STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK
March 1, 2008

SUMMARY

February was a continuation of the storms started in January. Statewide snowpack accumulation for February was 126% of average. Snowpacks now range from a low of 98% on the Bear River Basin to 142% of average over southwest Utah. The Weber, Provo and Uintah Basin snowpacks are 114% to 119% and the Sevier is at 129% of average. In most areas of the state, there is a substantial low elevation (6000 ft to 7500ft) snowpack, 110% to nearly 200% of normal. In many areas, this snow will likely melt off in March and early April giving the potential for above average streamflow in this period. Water managers should be aware of and plan for this runoff potential. Snowpacks on the Sevier and southwest Utah are already above their normal April 1 values and any additional accumulation during March is ice cream to go with cake. The Utah Lake, Uintah and southeast Utah watersheds need only 10% to 20% of normal March accumulation to reach average April 1 snowpacks whereas the Weber and the Bear Rivers need between 40% and 110% of normal March accumulations. The Bear River has about a 35% probability of getting that 110% of normal March accumulation while the remainder of the state has a 80% to 90% probability of at least average by April 1. These numbers may seem a bit odd in that an area that currently has greater than its average April 1 snowpack only has a 90% probability of having average by April 1 - the reason for that is: in many areas, March may have a net loss of snowpack and these areas while currently above their April 1 normal, could actually melt that snowpack and come in below normal. We certainly hope that does not occur this year. The areas highlighted last month for much above average snowpacks, southern and southeastern Utah, are again noted this month with individual sites in the 140% to 210% range. These areas have greater potential for high springtime snowmelt flows. Adequate preparations in these areas should be taken in case snowpacks continue to increase in March. Soil moisture values are: Bear - 55%, Weber - 53%, Provo - 42%, Uintah Basin - 34%, southeast Utah - 44%, Sevier - 43%, southwest Utah - 40%, and statewide - 44% of saturation. These values are similar to those of March 1, 2006 and drier than those of last year. Reservoir storage (currently 58% of capacity) took a hit last summer and declined 13% compared to last year. General water supply conditions range from near to above average. Streamflow forecasts range from 68% for the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 203% 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

March first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL are as follows: Bear - 98%, Weber - 114%, Provo - 119%, Uintahs - 118%, southeast Utah - 117%, Sevier - 129%, southwest Utah - 142% and the statewide figure is 117% of average. To reach average snowpack conditions by April 1, we need 12% of average snowpack accumulation. The probability of getting this amount of snow is 81%.

PRECIPITATION

Mountain precipitation during February was above to much above normal the state ranging from 106% on southwest Utah to 135% of average on the Uintahs. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Feb) to 114% of average statewide and ranges from 99% on the Bear to 121% over the Uintahs.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 58% of capacity down 13% 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 68% on the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 203% of average on South Creek near Monticello. Most flows are forecast to be in the 90% to 130% range.