

ALBENI FALLS DAM AND LAKE PEND OREILLE

May 7 2026

Spring Operations

Col. Kathryn P. Sanborn
Seattle District Commander

Rachel Dibble, SES
Bonneville Power Administration

David Varner
Upper Columbia Senior Water Manager

Joel Atwood
National Weather Service

The views, opinions and findings contained in this report are those of the authors(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.





U.S. ARMY

PUBLIC MEETING GROUND RULES



2

START: 5:00 p.m.

- **Sign in rosters** on table (at entrance). Make sure you sign in before leaving today's meeting.
- **Silence Devices:** Turn off or silence cell phones and other devices to prevent disruptions.
- **Panel Presentation:** Panelists will cover topics in their presentations without interruptions.

Q&A:

- **Moderator will be holding the microphone.**
- **Be brief and concise:** State your question first, then provide one or two sentences for context, if necessary.
- **No shouting, aggressive behavior or debating:** This is a session for questions and learning, not a platform for arguments or confrontations.
- **One question per person:** Allow panelists and others a chance to speak before asking follow-up questions.
- **Stay focused on the topic:** Only ask questions relevant to the specific subject of the panel.
- **Respectful conduct:** Refrain from side conversations, booing, or interrupting the panelists or other audience members.

• **CLOSING COMMENTS:** 6:45 p.m.

• **END:** 6:55 p.m.



U.S. ARMY

TOPICS

- Albeni Falls Dam Basic Facts
- Spillway Gate Defects and Concerns
- Weather Outlook
- Overview of Upcoming Spring/Summer Operations
- Spillway Gate Repair/Replacement Status
- Natural Resource Management Update
- How To Stay Informed



3





U.S. ARMY

LAKE PEND OREILLE 2026 EXPECTED OPERATIONS



4

Upstream

- Current lake level (5/7/26): 2055.6'
- Expect to be at 2056.0' over this weekend.
- Goal for intermediate 2060.0-foot level by end of May.
- Goal for summer pool 2062.0 feet by June 19.
- Operate to our normal one-half foot summer range (2062.0-2062.5 feet)
- Subject to change, depending on weather conditions affecting runoff quantity and intensity.

Downstream

- Will most likely look like normal operations.

ALBENI FALLS DAM



Hydropower



Navigation



Flood Control



Environmental
Stewardship



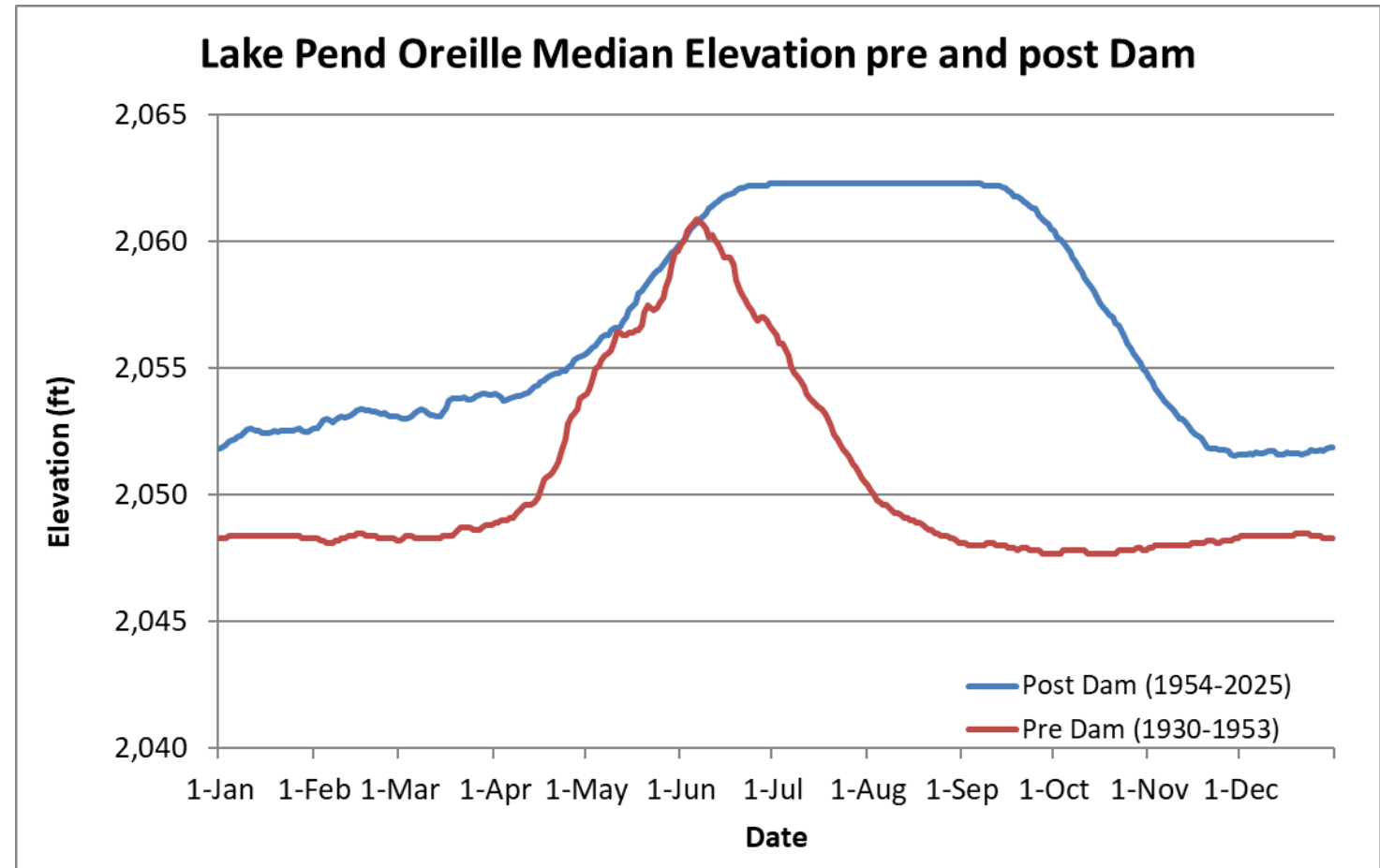
Recreation

Albion Falls Dam construction (1951-1955) was authorized by the
Flood Control Act of May 17, 1950

ALBENI FALLS DAM: BASIC FACTS



- Dam allows longer periods of full pool conditions compared to pre-dam.





U.S. ARMY

BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION



7

- Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is a Federal power-marketing agency as part of the Department of Energy.
- Has had a direct-funding agreement with USACE since 1992 for capital work and 1997 for routine work.
- USACE generates the hydroelectricity; BPA markets it and funds portions of the operating costs.
- That cost share agreement at Albeni Falls Dam is 97.5%; the remaining 2.5% is appropriated by Congress. Cost share includes flood risk management, hydropower, fish and wildlife conservation and navigation.



U.S. ARMY

ALBENI FALLS DAM: BASIC FACTS



8

Construction completed in 1955.

Consists of:

- **The Powerhouse** - passes water through three turbines to generate power and regulates lake level (fall drawdown and summer pool).
- **The Spillway** - passes water through 10 spillway gates to release water above powerhouse capacity (typically only used during spring runoff, not for fall drawdown).
- **Storage** - the lake is generally operated between 2051 feet and 2062.5 feet, unless there are flood conditions. This equals about 1.0 million-acre feet.



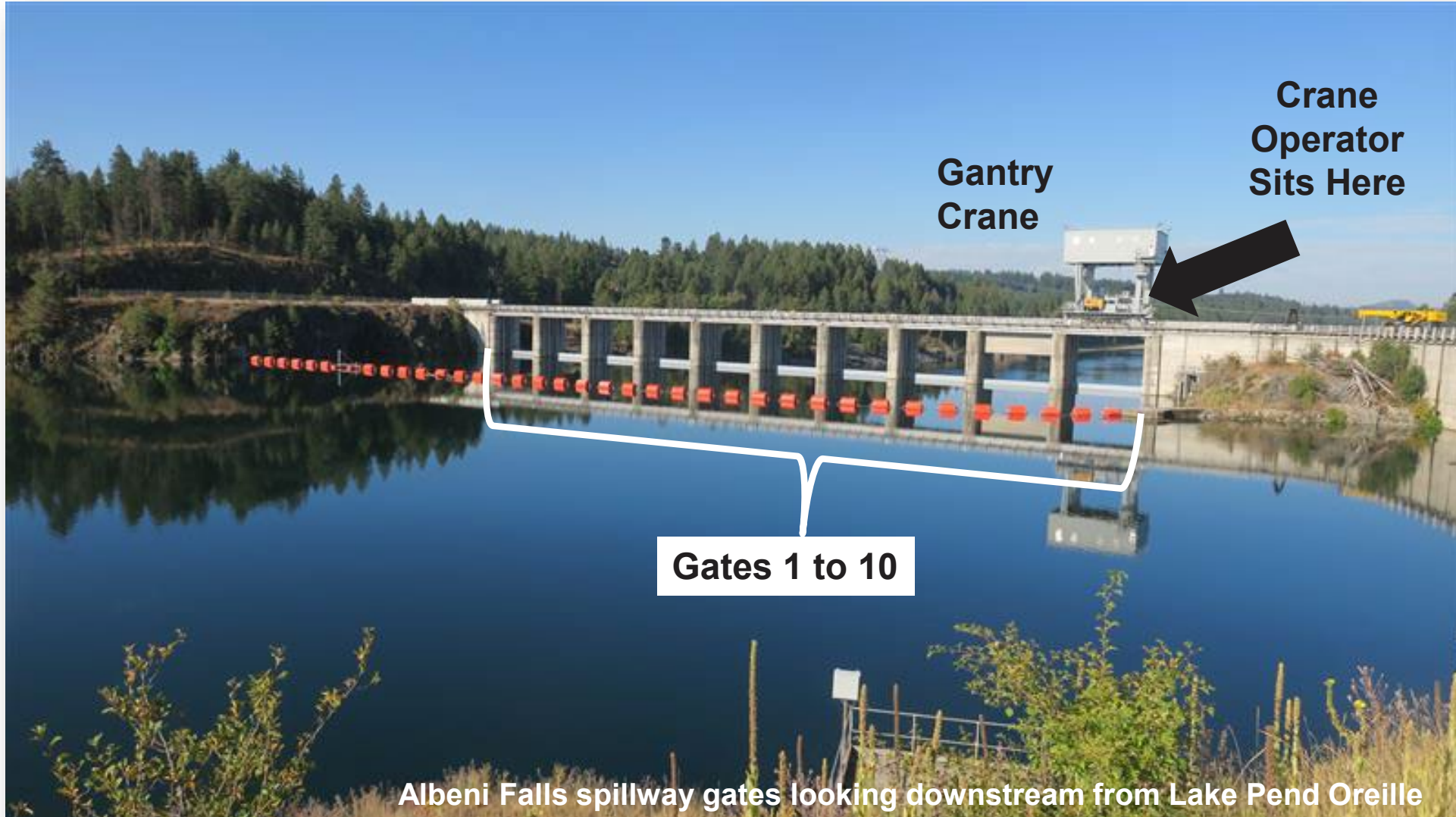


U.S. ARMY



9

ALBENI FALLS DAM SPILLWAY GATES: BASIC FACTS





U.S. ARMY



10

DISCOVERY OF SPILLWAY GATE DEFECTS

- USACE initiated physical work on a gate rehabilitation contract in June 2023.
- The rehabilitation contract's purpose was to repair cracked welds identified during routine maintenance inspections and to re-paint the gate.
- As part of this rehabilitation contract, Gate 3 was:
 - Removed and spare gate put in its place.
 - Transported to offsite fabrication shop.
 - Stripped of paint, and in-depth gate inspection completed.
- During gate rehabilitation, steel defects were discovered in April 2024.



SPILLWAY GATE DEFECT LOCATIONS

- Base metal defects (holes and cracks in the steel).
- Discovery led to concerns that, should a gate fail, it could drop or collapse.
- Gate failure could lead to crane operator injury, and/or crane and spillway gate damage and subsequent loss of controlling lake levels.





U.S. ARMY

SPILLWAY GATE OPERATIONS



12

- The fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) was completed on Gate 3 and the gate returned to service in summer 2025.
- Until each gate is replaced, the Army Corps must presume the other gates have these defects.
- It is essential we fulfill the project's authorized purposes while ensuring our personnel's safety and safe dam operations.
- Operating conservatively today reduces the risk of a catastrophic failure of any gate. **A gate failure** would impact the dam's ability to hold summer lake elevations and other seasonal pool elevations.

To minimize the risk of gate failure we are minimizing spill gate movements and only operating in fully open or fully closed positions. There is no flood risk to the public because of these defects.

REPLACEMENT PLAN



- Restricted operations remain in place until all gates are replaced.
- New gate design completed July 2025, two months ahead of schedule.
- USACE awarded a replacement contract for 11 new spillway gates in February 2026.
- First gate expected to arrive onsite in mid-2027, with subsequent gates arriving in 6-month intervals, as confirmed with the contractor.



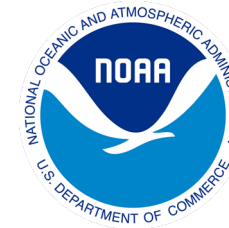
SEASONAL OUTLOOK FOR ALBENI FALLS AND PEND OREILLE RIVER

May 2026

Joel Atwood

joel.atwood@noaa.gov

Senior Service Hydrologist

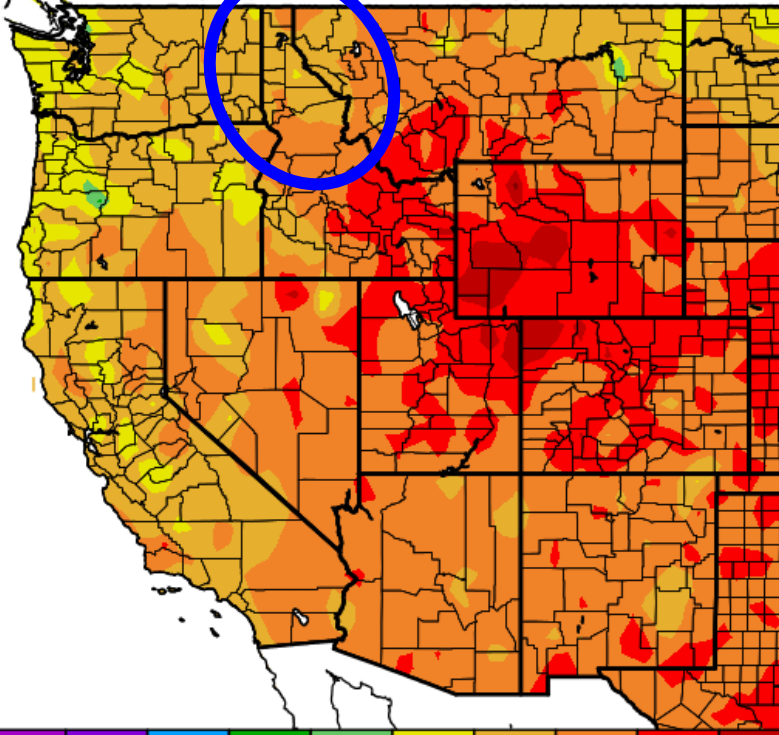


U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service
Spokane, WA

TEMPERATURE TRENDS - WINTER VS 90 DAYS

Water Year
Oct 1 - Present

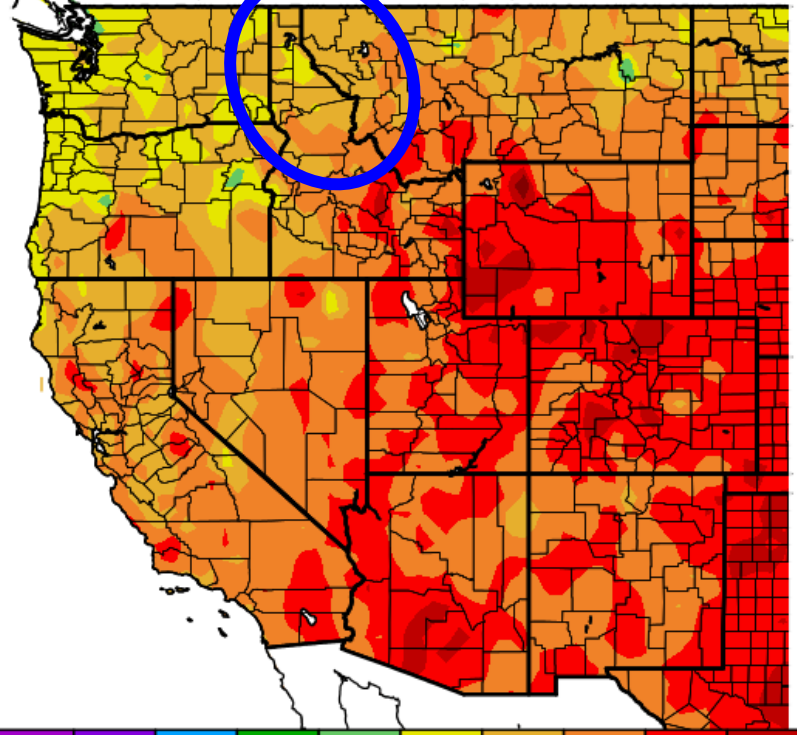
Ave. Temperature dep from Ave (deg F)
10/1/2025 - 5/3/2026



Generated 5/ 4/2026 at WRCC using provisional data.
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Last 90 Days

Ave. Temperature dep from Ave (deg F)
2/3/2026 - 5/3/2026

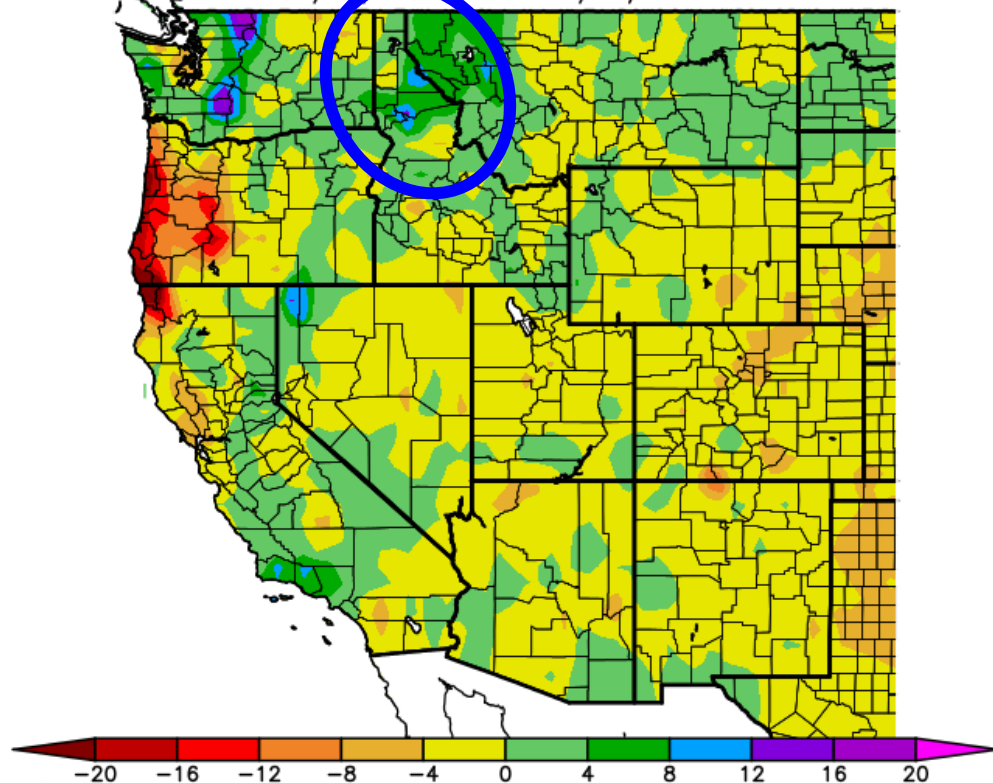


Generated 5/ 4/2026 at WRCC using provisional data.
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

PRECIPITATION TRENDS - WINTER VS 90 DAYS

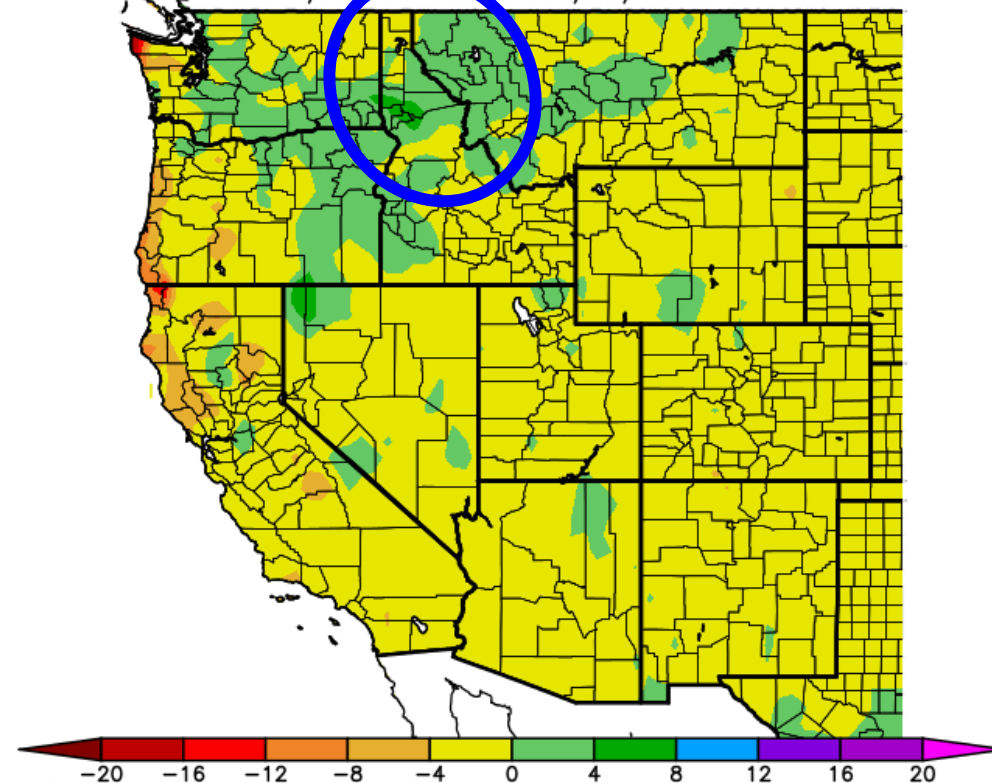
Water Year
Oct 1 - Present

Precipitation Departure from Average (in.)
10/1/2025 - 5/3/2026



Last 90 Days

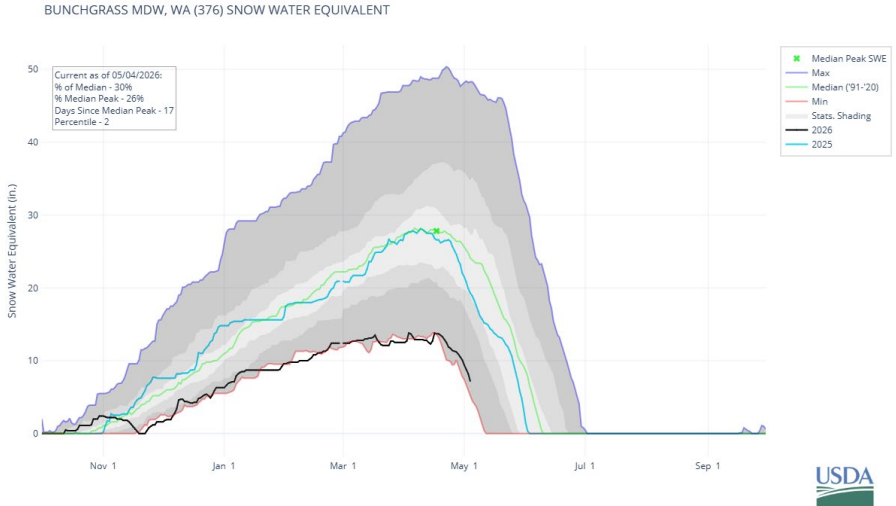
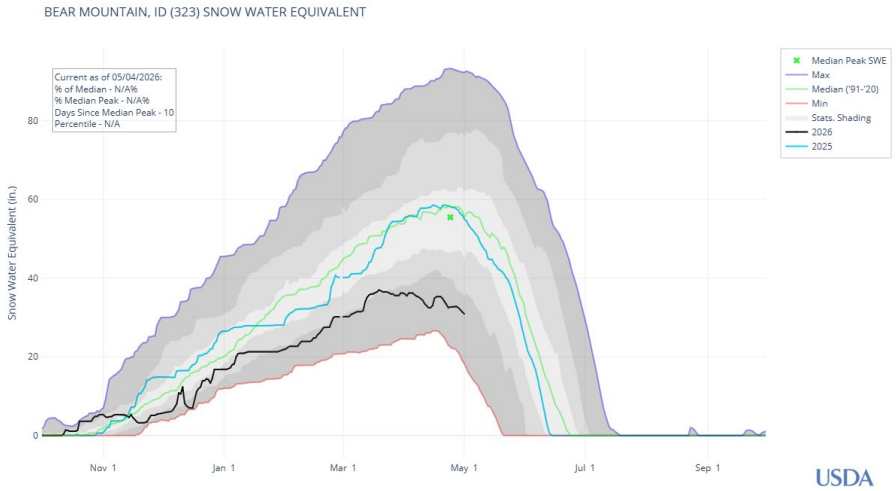
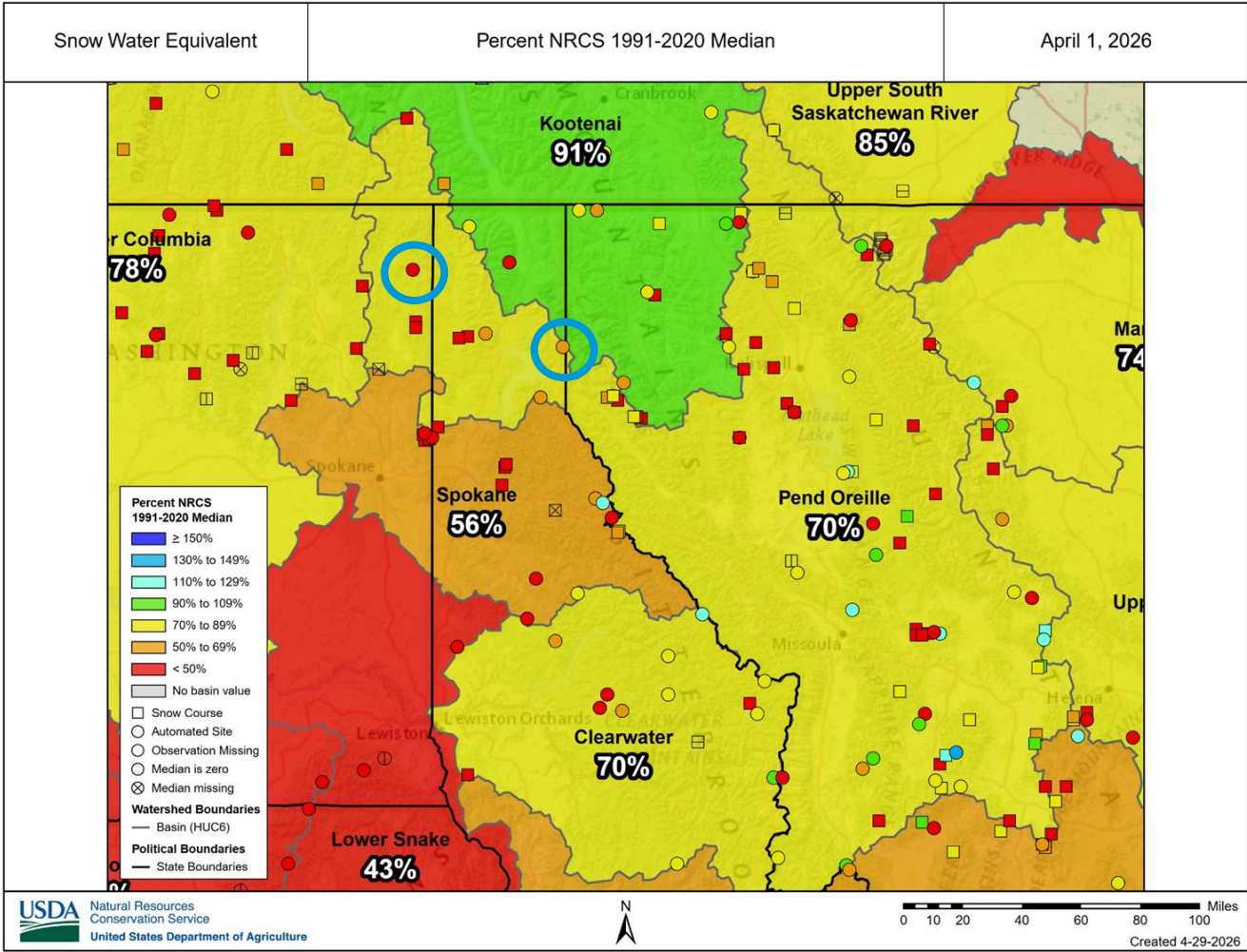
Precipitation Departure from Average (in.)
2/3/2026 - 5/3/2026



Generated 5/ 4/2026 at WRCC using provisional data.
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Generated 5/ 4/2026 at WRCC using provisional data.
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

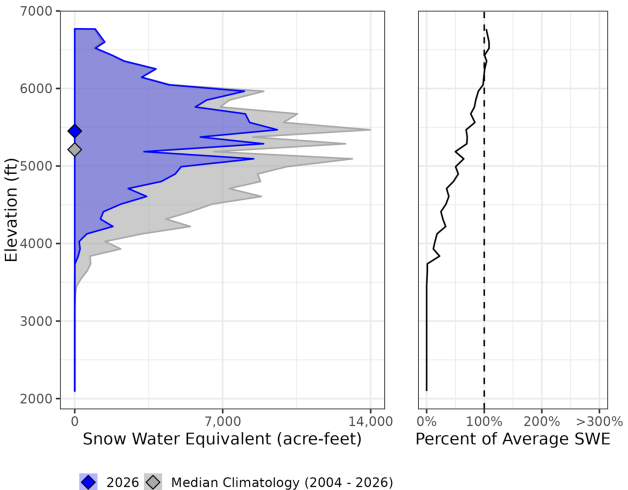
MOUNTAIN SNOWPACK



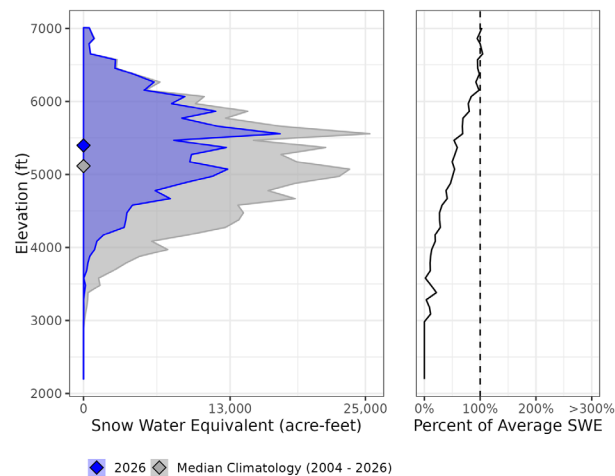
MOUNTAIN SNOWPACK - CONT.



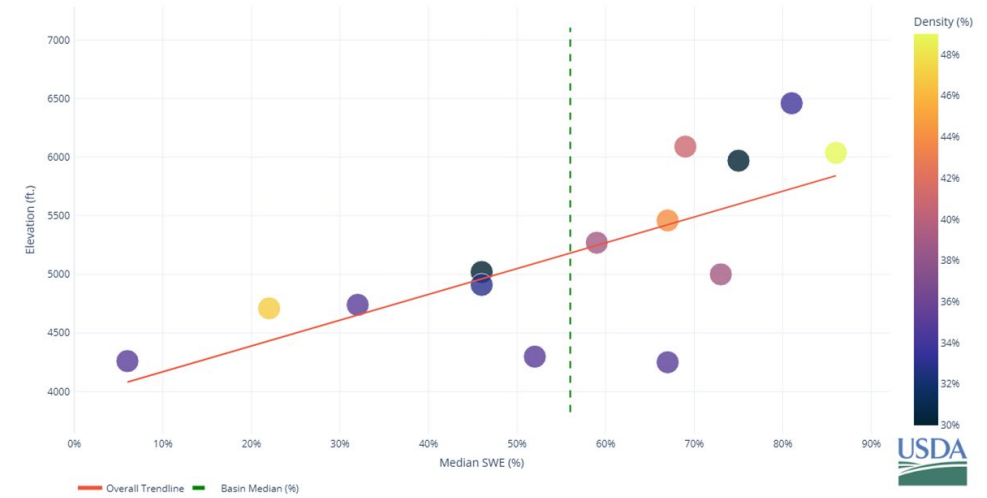
Hypsom-SWE for Pend Oreille Lake (HUC8: 17010214)
2026-05-04 (62% of Normal)



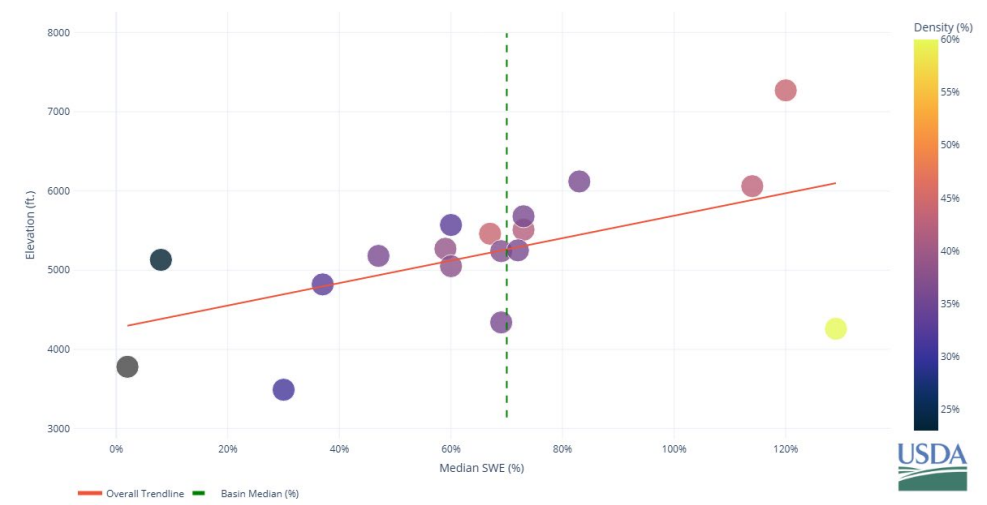
Hypsom-SWE for Priest (HUC8: 17010215)
2026-05-04 (52% of Normal)



SNOWPACK BY ELEVATION IN PEND OREILLE-KOOTENAI APRIL 1, 2026

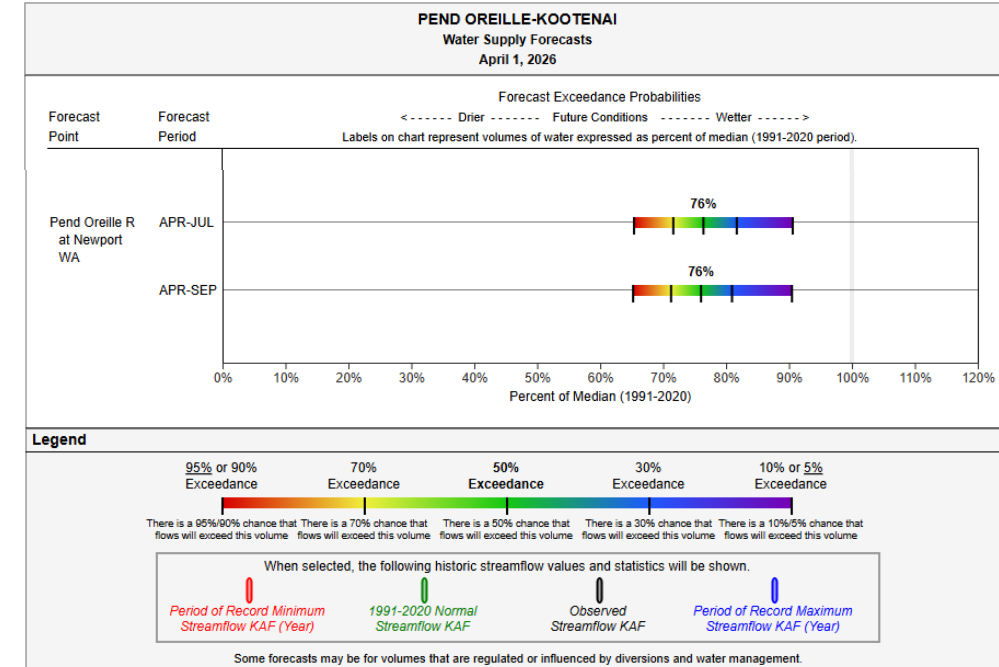
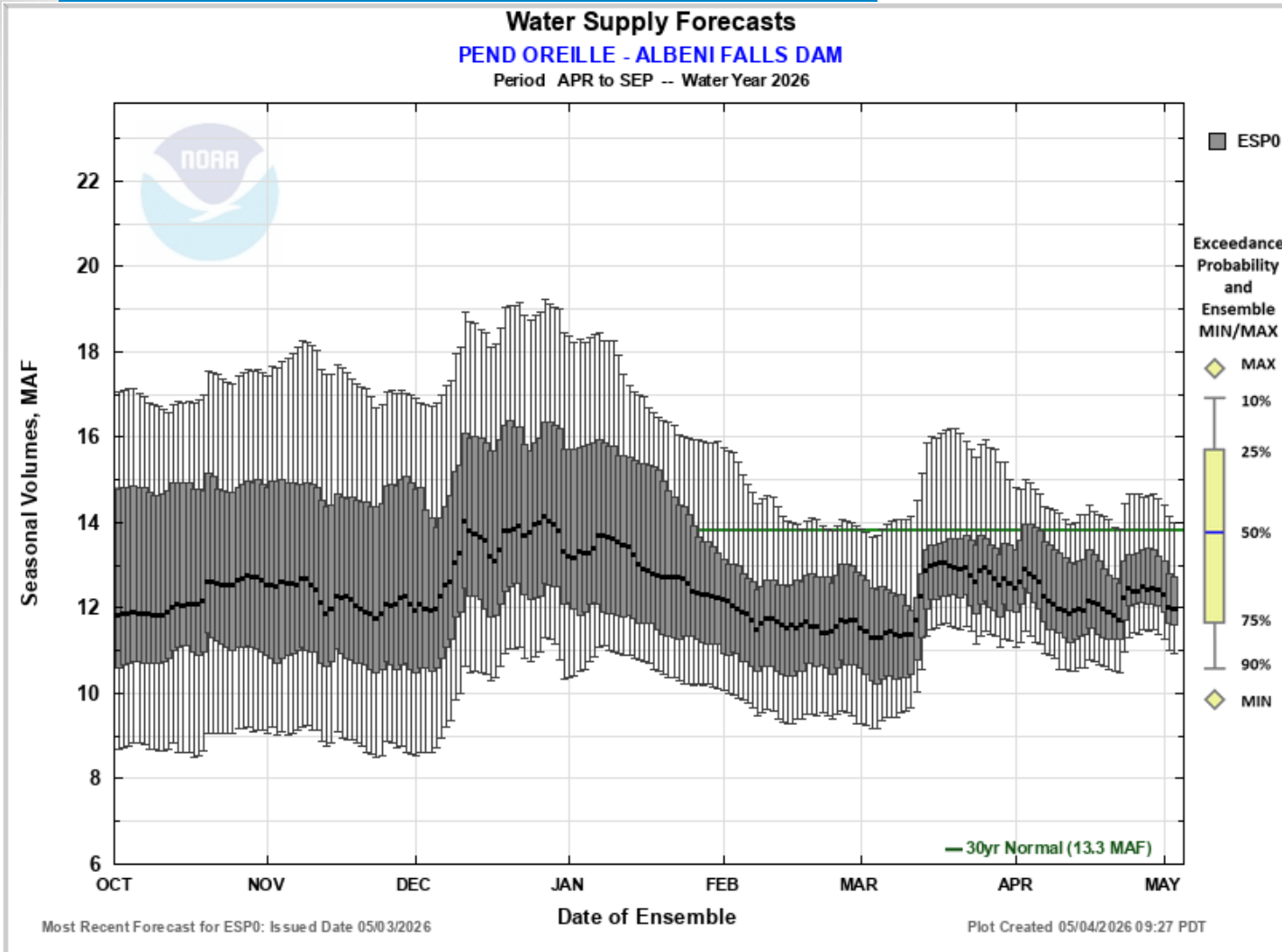


SNOWPACK BY ELEVATION IN LOWER CLARK FORK APRIL 1, 2026



Source: [UMT Drought Dashboard](#)

WATER SUPPLY FORECASTS



PEND OREILLE - ALBENI FALLS DAM (ALFW1)
Forecasts for Water Year 2026

Official Water Supply
ESP with 10 Days QPF Ensemble: 2026-05-03 Issued: 2026-05-03

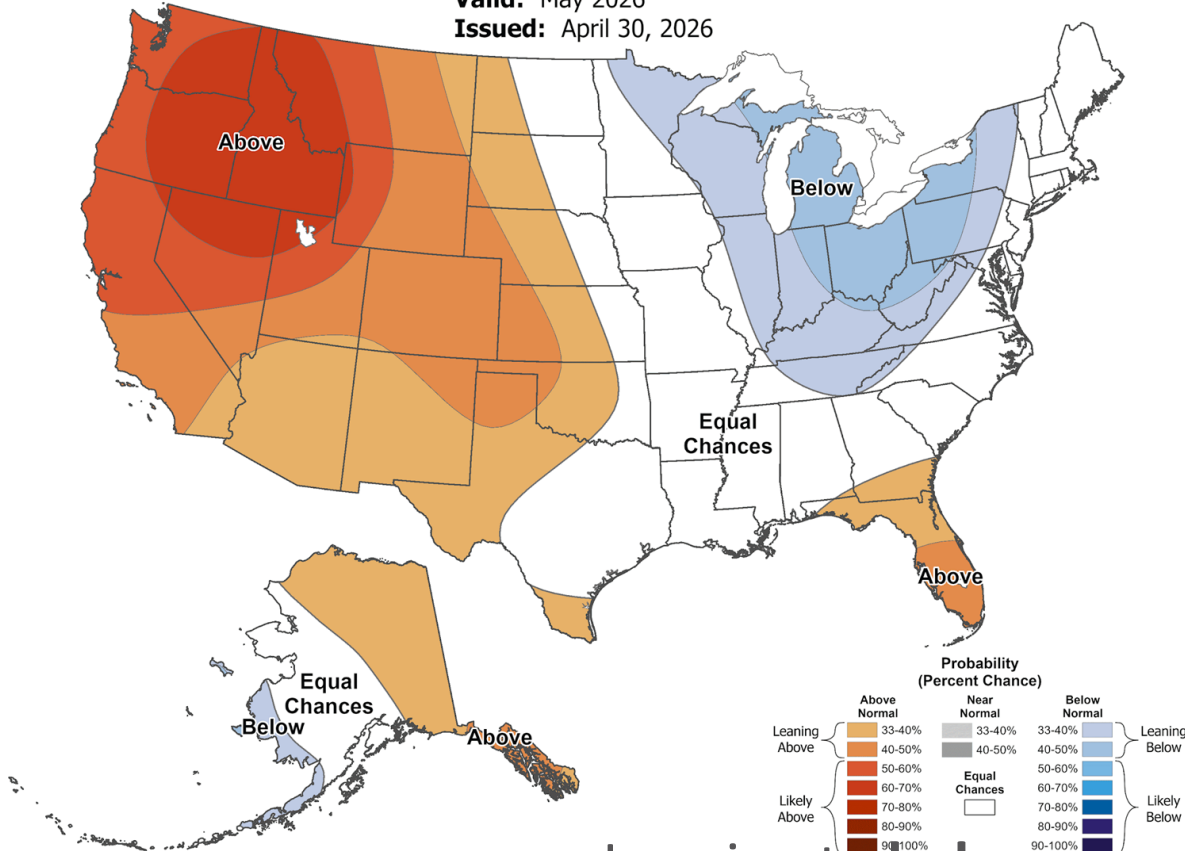
Forecast Period	Forecasts Are in KAF				30 Year Average (1991-2020)
	90 %	50 %	% Average	10 %	
APR-SEP	10125	11019	83	12710	13347
APR-JUL	9191	9996	81	11528	12369
APR-AUG	9704	10583	82	12186	12919
JAN-SEP	14249	15142	95	16834	15900
JAN-JUL	13315	14120	95	15651	14922
OCT-SEP	17683	18577	104	20269	17911

OFFICIAL CPC OUTLOOK – 1 MONTH



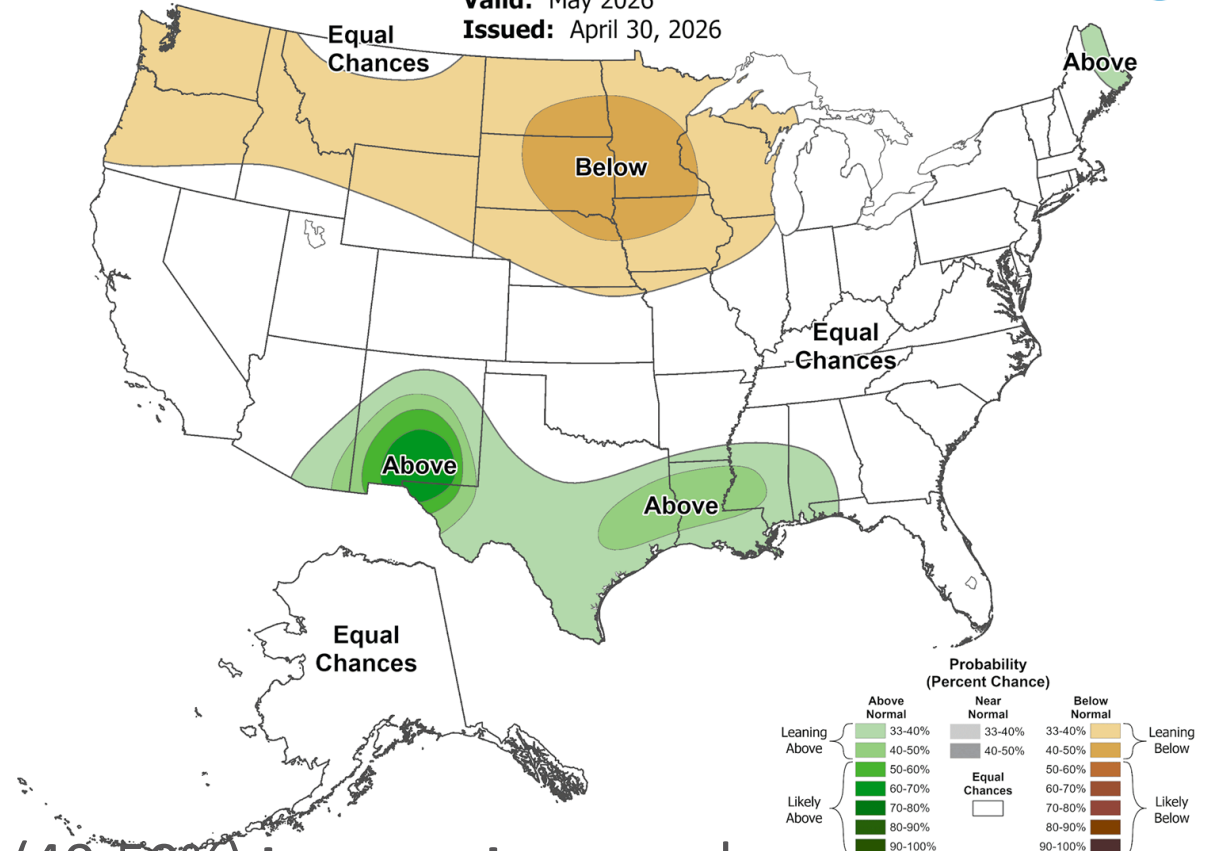
Monthly Temperature Outlook

Valid: May 2026
Issued: April 30, 2026



Monthly Precipitation Outlook

Valid: May 2026
Issued: April 30, 2026



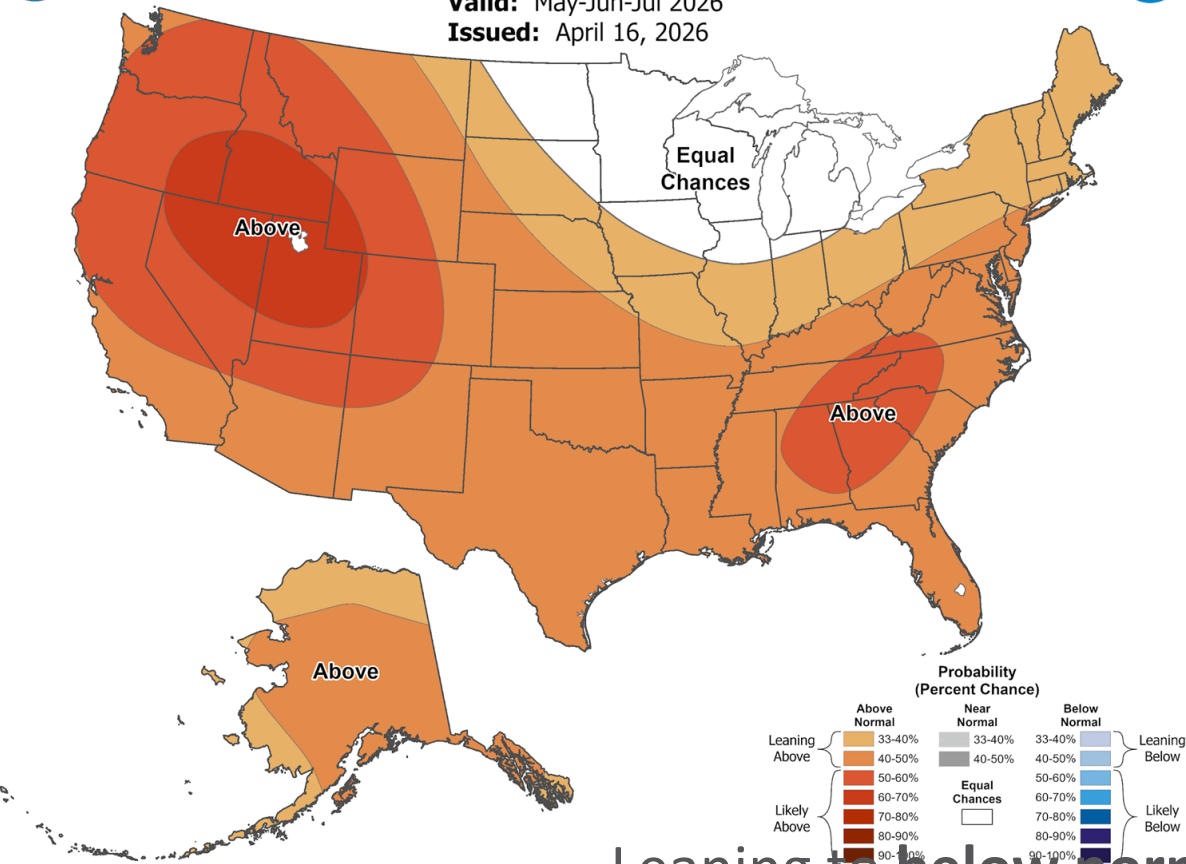
Leaning to below normal (40-50%) temperatures and
Leaning to above normal (40-50%) precipitation

OFFICIAL CPC OUTLOOK – 3 MONTH



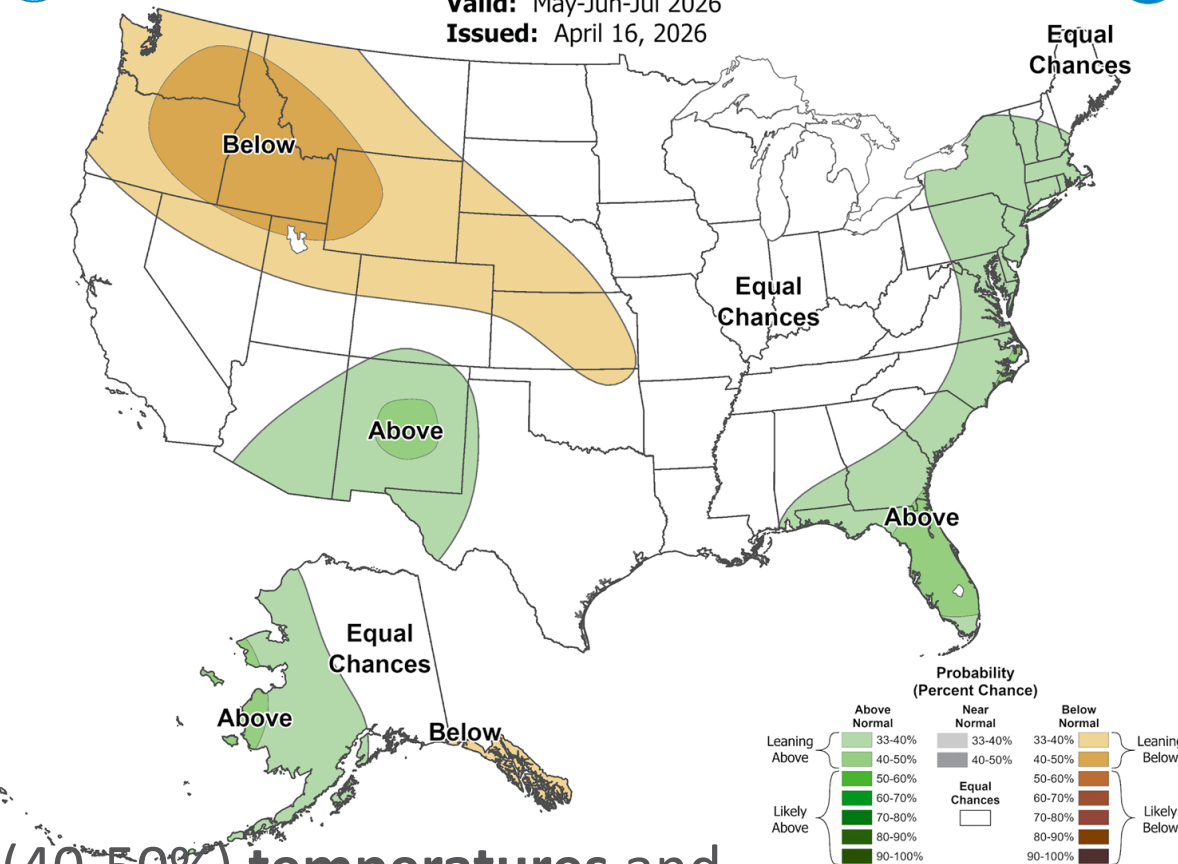
Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: May-Jun-Jul 2026
Issued: April 16, 2026



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: May-Jun-Jul 2026
Issued: April 16, 2026



Leaning to below normal (40-50%) temperatures and
Leaning to above normal (40-50%) precipitation



U.S. ARMY

SEASONAL OUTLOOK: BOTTOM LINE

- Seasonal outlook suggests a higher chance for a warm and dry summer.
- Drought conditions are likely to persist.
- Climate predictions have skill in predicting **seasonal totals/averages**.
- Lack of snowpack is the consequence of warmer conditions.

THANK YOU!

JOEL ATWOOD
SENIOR SERVICE HYDROLOGIST
JOEL.ATWOOD@NOAA.GOV



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | National Weather Service

Spokane, WA





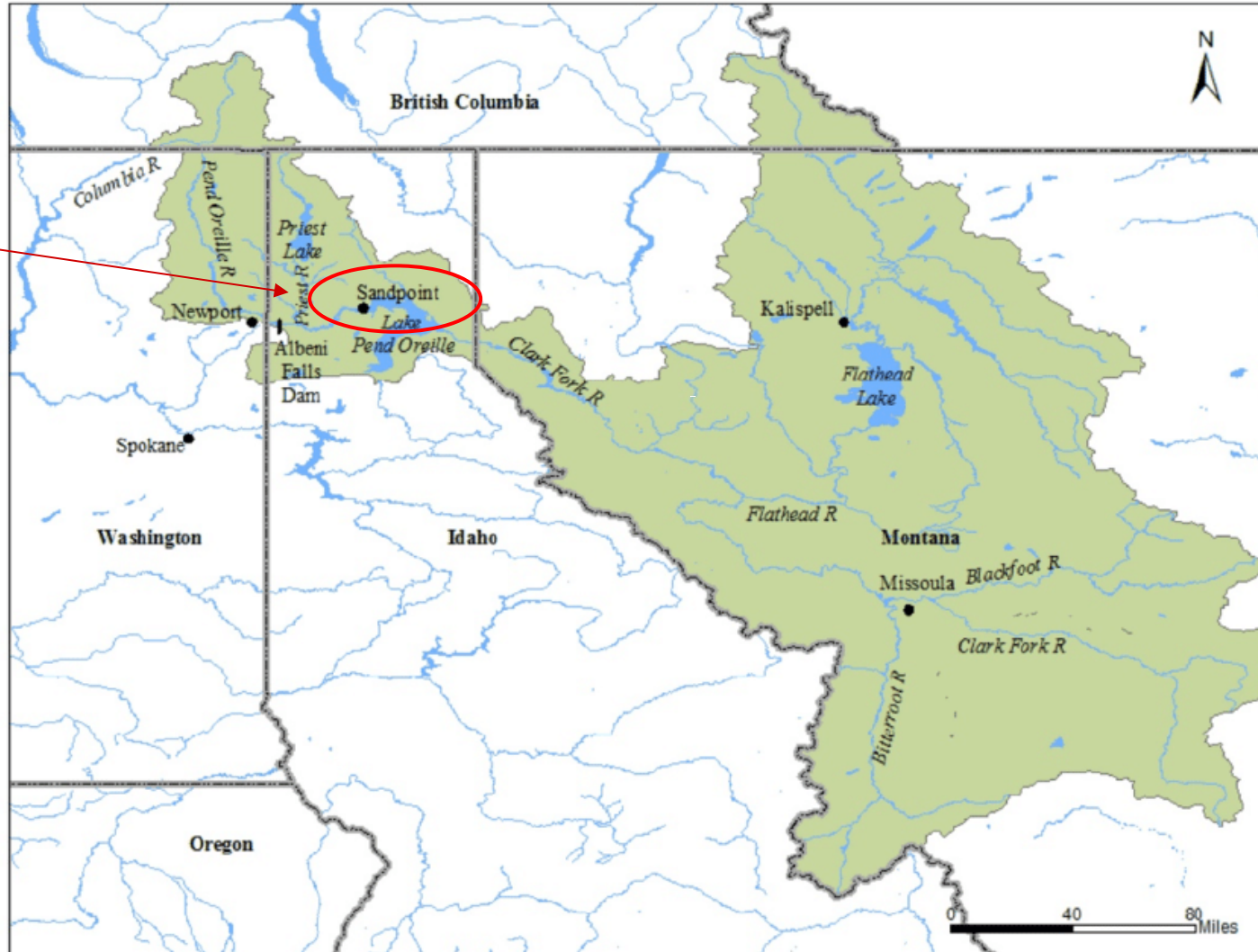
U.S. ARMY

LAKE PEND OREILLE BASIN (~24,200 SQ. MILES)



23

Sandpoint



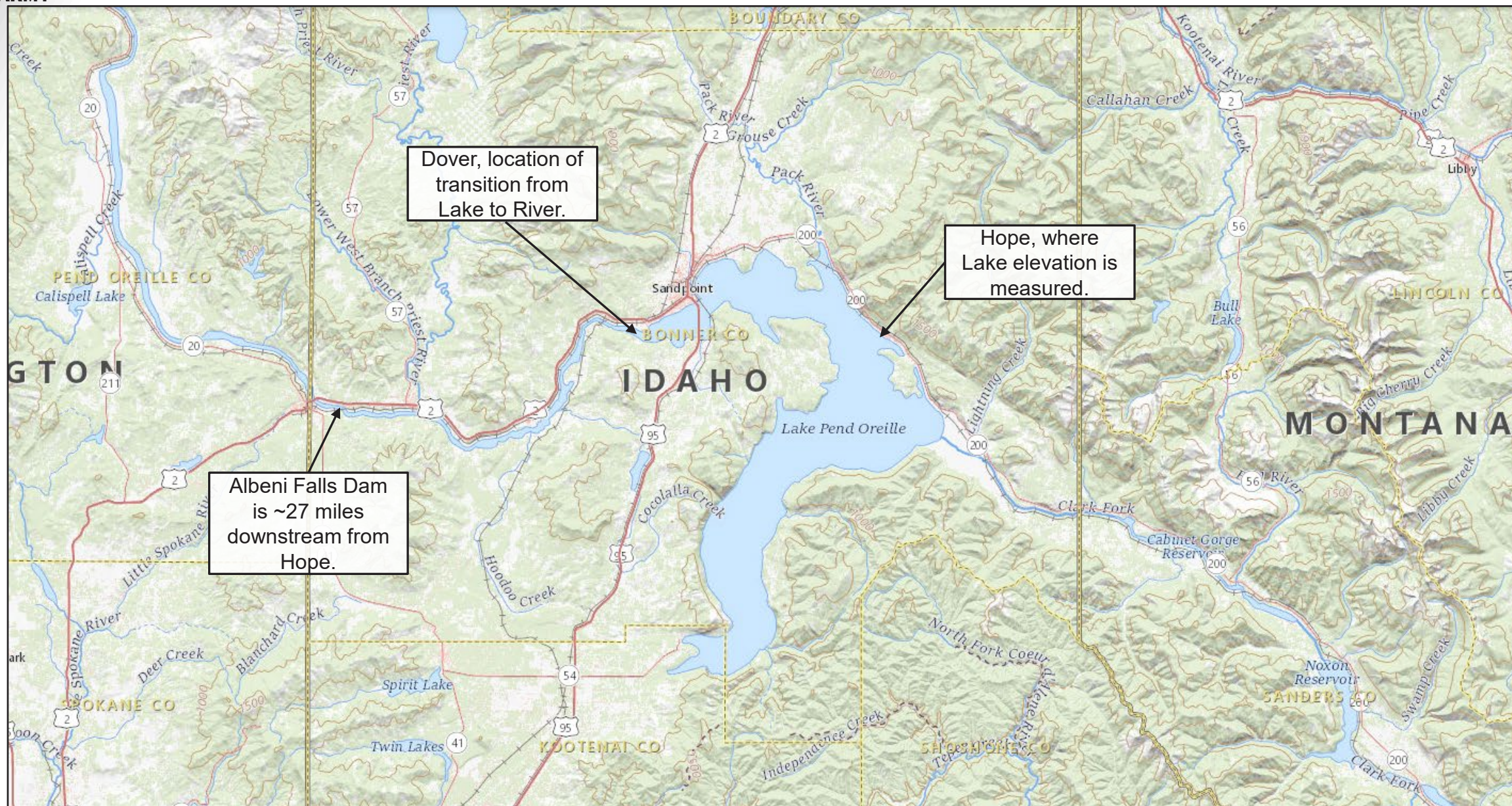


U.S. ARMY

ALBENI FALLS DAM AND LAKE PEND OREILLE



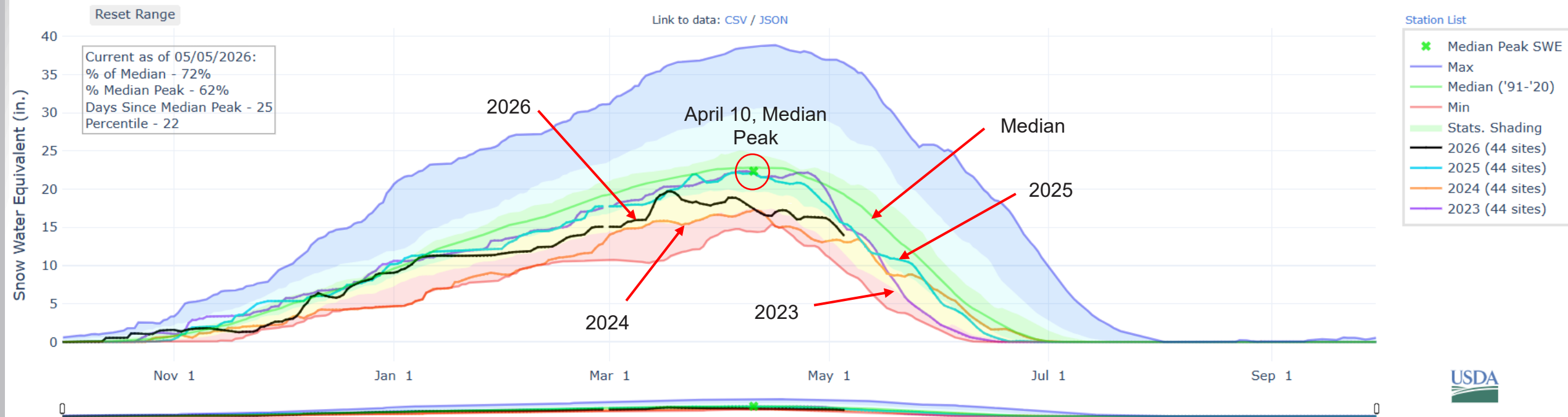
24





U.S. ARMY

25



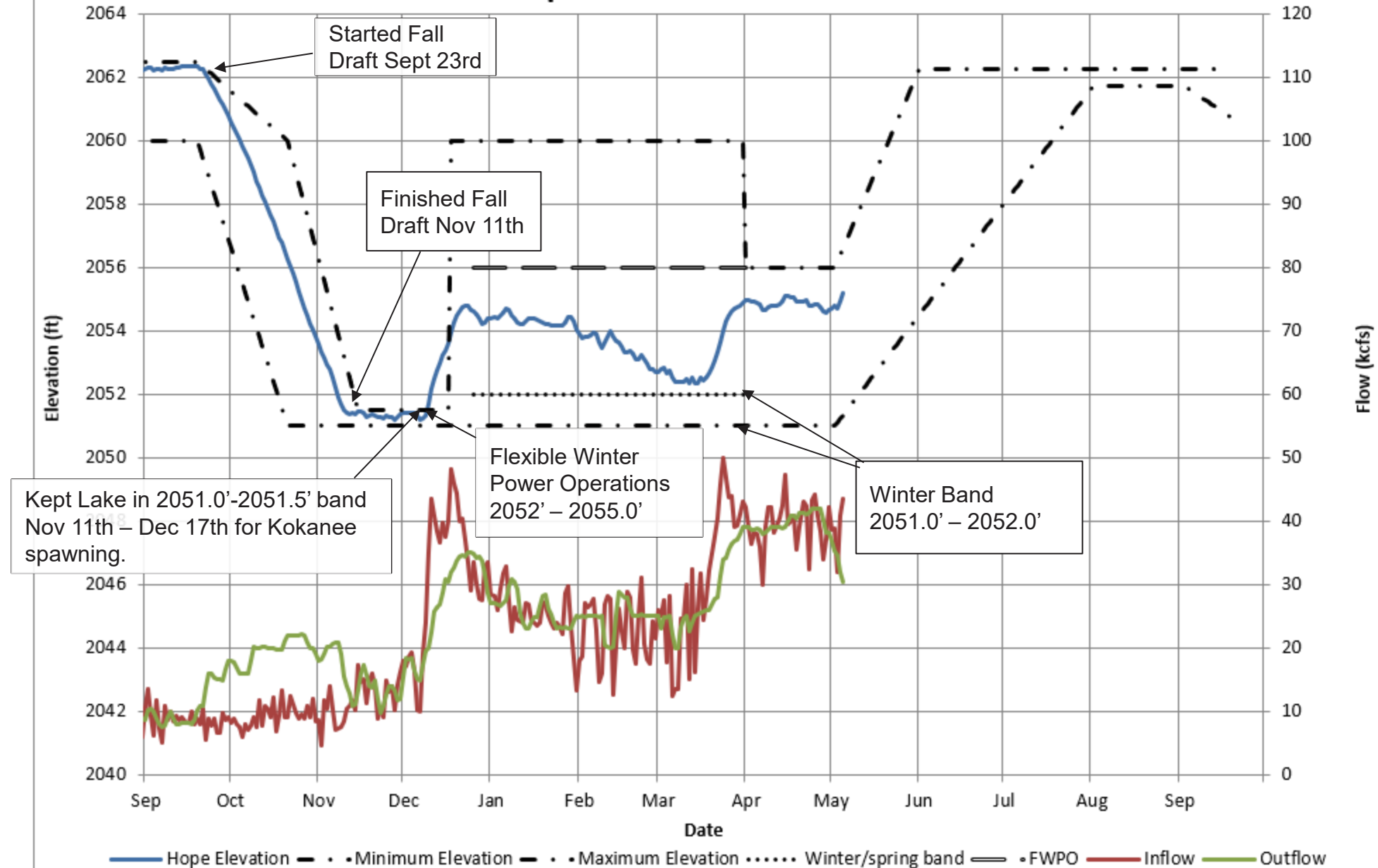


U.S. ARMY

Albeni Falls Dam and Lake Pend Oreille Operations September 2025 to Present



26



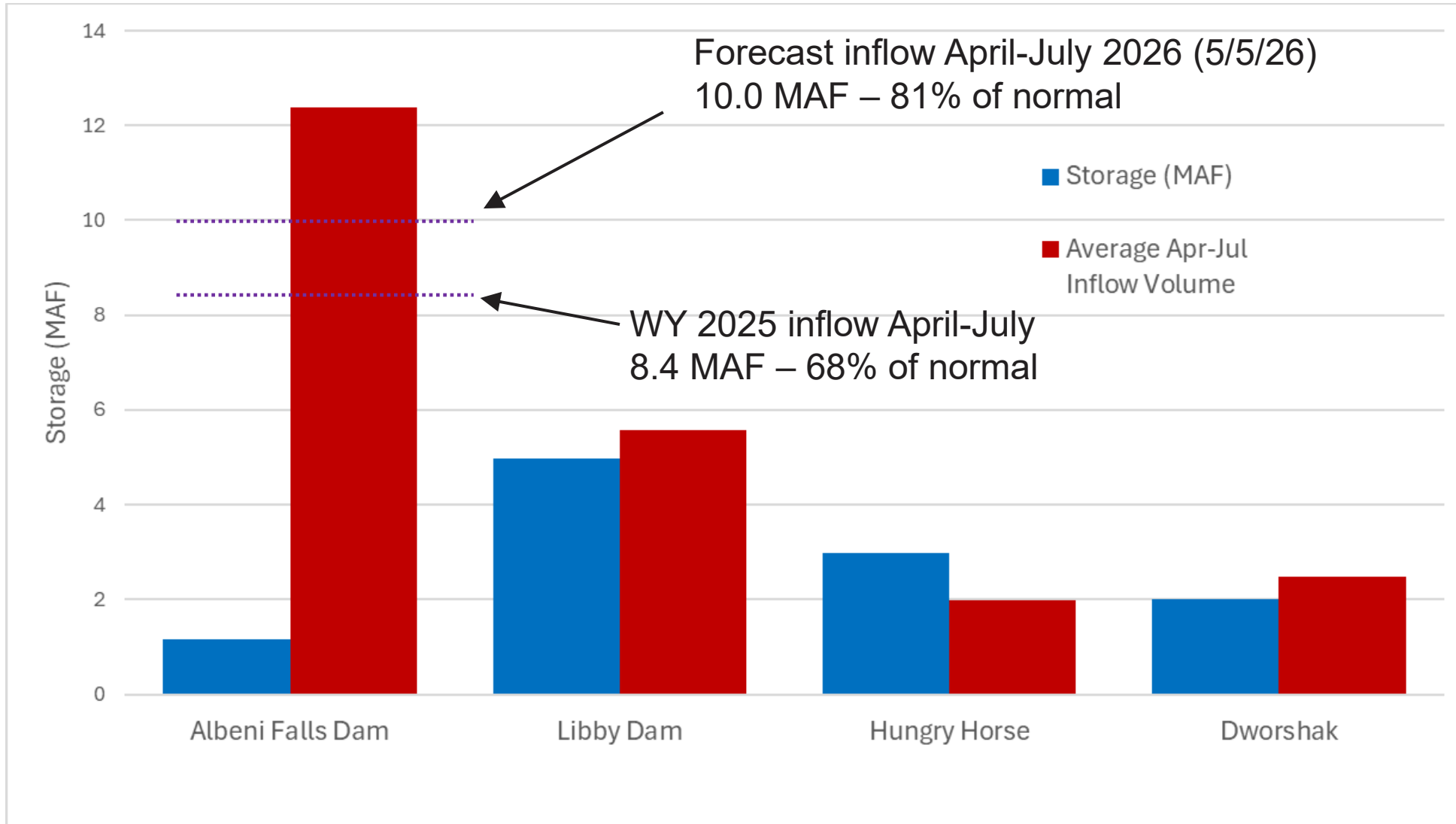


U.S. ARMY

COLUMBIA RIVER PROJECTS STORAGE VS SPRING RUNOFF



27



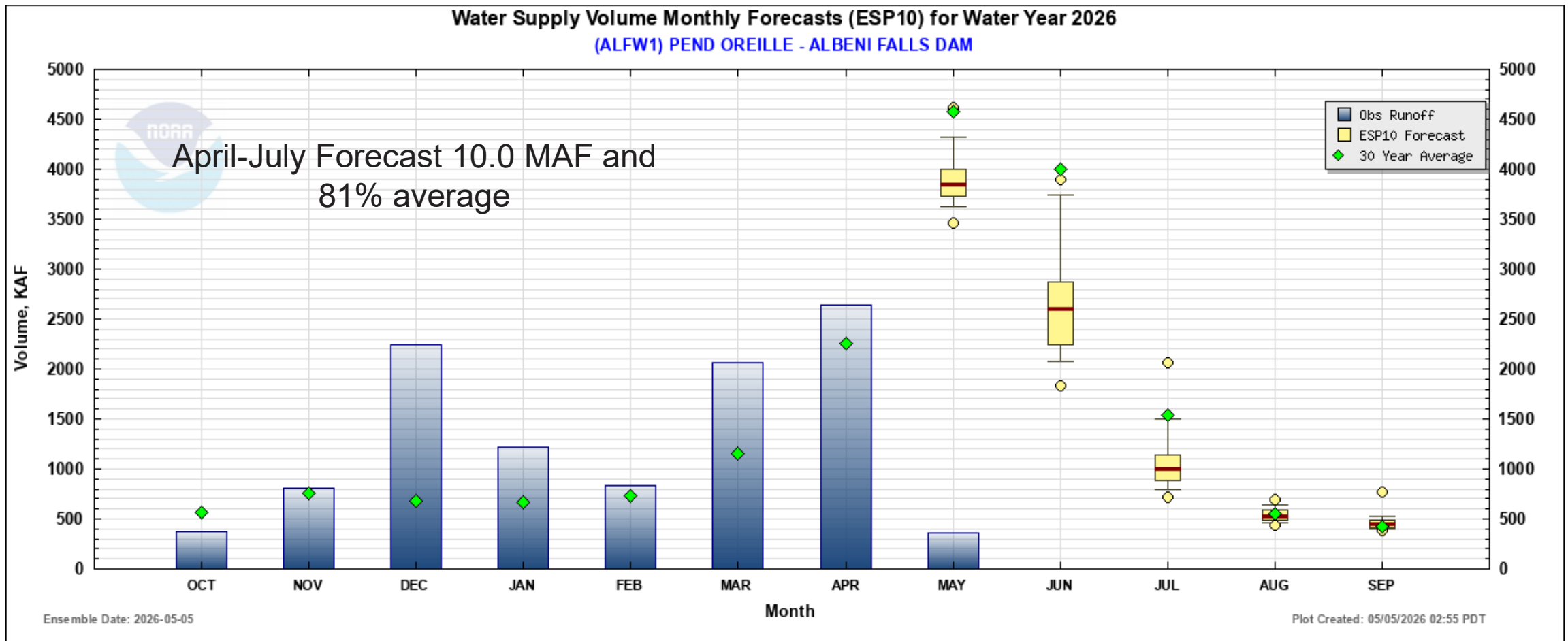


U.S. ARMY



MONTHLY VOLUMES

- Observed runoff was above average for March and above average for April.
- Peak runoff forecast to occur in May
- Mean runoff volume in May is forecast at 4MAF, enough to fill LPO four times



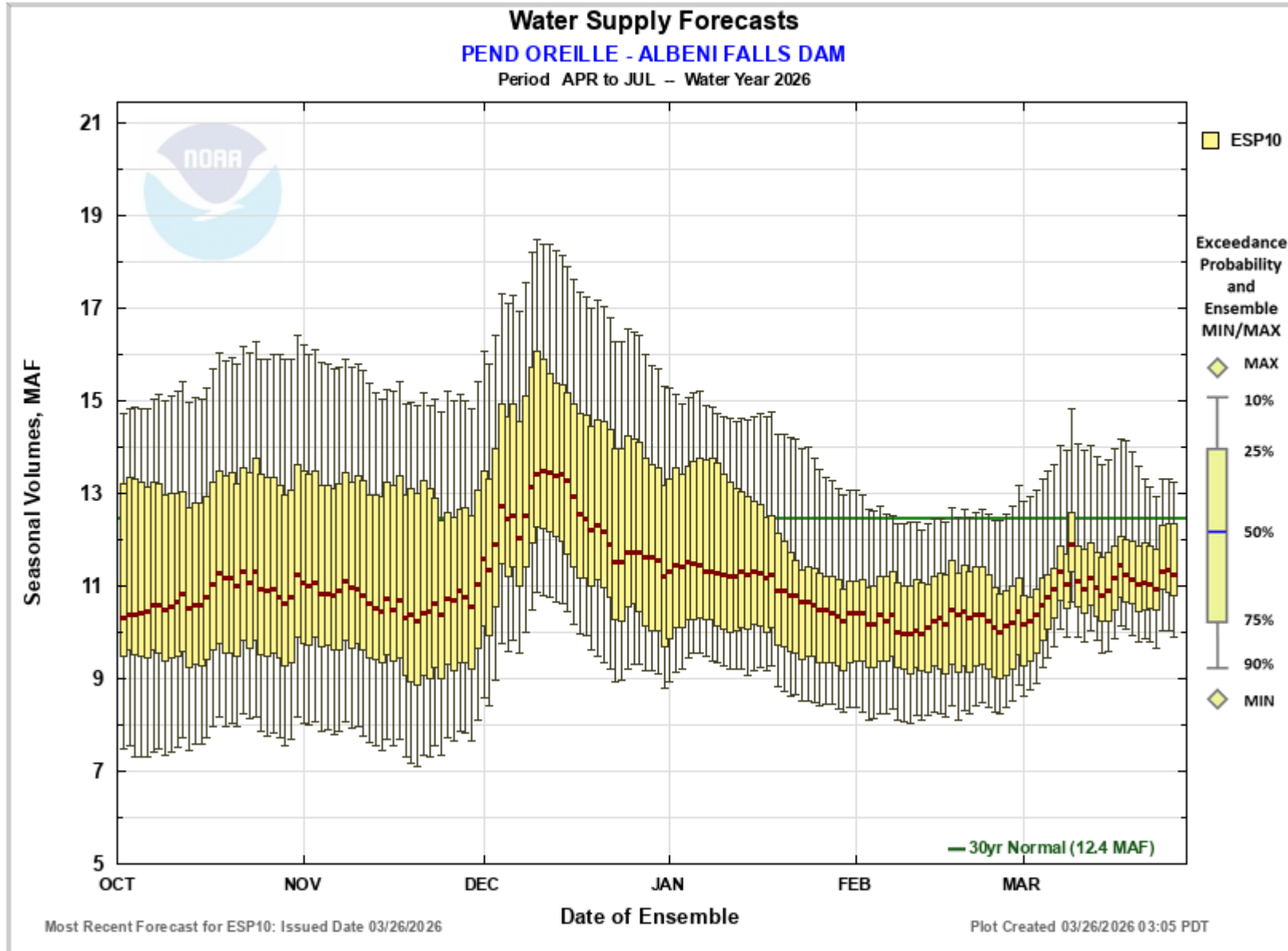


U.S. ARMY

CONSTANTLY CHANGING FORECASTS



29

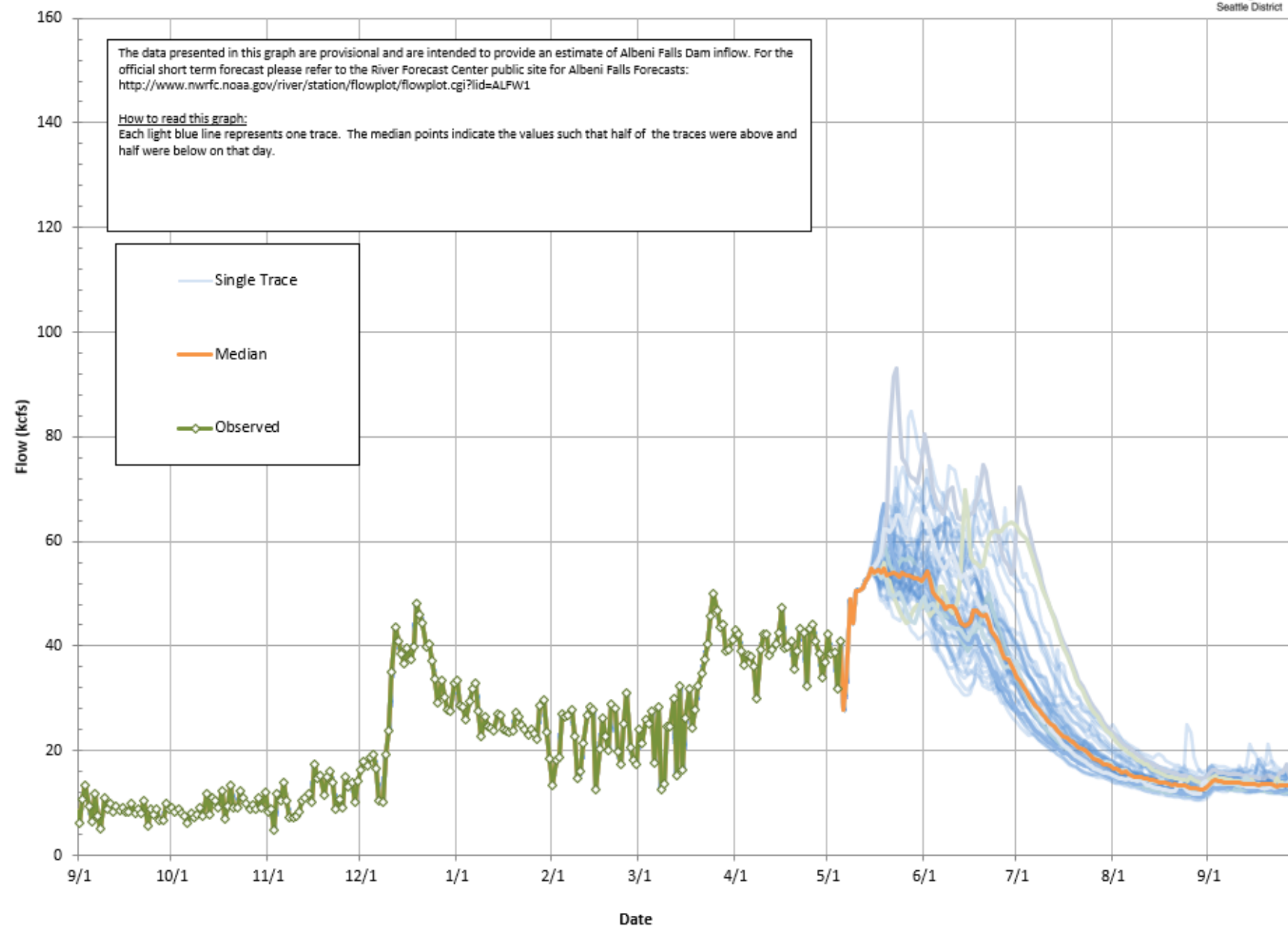




U.S. ARMY

Albeni Falls Dam Inflow - Probability ChartCorps of Engineers Projections Based on the 45 Ensemble Streamflow Prediction Traces
Issued by the Northwest River Forecast Center, National Weather Service

30





U.S. ARMY

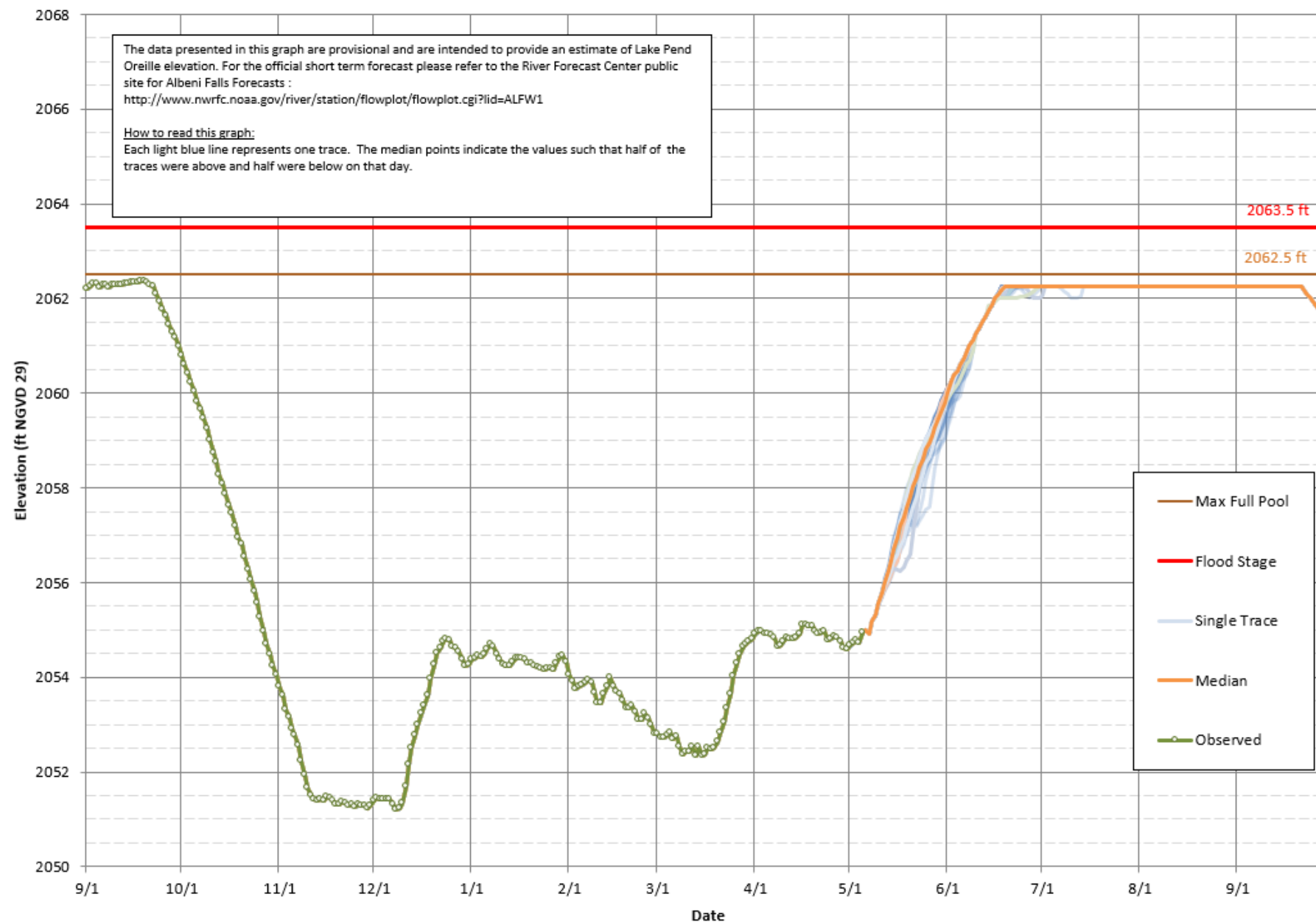
Modeled using current ESP traces as of 05/06/26

Lake Pend Oreille Elevation (Hope Gage) - Probability Chart

Corps of Engineers Projections Based on the 45 Ensemble Streamflow Prediction Traces
Issued by the Northwest River Forecast Center, National Weather Service

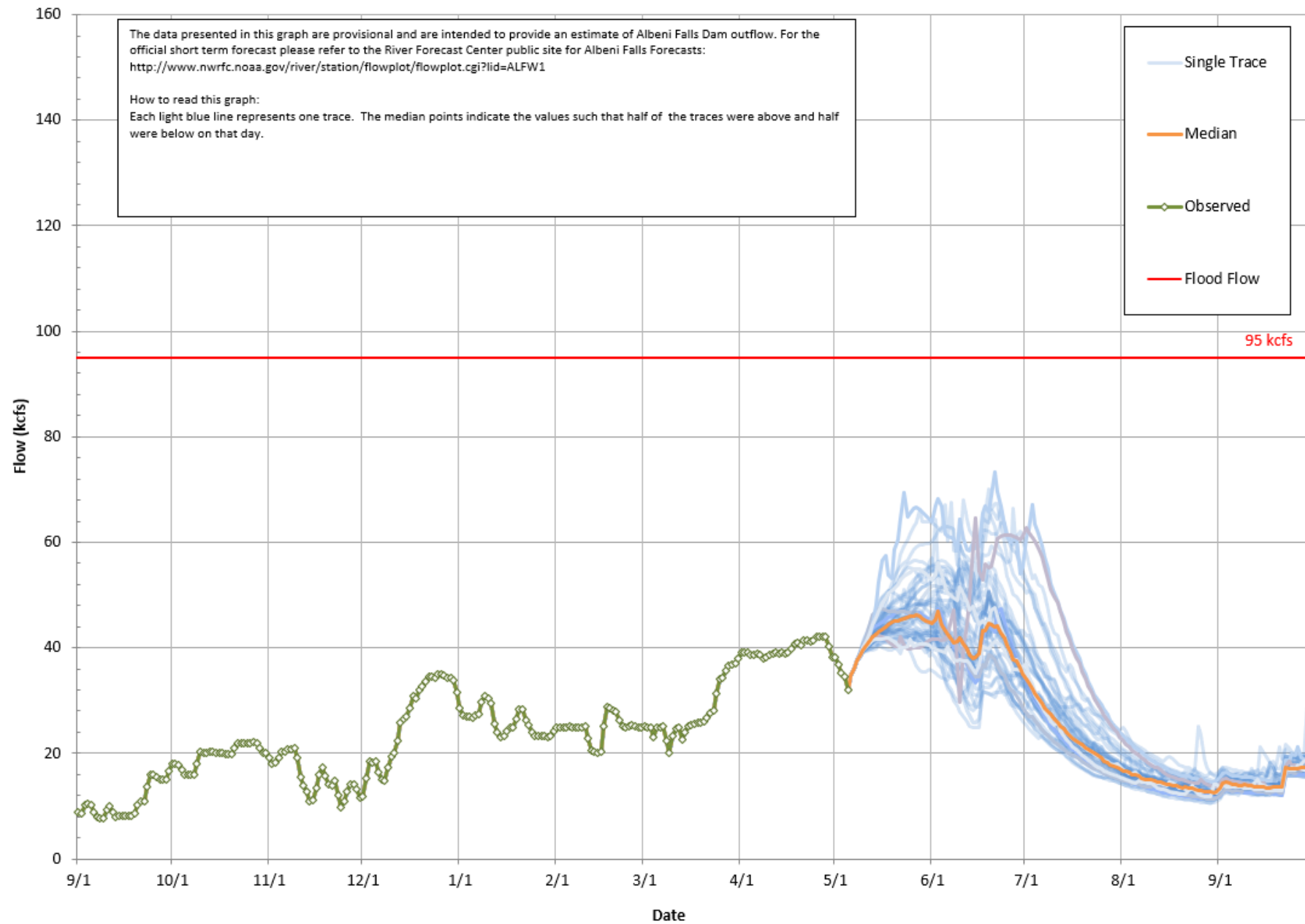


31



Albeni Falls Dam Outflow - Probability Chart

Corps of Engineers Projections Based on the 45 Ensemble Streamflow Prediction Traces
Issued by the Northwest River Forecast Center, National Weather Service





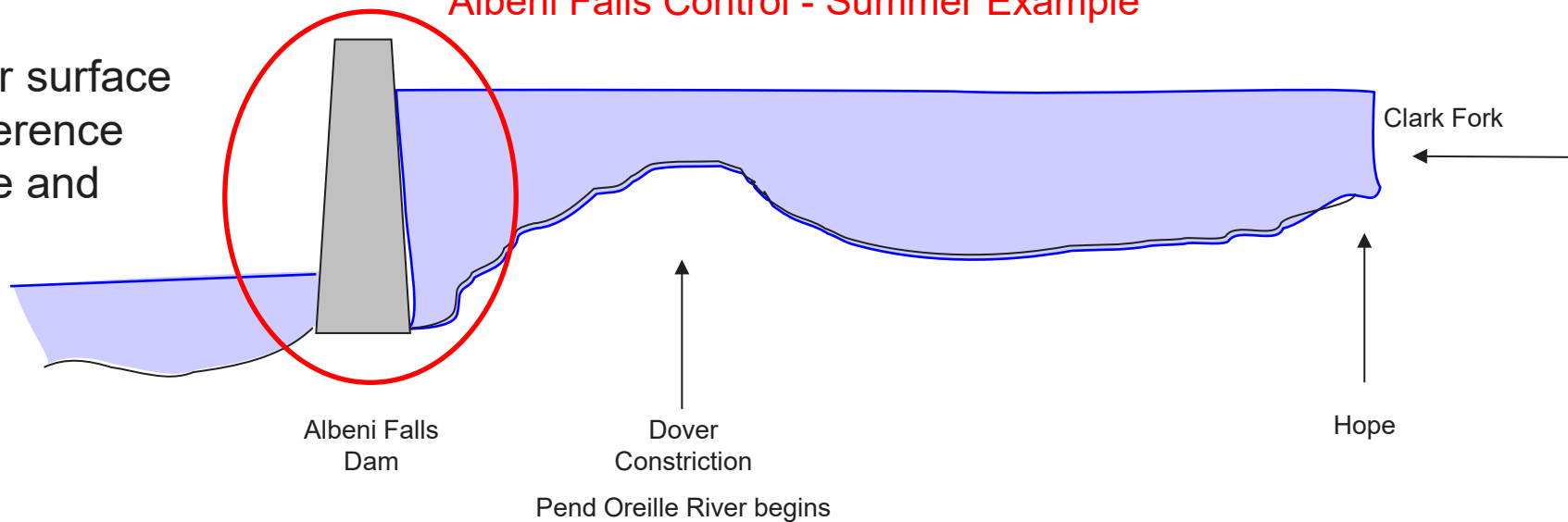
U.S. ARMY



33

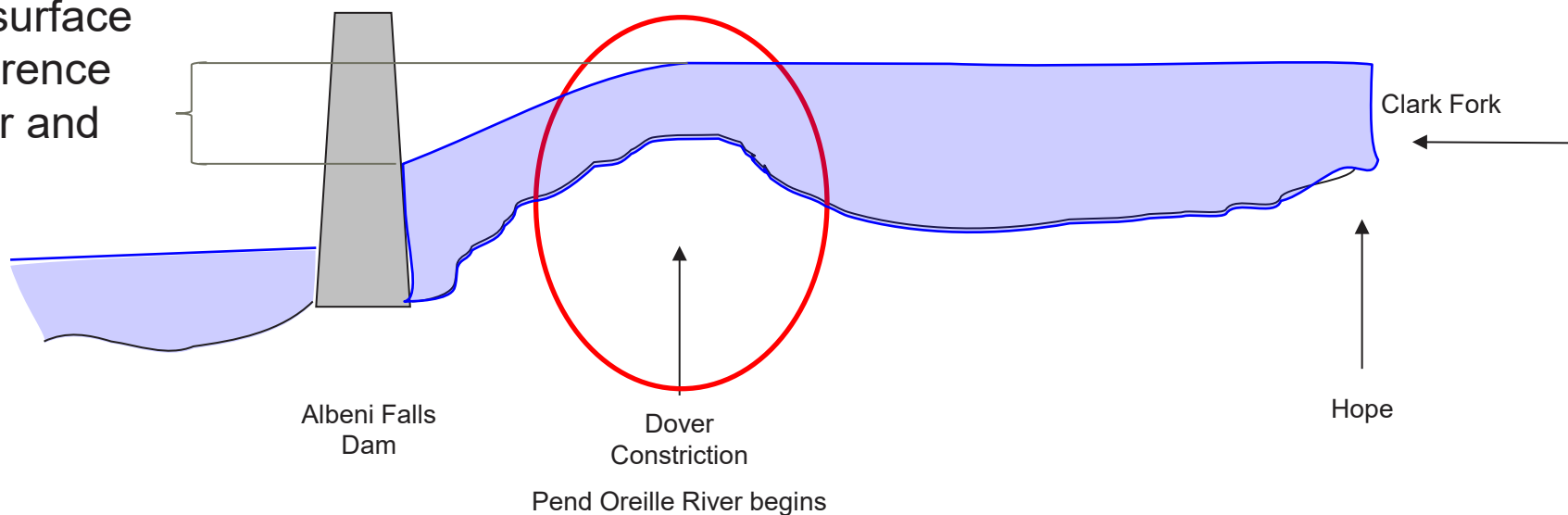
Albeni Falls Control - Summer Example

Half foot water surface elevation difference between Hope and Dam



Dover Constriction Control - High Spring Outflow Example

10-foot water surface elevation difference between Dover and Dam





U.S. ARMY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW



34

8 Permanent Staff Members

(Natural Resource Specialists and Maintenance)

- Hire 10 seasonals (for a total of 18 staff) during the summer season, not including 12 volunteer couples necessary to operate our recreation areas.

Conduct management activities on over 4,300 acres of public land around the lake and river.

Project hosts over 450,000 visitors on average annually.

- Visitation to USACE facilities generates an estimated \$18 million in spending around Lake Pend Oreille.





U.S. ARMY

2026 RECREATION SEASON



36

All USACE managed recreation areas will open as scheduled (normal hours) for the 2026 season

- Trestle Creek: April 1 – Oct. 31, 2026
- Riley Creek: May 9 – Sept. 20, 2026.
- Albeni Cove, Priest River and Springy Point: May 16 – Sept. 13, 2026.
- Visitor Center open 7 days/week through Labor Day 2026
- Reservations available through Recreation 1 Stop: www.recreation.gov
Shelters and campsites by reservation only
- Interested in volunteering for the 2026 season? www.volunteer.gov



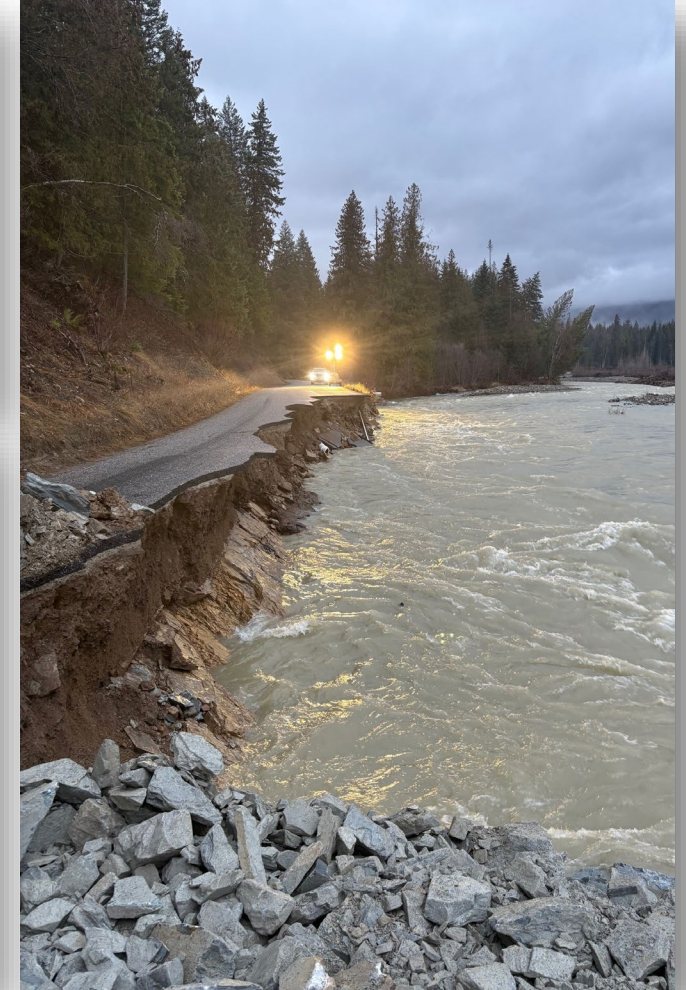
U.S. ARMY

LIGHTNING CREEK FLOOD RESPONSE



37

- Local Albeni Falls Dam Flood Team activated Dec. 11-19, 2025 after request from Bonner County (PL 84-99).
- Provided technical expertise, 5,000 sandbags, contracted an emergency contractor (Woods Crushing and Hauling) to lay 8,100 CY of riprap, 420 CY of $\frac{3}{4}$ minus, and restore over 2,300 feet of shoreline and roadway.
- USACE flood team spent 240+ hours out onsite providing QA/QC oversight for the contractor.
- Restored access to 300+ homes by working straight 36 hours from Friday (Dec.12) morning through Saturday (Dec.13) evening to repair and restore access to the East Spring Creek Road.
- USACE H&H surveys took place March 26.





U.S. ARMY

HOW CAN YOU STAY INFORMED?



38

- **Subscribe to receive updates about release changes and lake levels: UpperColumbiaWM@usace.army.mil**
- **Have general questions? Call us at 206-554-1894 or 208-437-3133**
- **Check our district water management data webpage: <https://water.usace.army.mil/office/nws>**
- **Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlbeniFallsDam/>**
- **Public website: <https://www.nws.usace.army.mil>**
- **Recreation One Stop: www.recreation.gov**
- **Send input on how restricted operations is affecting you to AFDpublicinput@usace.army.mil**
- **Take a tour! Public tours of the dam are offered year-round. Call the Visitor Center at 208-437-4617 for more information.**
- **Expect another public meeting in fall 2026.**



U.S. ARMY



39

HOW CAN YOU STAY INFORMED?



More info at our Seattle District Water Management data website:
<https://water.usace.army.mil/office/nws>

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▼

US Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District Water Management

This site is under active development and will replace our legacy website in early 2026. Questions and comments are welcome and can be sent to watermanagementteam@usace.army.mil

Water Management Data

- Chehalis River Basin
- Eastern Washington Rivers
- Flathead and Clark Fork Rivers
- Green River Basin
- Kootenai River Basin
- Lake Washington
- Pend Oreille River Basin**
- Puyallup River Basin
- Skagit River Basin

Contents

- Home
- Water Management Data**
- Hydrologic Query
- Additional Links
- Contact Information
- Water Management District Links



Water Management

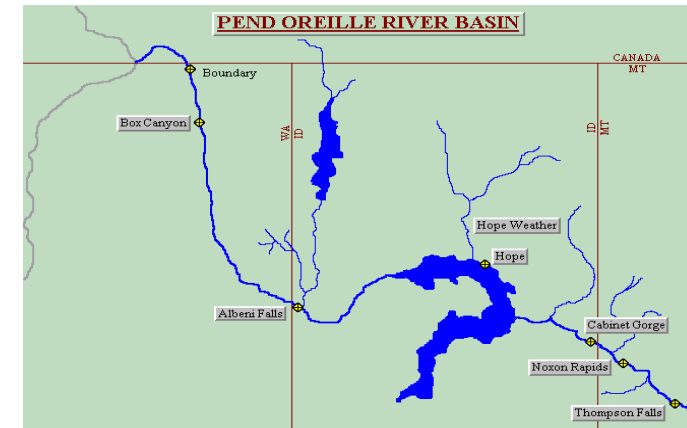
USACE - Seattle District

Seattle District Water Management provides reservoir regulation at dams and locks throughout the region in Washington, Idaho and Montana. Our engineers and scientists monitor weather conditions and water levels to determine the appropriate volume of water to release from dams or store in reservoirs to meet multiple objectives at each project. These objectives include flood risk management, economic benefits, and environmental stewardship. Water Management requires regional and international coordination of reservoir systems, coordinating water resource management with other government agencies, non-federal agencies, and a vast array of water users.

<https://water.usace.army.mil/data/pendoreille>

Pend Oreille River Basin

Albeni Falls	Box Canyon	Cabinet Gorge	Hope	Hope Weather
Noxon Rapids	Riley Creek	Riley Creek TA	Windbag Marina	Windbag Marina TA
Pack River	Thompson Falls	Cusick	Cusick TA	Pend Oreille Summary Hydrograph
Albeni Falls Dam ESP Traces	Bible Camp (live images)	Riley Creek (live images)	Sandpoint (live images)	Pend Oreille River at Newport (live image, USGS)





U.S. ARMY

Q&A



40

