Monthly Climate Report

NWS Reno NV

Issued: 2/10/2026

Weather Synopsis & Highlights:

Temperatures in January were generally near to above average across the majority of the region, with northern Washoe and Lassen counties, southeast Mono County and mountain areas standing out as with at least 4 degrees warmer than average. One notable exception was around main lakes in central and southern Mono County (Mono, Crowley, Bridgeport Reservoir) where strong valley inversions and persistent freezing fog for nearly half of the month kept temperatures more than 4 degrees below average (Figure 1). Precipitation was well below average regionwide, with the majority of western NV southward to Mono County having the largest deficits, receiving only 25-50% of average January precipitation, and isolated areas below 25% (Figure 2).

2026 began with a weak weather system bringing light cold rain to parts of western NV and eastern CA. A few locations in northeast CA received patchy freezing rain prior to sunrise on the 1st, but no significant travel impacts were reported. A stronger winter storm then impacted the Sierra from the 3rd through 5th with heavy snowfall of 1-2 feet across the Tahoe basin and 2-4 feet for higher elevations. For lower elevations, this remained a rain event with amounts generally between 0.25” and 0.50” across the main cities of far western NV with some foothill areas receiving 1” or more, and 1-2” with locally higher amounts across northeast CA from US-395 westward. For the remainder of western NV, amounts were mainly 0.25” or less.

This storm was followed by a quick-moving cold front during the night of the 7th and early morning of the 8th, which produced a burst of snow across lower elevations of western NV and the eastern Sierra. Most snowfall amounts were light (1-4”) but roads became icy with significant travel impacts due to temperatures dropping well below freezing. This system also produced the first and only measurable snow (1.5”) of the winter season so far at the Reno Airport.

From the 9th through the 22nd, a persistent ridge pattern set up over the region, producing a prolonged period of dry weather and generally light winds. Daytime temperatures were generally above average, mainly in the 50s, although inversion conditions produced areas of haze, reduced air quality and locally colder conditions in more protected valleys. A few locations, most notably around Mono Lake, experienced freezing fog for this 2 week period with temperatures remaining below 30 degrees and patchy slick road conditions.

A dry cold front passage during the night of the 23rd helped to clear out the freezing fog around Mono Lake, dropping temperatures to near average with chilly nights for the weekend of the 24th-25th. This was followed by warmer conditions through the end of the month, with highs climbing above 60 degrees in parts of western NV on the 30th and 31st. The final week of January was dry, except for a weak weather system which brought up to 2” of snowfall and liquid totals up to 0.15” from the Tahoe basin northward to northeast CA/far northwest NV during the night of the 27th.

Hydrology:

Let's get right to the point. January was a very dull month for hydrology in the area. With the only precipitation occurring in the first 7 days of the month, most of the story is related to what didn't happen. No new flooding, very little snow accumulation, and decreasing soil moisture. We did have some minor lingering residual December flooding in the lowest reaches of the Susan River that took a while to drain to Honey lake. Since January is typically a big month for snow accumulation, the snowpack percent of normal has plummeted over the last 3 weeks of the month (Figure 3,4 and 5). The snowpack is closer to normal further south in the Owens basin (Figure 6). Mountain soil-moisture has dropped significantly in January, but remains above normal (Figure 7), but soils in lower elevations have dried significantly over the month (Figure 8). Water year mountain precipitation is still slightly above normal for the east side of the Sierra, but falling below normal for northern Nevada (Figure 9). The contrast between water year precipitation and snowpack conditions (Figures 9 and 10) is dramatic this year and likely the lowest observed SWE to precipitation ratio for this time of year in many basins, especially in northern Nevada.

January Streamflows remained near normal for areas draining the Sierra due to above normal water year precipitation, much of which fell as rain, but streamflows in northern Nevada are mostly below normal (Figure 11). Water year to date observed streamflow volumes are generally above normal for the east side of the Serra and NE California, but below normal along the Humboldt and most tributaries (Figure 12 left side) April to July spring runoff forecasts are generally near to somewhat below normal along the east-side of the Sierra, and well below normal along the Humboldt and tributaries (Figure 12 right side). Keep in mind these seasonal water supply forecasts will continue to gain in skill through the snow accumulation season and may change dramatically with major storms or prolonged dry periods. Major reservoirs are generally near or above normal storage for this time of year, with Lake Tahoe and the Walker Basin well above normal storage, and Rye Patch falling below normal this month (Figure 13).

Drought Update:

The NWS Reno Service area only made it a few weeks with no drought indication on the US Drought monitor. Areas of D0 (abnormally dry) have crept back into eastern Pershing and Churchill counties (Figure 14). This change is largely due to the very dry January, and expanding snow drought in the basin and range. Further expansion of drought conditions are likely if the more active weather pattern is insufficient to make up for the already lost ground on this year's snowpack. Very warm water year temperatures (about 5 degrees above normal) have hindered snowpack accumulation and aided in melting shallow snow accumulation areas (Figure 15). Water year to date precipitation has been above normal for most of NE California and far western Nevada, but below normal for NE Nevada (Figure 16).

Additional Information on Drought and Climate:

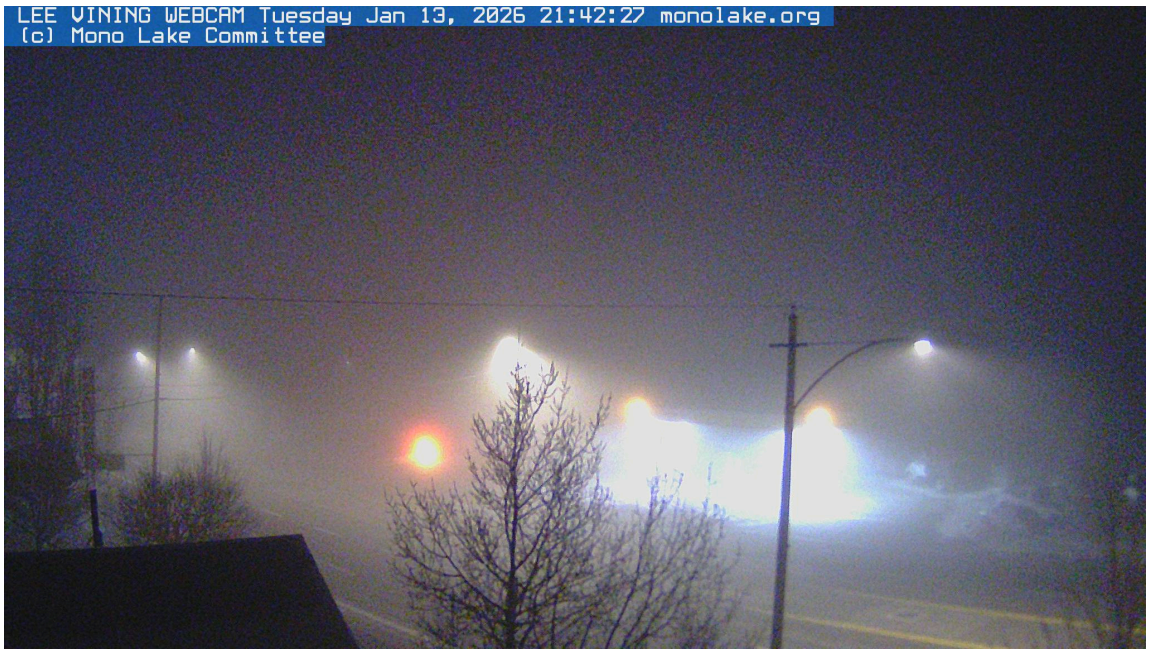
Report Drought conditions here
Nevada statewide Drought update
NV State Climate Office
NV Living with Drought

[Drought Monitor]
[New Drought.gov]
[California Nevada Drought Early Warning System]
[NOAA CPC Drought page]
[CNAP Drought tracker]
[California Nevada River Forecast Center]
[WRCC Drought Tracker]
[WRCC Enso page]
[WRCC Monthly Climate Summaries]
[Evaporative Demand Drought Index]
[US Seasonal Drought Outlook]

Contact NWS Reno Climate Team
rev.climate@noaa.gov 775-673-8100
https://www.weather.gov/rev/

Photos:


Photos 1-2: Plumas Eureka State Park January 5th on left and February 2nd on the right. Photo creditEdan Lindaman NWS Reno



Photos 3-4: Persistent freezing fog over Mono Lake brought poor visibility, much colder temperatures and patchy slick conditions to Lee Vining for about 2 weeks between January 9-23.

Figures:

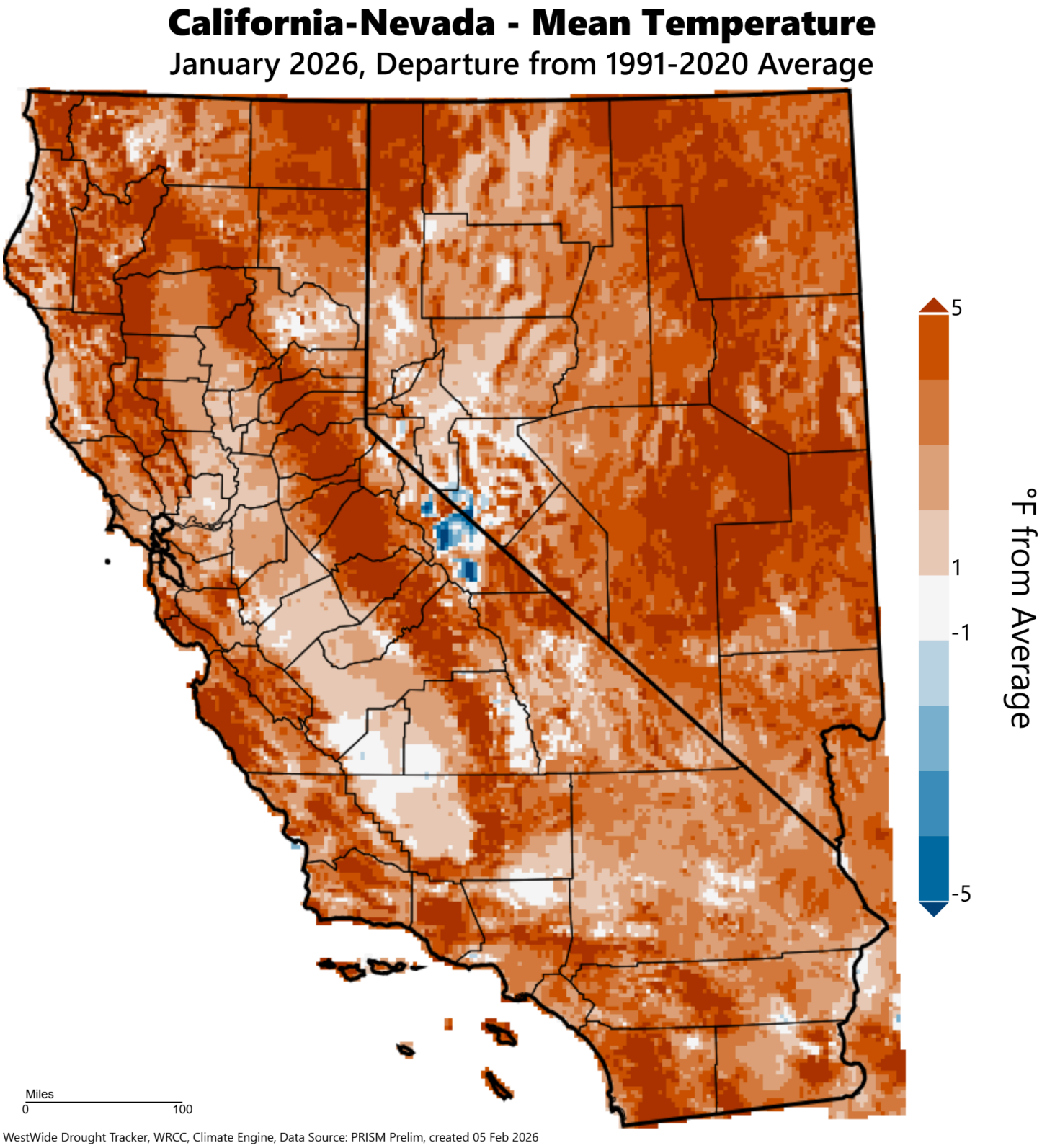


Figure 1: Departure from normal temperatures for January 2026.(WWDT)

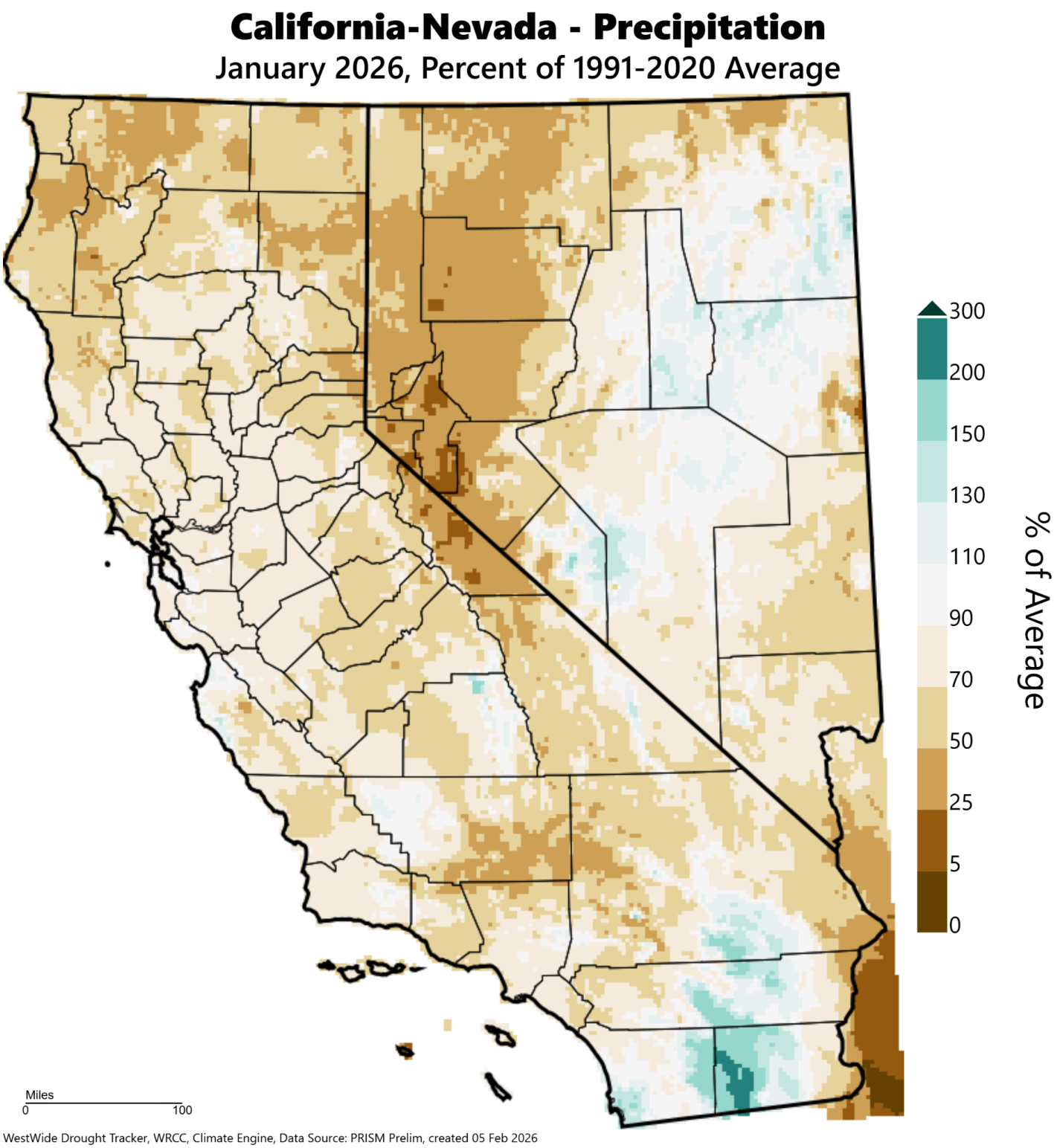


Figure 2: Percent of normal precipitation for January 2026. (WWDT)

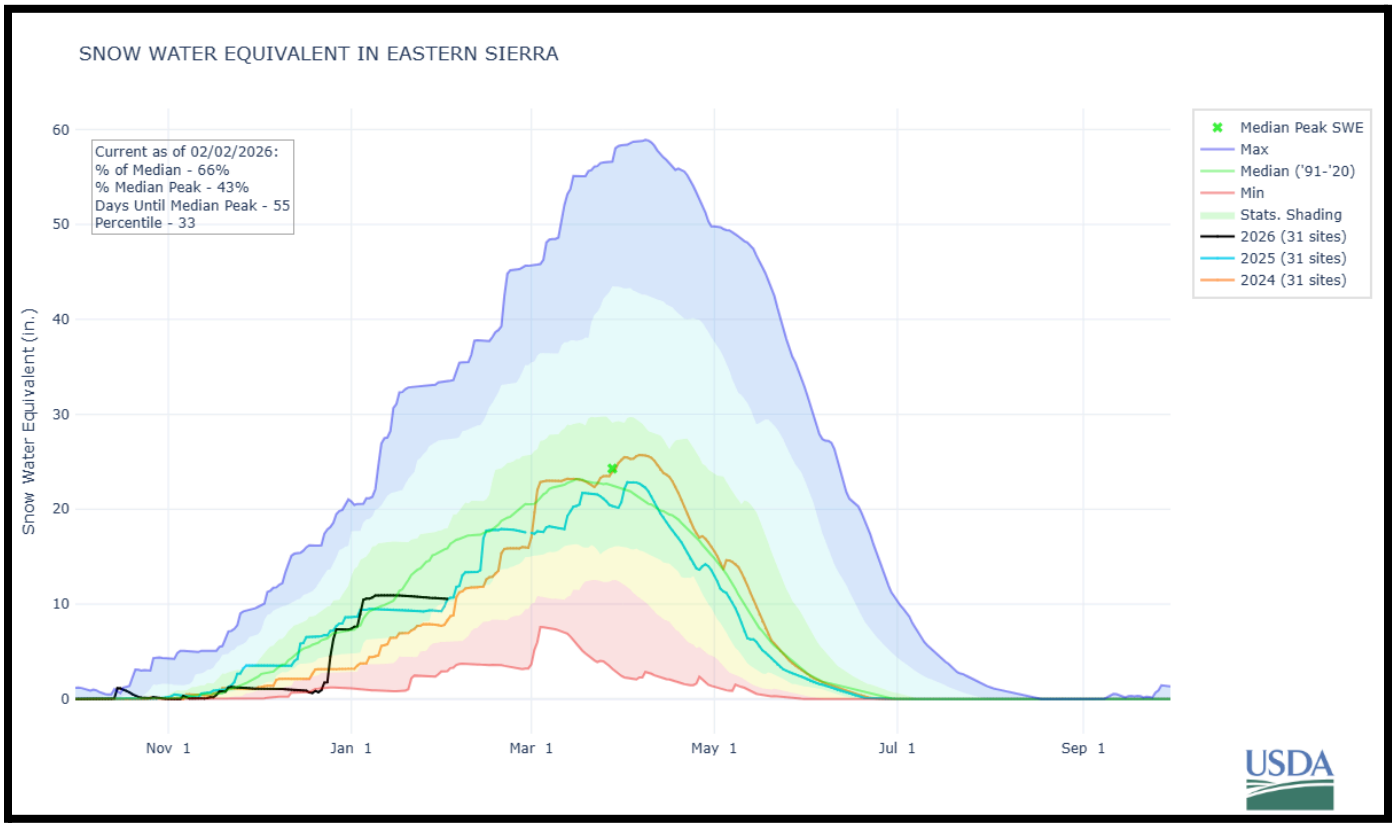


Figure 3. NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent (SWE) for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins. This year in black with 2025 in green and 2024 in orange and historic ranges shaded. Note,the dry conditions the last 3 weeks of January have taken a toll on the snowpack. The % of median was 119% on 1/6!

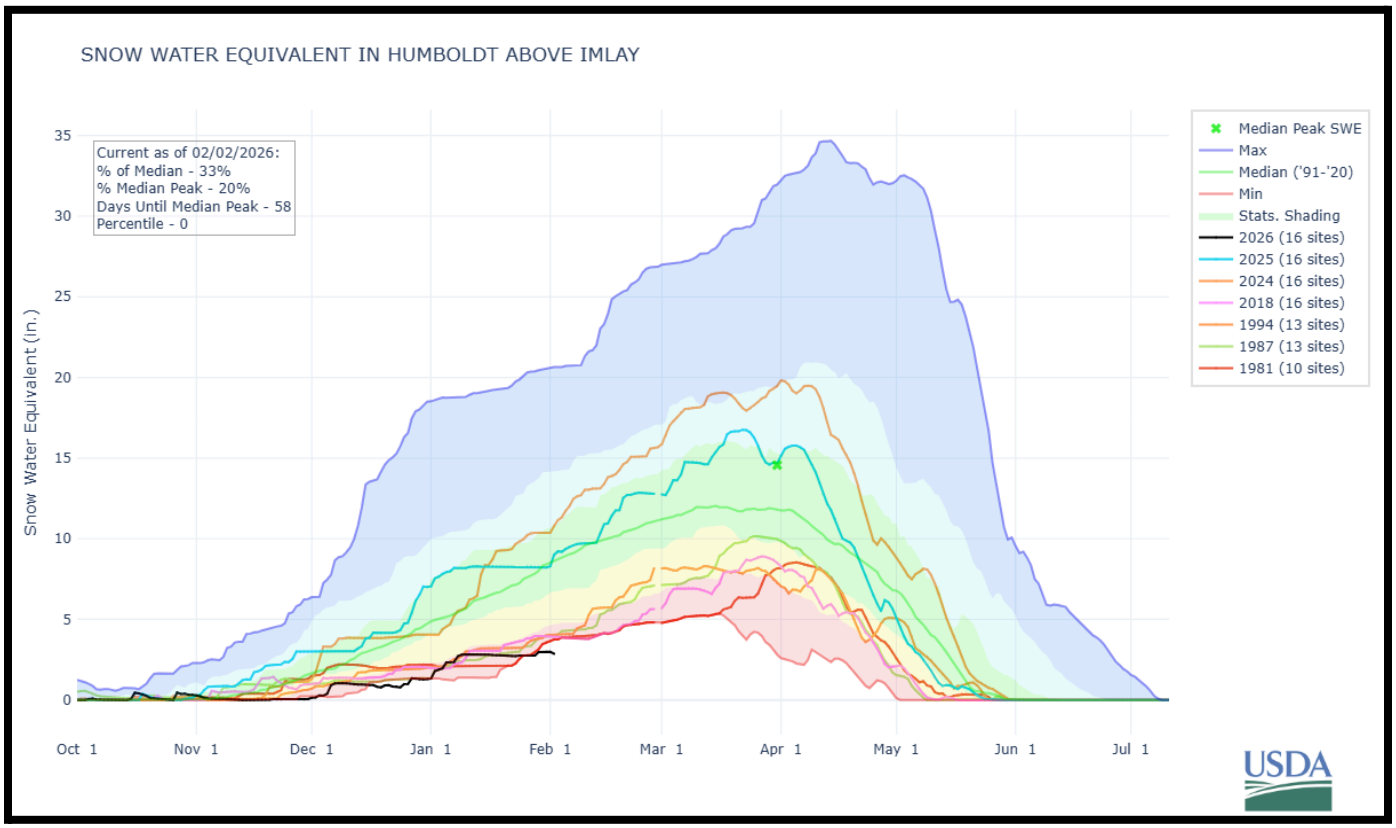


Figure 4. NRCS SNOTEL snow water equivalent (SWE) for the Humboldt with the past two years and most similar years plotted. Note as of 2/2/26 the basin average SWE is the lowest for the 45 year SNOTEL period of record.

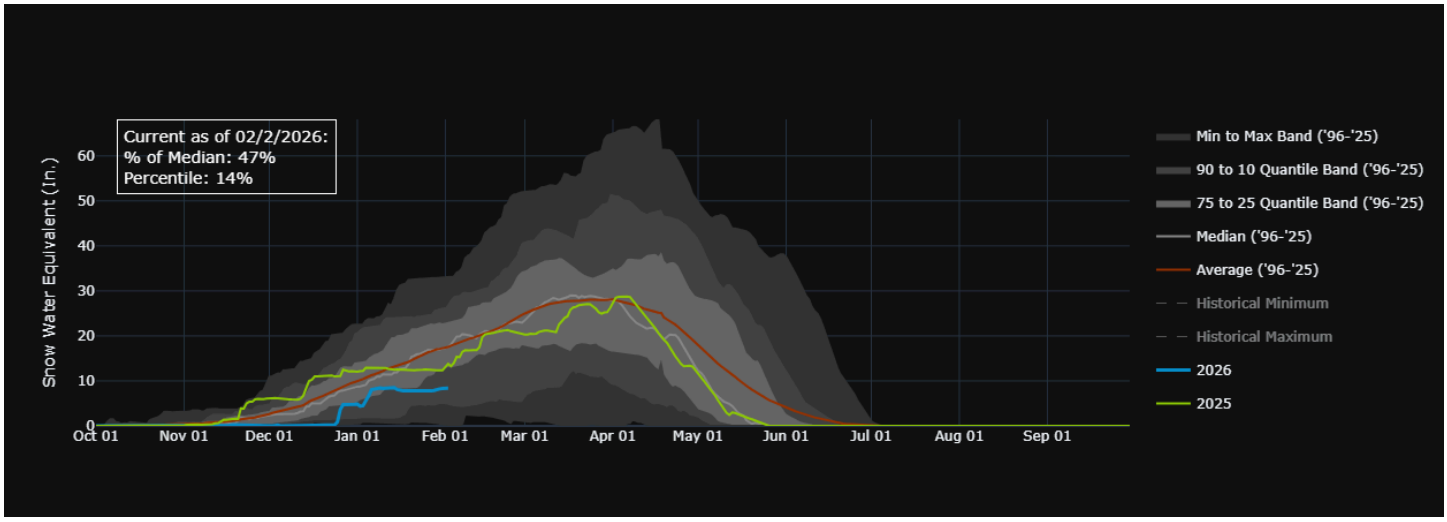


Figure 5. Feather Basin California Cooperative Snow Survey snow water equivalent (SWE)

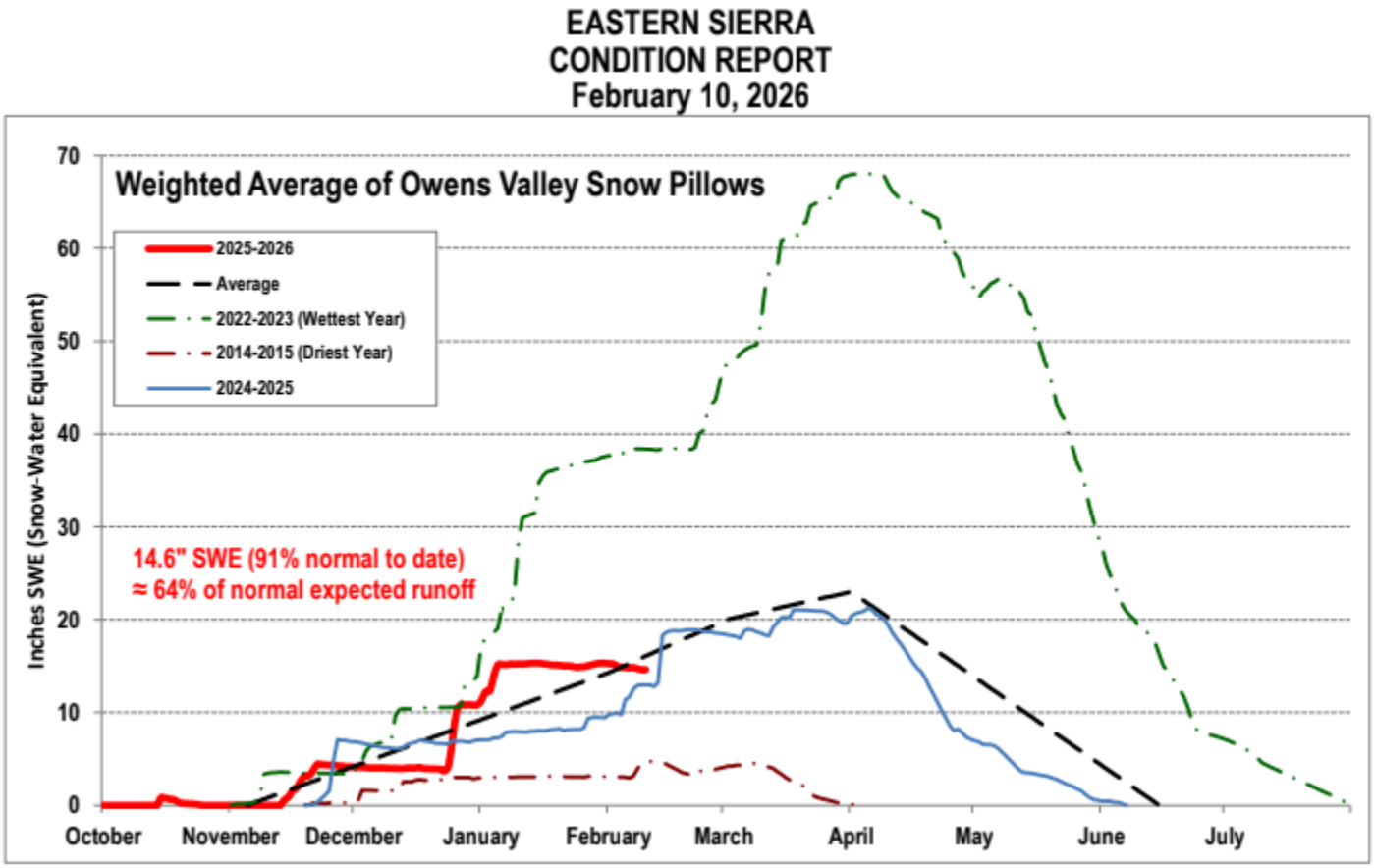
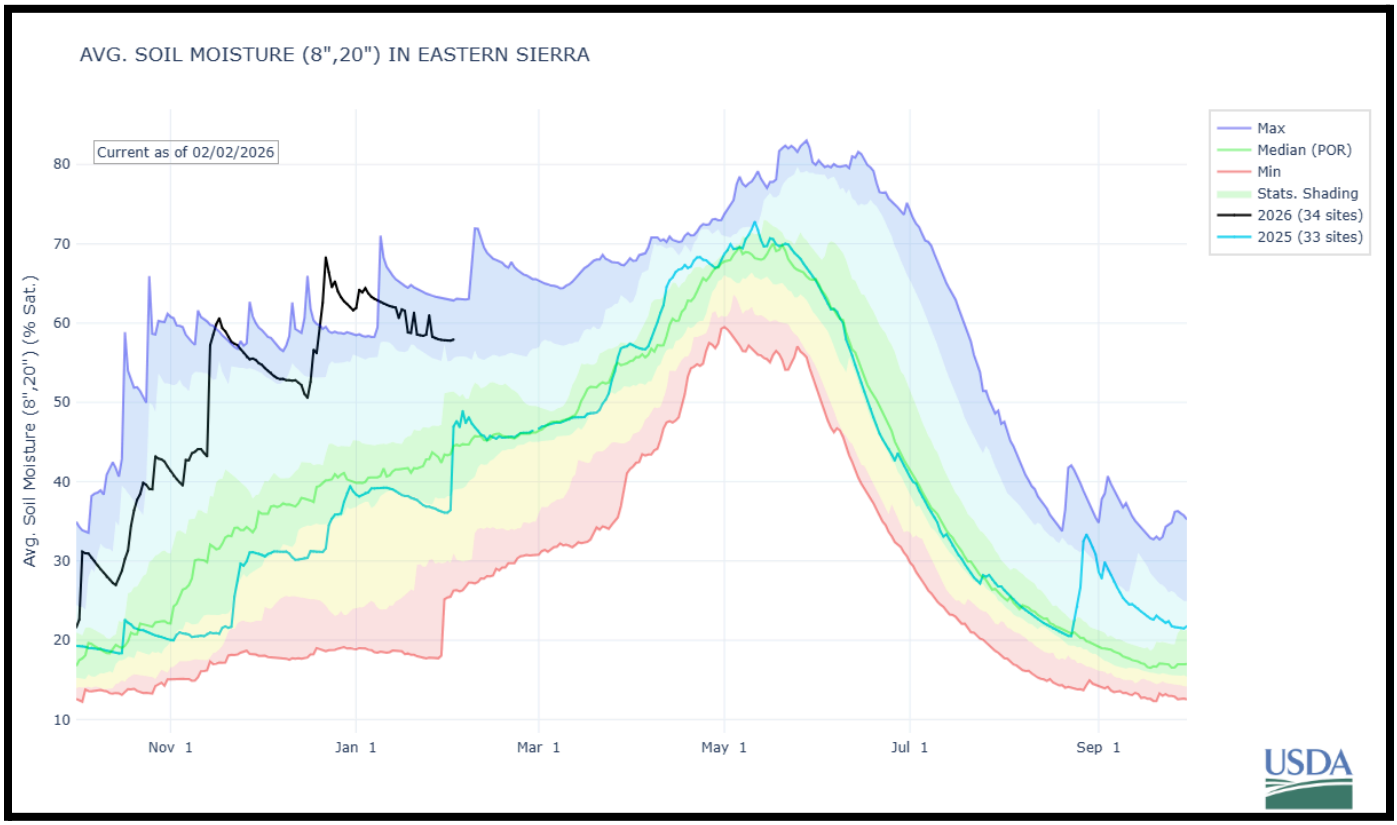


Figure 6. Snowpack conditions in Owens watershed. Figure courtesy of LADWP



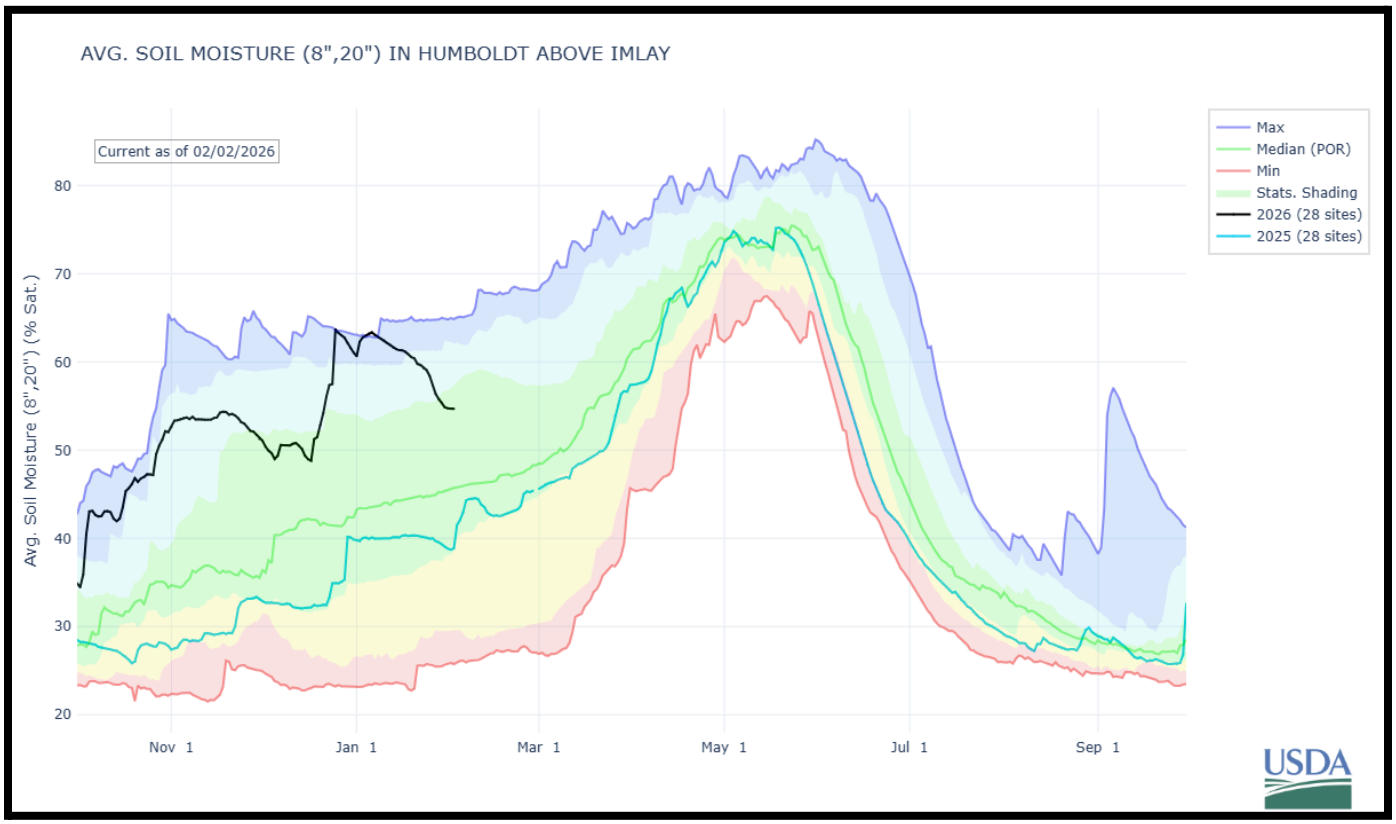


Figure 7. NRCS SNOTEL soil moisture for the combined Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins (top), and Humboldt basin (bottom) indicated in black for the water year 2026. Water year 2025 is plotted in green for additional perspective.

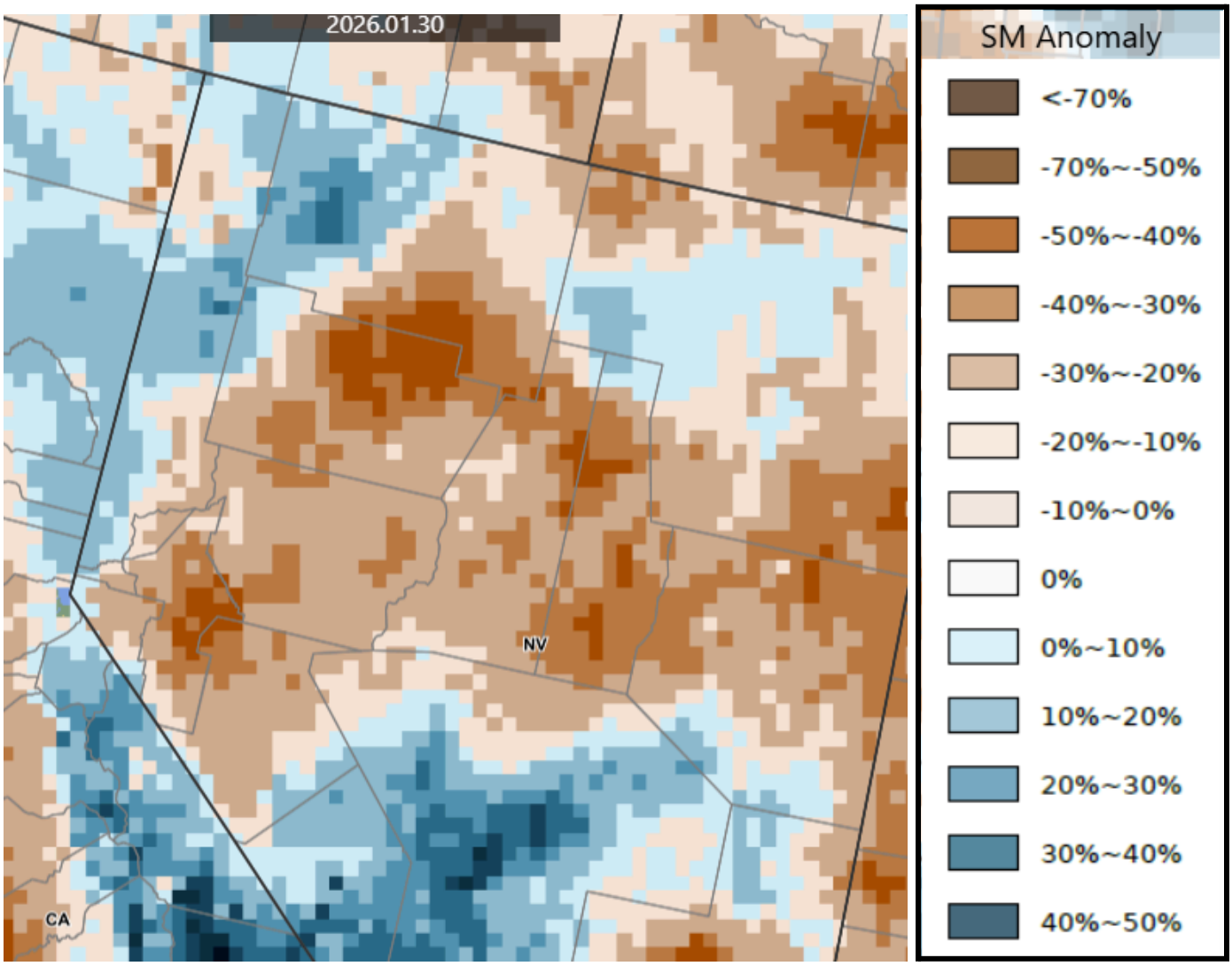


Figure 8. Crop-CASMA Soil Moisture Anomaly 01/30/26

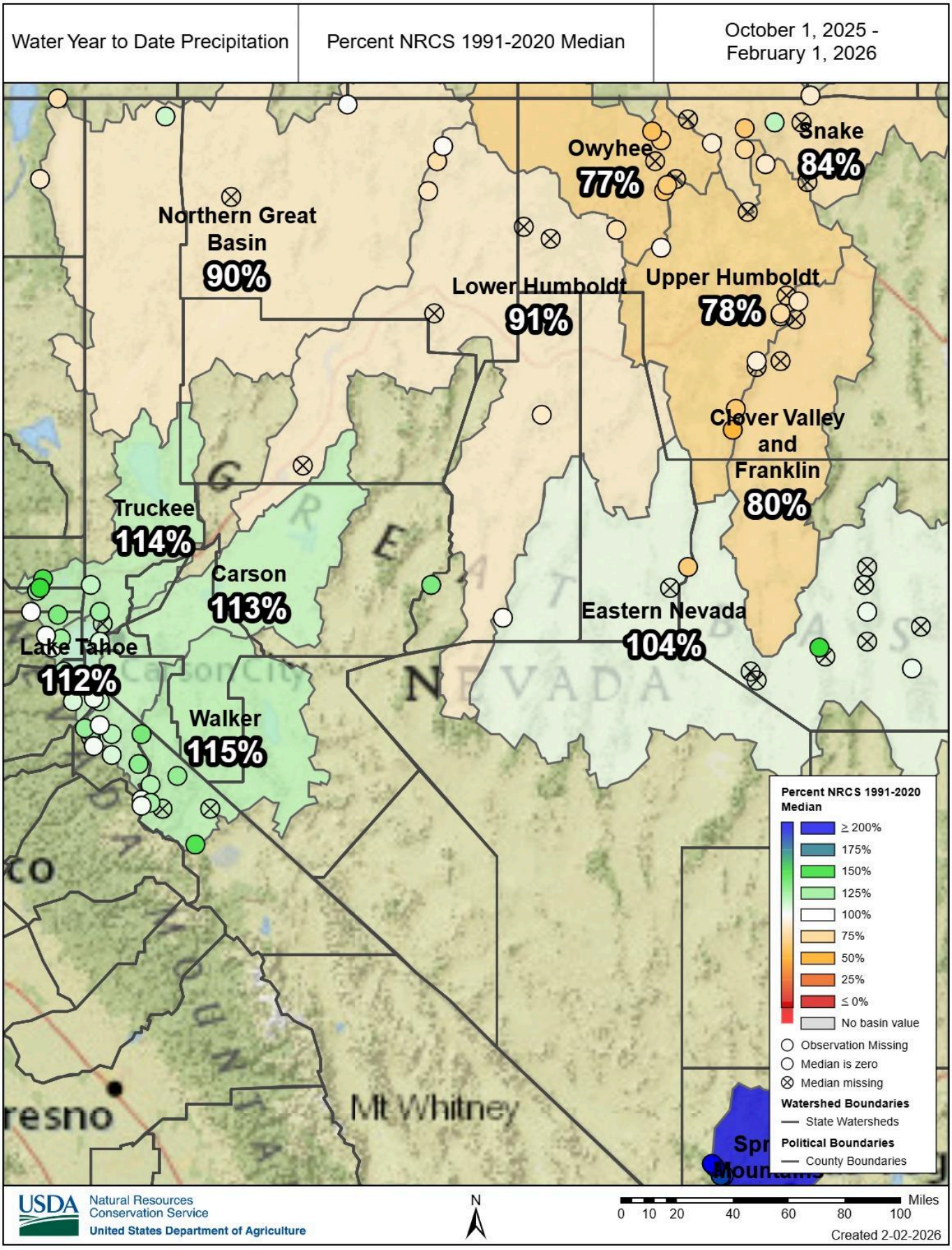


Figure 9. NRCS SNOTEL basin Water year precipitation as % of Median as of February 1st, 2026

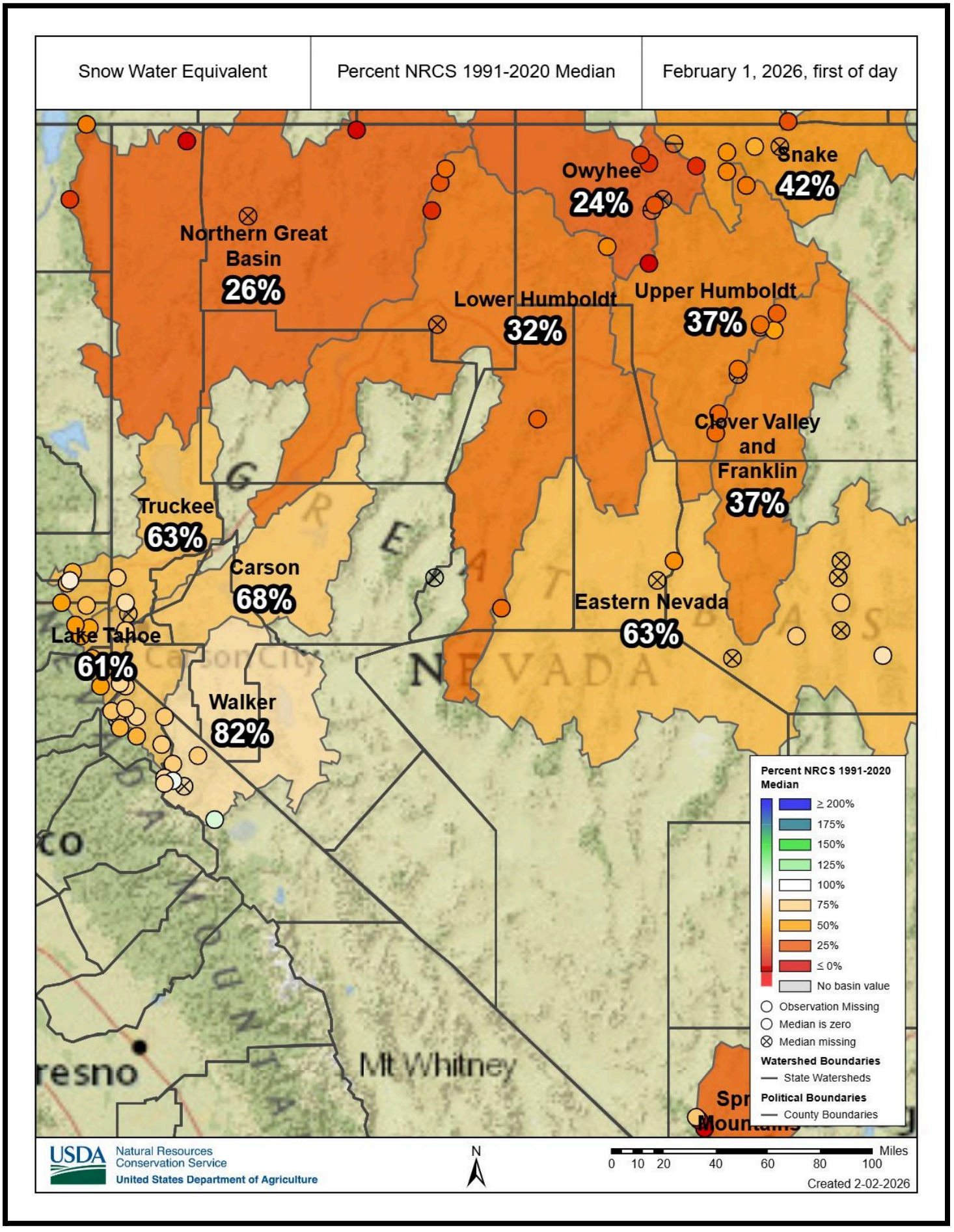


Figure 10. NRCS SNOTEL basin snow water equivalent (SWE) as % of median as of February 1st. 2026

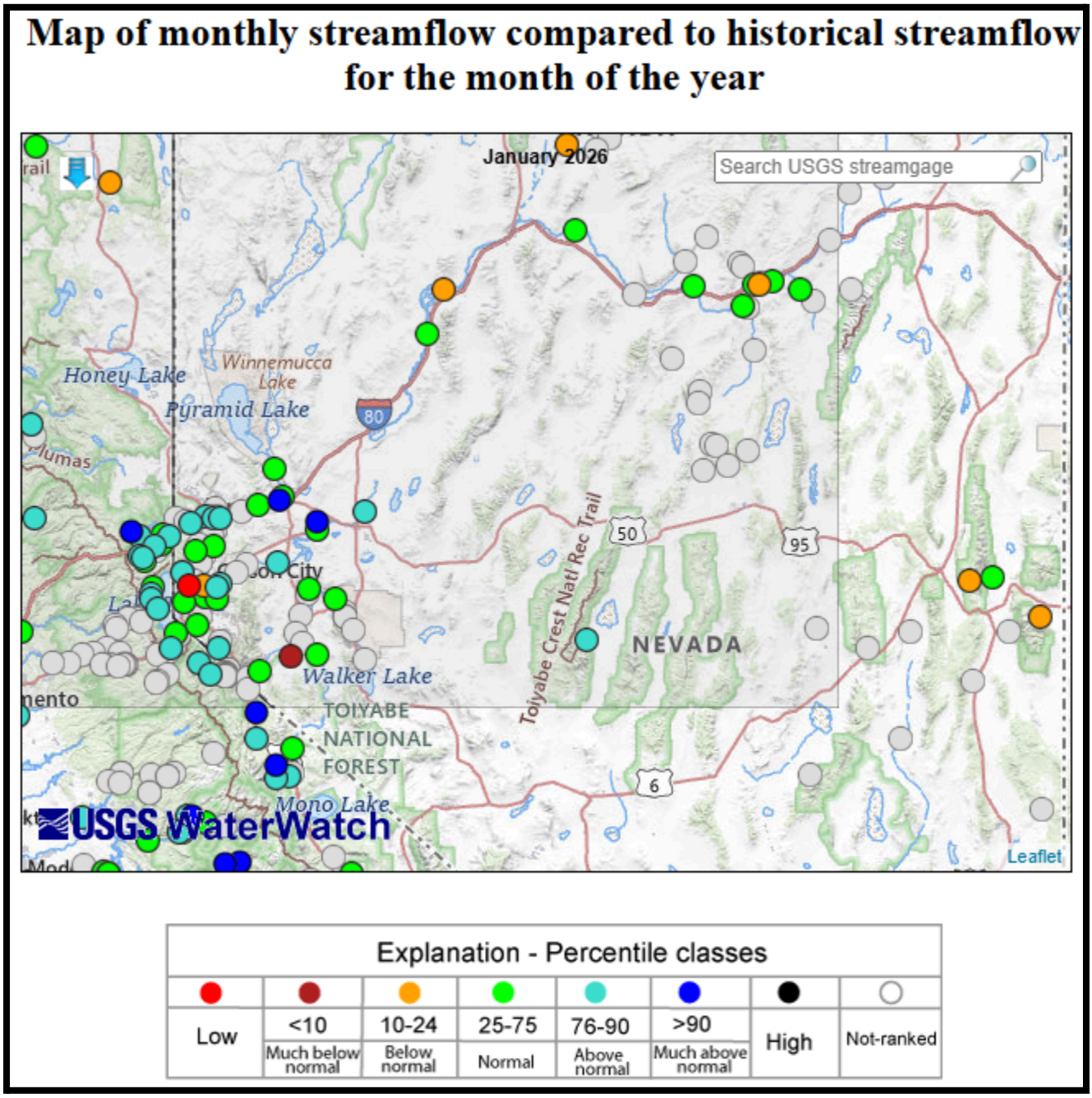
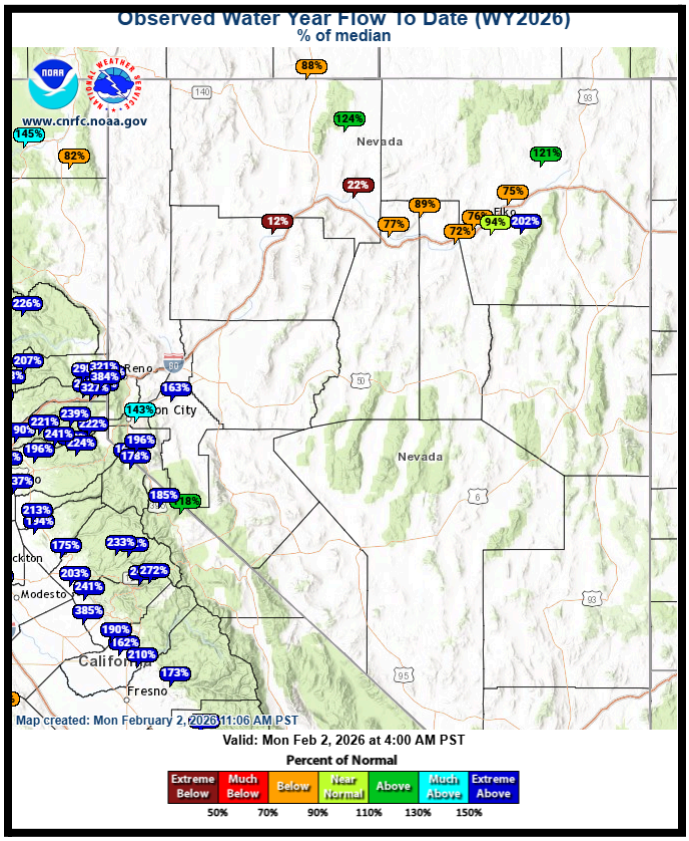


Figure 11: USGS Monthly streamflow for January.



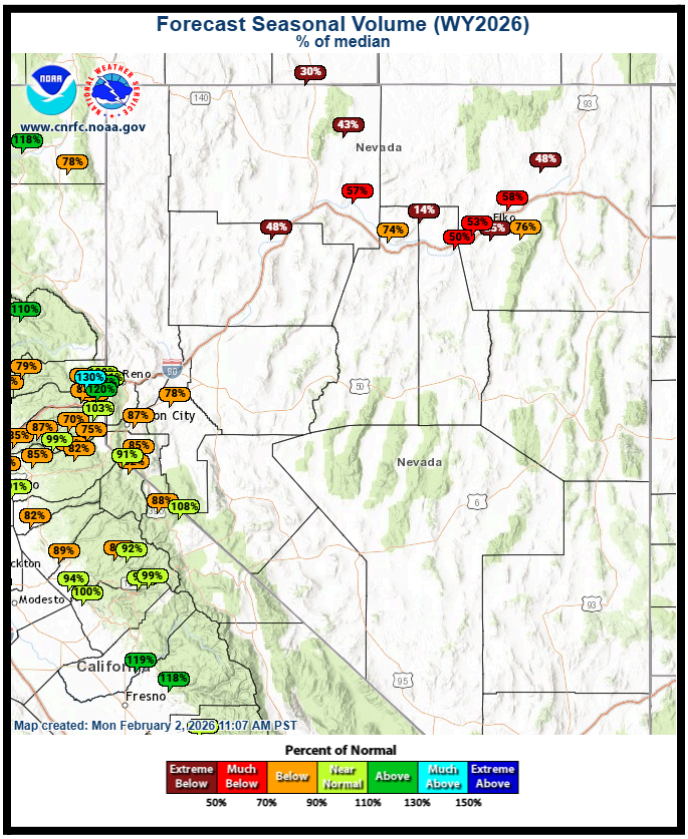


Figure 12. CNRFC Water year 2026 observed flow to date and right figure CNRFC April-July forecast volume both as % of median and as of January 6th.

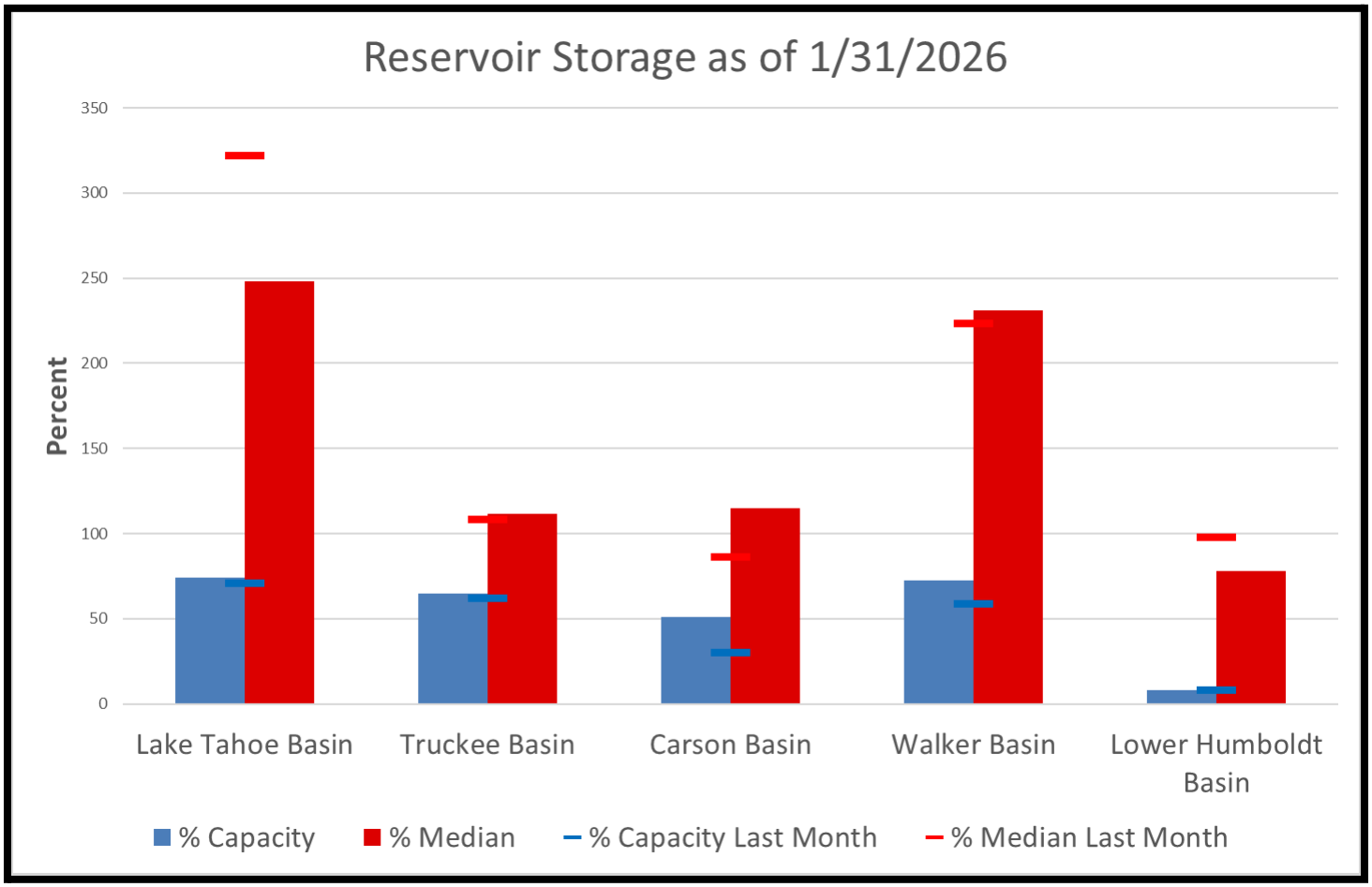
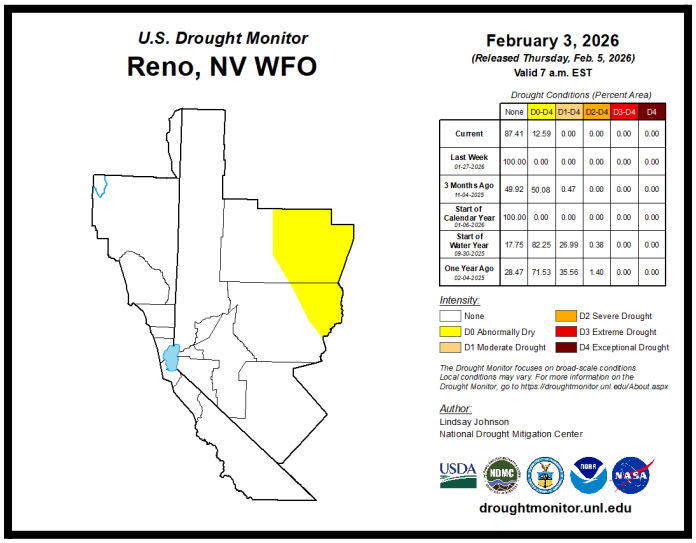


Figure 13. End of January reservoir storage relative to capacity and **median*** for this month and last month.



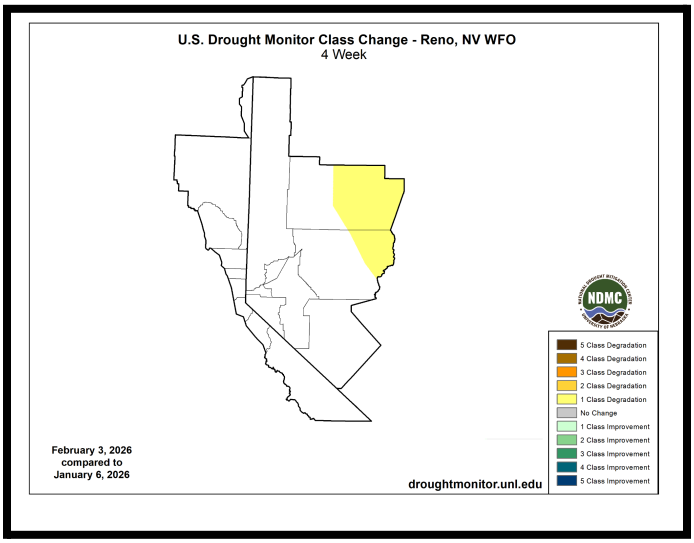


Figure 14. Drought Monitor Status and water year change map. Check for updates at: Drought Monitor.

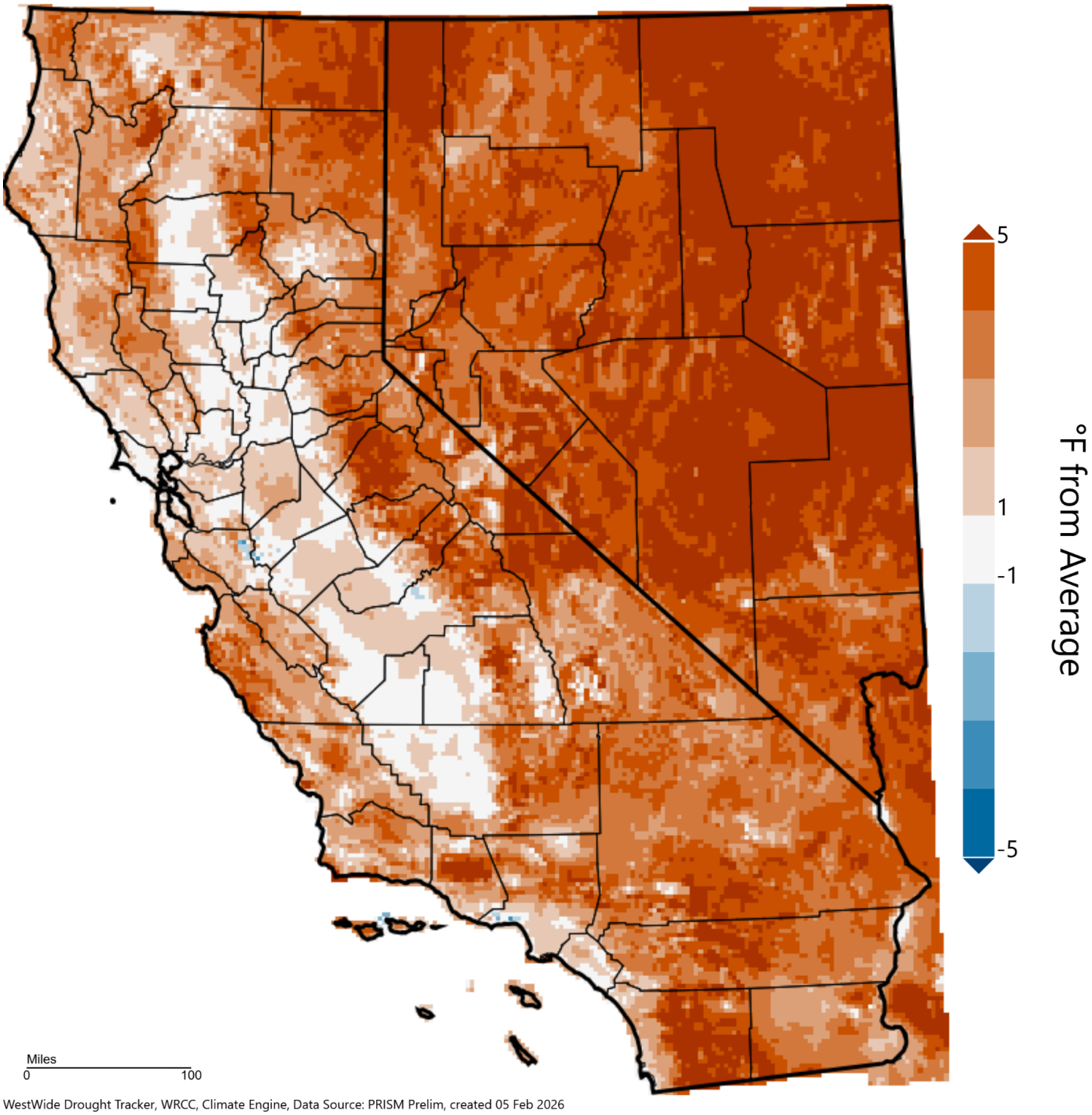


Figure 15. Water year to date mean temperature departure. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. (WWDT)

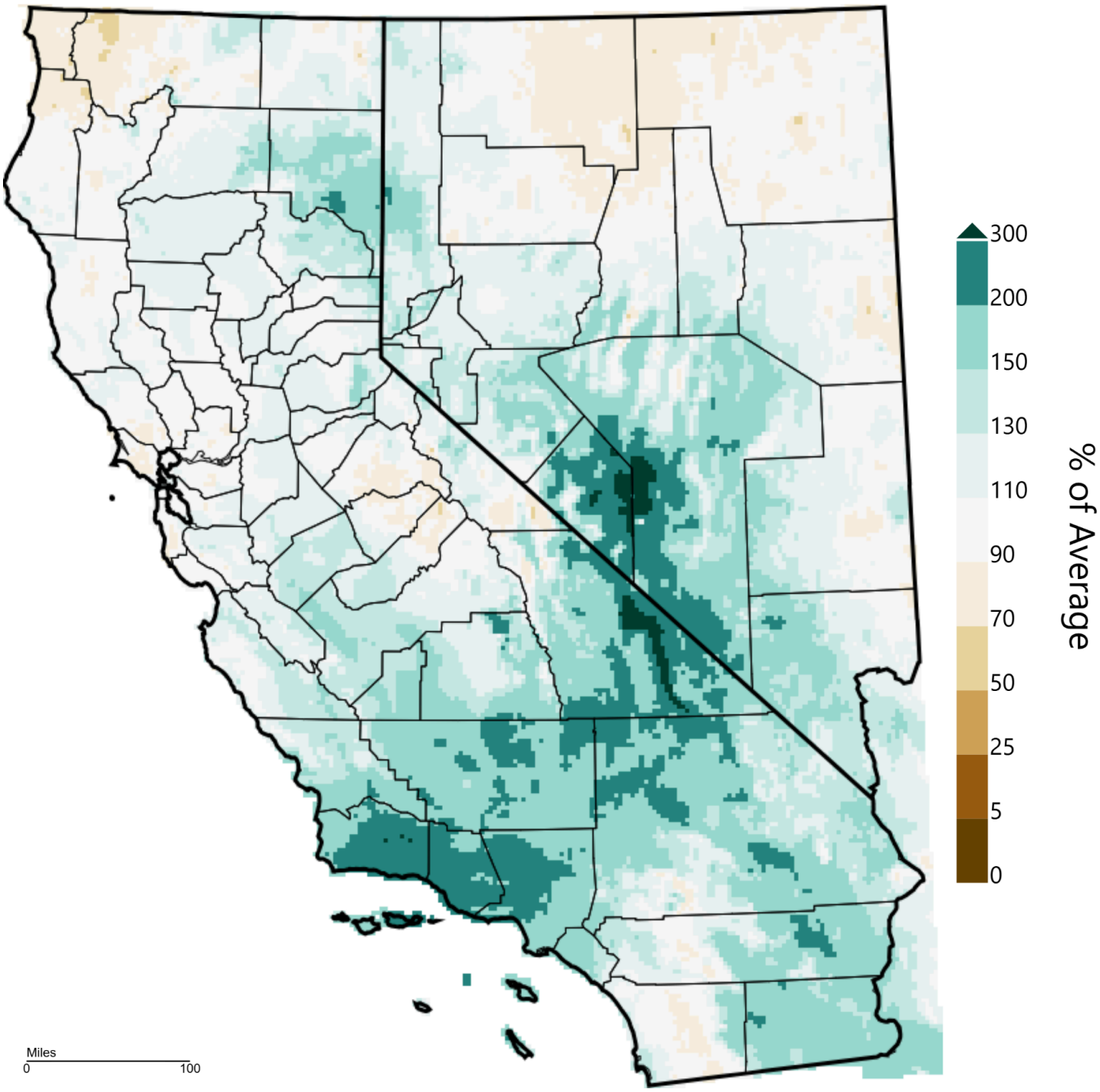


Figure 16. Water year to date precipitation. Courtesy of West Wide Drought Tracker. (WWDT)