

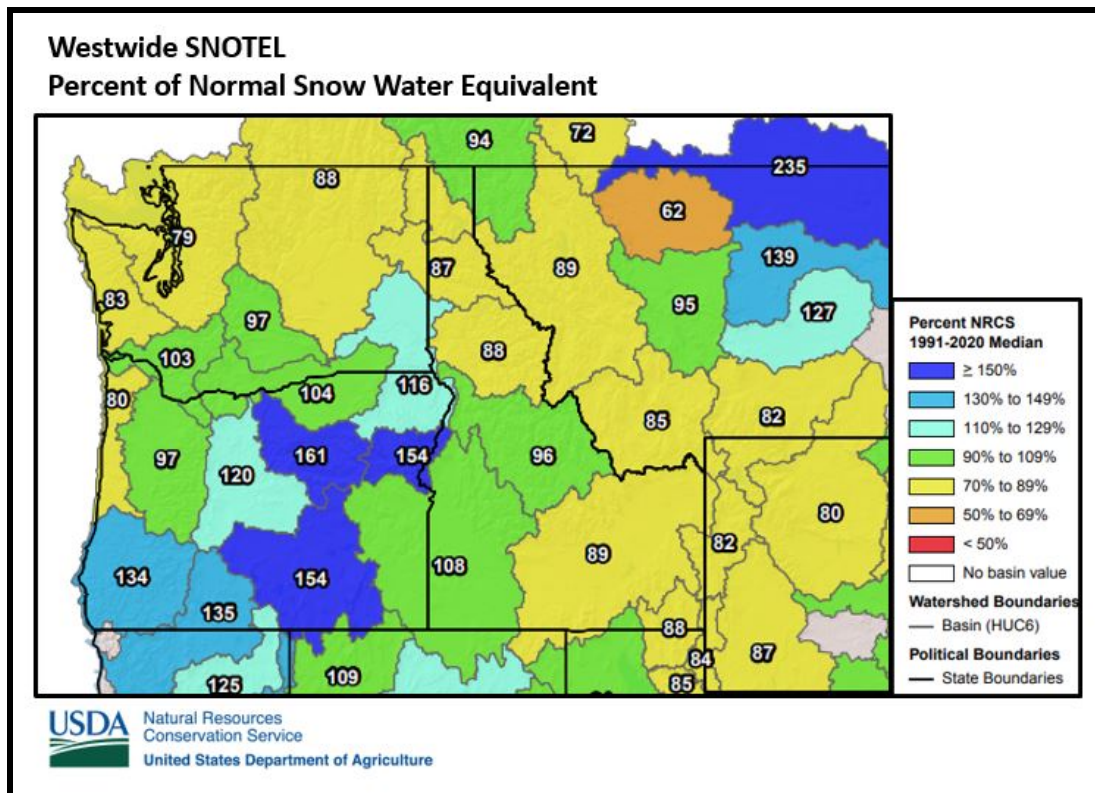
Northwest U.S. Moisture Situation Improves; More Needed

By Scarlett Waters

Kansas City, January 24 (World Weather Inc.) – [Precipitation in the northwestern United States has improved in recent weeks, although there is still need for more moisture to adequately recharge soil moisture and water reservoirs for use in the spring.](#)

Snowpack in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and northern Rocky Mountains is near to below normal across most of the region with above normal snowpack in the Blue Mountains of Oregon. Water reservoir levels in the Yakima Valley have improved slightly from autumn; however, reservoirs are still low, between 12% and 24% of capacity. Soil moisture has also improved, though there is need for more moisture. **Minimal to no precipitation is expected across the crop region in the next 7-days, though a dusting to 3 inches will occur over the northern Rocky Mountains. Longer range outlooks suggest drier biased conditions will prevail through February. If this verifies, more precipitation will be needed to maintain and improve moisture conditions ahead of spring.**

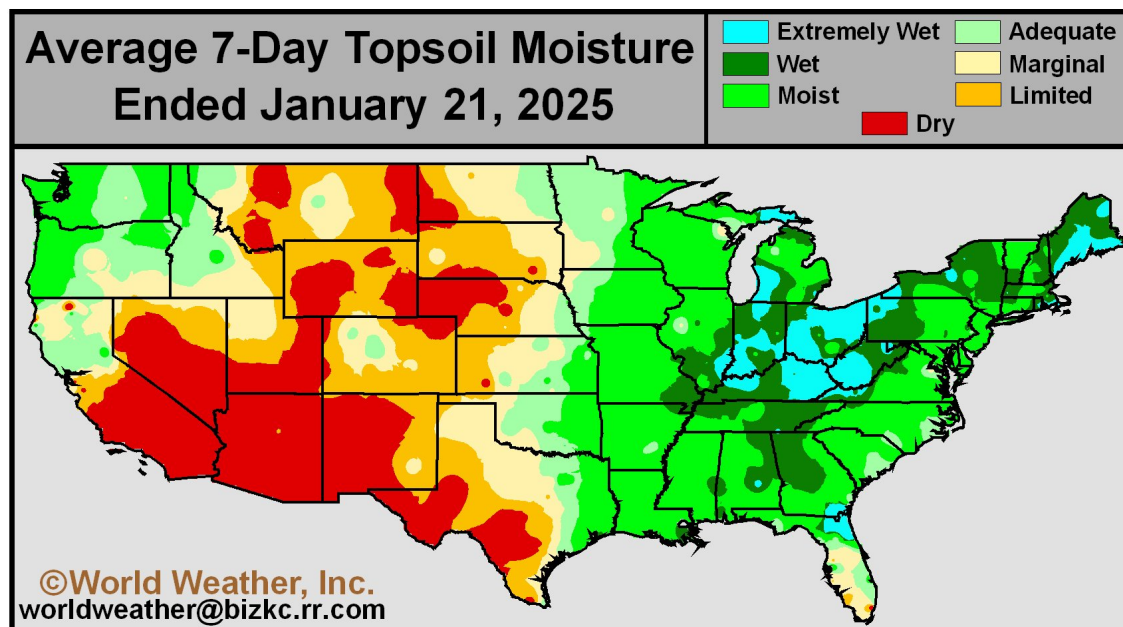
As of January 22, snowpack in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and northern Rocky Mountains was largely near to somewhat below normal. The Blue Mountains in Oregon had above normal snowpack varying from 116% to 161% of normal. **The northern Rocky Mountains and northern Cascade Range will need to see more precipitation events to bring snowpack levels up to normal for this time of year.** The snowpack is extremely important to the region for restoring water supply for human and crop consumption. Melting snow often contributes greatly to long term water supply making the snowpack extremely important.



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Reservoir levels in the Yakima Valley are between 12% and 24% of capacity, which is an improvement from the 12% or less of capacities noted during the autumn. Greater precipitation is needed to contribute to the water supply. Much of the water reservoirs in the Yakima Basin are fed by melting snow and runoff from the Cascade Mountains and since the Cascades seem to have a more significant snowpack than other areas in the region there may be reason to anticipate significant improvement in the water supply during the spring thaw. There is also a low demand for crop moisture at this time of year due to plant dormancy and that helps to buy time for further improvements in precipitation and the water supply.

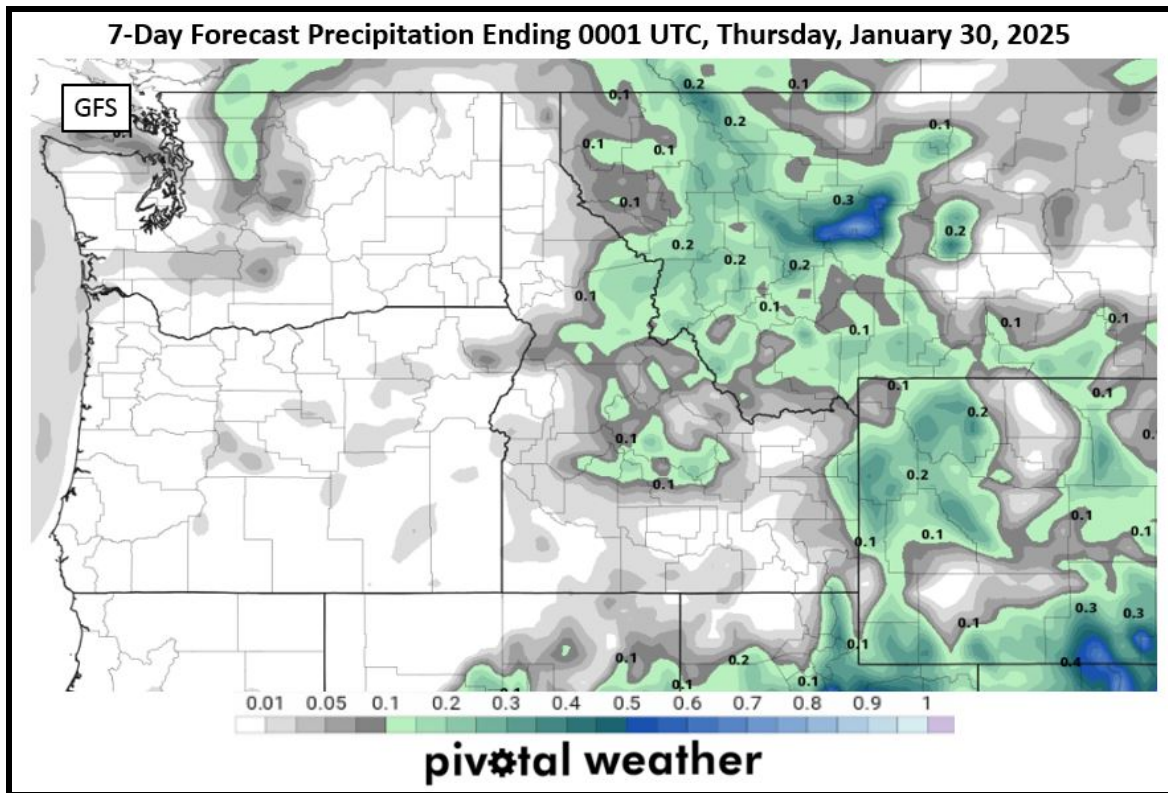
Reservoirs elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest crop region are over 25% of capacity. The upper Snake River Basin reservoirs have the greatest water reserve levels in the region with 47-90% of capacity being reported.



Soil moisture in this region has also improved since autumn. Moisture levels are rated adequate to slightly short which is a big improvement from the short to very short rating that was present a few months ago. Soil moisture is most limited in the Snake River and Harney Basins. Many of the Rocky Mountain states and neighboring areas of the northwestern Great Plains have very short soil moisture and that raises a concern over early spring farming potentials in unirrigated fields. **More moisture will be needed to improve these soil conditions before spring arrives and crops emerge from dormancy.**

In the next 7-days, minimal to no precipitation is expected across cropland. A dusting up to 3 inches of snow will be possible around the northern Rockies, which will aid in raising snowpack levels. In the longer range, somewhat drier biased conditions are expected to persist through the month of February. If this verifies, it will increase the need for moisture to maintain conditions before spring arrives and crops emerge from dormancy.

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