COLORADO
WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS UPDATE

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER: COLORADO DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES
ROOM 818, 1313 SHERMAN ST., DENVER, CO 80203
303-866-3581; www.water.state.co.us

February 2009

The Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) developed by this office and the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service is used as an indicator of mountain-based water supply conditions in the major river basins of the state. It is based on snowpack, reservoir storage, and precipitation for the winter period (November through April). During the winter period, snowpack is the primary component in all basins except the South Platte basin where reservoir storage is given the most weight.

The statewide SWSI values for January range from a high value of 2.2 in the Rio Grande Basin to a low value of 0.3 in the South Platte Basin. Five of the basins (Arkansas, Rio Grande, Gunnison, Colorado, and San Juan/Dolores) experienced a loss from the previous month's values. Two of the basins (South Platte and Yampa/White) experienced a gain from the previous month's values.

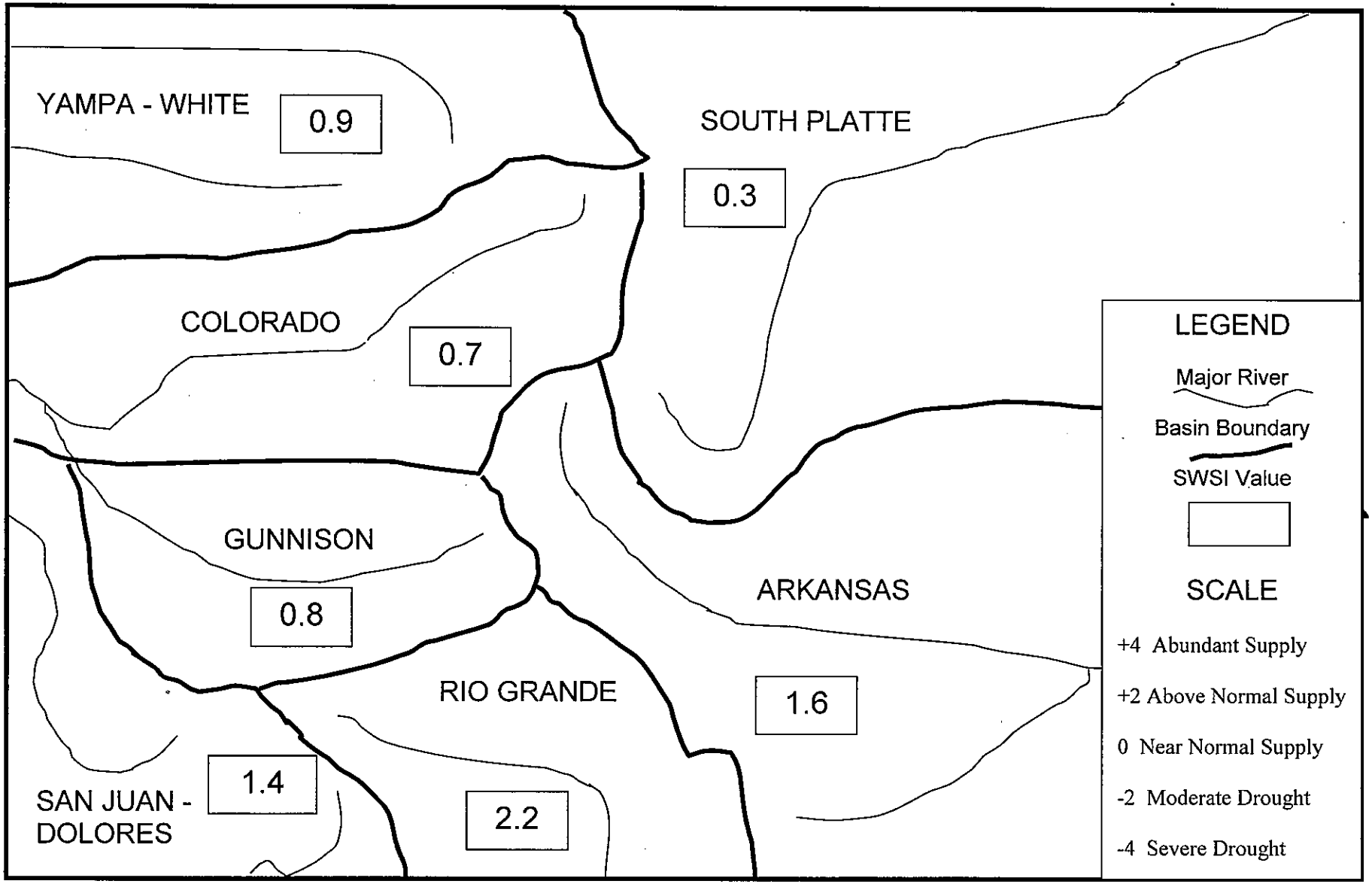
The following SWSI values were computed for each of the seven major basins for February 1, 2009, and reflect the conditions during the month of January.

Basin	February 1, 2009 SWSI Value	Change From Previous Month	Change From Previous Year
South Platte	0.3	+0.1	- 0.2
Arkansas	1.6	- 0.1	- 1.4
Rio Grande	2.2	- 0.4	- 1.3
Gunnison	0.8	- 0.9	- 2.5
Colorado	0.7	- 0.6	- 1.6
Yampa/White	0.9	+1.7	- 0.7
San Juan/Dolores	1.4	- 0.8	- 2.0

Scale

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Severe Drought		Moderate Drought		Near Normal Supply		Above Normal Supply		Abundant Supply

SURFACE WATER SUPPLY INDEX FOR COLORADO



February 1, 2009

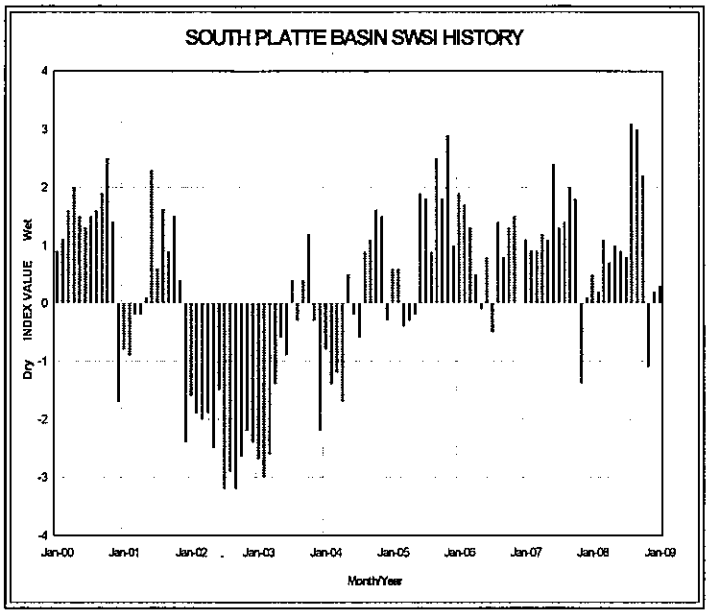
Basinwide Conditions Assessment

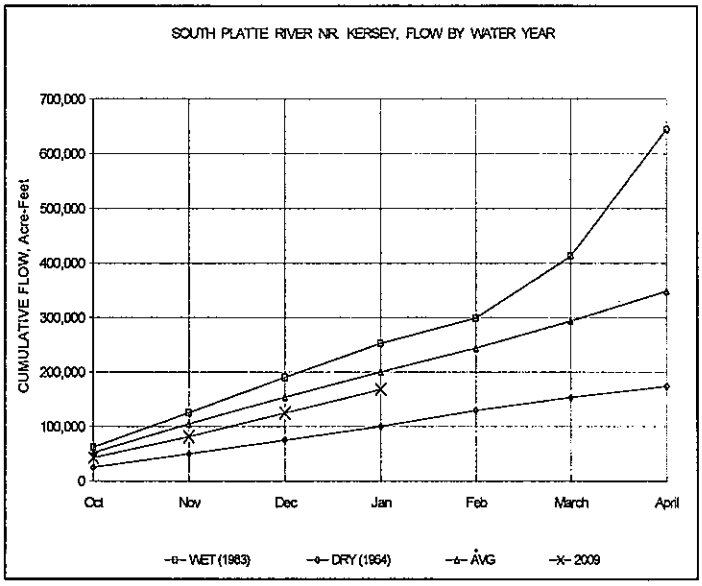
The SWSI value for the month was 0.3. Cumulative storage for the six reservoirs graphed on this page was 104% of normal as of the end of January. Cumulative storage in the major plains reservoirs: Julesberg, North Sterling, and Prewitt, is at 72% of capacity. Cumulative storage in the major upper-basin reservoirs: Cheesman, Eleven Mile, Spinney, and Antero is at 93% of capacity. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 103% of normal. Flow at the gaging station South Platte River near Kersey was 707 cfs, as compared to the long-term average of 760 cfs. Flow at the Colorado/Nebraska state line averaged 213 cfs.

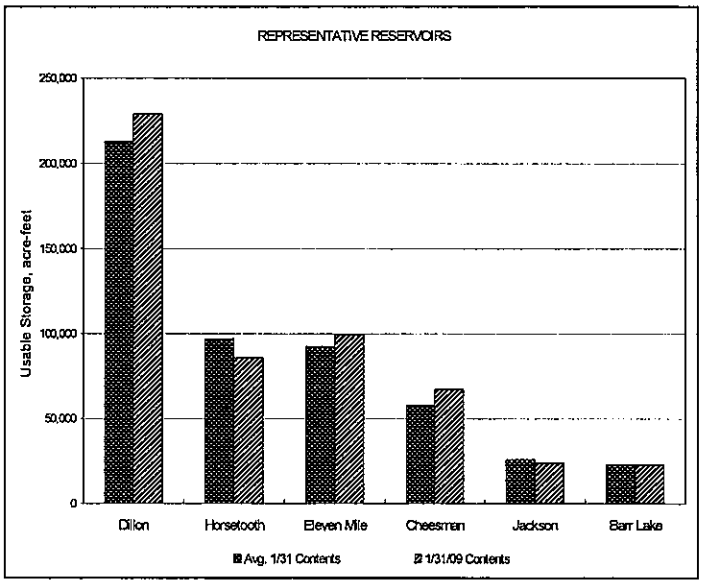
The warm conditions in January were excellent for storage as there were no limitations due to icing conditions during the month and overall flow was average or above throughout the basin. With the warm conditions, significant progress was made in filling most reservoirs on the mainstem and the tributaries. Overall storage moved from trailing last year's values to exceeding them and we expect most reservoirs to fill. Filling all of the plains reservoirs will allow recharge to occur this spring. Municipal providers also are anticipating having encouraging storage supplies going into next year.

Outlook

While the water supply situation in the South Platte basin is presently positive, conditions for next year will depend significantly on the snow the next few months and rain this spring.







Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 1.6. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 129% of normal. Flow at the gauging station Arkansas River near Portland was 460 cfs, as compared to the long-term average of 375 cfs. Storage in Turquoise, Twin Lakes, Pueblo, and John Martin reservoirs totaled 101% of normal as of the end of January.

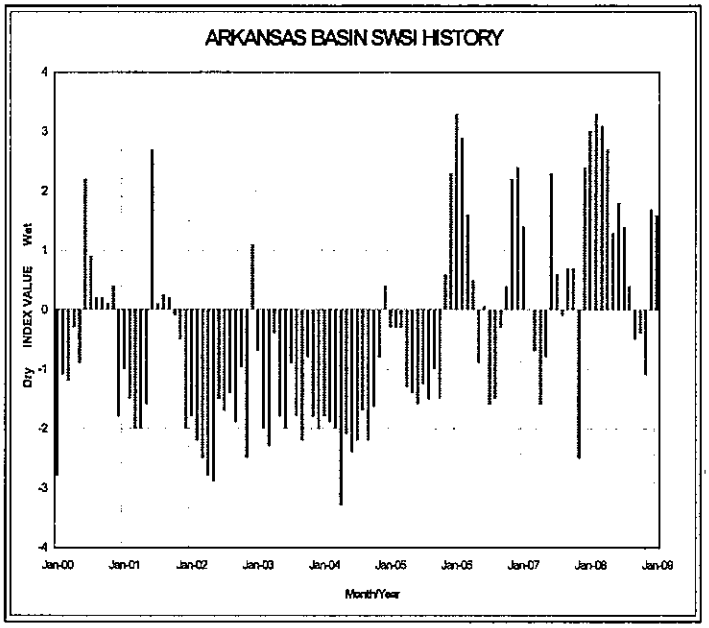
Outlook

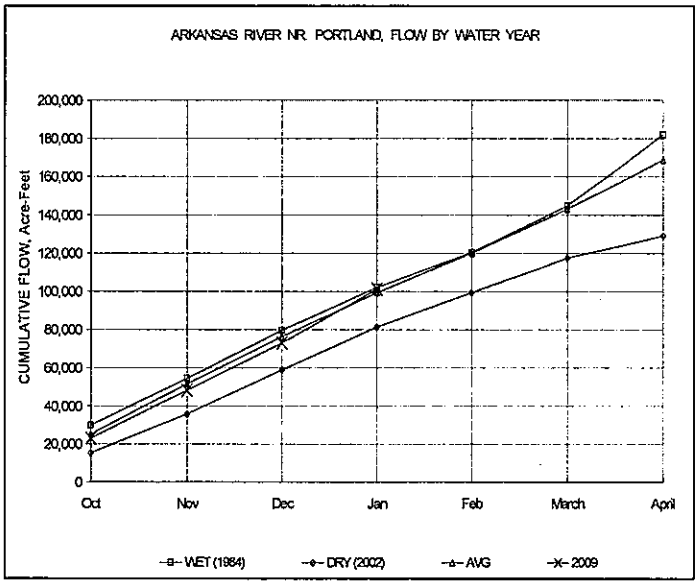
Reservoir storage in the Pueblo Winter Water Program totaled 99,618 acre-feet as of the end of January. This storage amount is slightly lower than last year's storage to date of 101,311acre-feet and represents 122% of the past five-year average. The overall Pueblo Reservoir storage content of 197,645 acre-feet at the end of January leaves some additional storage space in the Conservation Storage Pool in Pueblo Reservoir (256,949 acre-feet represents the maximum conservation storage). Strategic planning is underway to ensure the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project Water expected to be imported for 2009 can be stored in Turquoise, Twin Lakes and Pueblo Reservoirs without undue spills of water from Pueblo Reservoir.

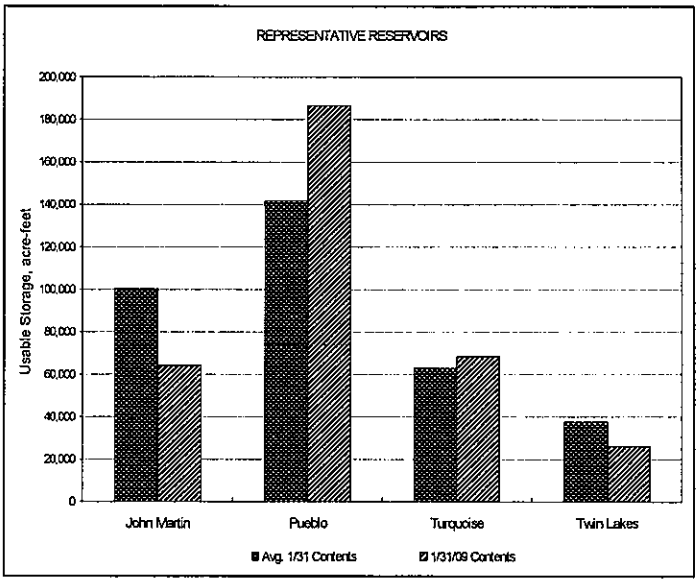
Conservation storage in John Martin Reservoir has accumulated 18,342 acre-feet versus 16,290acre-feet as of the end of January last year.

Administrative/Management Concerns

An Advisory Committee to the State Engineer has met and provided advice on a proposed set of rules entitled the "Arkansas River Irrigation Consumption Rules". This process will continue through part of 2009 prior to the Rules being promulgated through Water Court with an anticipated effective date of January 1, 2010.



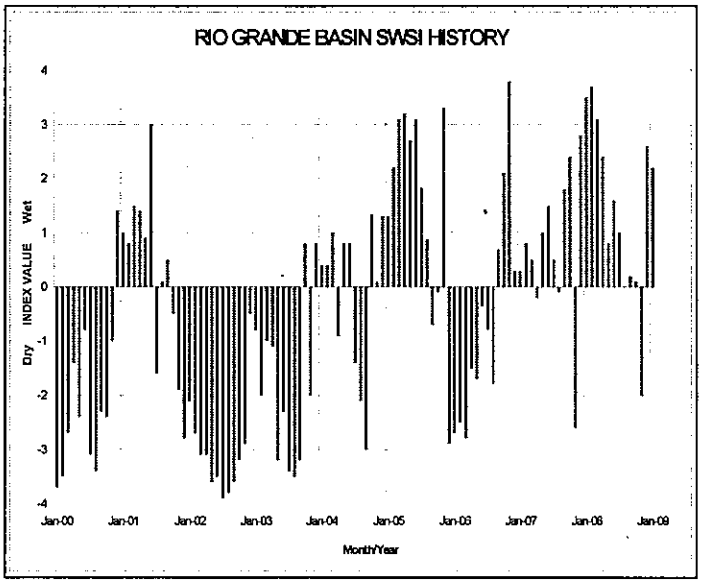




Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 2.2. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 126% of normal. Flow at the gaging station Rio Grande near Del Norte averaged 178 cfs (102% of normal). The Conejos River near Mogote had a mean flow of 54 cfs (113% of normal). Storage in Platoro, Rio Grande, and Santa Maria reservoirs totaled 91% of normal as of the end of January.

Snowfall in the high country during January was a bit disappointing after the excellent December snowpack accumulation. Precipitation in Alamosa was only 0.10 inches, 0.15 inches below normal. It was a very mild January for the southern part of the San Luis Valley where lack of snow on the ground allowed warmer conditions. But the icebox effect was in place in the northern end as snow lingered on the ground and dropped night-time temperatures well below zero for most of the month.

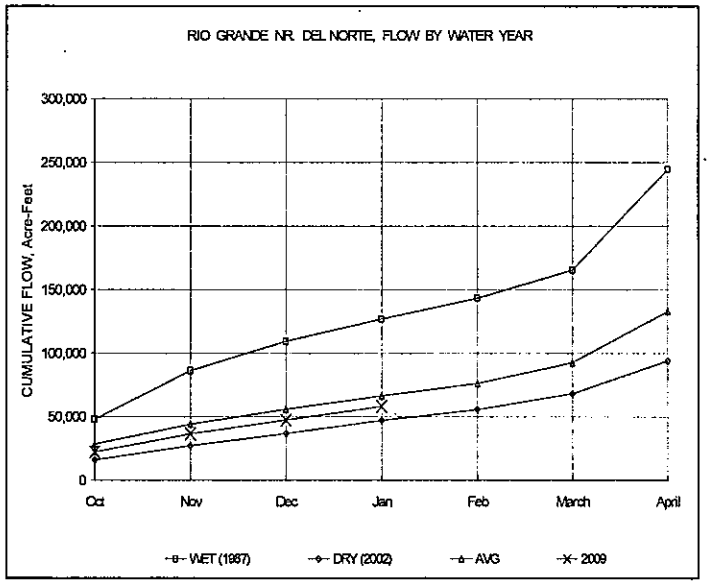


Outlook

Modest snowfall in the San Juans and Sangre de Cristos during January kept the snowpack above long-term averages. The southern and eastern mountains seem to be in better shape than the northern mountains.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service stream flow forecasts are predicting runoff in area streams to be in the range of 91% (Saguache Creek) to 127% (Costilla Creek) of average during the 2009 irrigation season.

It's shaping up to be a winter somewhat similar to last year with heavy snowfall during December after a very dry November. Last year, a very disappointing March and April brought little snowfall to the mountains.

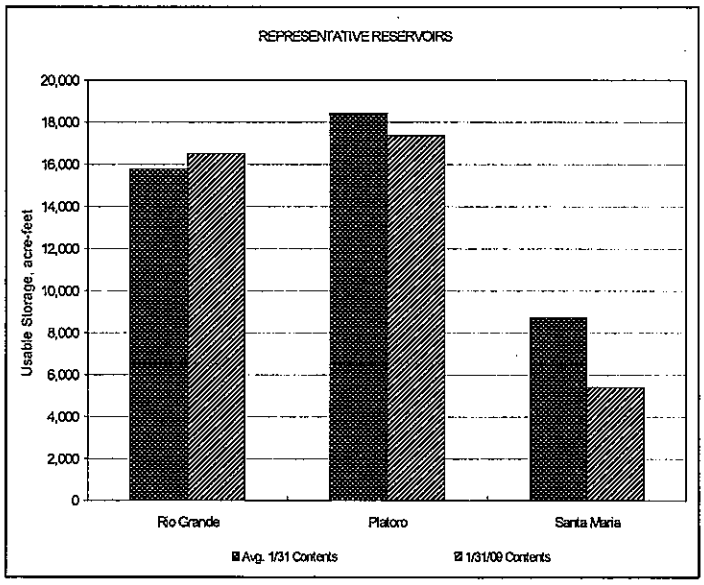


Administrative/Management Concerns

Much effort was spent during January finalizing streamflow and diversion records. The annual meetings of local districts and ditch boards are held this time of year to reflect back on the 2008 season and plan for the upcoming irrigation season.

Public Use Impacts

Outdoor sports enthusiasts should get while the getting is good this winter.



Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 0.8. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 115% of normal. Flow at the gaging station Uncompahgre River near Ridgway was 51 cfs, as compared to the long-term average of 45 cfs. Storage in Taylor Park, Crawford, and Fruitland reservoirs totaled 110% of normal as of the end of January.

Outlook

The average snowpack levels dropped slightly in January despite some late storms. The good news is that, as a whole, the Gunnison Basin was still at 116 percent of average accumulated snowpack on January 31st and, February and March are typically good months for snowpack accumulation in the basin. The January 1st runoff forecast for 2009 spring runoff into Blue Mesa is around 104 percent of average and Blue Mesa is anticipated to fill this year. This forecast is encouraging; however, history has shown that the forecast can change significantly between January and the end of the runoff season because January is still early in the snow accumulation period.

The January 1st forecast for the Gunnison River near Grand Junction is currently about 1.7 million AF or around 109 percent of average. Based on these values, the year is currently on track to be categorized as "average wet".

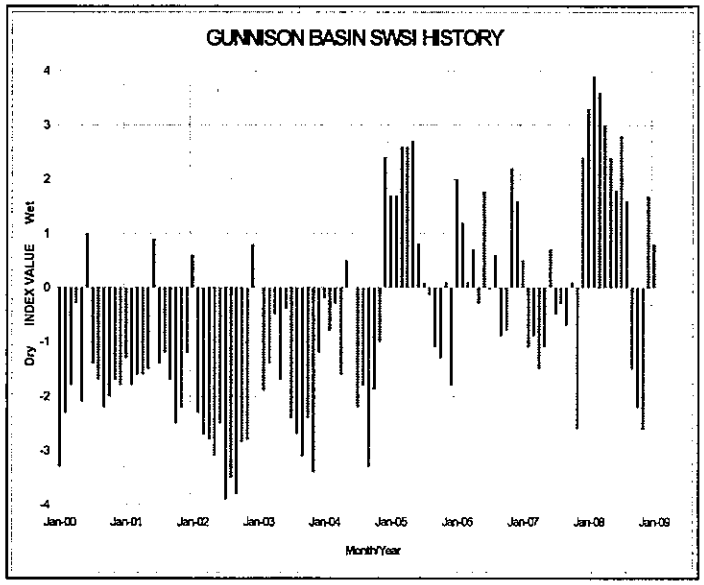
Administrative/Management Concerns

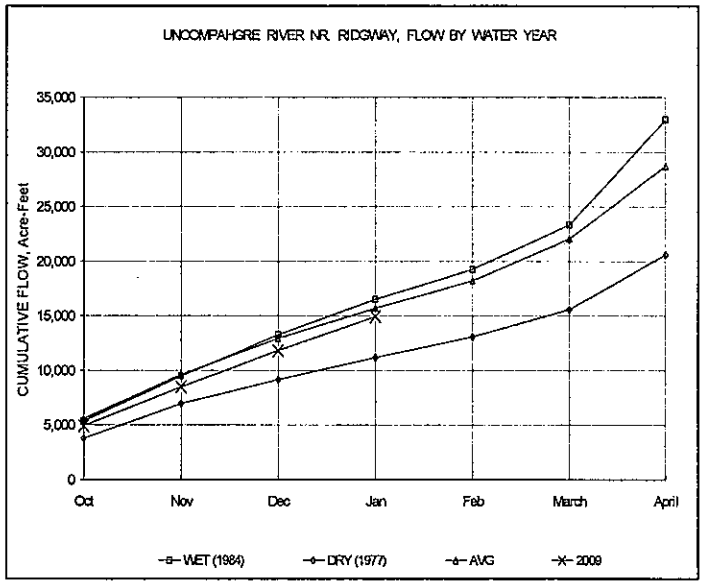
Due to the higher than average inflow rates to the Aspinall Unit, the Gunnison River below the diversion tunnel is currently flowing at 860 cfs. This rate will most likely change as conditions warrant, primarily as the Bureau of Reclamation responds to the forecasted inflows, demand for peak power generation, and scheduled maintenance activities. Gunnison River flow rates below the diversion tunnel normally run about 500 cfs for this time of the year.

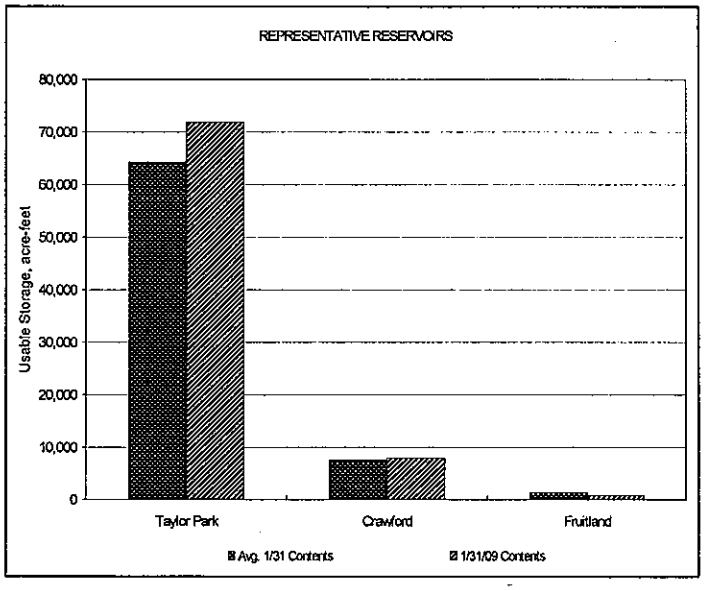
Public Use Impacts

Winter time public recreation, such as skiing and snowmobiling has been very good, and with the better than average accumulations, winter sport enthusiasts should be enjoying their snow activities for couple more months.

Also, farmers in the Uncompahgre Valley typically rely on early releases from Ridgway Reservoir to wet their fields prior to the Gunnison Tunnel being turned on in April. With above average carryover storage in Ridgway reservoir, this year should prove to be a good one for farmers in the Uncompahgre Valley to get a good start on the 2009 growing season.







Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 0.7. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 124% of normal. Flow at the gaging station Colorado River near Dotsero was 1409 cfs, as compared to the long-term average of 1016 cfs. Storage in Green Mountain, Ruedi, and Williams Fork reservoirs totaled 107% of normal as of the end of January.

Outlook

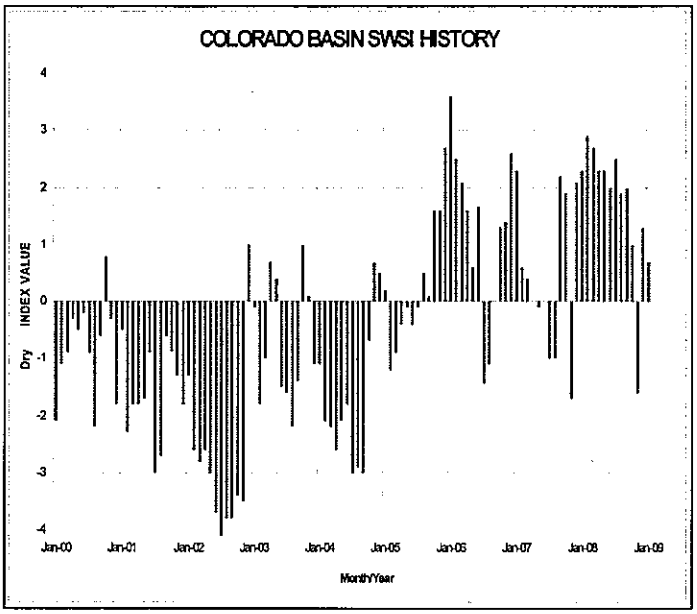
Lack of precipitation during the month of January lowered Upper Colorado Basin precipitation basin wide snow water equivalent average from 127 to 118 percent as of February 1st. Colorado River flows at Glenwood Springs varied, but remained close to average over the month of January.

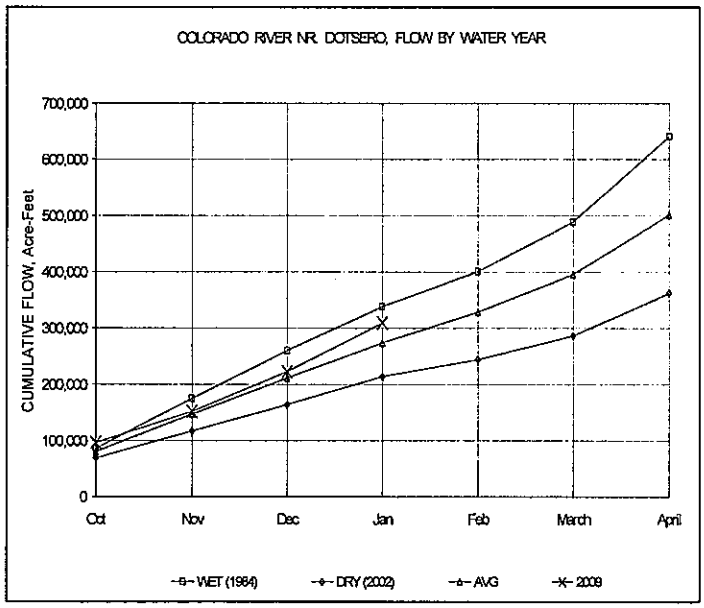
Administrative/Management Concerns

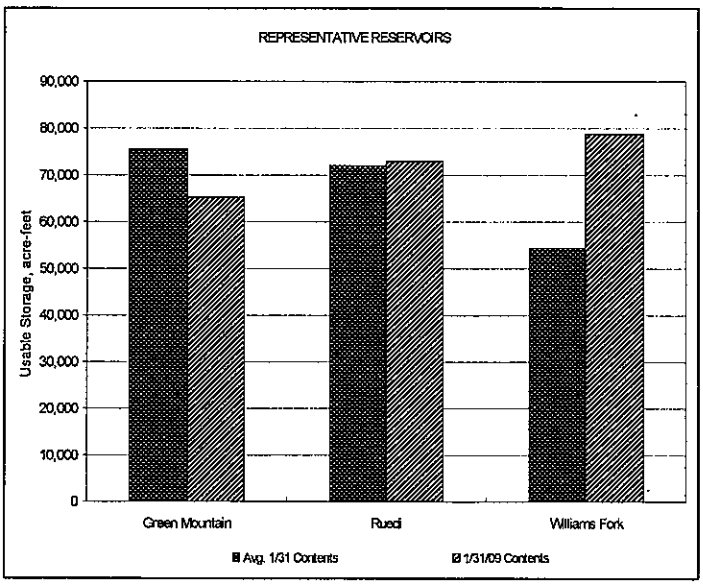
Green Mountain Reservoir inflow and CBT Project depletions decreased considerably resulting in slight decrease in reservoir releases in late January. Division 5 is searching for cooperators to help fund upgrades to seasonal gages on the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers. Installation of a cableway at the Roaring Fork River gage above the confluence with the Fryingpan River, would facilitate rating development at high flows which would benefit emergency flood warning response for communities between Basalt and Glenwood Springs.

Public Use Impacts

The City of Glenwood Springs has indefinitely postponed its decision to seek a water right associated with the whitewater park (constructed last winter/spring), citing declining revenues to fund the estimated $500,000 cost. A budget of $600,000 is committed this year for parking, restrooms, and spectator accommodations.

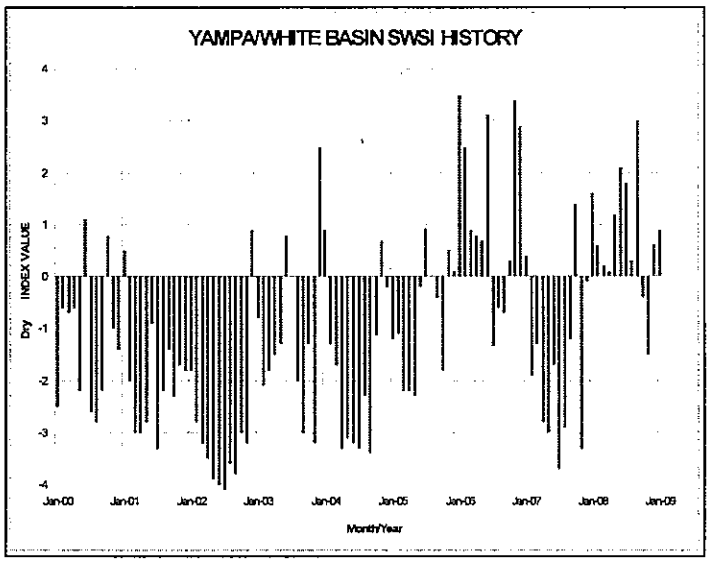


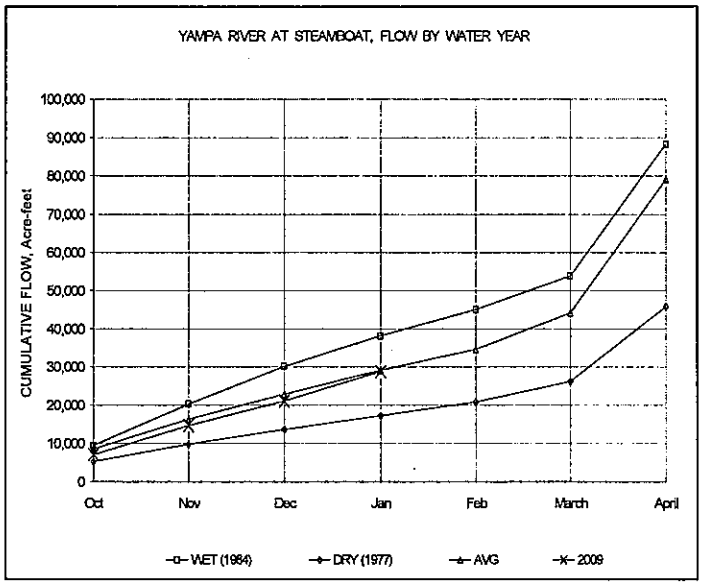




Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 0.9. Flow at the gauging station Yampa River at Steamboat was 125 cfs, as compared to the long-term average of 101 cfs. In January, precipitation increased dramatically in the Yampa, White, and North Platte River basins. Precipitation for the month, as measured at the SNOTEL sites operated by the NRCS, was reported at approximately 153% of average for the Yampa/White River basin and 140% of average for the North Platte River basin. Precipitation for the combined Yampa, White, and North Platte River basins was reported at approximately 144% of average for the month of January and 108% of average for the water year to-date. The snow water equivalent (SWE) as of January 31, 2009 for the Yampa and White River basins was 114% of average and for the Laramie and North Platte River basins was 107% of average. For the individual Division 6 basins, the snowpack at the end of the month was 107% of average for the North Platte River basin, 115% of average for the Yampa River basin, and 113% of average for the White River basin. NRCS predicts near average to above average spring and summer streamflows in the Yampa, White, and North Platte River basins. The latest runoff forecasts from the NRCS for the April through July period are 100% of average for the North Platte River at Northgate, 108% of average for the Yampa River near Maybell, 110% of average for the Little Snake River near Lily, and 105% of average for the White River near Meeker. Due to the cold night temperatures, many of the Division 6 stream gages are either closed for the winter season or currently ice-affected.





Outlook

Fish Creek Reservoir storage level decreased slightly in January and was reported at approximately 60% of capacity at the end of the month. Elkhead Creek Reservoir level increased slightly during the month to approximately 77% of its' enlarged capacity. Yamcolo Reservoir storage level also increased in January and the reservoir was at approximately 85% of capacity at the end of the month. Water stored in Fish Creek Reservoir is used primarily for municipal purposes, Yamcolo Reservoir for irrigation purposes, and Elkhead Creek Reservoir for municipal, industrial, recreation, and fish recovery releases.

Administrative/Management Concerns

The second year of the fish recovery release from Elkhead Creek Reservoir was completed successfully and data collected during the release are being compiled and reviewed by participating agencies. The program was directed by the Colorado River District, on behalf of the Recovery Program and Division 6 is responsible for protecting this water through the Yampa River critical habitat reach (from Craig to the confluence with the Green River at Echo Park).

Public Use Impacts

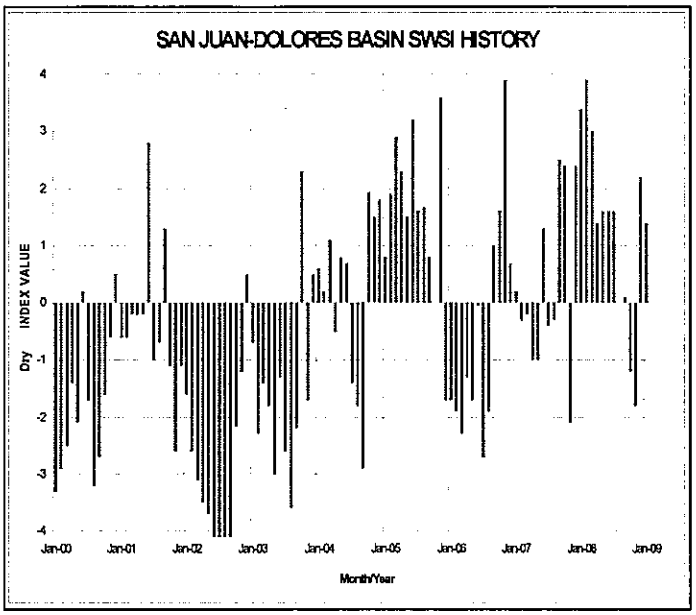
Many area reservoirs are frozen with good ice-fishing reported. The snowpack at the ski area continued to increase over the month and many powder days were enjoyed by skiers and boarders.

Basinwide Conditions Assessment

The SWSI value for the month was 1.4. The Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that February 1 snowpack is 117% of normal.

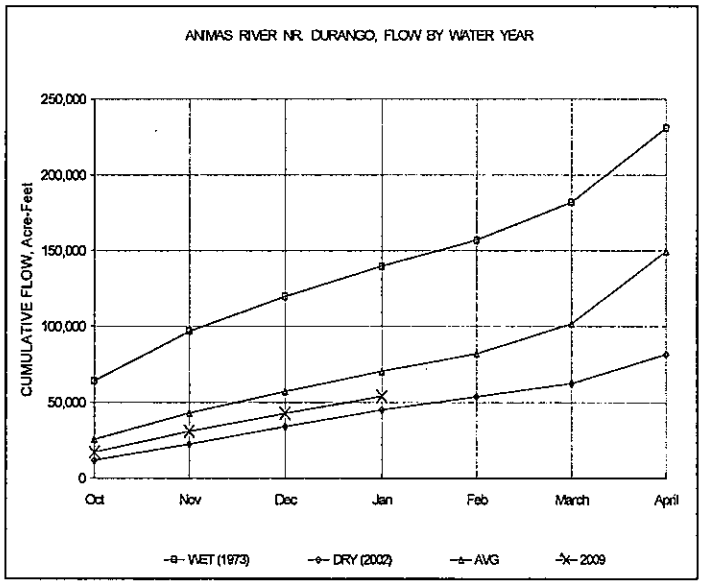
Flows at the Animas River at Durango averaged 183 cfs (90% of average). The Dolores River at Dolores was estimated to have averaged 46 cfs (87% of average). The La Plata River at Hesperus averaged 5.3 cfs (77% of average). Precipitation in Durango was 0.92 inches for January which is below the 30-year average of 1.71 inches. Precipitation to date in Durango, for the water year, is 8.22 inches which is above the average of 6.77 inches. Temperatures were near normal for the month. Durango was 0.7° above its 30-year average high and 1.6° below the 30-year average low.

At the end of the month Vallecito Reservoir contained 74,020 acre-feet compared to its normal contents of 54,121 acre-feet (137% of normal). McPhee Reservoir was up to 277,719 acre-feet compared to its normal contents of 257,870 acre-feet (108% of normal), while Lemon Reservoir was up to 18,480 acre-feet as compared to its normal content of 19,761 acre-feet (94% of normal).



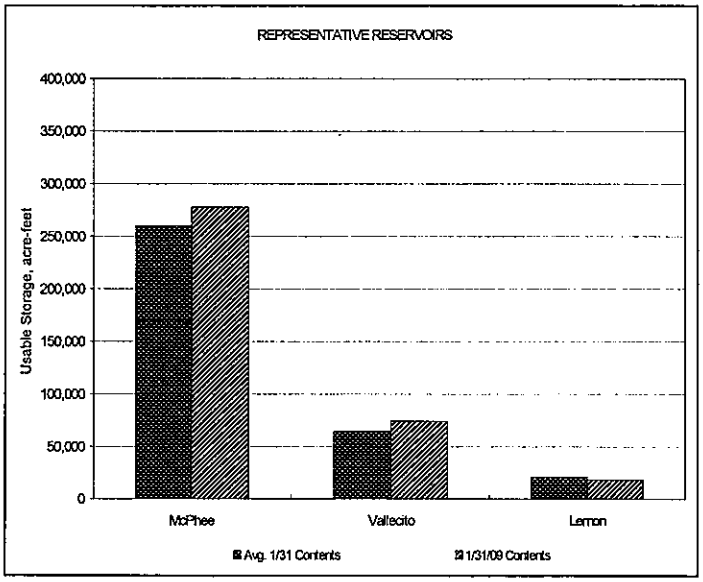
Outlook

Not as many storms hit the basin this month but we were still able to maintain above average snow-water-equivalent for the month. At the beginning of January the NRCS was reporting a snow-water-equivalent for the San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan River basins at 136% of average. By the end of January the value had declined to 117% of average.



Administrative/Management Concerns

The USBR is planning to begin filling Ridges Basin Reservoir in the spring of 2009. The reservoir is expected to take up to two years to fill depending on available water supplies and pumping plant capacity. The USBR has also begun the search for an entity to operate the facility.



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