FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts

Michael Sanchez
Utah Division of Water Resources
385-226-8967
masanchez@utah.gov

Drought Update

SALT LAKE CITY (April 15, 2022) – As winter ends and spring runoff begins, Utah remains in drought. With 95% of Utah's water supply coming from snowpack, there is a low chance of these below-normal snow levels refilling Utah's reservoirs.

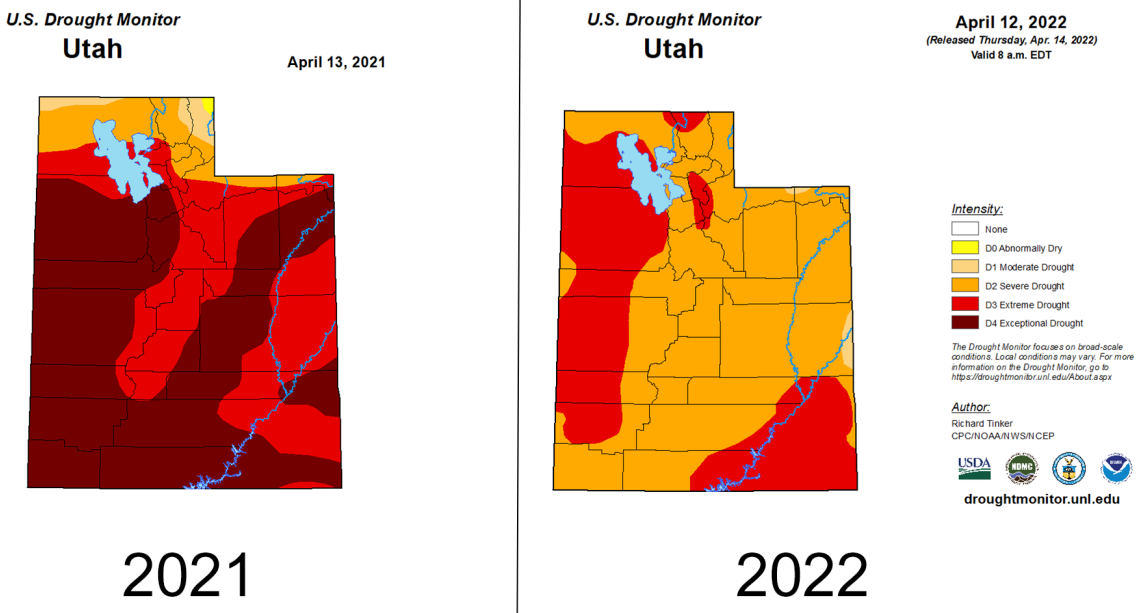
"Utah has been in drought eight of the last 10 years, and this year's disappointing snowpack is not going to pull the state out of drought," said Brian Steed, executive director of the Department of Natural Resources. "The recent snowstorms were beneficial, however, they added less than an inch of water to our snowpack. We are urging all Utahns to use water responsibly and to check with local water providers for potential water restrictions."

At-a-glance highlights:

- 99.39% of the state is in severe drought, 36.89% of Utah is in extreme drought.
- Statewide snow water equivalent (SWE), or how much water would be in the snowpack if it melted, peaked at 12 inches. This is 75% of the typical median peak of 16 inches for our water year.
- Twenty-eight of Utah's largest 45 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity. Overall statewide storage is 58% of capacity. This time last year, reservoirs were about 67% of capacity.
- Soil moisture is 6% higher compared to last year at this time. Wet soils are critical for effective spring runoff.
- Of the 95 measured streams, 51 are flowing below normal despite spring runoff. Eight streams are flowing at record low conditions.

# # #

FULL REPORT

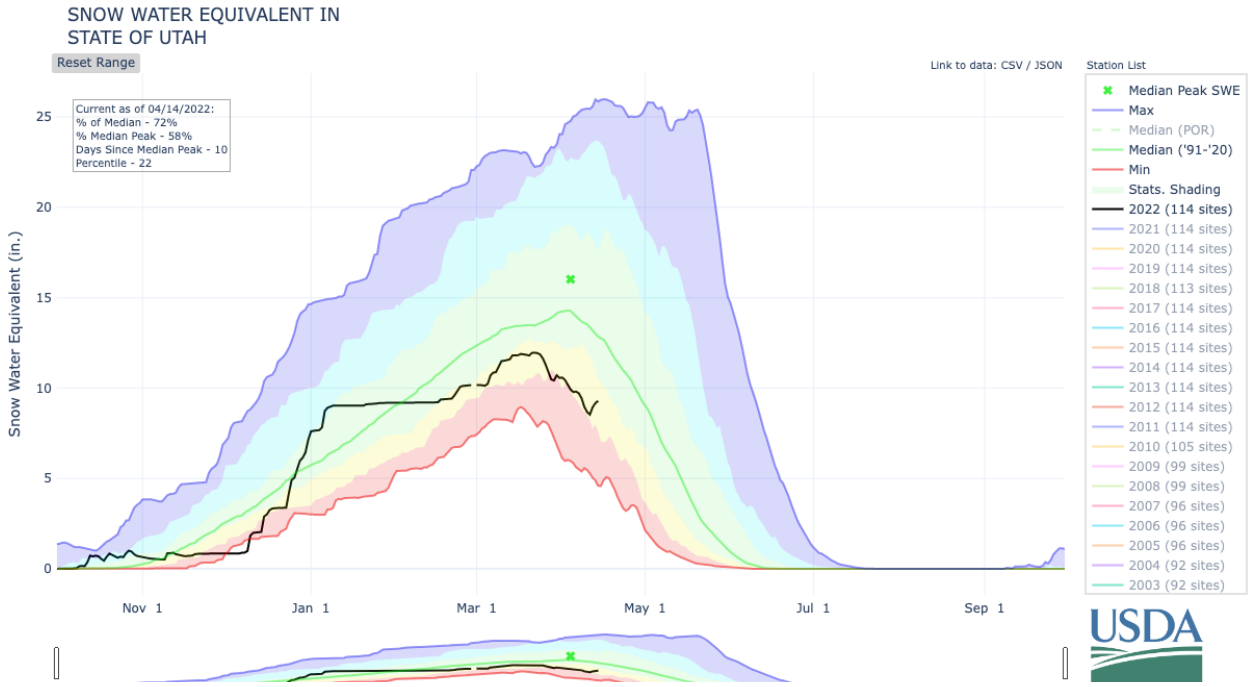


Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2021. Last year at this time 57.20% was in exceptional drought. Currently, no part of the state is in exceptional drought (the worst category), but reservoir storage has dropped significantly due to the extended drought. Currently 99.39% of the state is in severe drought.

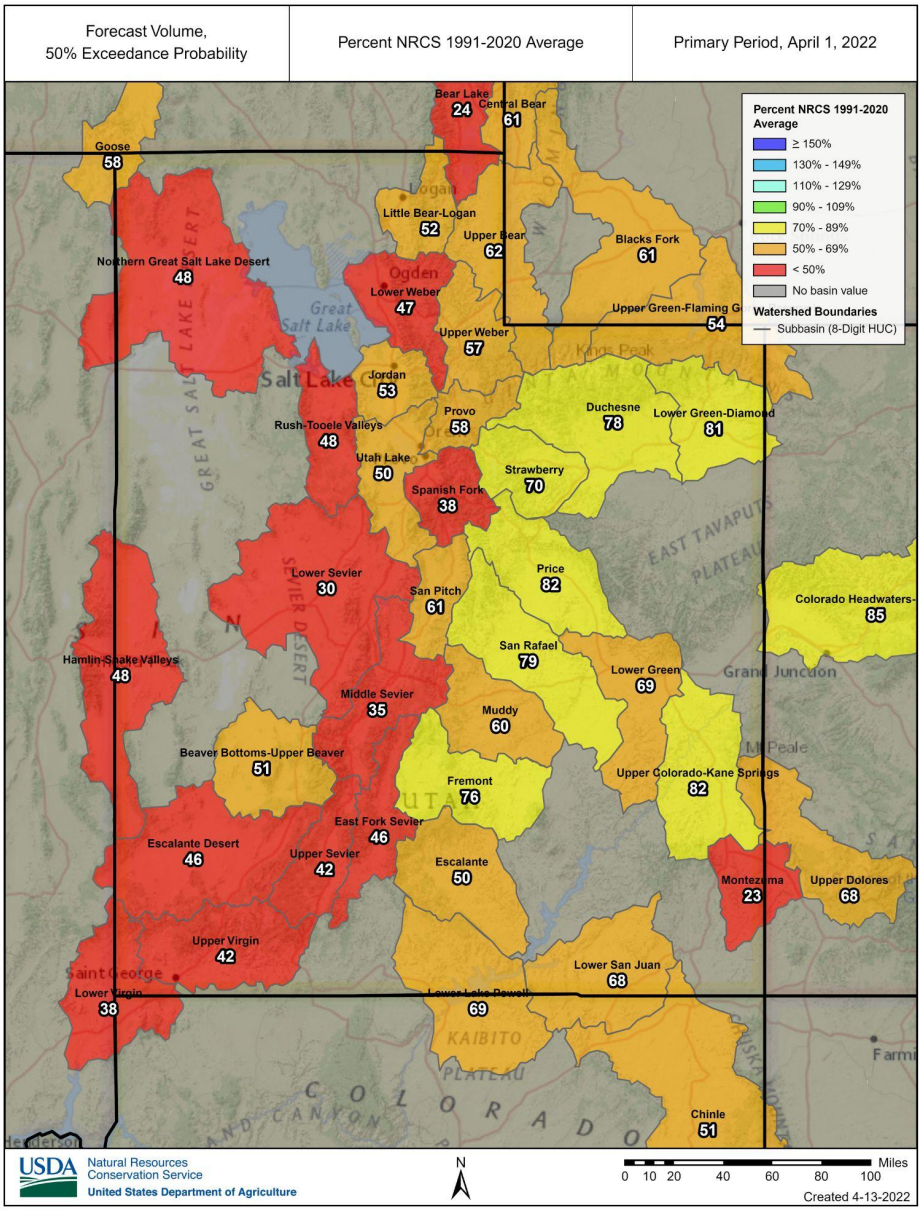
Precipitation and soil moisture

- Statewide snow water equivalent (the amount of water if it melted), peaked at 12 inches almost two weeks earlier than normal. Median peak (16 inches), occurs around the first of April.

- Spring runoff is underway with the snowpack levels declining as temperatures warm and snow melts.



Snow Water Equivalent peaked around March 22 at 12 inches. 16 inches is the normal peak for this time of year.



Graphic shows streamflow forecasts based on basins. Percentage is related to the volume of water expected in the basin.

Temperature and Evaporation

- March temperatures were much above average and caused the snowpack to start melting almost two weeks early. April temperatures have cooled and slowed the snowmelt.
- Above-average temperatures can cause the snowpack to melt and increase the demand of the air and land for water. It also means the demand for irrigation water can be triggered earlier. (Although, some secondary water systems are delaying water availability in an effort to stretch the water supply.)

Streamflows

- Fifty-one of Utah's 95 streams reporting data are flowing below normal.
- Eight streams had their seven-day average flow reach record low.
- Daily flow from 28 headwater streams is flowing close to the median for this time of year. Early snowmelt brought headwater streamflow up significantly. This higher flow will decline once the snowpack melts.

Reservoir and Lake Levels

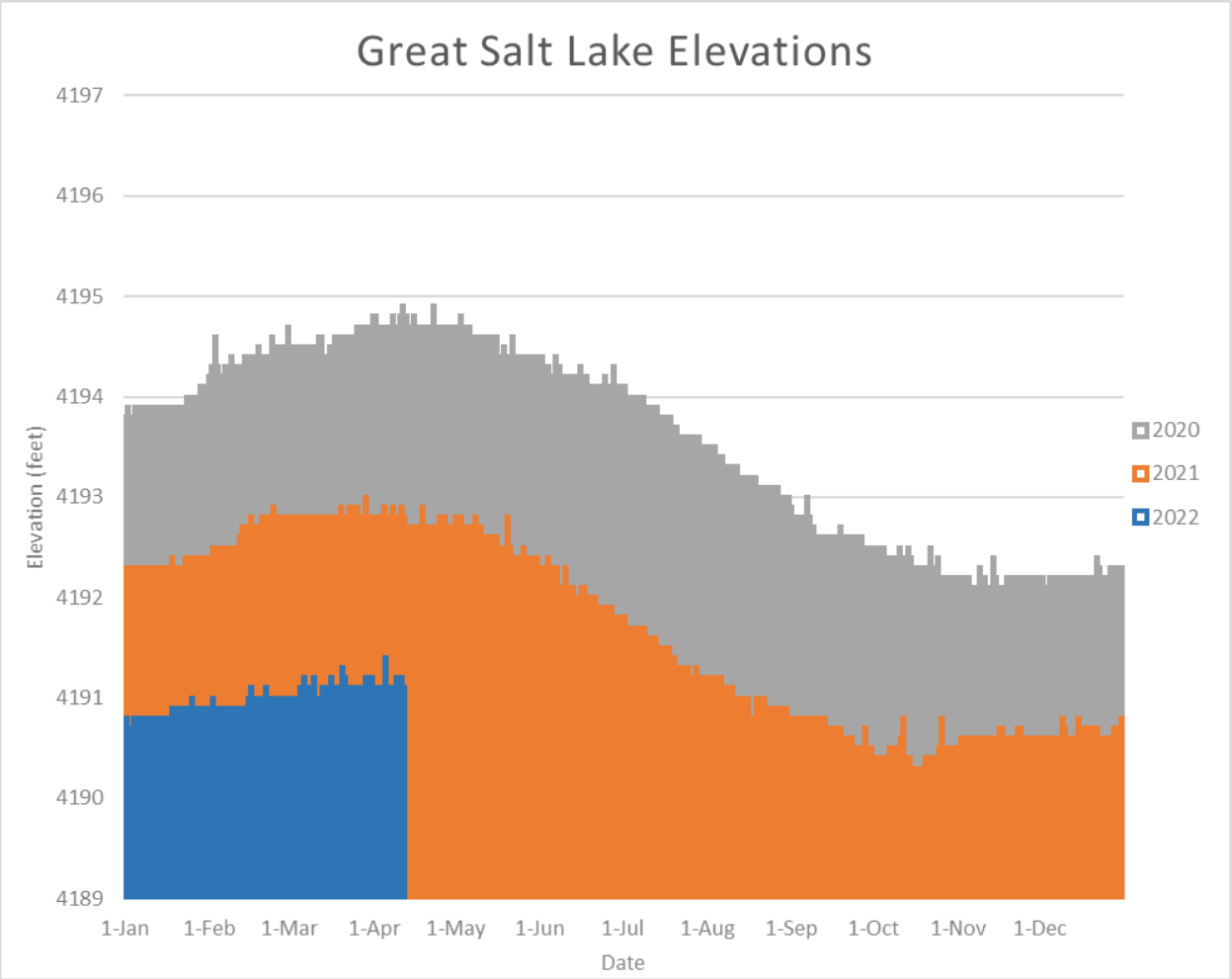
- Major reservoirs statewide are at 58% capacity. Reservoirs have begun to receive their spring inflow. Snowpack is needed to refill the reservoirs in the spring prior to the higher use summer months.
- Twenty-eight of Utah's 45 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity.
- After dropping to 4190.2 feet, a new record low, on Oct. 18, Great Salt Lake's elevation rose to 4191.1. Levels have remained nearly unchanged for the last month. Inflow is needed to overcome the typical seasonal summer drop of about 2.3 feet.

Water Rights

On major river systems within Utah, the initiation of the irrigation season (i.e., the period when water is diverted and beneficially used for irrigation purposes) is generally dictated by the respective water rights. In some instances, court decrees delegate authority to River Commissioners to identify when the irrigation season commences. The following table provides the anticipated dates for the beginning of the 2022 irrigation season.

River System	Irrigation Season Commencement Date	
	Per Commissioner	Per Water Rights
Upper Provo	May 1	
Lower Provo	April 20	
Weber	NA	Varies: March 1 - May 1
Upper Bear	NA	Varies: April 1 - June 1

Lower Bear	NA	April 1
Upper Sevier	NA	April 10 - 15
Lower Sevier	NA	April 1
Duchesne River lower	April 15	
Duchesne River upper	May 1	

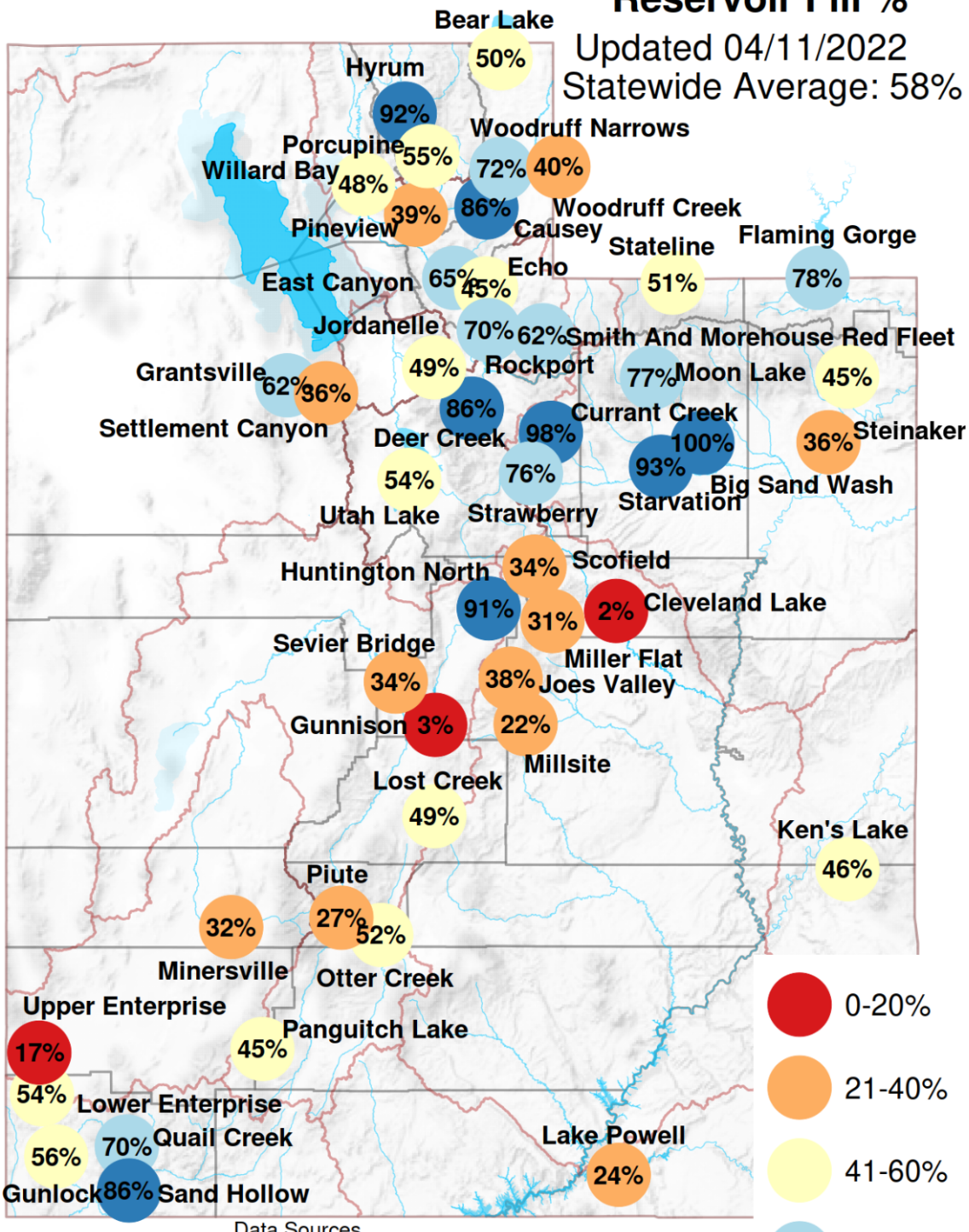


Graph compares elevations of the Great Salt Lake for the last three years.

Reservoir Fill %

Updated 04/11/2022

Statewide Average: 58%



Data Sources

United States Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Reclamation, Bear River Commision

Duchesne County Water Conservancy District

Emery Water Conservancy District

Washington County Water Conservancy District

Sevier River Water Users Association

Utah Division of Water Rights