

STATE OF UTAH GENERAL OUTLOOK

April 1, 2006

SUMMARY

January was fantastic, February was mediocre and March was simply extraordinary from a water supply perspective. Southern Utah was teetering on the brink of a dismal snowpack (44%) and runoff year and had just a slim chance of pulling out of the tailspin. However, getting a whopping 415% of normal increase in snow accumulation has brought this area to within a whisker of normal (85%) snowpack conditions. This area needed 550% of normal March accumulation and while not hitting a bases loaded home run in the bottom of the ninth with 2 out and 3 strikes, a game saving stand up triple (415%) is more than welcome at this point. Climatic conditions that have favored northern Utah most of the season hit southern and central Utah during March. That is not to say that northern Utah got slighted in any way with March snowpack accumulations ranging from 144% to 205% of average. There are still a few trouble spots remaining in spite of the dramatic increases in snowpack. In southeastern Utah, specifically the Monticello/Blanding area, mountain snowpacks remain much below average (60%) as well as in the New Harmony/Enterprise area (60%). Runoff in these areas is expected to be much below average. In general, northern Utah has padded already decent snowpacks and southern Utah has had substantial improvement in most areas. Lower elevation snowpacks in the southern areas remain below normal and may have an adverse impact on seasonal runoff. Snowpacks now range from 85% in southern Utah to 129% on the Weber River. The Bear, Weber and Provo watersheds are all within a few percentage points in the 125% to 130% of normal category with the Uintahs coming in very closely at 117%. There are some concerns on the Logan River and Blacksmiths Fork, as well as Farmington to City Creek where some snow measurement sites have near record high values. These general areas have the potential for high seasonal flows as well as high water problems for agricultural interests. Preparation for these potential flows is warranted. Soil moisture values in water producing areas are much less than last year statewide but more so in the south. The Virgin has only half the soil moisture of last year. This could have a significant impact on spring runoff, particularly in the south. Overall, soil moisture values range from about 35% in southeastern Utah to 60% of saturation in the upper 24 inches of soil in northern Utah. Precipitation for March was much above normal at 151%. This brings the seasonal precipitation, (Oct-Mar) to 113%. Low reservoir storage is becoming less of a concern with total reservoir storage at 71% of capacity, up 23% from last year. The Bear River basin has relatively poor reservoir storage but otherwise decent streamflow prospects. In general, most areas of the state have excellent reservoir carryover. General water supply conditions are near to above average and have been improving. Streamflow forecasts range from 18% to 171% of average. Surface Water Supply Indices range from 21% on the Bear River, to 88% on the Provo.

SNOWPACK

March first snowpacks as measured by the NRCS SNOTEL system range from 85% in southwest Utah to 129% on the Weber River Watershed. In select areas of southeastern Utah, snowpacks are as low as 60% of average. Northern snowpacks are similar or in the case of the Bear, higher than last year. Low elevation snowpacks are below normal except in the north. This is the typical peak of snowpack accumulation and the beginning of the snowmelt and runoff period. A cool, wet April could delay the melt season.

PRECIPITATION

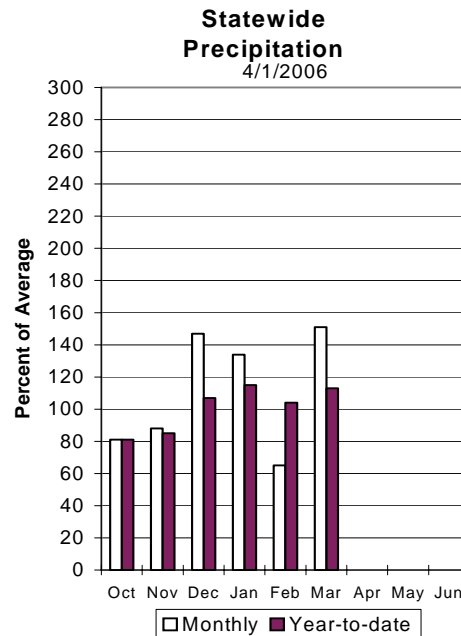
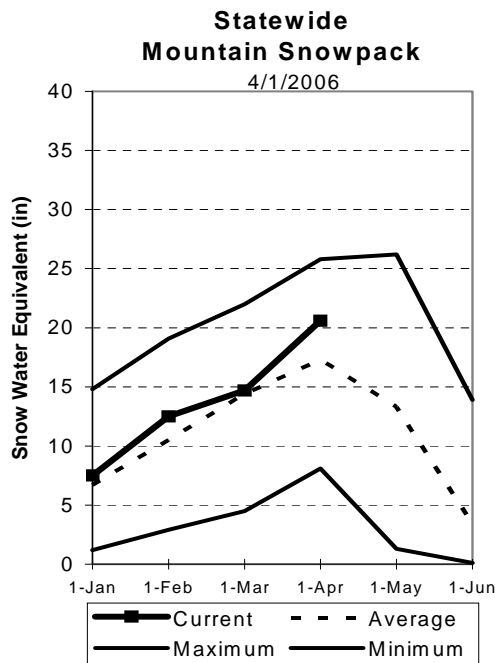
Mountain precipitation during March was phenomenal at 151% of average statewide. Precipitation was lowest on the Bear at 121% and highest over southwest Utah at 192% of average. This brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Mar) to 113% of average statewide. A dry fall and early winter has reduced soil moisture values considerably and this could negatively impact spring runoff.

RESERVOIRS

Storage in 41 of Utah's key irrigation reservoirs is at 71% of capacity. This is an increase of 23% from last year. Reservoirs across the State have been making steady gains in storage. Bear Lake really is the last reservoir to remain in an extremely low condition due to the prolonged drought.

STREAMFLOW

Snowmelt streamflows are expected to be much below average to much above average across the state of Utah this year. Forecast streamflows range from 18% on Recapture Creek near Blanding to 171% of average for Wheeler Creek on the Ogden Basin. Most flows are forecast to be in the 70% to 125% range.



Statewide Basin Reservoir Storage

