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Utah Water Conditions Update

SALT LAKE CITY (Nov. 30, 2023) – As Utah approaches the end of fall, water experts are closely monitoring the state's water conditions, presenting a mixed picture of hope and caution.

Snow Water Equivalent (SWE), a critical metric for assessing water availability, currently stands at 39% below normal for this time of year. With 125 days remaining until the typical peak snowpack, the state is cautiously optimistic about the potential for a good snow year.

Utah's reservoirs, vital for storing water for various needs, currently stand at 77% full statewide. This is around 20% higher than normal reservoir levels for this time of year. This statistic coupled with the 39% below normal SWE, underscores the delicate balance between water supply and water demand.

"While we still have a good amount of water in our reservoirs, we must continue to conserve," Joel Williams, deputy director of the Division of Water Resources, said. "The water year is off to a slow start, but it's still early. From now until April will be pivotal in determining the overall water outlook for the state."

The division urges residents to continue water conservation efforts despite promising water levels. The unpredictability of weather patterns necessitates a proactive approach to water stewardship. Now is an excellent time to maximize water efficiency by checking for leaks and upgrading old fixtures with water-efficient ones.

"Last year, we saw record-breaking snow totals," Williams said. "I hope we have another record snow year, but at the same time it's crucial that we plan for all possibilities."

To encourage water conservation among Utahns, the Department of Natural Resources continues to promote initiatives such as the Agricultural Optimization Program for farmers and SlowtheFlow.org for residents. These programs aim to educate and incentivize water-saving practices, ensuring Utahns become more drought resilient and prepare for future conditions.

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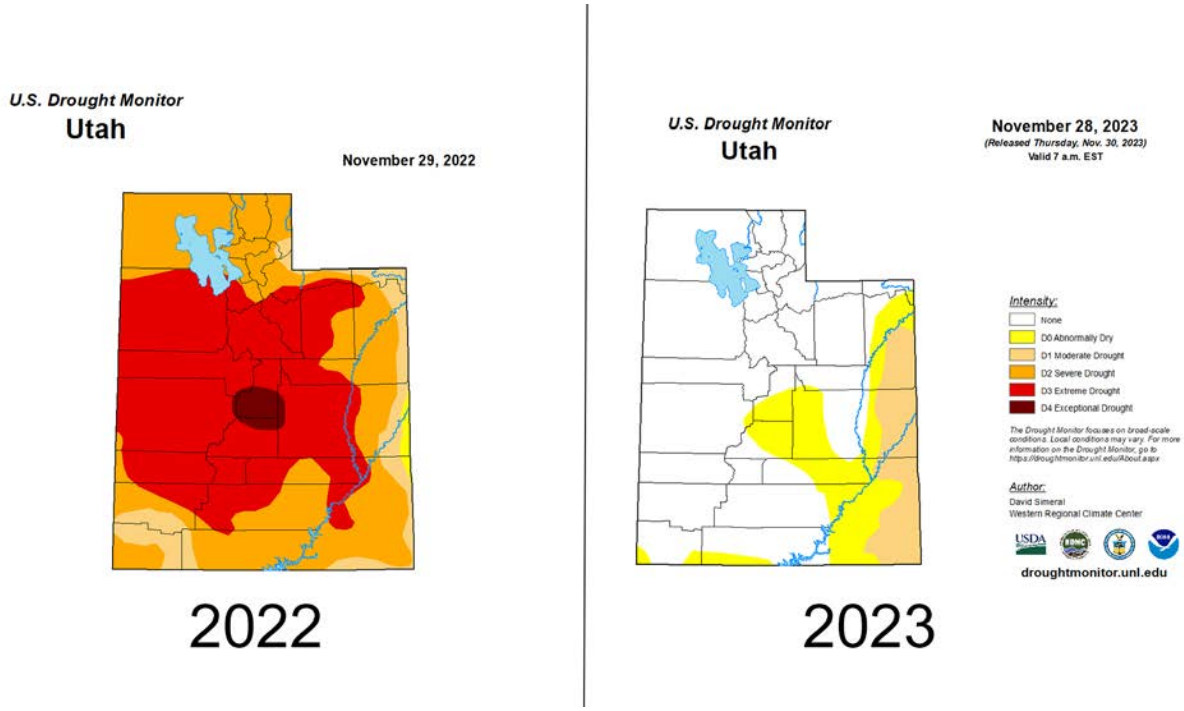
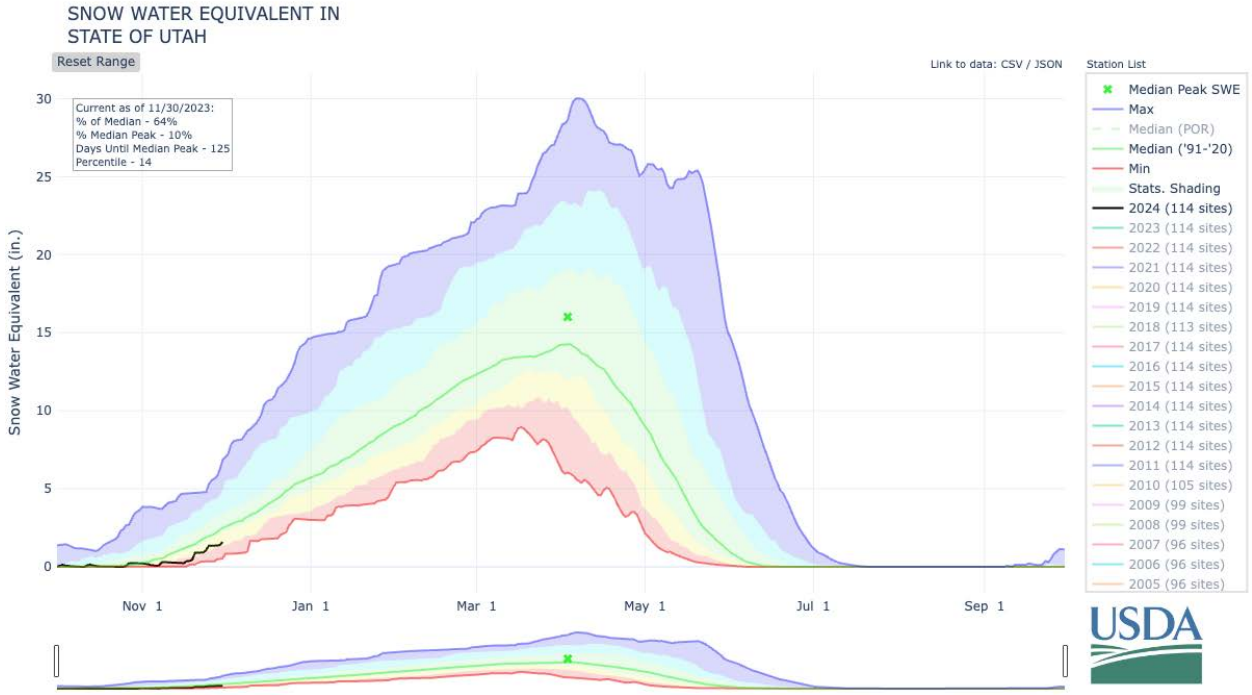
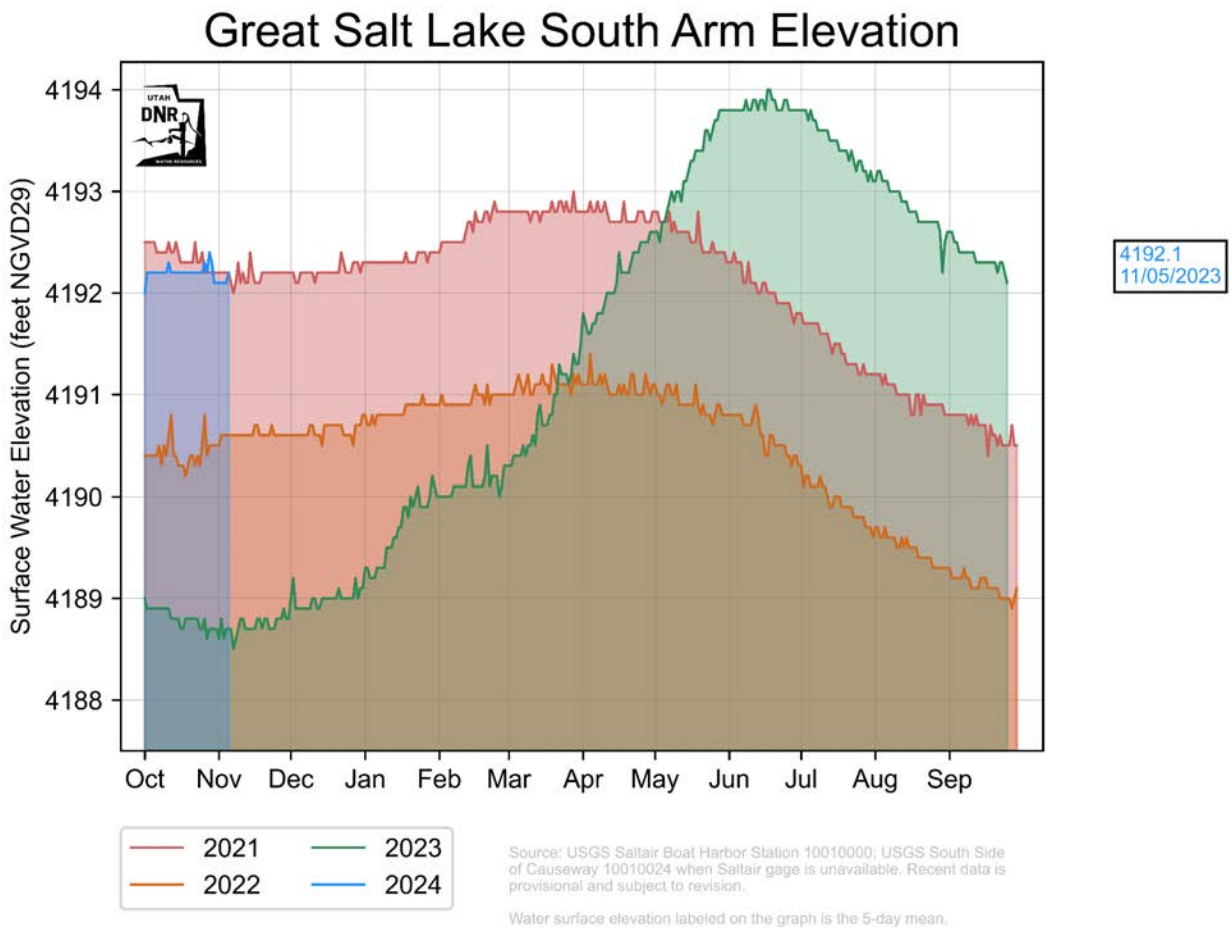


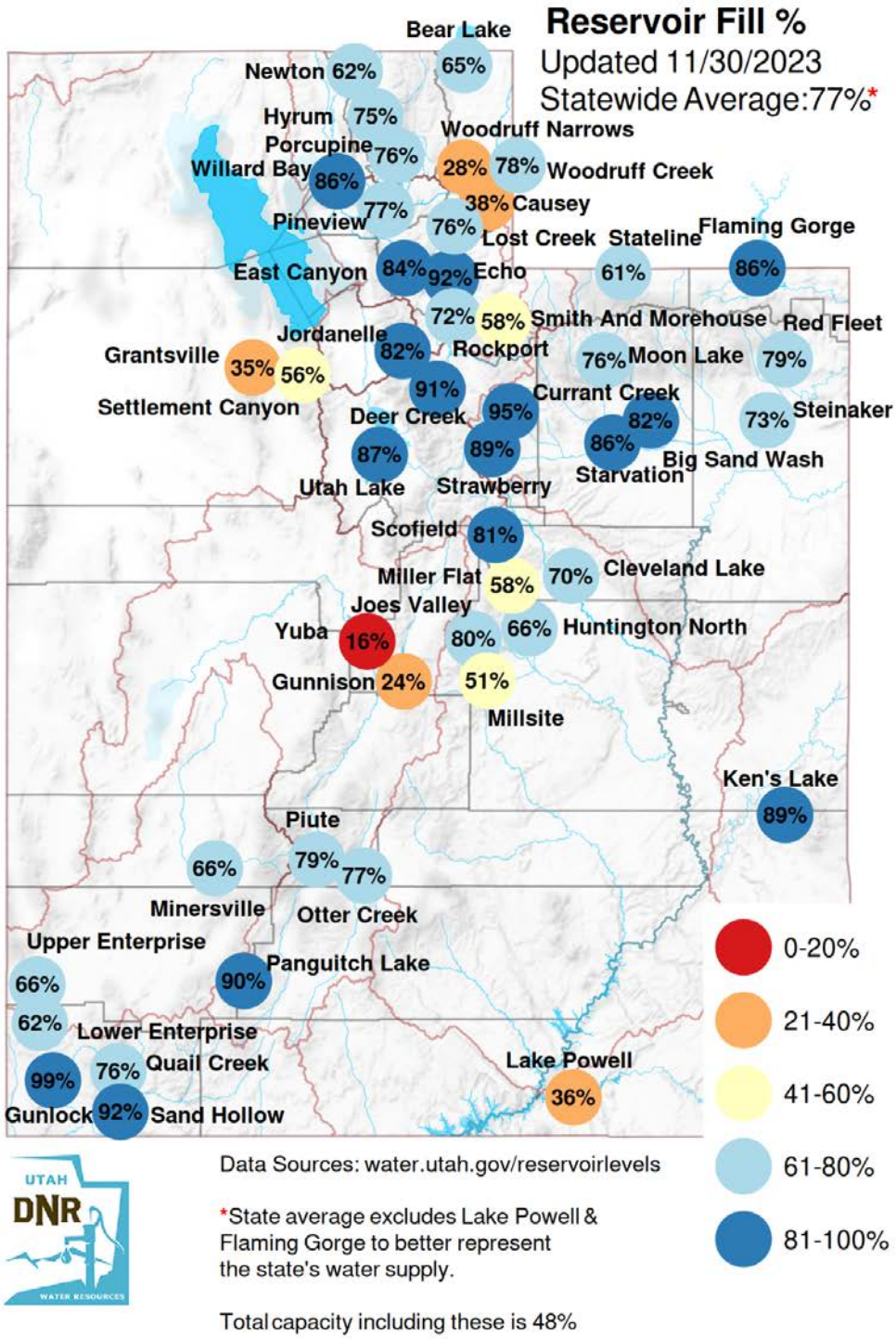
Graphic compares Utah's current drought situation to 2022. Currently, moderate drought covers 9% of the state. Last year at this time, 90% of the state was in severe drought.



Graph comparing the average of current accumulated snow water equivalent (in inches) of all sites within and adjacent to the watershed with all other years from the historical record. Source - NRCS



The graph shows Great Salt Lake levels since 2021. Great Salt Lake levels have stabilized for the season and are likely to rise during the next few months as winter storms roll in.



For more information, visit drought.utah.gov