

STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

April 1, 2011

SUMMARY

Winter by the calendar is officially over and under normal conditions snowpacks begin to melt. Looking out the window, winter seems to be hanging on and snowpacks at the mid and high elevations are still accumulating. April is a key swing month with regard to snowmelt runoff. Given high snowpacks (record and near record on the Bear, Weber and Provo), the difference between years with 'very high' flows and those with just 'high' flows tends to be a hot, dry April. A hot April insures a sequential melt scenario with the lower elevations melting off first, then the mid and lastly in June, the highest elevations. A cool, wet April/May postpones snowmelt and is conducive to concurrent melt – that is melt from remaining low, mid and potentially some higher elevation snowpacks melting at the same time which creates the potential for much higher flows, especially if you add in an intense precipitation event or abnormally high temperatures. Agricultural areas prone to inundation during high flow years are very likely to see it again this year in many areas across the state. The magnitude and duration of such events will be dependent on future climatic conditions. Prudent preparations should be taken in the next few weeks to mitigate or otherwise prepare for this potential. Snowpacks in northern Utah range from 134% on the Bear to 139% on the Provo. In southern Utah, snowpacks range from 117% in southeastern Utah to 158% on the Virgin. March precipitation ranged from below normal to above normal (84%-149%) in across Utah, which brings the year to date precipitation to much above normal statewide at 142%. Current soil moisture saturation levels in runoff producing areas are: Bear – 71%, Weber – 69%, Provo – 60%, Uintah Basin – 56%, SE Utah – 72%, Sevier – 68% and SW Utah – 69% of saturation. These are very high values and should lead to higher runoff efficiency. High snowpacks and high soil moisture have the potential for extremely high flows. Reservoir storage is currently at 71% of capacity statewide which is identical to last year at this time. General water supply conditions are much above average across the state. Streamflow forecasts range from 106% Ashley Creek nr Vernal to 273% of average for Sevier River nr Kingston. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 43% on the Bear River to 95% for the upper Sevier.

SNOWPACK

March first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system are as follows: Bear - 138%, Weber - 138%, Provo - 139%, Uintahs - 134%, southeast Utah - 117%, Sevier - 132%, southwest Utah - 158% and the statewide figure is 135% of average. The Bear and Provo snowpacks are near records and the Weber Basin is a new record high. Because of high variability in southern Utah, snowpacks there are not close to record conditions. Continued cool, wet weather could still substantially augment these figures whereas warm and dry would begin the melt process.

PRECIPITATION

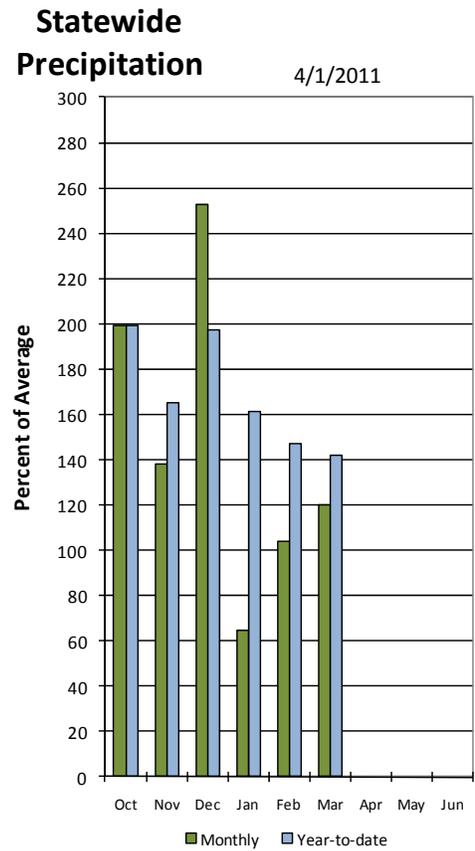
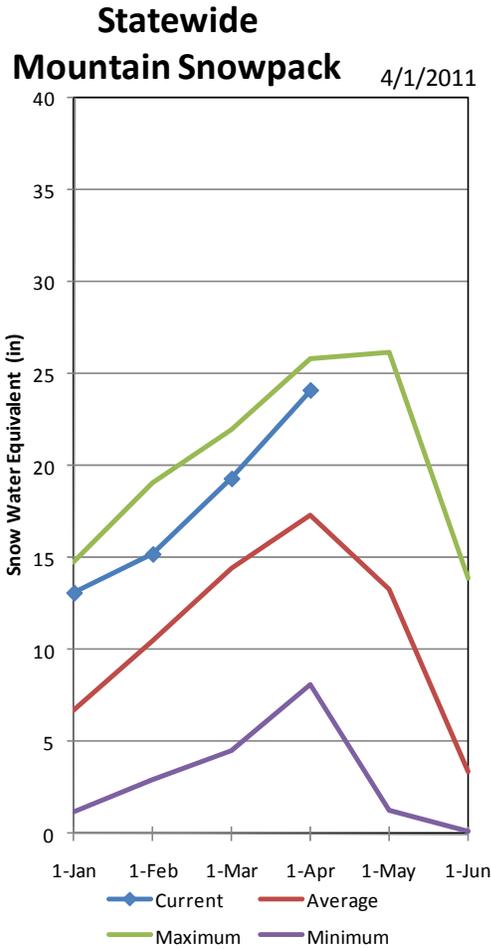
Mountain precipitation as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system during March was: Bear – 149%, Weber – 144%, Provo – 117%, Uintahs – 84%, SE Utah – 96%, Sevier – 107%, SW Utah – 95% and the statewide figure is 119% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Mar) to 142% of average statewide.

RESERVOIRS

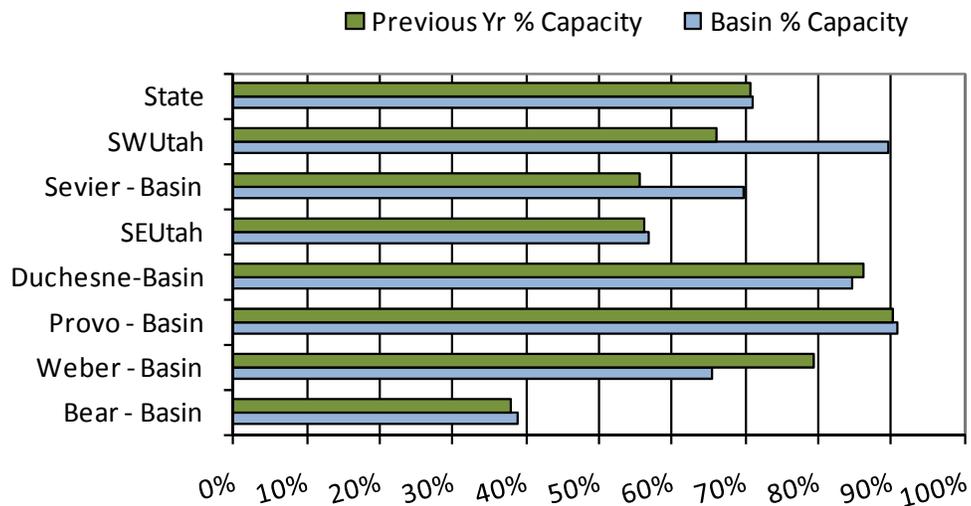
Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 71% of capacity, the same as last year. Reservoir storage by Basin: Bear – 39%, Weber – 65%, Provo – 91%, Uintah Basin – 85%, SE Utah – 57%, Sevier – 70%, SW Utah – 89% of capacity.

STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to be above to much above average across the state this year. Forecast streamflows range from 106% Ashley Creek Nr Vernal to 273% on the Sevier River nr Kingston. Most flows are forecast to be in the 130% to 180% range.



April Statewide Reservoir Storage

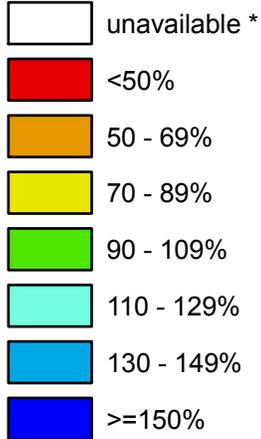


Utah

SNOTEL Water Year (Oct 1) to Date Precipitation % of Normal

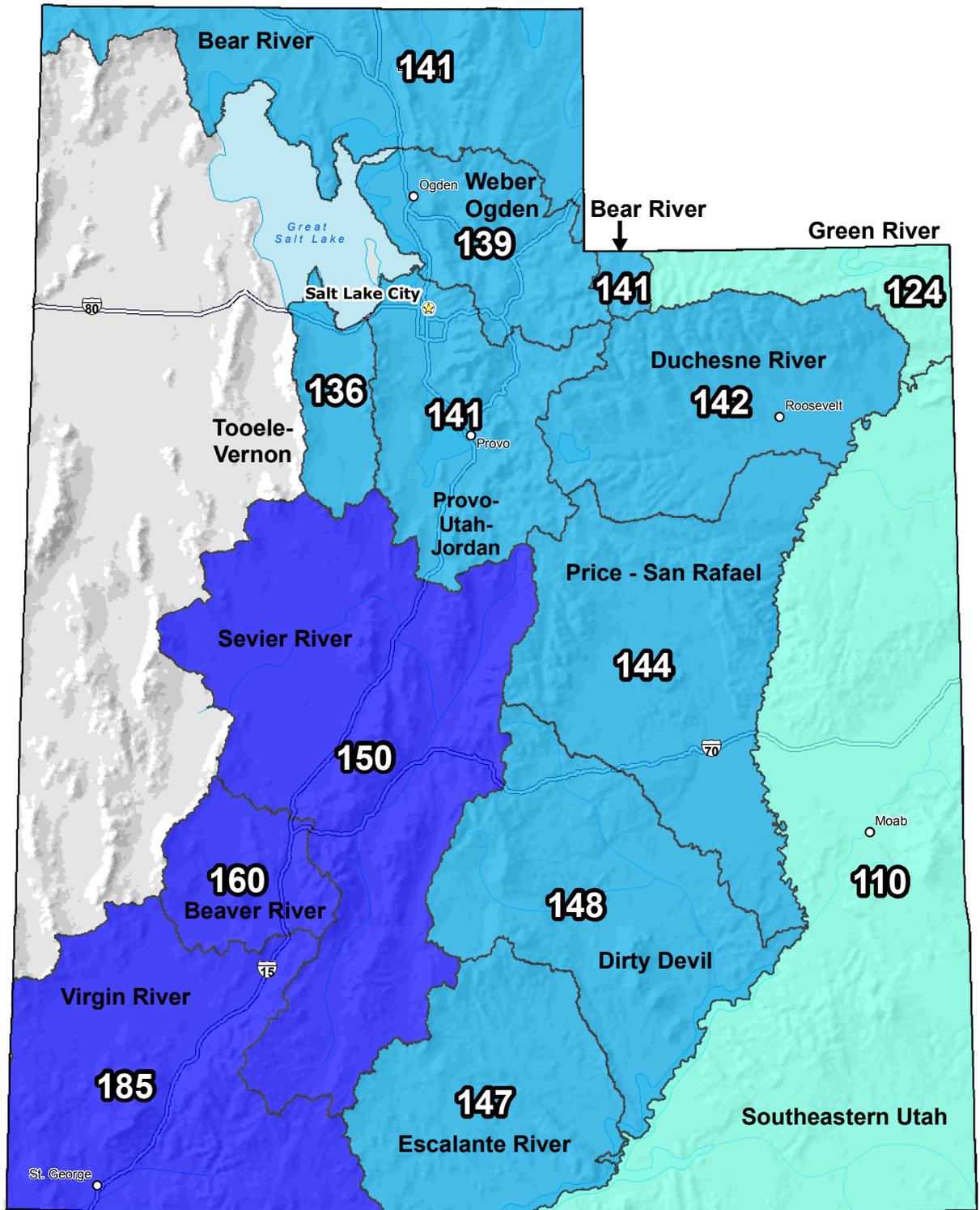
Apr 01, 2011

**Water Year
(Oct 1) to Date
Precipitation
Basin-wide
Percent of
1971-2000
Normal**



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year

**Provisional Data
Subject to Revision**



The water year to date precipitation percent of normal represents the accumulated precipitation found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

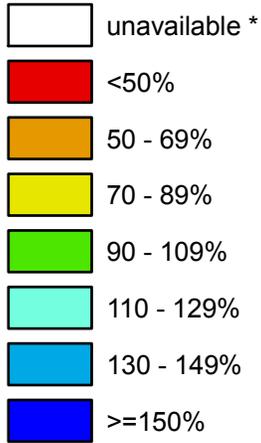
Prepared by the USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/>
Based on data from <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/reports/>
Science contact: Jim.Marron@por.usda.gov 503 414 3047

Utah

SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

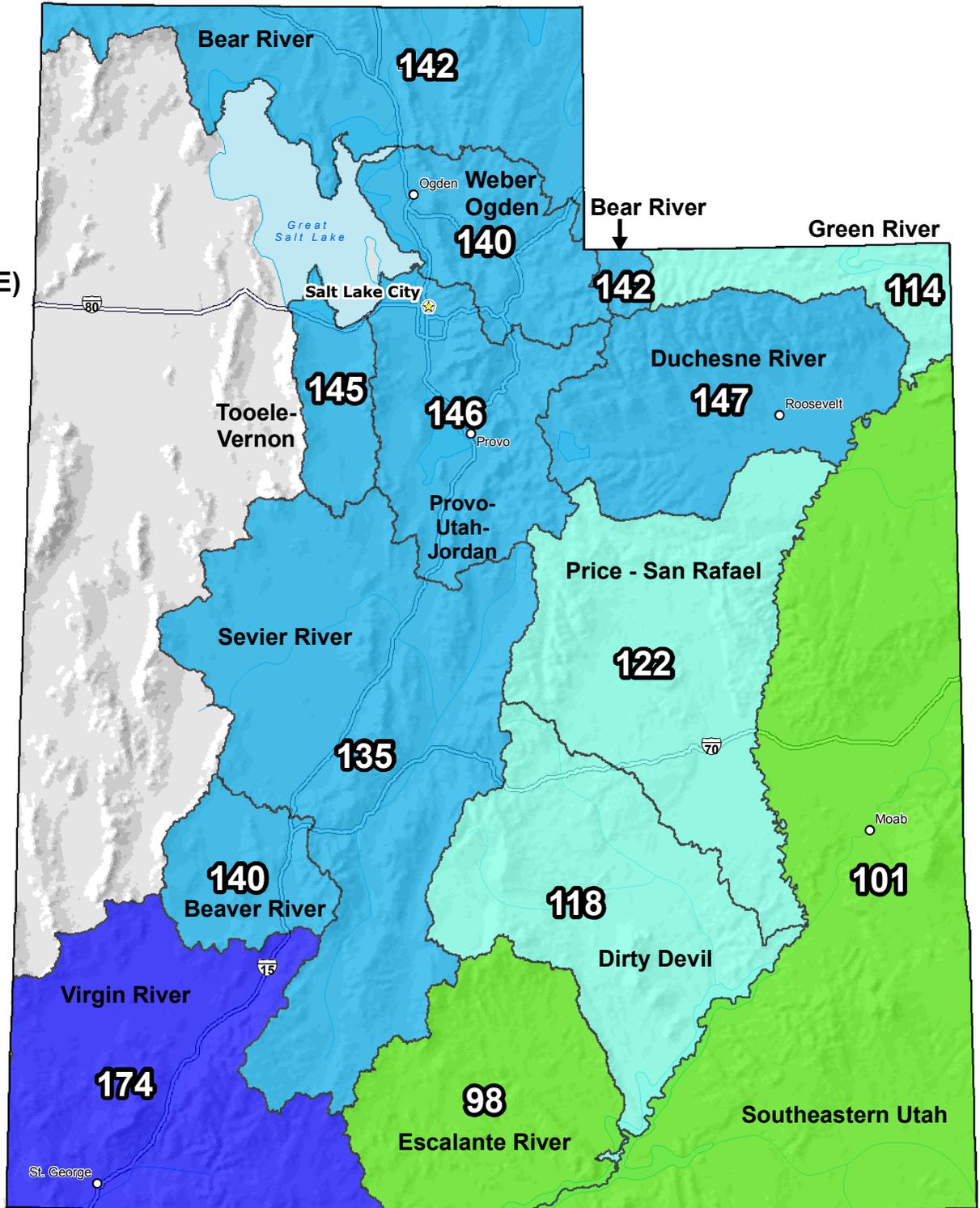
Apr 01, 2011

**Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)
Basin-wide
Percent of
1971-2000
Normal**



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year

**Provisional Data
Subject to Revision**



The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

Prepared by the USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
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State Watershed SWE

Swe Basin Average

