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Colorado River Hydrology and Operations Update

2027-2028 Operations, August 24-Month Study, DROA Status

September 14, 2026

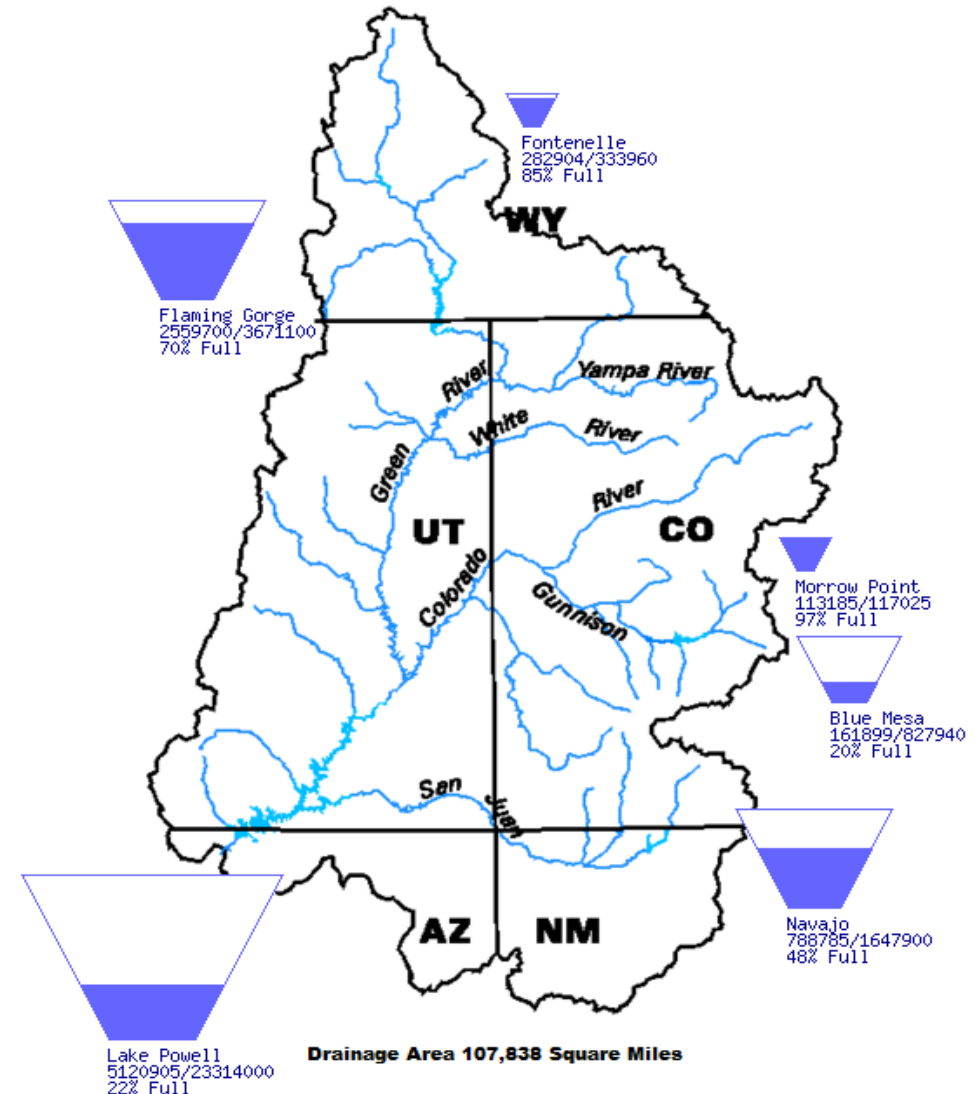
Upper Basin Storage

(as of September 8, 2026)

Reservoir	Percent Current Live Storage	Current Live Storage (maf)	Live Storage Capacity (maf)	Elevation (feet)
Fontenelle	85	0.28	0.33	6,499.27
Flaming Gorge	70	2.56	3.67	6,009.22
Blue Mesa	20	0.16	0.83	7,418.09
Navajo	48	0.79	1.65	6,010.99
Lake Powell	22	5.12	23.31	3,517.46
UC System Storage	30	9.04	29.93	
Total System Storage	31	18.15	58.48	

Data Current as of:
09/08/2026

Upper Colorado River Drainage Basin



Most Probable September Forecast Water Year 2026

Observed April – July 2026 Unregulated Inflow

Reservoir	Inflow (kaf)		Percent of Avg ¹
Fontenelle	318	-	43
Flaming Gorge	328	-	34
Blue Mesa	155	-	24
Navajo	141	-	22
Powell	1,144	-	18

Water Year 2026 Unregulated Inflow Forecast as of September 1, 2026

Reservoir	Inflow (kaf)	Change from Aug	Percent of Avg ¹
Fontenelle	623	16	58
Flaming Gorge	607	20	47
Blue Mesa	375	-10	41
Navajo	529	-25	58
Powell	3,516	-69	37

¹Water year statistics are based on the 30-year period from 1991-2020



Most Probable September Forecast Water Year 2027

April – July 2027
Forecasted Unregulated Inflow
as of September 1, 2026

Reservoir	Inflow (kaf)	Change from Aug	Percent of Avg ¹
Fontenelle	625	0	85
Flaming Gorge	790	15	82
Blue Mesa	535	-10	84
Navajo	525	-15	84
Powell	5,050	0	79

Water Year 2027
Unregulated Inflow Forecast
as of September 1, 2026

Reservoir	Inflow (kaf)	Change from Aug	Percent of Avg ¹
Fontenelle	875	0	81
Flaming Gorge	1,120	15	79
Blue Mesa	715	-20	79
Navajo	725	-25	80
Powell	7,320	20	76

¹Water year statistics are based on the 30-year period from 1991-2020





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2027-2028 Operating Guidelines

2027-2028 Operating Guidelines Overview

- Issued pursuant to the 2026 ROD which adopted the 2026 Final EIS Preferred Alternative Decision Framework
- Developed with consideration of feedback from the Upper Basin and Lower Basin States, Basin Tribes, and Stakeholders
- Key operational elements
 - Set annual releases from Lake Powell, including within-year adjustments
 - Set annual Lake Mead shortage condition with reductions distributed among Lower Basin States
 - Provide for Lower Basin system conservation water in addition to reductions
 - Extend and expand provisions for Intentionally Created Surplus
 - Establish a Federally Managed Water Resources Pool
 - Identify triggers for consultation on potential releases from Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) Upper Initial Units and other protective measures at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, if needed



Lake Powell Releases – Overview

- Three elevation ranges with a specified process for determining operations – *Upper Elevation Range*, *Mid Elevation Range* and *Lower Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range*
- The general steps for determining operations in the Upper Elevation and Mid Elevation Ranges are:
 - Perform Exhibit Runs using a series of potential releases in descending order to identify an initial Water Year (WY) release volume that maintains a minimum Lake Powell elevation of 3,510 ft throughout the WY
 - From October through April, evaluate monthly projections to determine if the release should be adjusted down (potentially in combination with releases from CRSP Upper Initial Units) to avoid declining below 3,510 ft through March of the following year or up if Lake Powell is projected to end the WY above 3,565 ft
 - Consult if Lake Powell is projected to decline below 3,500 ft
- The Lower Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range has a distinct process
- Two elevation ranges with consultation-dependent operations: When the projected October 1 Lake Powell elevation is above 3,665 ft or when the projected October 1 elevation is below 3,500 ft (the *Extraordinary Circumstances* range)

Lake Powell		
Elevation (feet)	Operation According to the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines	Live Storage (maf)
3,700	Consult on releases consistent with Section 602(a) storage requirement contained in the Colorado River Basin Project Act.	23.31
3,665		18.20
	Upper Elevation Range Release between 7.50 maf and 8.23 maf.	
3,565		8.15
	Mid-Elevation Range Release between 7.00 maf to 8.00 maf.	
3,540		6.45
	Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range Release between 6.00 maf and 7.00 maf to maintain elevation 3,510 ft.	
3,510		4.70
3,500		4.22
3,490	Extraordinary Circumstances Consult regarding potential actions to further protect critical Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure.	3.74
3,370		0



Lake Powell & Lake Mead Operational Diagram from the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines

WY 2027 Lake Powell Operational Determination Run (aka “Exhibit Run”) with an LTEMP 7.00 maf Release¹

Lake Powell		
Elevation (feet)	Operation According to the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines	Live Storage (maf)
3,700	Consult on releases consistent with Section 602(a) storage requirement contained in the Colorado River Basin Project Act.	23.31
3,665		18.20
	Upper Elevation Range Release between 7.50 maf and 8.23 maf.	
3,565	Mid-Elevation Range Release between 7.00 maf to 8.00 maf.	8.15
3,540	Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range Release between 6.00 maf and 7.00 maf to maintain elevation 3,510 ft.	6.45
3,510		4.70
3,500		4.22
3,490	Extraordinary Circumstances Consult regarding potential actions to further protect critical Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure.	3.74
3,370		0

Lake Mead		
Elevation (feet)	Operation According to the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines	Live Storage (maf)
1,220	Consult regarding the potential to increase apportionment above 6.25 maf.	26.18
1,125		14.14
	Shortage Condition Determination and Lower Basin Reductions Apportion 6.25 maf to the Lower Division States.	
1,010		5.05
	Consult to consider potential actions throughout the Basin to respond to and address hydrologic and operational conditions.	
950		2.01
895		0

3,515.89 ft
Oct 1, 2026
Projection

¹ Lake Powell and Lake Mead operational determinations will be documented in the draft 2027 AOP.



Lake Powell Releases – Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range

- *Lower Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range* — When the projected October 1 Lake Powell elevation is below 3,540 ft:
 - In August, determine whether an initial WY release volume of 7.0 maf maintains a minimum Lake Powell elevation of 3,510 ft throughout the WY. If 3,510 ft is maintained,
 - From October through April evaluate monthly projections for potential adjustments to the initial WY release volume
 - If the projected Lake Powell elevation is less than 3,510 feet, adjust Lake Powell releases downward as needed to no less than 6.0 maf, such that when combined with additional releases from the CRSP Upper Initial Units, a minimum of 3,510 feet is maintained through March of the following Water Year
 - If the projected Lake Powell elevation at the end of the Water Year is greater than 3,565 ft, adjust releases upward, such that half the difference in volume from the projected September 30 Lake Powell storage at elevation 3,565 is added to the release.
 - In August, if Exhibit Run shows that a WY release of 7.0 maf results in a decline below 3,510 ft defer the release determination and follow the WY process in the Determination Table (next slide)
 - Should Lake Powell be projected to reach elevations below 3,500 feet, see Section 5.1.D to consult on additional actions that may be necessary.

Lake Powell		
Elevation (feet)	Operation According to the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines	Live Storage (maf)
3,700	Consult on releases consistent with Section 602(a) storage requirement contained in the Colorado River Basin Project Act.	23.31
3,665	-----	18.20
	Upper Elevation Range Release between 7.50 maf and 8.23 maf.	
3,565	-----	8.15
	Mid-Elevation Range Release between 7.00 maf to 8.00 maf.	
3,540	-----	6.45
	Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range Release between 6.00 maf and 7.00 maf to maintain elevation 3,510 ft.	
3,510		4.70
3,500	-----	4.22
3,490	Extraordinary Circumstances Consult regarding potential actions to further protect critical Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure.	3.74
3,370		0



Lake Powell Lower Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range Determination Table

Month	Steps Reclamation will Follow to Determine Water Year Release in the Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range for 2027–2028 Operating Guidelines (when Lake Powell elevation is less than 3,510 feet in the August 24-Month Study Exhibit Run)
Aug	- State that the expected Water Year release will be between 6.0 and 7.0 maf - Determine monthly release pattern October-April that results in maintaining a minimum target elevation of 3,510 feet in March of the following year - Perform at least 2 “official” August 24-Month Studies - Runs assume a Water Year release of 6.0 maf and 7.0 maf - All runs include the same release pattern Oct-Apr that maintains a minimum target elevation of 3,510 feet in March of the following year
Sept-Dec	Perform the same 2 “official” 24-Month Studies each month as described above (may include adjustments to the October-April monthly release pattern if needed to maintain a target of 3,510 feet)
Jan-Mar	Continue potential adjustment of Lake Powell monthly releases per above but begin including assumptions regarding use of the CRSP Upper Initial Units for May of the current year through April of the following year, into the 6.0 maf run only, as appropriate
April	- Determine Water Year release according to the following steps: - Evaluate the projected Lake Powell elevation in March of the following year assuming a 7.0 maf release. For the purpose of Water Year 2027 and 2028 only, this will be considered as the baseline for determining whether releases should be less than 7.0 maf, and additional releases from CRSP Upper Initial Units should be considered. - If the March projected elevation is > 3,510 feet, - Set the Water Year release to 7.0 maf - No releases from the CRSP Upper Initial Units will be made for infrastructure protection purposes - If the March projected elevation is < 3,510 feet, determine the volume needed to maintain a minimum of 3,510 feet in March of the following year. As practicable, Reclamation will determine the reduced Lake Powell releases and CRSP Upper Initial Unit actions required contemporaneously (subject to hydrologic conditions), considering historical consultations and volumetric reductions in Lake Powell Releases and CRSP Upper Initial Unit releases. Past actions have included 1) a planned 500 thousand acre-feet (kaf) CRSP Upper Initial Unit release and recovery coupled with a 480 kaf reduction in the Lake Powell release and 2) a planned 660-1,000 kaf CRSP Upper Initial Unit release and recovery coupled with a 1,480 kaf reduction in the Lake Powell release. - Reclamation will consult with the Basin States in the event of any of the following conditions: - if the volume needed to protect the critical elevation of 3,500 feet in March of the following year is > 2.0 maf; or - if any Basin State believes there is inequity between the volume available for release from the CRSP Upper Initial Units and the Lake Powell release reductions, it may request consultation; or - if a Lake Powell release of < 6.0 maf is required to protect 3,500 feet in March of the following year; or - if the Lake Powell elevation at the end of the water year is projected to be greater than 3,565 feet. - When operating under 2 or 3 above, Reclamation will consider any other tools available that can be used to maintain 3,510 feet
May	Publish 24-Month Study with selected Water Year release and any projected releases from the CRSP Upper Initial Units for May of the current year through April of the following year (adjusted operations could begin in April if conditions warrant)



Lake Mead Operations – Operating Condition and Additional Considerations

- The Secretary will determine a Shortage Condition for 2027 and 2028 and apportion 6.25 maf for consumptive use in the Lower Division States (a reduction of 1.25 maf)
- In addition to the reduction of 1.25 maf per year in 2027 and 2028, Contractors within the Lower Division States will conserve an additional 700,000 af in total of System Conservation water in 2026, 2027, and 2028 pursuant to voluntary agreements
- Should the Most Probable projection of any 24-Month Study show Lake Mead falling below 1,010 ft in the subsequent 12 months, the Secretary shall consult to consider potential actions throughout the Basin to respond to and address hydrologic and operational conditions.
- Should the Most Probable projection indicate a likelihood of achieving Lake Mead elevation 1,125 feet or above during 2027 or 2028, the Secretary will consult with the Lower Division States regarding the potential to increase apportionments.

Lake Mead		
Elevation (feet)	Operation According to the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines	Live Storage (maf)
1,220	Consult regarding the potential to increase apportionment above 6.25 maf.	26.18
1,125		14.14
	Shortage Condition Determination and Lower Basin Reductions	
	Apportion 6.25 maf to the Lower Division States.	
1,010	Consult to consider potential actions throughout the Basin to respond to and address hydrologic and operational conditions.	5.05
950		2.01
895		0





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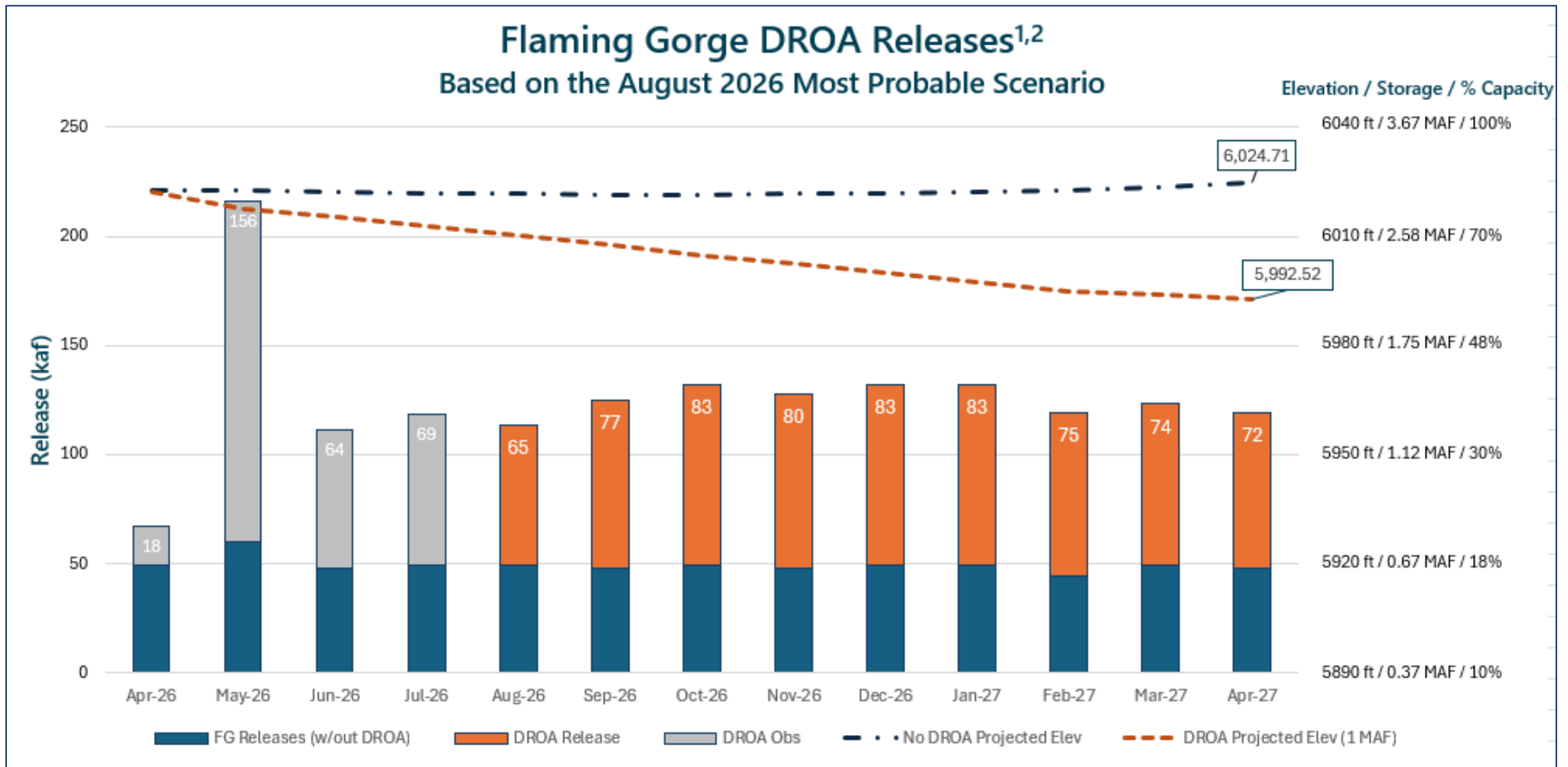
August 24-Month Study

Upper Basin Reservoir Operations

Water Year 2027-2028 Modeling Assumptions

August 2026 24-Month Study

- Lake Powell and the Upper Initial Units operated consistent with the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines, Upper Initial Units' Records of Decision, and the Upper Basin Drought Response Operations Agreement.
- **Lake Powell operating in Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range in WY 2027** - the August 2026 24-Month Study most probable inflow scenario projects the October 1, 2026 Lake Powell reservoir elevation to be 3,515.89 ft. This results in Lake Powell operating in the Low Elevation Infrastructure Protection Range (Section 5.1.C) of the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines for WY 2027.
- **Lake Powell WY 2027 release between 6.0 maf and 7.0 maf; to be determined in April** - with an annual release volume of 7.0 maf from Lake Powell in WY 2027, Lake Powell is projected to below elevation 3,510 ft, therefore operating in Section 5.1.C.2 of the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines.
 - The WY 2027 release may be outside of the identified range, subject to appropriate consultation, in accordance with Section 5.1.C.2 of the 2027-2028 Operating Guidelines.



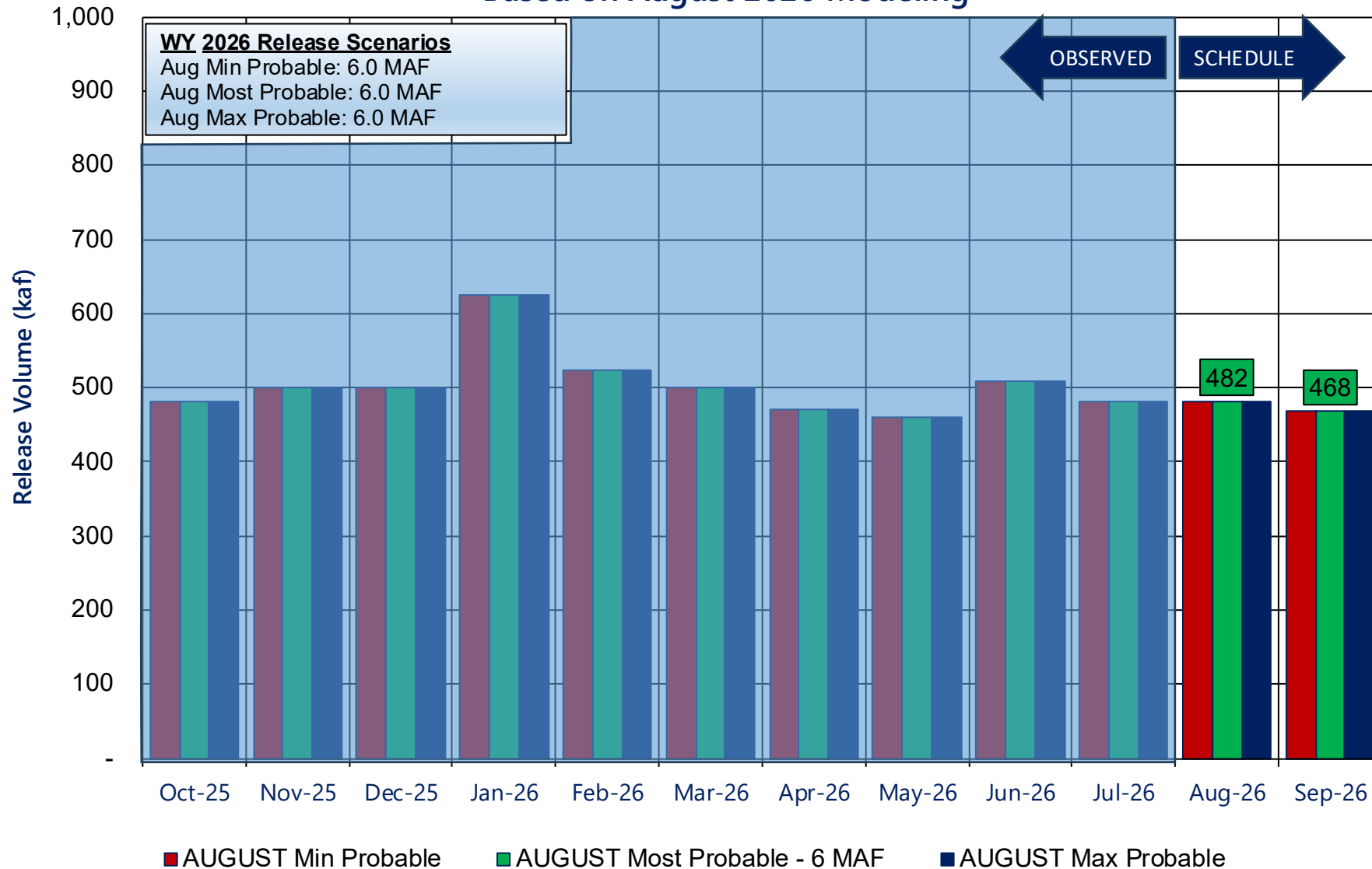
¹ Total DROA released through July 2026 is 308 kaf. Current modeling projects 1 MAF of DROA released by April 2027.

² Up-to-date DROA accounting is [available online](#).

Potential Lake Powell Monthly Release Volume Distribution

Release Scenarios for Water Year 2026

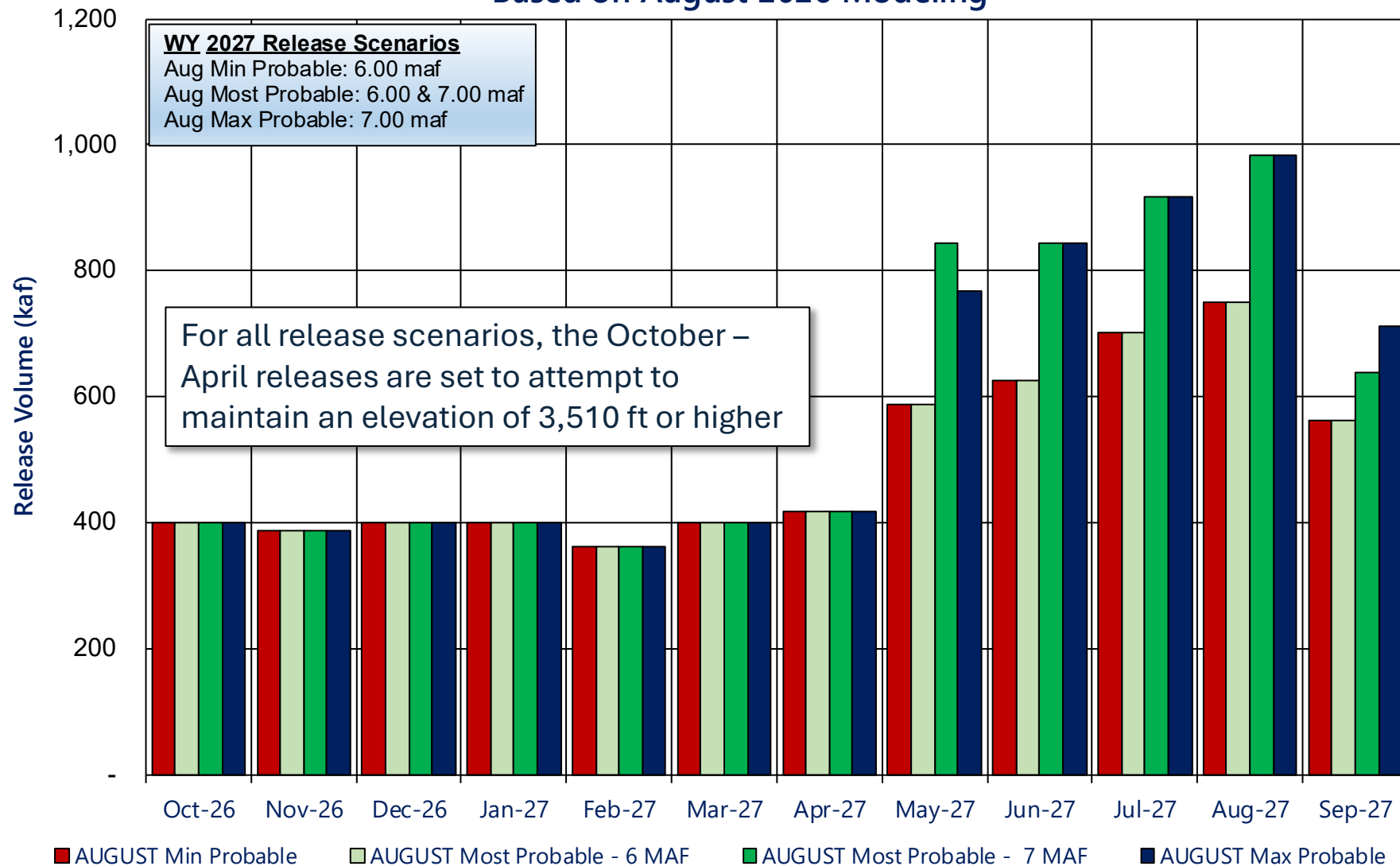
Based on August 2026 Modeling



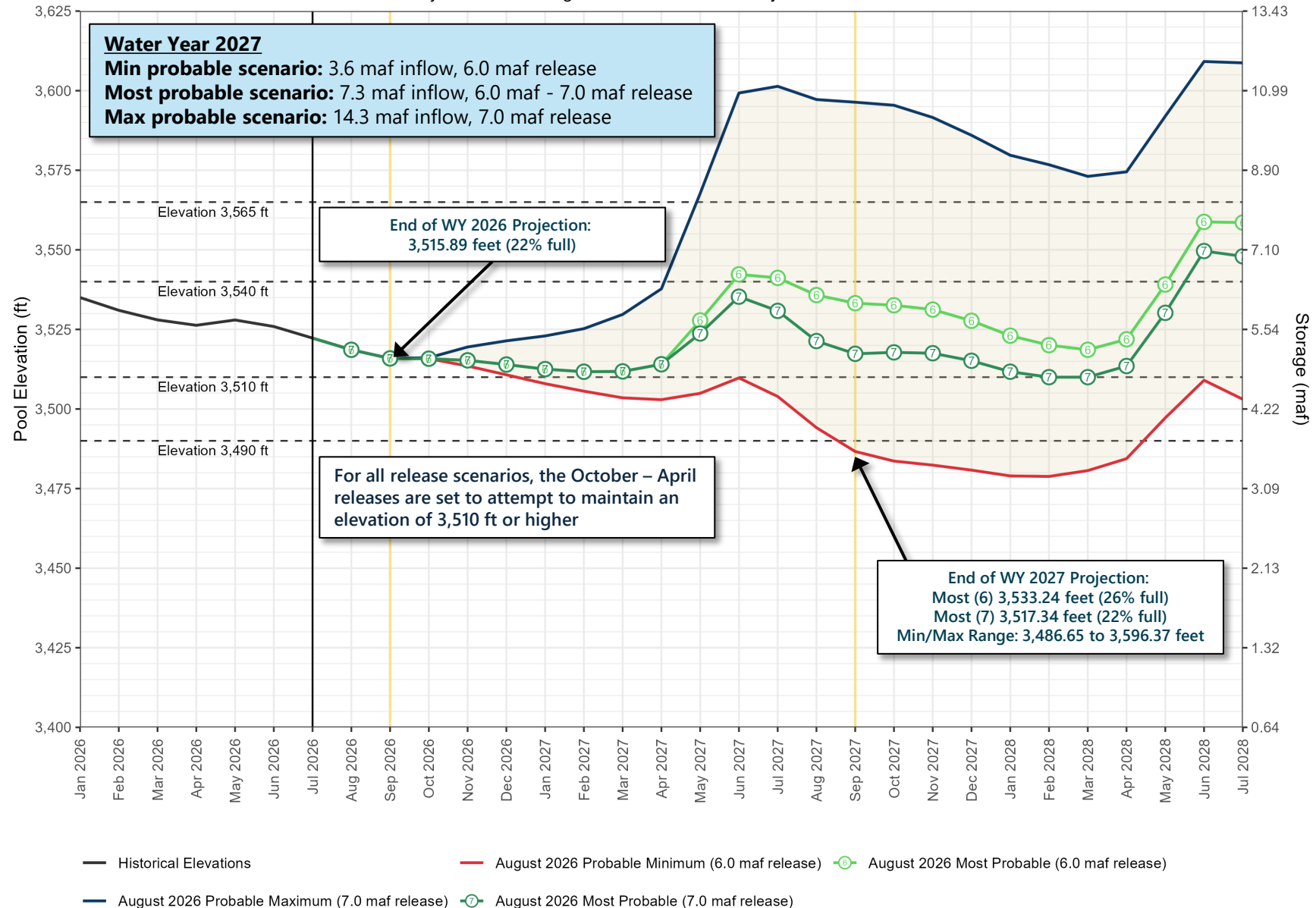
Potential Lake Powell Monthly Release Volume Distribution

Release Scenarios for Water Year 2027

Based on August 2026 Modeling



Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations Projections from August 2026 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



For both the probable minimum and probable maximum inflow scenarios, only the release volumes that most closely meet the release criteria were modeled (6.0 maf for probable minimum inflow and 7.0 maf for probable maximum inflow scenarios).

Thank you



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