

STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

March 1, 2012

SUMMARY

Snowpacks are below to much below average over Utah. Snowmelt runoff conditions are poor and not likely to improve significantly over the next month. There is only one month remaining in the snow accumulation season and the accumulation necessary in March to get to average ranges between 200% on the Bear to over 400% for southwest Utah. Most areas need a 250% of average accumulation to reach average by April 1 – not real likely to happen. What is more likely is that we will see 70% to 80% of normal snowpacks this year. February precipitation was much below (68% on the Weber) to near average (103% on the Uintahs). Central Utah to the Duchesne was near average with the southwest and north below average which brings the year to date precipitation to a below average 84%. Current soil moisture saturation levels in runoff producing areas are: Bear – 50%, Weber – 51%, Provo – 35%, Uintah Basin – 41%, SE Utah – 39%, Sevier – 44% and SW Utah – 41% of saturation. Northern Utah soils are dry and southern Utah soils are near average, all are much less than last year. Low snowpacks and low soil moisture lead to poor runoff. Reservoir storage is currently at 87% of capacity statewide which is 17% more than last year at this time. General water supply conditions (expected runoff plus reservoir storage) are near average across the state due to good reservoir storage. Streamflow forecasts range from 41% on Vernon Creek to 89% on the Whiterocks River nr Whiterocks. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 37% on Ferron Creek to 75% for the lower Sevier River.

SNOWPACK

March first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system are as follows: Bear - 77%, Weber - 69%, Provo - 64%, Uintahs - 78%, southeast Utah - 62%, Sevier - 71%, southwest Utah - 77% and the statewide figure is 72% of average. With only March remaining in the snow accumulation season, the range of potential snowpack outcomes is fairly small depending on future climatic conditions. If drought and early melt prevail, snowpacks could range between 15% (SW Utah) and 50% (Bear) of average. Given maximum accumulations, April 1 snowpacks could range between 90% (Weber) and 125% (SW Utah) of average. Getting back to 'average April 1 SWE' at this point requires maximum and above accumulation in March. With normal accumulations, April 1 snowpacks will be between 70% and 80% of average snowpack statewide.

PRECIPITATION

Mountain precipitation during February was: Bear – 83%, Weber – 68%, Provo – 81%, Uintahs – 103%, SE Utah – 91%, Sevier – 100%, SW Utah – 77% and the statewide figure is 86% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Feb) to 84% of average statewide.

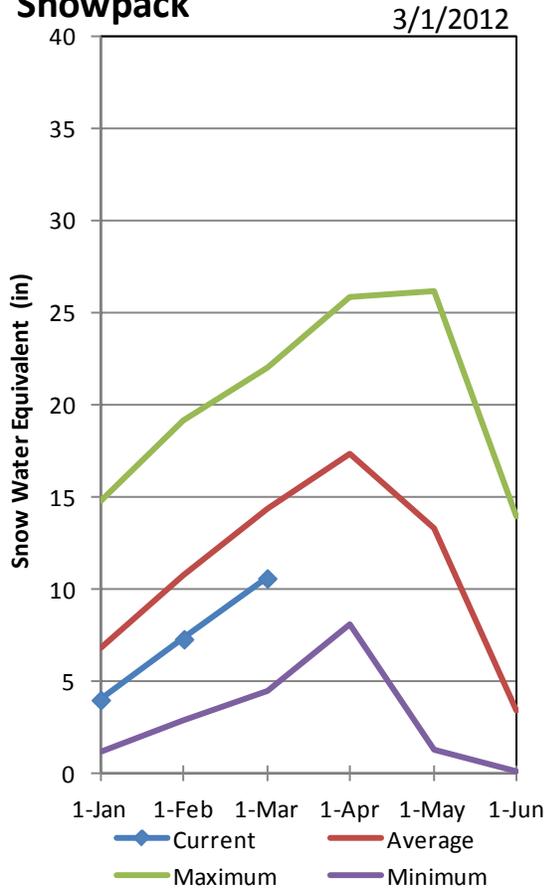
RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 87% of capacity, 17% more than last year. Reservoir storage by Basin: Bear – 77%, Weber – 82%, Provo – 93%, Uintah Basin – 88%, SE Utah – 78%, Sevier – 93%, SW Utah – 82% of capacity.

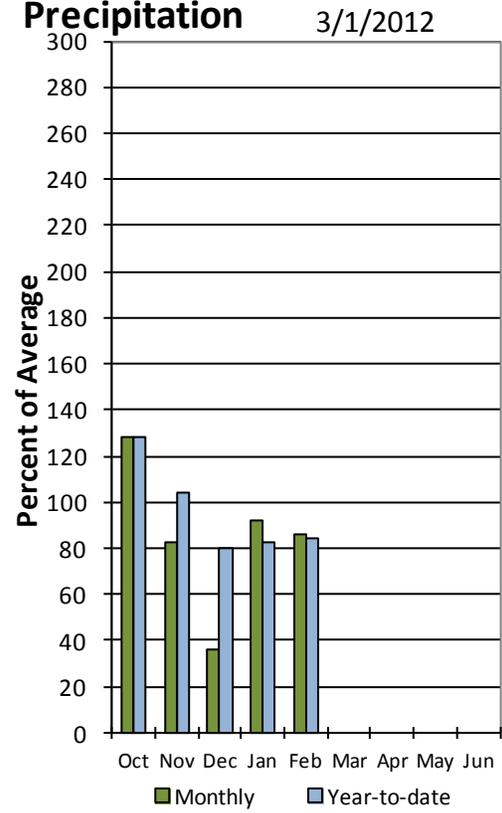
STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to be below to much below average across the state this year. Forecast streamflows range from 41% on Vernon Creek to 89% on the Whiterocks River. Most flows are forecast to be in the 50% to 80% range.

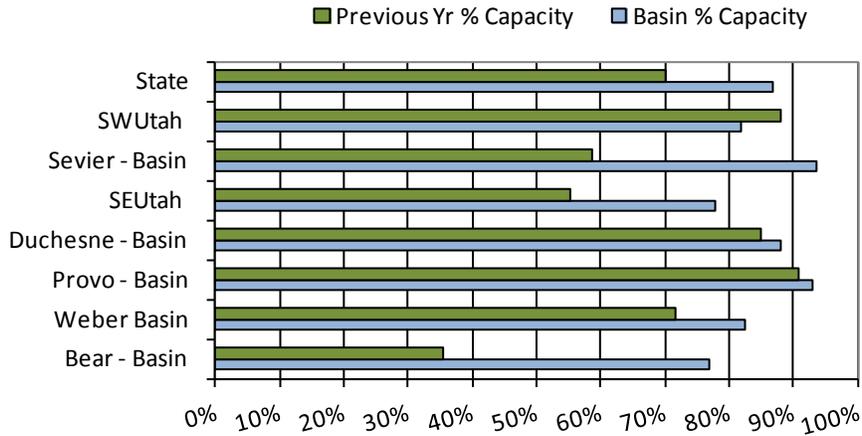
Statewide Mountain Snowpack



Statewide Precipitation



March Statewide Reservoir Storage

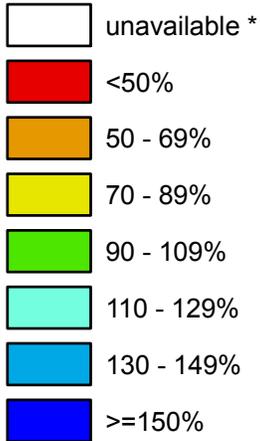


Utah

SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

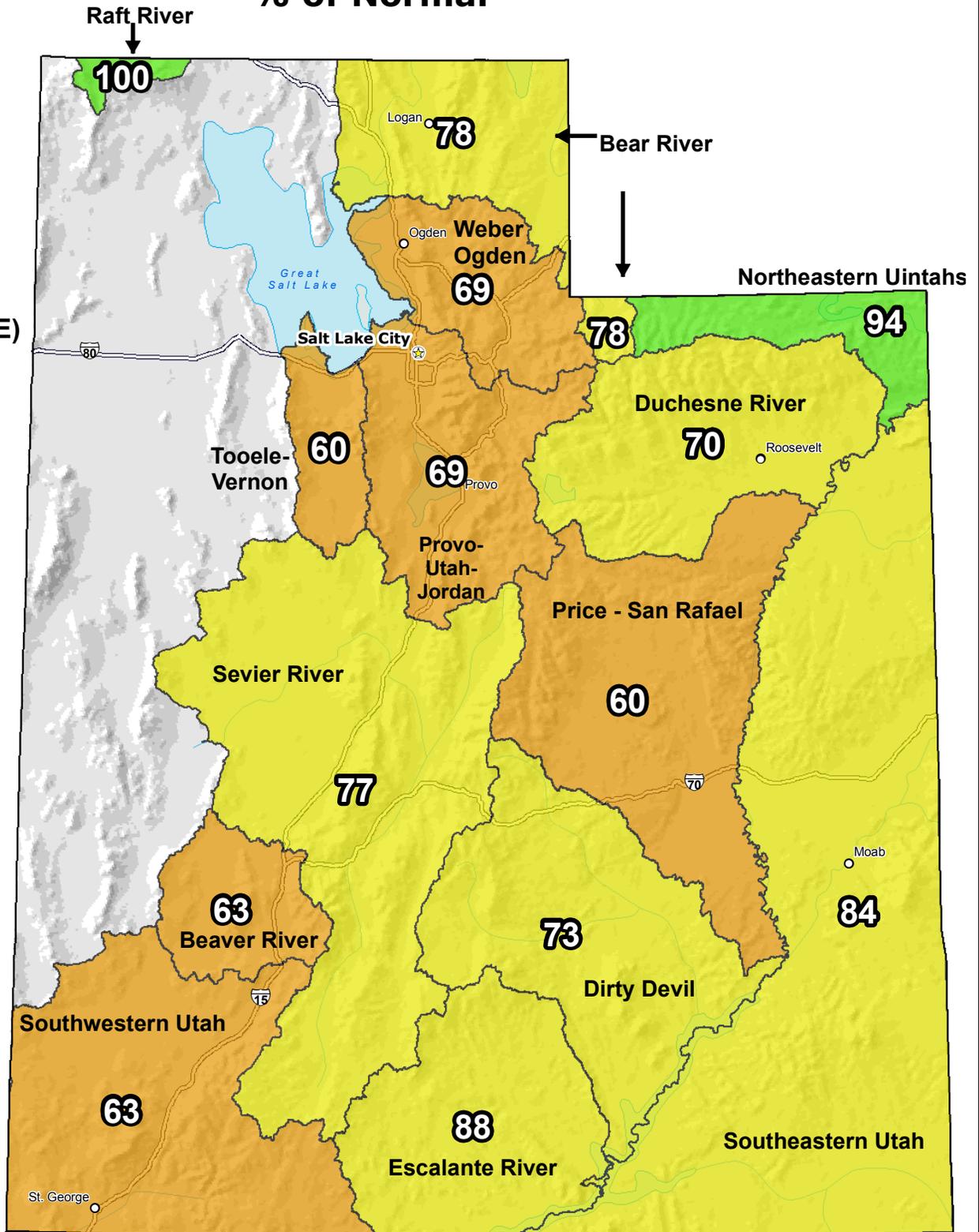
Mar 01, 2012

**Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)
Basin-wide
Percent of
1971-2000
Normal**



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year

**Provisional Data
Subject to Revision**



The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

Prepared by the USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/>
Based on data from <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/reports/>
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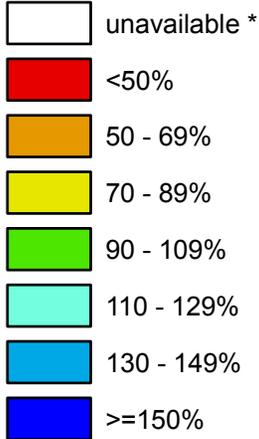
Utah

SNOTEL Water Year (Oct 1) to Date Precipitation

% of Normal

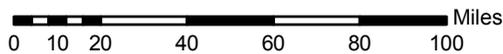
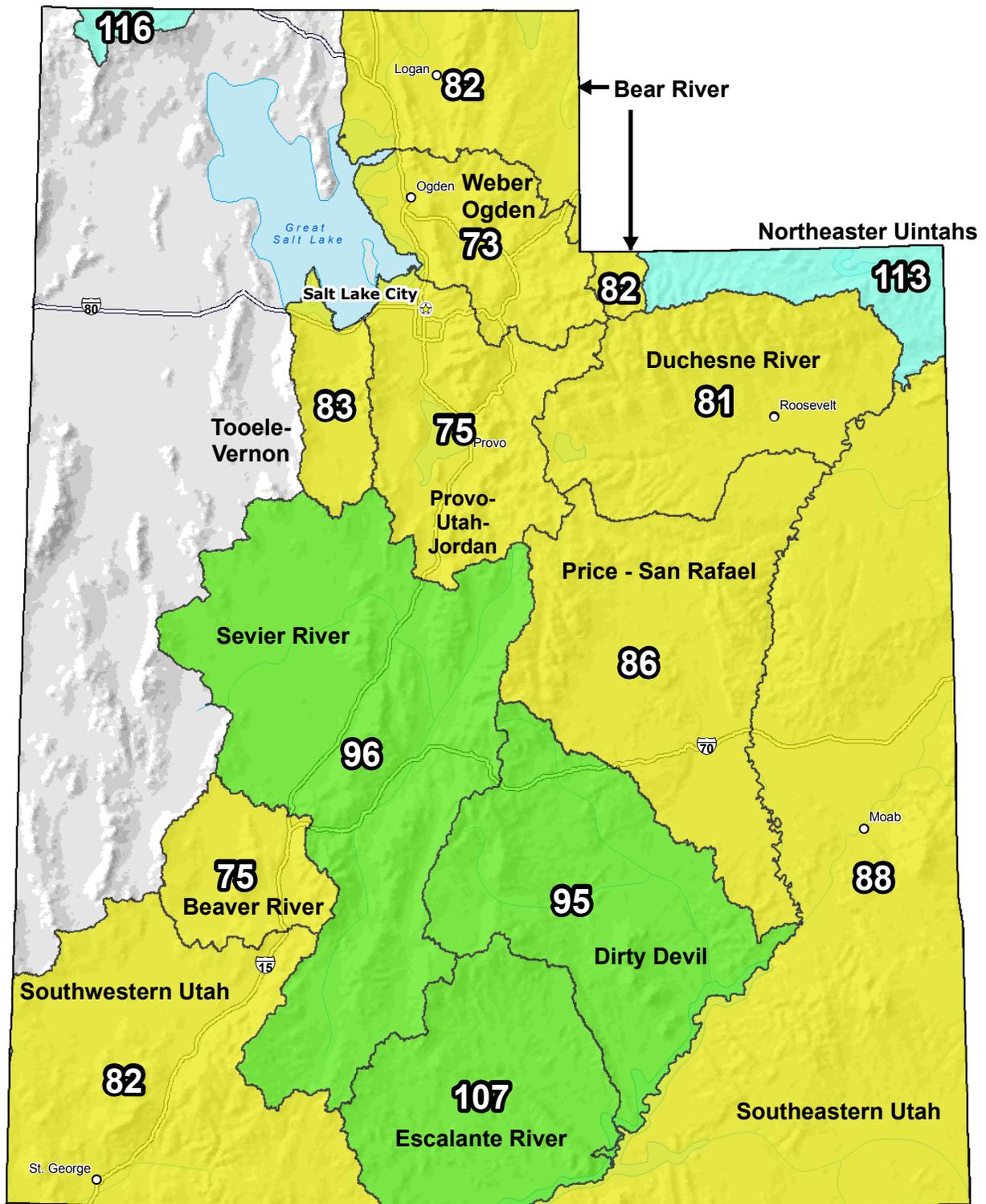
Mar 05, 2012

Water Year
(Oct 1) to Date
Precipitation
Basin-wide
Percent of
1971-2000
Normal



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year

**Provisional Data
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The water year to date precipitation percent of normal represents the accumulated precipitation found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

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