

YBSA Monthly Report February 2026

Storage: The five reservoirs are currently at 76% of capacity which is near average for this time of year. To maintain this average over the next two months, there will need to be more precipitation in the Cascades. The snow-water equivalent (SWE) at this time in the upper Yakima basin is 30% and 52% in the Naches basin. At those levels, the snowpack will not provide the water necessary for the Yakima basin's needs.

Drought in the Yakima Basin: According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, about 32% of the Pacific Northwest was experiencing some form of drought as of Feb. 17. The drought outlook for 2026 is that not enough snowpack for the Yakima basin. The snowpack at the present time is less than 50% of normal with only two months left for snow accumulation. [Click Here for complete article, "Washington State Facing Third-Worst Snowpack Year on Record Researchers Say."](#) **["Washington state facing third-worst snowpack year on record, researchers say"](#)**. By Olivia Palmer, Yakima Herald-Republic, Feb 26, 2026.

Short Water Year: With a low snowpack, spring runoff (flooding) is unlikely. Without additional surface water in the basin, groundwater suffers, and a reduction occurs in the aquifer. When ground water is not available for our agricultural community, it is not available for use to reduce the effects on our surface water. Both instream for and out of stream use suffers when very little groundwater returns to the Yakima River in the spring and summer. Along with the water and farmworker shortage, and the ability to sell the fruit and vegetables will create a problem for the economy in the Yakima Basin. Bringing additional surface water for the Yakima basin is the best solution (Columbia River Water).

Go to www.ybsa.org for additional information.