

STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

May 1, 2009

SUMMARY

April was a fantastic month for water supply in most areas of Utah – cool and wet. The combination of cool and wet does several things: 1) it adds to snowpacks and slows melt, 2) it keeps soils wet and loss rates to a minimum and 3) it delays and decreases water use. Cool, wet Aprils serve on balance to increase water supplies and we had a nice, cool, wet April. The Bear, Weber and Provo watersheds had melt rates near 70% of average due to the cooler, wetter conditions. The Uintas, SE and SW Utah had melt rates near average and the Sevier was slightly below normal. Currently snowpacks on the Bear, Weber and Provo watersheds are near average and below average on the Uintas, SE, SW Utah and the Sevier River areas. Snow stations in the Moab and Monticello area have melted out and streamflow there will rapidly decline. April precipitation was above to much above normal (122%-160%) in all areas of Utah except the SW portion which had average accumulations. This brings the year to date precipitation to near normal in all areas of the State. Current soil moisture saturation levels in runoff producing areas are: Bear – 74%, Weber – 74%, Provo – 75%, Uintah Basin – 75%, SE Utah – 75%, Sevier – 71% and SW Utah – 69%, up substantially from last month. Drier soils typically mean less runoff from snowmelt. Reservoir storage is currently at 70% of capacity statewide compared to 61% last year. General water supply conditions are near average in northern Utah and the Virgin and near to below average in central Utah. Streamflow forecasts for May-July range from 18% for South Creek above Lloyd's Reservoir near Monticello to 125% of average on South Willow Creek near Grantsville. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 17% in the Moab area to 85% for the Weber River.

SNOWPACK

May first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system are as follows: Bear - 99%, Weber - 108%, Provo - 104%, Uintas - 75%, southeast Utah - 64%, Sevier - 86%, southwest Utah - 66% and the statewide figure is 93% of average. Although the time frame is short, climate in May can yet impact runoff conditions – continued wet and cool will maximize runoff with dry and warm decreasing yields. Southern Utah is currently melting faster than normal with northern areas less than average.

PRECIPITATION

Mountain precipitation during April was: Bear – 122%, Weber – 148%, Provo – 160%, Uintas – 154%, SE Utah – 137%, Sevier – 115%, SW Utah – 105% and the statewide figure is 137% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-April) to 104% of average statewide.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 70% of capacity up 9% compared to May of last year. The Sevier Watershed is the only area of the state that currently has less reservoir storage than last year. Overall, most small and medium sized reservoirs should easily fill. Reservoir such as Bear Lake will not.

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 18% for South Creek above Lloyd's Reservoir near Monticello to 125% of average on South Willow Creek near Grantsville.

