



For Immediate Release  
January 4, 2018

Contact: Karry Rathje  
Public Information Manager  
435.673.3617  
[krathje@wcvcd.utah.gov](mailto:krathje@wcvcd.utah.gov)

**UTAH'S SNOWPACK LEVELS REPORTED AS "BELOW ABYSMAL"**  
***Southern Utah snowpack eight percent of normal***

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) referred to Utah's snowpack levels as "below abysmal" in its January 2018 Water Supply Outlook. Snowpack in Southwestern Utah is eight percent of normal. Seasonal precipitation (October to December) is 14 percent of average. Predictions indicate southern Utah will remain dry.

"This is one of the worst water years I've seen in my lifetime," said Ron Thompson, general manager of the Washington County Water Conservancy District (district). "We can drive our entire watershed right now and kick up dust – that's unprecedented for this time of year."

The Water Supply Outlook reports that southern Utah's snowpack falls well under the 1977 water year, which is one of the worst snowpack and runoff years in recent history. "Any duplication of that debacle would be good to avoid," reported Randy Julander, Snow Survey Supervisor for the NRCS. "That said, the train wreck is on its way - statistically if you are less than 75 percent of normal on January 1, there is only about a 20 percent chance of getting back to average by April 1, and the condition prevailing in southern Utah isn't even remotely close to 75 percent right now."

Water users in Washington County will likely live off reservoir storage in 2018, stated Julander. Sand Hollow Reservoir is currently 93 percent full and Quail Creek Reservoir is 67 percent full.

"Imagine our situation if we didn't have these reservoirs," said Thompson. "When they were initially proposed, there were some who said we'd never use a drop of water from them. I'm grateful that we, as a community, knew better. These reservoirs will carry us through this dry year. We'd be in dire circumstances if we listened to the naysayers."

Given the reservoir storage, water shortages are not expected in Washington County. However, the district encourages all water users to be efficient with their use. Turn off outdoor irrigation during the winter and water sparingly this spring. "Every drop we save counts," said Thompson.

***About Washington County Water Conservancy District***

Washington County Water Conservancy District is a not-for-profit public agency established in 1962 to manage Southern Utah's regional water needs. The district oversees the development, stabilization, management, acquisition and conservation of water resources in Washington County in an ongoing effort to provide a safe, reliable water supply for current and future generations. Visit [www.wcvcd.org](http://www.wcvcd.org) for more information.