



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Drought Update**

**SALT LAKE CITY** (Oct. 07, 2022) – Oct. 1 marks the first day of the new water year. A “water year” is a term commonly used in hydrology to describe a time period of 12 months for which precipitation totals are measured. This is the time of year where water experts start compiling data that will help predict how much water will make its way to our streams and reservoirs. It’s also when summer irrigation winds to a close.

“Celebrating the new water year is an exciting time for those in the water community. It’s when the water cycle resets,” Candice Hasenyager, director of the Division of Water Resources, said. “As we welcome the new water year, we should all make a resolution to be more waterwise.”

With the new water year comes uncertainty. With 95% of Utah’s water supply coming from snowpack, a poor or even average snowpack will not refill the state’s reservoirs. Water conservation continues to be a top priority for Utah.

“Utahns have made major strides in water conservation this summer,” Hasenyager said. “As the irrigation season ends and we spend more time in our homes, I urge Utahns to look for ways to [save water indoors](#).”

### **At-a-glance highlights:**

- According to [NRCS](#), for the 2022 water year, Utah ended at 75% of normal snowpack. Soil moisture levels at Utah’s SNOTEL sites are at 39% of saturation, up 2% from last year and hovering slightly above normal for this time of year.
- Thirty-seven 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.
- Of the 98 measured streams, 41 are currently flowing below normal.



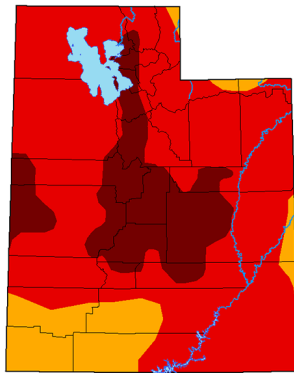
- With the cooler season, outdoor plants don't need as much water. Follow the [Lawn Watering Guide](#) to help save water for next year.
- Great Salt Lake continues to decline. Currently, the average [daily surface elevation](#) is 4,188.9. It dropped past the previous record low (4,190.2) on July 3 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](#).

###

## FULL REPORT

### U.S. Drought Monitor Utah

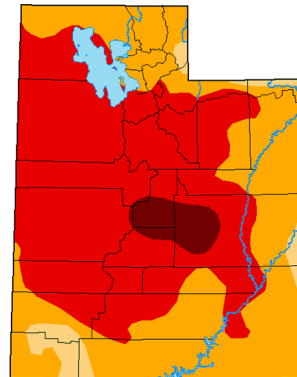
October 5, 2021



2021

### U.S. Drought Monitor Utah

October 4, 2022  
(Released Thursday, Oct. 6, 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:

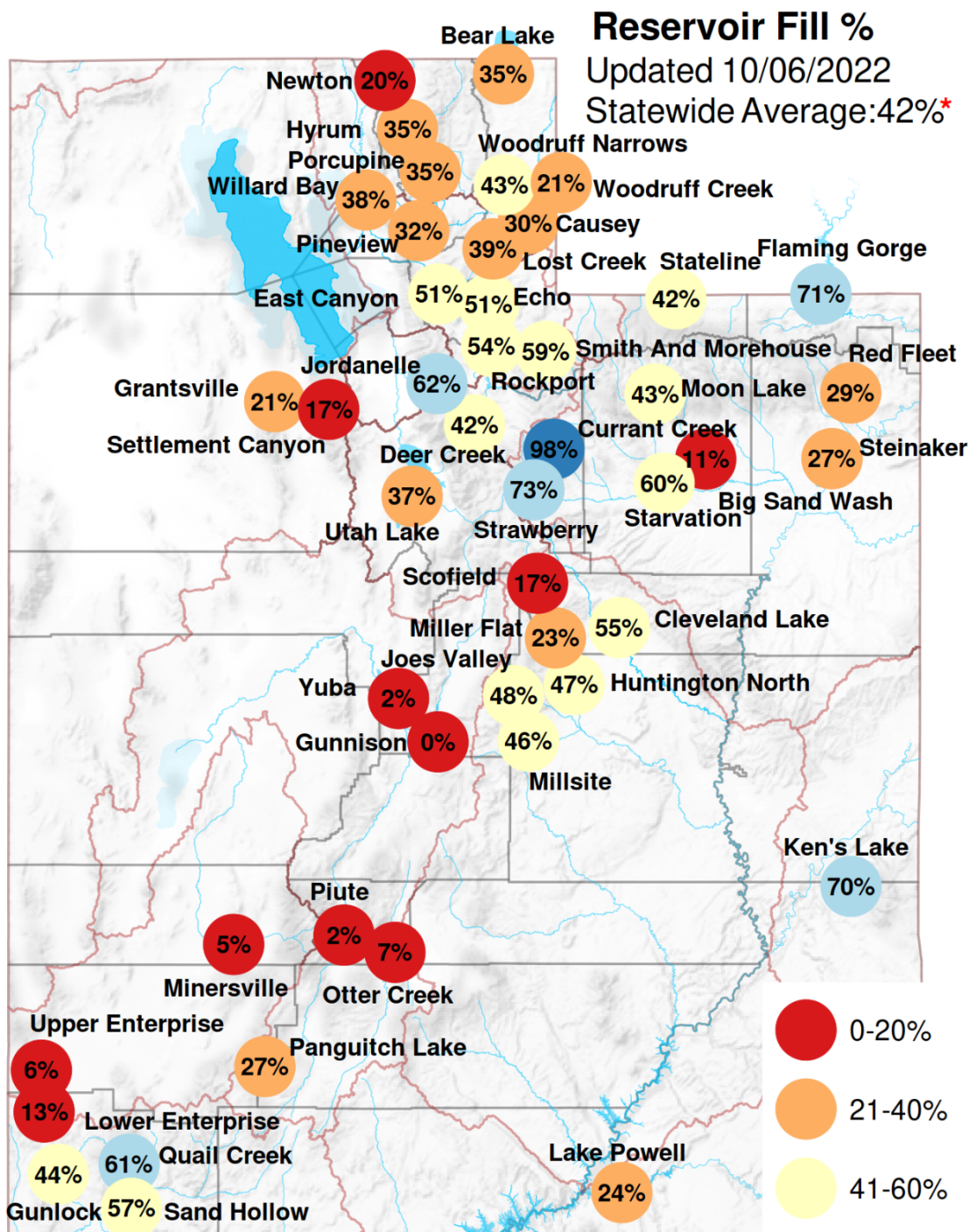
Brad Pugh  
CPC/NOAA



*Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2021. Extreme and exceptional drought (the worst category) covers 56.4% 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 56.4% 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](#) 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.



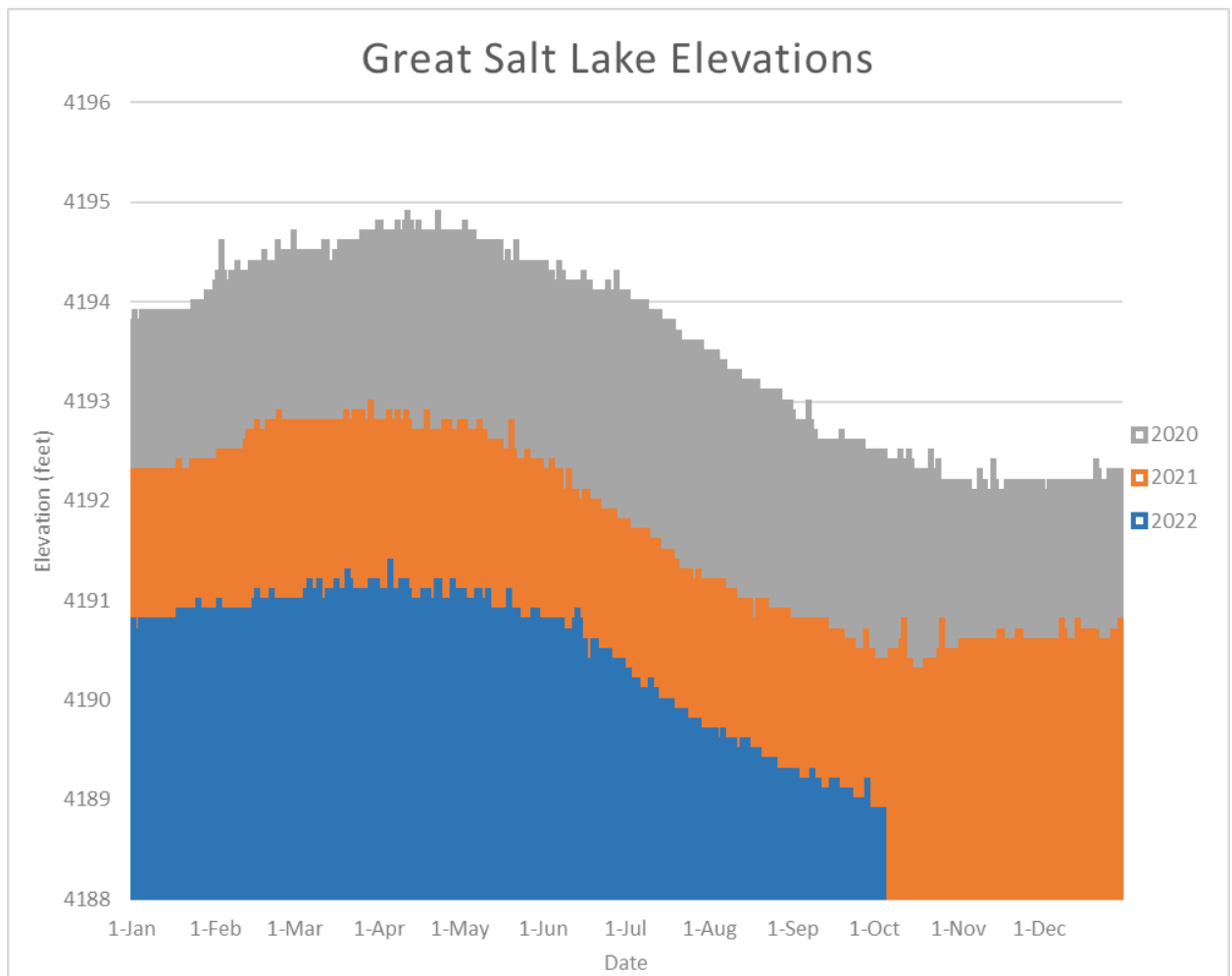
Data Sources: [water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels](http://water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels)

\*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**

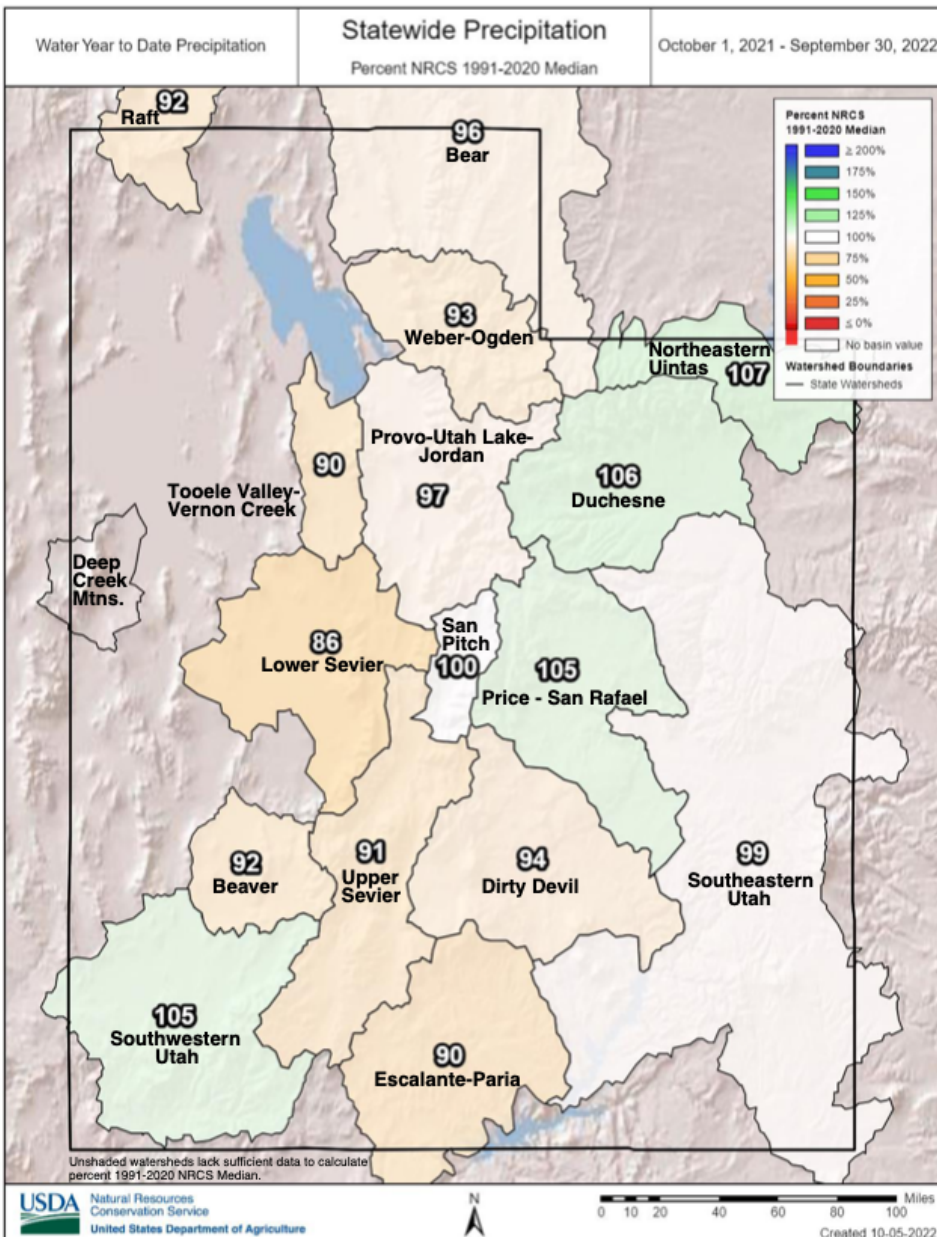
- Reservoir storage statewide continues to drop and now averages 42%. Thirty-seven of Utah's 47 reservoirs are below 55% of available capacity.
- Current statewide reservoir levels are about the same as they were last year at this time.
- Great Salt Lake continues to decline. Currently, the average [daily surface elevation](#) is 4,188.9. 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

- According to [NRCS](#), For the 2022 water year, Utah ended at 75% of normal snowpack. Soil moisture levels at Utah's SNOTEL sites are at 39% of saturation, up 2% from last year and hovering slightly above 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.*



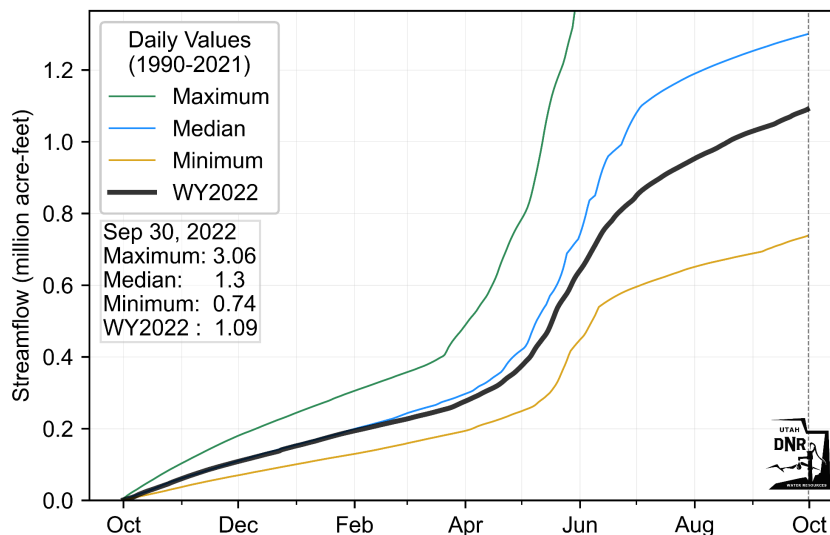
## Temperature and Evaporation

- Temperatures ran an average of about three degrees above normal for the last two weeks. This is a welcome change from the record-breaking temperatures of a month ago however, temperatures remain slightly higher than typical for this time of year.
- With the cooler season, outdoor plants don't need as much water. Follow the [Lawn Watering Guide](#) to help save water for next year.

## Streamflows

- Despite monsoon rains, cumulative streamflows are lower than typical for the year. This is due to the below-average snowpack and spring runoff.
- 41 of 98 measured streams are flowing below or much below normal.

### Cumulative Flow of 28 Headwater Streams



*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 due to drought conditions and high temperatures. Visitors are advised to check [habs.utah.gov](https://habs.utah.gov) for current conditions and report suspicious algae. **Recreational waterbody monitoring will end for the season on Oct. 31.**
  - 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
  - Highland Glen Pond; Rockport Reservoir; Rainbow Bay and Island Park at Deer Creek Reservoir; Lost Creek Reservoir; Echo 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)

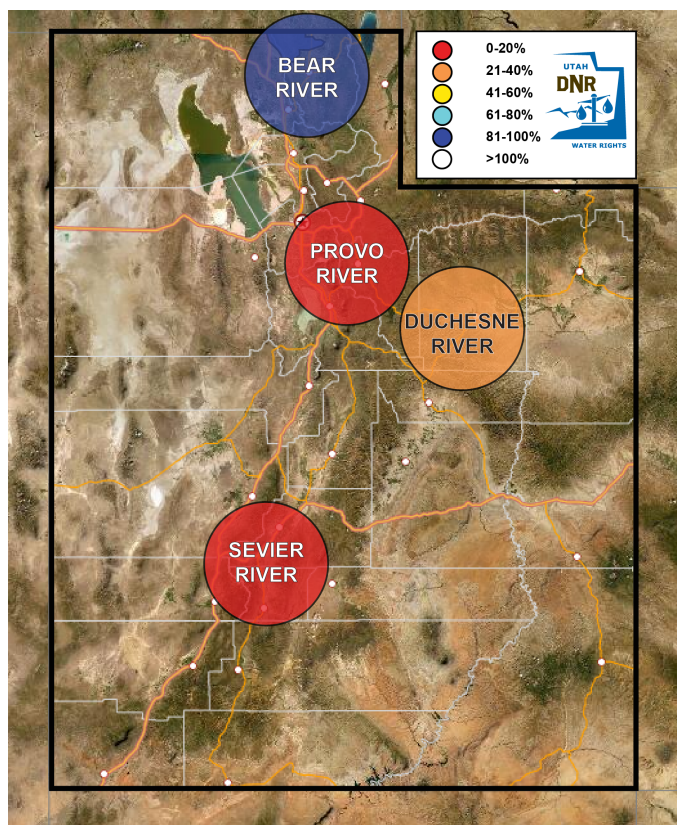
## **Water Rights**

### **Overview of the State of Surface Water Rights**

As the irrigation season draws to a close, water rights are being fully curtailed in river systems across the state. The following report is the final report of the 2022 irrigation season. Although late season rains provided a boost in some systems, 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, 89% of the water rights on the Bear River system are currently being satisfied compared to 24% 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, 34% of the water rights on the Bear River system were being satisfied. In 2019, however, 87% 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	89%	1255 <u>cfs</u>
2021	34%	484 <u>cfs</u>
2020	66%	933 <u>cfs</u>
2019	87%	1235 <u>cfs</u>

Provo River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	20%	92 <u>cfs</u>
2021	10%	46 <u>cfs</u>
2020	17%	77 <u>cfs</u>
2019	24%	108 <u>cfs</u>

Duchesne River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	29%	285 <u>cfs</u>
2021	25%	243 <u>cfs</u>
2020	19%	183 <u>cfs</u>
2019	35%	341 <u>cfs</u>

Sevier River	Rights Satisfied	Stream Flow
2022	13%	54 <u>cfs</u>
2021	16%	64 <u>cfs</u>
2020	20%	80 <u>cfs</u>
2019	33%	135 <u>cfs</u>