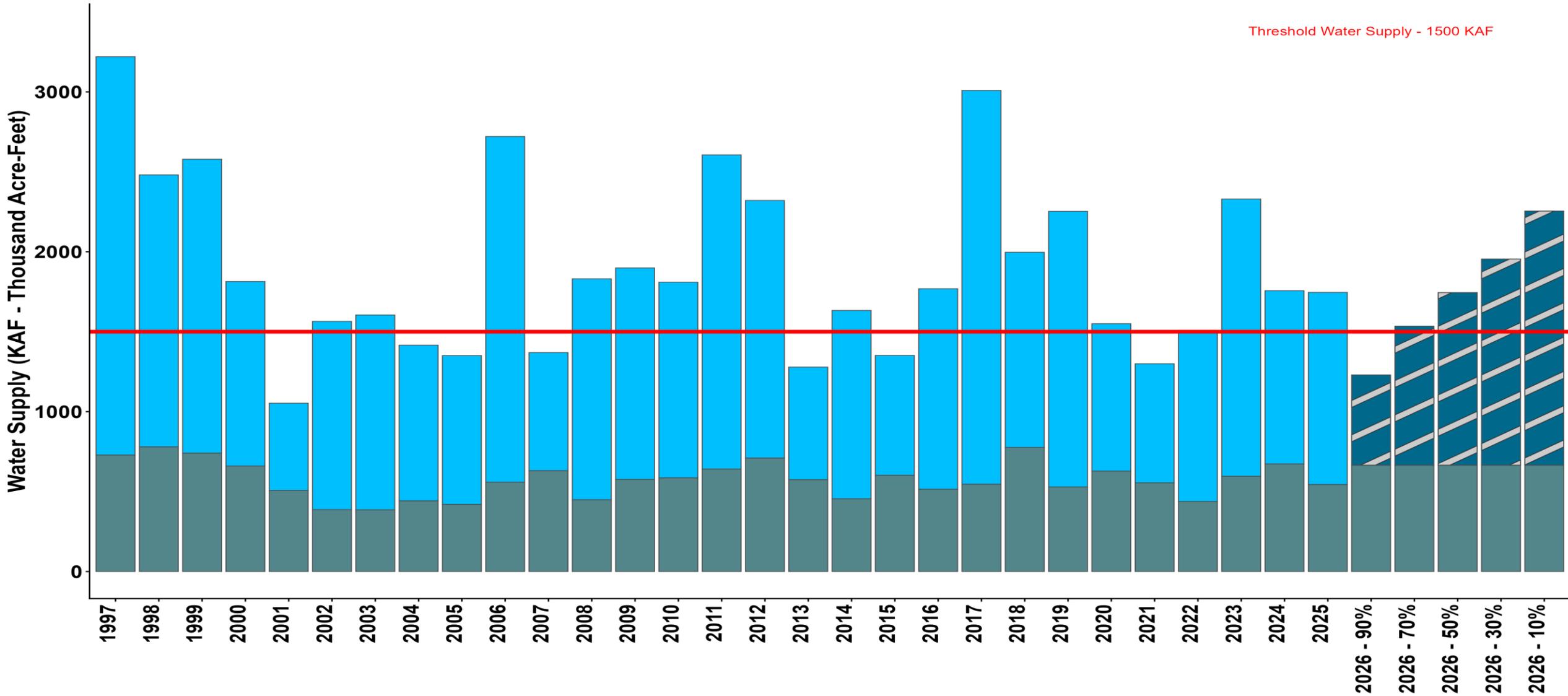
Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region Major Storage Reservoirs in the Boise & Payette River Basins



Reservoir Storage + Forecasted Volume = Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI)

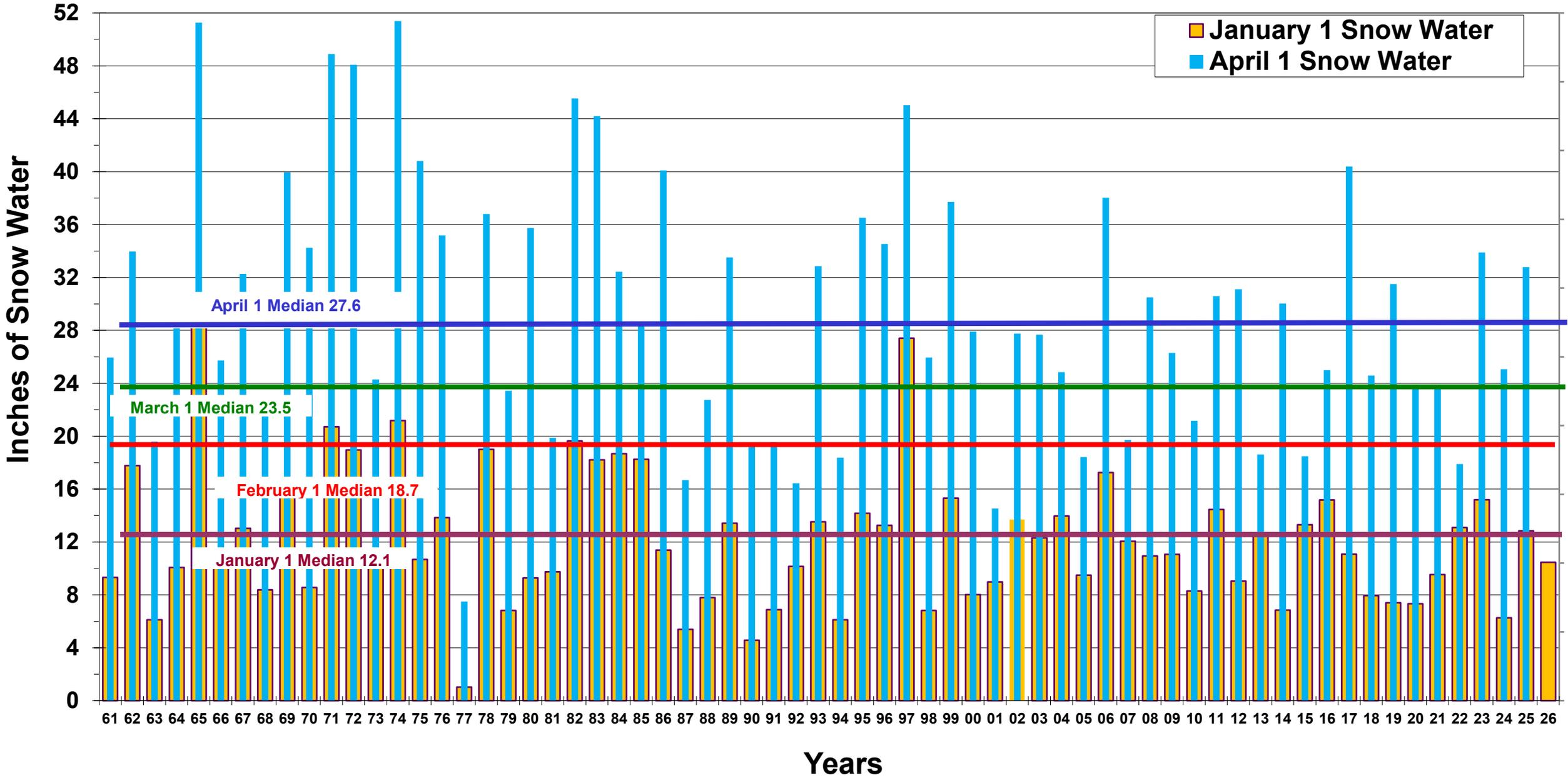
February 01, 2026 - Historic and Forecasted Surface Water Supply
Boise River Basin

Observed Streamflow Volume - Primary Period Current Forecast Streamflow Volume Start of Month Reservoir Volume



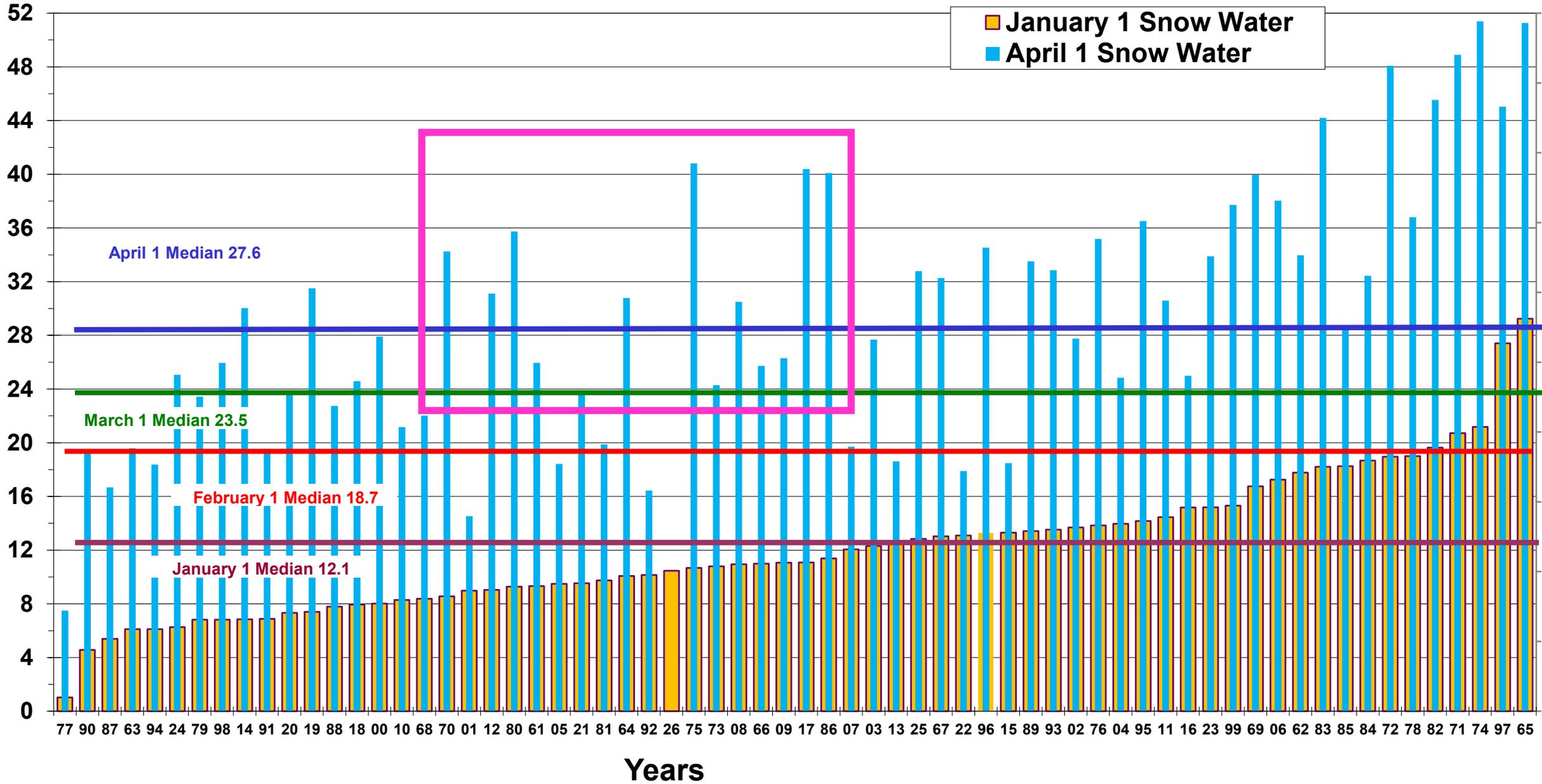
January Boise Basin 7 Station Snow Index for Years 1961 - 2016

Atlanta, Dollarhide, Graham, Jackson, Mores Creek, Trinity Mountain, Vienna Mine



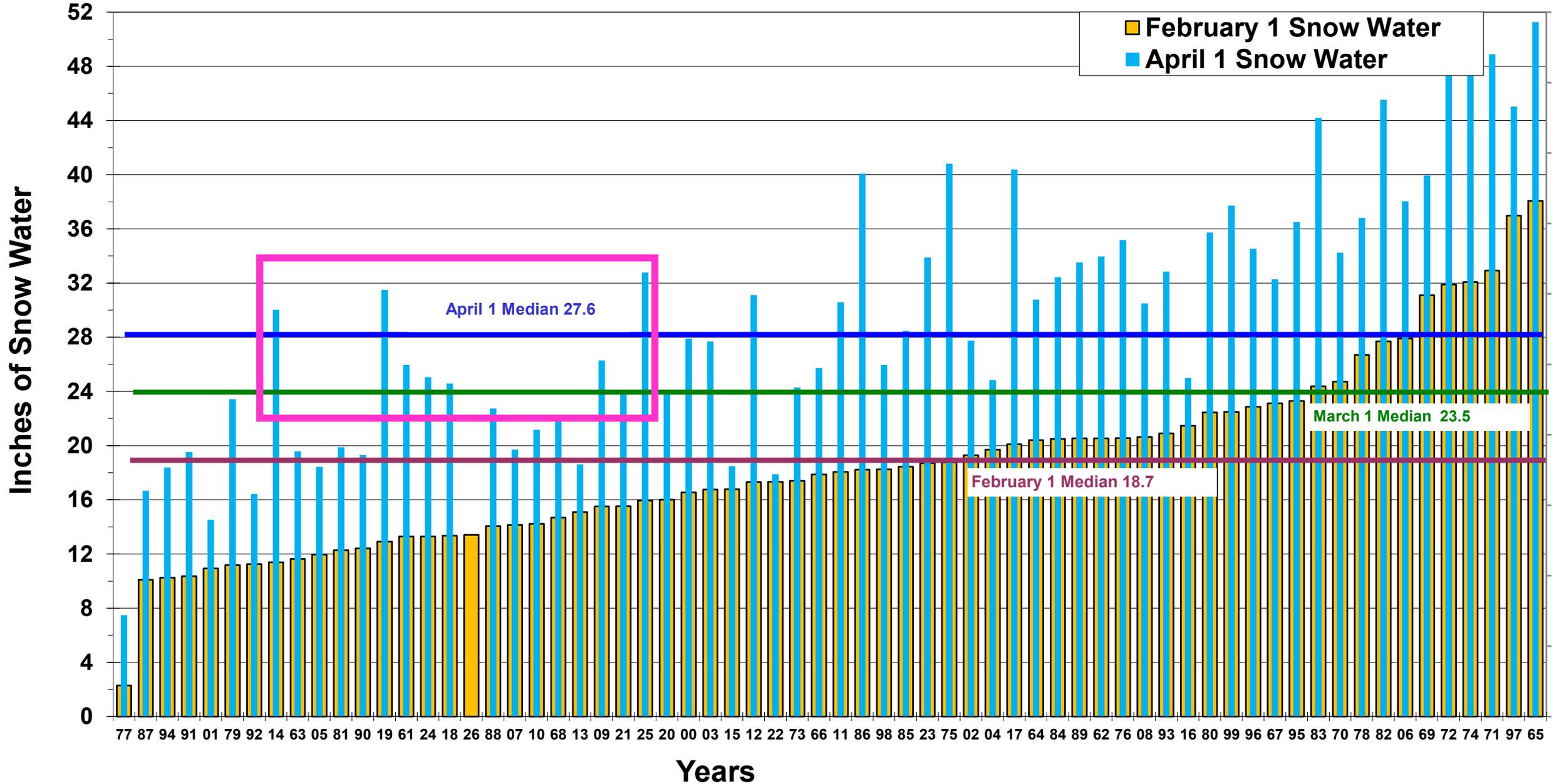
January Boise Basin 7 Station Snow Index for Years 1961 - 2016

Atlanta, Dollarhide, Graham, Jackson, Mores Creek, Trinity Mountain, Vienna Mine



February Boise Basin 7 Station Snow Index for Years 1961 - 2018

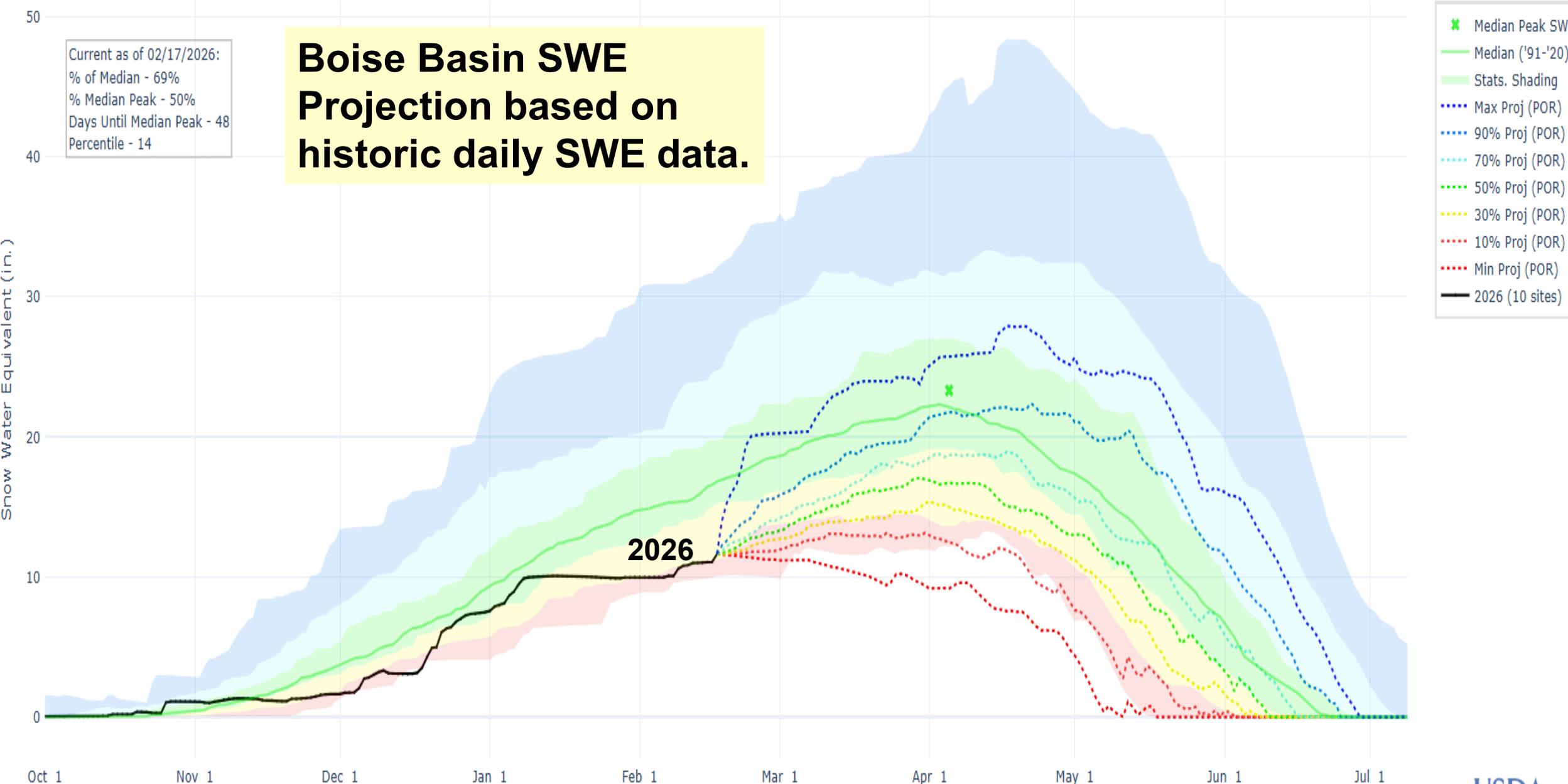
Atlanta, Dollarhide, Graham, Jackson, Mores Creek, Trinity Mountain, Vienna Mine



SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT PROJECTION IN BOISE

Current as of 02/17/2026:
% of Median - 69%
% Median Peak - 50%
Days Until Median Peak - 48
Percentile - 14

**Boise Basin SWE
Projection based on
historic daily SWE data.**



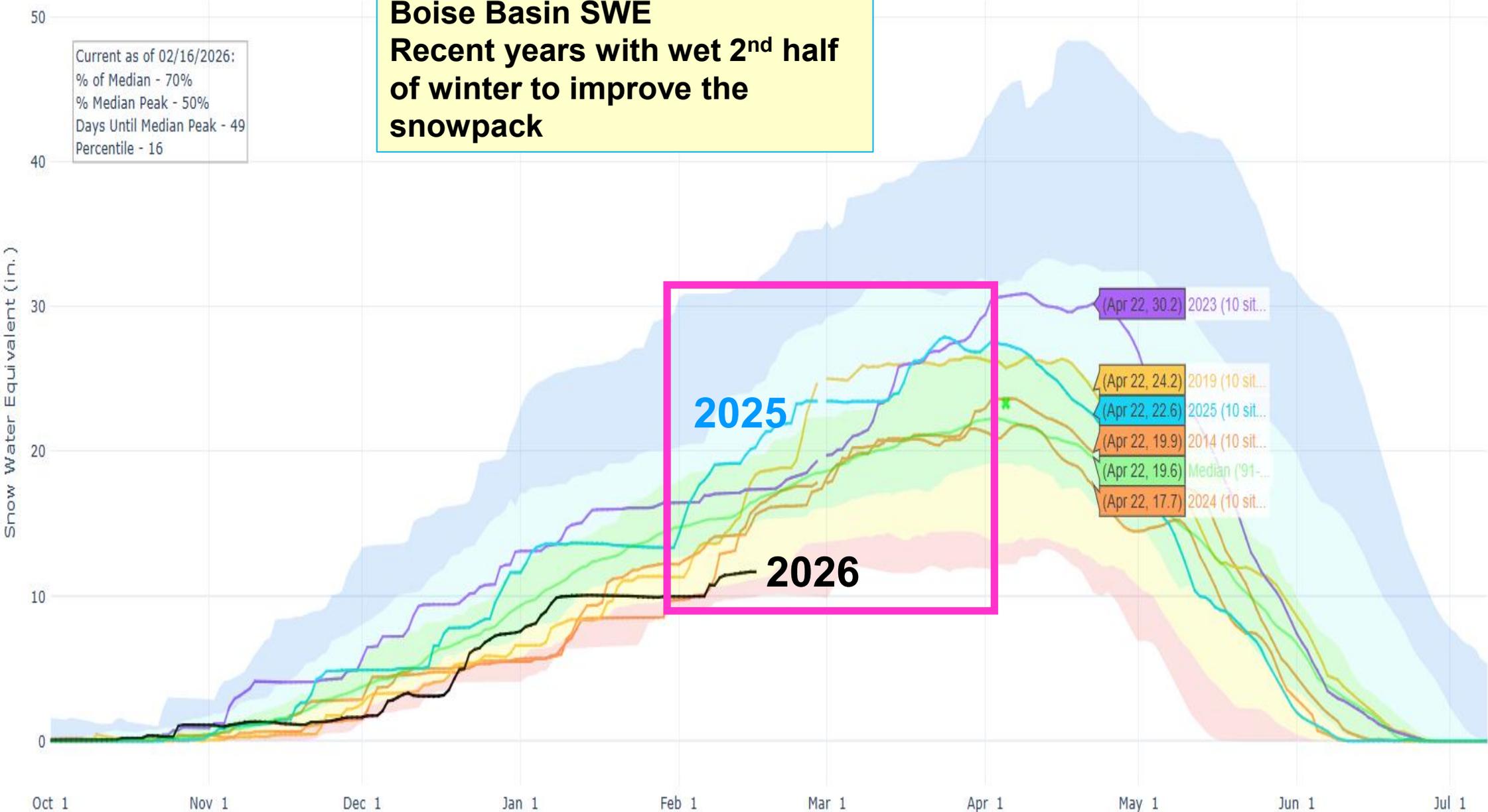
- ✖ Median Peak SWE
- Median ('91-'20)
- Stats. Shading
- ⋯ Max Proj (POR)
- ⋯ 90% Proj (POR)
- ⋯ 70% Proj (POR)
- ⋯ 50% Proj (POR)
- ⋯ 30% Proj (POR)
- ⋯ 10% Proj (POR)
- ⋯ Min Proj (POR)
- 2026 (10 sites)

SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN BOISE

Boise Basin SWE
Recent years with wet 2nd half
of winter to improve the
snowpack

Current as of 02/16/2026:
% of Median - 70%
% Median Peak - 50%
Days Until Median Peak - 49
Percentile - 16

- Median Peak SWE
- Median ('91-'20)
- Stats. Shading
- 2026 (10 sites)
- 2025 (10 sites)
- 2024 (10 sites)
- 2023 (10 sites)
- 2019 (10 sites)
- 2014 (10 sites)





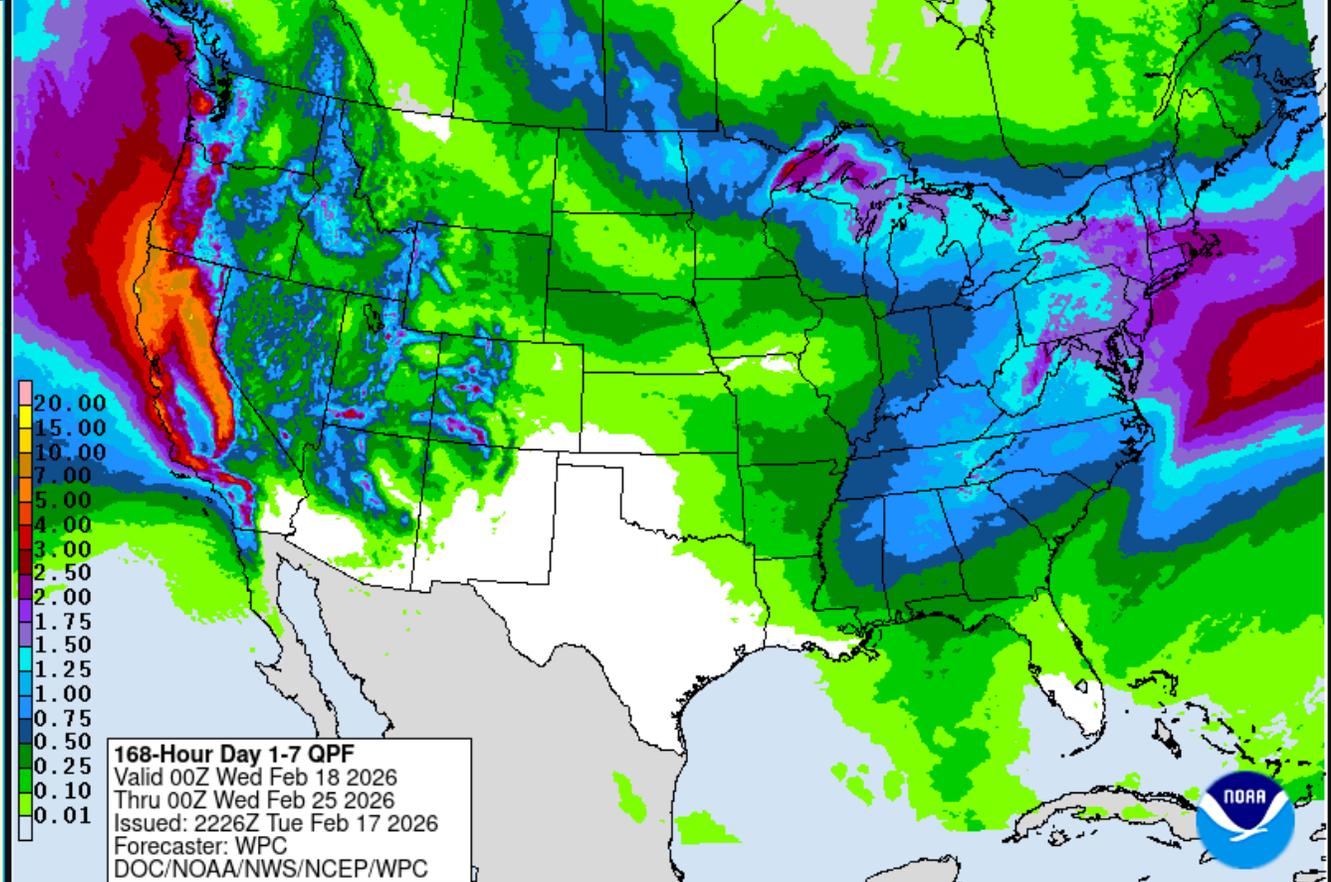
Short-Term Weather
What you see is what
you get till until the
weather pattern
changes again...

**Green grass in
Horseshoe Bend
Jan 8, 2026**

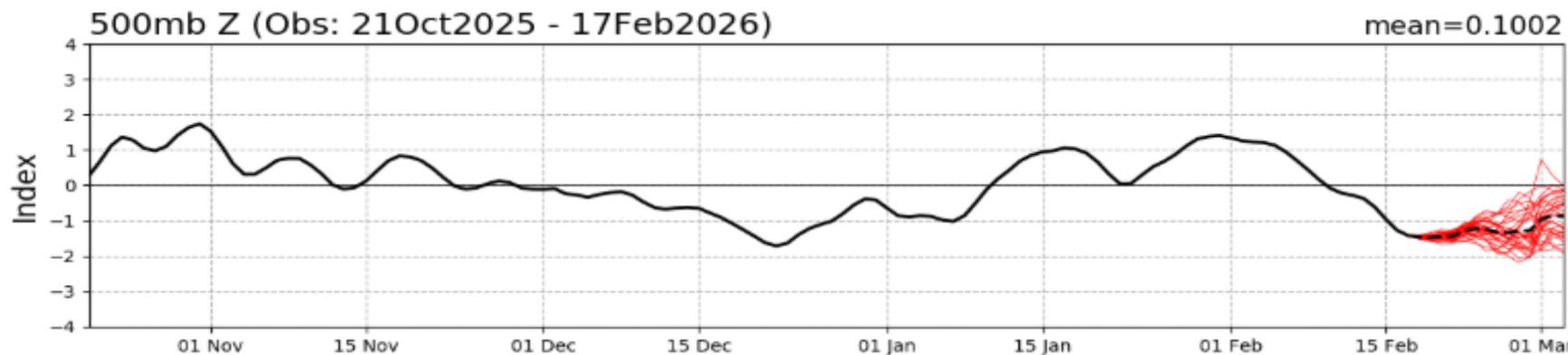
7-Day Total Precip Feb 18-25

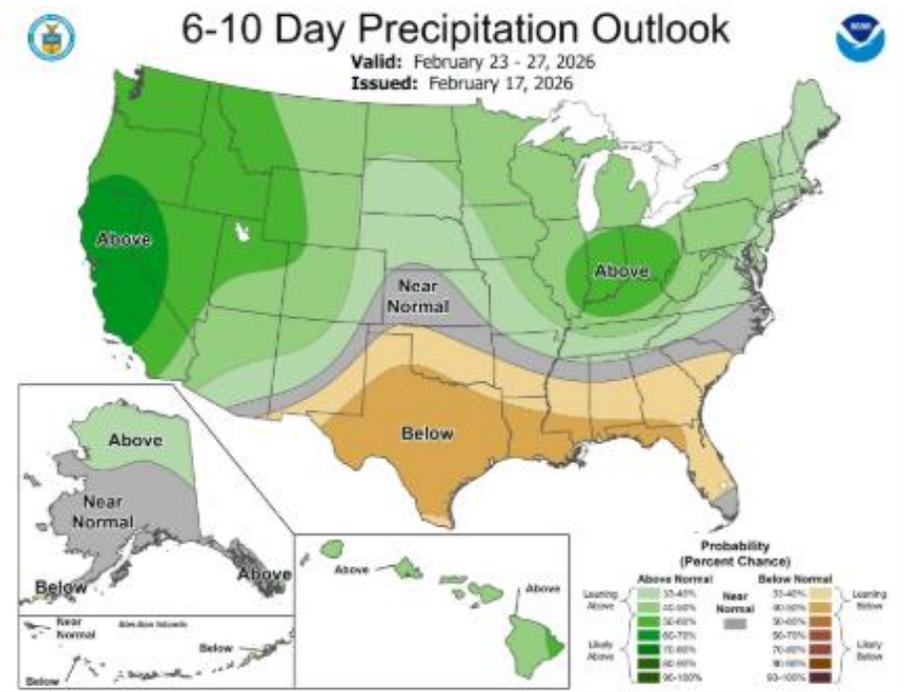
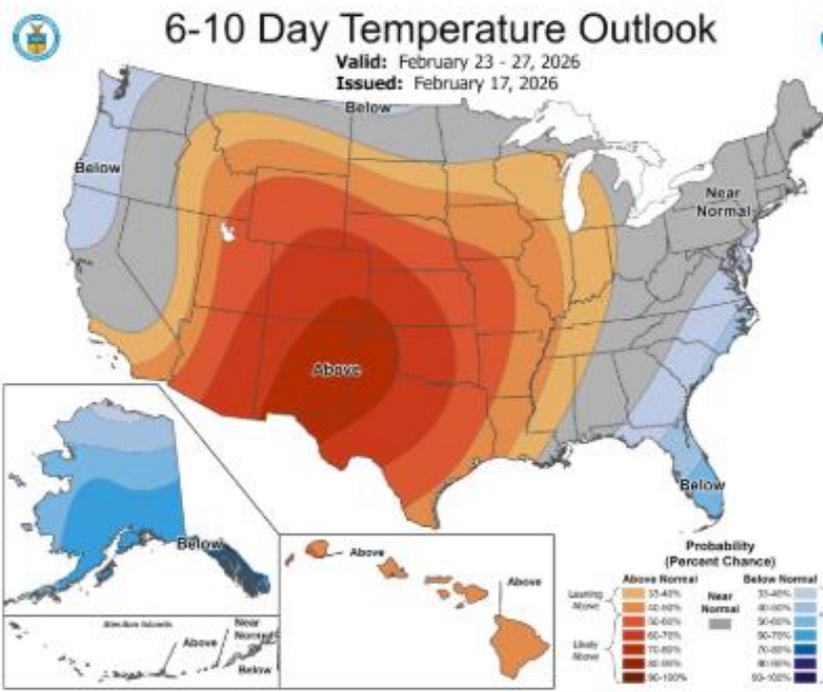
Good News

**PNA continues to
trend Negative
which often
means weather
in PNW.**



PNA Index: Observed & GEFS Forecasts

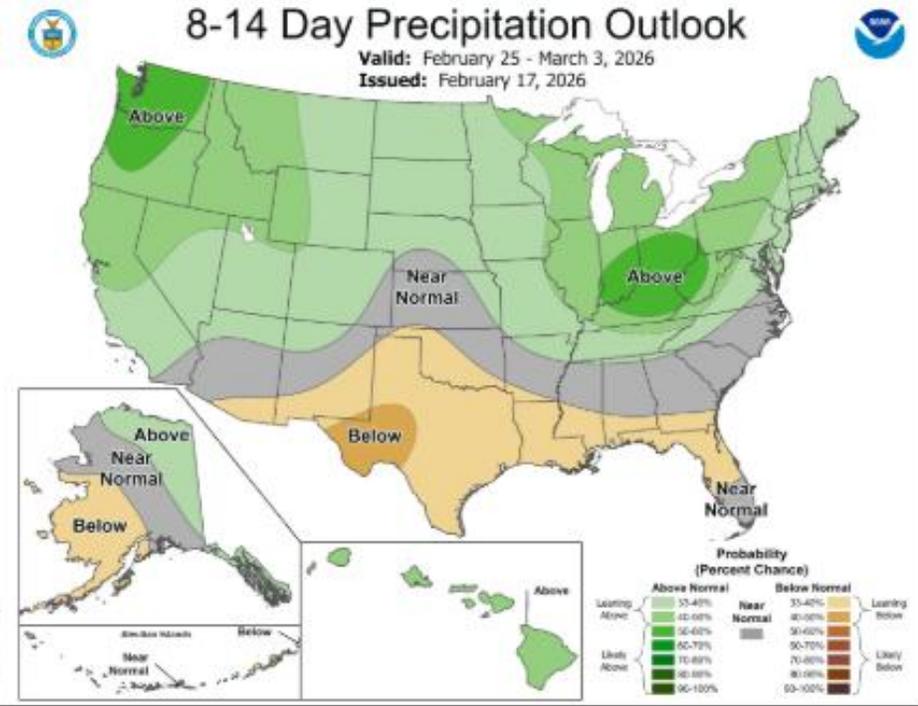
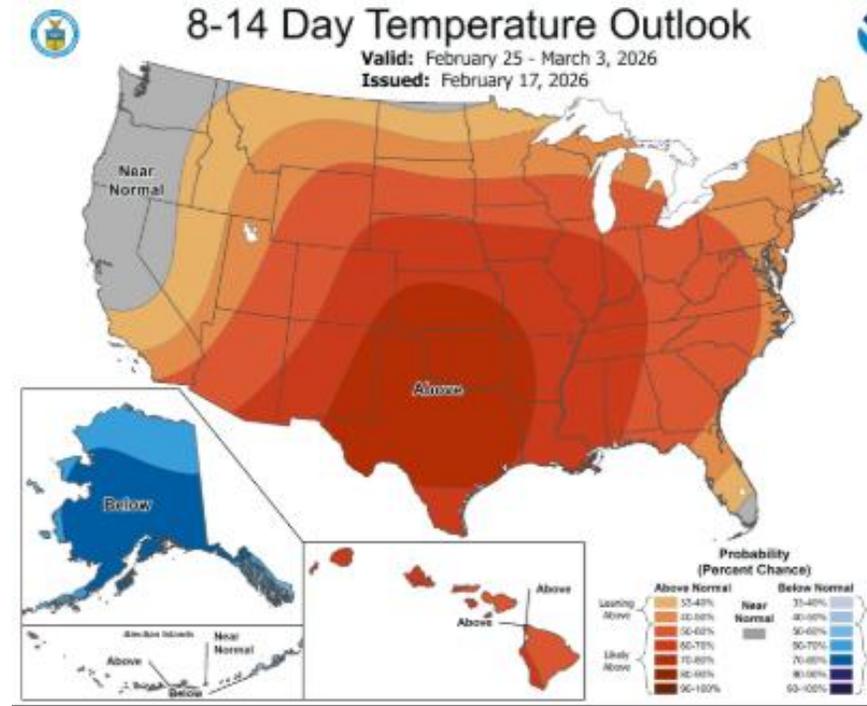


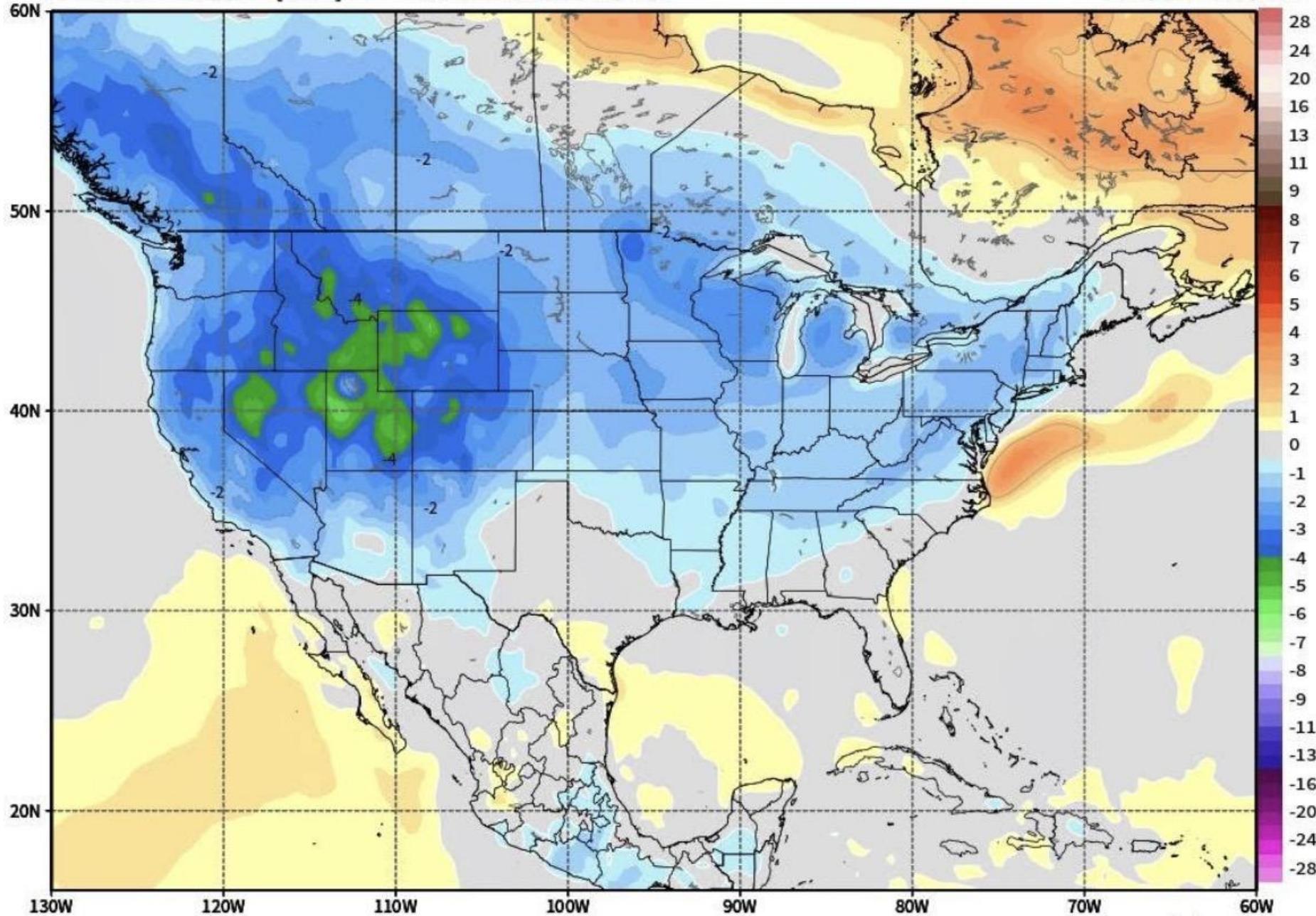


NWS
Temp & Precip
6-10 Day Outlook
Feb 23-27

and

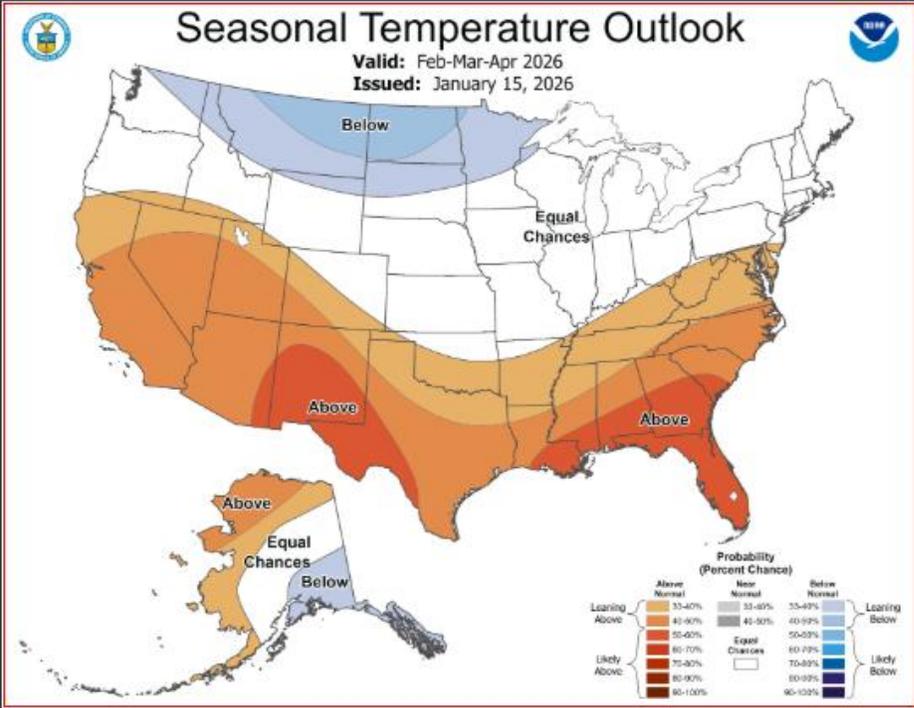
8-14 Day Outlook
Feb 25 - Mar 3





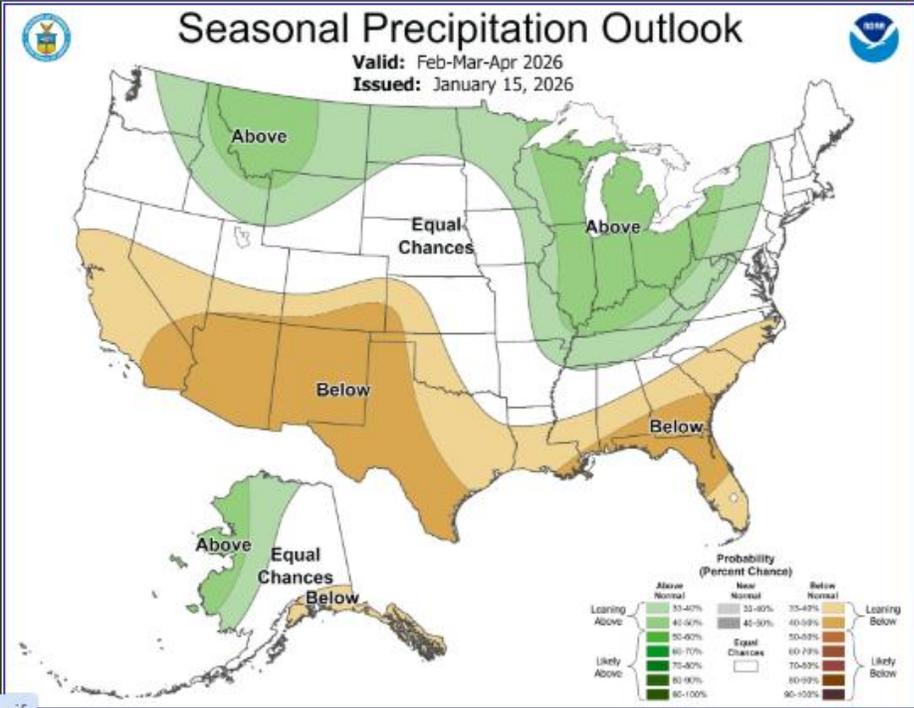
**Temperature
Anomaly
for Mar 13 - 27**

**Shows below
normal temps
for most of
west the US.**



Feb-Mar-Apr NWS Outlook

Questions – Comments



Snow: Idaho's Frozen Liquid Gold (Hybrid)

This course will discuss the building of Idaho's mountain snowpack as it reaches its peak in early April and current water supply outlook.

We'll examine the history of snow surveys and the usefulness of water supply information as well as current snow levels and water supply outlook.

We also will explore the importance of understanding your watershed and what makes it flow, current snow levels, water supply outlook, and key snow, flow and weather relationships to watch as our rivers rise.

PLEASE NOTE: *The first session of this course will meet on February 18, and the second session will meet on April 22.*

Presenter: Ron Abramovich, retired Water Supply Specialist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dates and time: **Session One:** Wed., Feb. 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Session Two: Wed., Apr. 22, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$25

Watch a preview of this program here: [**Snow: Idaho's Frozen Liquid Gold**](#)