

Yellowtail Dam Water Supply and Projected Operations



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

August 2026



Bighorn River Basin Map Source: DEMIS Mapserver

August Operating Range			
Forecast	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Monthly Average Inflow (cfs)	1,560	1,625	2,010
Monthly Average River Release (cfs)	1,500	1,500	1,500
End of August Elevation (feet)	3620.7	3621.2	3624.6
August 2026 Inflow Forecast (kaf)			
August Volume			100
Percent of Average			64
Water Year	Historical Inflow		Rank
2025	112		21
2024	155		12
2023	229		5
2022	150		14
30 Year Average	156		

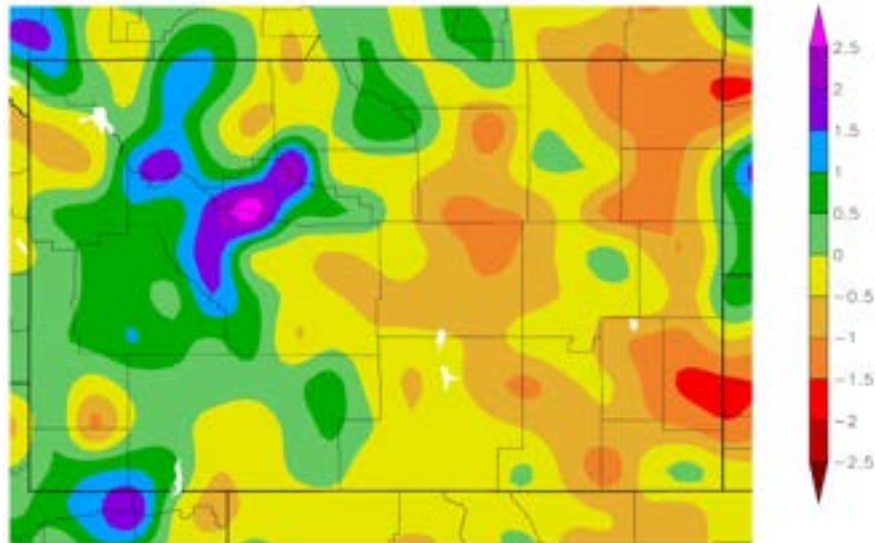


Climate Departure from Normal

July 1 through July 31, 2026

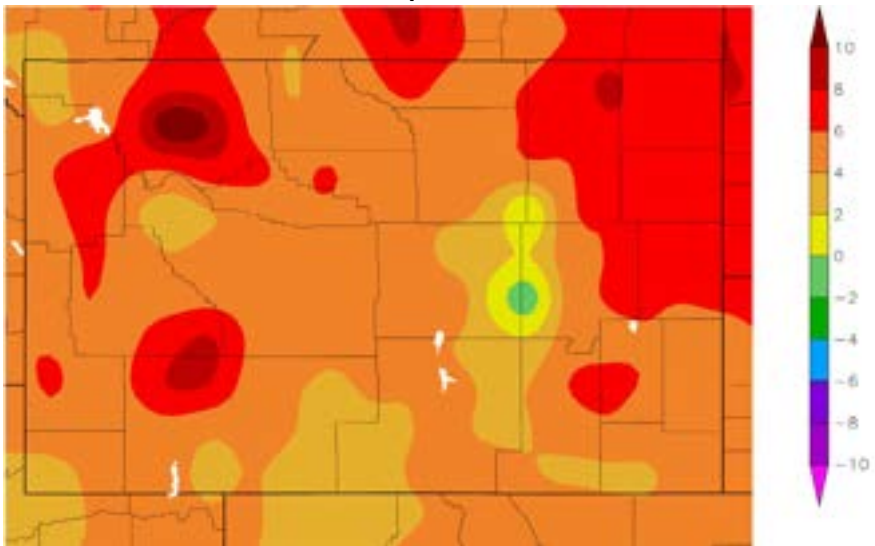
Precipitation

Departure from Normal (inches)



Departure from Normal (°F)

Temperature



HPRCC using provisional data from NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

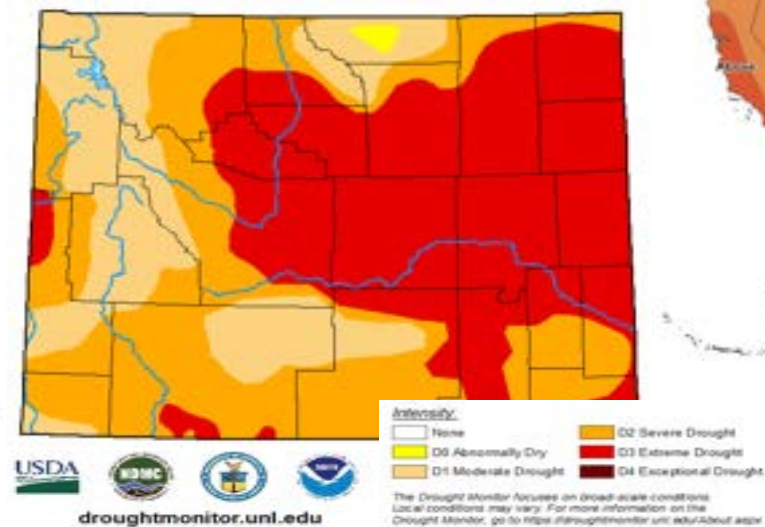
July precipitation across the Bighorn River Basin above Yellowtail Dam was generally above average in the higher elevations and below average in the valleys. Temperatures for the month were above normal.

Based on the climate outlook for August, there is a 33-40% chance that precipitation will be above average in the basin. Temperatures have a 33-40% chance of being above normal.

Drought conditions in the Bighorn River basin range from moderate to extreme.

Wyoming Drought Monitor Map

August 4, 2026

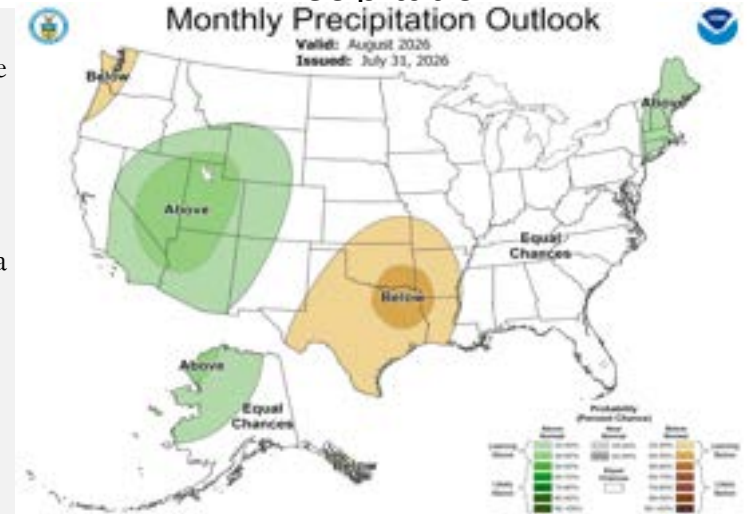


August Climate Outlook

Precipitation

Monthly Precipitation Outlook

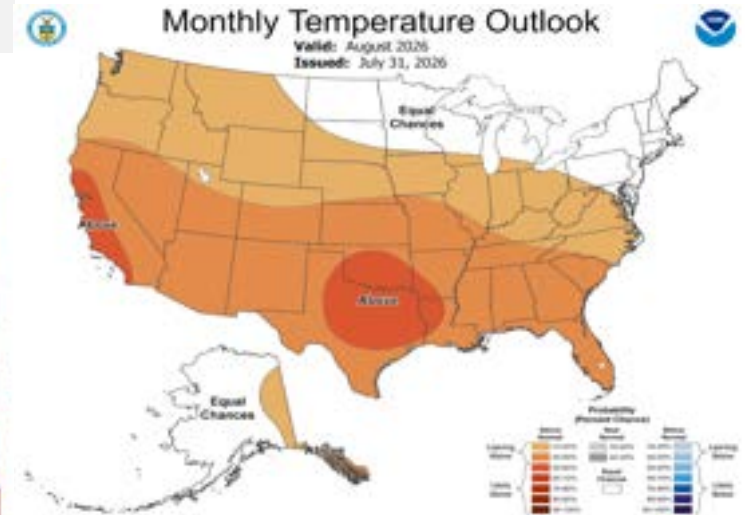
Valid: August 2026
Issued: July 31, 2026



Temperature

Monthly Temperature Outlook

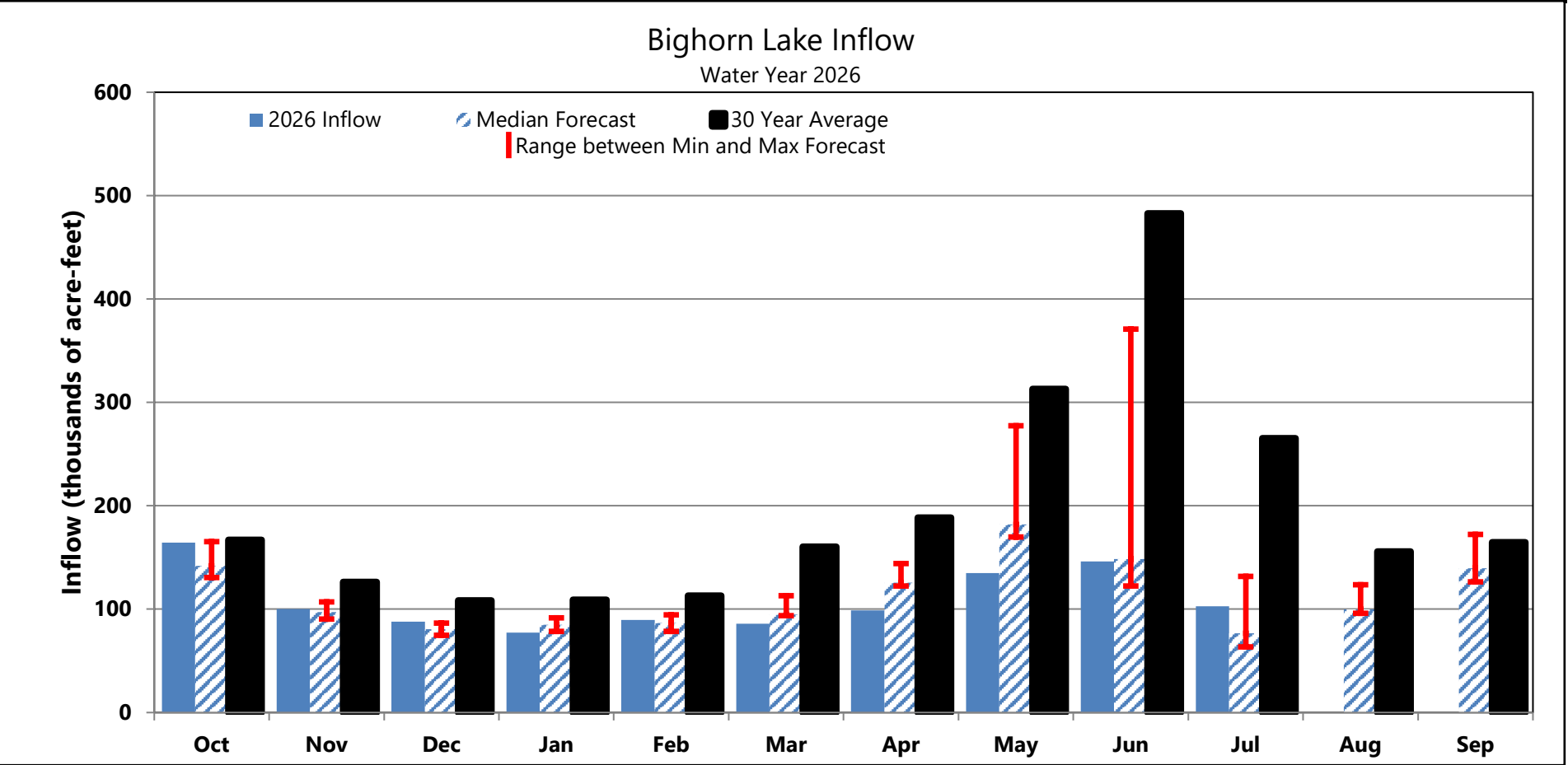
Valid: August 2026
Issued: July 31, 2026



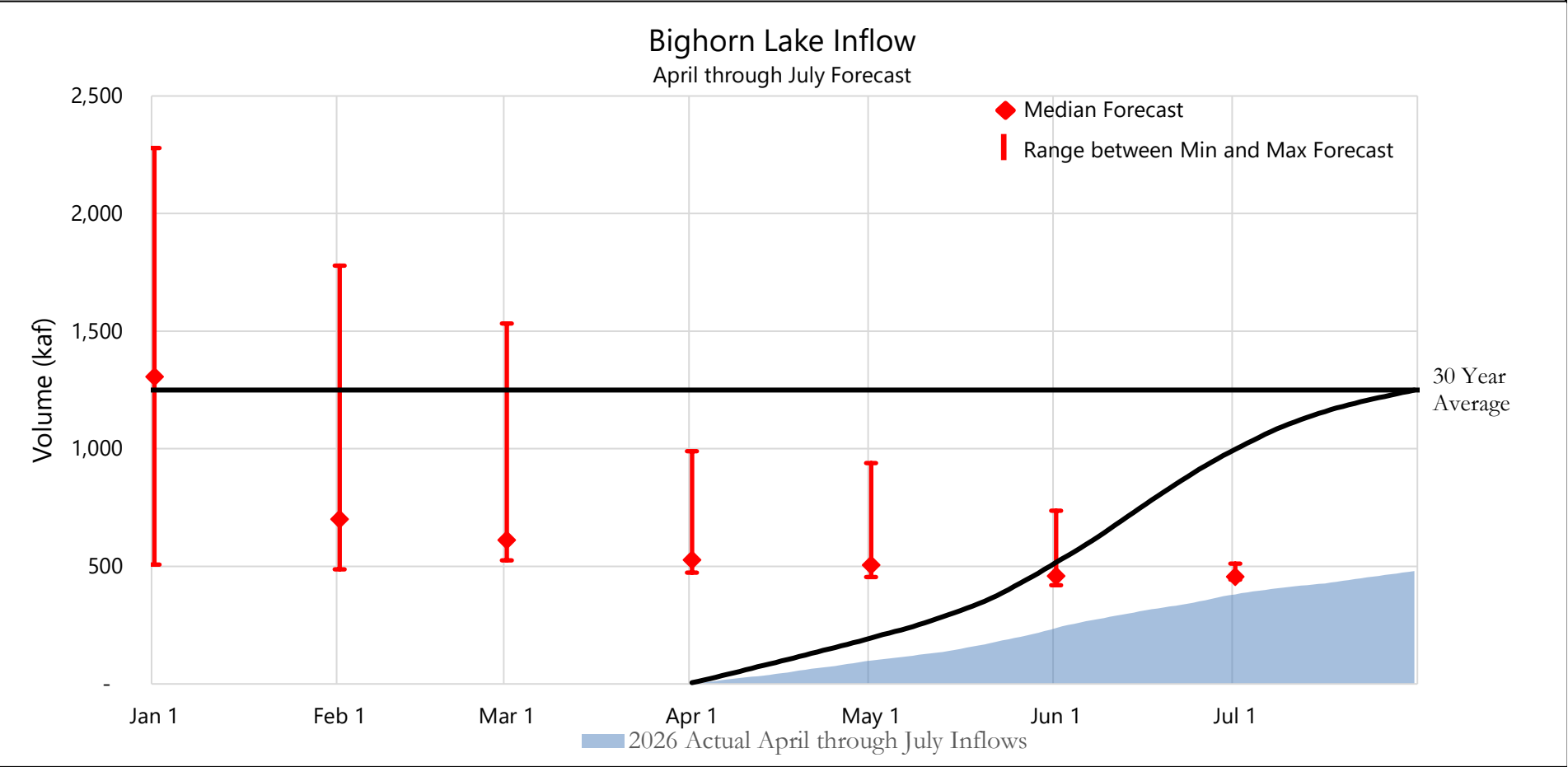
FORECAST SUMMARY

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 July inflows were between the median and maximum inflow forecast.

July Forecast Review				
	Median Forecast (kaf)	Actual (kaf)	Difference (kaf)	Actual (% of Avg)
July Inflow	76.6	102.8	26.2	39



April through July Inflow Forecast Review					
April through July Inflow	483 kaf	30 Year Average	1,250 kaf	Percent of Average	39

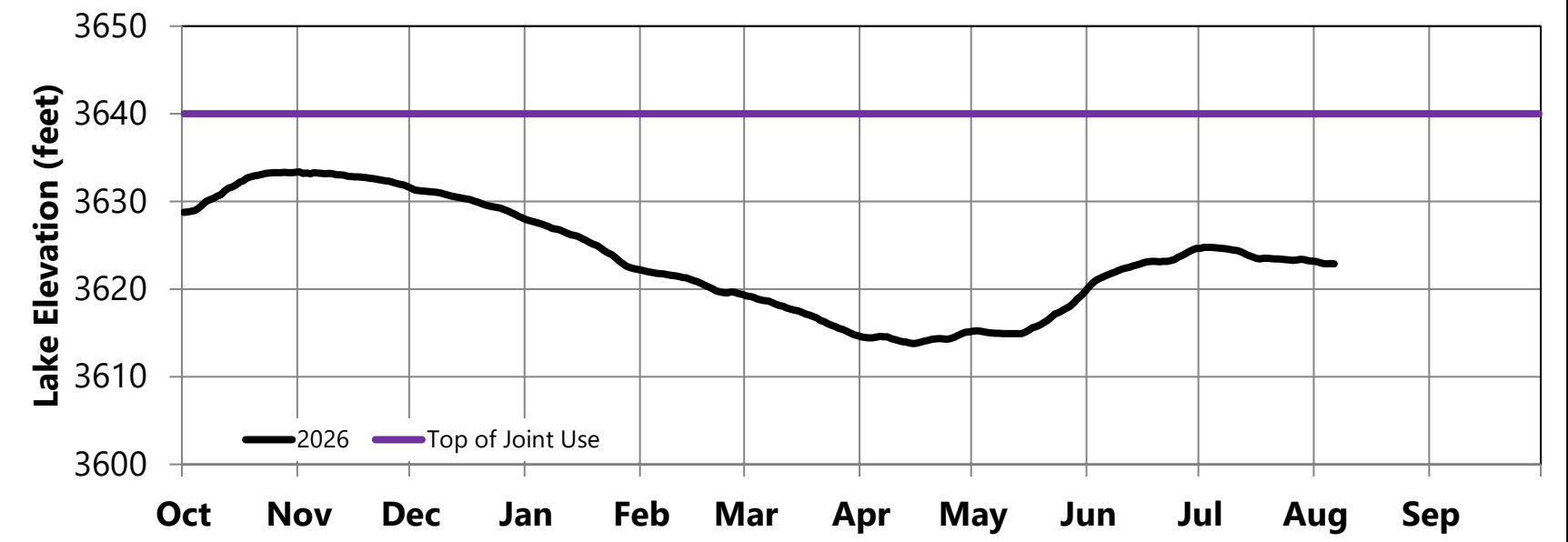


OPERATIONS REVIEW (October 1, 2025 through July 31, 2026)

Releases to the Bighorn River were maintained at 1,500 cfs during July based on forecasted inflows and the operating criteria. The elevation of Bighorn Lake decreased by 1.4 feet during July.

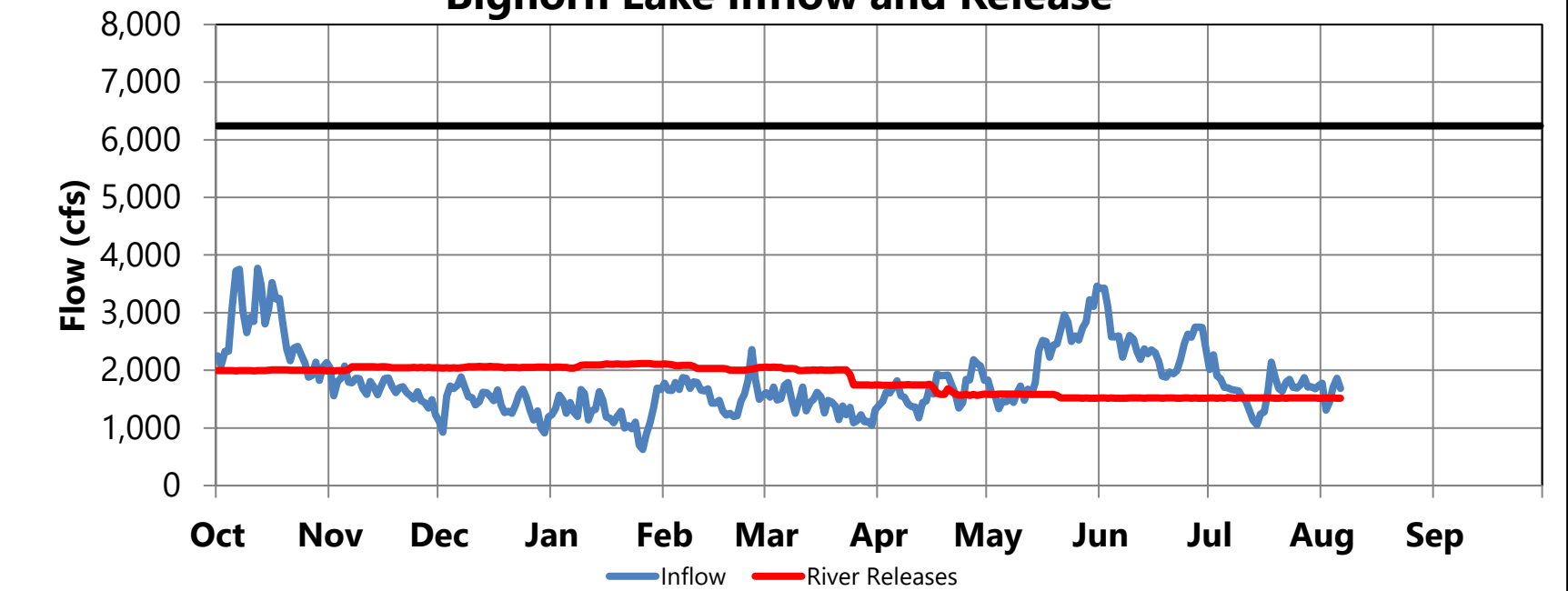
August 1 Storage Conditions				
	Elevation feet	Storage acre-feet	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Bighorn Lake	3623.2	839,475	92	83
Buffalo Bill	5386.1	588,006	101	91
Boysen	4712.8	532,609	87	72

Bighorn Lake Operations Water Year 2026



Average July Inflow			Average July Release		
	Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average		Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average
Bighorn Lake	1,675	39	Bighorn River	1,520	35
Buffalo Bill	1,965	71	Buffalo Bill Total Release	1,975	68
Boysen	755	37	Boysen Release	1,135	47

Bighorn Lake Inflow and Release



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

During August, releases to the Bighorn River are projected to remain at 1,500 cfs, increases may be made depending on actual inflow and changing hydrologic conditions in the basin. The next Bighorn Lake storage targets used for setting releases from Yellowtail Dam are an end of October storage target of 3635 to 3640 feet and end of March 2027 storage target of 3617 feet. The end of October target is only achieved with a minimum release of 2,500 cfs. If the end of October target cannot be achieved, the end of March target is used to set releases based on forecasted inflows.

Median Inflow Conditions (August Inflow: 100 kaf)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,090	1,020	800	301	312	299	301	428
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	1,886	1,551	644	203	203	203	203	203
Tributary Gain (cfs)	-1,352	-224	726	763	459	520	659	901
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	1,624	2,347	2,170	1,267	974	1,023	1,163	1,532
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	99.9	139.6	133.4	75.4	59.9	62.9	64.6	94.2
Monthly Release (kaf)	118.7	107.1	92.2	89.3	92.2	92.2	83.3	136.3
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,931	1,800	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,216
River Release (cfs)	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,216
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	824.9	861.6	907.1	897.4	869.4	844.3	829.5	791.7
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3621.2	3626.0	3631.1	3630.1	3627.0	3623.8	3621.8	3616.2
Minimum Inflow Conditions (August Inflow: 96 kaf)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,090	860	600	301	299	299	301	299
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	1,886	1,551	642	203	203	203	203	203
Tributary Gain (cfs)	-1,415	-287	678	758	455	517	654	896
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	1,562	2,124	1,921	1,262	958	1,019	1,158	1,398
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	96.0	126.4	118.1	75.1	58.9	62.7	64.3	86.0
Monthly Release (kaf)	118.6	107.1	94.7	89.3	92.2	92.2	83.3	92.2
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,929	1,800	1,540	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
River Release (cfs)	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	821.2	844.6	872.3	862.3	833.3	808.0	792.9	790.9
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3620.7	3623.9	3627.3	3626.1	3622.4	3618.7	3616.4	3616.1
Maximum Inflow Conditions (August Inflow: 124 kaf)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Boysen Release (cfs)	1,090	1,020	899	600	600	600	600	1,000
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	1,892	1,725	875	203	203	203	203	797
Tributary Gain (cfs)	-973	150	1,018	790	481	546	693	930
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	2,010	2,895	2,793	1,593	1,285	1,350	1,496	2,727
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	123.6	172.3	171.7	94.8	79.0	83.0	83.1	167.7
Monthly Release (kaf)	116.8	126.2	137.7	133.3	137.7	137.7	124.4	182.9
Afterbay Release (cfs)	1,900	2,120	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,975
River Release (cfs)	1,500	1,870	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,240	2,975
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	850.5	900.8	939.1	904.7	850.3	799.8	762.4	751.5
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3624.6	3630.5	3634.2	3630.9	3624.6	3617.5	3611.3	3609.3

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

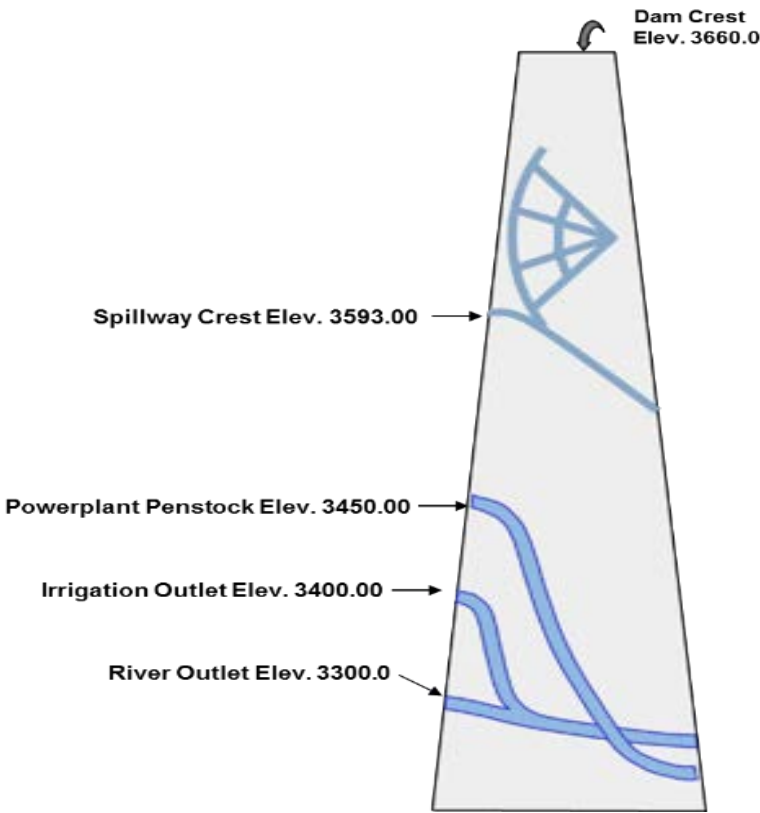
There is approximately 70 cfs of gain between Yellowtail Dam and Yellowtail Afterbay Dam from springs flowing into Yellowtail Afterbay. Total release from Yellowtail Dam is 70 cfs less than total release from Yellowtail Afterbay Dam. Unit 2 will be out of service for schduled maintenance through November 9.

Irrigation Demands Outlook								
Bighorn Canal (cfs)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	431	300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum Forecast	429	300	40	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Forecast	400	250	0	0	0	0	0	0

Power Generation Outlook								
Current Number of Units Available: 2 of 4								
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Turbine Capacity: 6,150 cfs								
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Scheduled Generation Limit: 4,100 cfs								
Yellowtail Powerplant Release (cfs)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	1,861	1,730	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	2,146
Minimum Forecast	1,859	1,730	1,470	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430
Maximum Forecast	1,830	2,050	2,170	2,170	2,170	2,170	2,170	2,905

Yellowtail Powerplant Generation (gwh)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	42	38	32	31	32	32	29	48
Minimum Forecast	42	38	33	31	32	32	29	32
Maximum Forecast	41	45	49	47	49	49	44	65

Yellowtail Spill (cfs)								
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Release Outlook by Outlet

Yellowtail Powerplant bypass releases are not expected through the end of March 2027.

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (August 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.

