

# STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

April 1, 2008

## SUMMARY

It is the rare exception in Utah where a significant snow accumulating weather pattern lasts more than a couple of months and so it is this year. A dry fall gave way to significant snow accumulations in late December, January and February which in turn gave way to drier conditions in March. March was dry enough that as we made our snow survey measurements via helicopter for this April 1 water supply report, the snow survey sample holes from the previous March 1 survey were still visible in the snowpack over much of southern Utah and even into the Uintah Basin. Statewide, snow accumulation was only 63% of normal for the past month. Some areas such as the Sevier had no net accumulation and southwest Utah had a 285% of average decline. Even with this huge decline in snow, southwest Utah is still at 94% of normal reflecting the much above average snowpack earlier in the season. Snowpacks now range from a low of 94% over southwest Utah to a high of only 112% on the Utah Lake and Uintah basin watersheds. This is as close to an 'average' snowpack year across the state as Utah ever gets. The circuitous route taken to reach the average April 1 snowpack was anything but average. In northern Utah, there remains a substantial low elevation (6000 ft to 7500ft) snowpack, 130% to nearly 200% of normal. In many areas, this snow is currently melting, giving the potential for greater streamflow early in the season. Water managers should be aware of and plan for this runoff potential. The areas highlighted last month for much above average snowpacks, southern and southeastern Utah, are noted this month for declining to near average conditions. Soil moisture values are: Bear - 57%, Weber - 59%, Provo - 49%, Uintah Basin - 37%, southeast Utah - 54%, Sevier - 58%, southwest Utah - 59%, and statewide - 53% of saturation. These values are similar to those of April 1, 2006 and drier than those of last year. Reservoir storage is currently at 60% of capacity statewide compared to 74% last year. General water supply conditions are near average across the state. Streamflow forecasts range from 58% for the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 167% of average on South Creek near Monticello. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 12% on the Bear River to 80% over the western Uintahs.

## SNOWPACK

April first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL are as follows: Bear - 100%, Weber - 108%, Provo - 112%, Uintahs - 112%, southeast Utah - 106%, Sevier - 108%, southwest Utah - 94% and the statewide figure is 108% of average. April 1 is the normal peak of snowpacks with melt beginning in the lower elevations, but climatic conditions in April may increase or decrease snowpacks. Cool, wet conditions will slow melt and lead to greater runoff later in the season whereas warm dry conditions will accelerate melt.

## PRECIPITATION

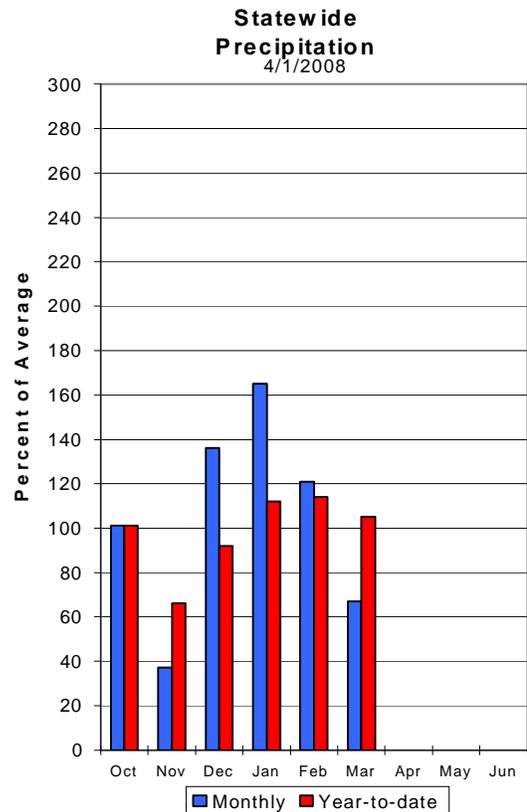
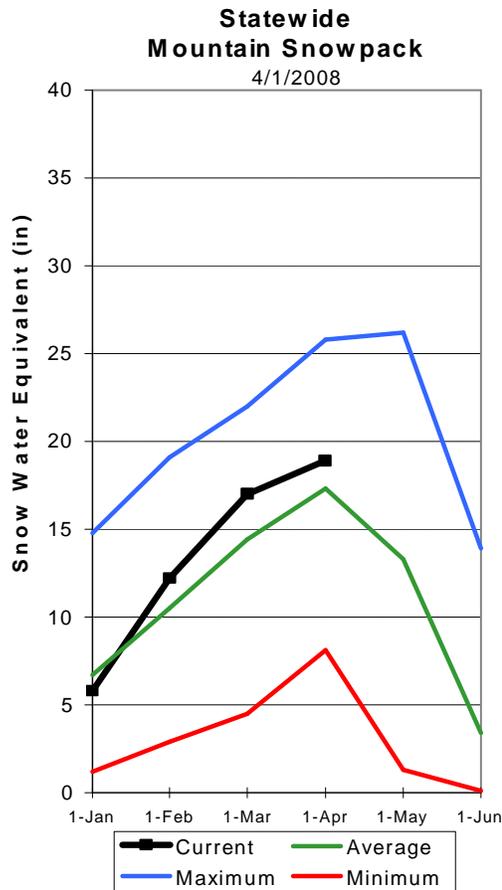
Mountain precipitation during March was much below to near normal across the state ranging from 32% over southwest Utah to 92% of average on the Bear River. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Mar) to 105% of average statewide and ranges from 98% on the Bear to 111% over the Uintahs.

## RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 60% of capacity down 14% from April 1 of last year. Reservoirs across the State declined substantially this past year due to a very long, hot and dry summer period. There are some such as Willard Bay, Scofield, Deer Creek and the Enterprise reservoirs that have fill restrictions that will limit overall water supplies in those areas.

## STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to have a wide range from below average to near average across the state of Utah this year. Forecast streamflows range from 58% on the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 167% of average on South Creek near Monticello. Most flows are forecast to be in the 90% to 120% range.



## Statewide Basin Reservoir Storage

