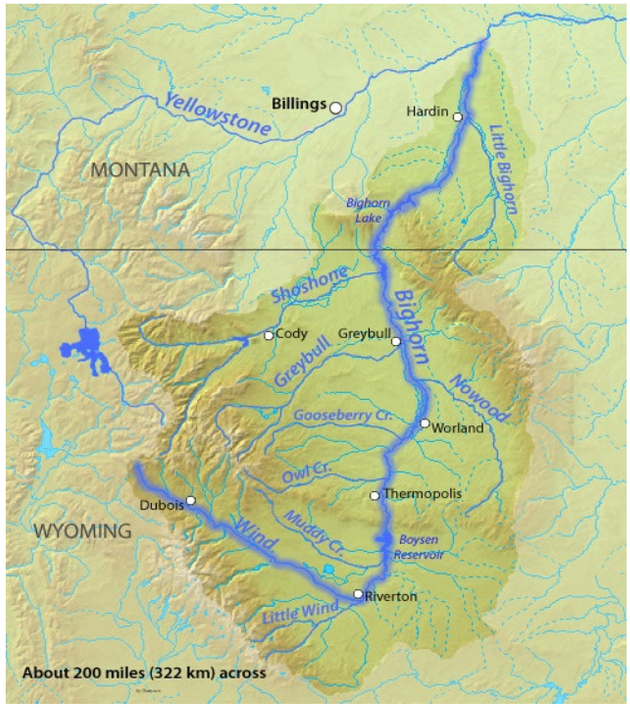
Yellowtail Dam Water Supply and Projected Operations

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

January 2026



Bighorn River Basin Map Source: DEMIS Mapserver

January Operating Range			
Forecast	**Minimum**	**Median**	**Maximum**
Monthly Average Inflow (cfs)	1,275	1,380	1,490
Monthly Average River Release (cfs)	2,100	2,100	2,100
End of January Elevation (feet)	3622.3	3623.2	3624.1

April - July 2026 Inflow Forecast (kaf)	
April - July Volume	1,307
Percent of Average	105

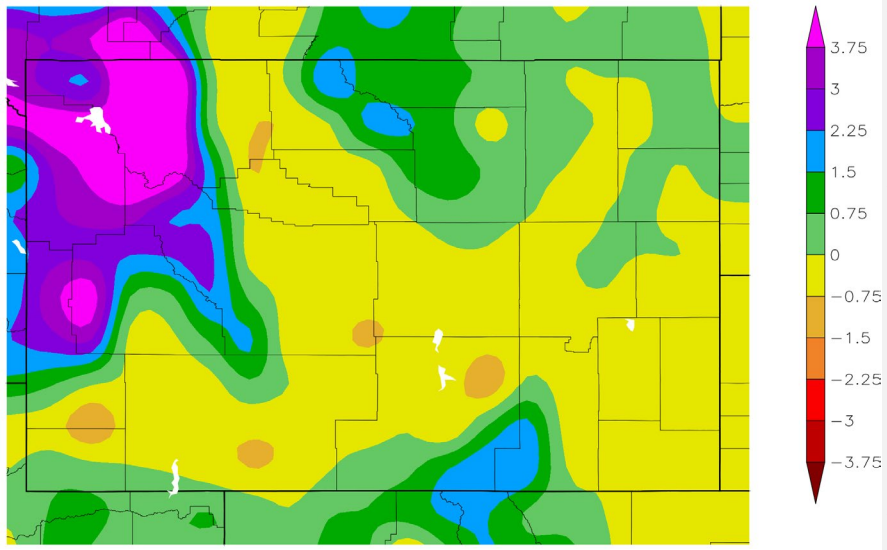
Water Year	Historical Inflow	Rank
2025	715	20
2024	1,135	15
2023	2,000	4
2022	990	19
30 Year Average	1,250	

Climate Departure from Normal

December 1 through December 31, 2025

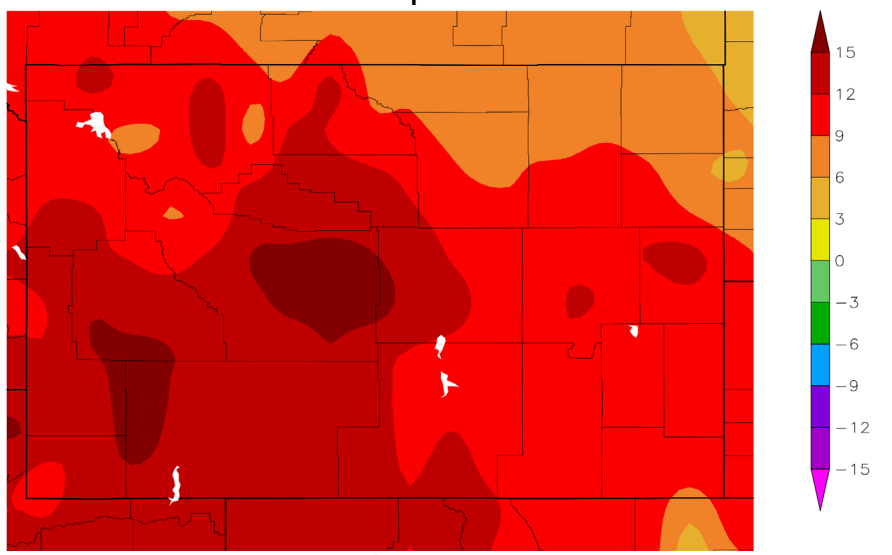
Precipitation

Departure from Normal (inches)



Departure from Normal (°F)

Temperature



HPRCC using provisional data from NOAA Regional Climate Centers

CLIMATE SUMMARY

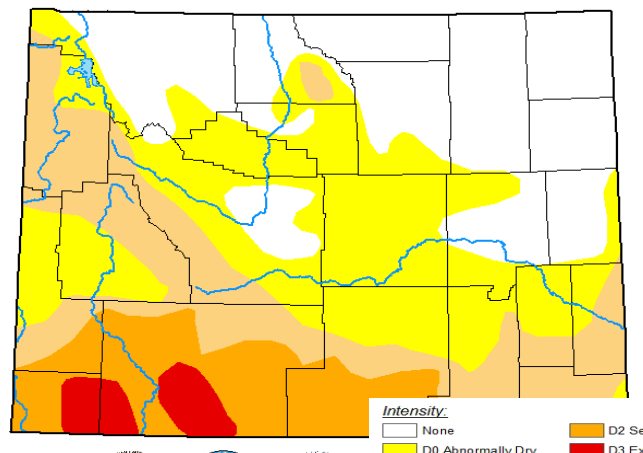
Precipitation in the Bighorn River basin above Yellowtail Dam was below average during December in the valleys and above average in the higher elevations and the upper portion of the basin. The average temperature for December was above average for the basin.

Based on the climate outlook for January, there is a 40-60% chance that precipitation will be above average for the basin. There is a 33 to 40 percent chance the temperature will be above average in the upper Bighorn River basin. There is an equal chance that temperature will be above, below, or near average in the lower portion of the basin.

Drought conditions in the Bighorn River basin range from none to moderate.

Wyoming Drought Monitor Map

November 25, 2025



USDA NDMC

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

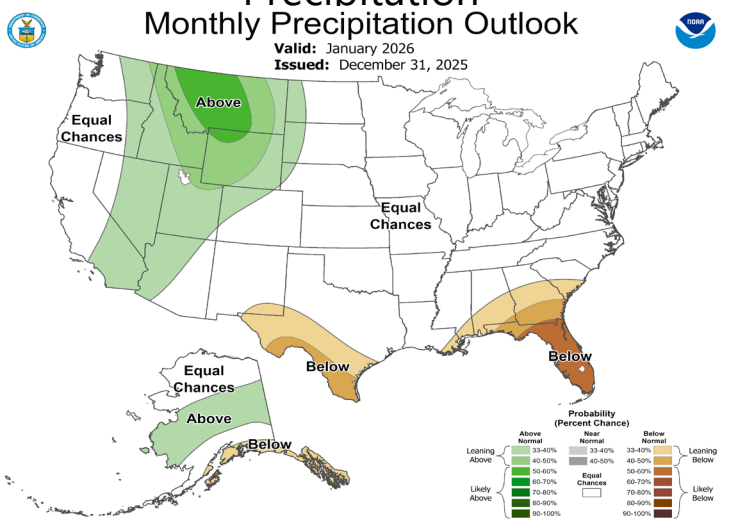
Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

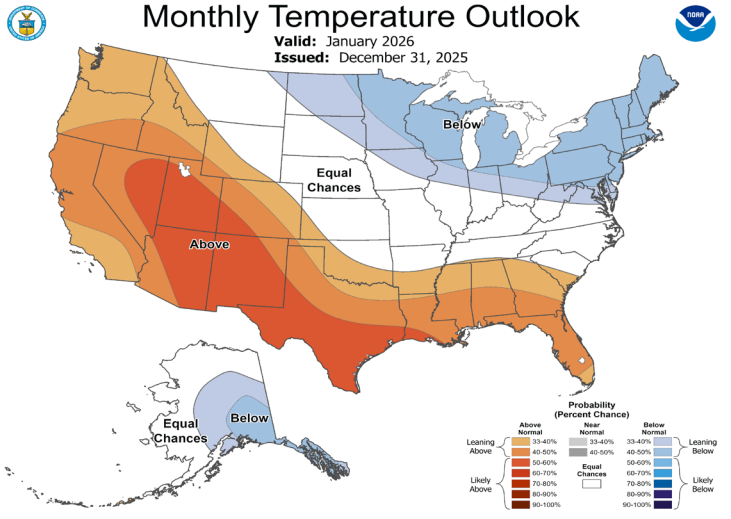
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx

January Climate Outlook

Precipitation



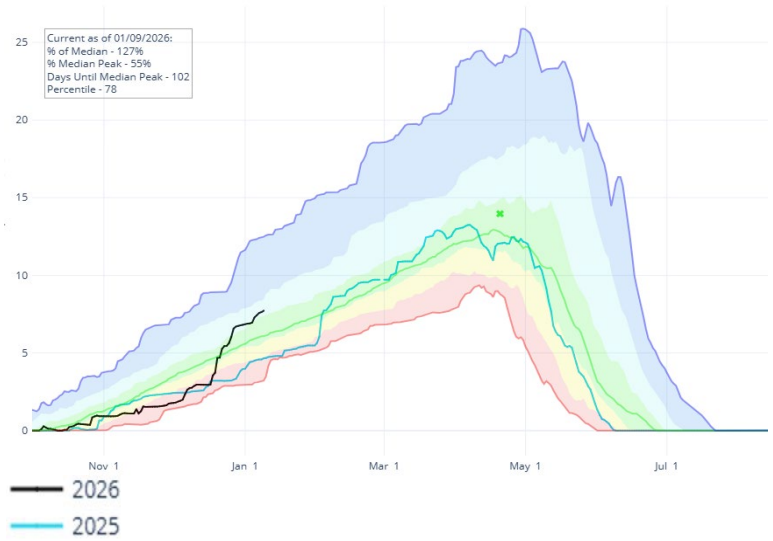
Temperature



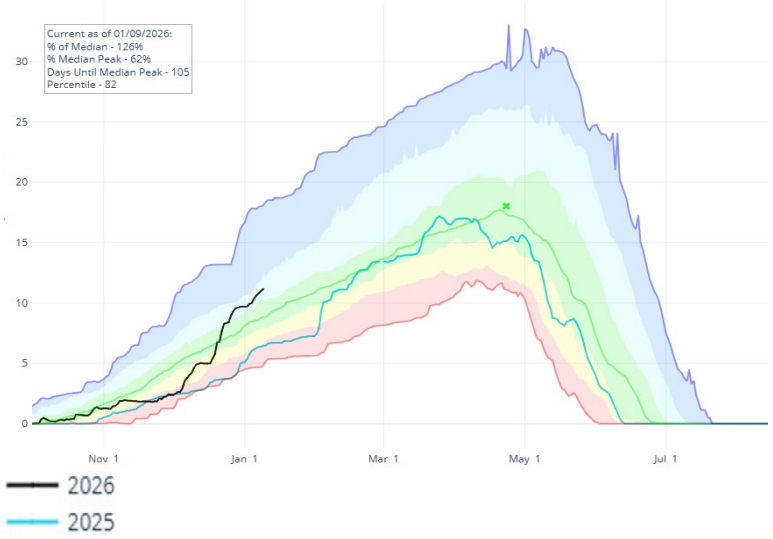
SNOWPACK SUMMARY

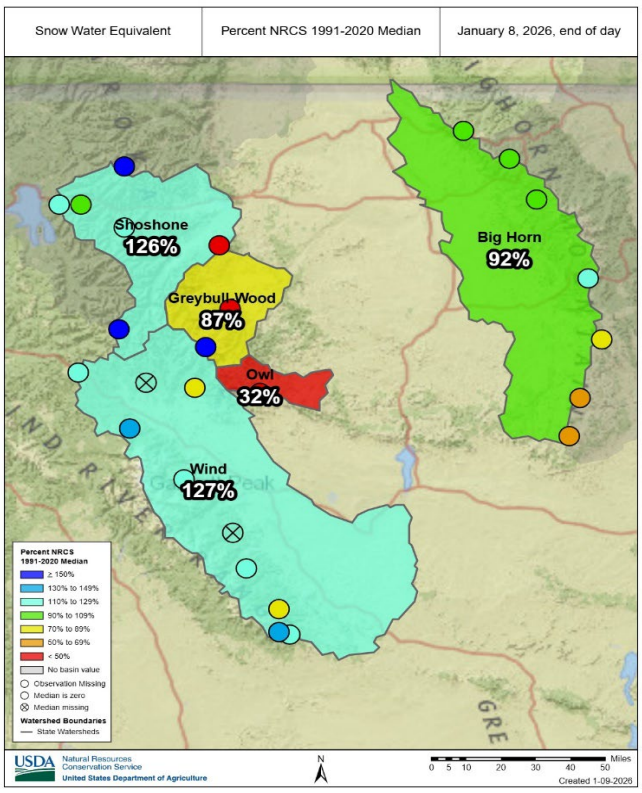
The snow water equivalent (SWE) graphs are a composite of SNOTEL sites within the Bighorn River Basin managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Wind River

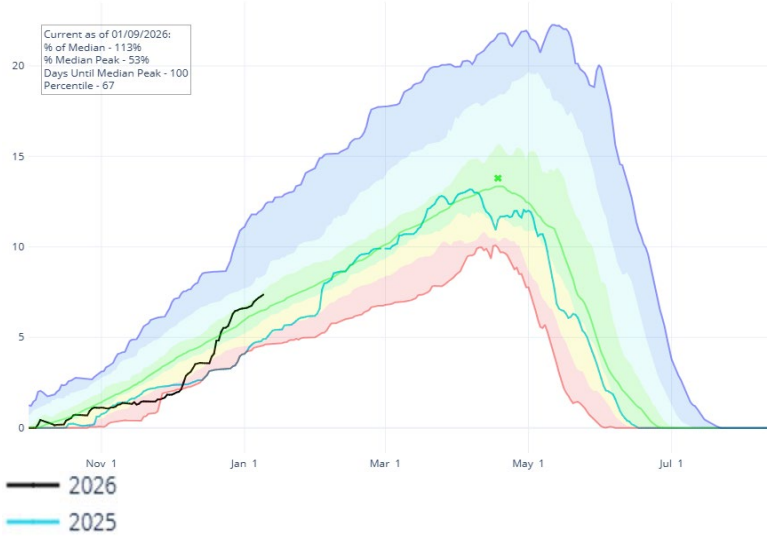


Shoshone River



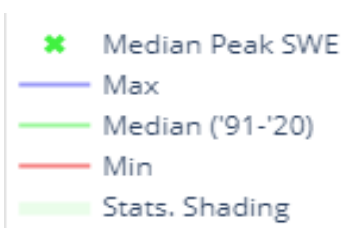


Bighorn River



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

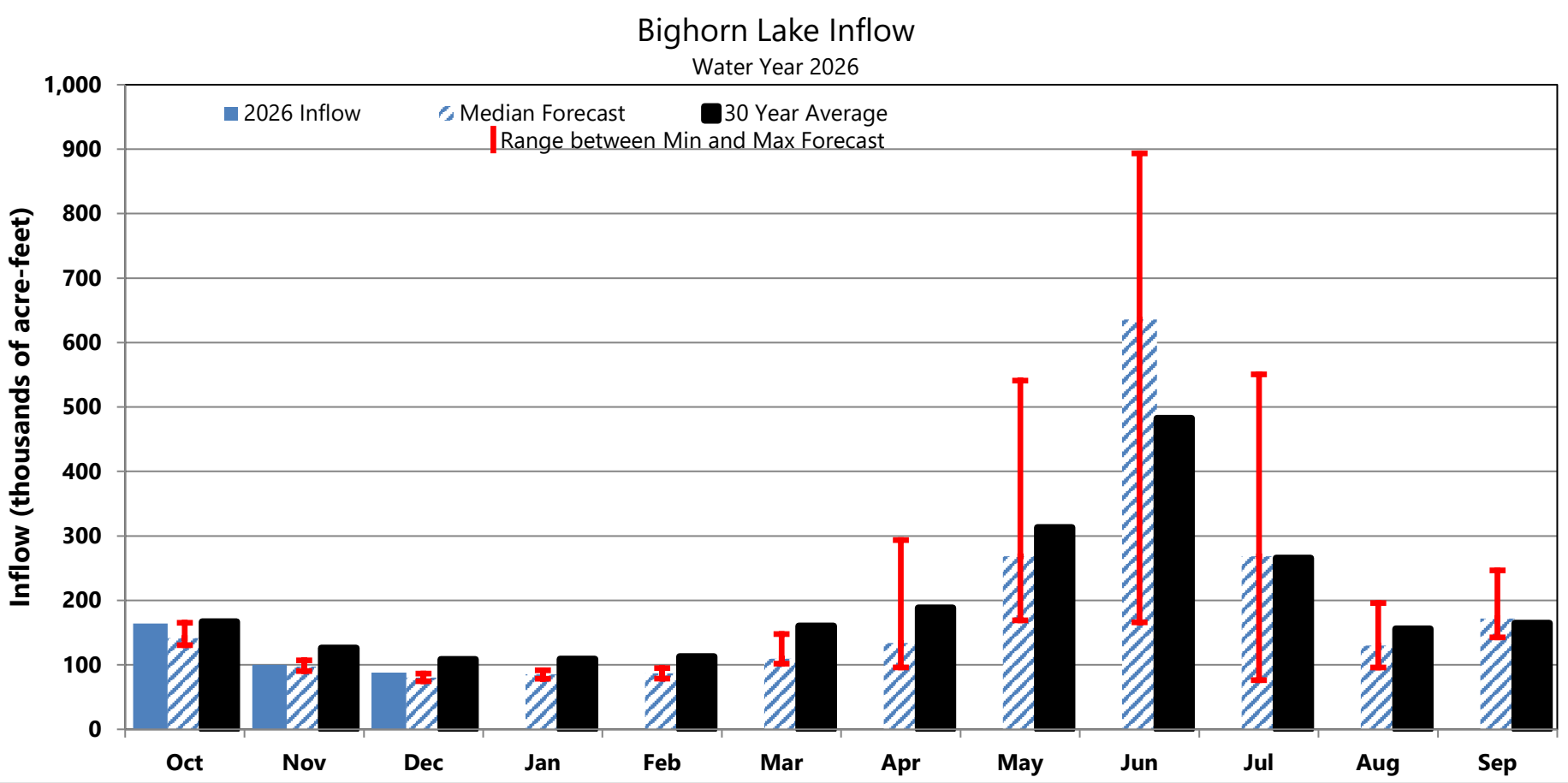


FORECAST SUMMARY

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 December inflows were greater than the maximum inflow forecast.

December Forecast Review

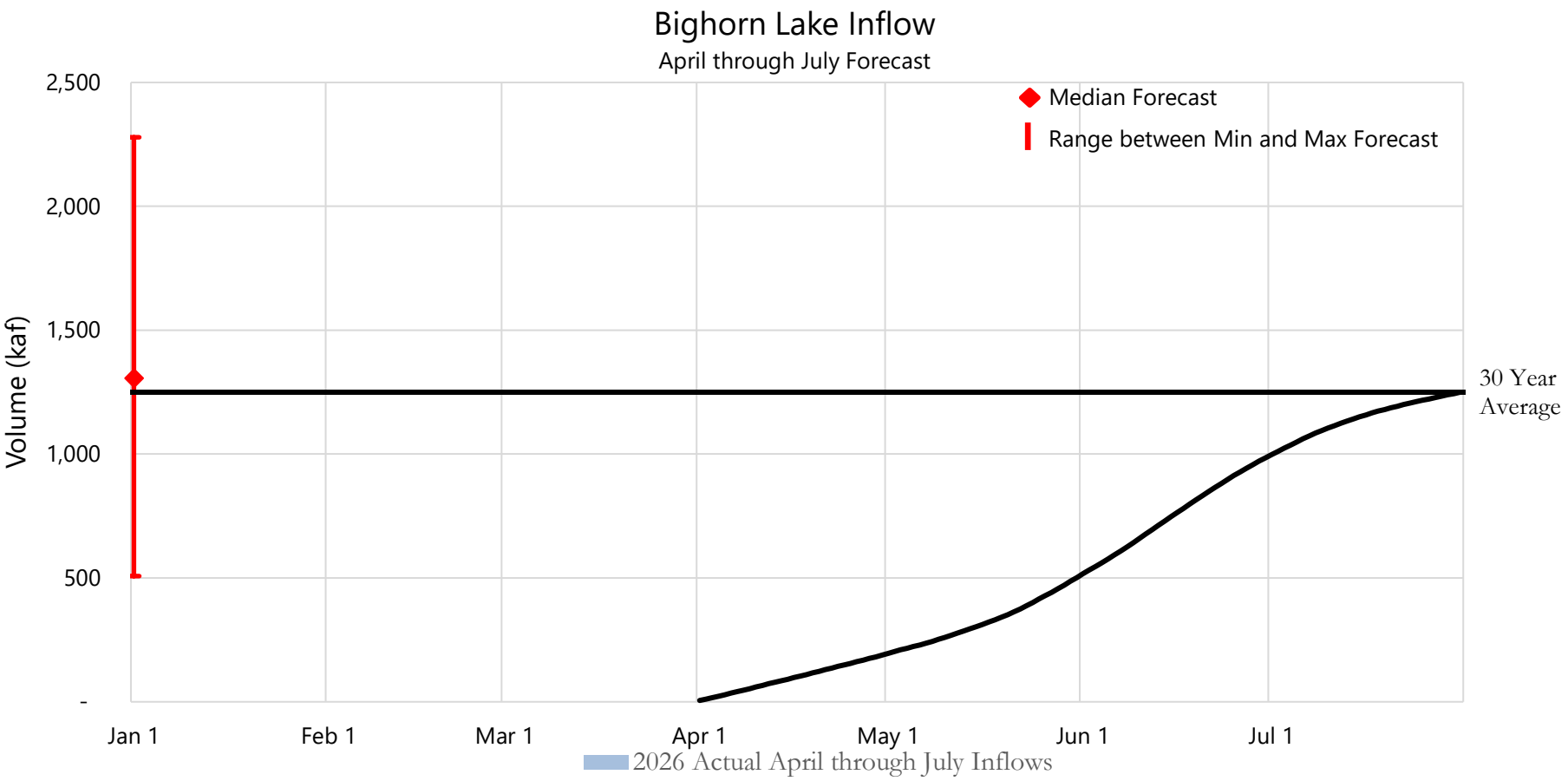
	Median Forecast (kaf)	Actual (kaf)	Difference (kaf)	Actual (% of Avg)
December Inflow	80.5	88.1	7.6	81



April through July Inflow Forecast for January 1

	Median Forecast (kaf)	% of Average	Minimum Forecast (kaf)	Maximum Forecast (kaf)
April through July Inflow	1,307	105	508	2,279

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

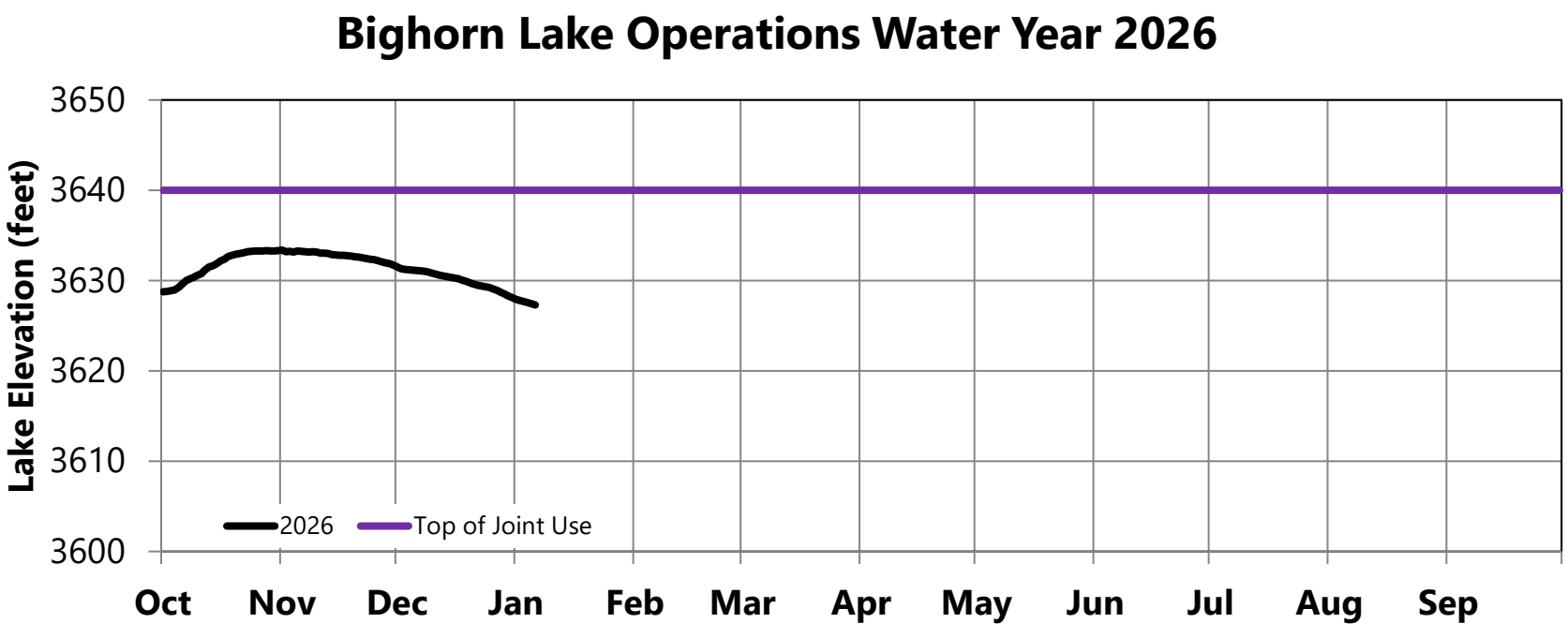


OPERATIONS REVIEW (October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025)

Releases to the Bighorn River were increased to 2,060 cfs during December based on winter release criteria. The elevation of Bighorn Lake decreased by 3.6 feet during December.

January 1 Storage Conditions

	Elevation feet	Storage acre-feet	Percent of Average	Percent Full
Bighorn Lake	3628.1	879,393	104	87
Buffalo Bill	5357.4	383,414	87	59
Boysen	4712.0	521,099	93	70

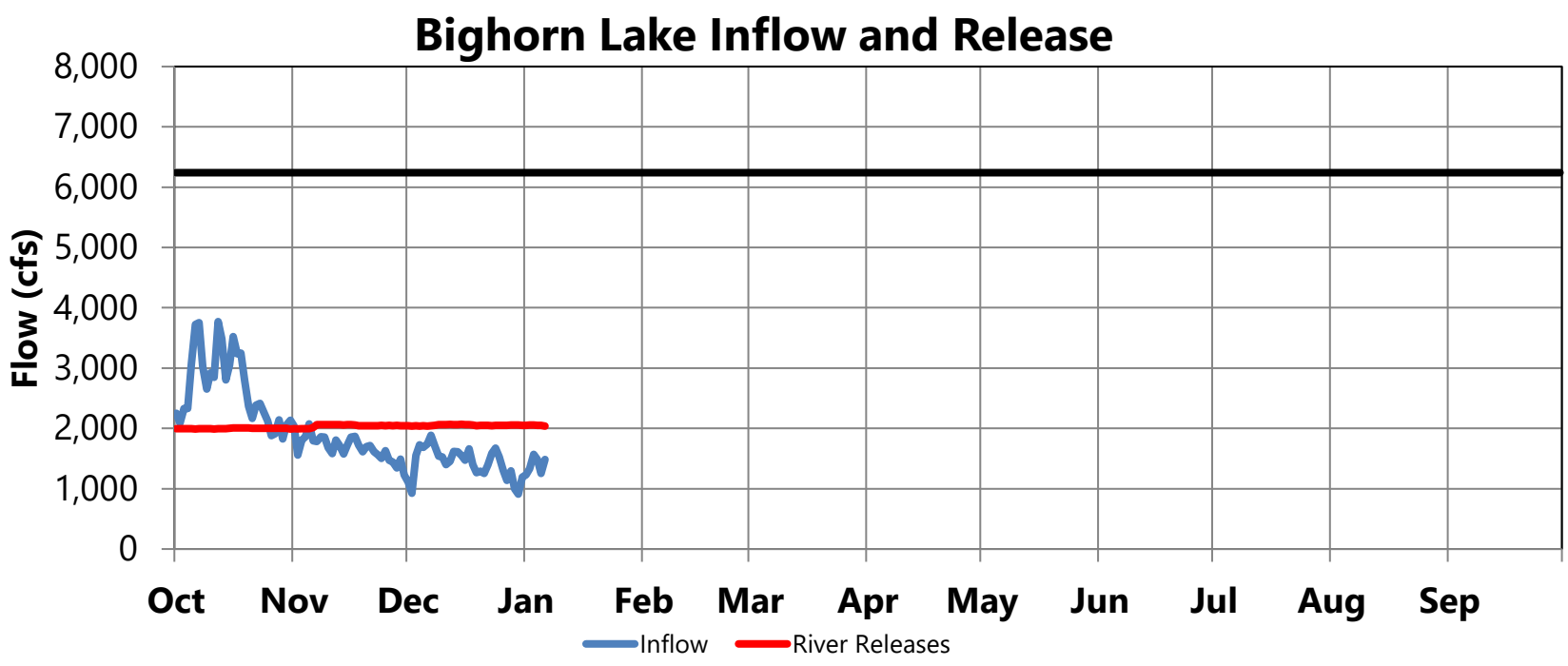


Average December Inflow

	Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average
Bighorn Lake	1,430	81
Buffalo Bill	400	142
Boysen	640	99

Average December Release

	Monthly Avg cfs	Percent of Average
Bighorn River	2,055	85
Buffalo Bill Total Release	155	52
Boysen Release	605	77



OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026)

Winter releases to the Bighorn River were set in early November at 2,050 cfs. The winter release is based on storage in Bighorn Lake, end of March 2026 storage target of 3617 feet, planned releases from Boysen and Buffalo Bill, and forecasted gains. Releases to the Bighorn River will be adjusted up and down through the winter based on actual inflows into Bighorn Lake. Releases will be increased to 2,110 cfs during January based on December inflows being greater than forecasted.

Median Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 1,307 kaf)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Boysen Release (cfs)	600	600	600	1,000	1,499	3,533	2,305
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	153	155	153	682	2,048	5,235	3,243
Tributary Gain (cfs)	629	808	1,028	566	815	1,923	-1,179
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	1,382	1,563	1,781	2,248	4,362	10,691	4,369
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	85.0	86.8	109.5	133.8	268.2	636.1	268.6
Monthly Release (kaf)	129.1	117.2	146.3	147.6	255.1	417.8	272.6
Afterbay Release (cfs)	2,100	2,110	2,380	2,480	4,149	7,022	4,434
River Release (cfs)	2,100	2,110	2,379	2,380	3,799	6,622	3,984
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	839.6	813.1	780.6	770.9	788.3	1,010.8	1,011.1
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3623.2	3619.5	3614.4	3612.8	3615.6	3640.0	3640.0

Minimum Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 508 kaf)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Boysen Release (cfs)	600	600	600	701	1,025	1,200	1,150
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	155	157	155	684	1,730	2,047	1,996
Tributary Gain (cfs)	522	661	903	230	-5	-457	-1,904
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	1,277	1,418	1,658	1,615	2,750	2,790	1,242
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	78.5	78.7	101.9	96.1	169.1	166.0	76.3
Monthly Release (kaf)	129.1	113.9	111.3	109.5	128.5	127.3	131.6
Afterbay Release (cfs)	2,100	2,050	1,810	1,840	2,090	2,140	2,140
River Release (cfs)	2,100	2,050	1,810	1,690	1,690	1,690	1,690
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	833.1	801.9	796.8	787.6	832.4	875.3	824.3
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3622.3	3617.8	3617.0	3615.5	3622.2	3627.7	3621.1

Maximum Inflow Conditions (April through July Inflow: 2,279 kaf)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Boysen Release (cfs)	600	600	1,099	2,000	3,300	5,324	3,934
Buffalo Bill Release (cfs)	155	157	155	1,862	3,380	6,210	5,030
Tributary Gain (cfs)	735	954	1,150	1,072	2,119	3,482	-8
Monthly Inflow (cfs)	1,490	1,711	2,404	4,934	8,799	15,016	8,956
Monthly Inflow (kaf)	91.6	95.0	147.8	293.6	541.0	893.5	550.7
Monthly Release (kaf)	129.1	120.5	219.7	343.6	554.1	664.5	480.3
Afterbay Release (cfs)	2,100	2,170	3,573	5,775	9,012	11,167	7,811
River Release (cfs)	2,100	2,170	3,573	5,775	8,812	10,867	7,361
End-of-Month Content (kaf)	846.2	824.6	757.0	711.1	702.4	935.6	1,010.3
End-of-Month Elevation (feet)	3624.1	3621.1	3610.3	3601.6	3599.9	3633.9	3639.9

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026)

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)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Median Forecast	0	0	0	100	350	400	450
Minimum Forecast	0	0	0	150	400	450	450
Maximum Forecast	0	0	0	0	200	300	450

Power Generation Outlook

Current Number of Units Available: 3 of 4
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Turbine Capacity: 8,200 cfs
Approximate Yellowtail Powerplant Scheduled Generation Limit: 4,160 cfs

Yellowtail Powerplant Release (cfs)

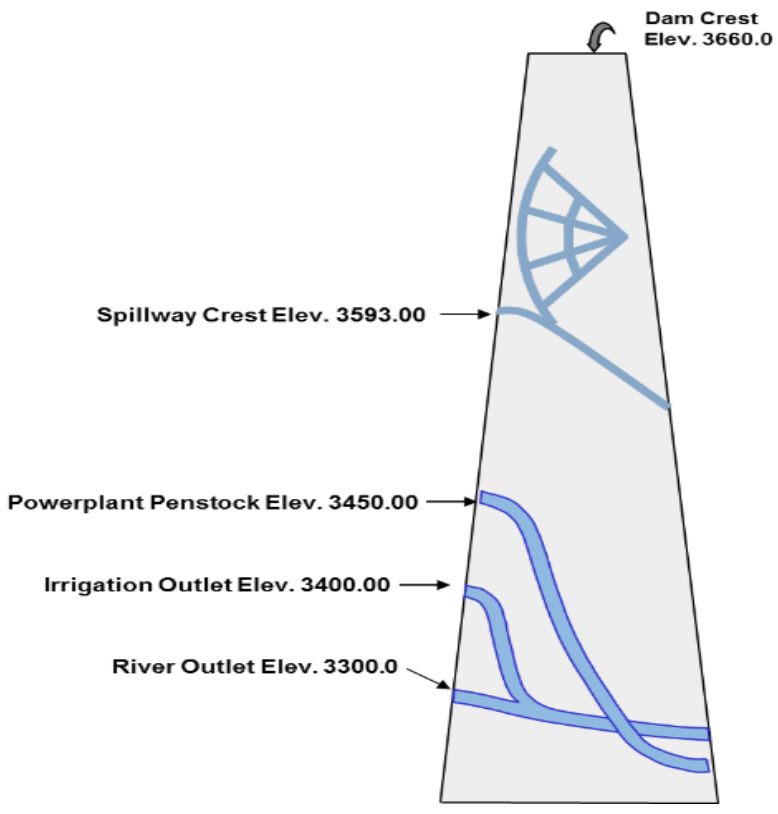
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Median Forecast	2,030	2,040	2,310	2,410	4,079	6,068	4,348
Minimum Forecast	2,030	1,980	1,740	1,770	2,020	2,070	2,070
Maximum Forecast	2,030	2,100	3,503	5,705	6,240	6,240	5,837

Yellowtail Powerplant Generation (gwh)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Median Forecast	46	42	52	53	92	132	98
Minimum Forecast	46	40	39	39	46	45	47
Maximum Forecast	46	43	79	124	141	136	132

Yellowtail Spill (cfs)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Median Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	884	16
Minimum Forecast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Forecast	0	0	0	0	2,702	4,857	1,904

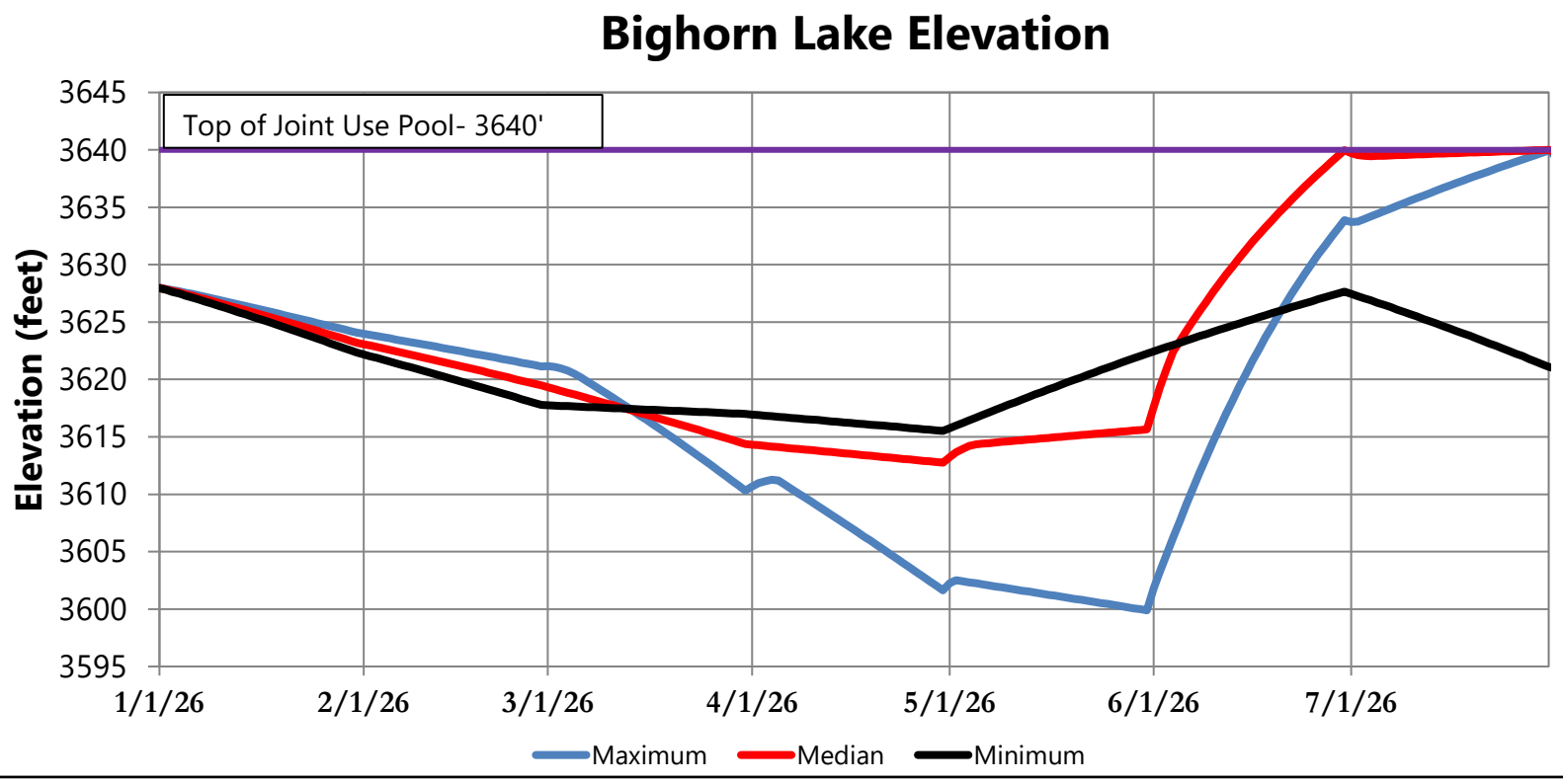


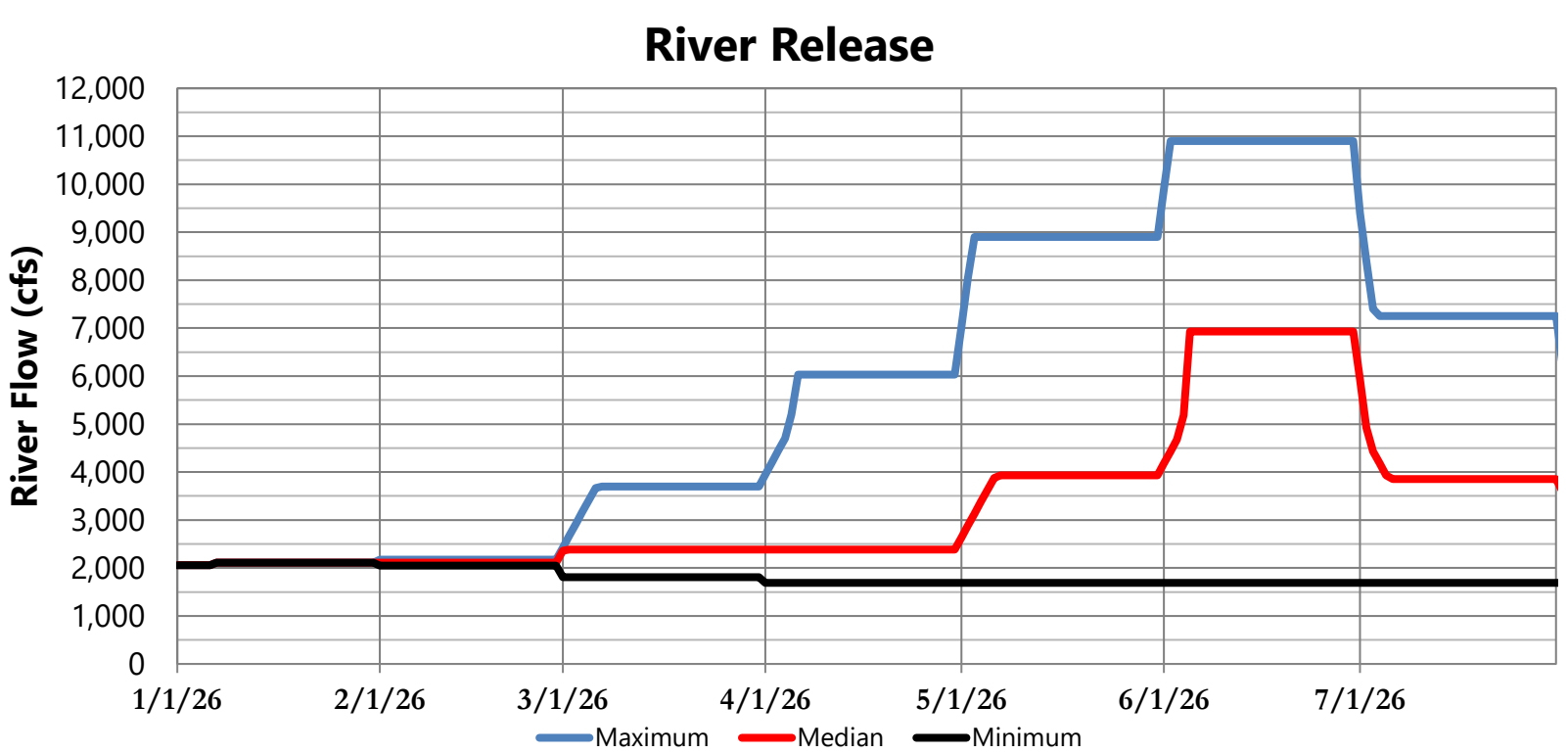
Release Outlook by Outlet

Yellowtail Powerplant bypass releases are expected in June and July under median inflow conditions and May through July under maximum inflow conditions.

OPERATIONS OUTLOOK (January 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026)

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