MOUNTAIN REGIONAL WATER

To: Administrative Control Board

From: Lisa Hoffman, Assistant General Manager

Date: April 10, 2026

Subject: 2026 Drought Response Recommendation

Action Requested

District staff recommends adoption of a Drought Response Level 3 (Moderate) for the 2026 irrigation season, with the ability to institute a Drought Response Level 4 (Severe) should water supply conditions continue to decline in the coming months.

Background

In 2021 the District adopted a Drought Response Plan ("Plan"). The Plan was further updated in 2022 with six drought response levels noted below:

Drought Response Level	Water Shortage Description
1	Normal
2	Advisory
3	Moderate
4	Severe
5	Extreme
6	Exceptional

In 2022, a Level 4 drought restriction was put into effect for the irrigation season of 2022 due to a low snowpack and extremely low reservoir levels. Since then, the District has operated at a Level 1 for years 2023-2025.

Behind this memo I've provided the most recent updates from Utah's Department of Natural Resources, which can be found at **drought.utah.gov** and include the US Drought Monitor, current reservoir fill and Snow Water Equivalent (SWE).

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With the historically low snowpack this year, but reservoirs at slightly above-average levels, the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District (WBWCD) board has adopted Drought Response Level 3, which is a 20% reduction in outdoor irrigation. In addition, WBWCD is delaying the start of the irrigation season until May 15th . WBWCD will continue to monitor conditions and said they may move to a higher response level (or lower) depending on the spring and early summer weather conditions.

Other water agencies have messaged the following restrictions:

Salt Lake City - Stage 2 (Mild) drought advisory, asking for voluntary reductions in indoor and outdoor water use.
Park City Municipal – no restrictions, general conservation messaging only.
Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District – delay irrigation until May 15th .

Governor Cox has not declared a state of emergency, which was done in 2025 for 17 counties (of which Summit County was not one) and for the entire state in April 2022 when 99.39% of the state was in Severe Drought, or worse, as defined by the U.S. Drought Monitor. At that time almost 50% of the state was in Extreme Drought and many reservoirs were below 50% capacity.

At this time, while snowpack was historically low, statewide reservoir levels are good, hovering around 68-73%.

Per the District's Drought Response Plan, *"The District General Manager will provide a Drought Level recommendation to the Board annually, during the April Board meeting, and direct enforcement activities for the District."*

Accordingly, District staff recommends following WBWCD indicating a Drought Response Level of 3, Moderate, with a 20% outdoor irrigation reduction for the coming irrigation season.

District staff will continue to monitor weather conditions and communicate with WBWCD and other partner agencies as spring ends and summer begins and watch for a continued degradation of water supply that could lead to implementation of a Level 4 response.

If a Level 4 response is determined to be necessary, a public hearing will be held to adopt drought rates as described in the District's Drought Response Plan.

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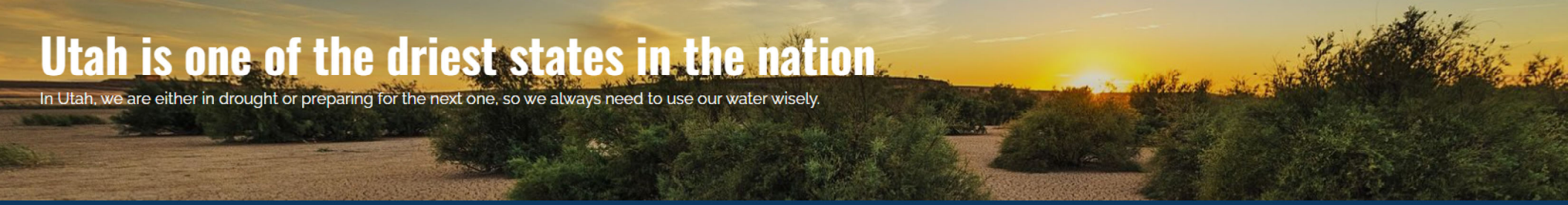
In the meantime, District staff will continue to educate customers on conservation practices through the District's Landscape Lawn Exchange Program, Utah's RainHarvest Rain Barrel Program, using Eye on Water to measure and monitor outdoor irrigation, and coordinate with other state and local agencies on conservation messaging.



Utah is one of the driest states in the nation

In Utah, we are either in drought or preparing for the next one, so we always need to use our water wisely.

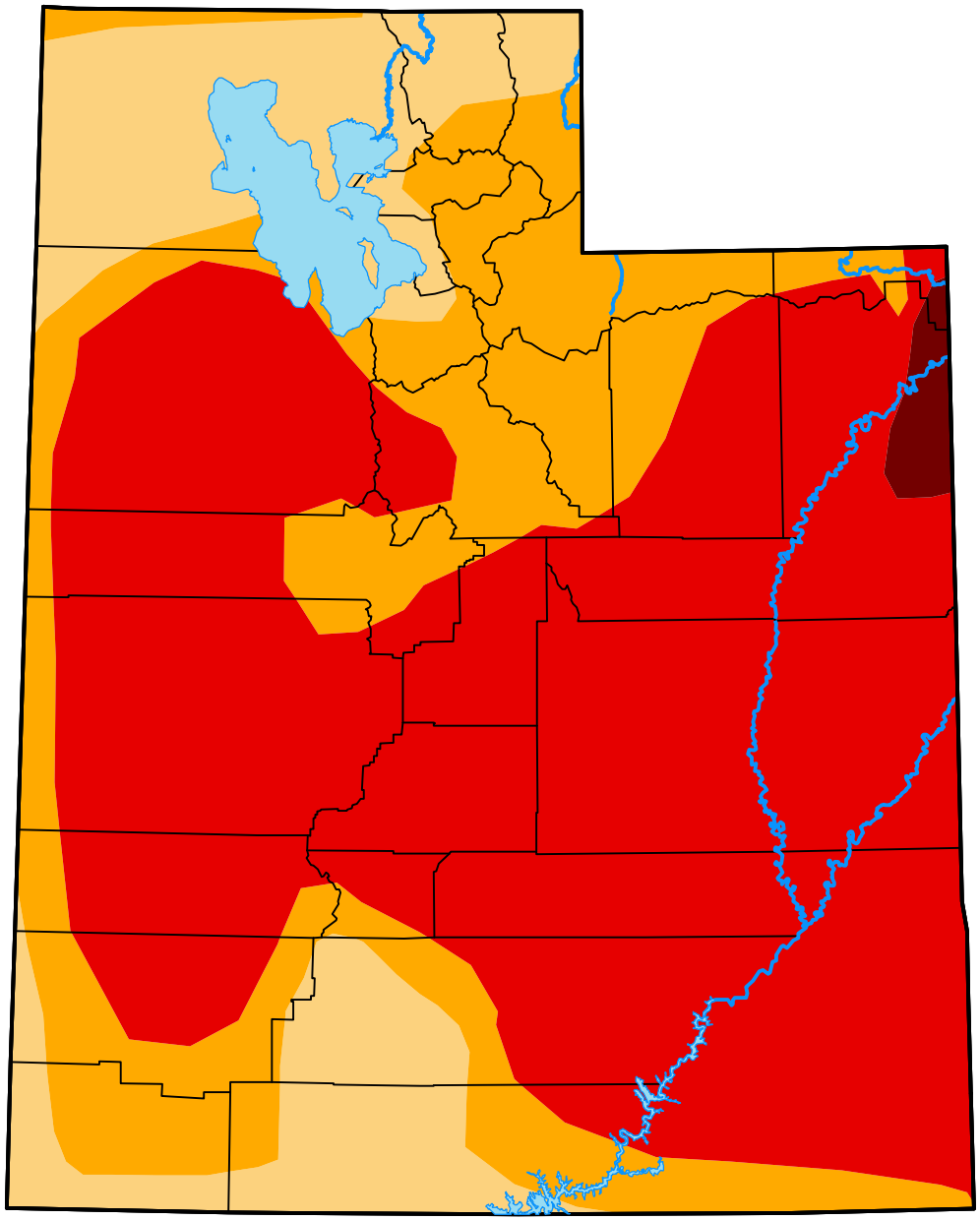
Recent Updates (as of 04/08/26)

- Utah's snowpack is the lowest on record and peaked three weeks early. The state's peak was on March 9 at 8.4 inches, which is about half of what the state typically receives by the beginning of April. Weather forecasts suggest that snowmelt will outpace any new snow the state might receive.
- Water conservation remains critical as water managers prepare to rely on existing reservoir storage to meet summer demands. Reservoir storage averages 73% full, which is slightly higher than normal for this time of year but a decrease from the 82% recorded last year.
- As noted in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's April 1st Water Supply Outlook Report, every major basin in Utah had record-low SWE as of April 1st, and some were almost completely melted-out. Most of Utah's 140 individual SNOTEL sites were at record-low SWE, with 53 sites (38% of the network) already dried out by then. By one week later, the number of snow-free sites in Utah had increased to 64.
- Currently, 59% of the state is in extreme drought. Additional drought recommendations for communities and water providers are available in the state's Drought Response Plan.
- In Utah, about 95% of our water supply comes from snowpack. Reservoir storage helps us preserve that water for use in dry summer months and drought years. To encourage water conservation among Utahns, the Department of Natural Resources continues to promote initiatives such as the Agricultural Water 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. Many indoor water-saving tips are available on the Slow the Flow website.
- Check out the Department of Natural Resources' latest article: Drought in Utah

Jordan River, October 2025

U.S. Drought Monitor

Utah



April 7, 2026

(Released Thursday, Apr. 9, 2026)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	83.07	59.31	0.98
Last Week *03-31-2026*	0.00	100.00	100.00	83.07	59.31	0.98
3 Months Ago *01-06-2026*	0.00	100.00	93.50	42.25	2.99	0.00
Start of Calendar Year *01-06-2026*	0.00	100.00	93.50	42.25	2.99	0.00
Start of Water Year *09-30-2025*	0.00	100.00	100.00	77.51	14.44	0.00
One Year Ago *04-08-2025*	4.20	95.80	76.03	38.82	4.29	0.00

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:

David Simeral

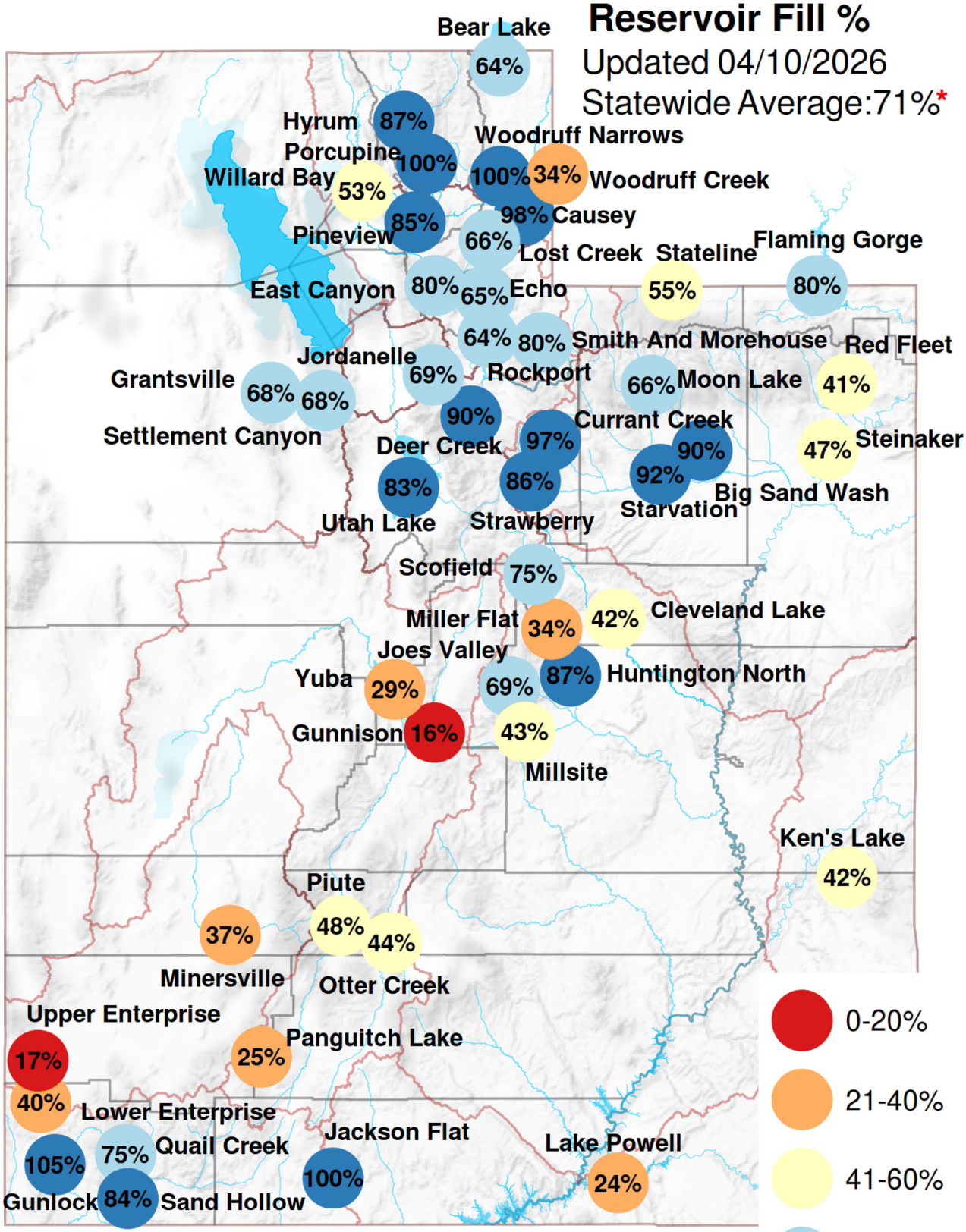
Western Regional Climate Center

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Reservoir Fill %

Updated 04/10/2026

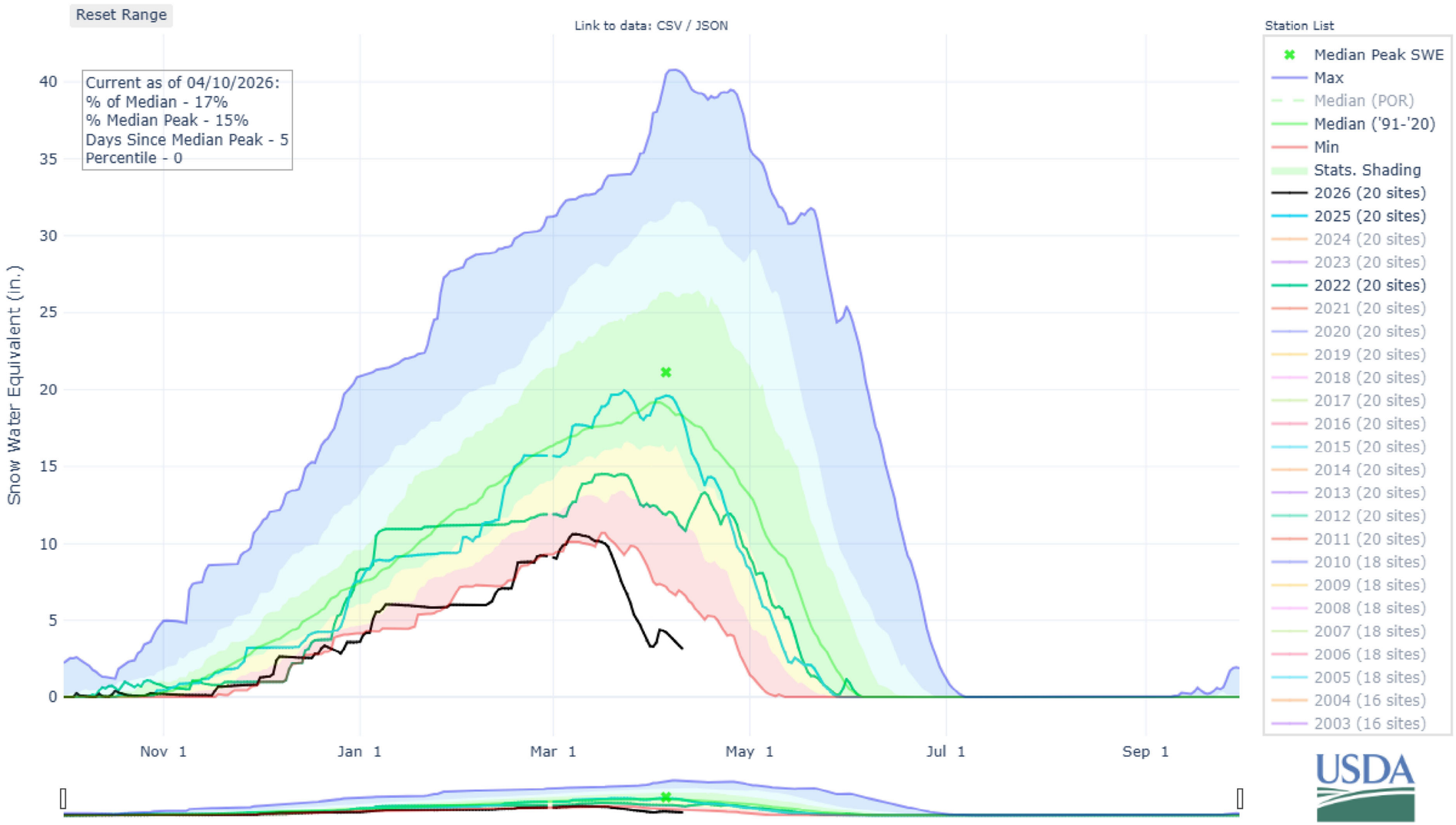
Statewide Average:71%*



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 39%


Reset Range
Link to data: CSV / JSON
Current as of 04/10/2026:
% of Median - 17%
% Median Peak - 15%
Days Since Median Peak - 5
Percentile - 0
Snow Water Equivalent (in.)
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40
Nov 1
Jan 1
Mar 1
May 1
Jul 1
Sep 1
Station List
Median Peak SWE
Max
Median (POR)
Median ('91-'20)
Min
Stats. Shading
2026 (20 sites)
2025 (20 sites)
2024 (20 sites)
2023 (20 sites)
2022 (20 sites)
2021 (20 sites)
2020 (20 sites)
2019 (20 sites)
2018 (20 sites)
2017 (20 sites)
2016 (20 sites)
2015 (20 sites)
2014 (20 sites)
2013 (20 sites)
2012 (20 sites)
2011 (20 sites)
2010 (18 sites)
2009 (18 sites)
2008 (18 sites)
2007 (18 sites)
2006 (18 sites)
2005 (18 sites)
2004 (16 sites)
2003 (16 sites)
USDA