



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Drought Update

**SALT LAKE CITY** (Jan. 24, 2022) – Consistent storms and cooler temperatures have brought Utah’s snowpack statewide to 183% of normal for this time of year, which makes this the best winter (so far) that we’ve seen in almost 20 years! With a little more than two months left for the state to accumulate snow, the state needs these conditions to continue for effective spring runoff.

“These snow totals are a welcome sight and have given a much-needed boost to our snowpack,” Candice Hasenyager, director of the Division of Water Resources, said. “Every basin in Utah is reporting over 150% of normal snowpack. This is great news, especially for basins such as the Upper and Lower Sevier, which have seen dwindling water supplies in the last few years.”

Almost 100% of the state is still in some form of drought, according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#). The authors have downgraded the level of exceptional drought (the worst category) in Utah to 0%. The last time this happened was May 31, 2022. The state is still in the second and third worst categories of drought (severe and extreme), and it’ll take multiple years of above-average snowpack to refill our reservoirs.

“This is good news, but we have a long road ahead to recover from this prolonged drought,” Hasenyager said. “We must continue to use our water wisely to see the full benefits of the new snow added to our snowpack.”

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

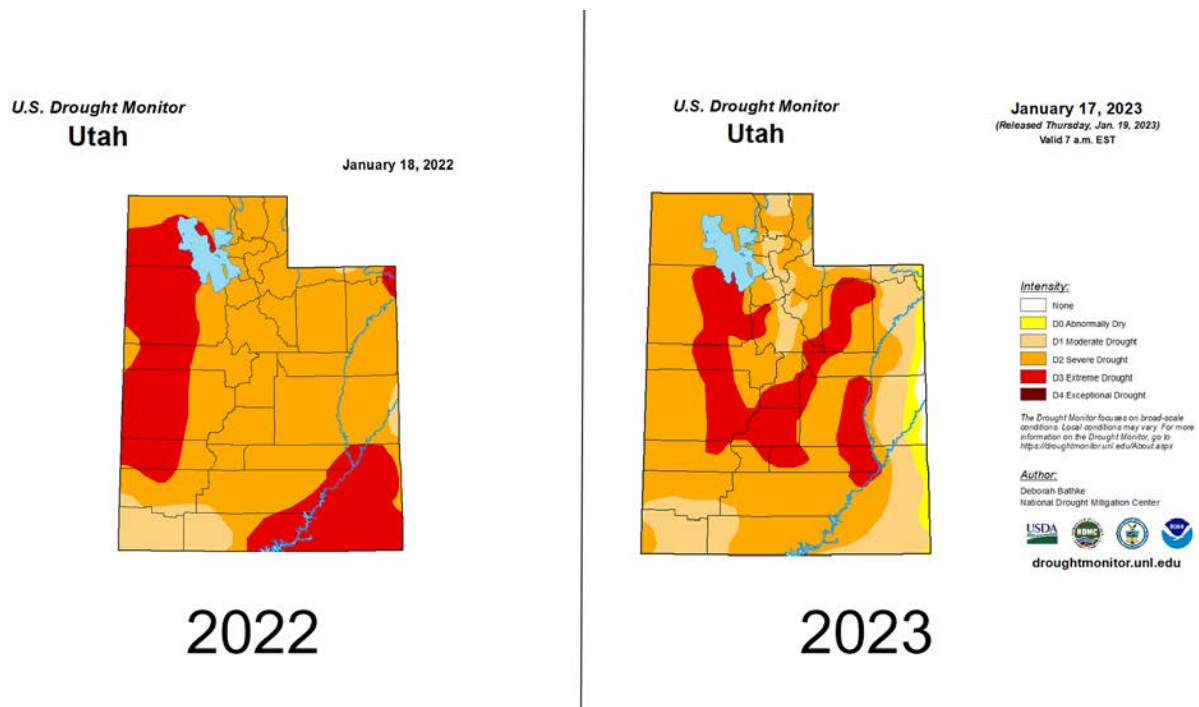
- **Great Salt Lake has risen a foot** since its historic low two set in early November 2022. This is due to direct precipitation and inflows to the lake. Experts are also working to understand how the causeway breach modification that occurred last summer might be impacting the quick rise in lake levels. For context, the lake rose just over a foot all of last year. We are off to a good start as we look toward spring runoff!



- According to the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), Utah's statewide snow water equivalent (SWE) is 183% of normal. The only years that have had more snow on this date since the SNOTEL network was installed were 1984, 1997 and 2005. This makes this the best winter (so far) that we've seen in almost 20 years!
- Thirty of the 47 [reservoirs](#) the division monitors are below 55%, which is about the same as last year but still about 10% lower than normal for this time of year.
- Of the 71 measured streams, 18 are currently flowing below normal. The number of streams measured has decreased due to ice on the stream gauges.
- Residents can find water-saving tips at [SlowtheFlow.Org](#).

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## FULL REPORT

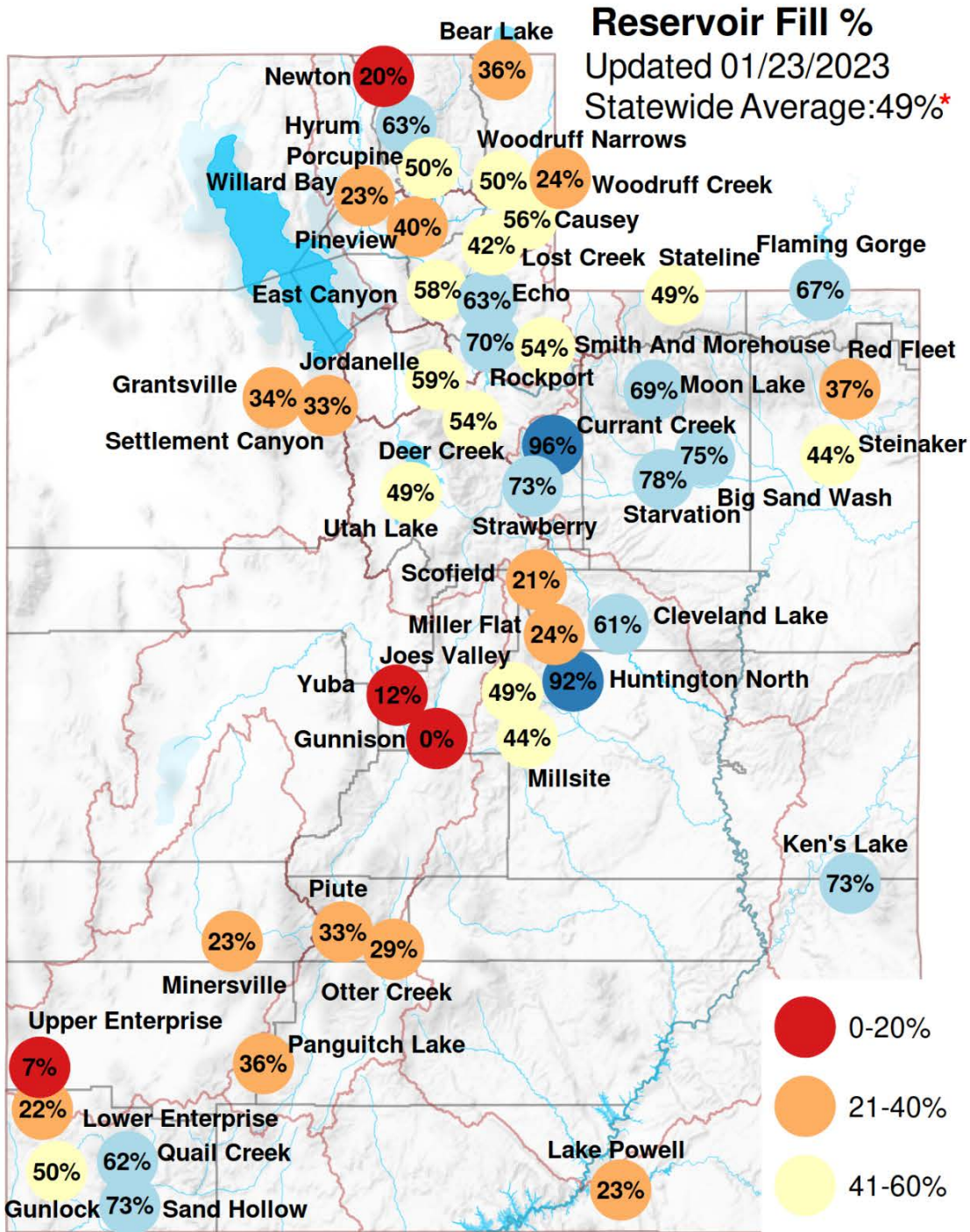


*Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2022. Extreme and severe drought covers 77% of the state. Last year at this time, 93% of the state was in severe drought.*

## U.S. Drought Monitor

- According to the latest information released by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#), Utah is now out of exceptional drought (the worst category). The last time this happened was May 31, 2022. The state is still in the second- and third-worst categories of drought (severe and extreme), and it'll take multiple years of above-average snowpack to refill our reservoirs.
- 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.



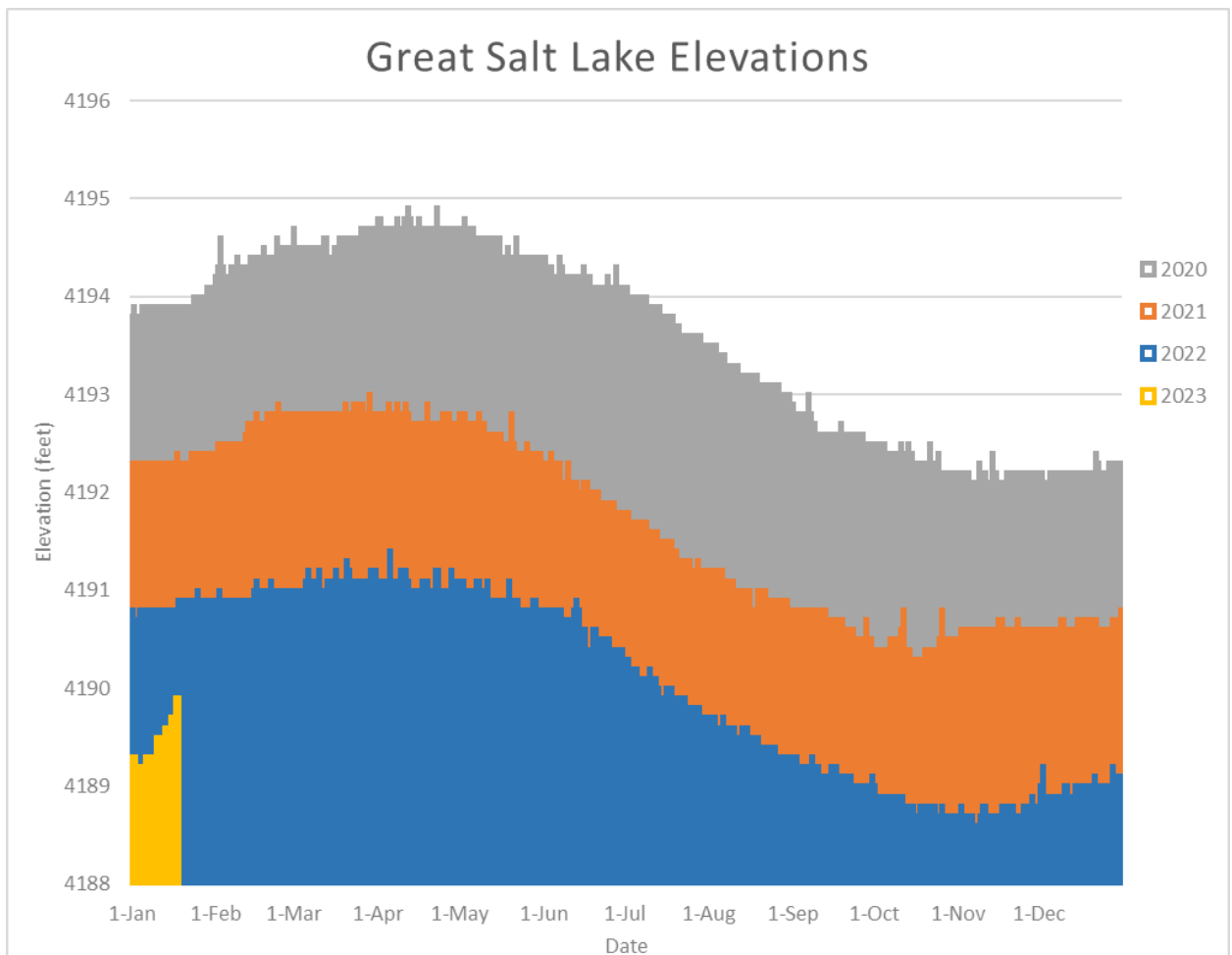
Data Sources: [water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels](http://water.utah.gov/reservoirlevels)

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

Total capacity including these is 38%

## Reservoir and Lake Levels

- Reservoir storage statewide now averages 49%. Thirty 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 has risen a foot** since its historic low two set in early November 2022. This is due to direct precipitation and inflows to the lake. Experts are also working to understand how the causeway breach modification that occurred last summer might be impacting the quick rise in lake levels. For context, the lake hardly rose a foot all of last year. We are off to a good start as we look toward spring runoff!

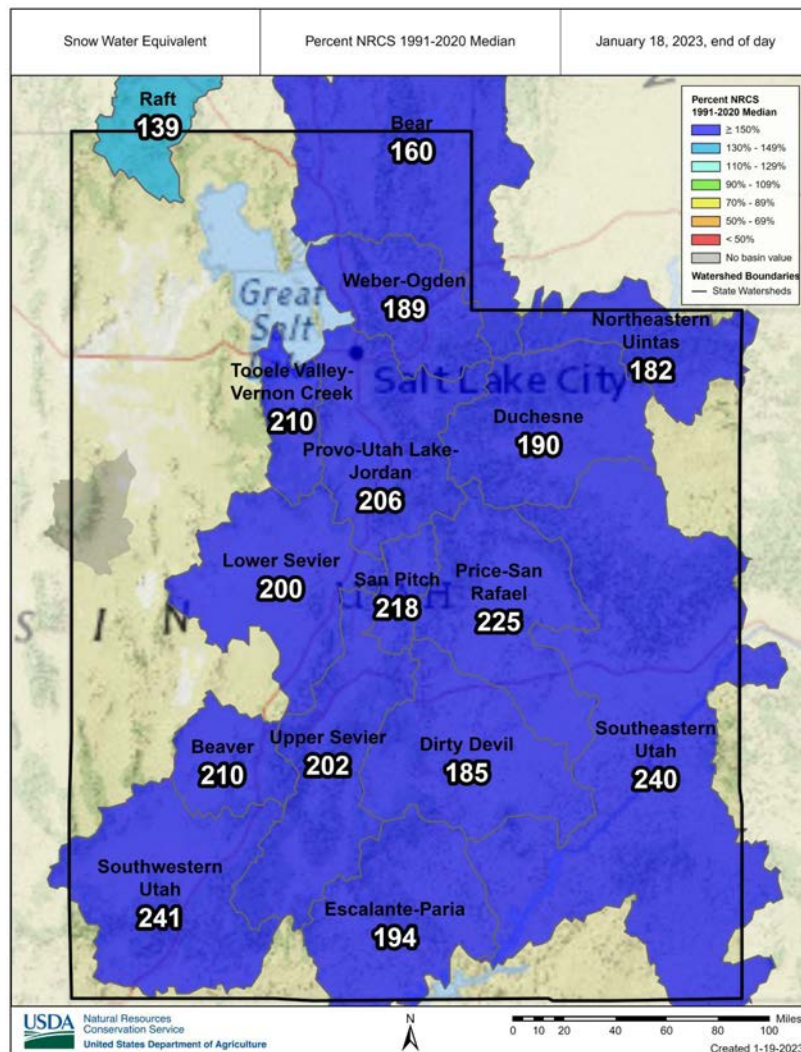


*The graph compares elevations of Great Salt Lake from 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.*



## Precipitation and soil moisture

- Snow water equivalent, or the amount of water in the snowpack, across the state has been well above average. Currently at 14.4 inches, the state has received more snow water equivalent this water year than the entire last winter season.
- Soil moisture is 46%, about 7% above normal levels for this time of year. Higher soil moisture will assist in spring runoff getting to reservoirs.



*Snow water equivalent based on regions as compared to other recorded years (Period of Record). Every basin in Utah is reporting over 140% of normal snowpack.*

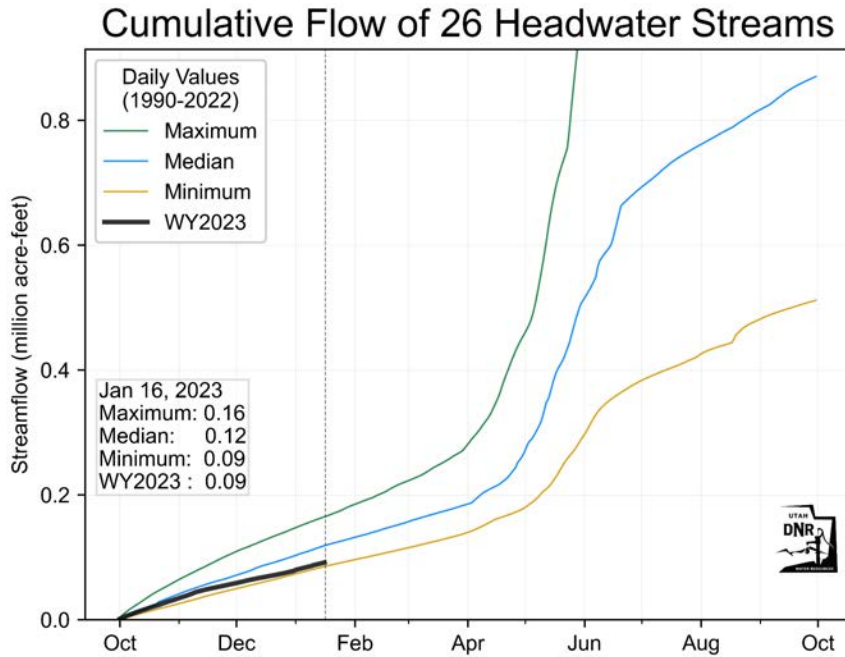
## Temperature and Evaporation

- Temperatures have been nearly 3 degrees warmer than average for the last two weeks. This has resulted in rain in lower elevations rather than snow. The temperatures haven't affected the higher elevation snow that contributes to mountain snowpack.

- Evaporation has been typical for this time of year.

## Streamflows

- Of the 71 measured streams, 18 are currently flowing below normal. The number of streams measured has decreased due to ice on the stream gauges.
- None of the 71 measured streams are flowing at record low. This is due to above average precipitation across the state.



*Total volume of streamflow water for the water year for headwater streams is below average. This could be due to water being locked in the snowpack, ice impacting gauges, or lingering low flows from drought conditions. Headwater streams are unregulated and represent natural runoff conditions. The current year black line is significantly below the median blue line.*