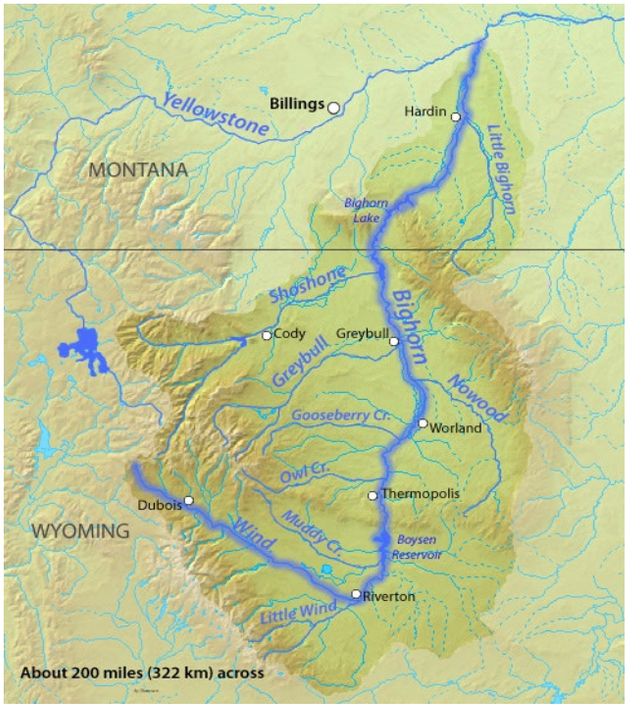
Yellowtail Dam Water Supply and Projected Operations

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

April 2026



Bighorn River Basin Map Source: DEMIS Mapserver

April Operating Range			
Forecast	**Minimum**	**Median**	**Maximum**
Monthly Average Inflow (cfs)	2,055	2,110	2,420
Monthly Average River Release (cfs)	1,665	1,665	1,955
End of April Elevation (feet)	3617.7	3618.6	3619.7

April - July 2026 Inflow Forecast (kaf)	
April - July Volume	528
Percent of Average	42

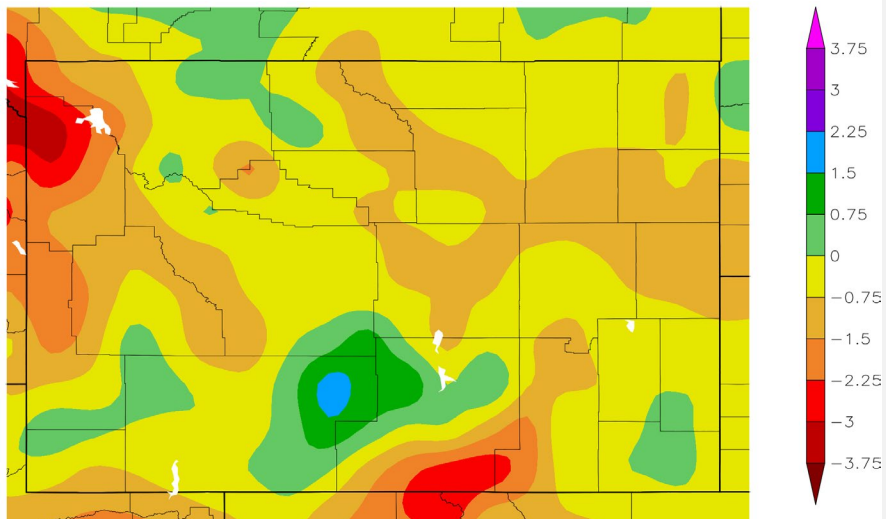
Water Year	Historical Inflow	Rank
2025	715	20
2024	1,135	15
2023	2,000	4
2022	990	19
30 Year Average	1,250	

Climate Departure from Normal

March 1 through March 31, 2026

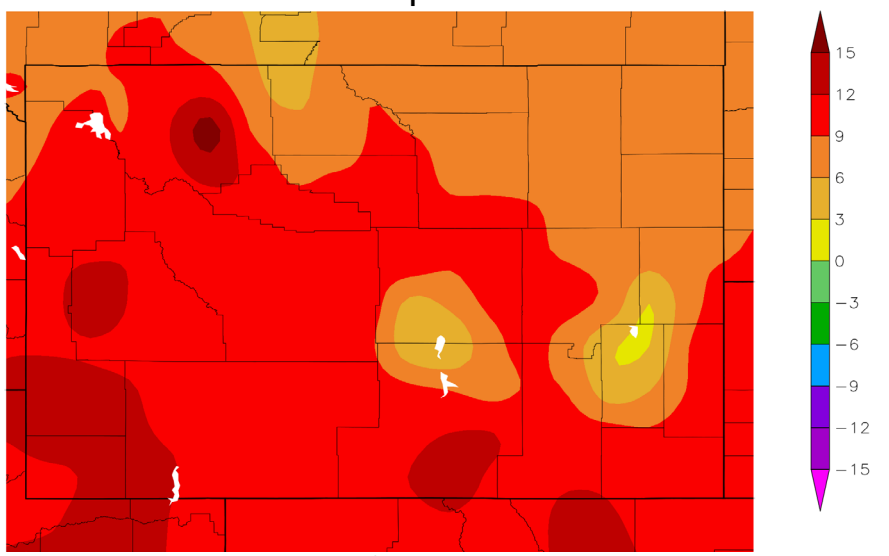
Precipitation

Departure from Normal (inches)



Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)



HPRCC using provisional data from NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

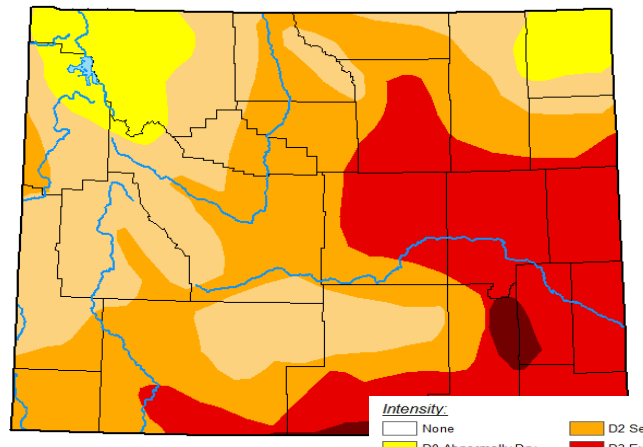
March precipitation across the Bighorn River Basin above Yellowtail Dam was generally below average, with only a few small scattered areas in the basin experiencing above average amounts. Temperatures for the month were warmer than normal.

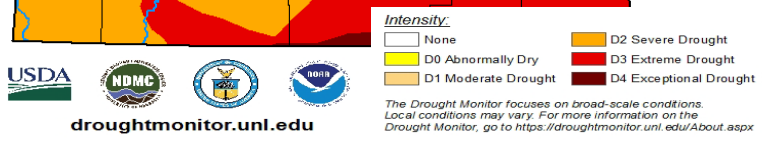
Based on the climate outlook for April, there is an equal chance that precipitation will be above, below, or near average in the basin. Temperatures, however, have a 33–40% chance of being above normal.

Drought conditions in the Bighorn River basin range from abnormally dry to severe.

Wyoming Drought Monitor Map

March 31, 2026

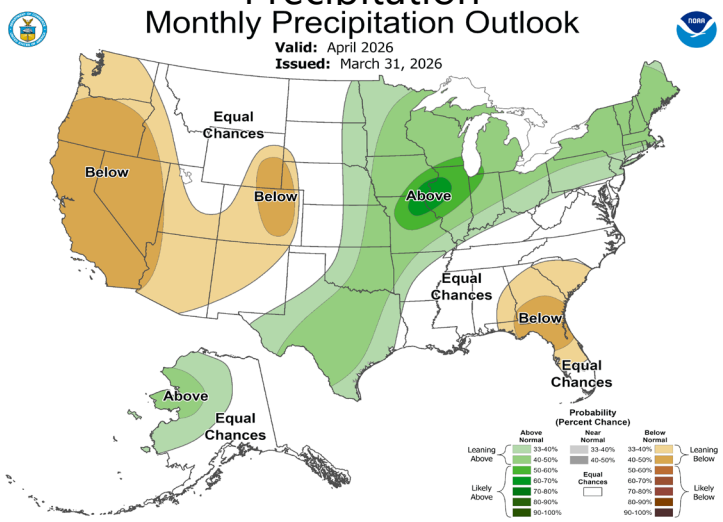




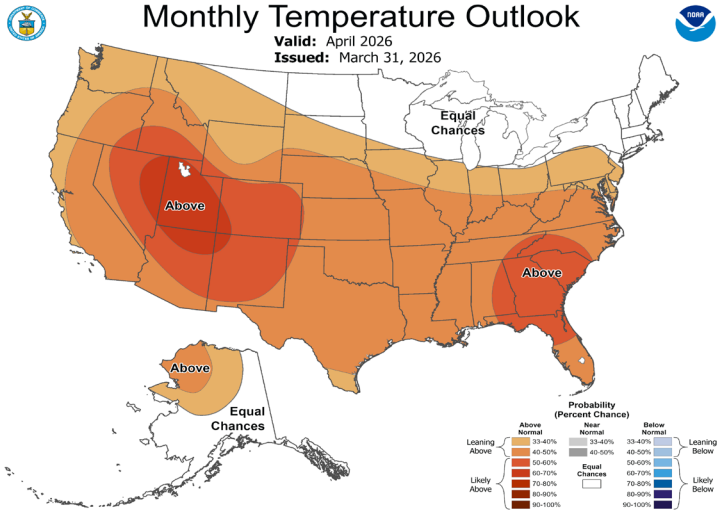
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

April Climate Outlook

Precipitation



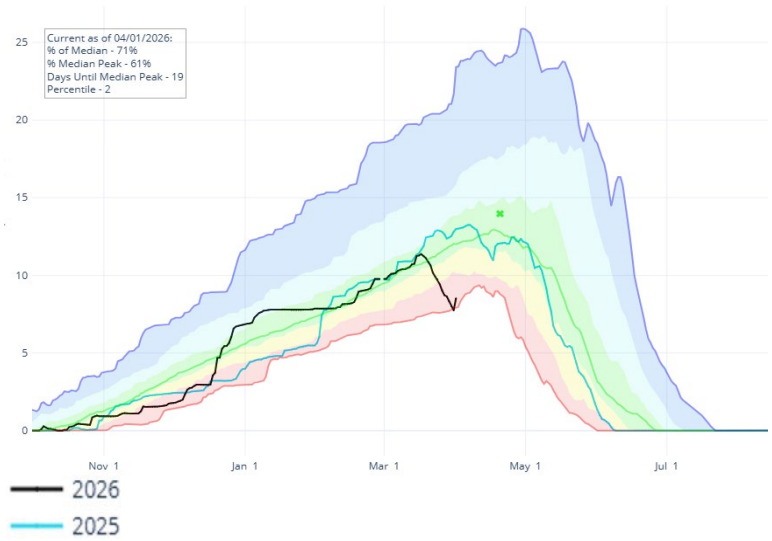
Temperature

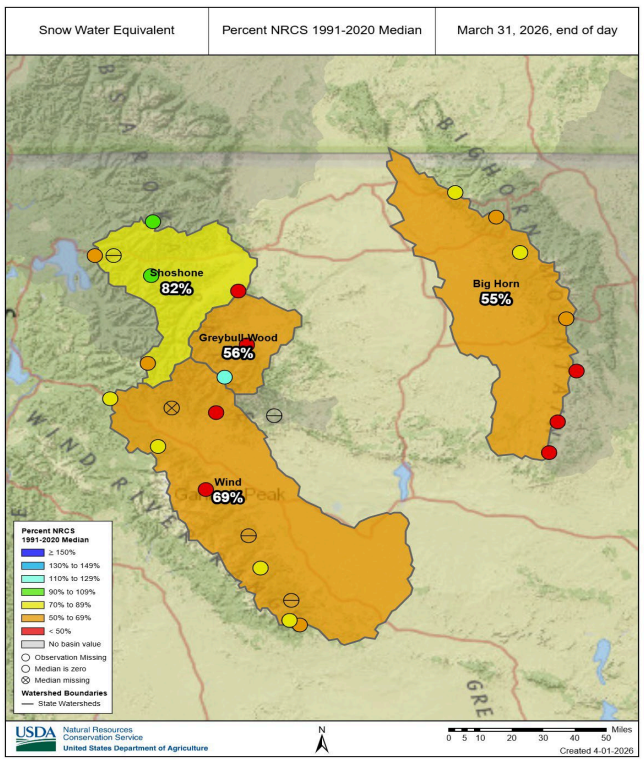


SNOWPACK SUMMARY

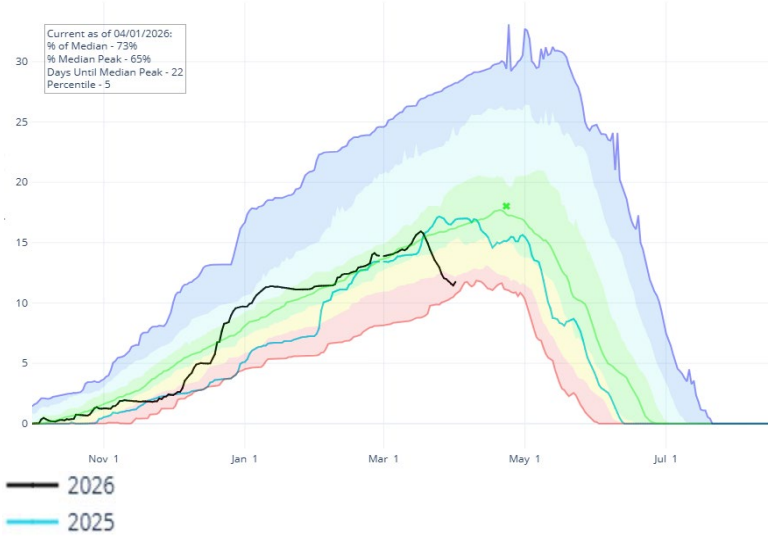
The snow water equivalent (SWE) graphs are a composite of SNOTEL sites within the Bighorn River Basin managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Wind River

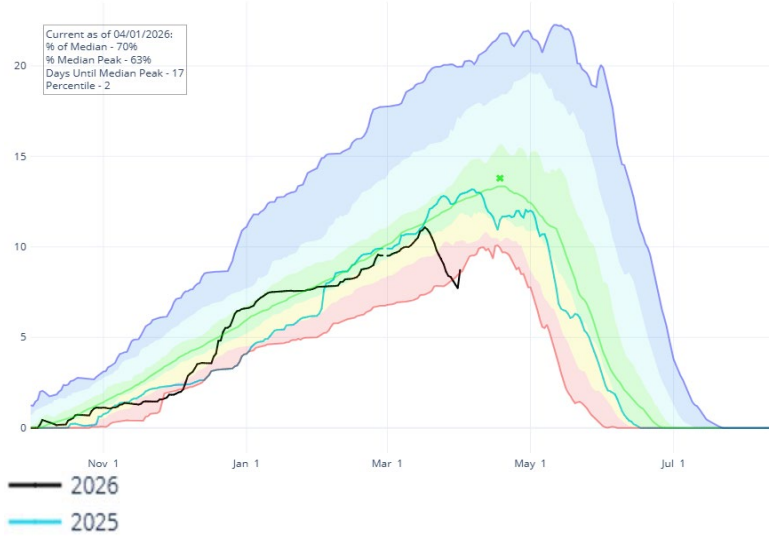




Shoshone River

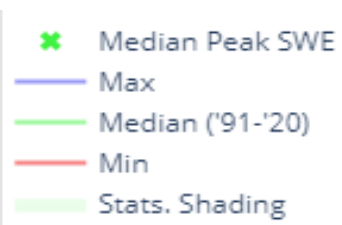


Bighorn River



NRCS Montana Snow Survey Website: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mt/snow/

Statistical shading breaks at 10th, 30th,50th, 70th, and 90th Percentiles
Normal ('91-'20) – Official median calculated from 1991-2020 data
Normal (POR) – Unofficial mean calculated from Period of Record data

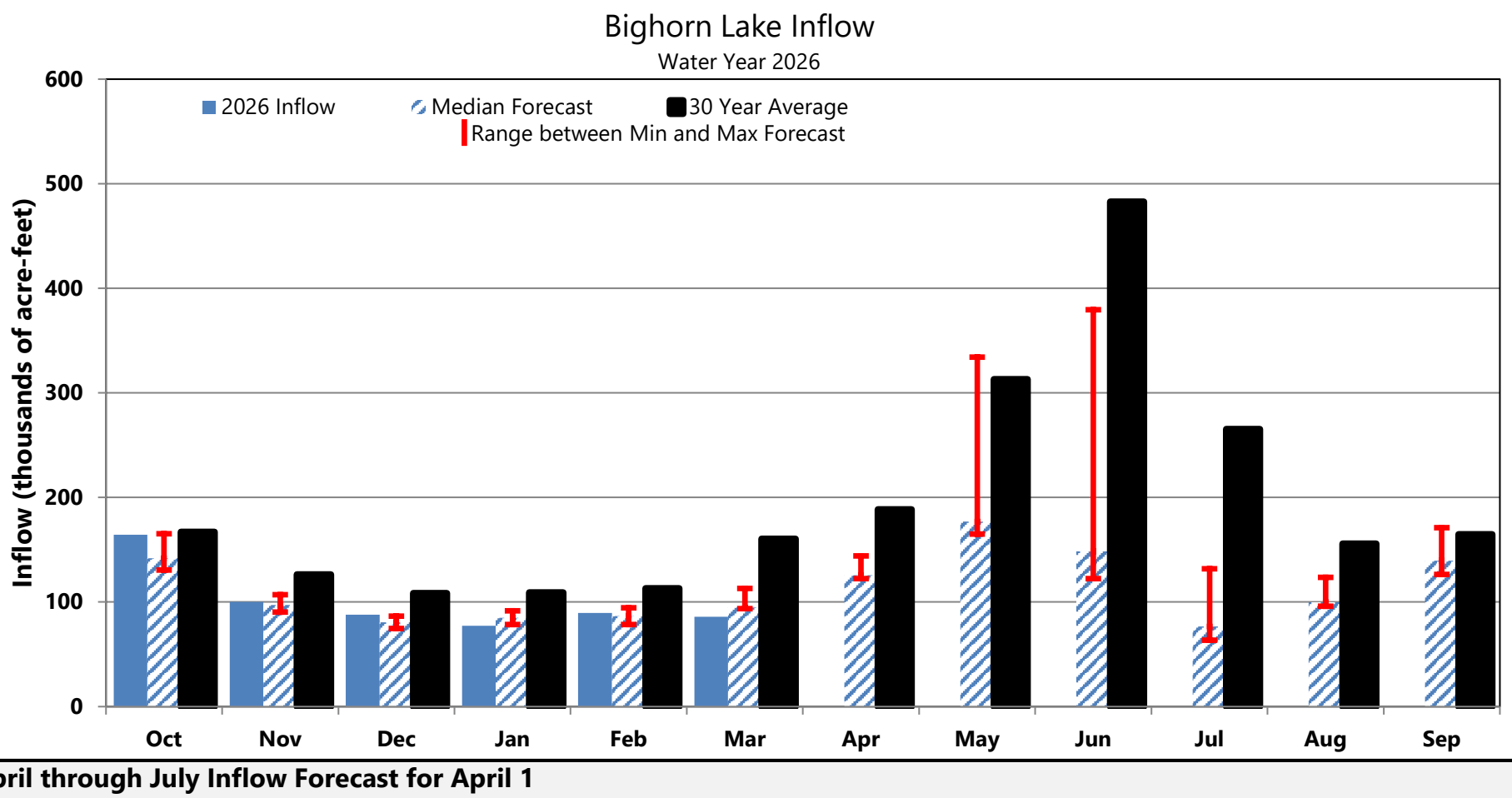


FORECAST SUMMARY

NRCS SNOTEL data, streamflow data, climate data, and planned releases from Boysen and Buffalo Bill Reservoirs are used to compute an inflow forecast for Bighorn Lake. Actual March inflows were less than the minimum inflow forecast. The April through July inflow forecast for April 1 is below the minimum fill volume.

March Forecast Review

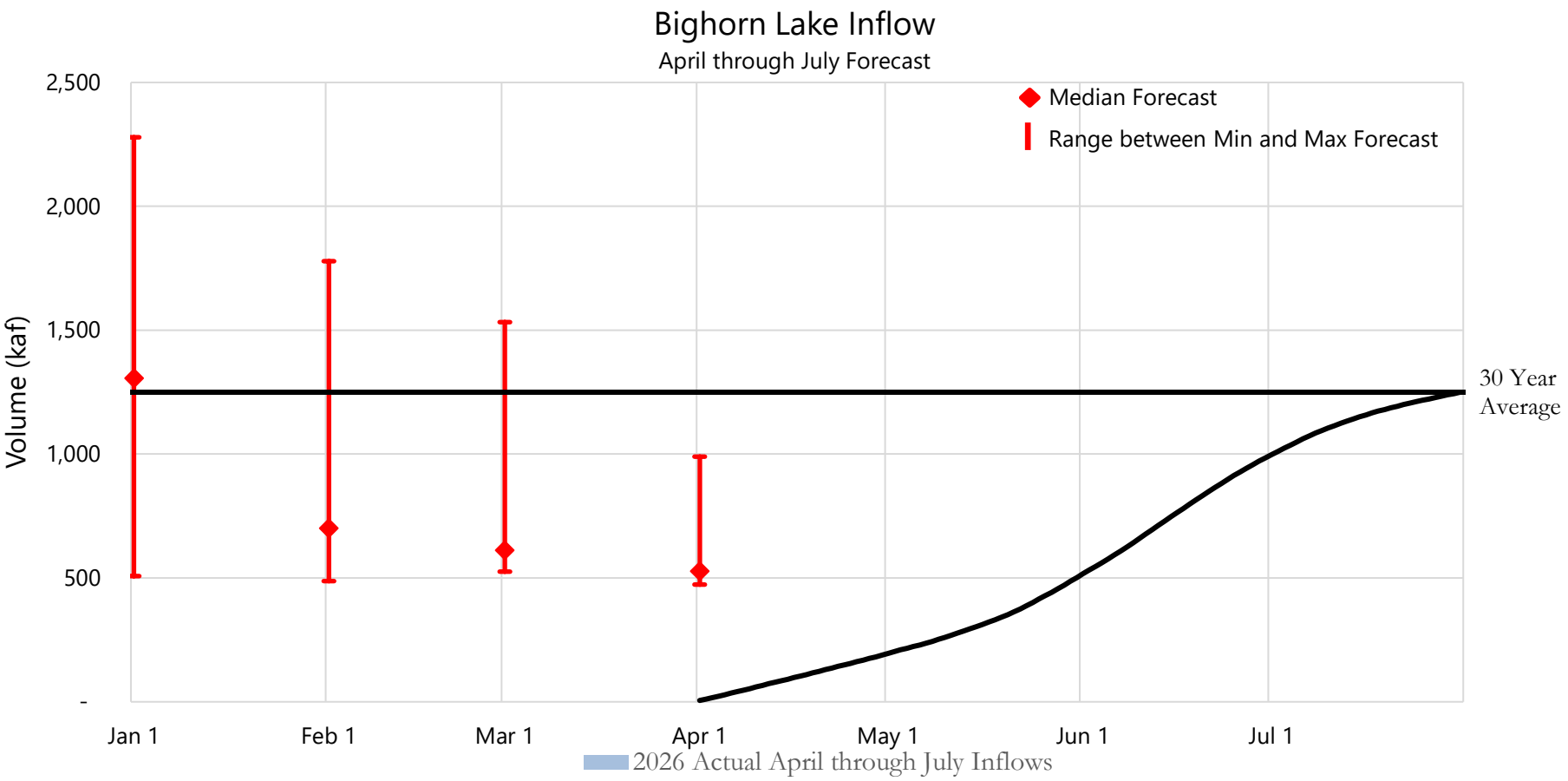
	Median Forecast (kaf)	Actual (kaf)	Difference (kaf)	Actual (% of Avg)
March Inflow	94.9	86.0	(8.9)	54



April through July Inflow Forecast for April 1

	Median Forecast (kaf)	% of Average	Minimum Forecast (kaf)	Maximum Forecast (kaf)
April through July Inflow	528	42	473	990

Historic Maximum (2017)	2,953 kaf	Historic Minimum (2004)	392 kaf	Average	1,250

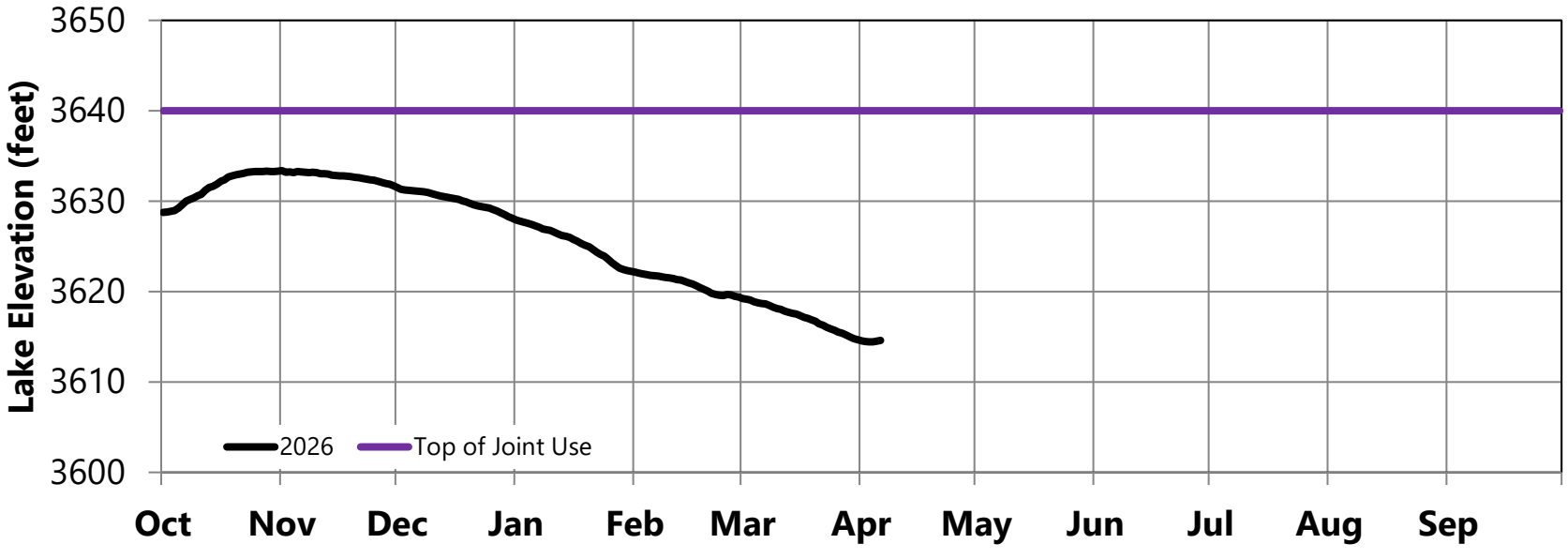


OPERATIONS REVIEW (October 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026)

Releases to the Bighorn River were decreased to 1,750 cfs during March based on forecasted inflows. The elevation of Bighorn Lake decreased by 4.7 feet during March.

April 1 Storage Conditions

	Elevation feet	Storage acre-feet	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Bighorn Lake	3614.7	782,471	101	77
Buffalo Bill	5365.4	435,934	101	67
Boysen	4713.0	534,966	98	72

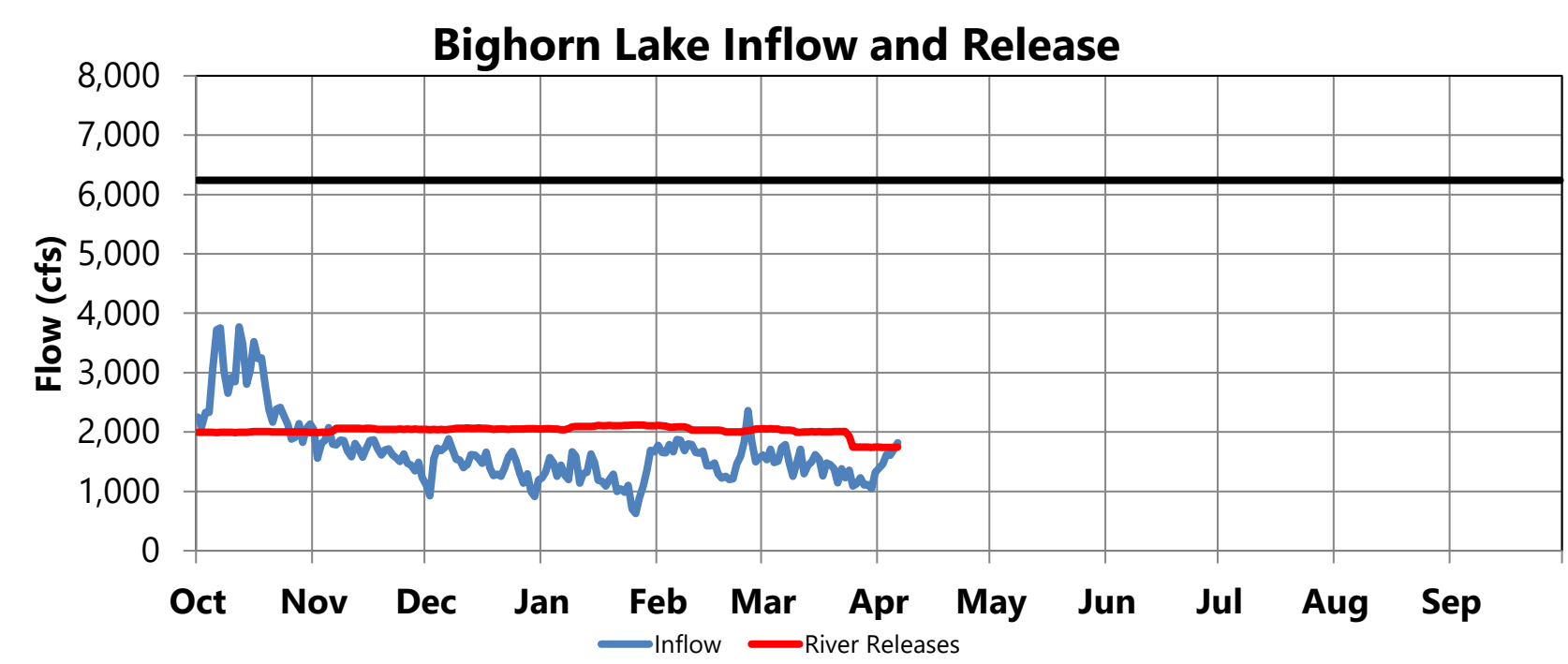


Average March Inflow

	Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average
Bighorn Lake	1,400	54
Buffalo Bill	785	220
Boysen	740	85

Average March Release

	Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average
Bighorn River	1,955	66
Buffalo Bill Total Release	170	38
Boysen Release	540	56



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

Releases to the Bighorn River will decrease from 1,750 cfs to 1,580 cfs on April 16 based on a storage target of 3617 feet on March 31, 2027. During the remainder of April, releases to the Bighorn River will either increase or remain at 1,580 cfs depending on actual inflow and changing hydrologic conditions in the basin. The median inflow forecast of 528 kaf is less than the minimum fill forecast for Bighorn Lake. Minimum fill criteria is based on an April through July forecast volume that allows the lake to fill with a minimum release of 2,000 cfs. Inflow forecasts below the minimum fill volume transitions operations to target an end of March elevation of 3617 the following year while maintaining a constant release. Under these conditions the reservoir does not fill.

Median Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 528 kaf)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,081	1,220	1,220	1,200	1,090	1,020	800	301	299	299	301	299
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	815	1,711	1,866	1,991	1,886	1,551	629	153	153	153	153	153
Tributary Gain (cfs)	212	-51	-589	-1,944	-1,352	-224	726	776	468	532	675	914
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	2,109	2,881	2,497	1,246	1,624	2,347	2,155	1,230	921	984	1,129	1,366
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	125.5	177.1	148.6	76.6	99.9	139.6	132.5	73.2	56.6	60.5	62.7	84.0
Monthly Release (kaf)	105.0	118.7	117.8	124.8	124.8	111.9	97.2	94.0	97.2	97.2	87.7	97.2
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,765	1,930	1,980	2,030	2,030	1,880	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580
River Release (cfs)	1,665	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	807.1	869.8	904.8	860.9	840.2	872.2	911.8	895.2	859.0	826.6	805.5	796.6
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3618.6	3627.0	3630.9	3625.9	3623.3	3627.3	3631.6	3629.9	3625.7	3621.4	3618.3	3617.0

Minimum Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 473 kaf)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,081	1,150	1,150	1,099	1,090	860	600	301	299	299	301	299
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	815	1,711	1,866	1,991	1,886	1,551	628	153	153	153	153	153
Tributary Gain (cfs)	160	-178	-958	-2,057	-1,416	-287	678	755	451	512	648	891
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	2,057	2,683	2,058	1,033	1,561	2,125	1,905	1,208	903	964	1,102	1,343
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	122.4	165.0	122.4	63.5	96.0	126.4	117.2	71.9	55.5	59.3	61.2	82.6
Monthly Release (kaf)	108.0	116.8	116.0	119.9	119.9	107.1	94.7	89.3	92.2	92.2	83.3	92.2
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,815	1,900	1,950	1,950	1,950	1,800	1,540	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
River Release (cfs)	1,665	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	801.0	853.5	864.1	812.0	792.3	815.8	842.6	829.4	797.0	768.4	750.2	744.8
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3617.7	3625.0	3626.3	3619.3	3616.3	3619.9	3623.6	3621.8	3617.0	3612.3	3609.1	3608.1

Maximum Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 990 kaf)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,081	1,800	2,069	1,200	1,090	1,000	899	800	800	800	799	1,067
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	815	2,920	2,676	2,211	1,892	1,725	834	419	353	353	353	353
Tributary Gain (cfs)	525	715	1,633	-1,268	-972	150	1,019	906	577	652	841	1,054
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	2,422	5,435	6,377	2,143	2,011	2,876	2,752	2,125	1,731	1,805	1,993	2,474
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	144.1	334.2	379.5	131.8	123.6	171.1	169.2	126.4	106.4	111.0	110.7	152.1
Monthly Release (kaf)	116.4	268.3	255.9	190.9	180.8	166.0	156.2	151.1	156.2	156.2	141.1	156.2
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,957	4,364	4,300	3,105	2,940	2,790	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540
River Release (cfs)	1,957	4,164	4,000	2,655	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540	2,540
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	814.3	884.4	1,012.2	957.4	904.6	913.8	931.2	910.7	865.2	824.3	797.8	798.1
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3619.7	3628.7	3640.1	3635.8	3630.9	3631.8	3633.5	3631.5	3626.5	3621.1	3617.2	3617.2

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

There is approximately 70 cfs of gain between Yellowtail Dam and Yellowtail Afterbay Dam from springs flowing into Yellowtail Afterbay. Total release from Yellowtail Dam is 70 cfs less than total release from Yellowtail Afterbay Dam.

Irrigation Demands Outlook

Bighorn Canal (cfs)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	100	350	400	450	450	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum Forecast	150	400	450	450	450	300	40	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Forecast	0	200	300	450	400	250	0	0	0	0	0	0

Power Generation Outlook

Current Number of Units Available: 4 of 4
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Turbine Capacity: 6,150 cfs
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Scheduled Generation Limit: 6,150 cfs

Yellowtail Powerplant Release (cfs)

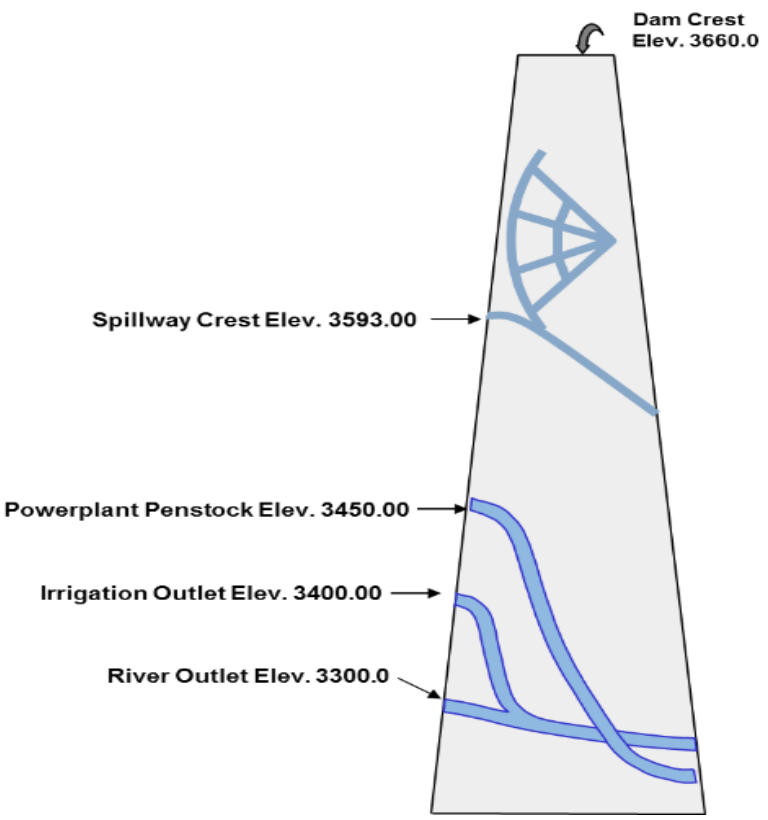
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	1,695	1,860	1,910	1,960	1,960	1,810	1,510	1,510	1,510	1,510	1,510	1,510
Minimum Forecast	1,745	1,830	1,880	1,880	1,880	1,730	1,470	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430
Maximum Forecast	1,887	4,294	4,230	3,035	2,870	2,720	2,470	2,470	2,470	2,470	2,470	2,470

Yellowtail Powerplant Generation (gwh)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	37	42	42	44	44	39	34	33	34	34	31	34
Minimum Forecast	38	41	41	42	42	38	33	31	32	32	29	32
Maximum Forecast	41	97	92	68	65	59	56	54	56	56	50	56

Yellowtail Spill (cfs)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

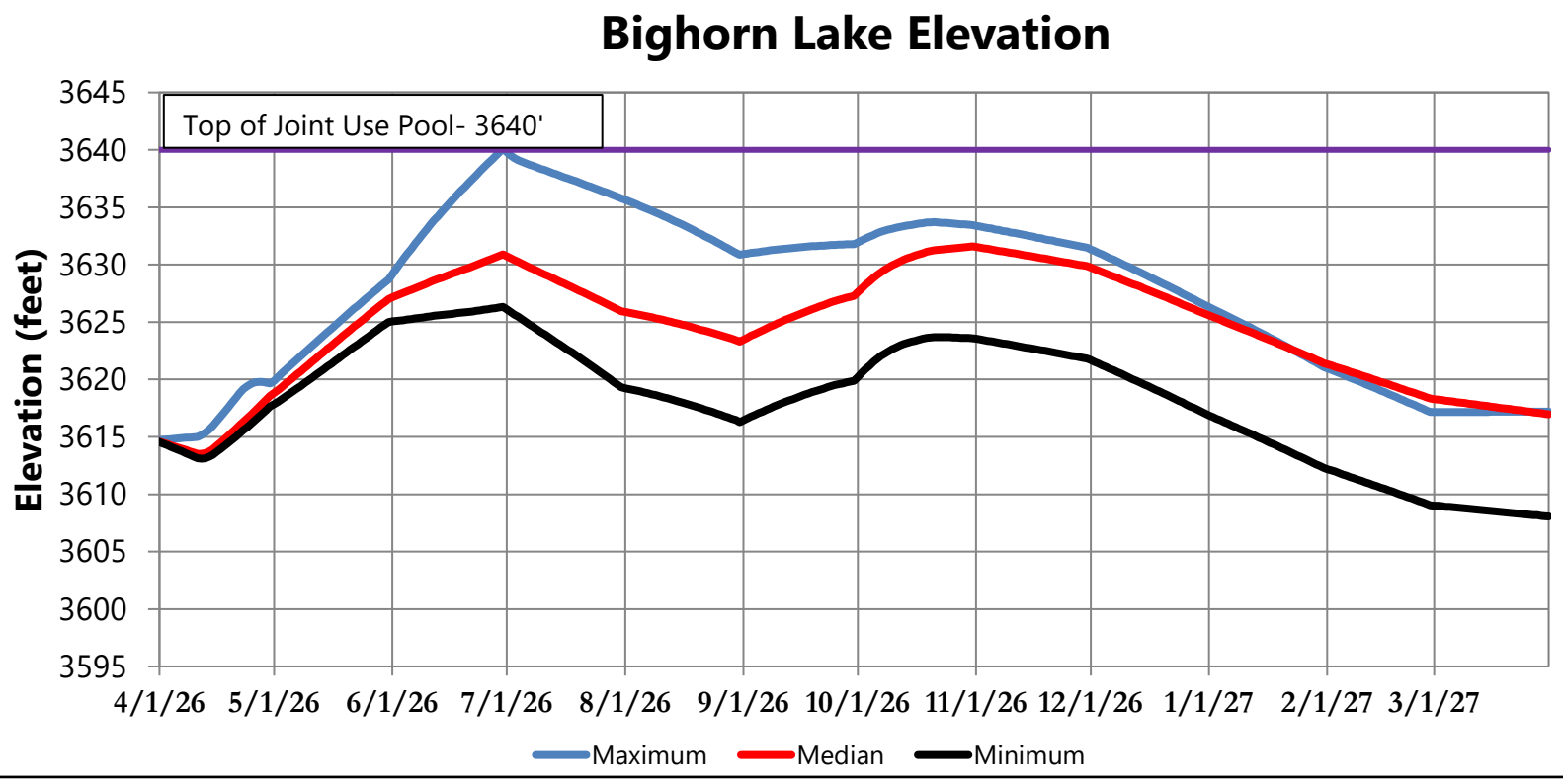


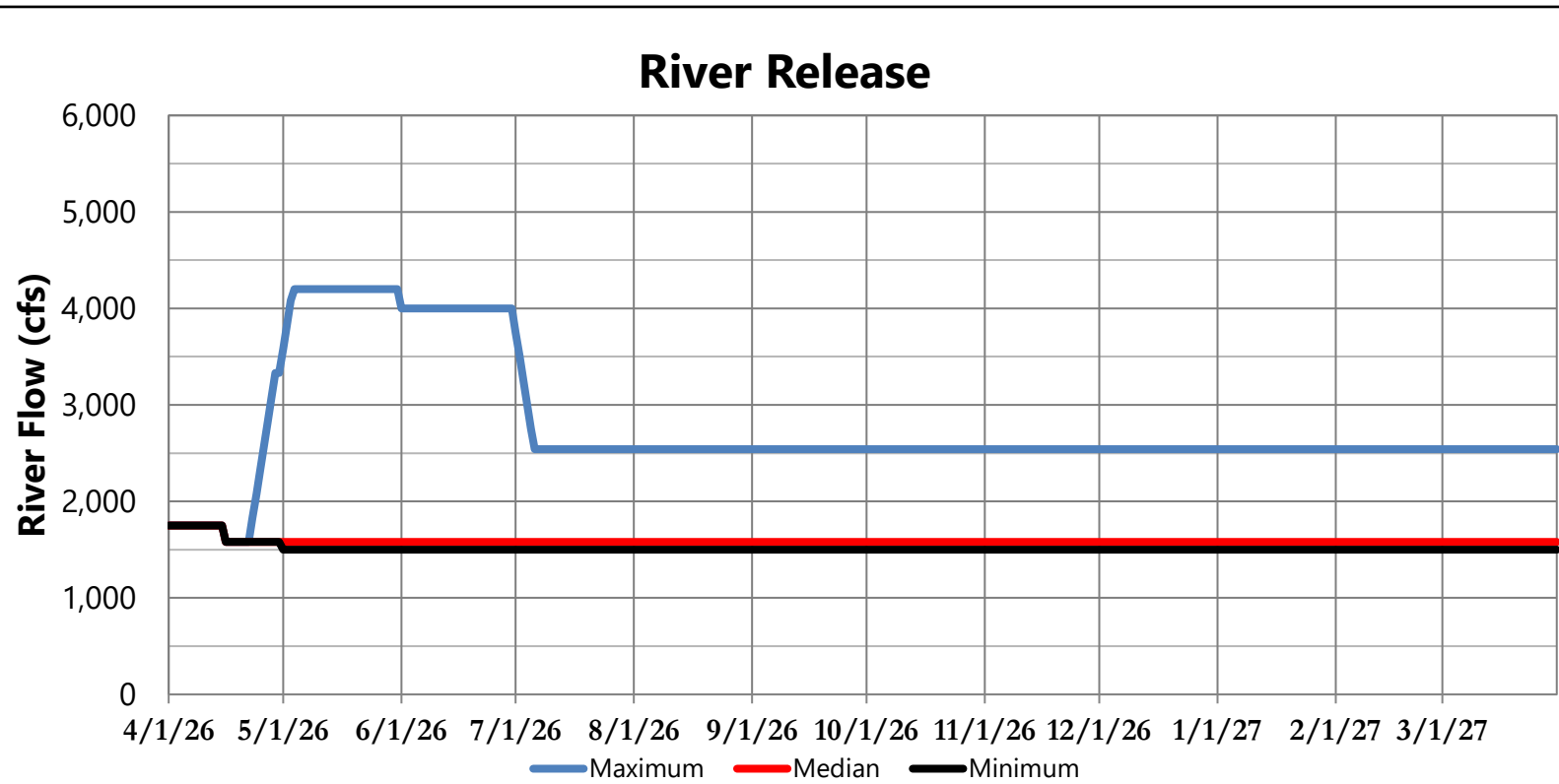
Release Outlook by Outlet

Yellowtail Powerplant bypass releases are not expected under median, minimum, or maximum plans.

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027)

Projected elevations and the range of river releases are based on the median, minimum, and maximum inflow forecasts. End-of-month elevations and river releases vary based on the difference between forecasted inflow scenarios.





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Monthly Operating Plans, Current Conditions, Snowpack and Other Water Management Information
https://www.usbr.gov/gp/lakes_reservoirs/wareprts/main_menu.html