

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



Health Hub



WHERE'S THE WATER?

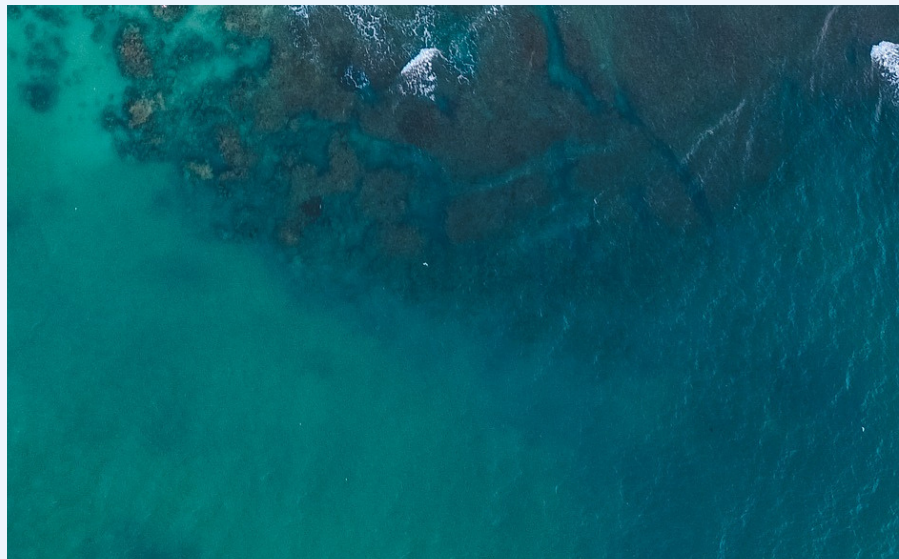


You never know the worth of water until the well runs dry.

Water is the driving force of life. It nourishes our bodies, allows nature to flourish, and houses entire ecosystems. Seventy-one percent of the earth's surface is made up of water, however, 96.5% of that water is found in the oceans as saltwater, and two percent is locked up in ice caps, glaciers, and snowy mountain ranges. This leaves a little over one percent of the earth's water supply for our daily needs. Pretty crazy, huh? With all of the water that is constantly flowing, it can be easy to forget just how rare freshwater really is. Though it is possible to treat unsafe water for consumption, the process itself requires massive amounts of energy. Therefore, with such limited access to freshwater, it's important that we do all we can to conserve it!

Did you know?

The average American uses about 80 gallons of water a day, however, here in Utah, the average person uses 178 gallons per day. That's twice as much as the national average!



Why is this important now?

Currently, Utah is experiencing the worst drought it has ever seen (see Figure 1). With 92.5% of the state experiencing extreme drought and 65.2% in exceptional drought.

What exactly does this mean?

Drought conditions are broken into a five-category system as follows:

D0: Abnormally Dry

- Dryland crops are struggling
- Water for cattle is limited

D1: Moderate Drought

- Soil moisture is low
- Feed for cattle is limited
- Springs are drying

D2: Severe Drought

- Pasture and water is inadequate for cattle
- Air quality is poor
- Streams and ponds are dry

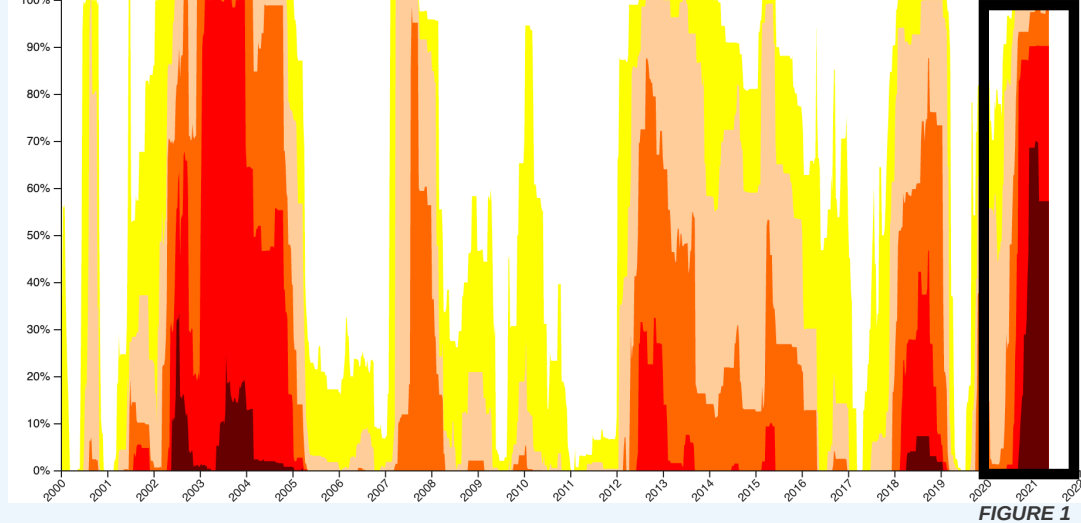
D3: Extreme Drought

- Fire danger increases
- Native vegetation is stressed
- Streamflow is low

D4: Exceptional Drought

- Fire restrictions increase
- Irrigation water allotments are cut

Due to the current conditions, Governor Cox has issued a state of emergency and has encouraged all to do their part in conserving water.



Salt Lake City's Water

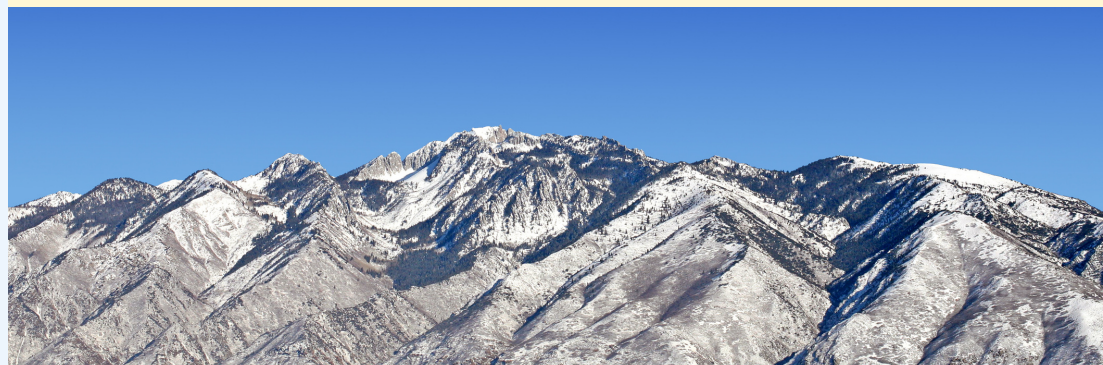
Where does the water come from?

Utah's drinking water comes from either surface water (lakes, reservoirs, rivers) or ground water (wells or springs). There are about 1,850 sources total in the state.

Here in Salt Lake City, drinking water comes from the Big Cottonwood Watershed. A watershed is an area of land that collects, stores, and releases water into a single stream. The Big Cottonwood Watershed contains the City Creek Canyon, Parleys Canyon, Big Cottonwood Canyon, and Little Cottonwood Canyon. As the snow in the Wasatch Mountains melt, the water from the melt flows into the creeks that flow into the canyons. Sixty percent of Salt Lake's drinking water comes from these canyons. The rest of the supply comes from the Deer Creek Reservoir and other ground water supplies found in the valley.

Did you know?

It takes less than 24 hours for a drop of water at the top of the Wasatch Mountains to reach a faucet in Salt Lake City.



How Can I Do My Part?



Do not water your lawn from 10am- 6pm or when it's windy.

Identify and fix any leaks.

Install a rain barrel for outdoor watering.

Use a commercial carwash that recycles water or, if you wash your own car, use a shut-off nozzle that can be adjusted to a fine spray.

Plant native and drought-tolerant plants.

Run your dishwasher and washer and dryer with full loads only.

Use a slow flow shower head and faucet aerators.

Set your mower blades at 3-4 inches. Having taller grass means that the roots are deeper and can access water that is deeper in the soil.

Position sprinklers so that they're not spraying paved areas.

Rather than using the garbage disposal, throw food into a compost pile to dispose of it.

Did you know?

You can receive a rebate for replacing your old toilet, installing a WaterSense smart controller, and designing your landscape to a more water-efficient design.

Conserving water means using our water supply wisely and being responsible. As every individual depends on water for livelihood, we must learn how to keep our limited supply of water pure and protected for generations to come.