For Immediate Release
October 1, 2025

Contact: Karry Rathje
Public Affairs Manager
435.673.3617
karry@wcwcd.gov

Washington County Narrowly Misses Lowest Water Year on Record with only 4.52 Inches of Precipitation

St. George, UT — Washington County ends the 2024-2025 water year with only 4.52 inches of precipitation[1], narrowly missing the driest water year[2] since recordkeeping began in 1893. The county, which averages 9.27 inches for the water year, received 49% of normal precipitation.

The driest water year of record, 1955-1956, produced 4.32 inches of rainfall. St. George was expected to break the long-standing record until storms arrived in late September.

Zach Renstrom, general manager for the Washington County Water Conservancy District (district) said weak snowpack had the biggest impact on this year's supply. "Melting snowpack feeds the Virgin River. We divert that snowmelt into reservoirs to meet community water supply needs throughout the year," he said.

Despite low precipitation, the community managed the supply better than expected. "Reservoir depletion was lower than we anticipated because of the community's efforts to conserve the available water," said Doug Bennett, district conservation manager.

(more)

[1] National Weather Service data
[2] A water year is based on the annual hydrologic cycle and begins October 1st and ends on the following September 30th.

The region's cities implemented messaging to remind people to suspend watering during the few storms that passed through the region. "If everyone turned off irrigation for just one summer day, it saves us more than 40 million gallons – enough water to serve 250 households for a full year," said Bennett.

The region also saw record adoption of landscape water conservation measures. "Residents voluntarily converted more than three million square feet of lawns to water-efficient landscape over the past 36 months – more than any other region in the state," Bennett added.

The primary reservoirs used to supply drinking water, Sand Hollow and Quail Creek, ended the water year at 71% and 57% of capacity, respectively. Despite moderately healthy reservoirs, water managers will be watching the winter snowpack. "Another low water year would strain our storage," said Renstrom.

As a proactive measure to deal with the prospect of a shortage, the district released a draft Water Shortage Contingency Plan this week. The plan is currently under review by the eight municipalities served by the district, which include Hurricane, Ivins, La Verkin, Santa Clara, St. George, Toquerville, Virgin and Washington.

The plan outlines the process to declare a shortage and calls for water budgeting in each city based on the number of connections they serve. The cities will be responsible for designing and implementing strategies to reduce water use in their community.

The district will present the plan to the Administrative Advisory Committee during its October 28 meeting. The committee, which consists of mayors and city managers representing the eight municipalities, will consider whether to recommend the plan to the district's board of trustees for formal adoption at its November 4 meeting.

"I'm hoping these fall storms will carry us into a wet winter, but if they don't, this plan will guide us during a potential shortage," said Renstrom.

About Washington County Water Conservancy District

The Washington County Water Conservancy District is a not-for-profit public agency that oversees water resources in Washington County, UT. Visit wcwcd.gov for more information.

-###-

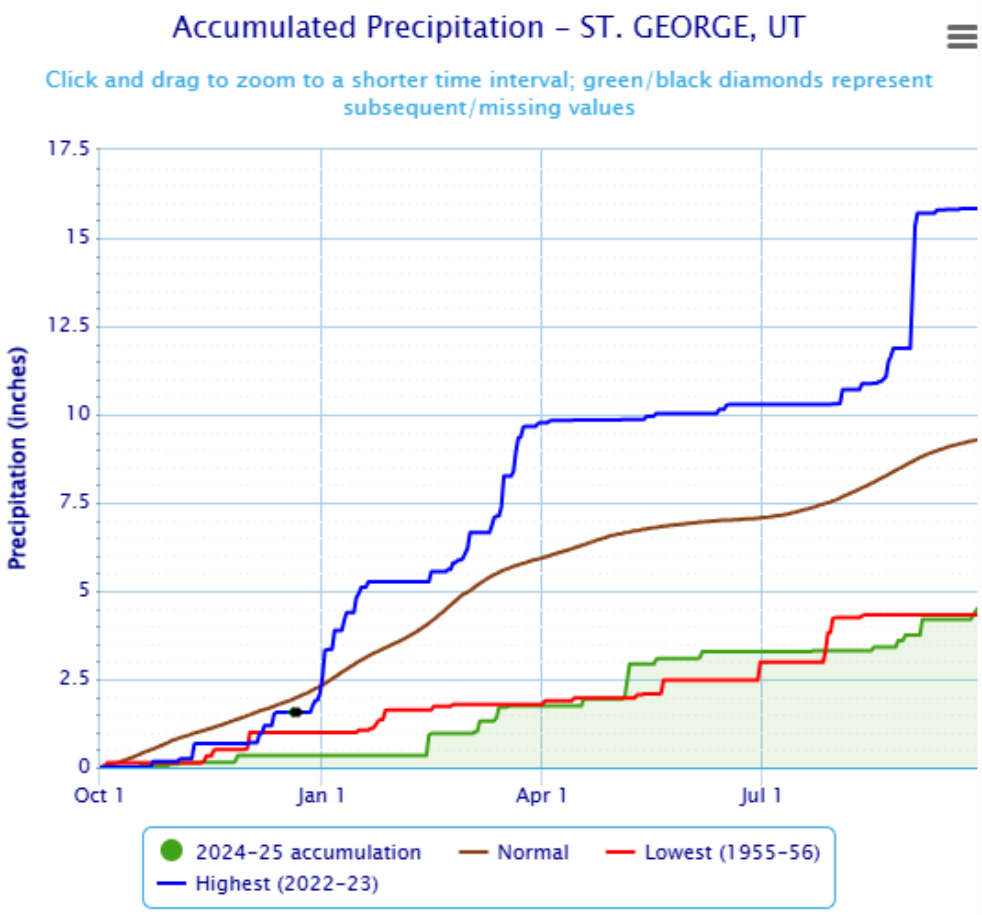

Chart source: https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=slc