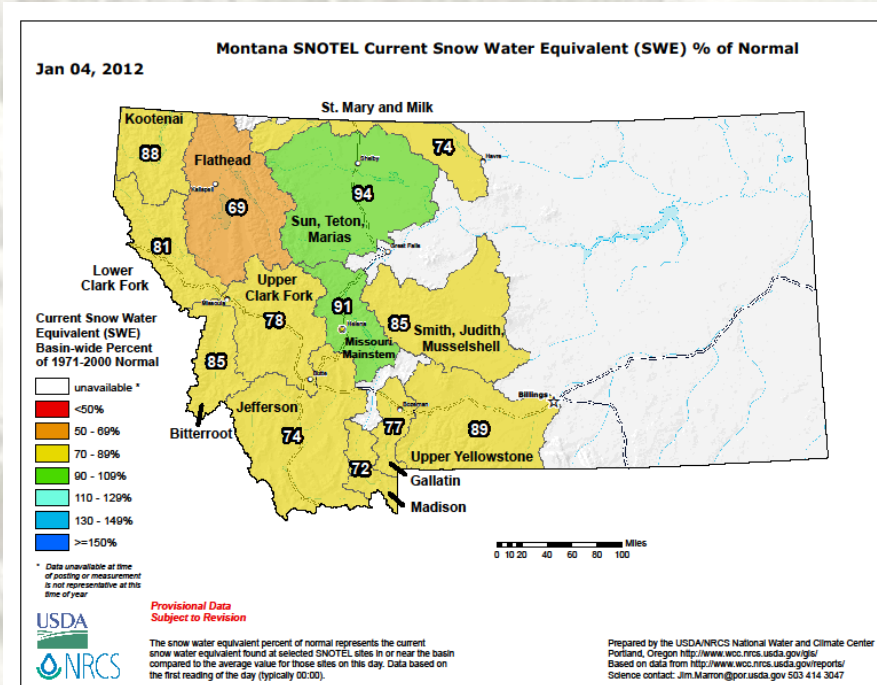


With a fantastic fishing year in 2011 now behind us in Montana, it's time to take a look forward to what 2012 might bring. 2011's snow pack was unreal according to the last available readings from June 13 of 2011 we had upwards of 280% in the Yellowstone Basin, the Gallatin and Madison drainages were over 300% of average, and the Jefferson and Missouri ended the year at over 330% of average. To say we had a lot of snow in 2011 would be an understatement, it was record setting and made for some good late season fishing, but left a lot of Montana's famous waters unfishable till nearly August. All of that water combined with good water years in 2009 and 2010 left us with healthy fisheries, good recruitment of numbers of new fish, and better than ever fishing conditions in the late season.

Currently the 2012 snow pack is nowhere near where it was in 2011, which isn't a bad thing, and we still have our heaviest snow months ahead of us (February and March) so there's plenty of reason to be optimistic and even excited about early season prospects for fishing this year in Southwest Montana. As you can see by the current Snow Water Equivalency Chart below the current SWE in the Madison, Gallatin, Yellowstone, Missouri and Jefferson drainages is ranging from a low of 72% to a high of 91%, putting us in a very comfortable position.



Far from drought conditions faced in the early to mid 90's the current snow pack bodes well for the fishing. With 3+ good years of water now in a row in Montana, a little less snow pack is not going to harm any fisheries. More likely it will make for some better fishing conditions –depending on the snowmelt and runoff time period – a little earlier than we've had the past few years setting us up for a better Salmonfly hatch this year, a better Mother's Day Caddis Hatch this year, and better fishing with attractors and assorted dry flies in June and July this upcoming season.

As is the case with any *Forecast* this is all dependent on Mother Nature and what the next few months bring us snow and weather wise. However, we can comfortably advise our customers that 2012 should be an excellent fishing season and barring incredible snow pack gains in the next 2 months we'll be fishing much earlier in the year with a lot of happy, fat, healthy fish in the rivers!

If you have questions on your travel plans to Montana this year, be sure and consult with the Oldest Fly Shop in Bozeman, we've been outfitting since the 70's and we've got the most knowledgeable friendly guides in the area. Trust in our experience and let us show you why we've been A Fly Fishing Tradition Since 1978!

-Kris & Dave Kumlien and Justin & Lisa King



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