



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drought Update

SALT LAKE CITY (Sept. 22, 2022) – As the irrigation season winds down, the state’s reservoirs are near the same level as they were this time last year. Reservoir levels started the season much lower, which means Utahns have drawn less water from our reservoirs when compared to last year.

“The efforts that the legislature, residents and municipalities have made are working,” Candice Hasenyager, director of the Division of Water Resources, said. “This helps us keep water in our reservoirs for future years.”

Communities across the state are responding to proactive community outreach and education for the need to conserve water.

“Water usage did increase during the record hot temps earlier this month, but overall, Utahns across the state have helped save billions of gallons,” Hasenyager. “Drought or no drought, we need to use our water supply responsibly.”

At-a-glance highlights:

- Salt Lake City is reporting a very high level of community engagement in conservation programs such as water checks, water audits, low-water grass seed, rain barrels and incentive programs.
- Salt Lake City saved **2.9 billion gallons** in their service area (*compared to three-year average demand*)
- Washington County Water Conservancy District’s water production is **111 million gallons less** compared to last year, despite a nearly 5% increase in the number of connections
- Weber Basin Water Conservancy District’s year-to-date deliveries are down 22%, about **5**



billion gallons compared to last year

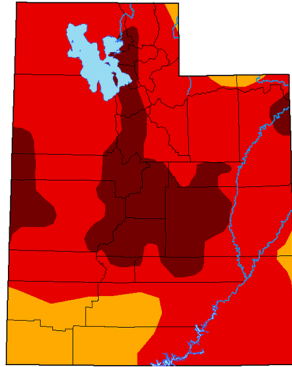
- Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District has maintained a reduction of half a billion gallons of water compared to last year
- [Utah Water Savers](#) has processed 23,640 smart irrigation controller rebates and 3,000 toilet rebates (*since program inception in 2018*)
- Drought conditions and high temperatures continue to cause harmful algal bloom (HABs) growth throughout the state. Visitors are advised to check habs.utah.gov for current conditions and report suspicious algae. More info in the full report below.
- Waterfowl populations have decreased across North America due to drought impacts. Anyone planning to hunt waterfowl this fall should [visit the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources website](#) to see how populations are doing across the state and for hunting tips.
- The main ramp and island ramp at Deer Creek State Park are now closed. There are 16 [boat ramp closures](#) for Utah's state parks. Last year at this time, 11 boat ramps were closed.
- 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 4,189.1. 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

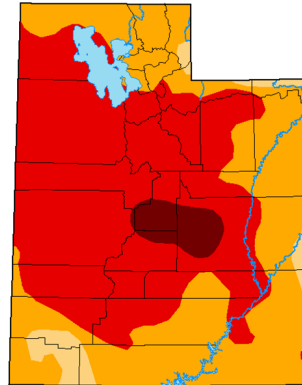
September 21, 2021



2021

U.S. Drought Monitor Utah

September 20, 2022
(Released Thursday, Sep. 22, 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>

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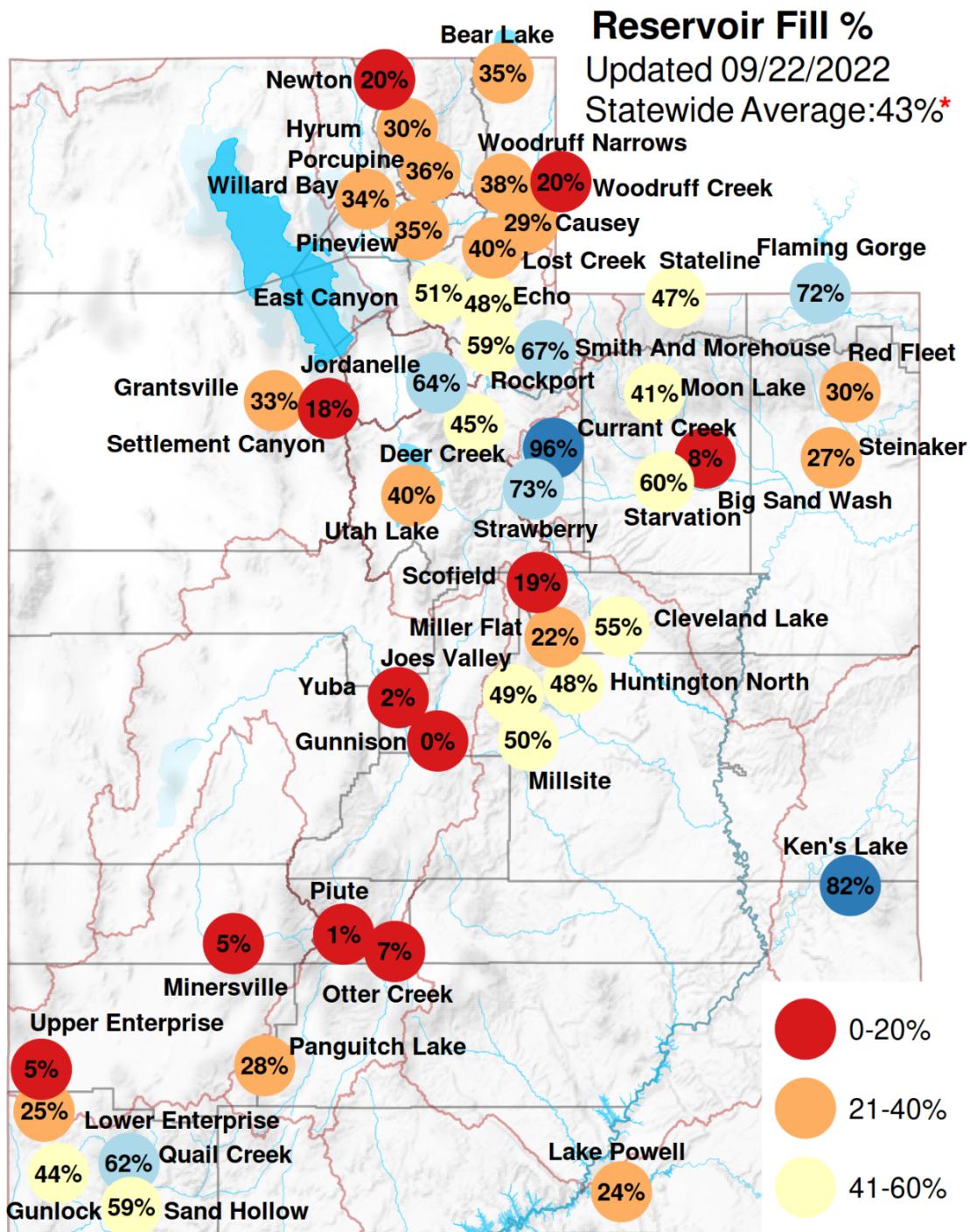


droughtmonitor.unl.edu

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](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu), 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](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/ConditionMonitoringObserverReport) 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.



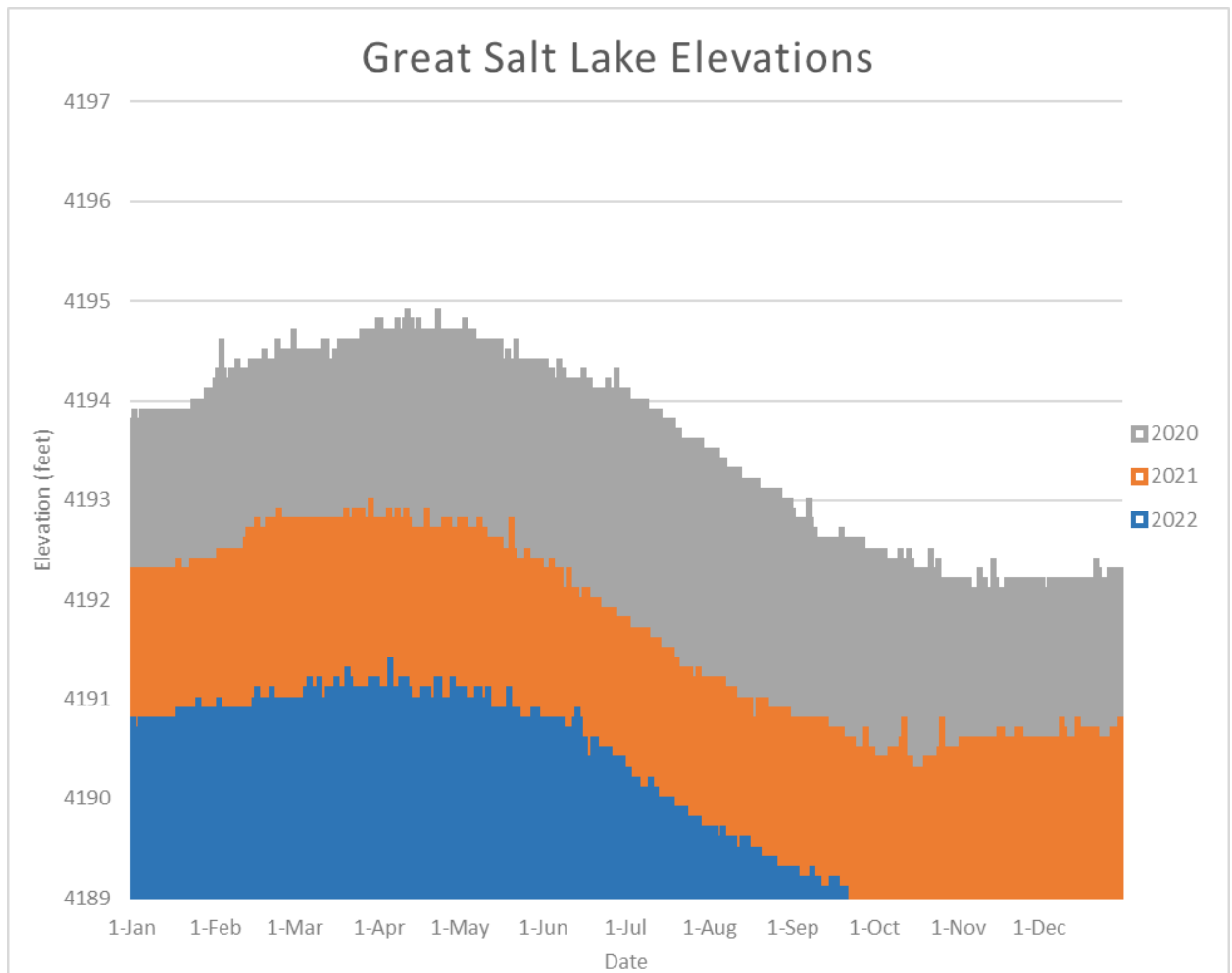
Data Sources: water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels

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

Total capacity including these is 36%

Reservoir and Lake Levels

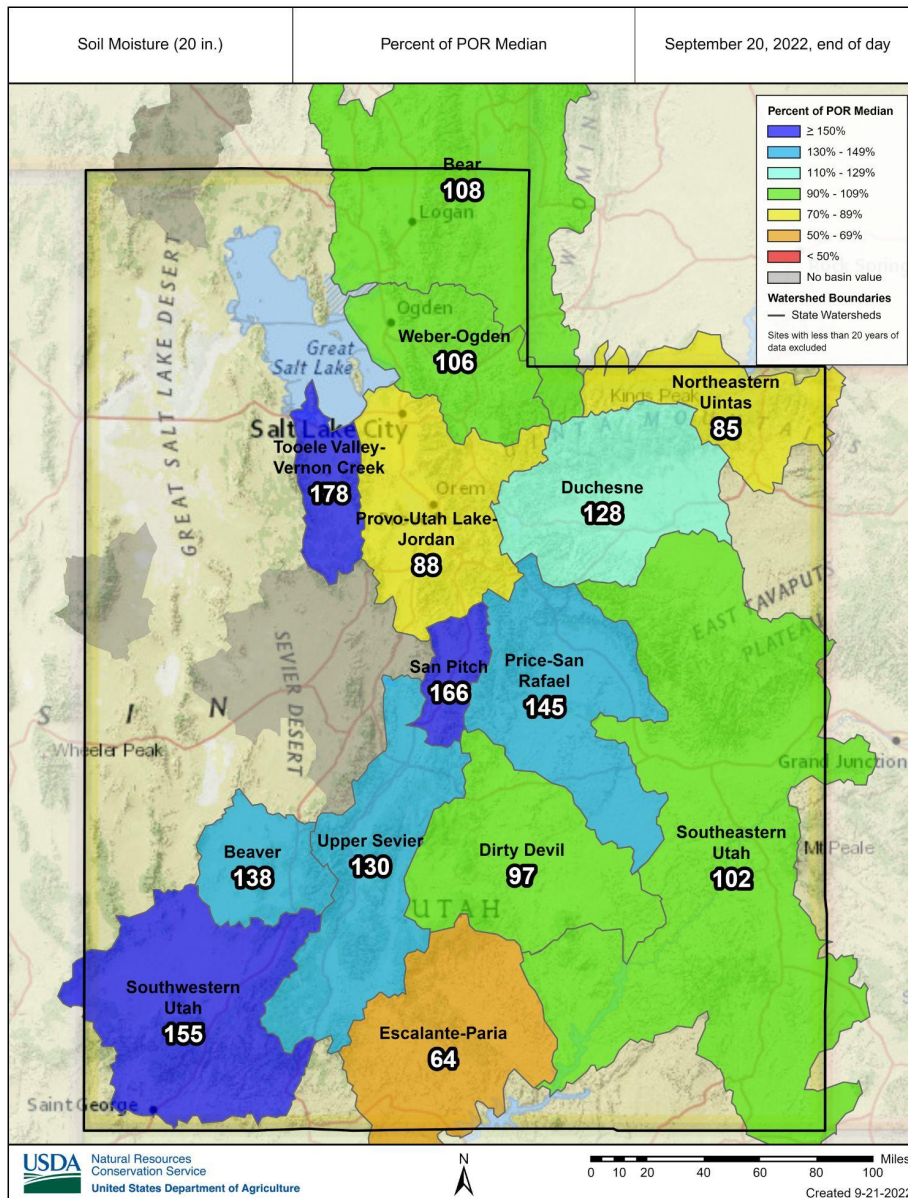
- Reservoir storage statewide continues to drop and now averages 43%. Thirty-five of Utah's 47 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity.
- Current statewide reservoir levels are about the same as they were last year at this time.
- Great Salt Lake continues to decline. Currently, the average [daily surface elevation](#) is 4,189.1. 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 dropped with early September record high temperatures. Recent precipitation and slightly cooler temperatures have helped soil moisture recover. Current levels are mostly normal for this time of year.
- The National Weather Service is forecasting a third year of La Nina. La Nina typically results in higher than normal temperatures and drier than normal precipitation.



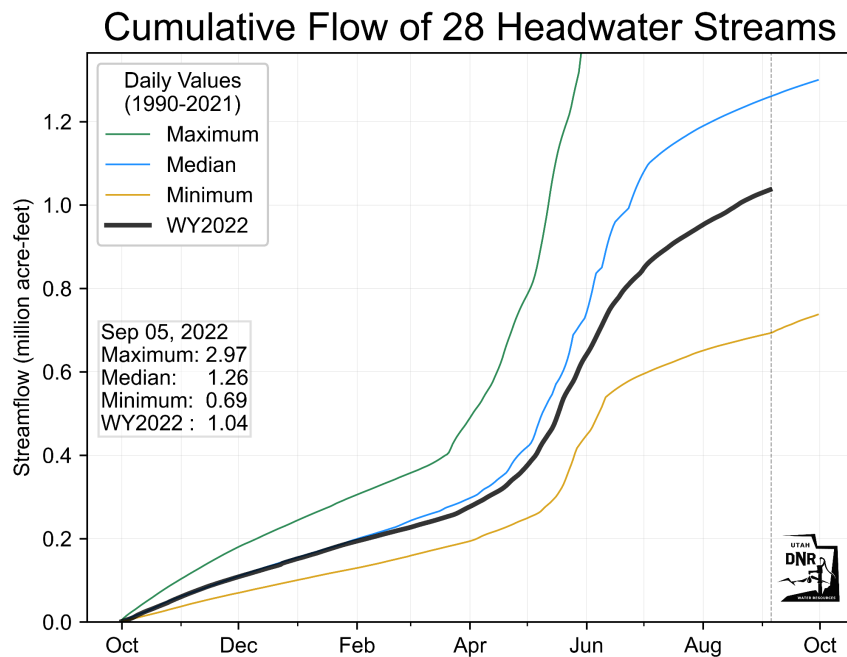
Soil moisture based on regions as compared to other recorded years (Period of Record). Soil moisture is generally good around the state although there are some lower areas of concern. High soil moisture is important in the fall before the soil freezes for the winter.

Temperature and Evaporation

- Temperatures ran an average of five degrees above normal for the last two weeks. The record-breaking temperatures have receded however, temperatures remain slightly higher than typical for this time of year.
- Higher than normal temperatures increase use as well as evaporation.

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

- Drought conditions and high temperatures continue to cause harmful algal bloom (HABs) growth throughout the state. 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
 - Rockport Reservoir; Jordanelle Reservoir; Deer Creek Reservoir; Lost Creek Reservoir; Echo Reservoir; Andy Adams Reservoir; Mantua Reservoir; the Pond at Willard Bay; Clinton Pond; Scofield Reservoir; Calf Creek; Panguitch Lake; Baker Reservoir; the North Fork of the Virgin River (including the Narrows); Right and Left Fork of North Creek at Zion National Park.
 - 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.
- Health Watch
 - Green River (Split Mountain Campground in Dinosaur National Monument), Matt Warner Reservoir, and La Verkin Creek (Zion National Park)

Wildlife Impacts

- There are a variety of waterfowl species in Utah, including ducks, geese and swans. Duck populations in Utah are doing OK this year, but numbers across North America have decreased due to drought impacts. There were fewer ponds available for nesting last year, which led to a decrease in reproduction.
- Anyone planning to hunt waterfowl this fall should [visit the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources website](#) to see how populations are doing across the state and for hunting tips.

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. The most recent boat ramp closures include both ramps at Deer Creek State Park. Conditions for all state park boat ramps can be found on the official [Utah Division of State Parks website](#). 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.

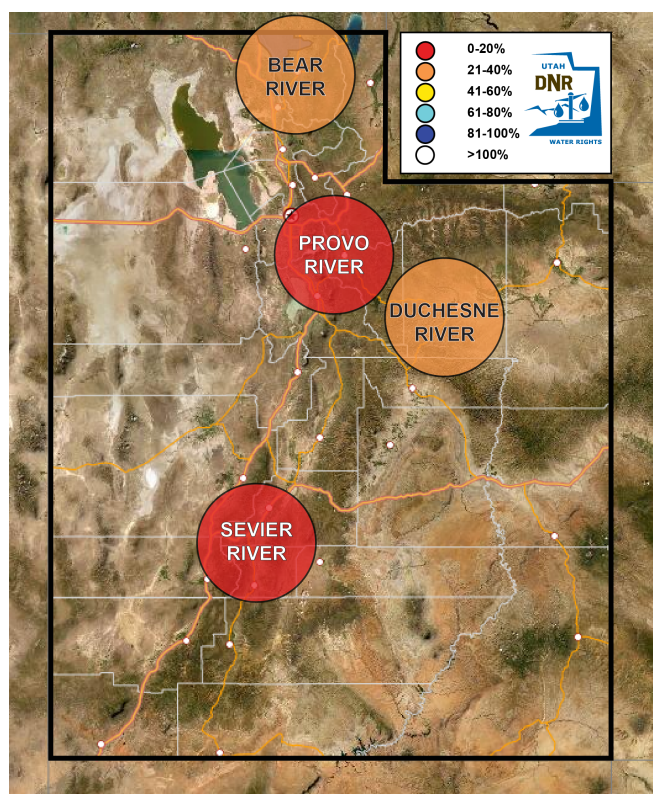
Water Rights

Overview of the State of Surface Water Rights

Varying conditions around the state have allowed some river systems to increase the number of rights they can satisfy, while others have seen further reductions. For example, of the systems listed here, Duchesne increased the percentage of rights satisfied from 14% to 26%, while the Bear River system fell to the lowest percentage of rights satisfied for this week in the last four years. 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, 17% of the water rights on the Provo River system are currently being satisfied compared to 20% 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, 10% of the water rights on the Provo River system were being satisfied. In 2019, however, 24% 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	24%	346 <u>cfs</u>
2021	39%	553 <u>cfs</u>
2020	56%	788 <u>cfs</u>
2019	55%	772 <u>cfs</u>

Provo River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	17%	77 <u>cfs</u>
2021	10%	46 <u>cfs</u>
2020	14%	62 <u>cfs</u>
2019	24%	108 <u>cfs</u>

Duchesne River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	26%	255 <u>cfs</u>
2021	32%	310 <u>cfs</u>
2020	19%	185 <u>cfs</u>
2019	35%	340 <u>cfs</u>

Sevier River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	12%	47 <u>cfs</u>
2021	15%	62 <u>cfs</u>
2020	19%	77 <u>cfs</u>