

STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

February 1, 2009

SUMMARY

January 2009 saw pretty much average snow accumulation in northern and southeastern Utah. The Sevier basin had a bit below average January snowpack accumulation at 88% but southwestern Utah was much below normal with only 48% of an average January accumulation. Much of January was dominated by high pressure systems across the state and broken only occasionally by large storms. Snowpacks across the state now range from 83% over the Uintahs to 111% in southwestern Utah. There is an interesting pattern in the current snowpack where the east side of the Wasatch and Sevier Plateaus comprising the Escalante, Dirty Devil, San Rafael, Price, clear to the Duchesne and the north Slope is below average and the west side has a near normal snowpack. January precipitation was near to above normal (94%-123%) in northern Utah and near to below normal (77%-105%) in the south which brings the year to date precipitation to near normal in the north and above average in the south. Current soil moisture saturation levels in runoff producing areas are: Bear – 55%, Weber – 54%, Provo – 41%, Uintah Basin – 31%, SE Utah – 36%, Sevier – 43% and SW Utah – 39%, up 1% to 6 % from last month. Drier soils typically mean less runoff from snowmelt. Reservoir storage is currently at 59% of capacity statewide compared to 56% last year. General water supply conditions are near average in northern Utah, above average on the Virgin and near to below average in central Utah. Streamflow forecasts range from 60% for the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 111% of average on the Beaver River nr Beaver. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 25% on the Bear River to 71% for the Virgin. The extremely low value for the Bear River is a reflection of Bear Lake storage which continues to be well below normal.

SNOWPACK

February first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system are as follows: Bear - 90%, Weber - 96%, Provo - 98%, Uintahs - 83%, southeast Utah - 89%, Sevier - 103%, southwest Utah - 111% and the statewide figure is 94% of average. With February and March remaining in the snow accumulation season, the range of potential outcomes is narrowing, however any outcome is possible depending on future climatic conditions. If drought prevails, snowpacks could range between 20% and 70% of average. Given maximum accumulations, April 1 snowpacks could range between 120% and 190% of average. With normal accumulations, April 1 snowpacks will be between 90% and 110% of average. The area with lowest snowpack average is the north slope of the Uintahs – 69%.

PRECIPITATION

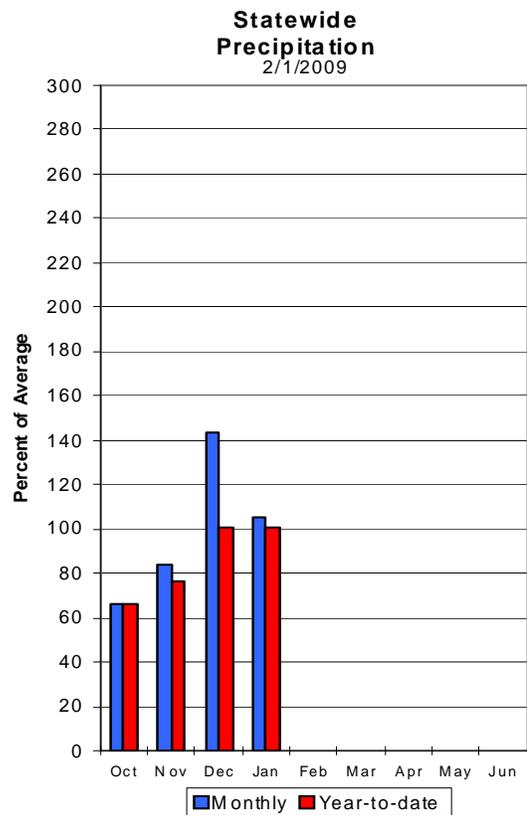
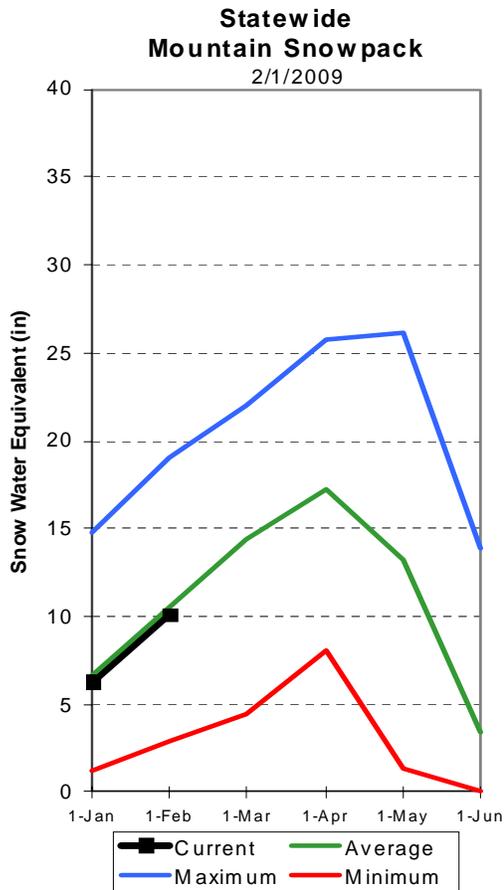
Mountain precipitation during January was: Bear – 102%, Weber – 116%, Provo – 123%, Uintahs – 94%, SE Utah – 97%, Sevier – 105%, SW Utah – 77% and the statewide figure is 105% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Jan) to 101% of average statewide.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 59% of capacity up 3% compared to February of last year. A very mild and dry fall has contributed to reservoir declines across the State. There is some good news on the reservoir repair front as all previously restricted fill reservoirs are now able to store, including Willard Bay.

STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to have a wide range from much below average to above average across the state of Utah this year. Forecast streamflows range from 60% on the Bear River at Stewart Dam to 111% on Beaver River nr Beaver. Most flows are forecast to be in the 80% to 100% range.



Statewide Basin Reservoir Storage

