



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drought Update

SALT LAKE CITY (Sept. 08, 2022) – A record-breaking [heatwave](#) has left our soils parched and is another reminder to use our water supply more efficiently. Salt Lake City continues to be a hotspot. Currently, Salt Lake City has seen 34 days of 100 degree plus temperatures, breaking the previous record of 21.

“Scorching temperatures statewide have taken a toll on our soil moisture this past week,” Candice Hasenyager, director of the Division of Water Resources said. “If this trend continues, it means less water will make its way to our streams and reservoirs during next year’s spring runoff.”

In an effort to stretch the water supply and use this precious resource wisely, many municipalities across the state are adopting water efficiency standards and conservation ordinances.

“These communities are leading by example and showing that Utah is serious about water conservation,” said Hasenyager. “These policies will shape water use for decades to come.”

At-a-glance highlights:

- 17 communities within the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District’s service area have adopted water conserving ordinances to their city codes.
- Seven communities within Jordan Valley water Conservancy District’s service area have adopted water conserving ordinances.
- Washington County Water Conservancy District recently passed the most water [restrictive ordinances](#) for new development in Utah. The new ordinances are projected to save nearly 11 billion gallons over the next 10 years.



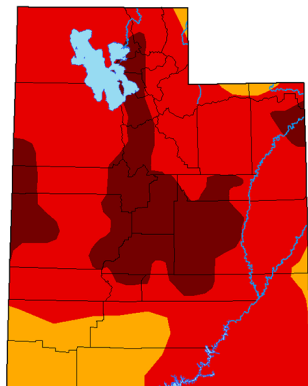
- Drought conditions have resulted in low spring flows for water systems in North Logan, Alpine City, and Echo. Communities are looking into drilling new wells and activating emergency well sources. Weber Basin will haul water to the town of Echo for the remainder of the summer season.
- The main ramp and island ramp at Deer Creek State Park are now closed. In total there are fifteen [boat ramp closures](#) for Utah's state parks. Last year at this time, eleven boat ramps were closed.
- A total of 875 fires have burned in the state this year with 411 of them human-caused. This is down 20% from the previous year.
- Finished projects from the initial round of funding for the Agricultural Water Optimization program have a reported savings of 21,459 acre feet of water - that's about **7 billion gallons of water!** (25% of projects have not been completed yet, so savings have not yet been recorded)
- Thirty-five of the 47 reservoirs the division monitors are below 55%, which is about the same as last year, but still about 12% lower than normal for this time of year.
- Great Salt Lake continues to decline. Currently, the average [daily surface elevation](#) is 4,189.2. It dropped past the previous record low (4,190.2) on July 3 and will likely continue to decline until mid-October.
- Residents looking for tips on how to help reduce water consumption can be found at [SlowtheFlow.Org](#).

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FULL REPORT

U.S. Drought Monitor
Utah

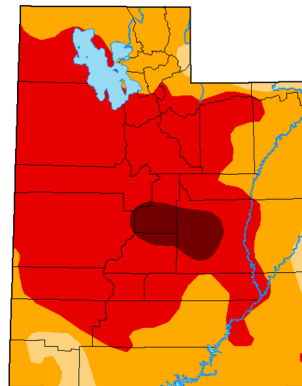
September 7, 2021



2021

U.S. Drought Monitor
Utah

September 6, 2022
(Released Thursday, Sep. 8, 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:

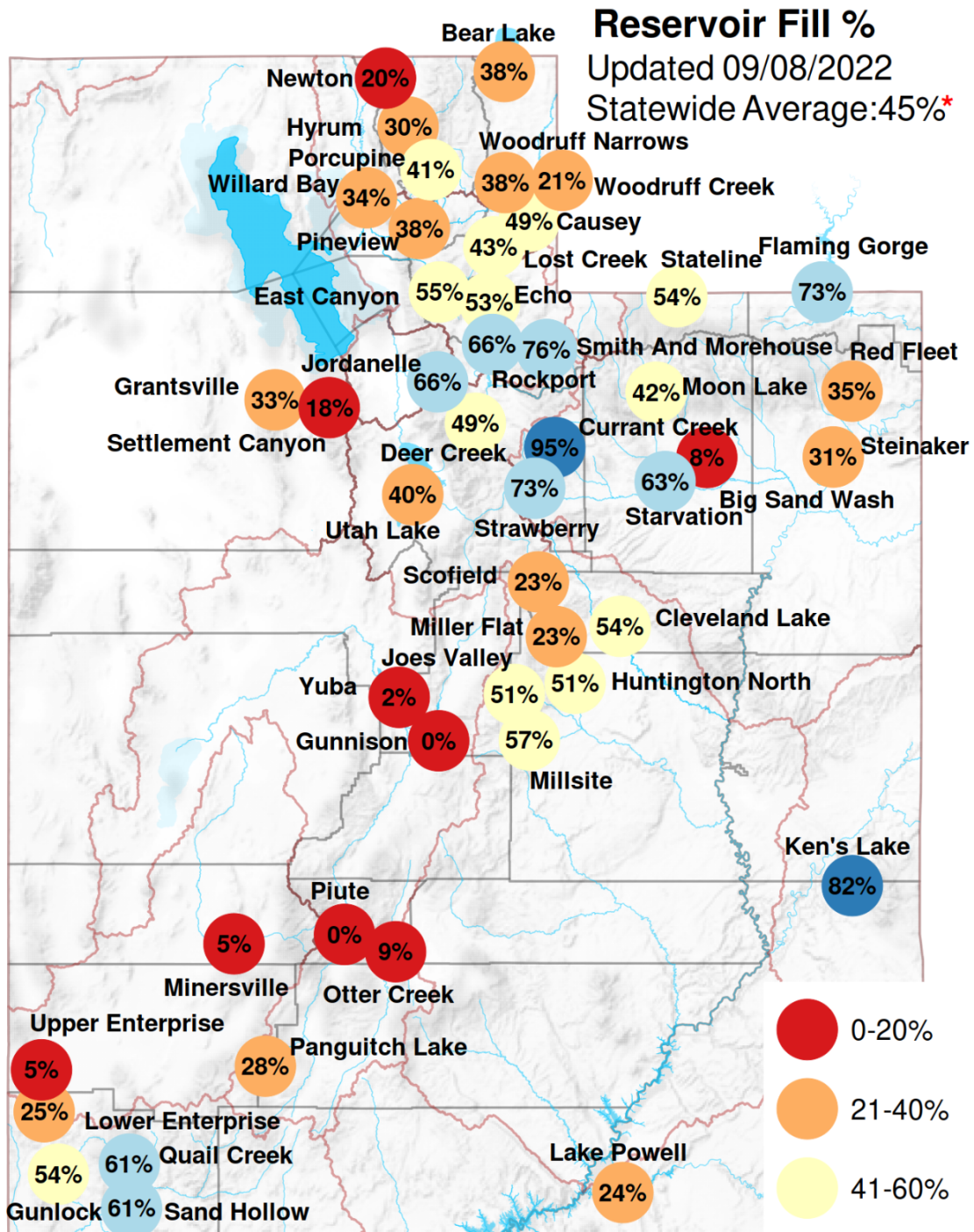
David Simenel
Western Regional Climate Center



Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2021. Extreme and exceptional drought (the worst category) covers 56.6% of the state. Last year at this time 88% of the state was in exceptional drought.

U.S. Drought Monitor

- According to the latest information released by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), drought conditions continue to plague the state, with 56.6% of the state experiencing “Extreme” or “exceptional” drought conditions. Extreme and exceptional drought conditions are the Drought Monitor’s most serious categories. At the same time last year, 88% of the state was in extreme drought.
- Residents looking to report drought impacts can use the U.S. Drought Monitor’s [Condition Monitoring Observer Report](#) (CMOR) system. The report will become part of the permanent record, appearing immediately on an interactive map visible to the public, including authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor and the media.



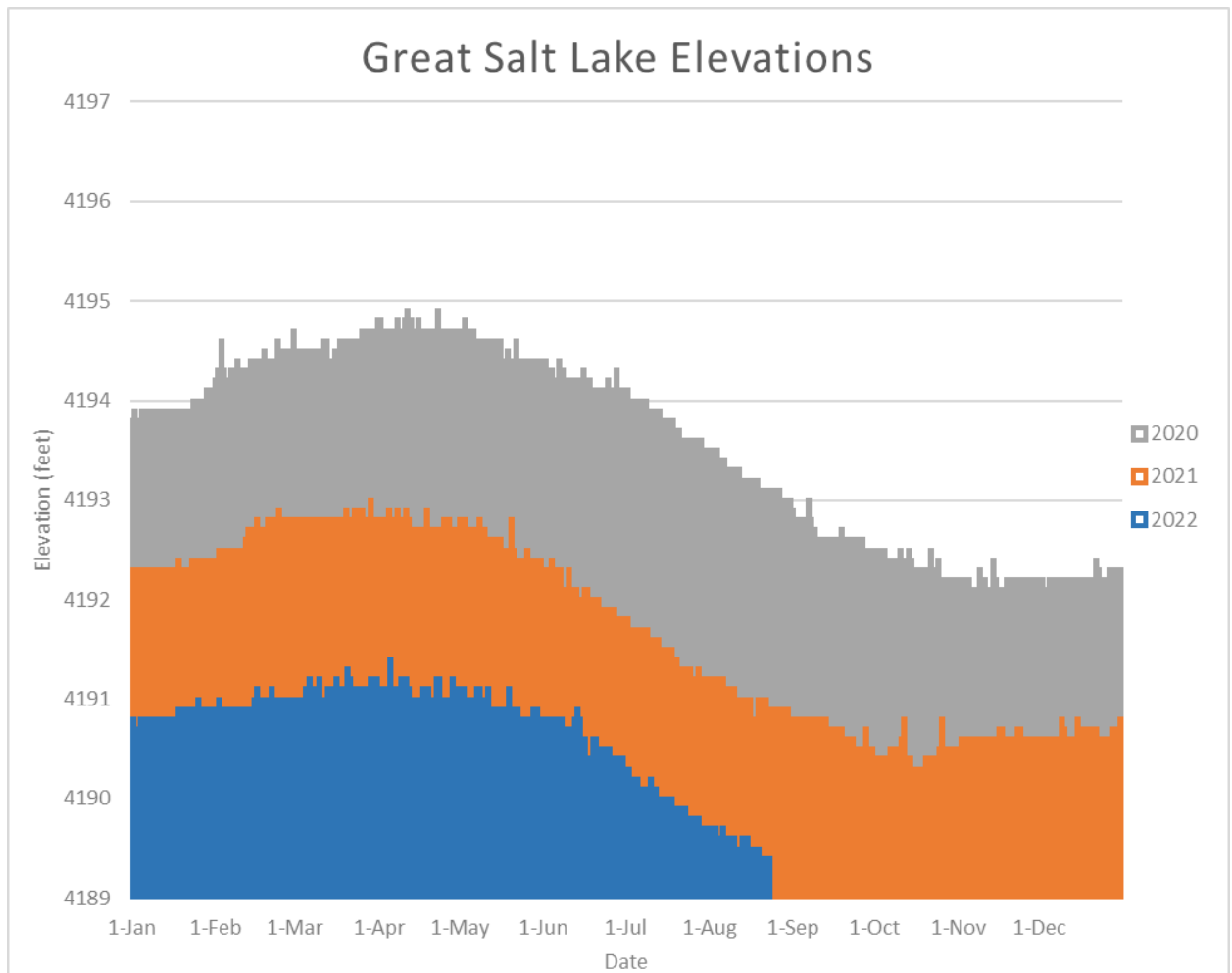
Data Sources: water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels

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

Total capacity including these is 37%

Reservoir and Lake Levels

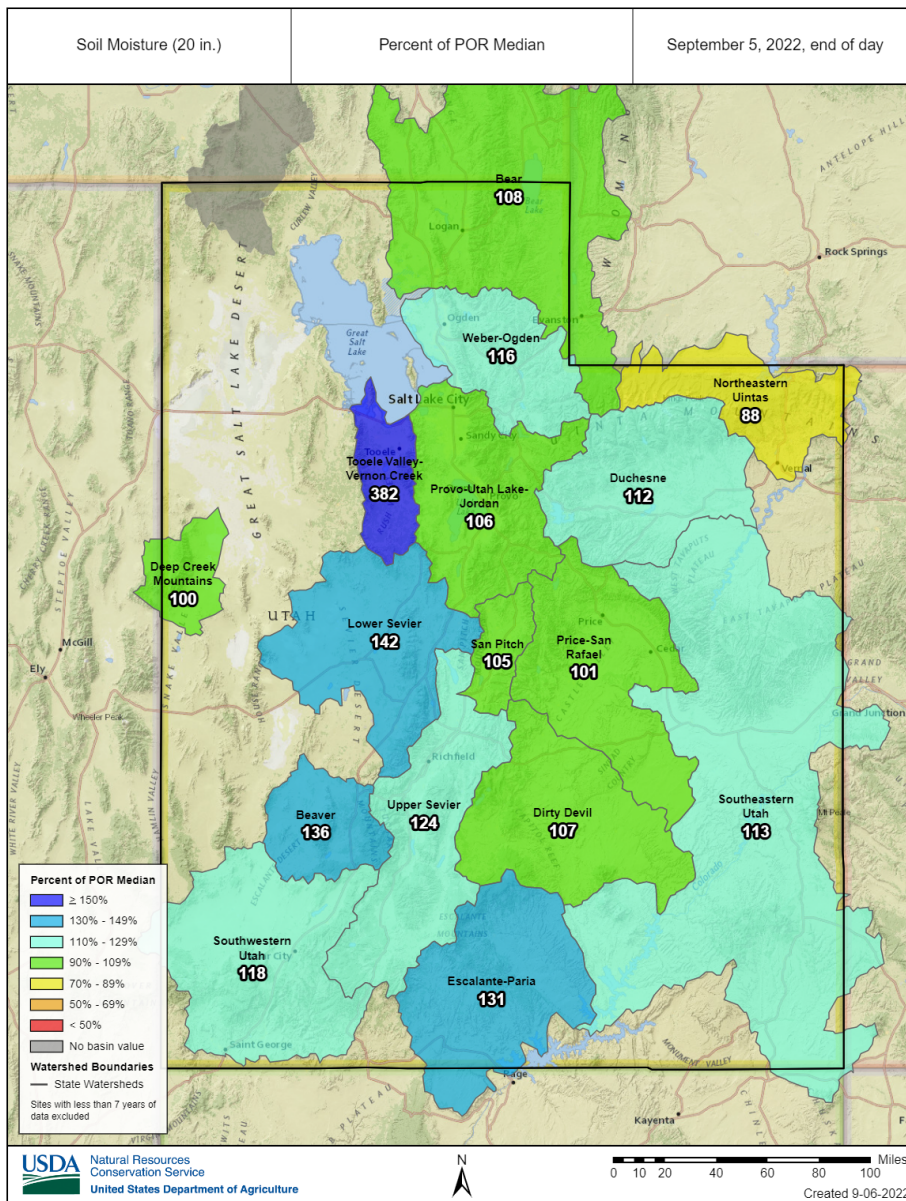
- Reservoir storage statewide continues to drop and now averages 45%. Thirty-five of Utah's 47 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity.
- Current statewide reservoir levels are about the same as they were last year at this time.
- Great Salt Lake continues to decline. Currently, the average [daily surface elevation](#) is 4,189.2. It surpassed the previous record low (4,190.2) on July 3 and will likely continue to drop until mid-October.



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

Precipitation and soil moisture

- Soil moisture has dropped with recent high temperatures. Current levels are normal for this time of year.
- Summer monsoons season has ended. Summer rains typically don't add to reservoir levels, however the decrease in demand can stop reservoirs from dropping further.



Soil moisture based on regions as compared to other recorded years (Period of Record). Most of the state has soil moisture typical for this time of year. Soil moisture has declined recently due to high temperatures. High soil moisture is important in the fall before the soil freezes for the winter.

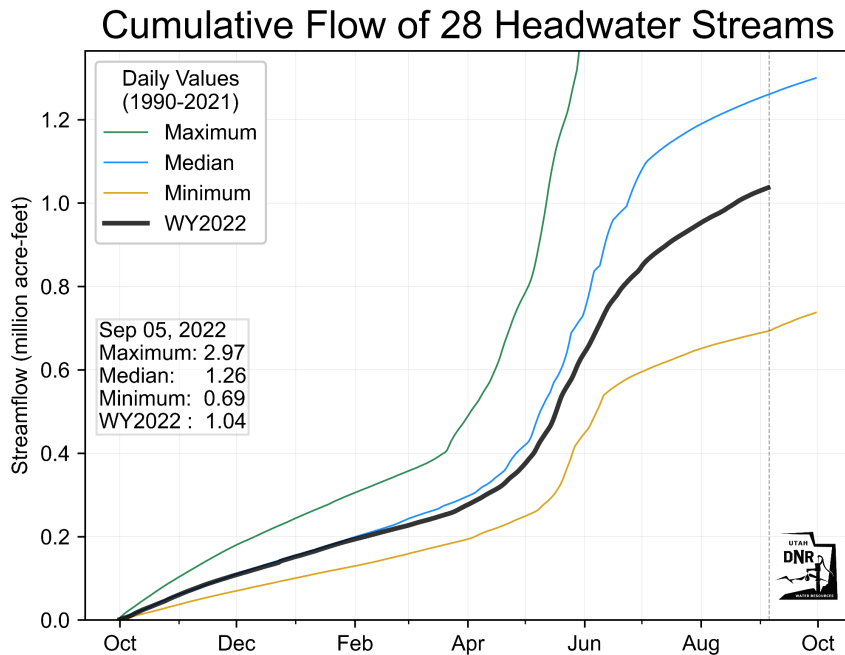
Temperature and Evaporation

- The National Weather Service issued multiple heat threat advisories over the last two weeks. High temperatures continue to harass the state as well as much of the west. Record high temperatures have dominated many parts of the state.

- Salt Lake City continues to be a hotspot. Currently, Salt Lake City has seen 34 days of 100 degree plus temperatures, breaking the previous record of 21. A new high temperature of 107 degrees was set for the month of September.

Streamflows

- Despite monsoon rains, cumulative streamflows are lower than typical for the year. This is due to the below average snowpack and spring runoff.
- 56% of streams are flowing below or much below normal.



Total volume of streamflow water for the water year for headwater streams is below average. Headwater streams are unregulated and represent natural runoff conditions. The current year black line is significantly below the median blue line.

Department of Environmental Quality

- Harmful algal blooms (HABs) continue to grow throughout the state due to drought conditions and high temperatures. Visitors are advised to check habs.utah.gov for current conditions and report suspicious algae.
 - Danger Advisory: Do not swim, boat, drink water, or fish, and keep animals away from the following water body
 - Big East Lake at Payson Lakes
 - Health Watch and Warning Advisories: Do not swim, water ski, or drink the water, clean fish well and discard guts, and keep animals away from the following water bodies:
 - Warning Advisories
 - Andy Adams Reservoir; Mantua Reservoir; the Pond at Willard Bay; Clinton Pond; Scofield Reservoir; Otter Creek Reservoir; Calf Creek; Willis Creek; Panguitch Lake; Baker Reservoir; the North Fork of the

- **Utah Lake:** There is a lakewide advisory in place, and advisories at American Fork Marina, Lindon Marina, Saratoga Springs Marina, Lincoln Marina, Utah Lake State Park, Sandy Beach, and Provo Bay at Utah Lake.

- Utah Department of Natural Resources, 1594 W. North Temple Suite 3710, PO Box 145610, Salt Lake City, UT 84114, 801-538-7200, www.nr.utah.gov

- Projects funded in 2021 have a projected water savings of 15,283 acre feet of water or 5 billion gallons of water.

For more information on the program and how to apply, visit:

<https://ag.utah.gov/farmers/conservation-division/water-optimization-program/>

Wildlife Impacts

- There are a variety of upland game species in Utah, including doves, band-tailed pigeons, grouse, partridge, cottontail rabbits and snowshoe hares. Several years of ongoing drought have impacted some of these species in different areas of the state.
- The majority of the upland game hunts in Utah are open to anyone with a Utah hunting license. Before heading out in the field, [visit the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources website](#) to see how the populations are doing across the state and for some tips that will help you have success hunting upland game this fall.

State Parks

- With water levels continuing to drop, we encourage the public to continue checking water and launch ramp conditions BEFORE heading out to a park. Many launch ramps are either under an advisory or closed. Launch at your own risk.
- Low water levels may also expose additional navigation hazards and decrease the overall amount of boatable water. As such, it is essential that boaters remain vigilant and follow Utah's boating laws, rules, and safety practices.

Wildfire Risks

- Due to the recent rise in temperature the northern part of the state has been moved to moderate risk for Wildfire according to the [Great Basin Coordination Center's 7-day outlook](#). Southern Utah is currently at low risk of wildfire potential.
- A total of 875 fires have burned in the state this year with 411 of them human-caused. This is down 20% from the previous year.

Water Rights

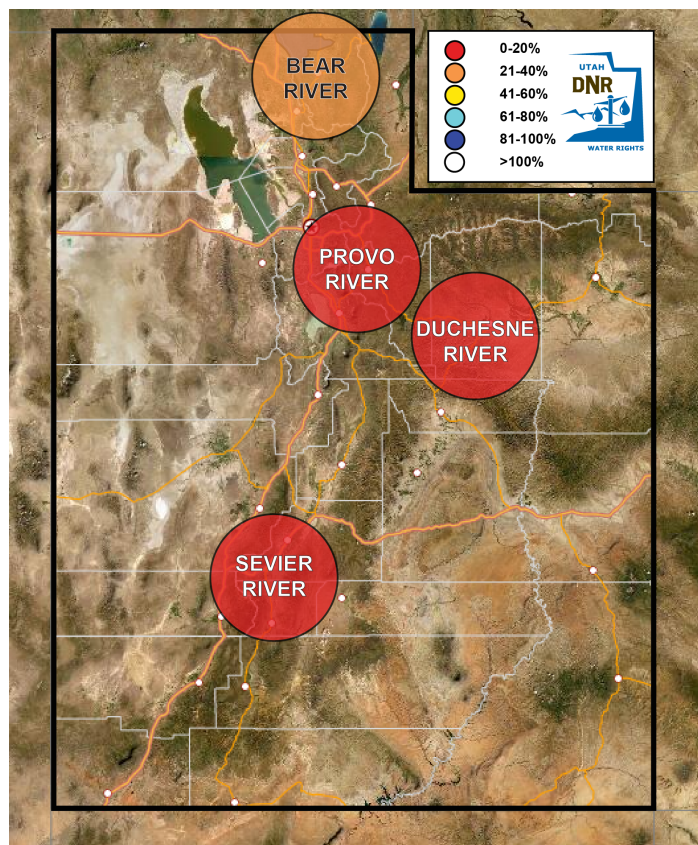
Overview of the State of Surface Water Rights

Hot and dry conditions have led to diminished stream flows on many of the river systems across the state. As a result, the number of water rights which could be satisfied is reduced compared to what was reported 2 weeks ago. Surface water rights in Utah are limited by the available natural flow in the river system. Normally, as conditions get drier, the flow diminishes and fewer water rights can be satisfied. Because Utah water law follows the prior appropriation doctrine, older (senior) water rights have preference—or “priority”—over younger (junior) water rights.

The four systems identified below (i.e., Bear River, Duchesne River, Provo River, and Sevier River) are a good representation of the various river systems throughout the state. The percentages shown in the table are based on the total amount of water rights. For example, 14% of the water rights on the Duchesne River system are currently being satisfied compared to 26%

two weeks ago. River Commissioners oversee these systems to ensure water is being diverted by those entitled to receive it according to their priority dates.

Since the water supply varies each year, we have provided data for the current year with data from the same day for the previous three. For example, last year at this time, 33% of the water rights on the Duchesne River system were being satisfied. In 2019, however, 38% of rights were being satisfied. Please note, when a system shows a number greater than 100%, it means that all water rights on the system are being satisfied and additional water is being stored in reservoirs.



Bear River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	40%	570 cfs
2021	60%	851 cfs
2020	55%	777 cfs
2019	44%	625 cfs

Provo River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	20%	92 cfs
2021	14%	62 cfs
2020	14%	62 cfs
2019	17%	77 cfs

Duchesne River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	14%	134 cfs
2021	33%	324 cfs
2020	17%	169 cfs
2019	38%	372 cfs

Sevier River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	13%	52 cfs
2021	12%	49 cfs
2020	24%	96 cfs
2019	28%	112 cfs