

(Monday, September 27)

Subject: 2021 Upper Snake River and Reservoir Operations Update

Purpose: The purpose of these updates is to provide information regarding Reclamation's operations and basin conditions as the season progresses. The operations outlined in this update are based on the best data available at the time and are subject to change as new information becomes available. For additional information and resources, please visit our website at <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/uppersnake/>.

Highlights

****Outlook for the ramp down of releases at Jackson Dam as well as an update on the second year of the Lake Walcott drawdown.**

South Fork above Heise Reservoirs

****Jackson Lake Dam:** The reservoir is 18% full and storing approximately 154,400 acre-feet. The current storage is 497,867 acre-feet lower than last year on this date, and 30% of normal. The reservoir is currently targeting a release of 3,000 cfs. Starting Thursday, September 30th, the discharge from the reservoir will be ramped down to achieve a release of approximately 280 cfs on Tuesday, October 5th. During the ramp-down period, the river stage below the dam is expected to decrease by 6-10 inches each day. The daily reductions in stage will be comprised of smaller adjustments on 1-4 hour intervals to moderate river conditions.

Palisades Dam: The reservoir is 7% full and storing approximately 88,029 acre-feet. The current storage is 527,793 acre-feet lower than last year on this date, and 17% of normal. The current release target is 6,000 cfs which is expected to continue following irrigation trends and will likely be at storage season levels in early November. Overall, the combined storage between Jackson and Palisades is within 1% of the period of record low for this date.

Mainstem Snake River Reservoirs above Milner

****American Falls Dam:** The reservoir is 6% full and storing approximately 102,965 acre-feet. The current storage is 299,910 acre-feet lower than last year on this date, and 30% of normal. The current release target is 5,000 cfs which will be ramped down each day this week to achieve a release of approximately 1,000 cfs on Friday, October 1st. This magnitude of reductions is several weeks earlier than recent years due to early shut-off of irrigation and the need to hold water back to achieve the scheduled Lake Walcott drawdown.

****Minidoka Dam/Lake Walcott:** The second year of the 7-foot drawdown in Lake Walcott has begun, and the reservoir is approximately 16 inches below full. The rate of draft will increase later this week when American Falls releases are reduced as outlined above. When the upstream reductions take effect, Lake Walcott levels are projected to decrease by 4-8 inches per day through the end of next week before leveling off and beginning to refill the week of October 11th. For more information regarding the Lake Walcott drawdown, please contact the individuals listed below.

Upper Snake Reservoir System: As of September 26th, storage in the federal reservoir system above Milner amounted to 536,825 acre-feet, which is 13% of system capacity and 34% of normal. Comparatively, the reservoir system is 1,352,492 acre-feet lower than last year. With 4 days remaining in the water year, 2021 is on track to have the 3rd lowest total natural flow volume above Milner in the last 34 years.

[Jackson Lake Boat Ramps](#)

[Palisades Reservoir Boat Ramps](#)

[American Falls Reservoir Boat Ramps](#)

[Island Park Reservoir Boat Ramps](#)

[Upper Snake Total System Storage \(Federal\)](#)

For additional information, please contact the individuals below, or call the Upper Snake River and Reservoir Operations line at 208-670-0761.

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Reservoir levels, reservoir discharge, and river flows can be monitored on the USBR Hydromet page here:

<https://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/>

The Upper Snake “teacup” diagram which provides a graphical overview of system conditions can be accessed here: <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/burtea.html>