



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

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

Drought Update

SALT LAKE CITY (June 30, 2022) – The state's dry conditions in May and record high temperatures in June continue to elevate drought conditions. According to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), 82.83% of the state is in extreme drought or worse. On June 12, Salt Lake City reached 102 degrees, becoming the city's first 100-plus-degree day and beating the previous record high temperature set in 1918. There is more variation in the water situation throughout the state than last year.

"Storms these past couple of weeks gave us a glimpse of the monsoon season," said Candice Hasenyager, director of the Division of Water Resources. "We welcome this precipitation and recognize that it helps to reduce demand on our water supplies. It is essential to use our water wisely to ensure it's available now and into the future."

At-a-glance highlights:

- Recreators should check reservoir levels before they head out. Conditions vary and some [boat ramp closures](#) are in place due to low water levels.
- The current elevation of Great Salt Lake is 4190.4, less than five inches away from reaching a new historic low. The current historic low (set on Oct. 18) is 4190.2. Great Salt Lake is nearly 1.5 feet lower than this time last year and over 7 feet lower than this time in 2012. Seasonal water supply forecasts throughout the Great Basin (not including the GSL), are 50-60% of average for 2022.
- New drought.utah.gov website gives a broader view of drought impacts. The site centralizes a variety of drought resources representing multiple agencies. Fire info, wildlife impacts, water supply info, boat ramp closures and current drought stats can all be found on the new site.
- Current drought conditions have created drier fuels which increase the chance of wildfire. To date, there have been 321 wildfires in the state of Utah. Of the 321 wildfires this year, 221 of them have been human-caused.



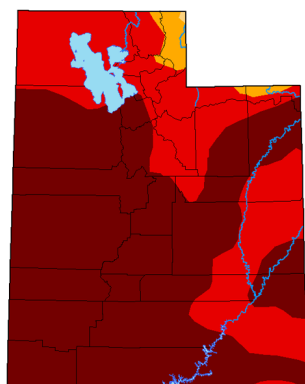
- [Harmful algal blooms](#) (HABs) have been detected in the North Fork of the Virgin River (including The Narrows) and North Creek in Zion National Park. Those areas are currently under a Warning Advisory. La Verkin Creek in Zion National Park is under a Health Watch, as HABs may be present.
- Sixteen of Utah's largest 45 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity. Overall statewide storage is 62% of capacity. This is about where reservoirs were this time last year.
- Last year Jordanelle reservoir only rose 21,650 acre-feet. This year over three times that amount reached the reservoir. Reservoir levels are still low due to years of drought but we appreciate that more water made it to the reservoirs.
- Of the 99 measured streams, 55 are flowing below normal despite spring runoff. **Three streams are flowing at record low conditions.** Due to low snowpack, streamflows are expected to be lower than normal.
- The ongoing drought may lead to more wildlife traveling into Utah neighborhoods in search of food and water. To find alternate food sources, deer and other big game animals may end up in people's yards or gardens this summer. Check tips to save plants and minimize property damage from these wildlife visits below.
- According to the latest information released by the U.S. Drought Monitor, drought conditions continue to plague the state, with 82.83% of the state experiencing "Extreme" or "exceptional" drought conditions. Extreme and exceptional drought conditions are the Drought Monitor's most serious categories.

###

FULL REPORT

U.S. Drought Monitor
Utah

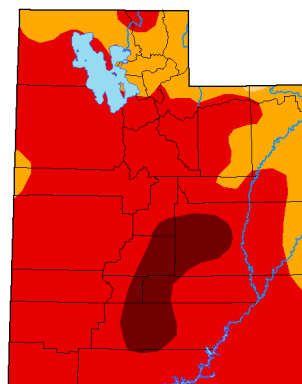
June 29, 2021



2021

U.S. Drought Monitor
Utah

June 28, 2022
(Released Thursday, Jun. 30, 2022)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



2022

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Curtis Riganti
National Drought Mitigation Center

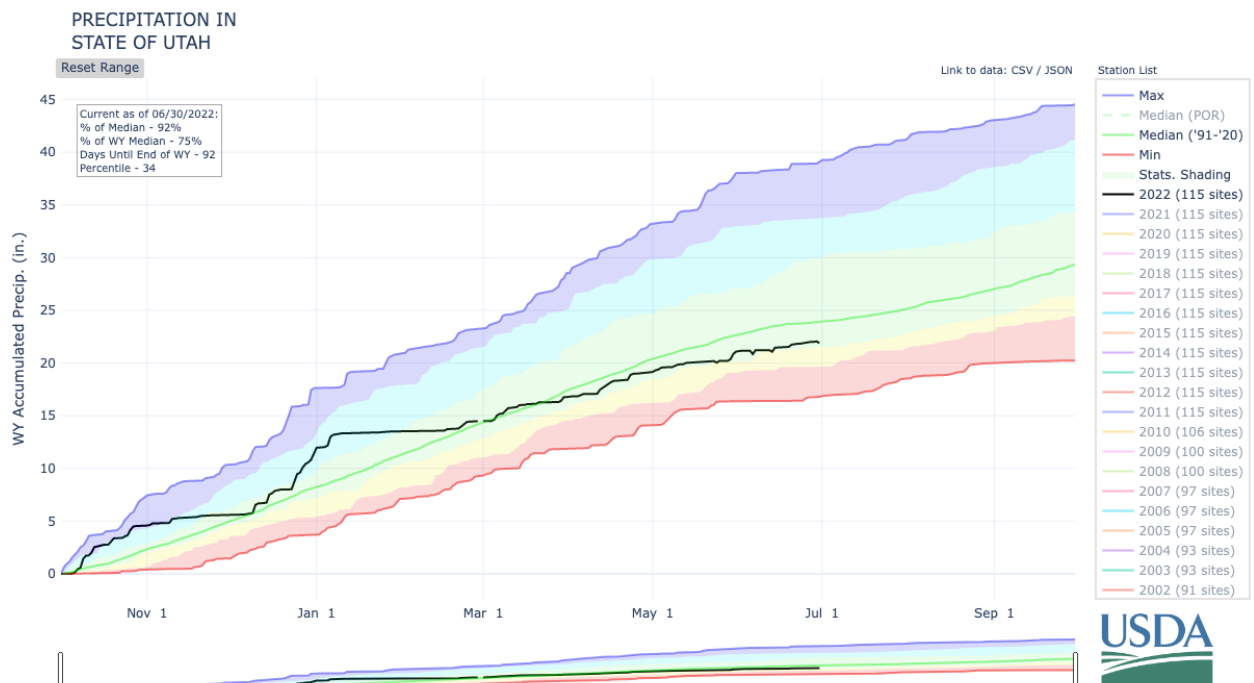


droughtmonitor.unl.edu

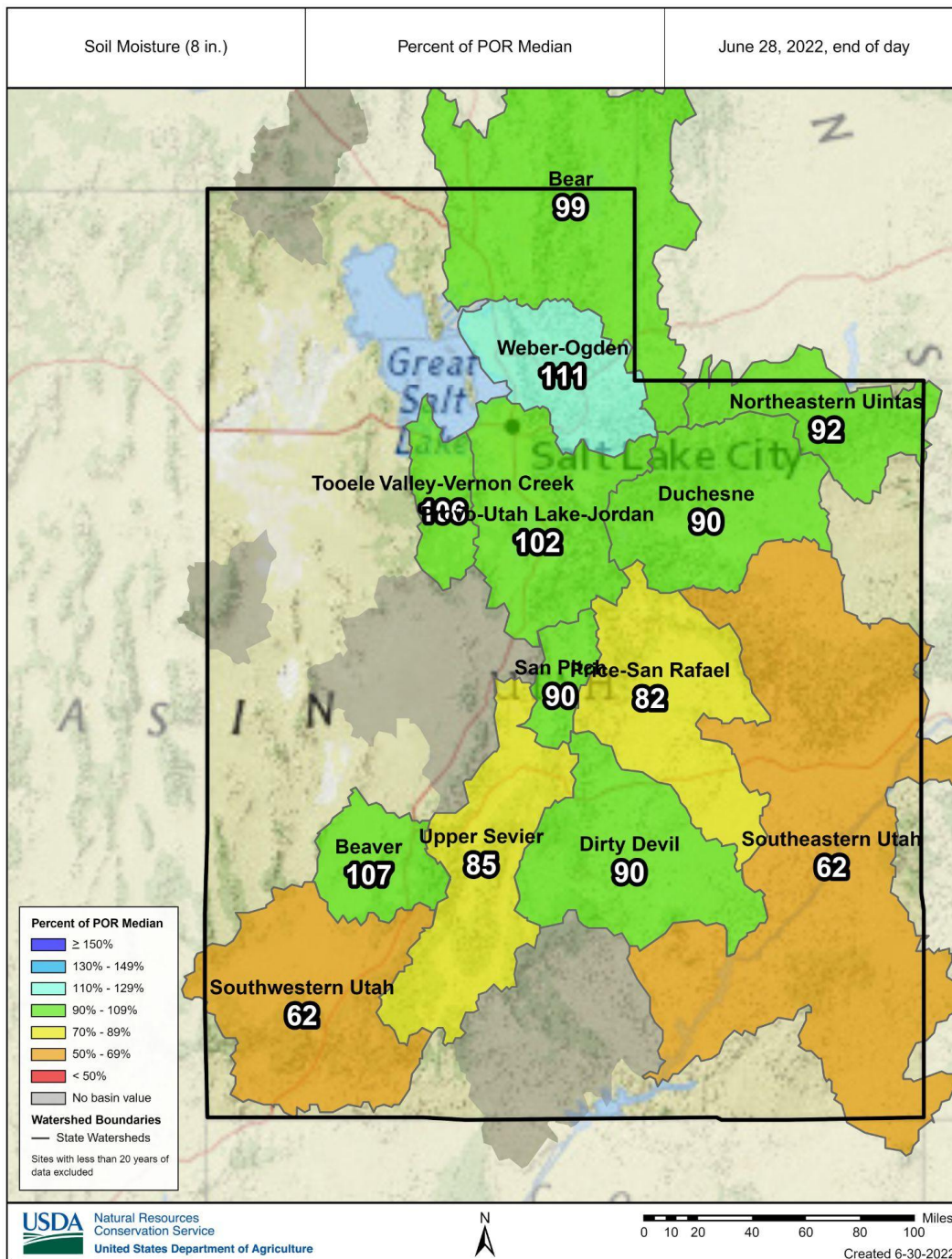
Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2021. Exceptional drought (the worst category) covers 7.73% of the state. Last year at this time 65.23% was in exceptional drought.

Precipitation and soil moisture

- Southern Utah saw little to no precipitation in May 2022, with Cedar City and St. George tying their records for the driest May on record.
- Precipitation has been lower than average. This is shaping up to be the 19th driest spring on record in approximately 125 years of data.
- Soil moisture is decaying faster than usual this water year, which could mean increased fire danger this summer.
- Spring runoff is nearly over, causing streamflow levels to decline. Snowpack was 25% below average, and runoff was not enough to refill our reservoirs.



Total Precipitation is below typical for this time of year. Precipitation statewide has been lower than normal since late April.



Soil moisture based on regions, some areas are in a better situation than others.

Temperature and Evaporation

- Temperatures over the last two weeks were slightly cooler in the northern portion of the state and warmer to much warmer in the southern portion.
- Evaporation was slightly less than typical in most areas of the state. Two areas in the northwest and southeast part of the state did have higher evapotranspiration. Evapotranspiration is essentially how thirsty the air is for water.

Streamflows

- Fifty-five of Utah's 99 streams reporting data are flowing below normal.
- Due to low snowpack, streamflows are flowing lower than normal. This means our reservoirs won't fill as they normally would.
- Three streams had their seven-day average flow reach record low.
- Daily flow from 28 headwater streams is flowing below the median for this time of year. Early snowmelt brought headwater streamflow up significantly. Streamflow is declining signaling that the snowpack is mostly melted.

Reservoir and Lake Levels

- Major reservoirs statewide are at 62% capacity. Reservoirs have received most of their spring inflow and are not expected to rise much more due to below-normal snowpack.
- Sixteen of Utah's 45 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity.
- The current elevation of Great Salt Lake is 4190.4, this is less than five tenths of a foot away from reaching a new historic low. The current historic low (set on Oct. 18, 2021) is 4190.2.

Department of Environmental Quality

- Harmful algal blooms (HABs) and toxins have been detected in the North Fork of the Virgin River (including The Narrows) and North Creek in Zion National Park. Those areas are currently under a Warning Advisory. La Verkin Creek in Zion National Park is under a Health Watch, as HABs may be present.
- A Health Watch is in effect for Otter Creek Reservoir after HABs were observed near the State Park beach access and Tamarisk Point. DWQ monitoring staff collected samples and results are pending.
- A Health Watch is in effect for Scofield Reservoir after HABs were observed near the Mountain View boat launch and DNR anglers' access point. DWQ monitoring staff collected samples and results are pending.
- The Utah County Health Department has issued a Warning Advisory for Lincoln Marina at Utah Lake. Sampling at Lincoln Marina on 6/27 detected high concentrations of toxin-producing algae (370,000 cells/mL) and dangerous levels of toxins (123 ug/L of microcystin).

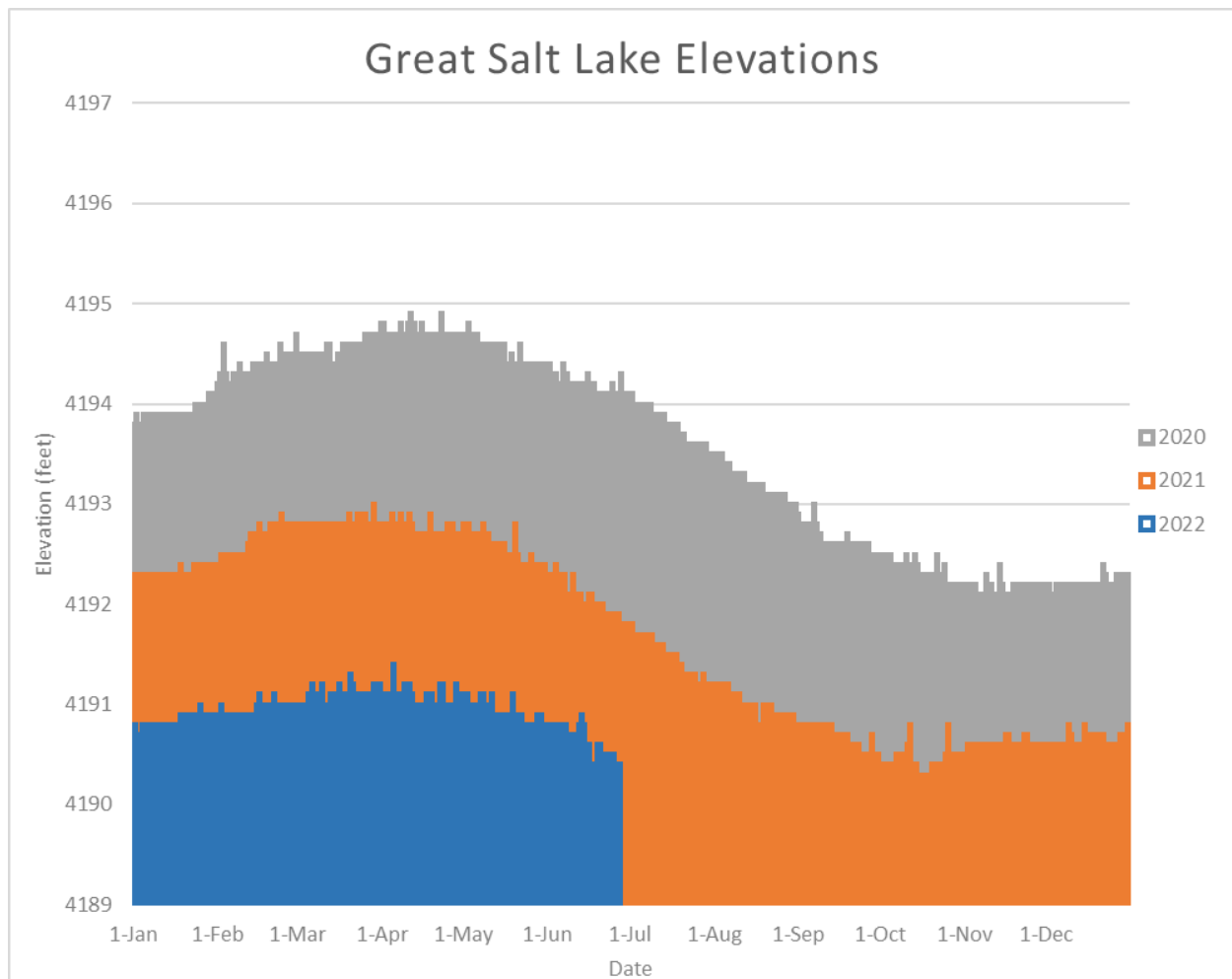
Wildlife Impacts

- The ongoing drought may lead to more wildlife traveling into Utah neighborhoods in search of food and water. In order to find alternate food sources, deer and other big game animals may end up in people's yards or gardens this summer. If you want to try to save your plants and want to minimize any property damage from these wildlife visits, here are a few tips:
- Building an 8-foot fence around your garden or yard is the most effective method, and is often the only reliable way to keep deer out of your garden.
- Another fairly effective technique is to install a motion-activated sprinkler.
- You can also try planting unpalatable vegetation around the perimeter of your garden to deter deer from eating additional plants.

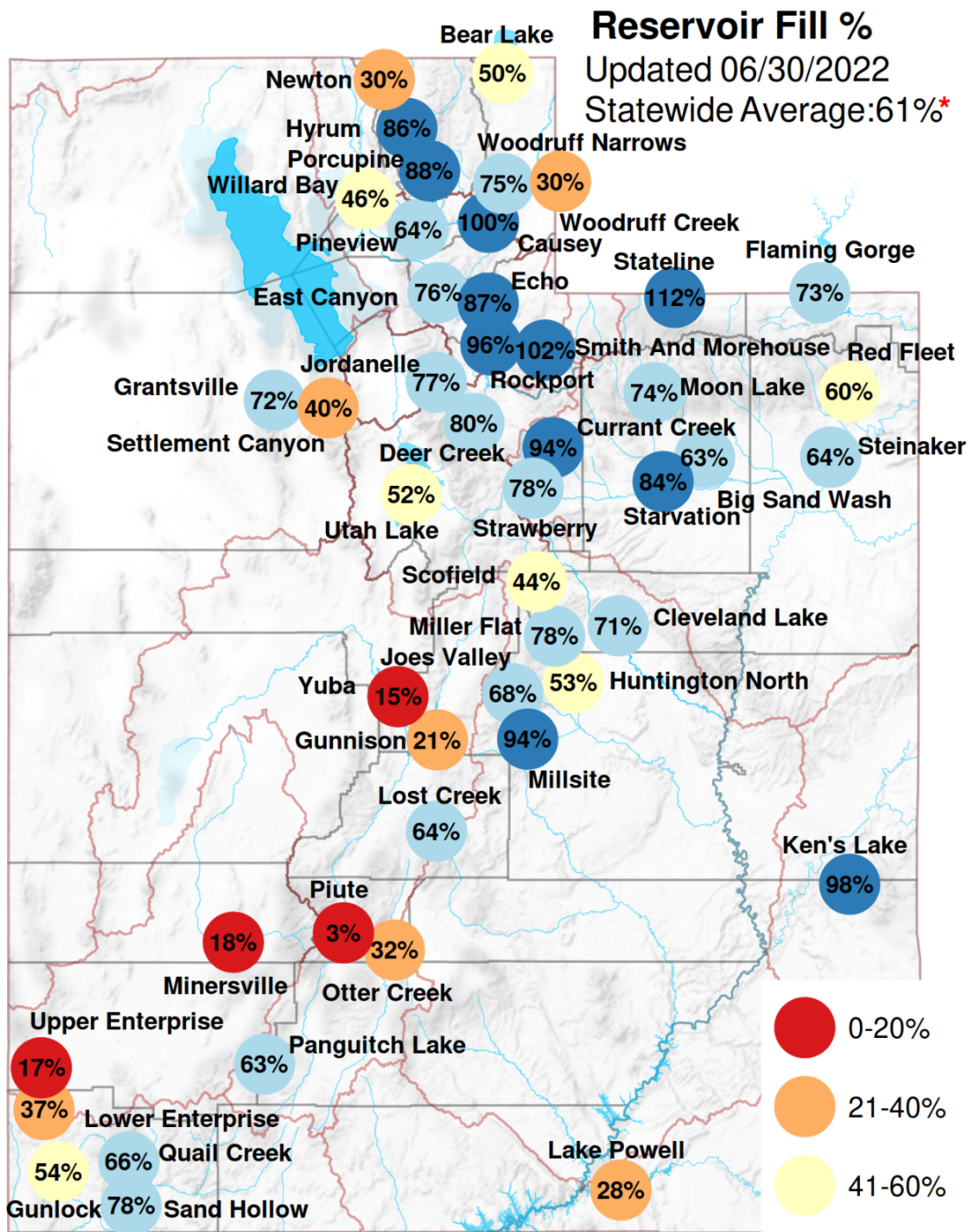
- While some people may want to prevent deer and other wildlife from eating their lawns or gardens, others may be looking for ways they can help hungry and thirsty animals this summer. While it may be tempting to provide feed or water for these animals, it can lead to unsafe situations for the animals and people. The best way you can help wildlife is by letting animals stay wild. Don't approach them, and don't try to feed them.
- Visit the [Utah Division of Wildlife Resources website](#) for more information about preventing conflicts with wildlife during the drought.

Wildfire Risks

- To date, Utah has seen 321 wildfires since January 1st, with 221 of them classified as human-caused that have burned a total of 6,110 acres. 70 fires have been naturally caused this season.
- The [National 7 Day Fire Potential Outlook](#) categorizes much of western Utah at low risk, with the rest of the state falling in the little to no risk category.
- Drought conditions have led to critically dry fuels in the southern part of the state. The monsoonal moisture that we have received this week has led to lower fire activity.



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



Data Sources: water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels

*State average excludes Lake Powell & Flaming Gorge to better represent the state's water supply.

Total capacity including these is 47%

