STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK
Feb 1, 2008

SUMMARY

January snowstorms came early, often and packed a pretty good punch this year with a statewide average monthly accumulation of 165% of normal. February 1 snowpacks now range from a low of 94% on the Bear River Basin to 144% of average over southwest Utah. The Weber, Provo and Uintah Basin snowpacks are 110% to 115% and the Sevier is at 134% of average. In times of plenty, such as our recent good fortune in January snow accumulation, it is wise to remember that the faucet that is Utah Climate, can turn off just as quickly as it turned on. That said, and with the accumulation of the first 4 days of February, southeastern and southwestern Utah are already above their normal April 1 snowpack values. Additional accumulation in February and March in these regions will give much needed drought relief and hopefully refill some much needed reservoir storage. There are some areas of southern and southeastern Utah that warrant closer inspection as individual sites are well above 200% of average and may have greater potential for high springtime snowmelt flows. In the Monticello area, Camp Jackson SNOTEL is reporting 213% of average snowpack and on the upper Sevier/Virgin, mid and lower elevation sites such as Long Valley Junction, Agua Canyon and Harris Flat are at 240%, 214% and 251% of average. Even some of the higher sites in this area are above 150% of average conditions. In southwestern Utah, the Gutz Peak SNOTEL site currently has over 12 inches of snow water equivalent, only slightly below its February 2005 value when substantial flows were experienced. Adequate preparations in these areas should be taken in case snowpacks continue to increase in February and March. Soil moisture values are: Bear - 53%, Weber - 51%, Provo - 40%, Uintah Basin - 33%, southeast Utah - 42%, Sevier - 39%, southwest Utah - 37%, and statewide - 42% of saturation. These values are similar to those of January 1, 2006 and drier than those of last year. Reservoir storage (56% of capacity) took a hit last summer and has declined 12% compared to last year. General water supply conditions range from near to above average. Streamflow forecasts range from 62% for the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 188% of average on South Creek near Monticello. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 12% on the Bear River to 84% over the western Uintahs.

SNOWPACK

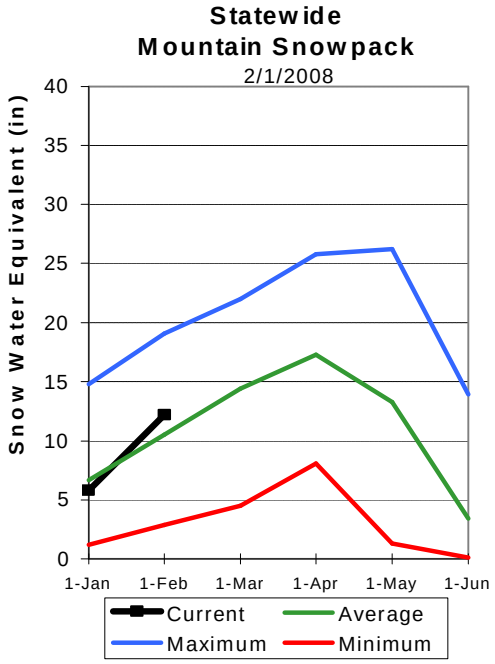
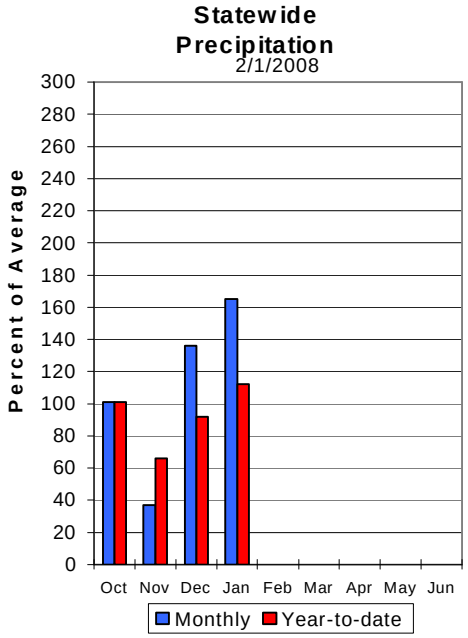
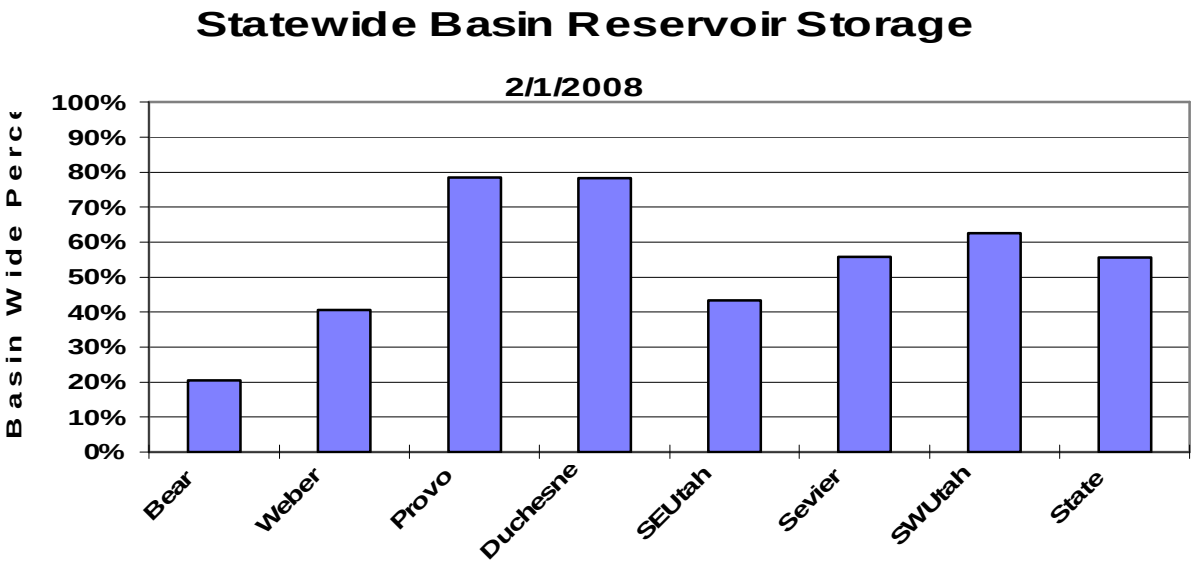
February first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL are as follows: Bear - 94%, Weber - 110%, Provo - 115%, Uintahs - 112%, southeast Utah - 118%, Sevier - 134%, southwest Utah - 144% and the statewide figure is 115% of average. To reach average snowpack conditions by April 1, we need 75% of average snowpack accumulation. The probability of getting this amount of snow is 70%.

PRECIPITATION

Mountain precipitation during January was much above normal in across the entire state ranging from 139% on the Bear River to 211% of average across southwest Utah. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Jan) to 112% of average statewide and ranges from 97% on the Bear to 124% over southwestern Utah.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 56% of capacity down 12% from February 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 62% on the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 188% of average on South Creek near Monticello. Most flows are forecast to be in the 90% to 130% range.