STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK
April 1, 2012

SUMMARY

The pendulum swings the other way. Pendulum swings is such a gentle euphemism – others such as pinballing, demolition derby, hockey pucking and the like are more descriptive. Last year at this time water managers were sitting on pins and needles waiting for the inevitable torrent of flows from massive snowpacks. The scene is repeating itself but to the extreme on the other side – pins and needles again but no sense waiting on water that isn't coming. Already meager snowpacks are falling faster than a three year old in high heels. Steady high winds and record temperatures in late March both melted and sublimated snowpacks taking a big chunk of what little there was leaving even less for springtime runoff. March was simply put, not kind to us – instead of accumulating more snow as is typical for March, we got the proverbial lump of coal with melting snowpacks worsening an already poor runoff situation. It wasn't the worst March ever – but it wasn't far from it. Snowpacks across the state are pathetically low and in full retreat ranging from 37% in the southeast to 59% on the Bear. March precipitation was much below normal statewide ranging from 56% to 71% of average. This brings the year to date precipitation to below normal statewide at 80%. Current soil moisture saturation levels in runoff producing areas are: Bear – 73%, Weber – 68%, Provo – 61%, Uintah Basin – 65%, SE Utah – 73%, Sevier – 64% and SW Utah – 68% of saturation. These are similar to last year prior to any snowmelt, the current figures are due to early snowmelt and infiltration. Low snowpacks and the snowpack loss to bring soil moisture to near saturation will lead to lower runoff efficiency and less streamflow this season. Reservoir storage is the only ray of sunshine in the water supply picture and is currently at 88% of capacity statewide which is17% more than last year at this time. General runoff conditions are much below average across the state. Streamflow forecasts range from 27% on the Strawberry nr Soldier Springs to 75% of average for the Whiterocks River. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 23% for Moab to 64% for the Bear. Water managers should prepare for early streamflow, shorter duration, longer irrigation season, low volumes and low peak flows.

SNOWPACK

April first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system are as follows: Bear - 59%, Weber - 52%, Provo - 51%, Uintahs - 52%, southeast Utah - 37%, Sevier - 50%, southwest Utah - 48% and the statewide figure is 52% of average. The southeast figure is a record low and the Sevier is close to a record low. Continued hot dry weather will accelerate the melt.

PRECIPITATION

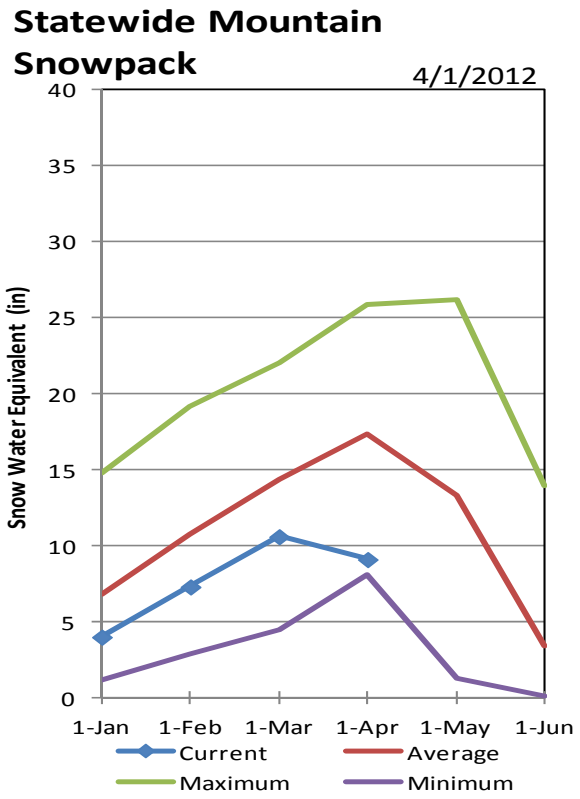
Mountain precipitation as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system during March was: Bear – 58%, Weber – 58%, Provo – 64%, Uintahs – 56%, SE Utah – 56%, Sevier – 65%, SW Utah – 71% and the statewide figure is 61% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Mar) to 80% of average statewide.

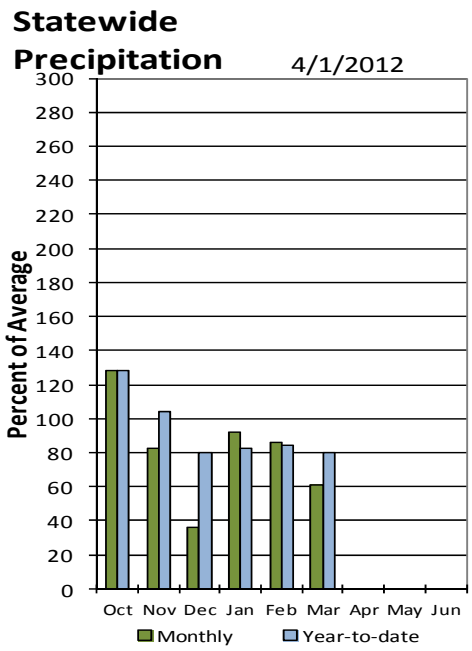
RESERVOIRS

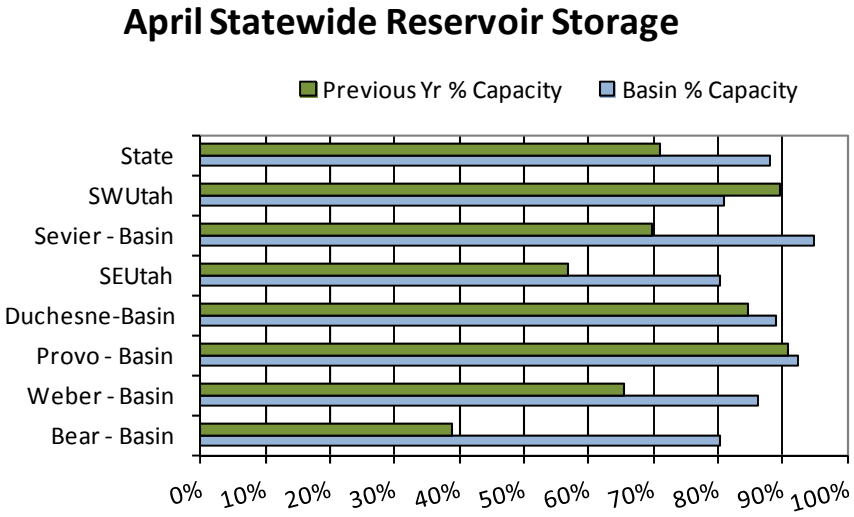
Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 88% of capacity, 17% more than last year. Reservoir storage by Basin: Bear – 80%, Weber – 86%, Provo – 92%, Uintah Basin – 89%, SE Utah – 90%, Sevier – 85%, SW Utah – 81% of capacity.

STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to be much below average across the state this year. Forecast streamflows range from 27% on the Strawberry to 75% on the Whiterocks River. Most flows are forecast to be in the 40% to 60% range.

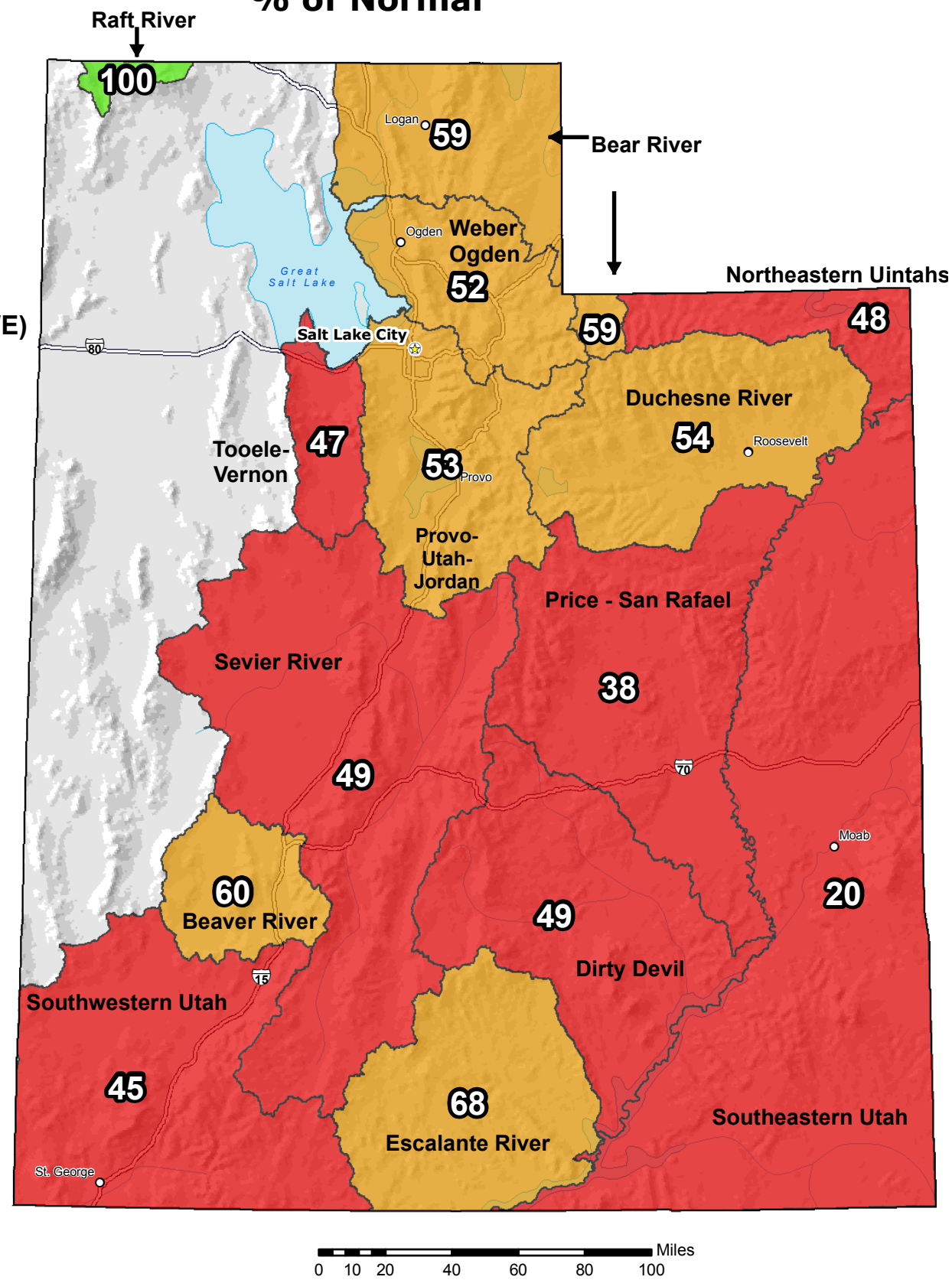






Utah
SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)
% of Normal

Apr 01, 2012



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

- unavailable *
- <50%
- 50 - 69%
- 70 - 89%
- 90 - 109%
- 110 - 129%
- 130 - 149%
- >=150%

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

Provisional Data Subject to Revision

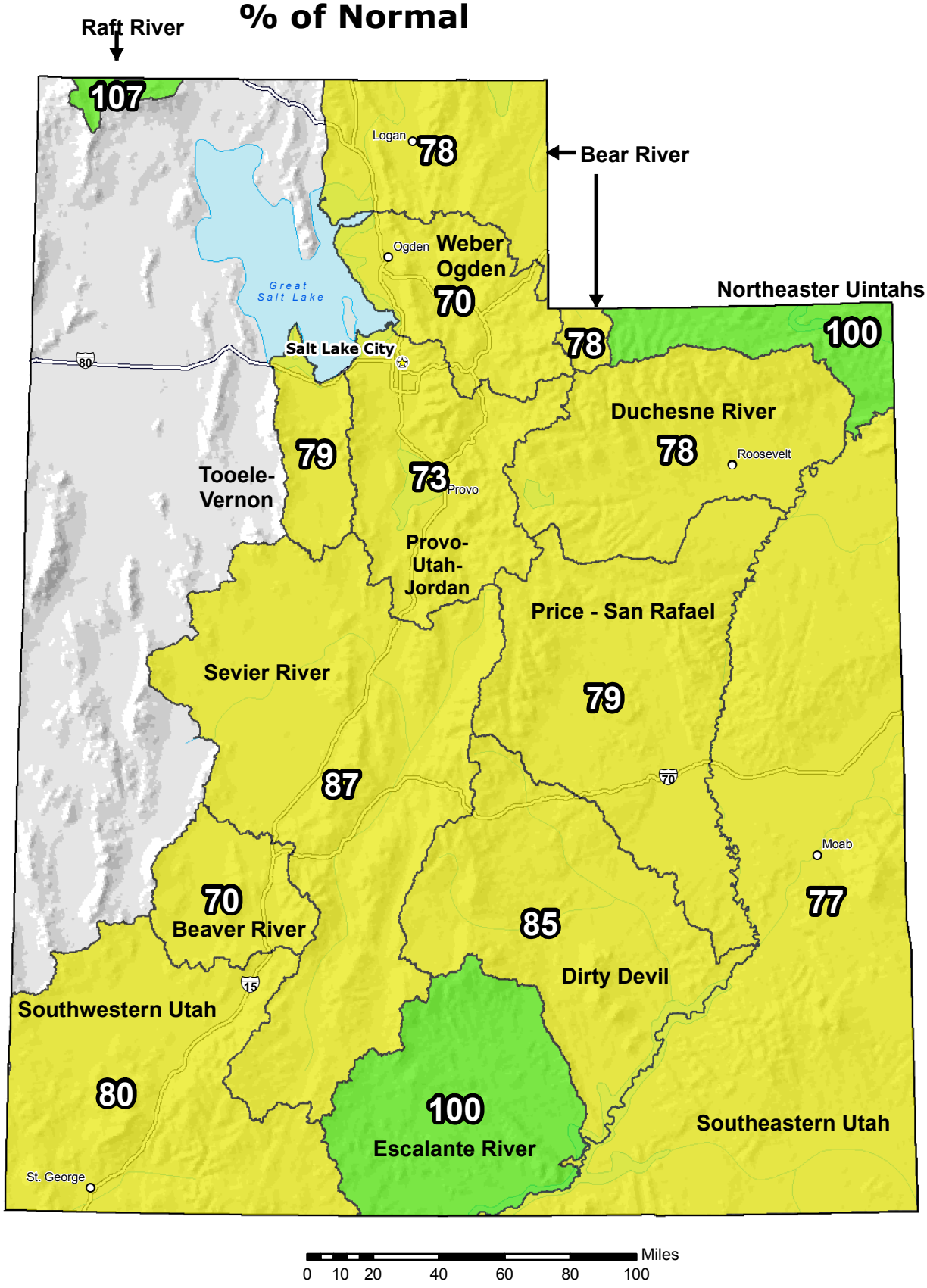
USDA NRCS

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

Apr 01, 2012



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

- unavailable *
- <50%
- 50 - 69%
- 70 - 89%
- 90 - 109%
- 110 - 129%
- 130 - 149%
- >=150%

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

Provisional Data Subject to Revision

USDA NRCS

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