



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

Moab/Monticello Ranger District
62 East 100 North
P.O. Box 386
Moab, UT 84532
Phone # (435) 259-7155
Fax # (435) 259-7737

File Code: 2210/2230

Date: May 16, 2013

La Sal Livestock LTD.
c/o Lowery Redd
P.O. Box 368
La Sal, Utah 84530

**CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN
RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Dear Mr. Redd:

This letter will serve as your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Chicken Creek, Dorry and La Sal C&H Allotments for the 2013 grazing season. This AOI is made part of your Term Grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, item 8(a). A failure to follow these instructions is a violation of your permit. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the Forest Plan. **Please read your instructions thoroughly.**

AUTHORIZED USE FOR 2013

Allotment	Numbers	Kind	Class	Season	Permittee	Non-use	
						Resource protection	Personal convenience
Dorry	200	Cattle	Cow/Calf & Bull	06/01 to 10/15	La Sal Livestock Ltd.	32 c/c pairs	
La Sal	770	Cattle	Cow/Calf & Bull	5 days between 06/10 and 06/25	La Sal Livestock Ltd.	230 c/c pairs	
La Sal	740	Cattle	Cow/Calf & Bull	09/16 to 10/20	La Sal Livestock Ltd.	260 c/c pairs	
La Sal (Dark Canyon)*	50	Cattle	Cow/Calf	08/20 to 09/15	La Sal Livestock Ltd.		
La Sal (Horse Pasture)*	2	Horse	Mature	06/16 to 10/15	La Sal Livestock Ltd.		
Chicken Creek	770	Cattle	Cow/Calf & Bull	10/10 to 10/23	La Sal Livestock Ltd.	230 c/c pairs	
La Sal (Pine Ridge)**	150	Cattle	Cow/Calf	10/21 to 10/25	La Sal Livestock Ltd.		

*On-off portion of permit, livestock use the area in conjunction with non-FS lands.

**Trail through when driving cattle off allotment



GRAZING SYSTEM AND SCHEDULE

Dorry:

Pasture	Number	Kind	Approximate Dates
Slaughter Flats	200	Cattle	06/01 – 07/04
Amasa Back (Ridge portion)	100	Cattle	07/05 – 07/20
Amasa Back (Pack Creek portion)	100	Cattle	07/05 - 07/20
*Moores Unit (Southern portion)	200	Cattle	07/21 – 08/02
*Moores Unit (Northern portion)	200	Cattle	08/03 – 08/15
Upper Dorry	200	Cattle	08/16 – 09/20
Lower Dorry	200	Cattle	09/21 – 10/15

*Portions of the Lower Dorry and Moores Units are partially separated by natural barriers; however there are no fences, so livestock may still be in other portions of the pasture than indicated here.

La Sal:

Pasture	Number	Kind	Approximate Dates
Buck Hollow	770	Cattle	Between 06/10 – 06/25 (for about 5 days)
Coyote	740	Cattle	09/23 – 10/20
La Sal Creek	740	Cattle	Trail through 09/16 to 09/23
La Sal Pass	740	Cattle	Trail through 09/16 to 09/23

Chicken Creek:

Pasture	Number	Kind	Approximate Dates
Chicken Creek	770	Cattle	07/05 – 07/19

Permitted pack and saddle stock authorized on the allotment for livestock management will not exceed four head. This is separate from the 2 head that is on your permit and you are billed for.

Management Response to Drought Conditions

You are planning to take partial non-use of about 230-260 c/c pair on the La Sal and Chicken Creek allotments and 32 c/c pair on the Dorry allotment due to current below normal snow pack, precipitation and soil moisture conditions and because current forecasts are predicting a continuation of drought conditions into this summer (*see enclosed documents concerning current conditions and forecasts*). You will also be hauling water into the Slaughter Flats area and are planning on having a full-time rider to improve cattle distribution. Management may need to be adjusted depending upon actual conditions on the ground. Livestock may need to be removed from the allotment earlier than planned if drought conditions worsen.

Your allotment should be inspected for range readiness to determine forage growth and fence and water improvement conditions. **The pasture move dates shown above are an estimate, and may change on the basis of actual range conditions.** Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact the District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions.

PROPER GRAZING-USE INDICATORS

Utilization standards are tools used in achieving or moving towards desired rangeland conditions. Utilization standards are not the desired conditions or management objectives themselves, they are indicators. Desired conditions and objectives are discussed in the 1986 Forest Plan and/or the Allotment Management Plan.

Desired goals in the 1986 Forest Plan include:

- Bring livestock obligation in line with rangeland carrying capacity
- Maintain upward or stable trends in vegetation and soil condition.

Management Objectives in the 1979 La Sal Allotment Management Plan include:

- Increase desirable species composition, forage production and ground cover density to its estimated potential.
- Prevent resource damage to the watershed areas in the head of Pole Canyon, Lackey Basin and La Sal Pass.

Management Objectives in the 1984 Chicken Creek Allotment Management Plan include:

- Relieve grazing pressure on riparian vegetation.
- Increase ground cover density and range condition class

The 1990 Forest Plan Amendment for Range Proper-Use Criteria states proper use as ranging from 40-65% use of upland key species depending on the grazing system applied and from 30-60% use of riparian key species depending season of use. This amendment kept the existing provision that proper use criteria are to be established on an allotment by allotment basis and as given in the AMP and AOIs.

For the La Sal, Dorry and Chicken Creek allotments proper use criteria in 2013 is:

<u>Upland Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring/Summer	40-45%
Fall	50-55%
<u>Riparian Areas:</u>	<u>Use of Key Species</u>
Spring (Early and rapid growth)	50-60%
Summer (Moderate growth)	45-50%
Fall (Slow growth)	30-40% or 4-5 inches stubble or regrowth

There is a difference between where percentage utilized is applied and where stubble height is applied to determine proper use in riparian areas. Percent utilized is used for plant species that are within the larger riparian area (the area that is influenced by the stream and the water table) but not along the greenline. The greenline is the first perennial vegetation on or near the stream's edge that is at least one foot wide. Stubble height measurements are used to determine proper use along the greenline. The plant species considered are typically water loving species (hydric species) such as sedges.

It is your responsibility as the permittee to recognize when proper use has been reached and promptly move all cattle as necessary. If you need some assistance, or methods and tools for determining proper use, please contact Tina Marian.

When proper use has been reached in the unit being grazed, your cattle are to be herded to the next scheduled unit. **When proper use is reached in the last unit grazed, all cattle are to be removed from the allotment, even if this date is prior to the end of your grazing season.** Cattle found on the Allotment before or after the permitted grazing season will be billed at the unauthorized use rate and permit non-compliance actions will be initiated.

You should be aware that Forest Service policy provides that “an authorized officer may require the permittee to monitor and report information on compliance with the grazing permit, allotment management plan and annual operation instructions as a term and condition of your permit.”

To facilitate livestock moves, gates may be opened a few days prior to the scheduled move date only when moving into an adjacent pasture. Gates must be closed and the grazed pasture entirely cleaned of livestock no later than five days following the scheduled move date. Grazed pastures must be kept clean of livestock following the pasture move.

IMPROVEMENTS

Thank you for the work you completed on the 2012 La Sal fence agreement. We were able to get the Buckhollow/Coyote fence inspected and found it was to standard.

There are several items that need to be taken care of listed below before you will allowed to stock the Dorry and Chicken Creek allotments. If they are not completed and you stock the allotment you will be issued a Notice of Non-Compliance:

- The Upper/Lower Dorry division fence (from Dorry Canyon to the South- see Dorry 2012 agreement map) that you were assigned in 2012 was not inspected and you provided no documentation that it was done so it will need to be inspected by **June 1st**.
- The 2012 springs you were assigned in Lower Dorry (see Dorry 2012 agreement map) also need to be inspected before **June 1st** as no documentation of them being up to standards was provided.
- You were issued a Notice of Non-Compliance last fall for not completing the spring/trough improvement that you were assigned to complete in Chicken Creek in 2011 (see 2011 Chicken Creek Agreement Map). The letter indicated that you must have this done and inspected by Forest Service staff by **June 15th** or further action may be taken on your permit.

As discussed during your 2013 AOI meeting:

2013 FENCE AGREEMENTS:

La Sal Allotment: For 2013, you have agreed to heavy maintenance on the fence between La Sal Pass and the Dorry Allotment as shown on the attached map.

Dorry Allotment: For 2013, you have agreed to heavy maintenance on the northern part of the fence between the Lower Dorry and Upper Dorry units from Dorry Canyon to the Brumley allotment boundary as shown on the attached map. The fence line must be cleared of brush in order to meet standards in the sections where it is a lay-down fence.

2013 SPRING AGREEMENTS:

La Sal Allotment: For 2013, you have agreed to reconstruct the enclosure around the Lackey Basin spring as shown on the map attached. Currently it is a barbed wire and T-post fence, it will be reconstructed with post and rails. The Forest Service will provide the materials needed.

Dorry Allotment: For 2013, you have agreed to bring to permit standards that spring just off the Trans La Sal trail in Upper Dorry as shown on the map attached (see also 2001 photos of the spring and sheep trough). Currently there is an old sheep trough here. The Forest Service will provide you with a trough or troughs to replace this with.

When you complete your fence and spring agreements you must fill out and sign the Improvement Agreement Form (pink) that is found in your folder. I suggest that you provide photographs of before and after conditions to assist in documenting compliance with maintenance requirements. I also encourage you to contact Tina when you complete your maintenance so she can schedule a timely inspection.

If you fail to bring the above agreed improvements up to standard by **Oct 15th, 2013** you will not be allowed to stock the allotment in 2014 until the agreement is fulfilled.

Range improvements are essential in ensuring that livestock are well distributed and that Forest standards and guides are met.

- Improvements are to be maintained to standard prior to livestock entering the pasture and that failure to do so is a violation of their permit and action will be taken when violations are documented.
- If improvements have not been maintained, then develop a schedule to bring them up to standard.
- Until all improvements are functional it is not appropriate to authorize full numbers or season of use, unless assurances can be made that utilization standards will not be exceeded.

The maintenance of all structural improvements listed under part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit, Special Terms and Conditions: *Construction and Maintenance of Structural Improvements* is a

requirement and should be completed prior to your entry into each pasture. The allotment permittee or permittees are responsible for the maintenance of all structural range improvements on this allotment. For allotments managed by an Association or Herd Manager specific maintenance responsibilities may be assigned to individual permittees by the Association President or Herd Manager.

If you wish to use forest products (trees and oak brush) from the National Forest to maintain your fences/spring exclosures on your allotment, you must receive authorization from either the Moab or Monticello Office prior to cutting.

NEPA and PLANNED PROJECTS

The La Sal and Chicken Creek allotments are scheduled to have an environmental analysis completed in 2014 to meet the requirements of Public Law 104-19, Section 504(a): Establish and adhere to a schedule for the completion of National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) analysis and decisions on all allotments within the National Forest System unit for which NEPA is needed (PL 104-19 section, General Provision 1995).

As discussed during the AOI meeting a cooperative group is being put together which will meet for the purposes of sharing information about the management and resources of the allotments and by consensus form recommendations to be considered with the planning of the management of the allotments.

The Lackey Basin Aspen Restoration Project will begin implementation this year. This spring some mastication along the La Sal Pass Rd will be done in preparation for the prescribed burn. There may be some burning this fall the main prescribed burn on South Mountain will likely occur next year depending on conditions.

MISCELLANEOUS

Refer to Special Terms and Conditions in Part 3 of Term Grazing Permit for specific instructions pertaining to maintenance standards for range stock water developments, range fences, corrals, and herding standards.

All permitted livestock must be branded with your registered brand as documented in your Term Permit before they enter the National Forest.

Place salt blocks away from water, roads, meadows and other open areas so as to draw livestock into areas that receive light utilization. When livestock leave a pasture move the salt out of the pasture as well.

You will furnish sufficient riders or herders to achieve proper distribution of livestock. **Because of the size of your operation, it is necessary to have a full-time rider to ensure cattle are being distributed properly and in the right pastures at the planned for times.**

Certified Weed Free Hay must be used if you do any supplemental feeding of horses on the allotment while gathering or moving cattle.

If you find the need to use mechanical clearing (tractors, bulldozers etc.) of fence lines or to clean ponds or other water improvements, you must have proper archeological clearance and permission from the District Ranger.

Enclosed in your AOI folder you will find an Actual Use Record sheet. As your 2013 grazing season progresses, please fill out this form in detail and return it promptly at the end of the grazing season. There are also extra sheets included in the folder where you are encouraged to document management on your allotment.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The permittee will not allow owned or controlled livestock to be on Forest Service-administered lands unless the fees specified in the Bill for Collection are paid and confirmation of payment through the "lock box" process is received prior to livestock entering NFS lands.

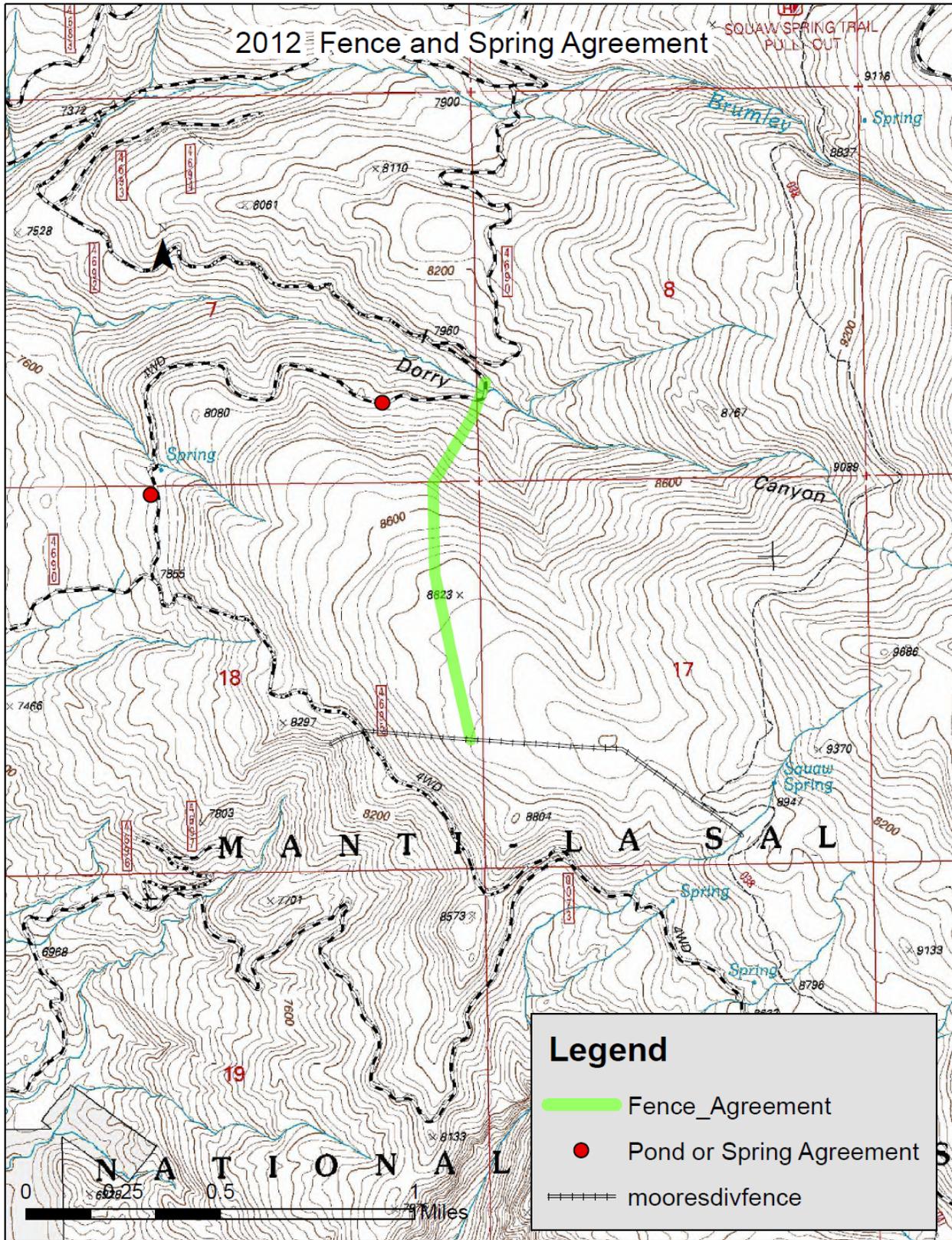
I am looking forward to working with you this summer. Please call Tina Marian (435-636-3368) if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

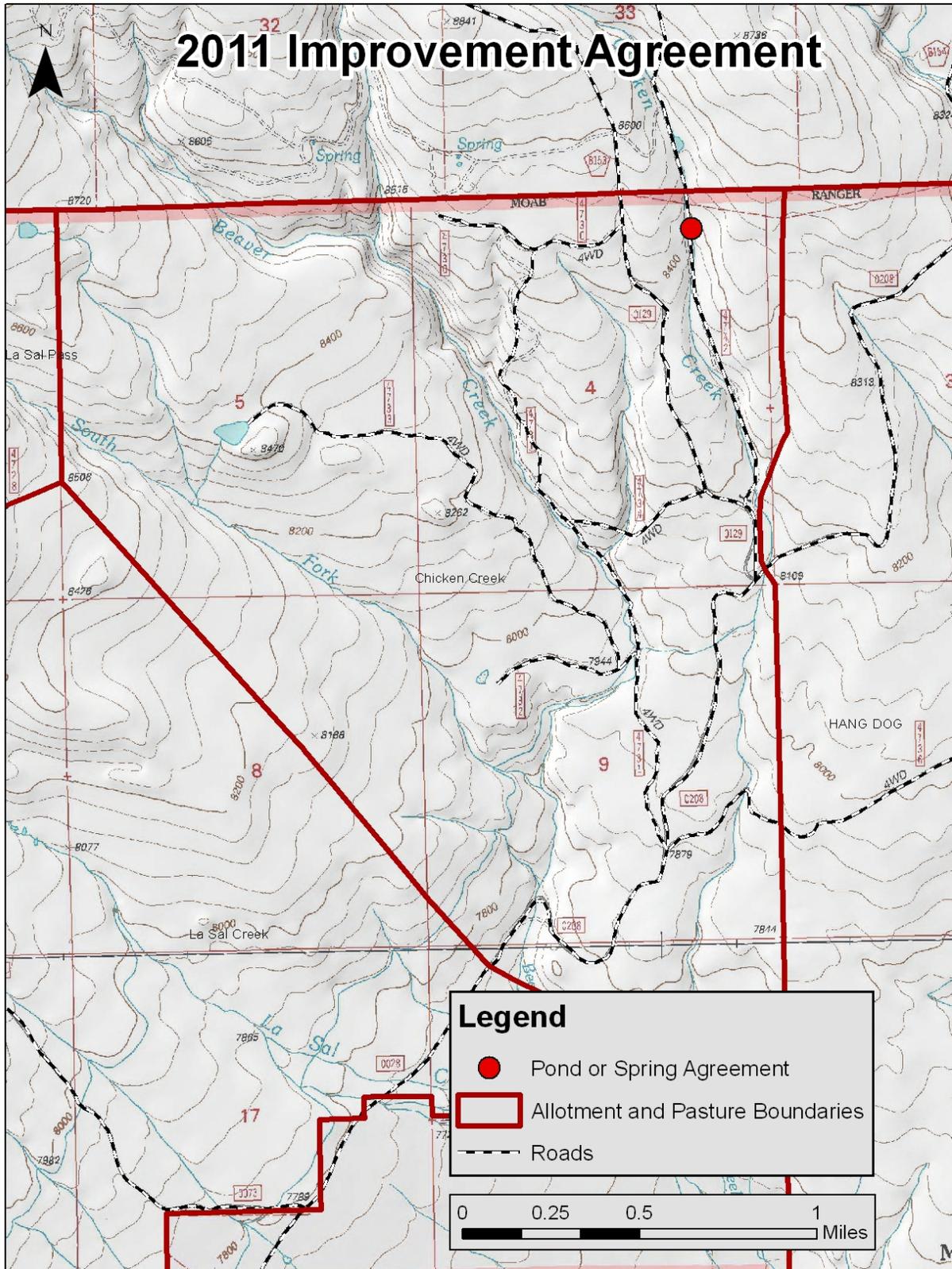


for MICHAEL DIEM
District Ranger

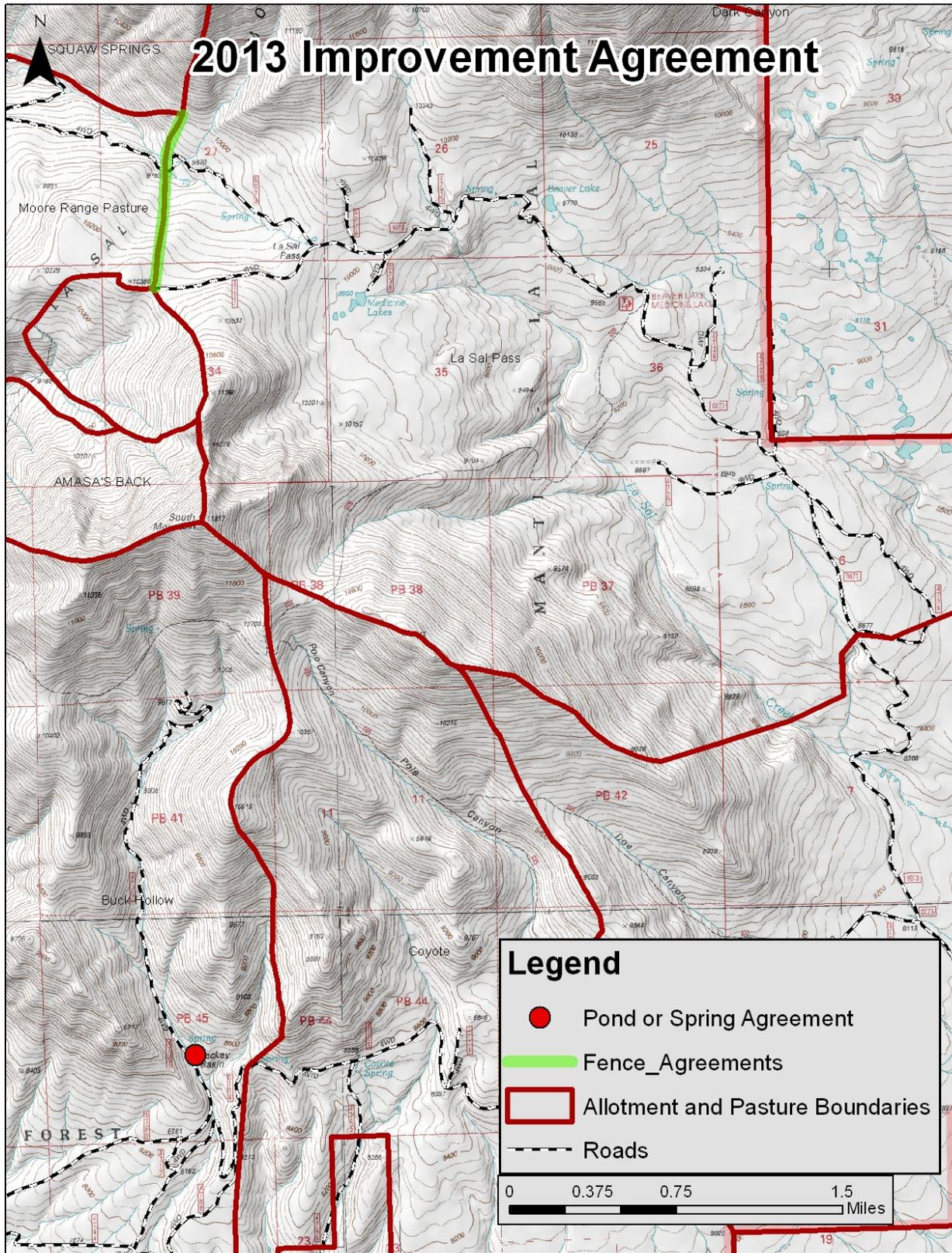
2012 Dorry Improvement Agreement – These springs and fence needs to meet standards and be inspected by FS staff by June 1st.



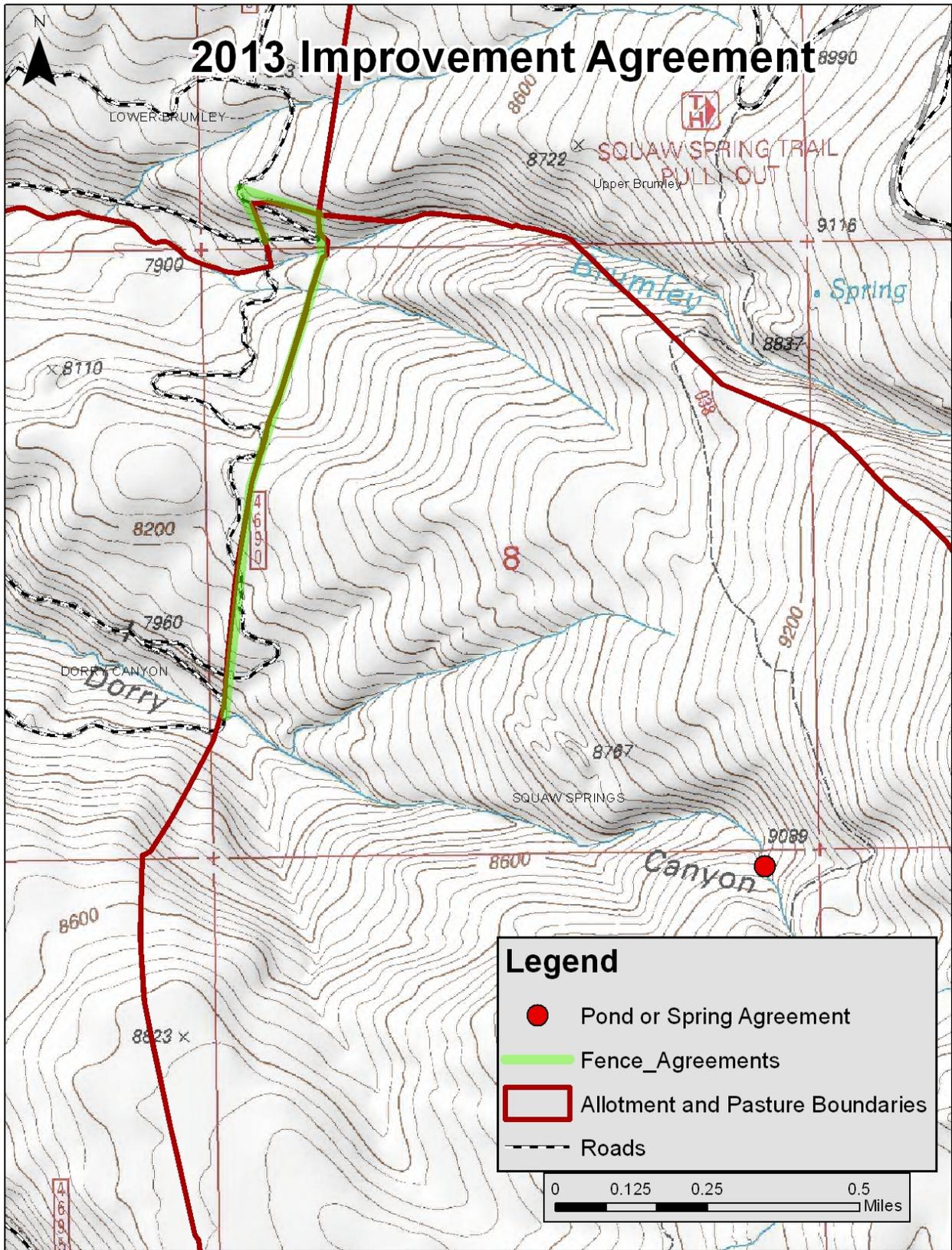
2011 Chicken Creek Improvement Agreement – This was not completed in 2011 nor 2012, thus a Non-Compliance Letter was sent. You must have this spring done by **June 15th**, 2013 to avoid further permit action.



2013 La Sal Improvement Agreement- Needs to be done by Oct 15th, 2013.



2013 Dorry Improvement Agreement - Needs to be done by Oct 15th, 2013.

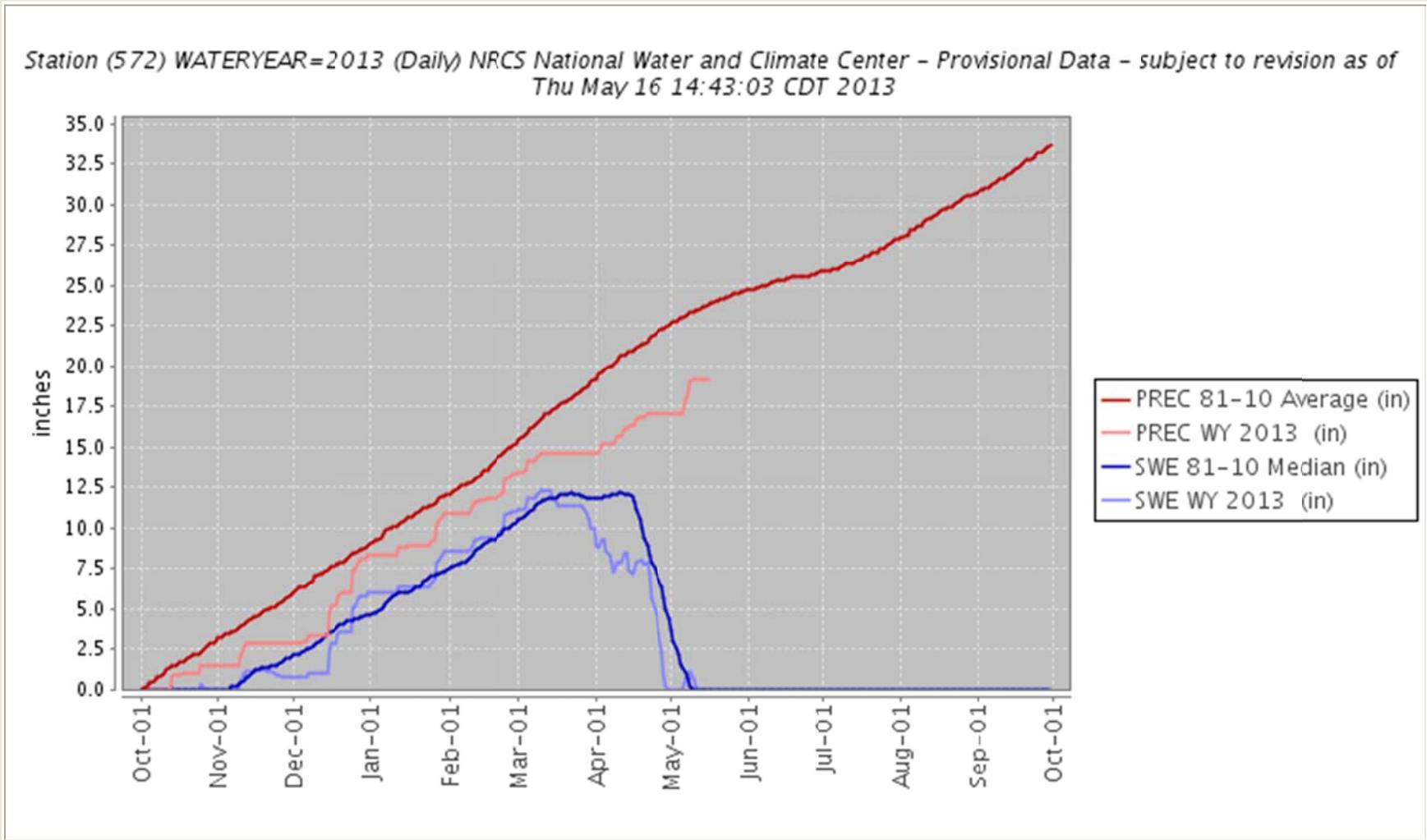


2001 Photos of spring agreement for 2013.



Utah (PST) SNOTEL Site LASAL MOUNTAIN (572) (09L03S) Daily series for wateryear=2013

NRCS National Water and Climate Center - Provisional Data - subject to revision as of 2013-May-16. Notes on dates - Daily sensors (e.g. TAVG.D-1) report a summary value for the previous day. Hourly sensors (e.g. TAVG.H-1) report a summary value for the previous hour. Instantaneous sensors (e.g. TOBS.I-1) report a single observation on the hour.



Below average precipitation in 2013

Utah Climate and Water Report

May 2013



Western Uintah Mountains; April 2013.
Photo by Kent Sutcliffe

Utah Climate and Water Report

The purpose of the Climate and Water Report is to provide a snapshot of current and immediate past climatic conditions and other information useful to agricultural and water user interests in Utah. The report utilizes data from several sources that represent specific parameters (streamflow data from the United States Geological Survey, reservoir data from the Bureau of Reclamation, and other sources), geography including high elevation United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Snowpack Telemetry (SNOTEL) data, and agriculturally important data from the USDA-NRCS Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN). Data on precipitation, soil moisture, soil temperature, reservoir storage, and streamflow are analyzed and presented. These data analyses can be used to increase irrigation efficiency and agricultural production. As with all data and analyses, there are limitations due to data quality, quantity, and spatial application.

Report Content

1) Climate and Water Information – Soil Climate Analysis Network

- a) Utah SCAN Water Year Precipitation
- b) North Central
- c) Northern Mountains
- d) Uintah Basin
- e) Southeast
- f) South Central
- g) Western and Dixie
- h) 2010 Minimum Soil Temperatures at Utah SCAN sites

2) General Hydrological Conditions

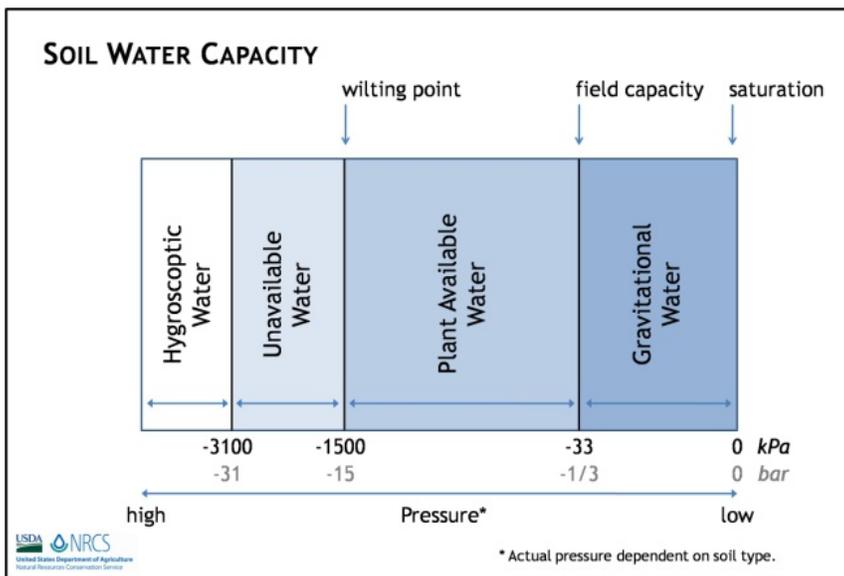
- a) SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal
- b) SNOTEL Water Year to Date Precipitation
- c) Bear River Basin
 - Water Availability Index
- d) Weber and Ogden River Basins
 - Water Availability Index
- e) Utah Lake, Jordan River, and Tooele Valley Basins
 - Water Availability Index
- f) Uintah Basin
 - Water Availability Index
- g) Southeast River Basins
 - Water Availability Index
- h) Sevier and Beaver River Basins
 - Water Availability Index
- i) E. Garfield, Kane, Washington, and Iron Co.
 - Water Availability Index

Climate and Water Information

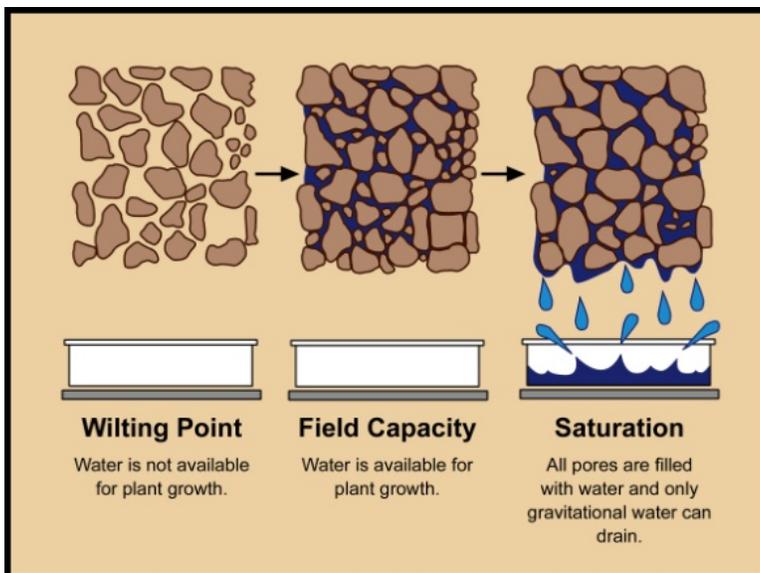
Soil Climate Analysis Network

Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) stations are primarily located on low- to mid-elevation, agriculturally important landscapes that maintain representative soils. Elevations range from 3,000 to 7,000 ft. The SCAN network provides real-time soil moisture and temperature data coupled with additional climate information for use in natural resource planning, drought assessment, water resource management, and resource inventory. Stations are situated on non-irrigated, native soils, are remotely located, and collect hourly atmospheric and soils data that are available to the public online.

In order to summarize SCAN data, the 35 sites in Utah are grouped by climate divisions (North Central, Northern Mountains, Uintah Basin, Southeast, South Central, Dixie, and Western).



Explanation of soil water capacity definitions. Field capacity (FC) and wilting point (WP) are calculated in the laboratory for each soil horizon. The amount of water held between field capacity and wilting point is plant available.



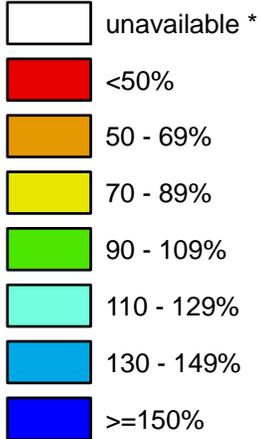
Visual explanation of soil water capacity definitions.

Utah

SNOTEL Water Year (Oct 1) to Date Precipitation % of Normal

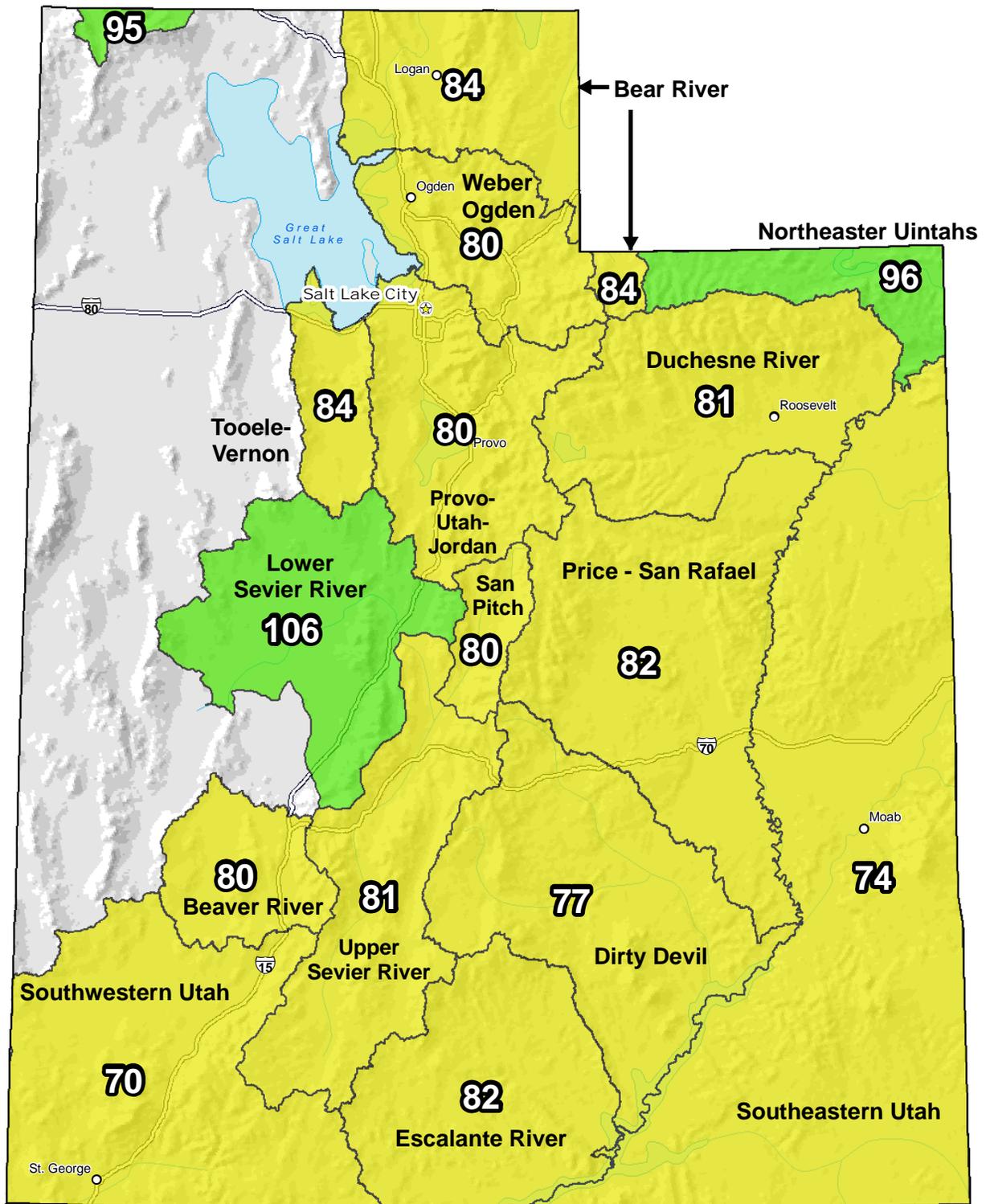
May 01, 2013

Water Year (Oct 1) to Date Precipitation Basin-wide Percent of 1981-2010 Average



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year

**Provisional Data
Subject to Revision**



The water year to date precipitation percent of normal represents the accumulated precipitation found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

Prepared by the USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/gis/>
Based on data from <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/reports/>
Science contact: Jim.Marron@por.usda.gov 503 414 3047

Utah Hydrologic Summary

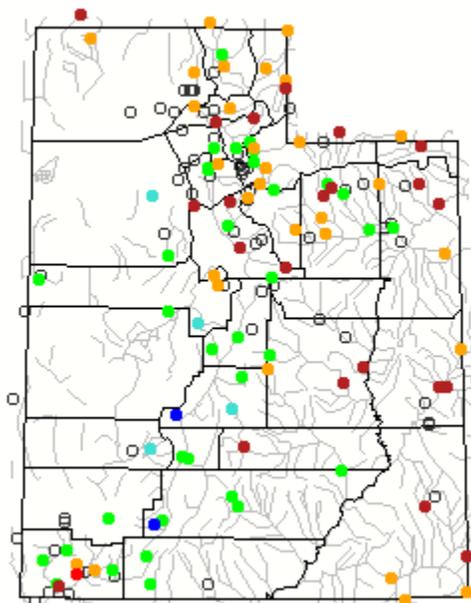
May 1, 2013

Current Conditions

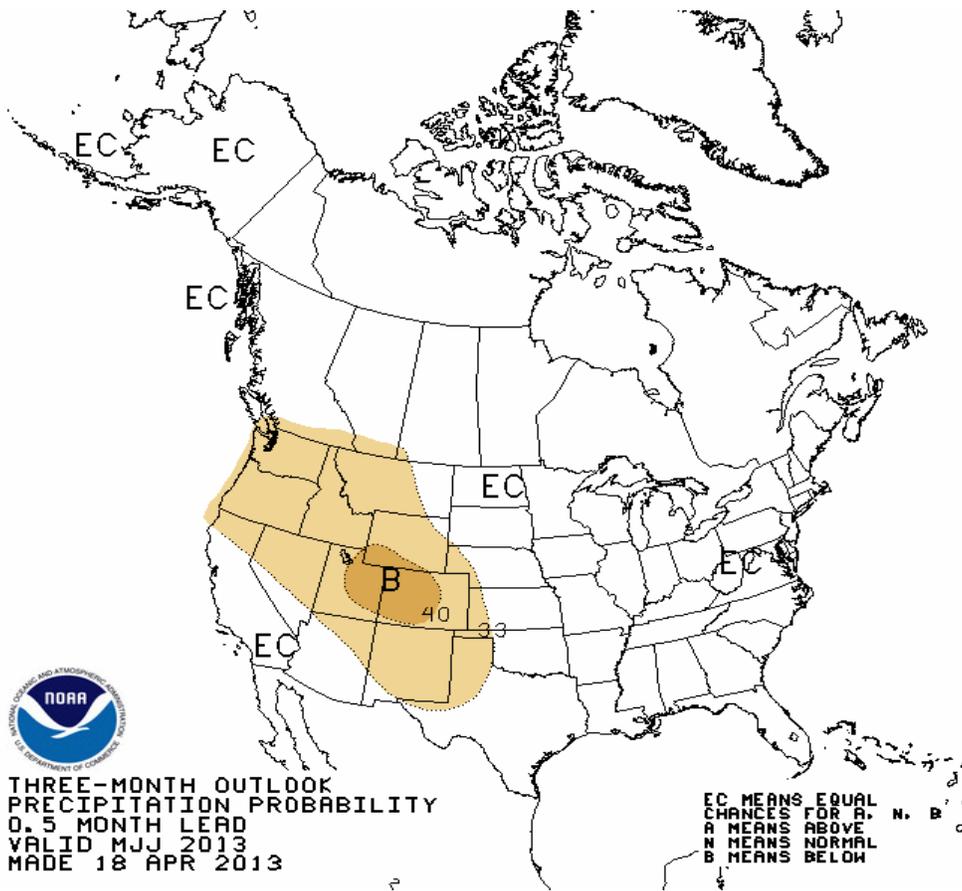
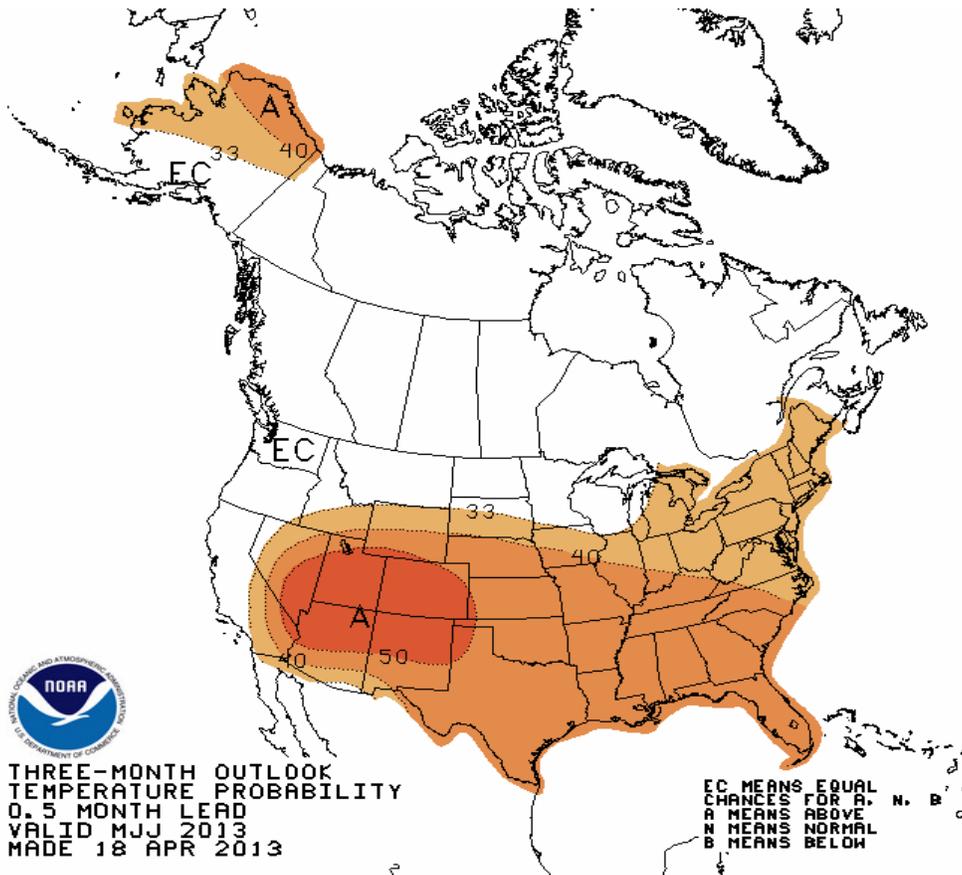
Current runoff, as shown in the USGS graphic below, is mostly below to much below average across many areas of Utah. Snow packs over much of southern Utah are close to melt out with the exception of the Beaver and upper Sevier. In southeast Utah, peak flows and in some cases, the majority of this season's stream flows are already past and stream flow will continue to decline. Peak flows in the remainder of the state will likely occur in May with rapid declines thereafter. There simply isn't sufficient snowpack to sustain high flows this year and long term base flow conditions will likely be much lower as well. Much of this year's snowmelt has gone to recharge soil moisture which is currently average in the north and much dryer and drying quickly in the south. The southeast is very dry and is reflected in the observed streamflows. April precipitation was fantastic in the north (150%-200%) and below normal in the south (25%-75%). Reservoir storage is nearly 20% less than last year, near 73% of capacity across the state. Southeast Utah is very low at 49% of reservoir capacity. Having melted the greater part of snowpack in southeastern Utah, observed runoff response has been very weak. Expect this trend to continue for many areas of the state: low volumes and low peak flows. Poor runoff conditions will and already have had impacts on agriculture across the state with water allocation cuts. The National Climate Prediction Center forecasts for the area suggest warmer and drier conditions for the next 3 months. Based on all available water supply data, (reservoir storage, runoff predictions, climate forecasts, etc) agriculture producers will have to determine how much and what type of crops to plant in order to minimize risk and maximize production in what is becoming a very challenging year.

Current Utah Streamflow - Courtesy US Geological Survey

Hednesday, May 01, 2013 10:30ET



Explanation - Percentile classes							
Low	<10 Much below normal	10-24 Below normal	25-75 Normal	76-90 Above normal	>90 Much above normal	High	Not ranked



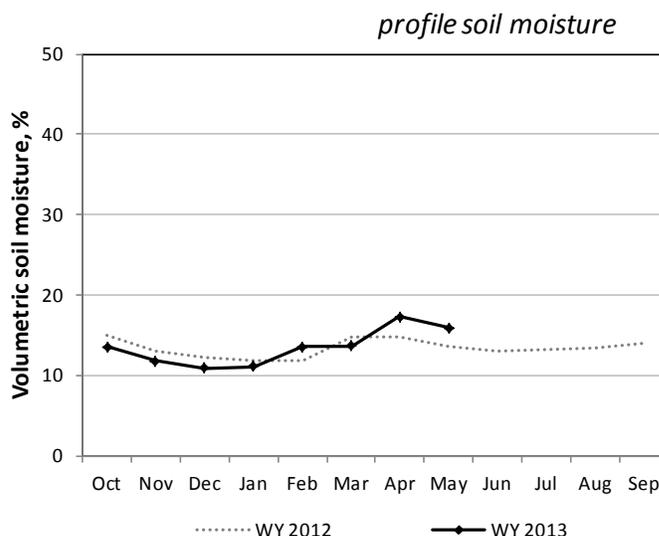
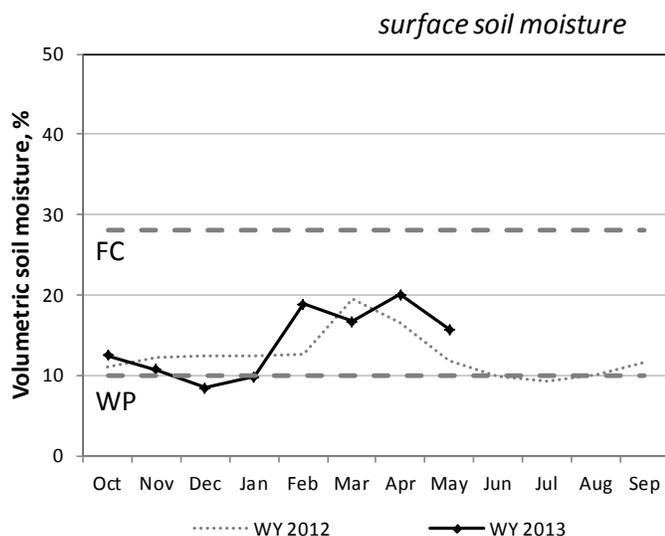
Southeast

Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN)

Site name	Precip to Date*	Monthly Precip	Soil Moisture					Soil Temperature				
			2"	4"	8"	20"	40"	2"	4"	8"	20"	40"
			volume %					°F				
SOUTHEAST												
Price	4.3	1.3	2	20	26	15	18	55	59	60	55	51
Green River	1.9	0.4	7	12	13	5	8	66	67	68	62	56
Harm's Way	3.1	0.6	12	0	20	24	11	59	57	58	53	49
West Summit	2.6	0.4	11	18	22	24	16	56	58	57	51	47
Eastland	3.0	0.1	17	19	22	33	34	55	56	56	51	48
Alkali Mesa	4.2	0.1	9	9	18	20	13	60	60	60	55	50
McCracken Mesa	4.7	0.2	9	24	24	24	12	62	64	64	58	55

* Precipitation since October 1 (beginning of the water year). Monthly Precip is the amount of precipitation accumulated in the past month. SCAN sites utilize tipping bucket rain gauges which do not accurately measure precipitation in the form of snowfall. Soil moisture and temperature values reflect conditions measured on the first of the month.

Southeast



Surface soil moisture is the weighted mean of the water content measured at depths of 2, 4, and 8 inches. **FC** is the mean field capacity, **WP** is the mean permanent wilting point for the soil surface (0 to 12 inches) at SCAN sites within the region, and **WY** is the water year lasting October through September. *Profile soil moisture* is the weighted mean of water content measured at depths of 2, 4, 8, 20, and 40 inches.

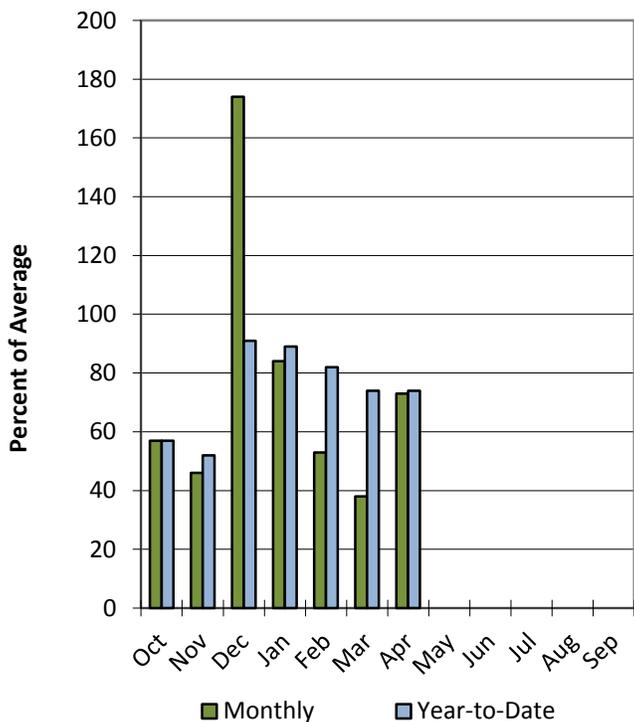
Additional data available at the SCAN website, including: hourly air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, wind direction, barometric pressure, precipitation, solar radiation, soil temperature, and soil moisture.

Southeastern Utah Basin

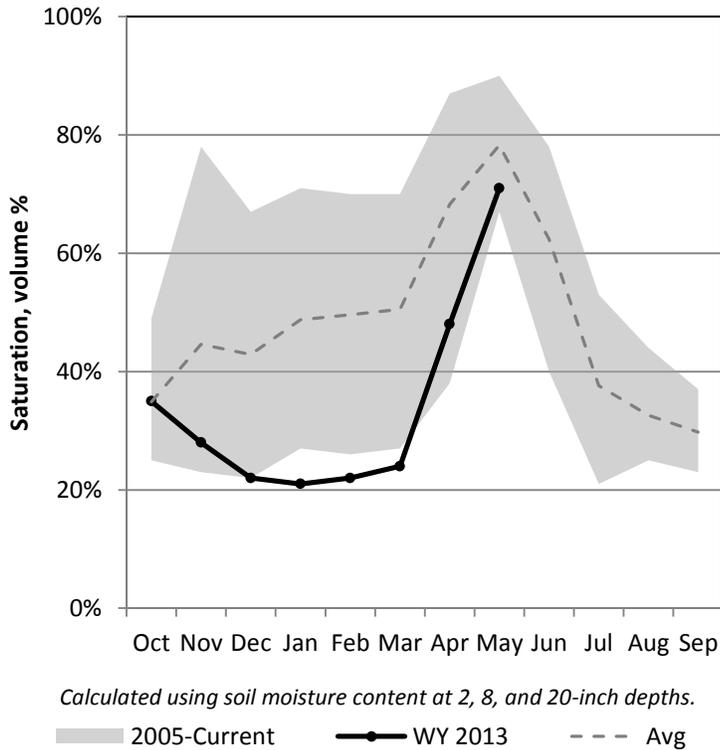
5/1/2013

Precipitation in April was below average at 73%, which brings the seasonal accumulation (Oct-Apr) to 74% of average. Soil moisture is at 71% compared to 72% last year. Reservoir storage is at 20% of capacity, compared to 65% last year. The water availability index for Moab is 4%.

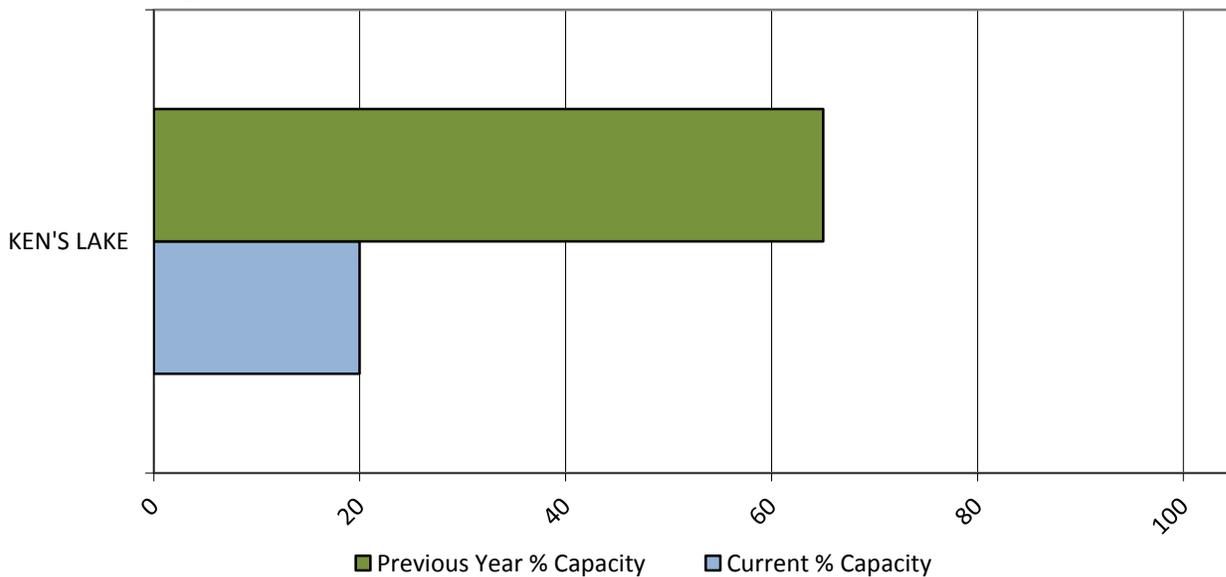
Precipitation



Soil Moisture



Reservoir Storage



U.S. Drought Monitor

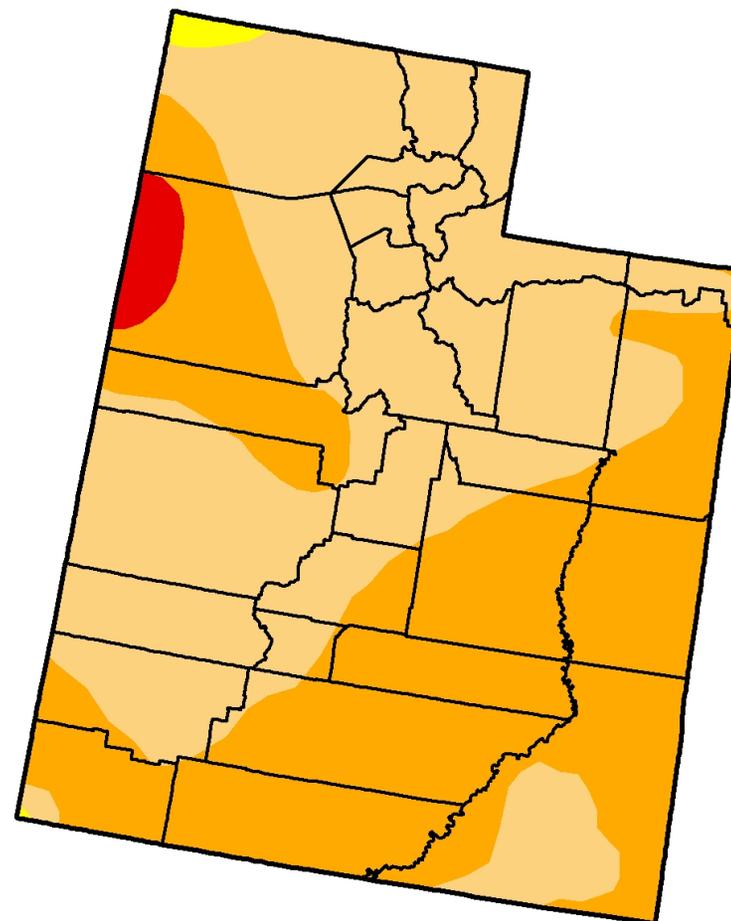
Utah

May 14, 2013

Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	99.46	47.09	1.53	0.00
Last Week (05/07/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	96.29	51.39	1.53	0.00
3 Months Ago (02/12/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	99.90	55.35	2.02	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	99.99	66.47	21.34	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	83.18	22.53	0.00
One Year Ago (05/08/2012 map)	1.05	98.95	85.80	26.33	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

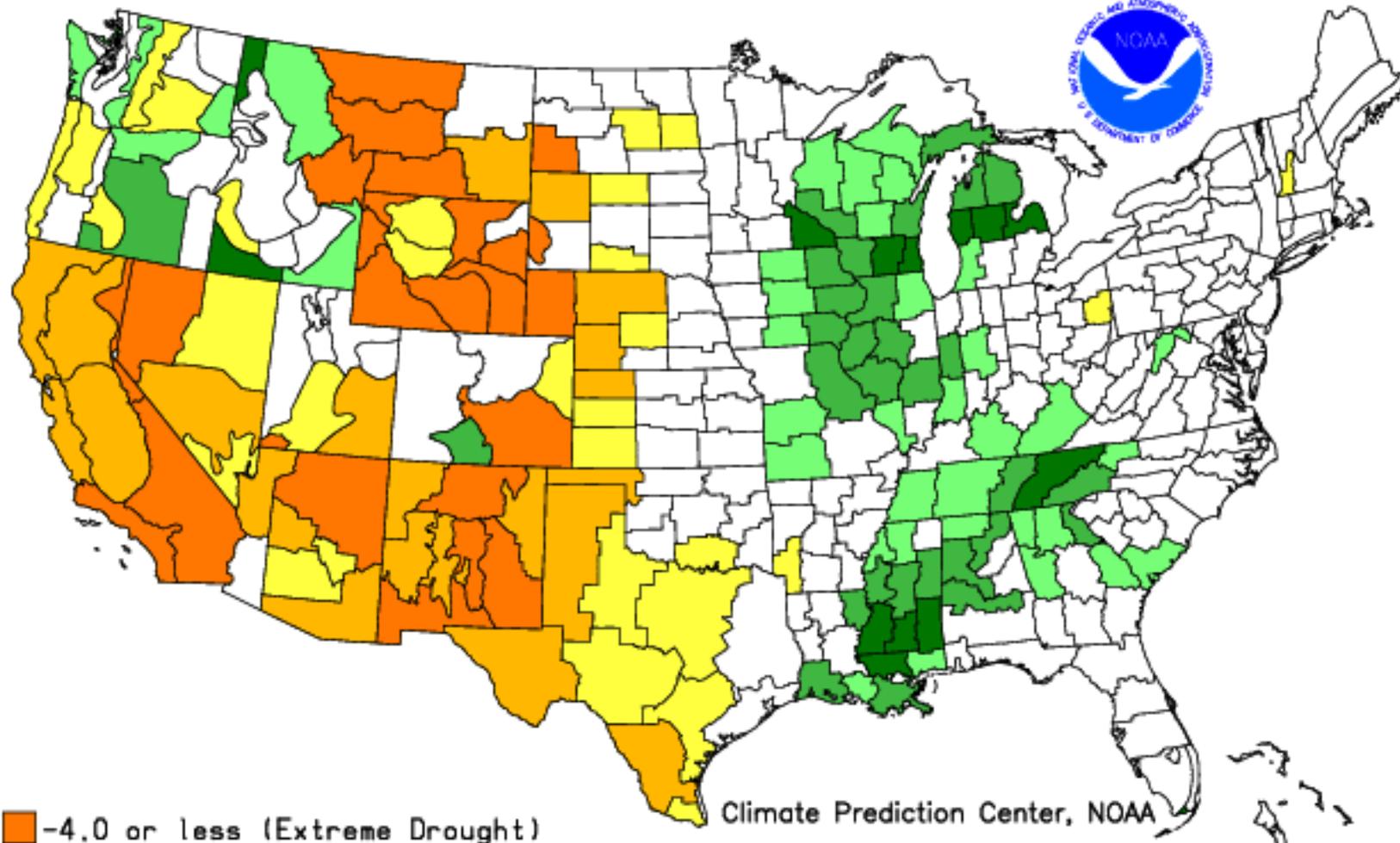


Released Thursday, May 16, 2013

Rich Tinker, Climate Prediction Center/NCEP/NWS/NOAA

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Drought Severity Index by Division
Weekly Value for Period Ending MAY 11, 2013
Long Term Palmer



- 4.0 or less (Extreme Drought)
- 3.0 to -3.9 (Severe Drought)
- 2.0 to -2.9 (Moderate Drought)
- 1.9 to +1.9 (Near Normal)

- +2.0 to +2.9 (Unusual Moist Spell)
- +3.0 to +3.9 (Very Moist Spell)
- +4.0 and above (Extremely Moist)



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for May 16 - August 31, 2013
Released May 16, 2013



Some Improvement

Some Improvement

Development

Improvement

Persistence

Development

Persistence

Development

Improvement

No Drought Posted/Predicted

KEY:

-  Drought to persist or intensify
-  Drought ongoing, some improvement
-  Drought likely to improve, impacts ease
-  Drought development likely

Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Short-term events – such as individual storms – cannot be accurately forecast more than a few days in advance. Use caution for applications – such as crops – that can be affected by such events. "Ongoing" drought areas are approximated from the Drought Monitor (D1 to D4 intensity). For weekly drought updates, see the latest U.S. Drought Monitor. NOTE: the green improvement areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels, but do not necessarily imply drought elimination.