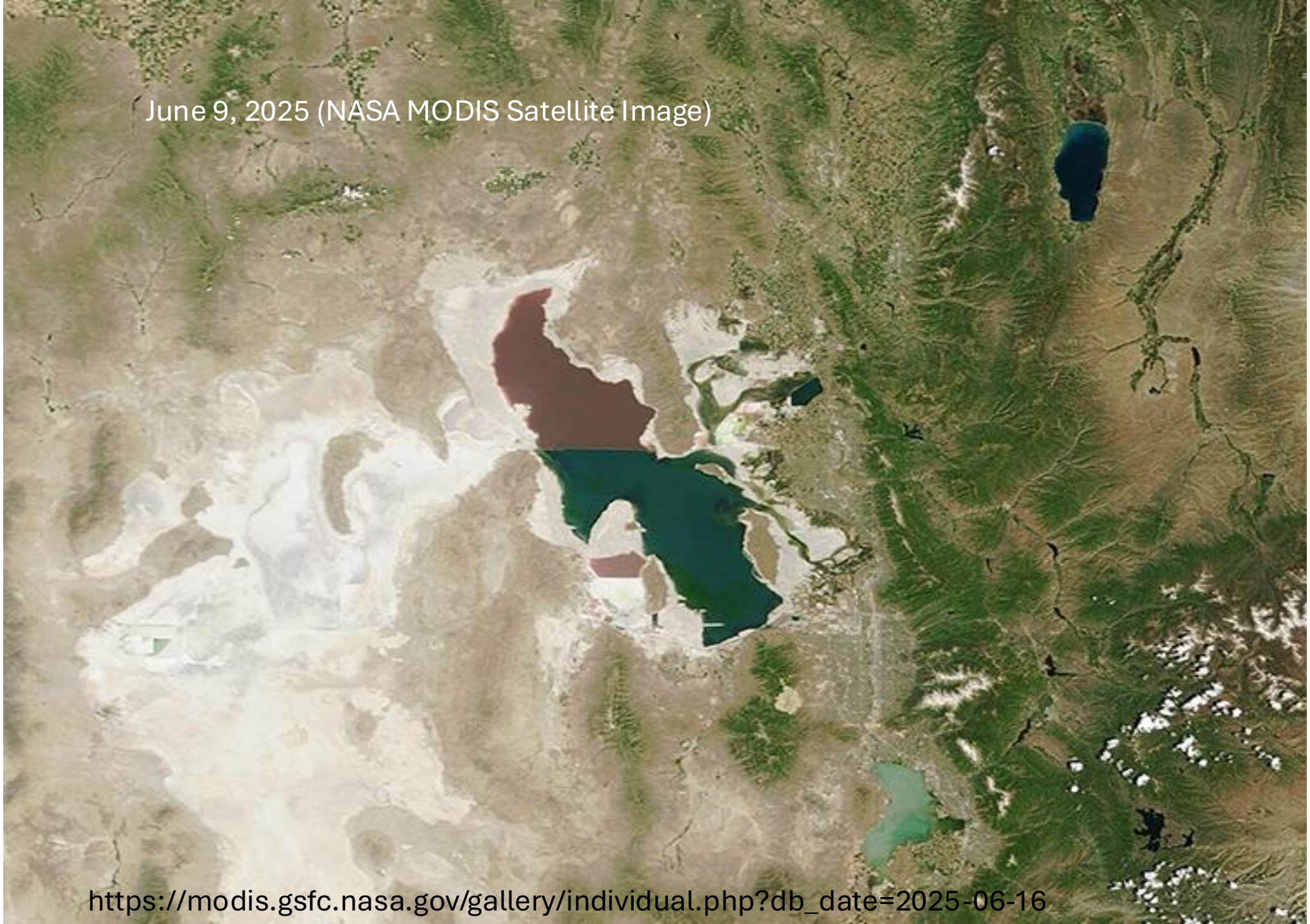
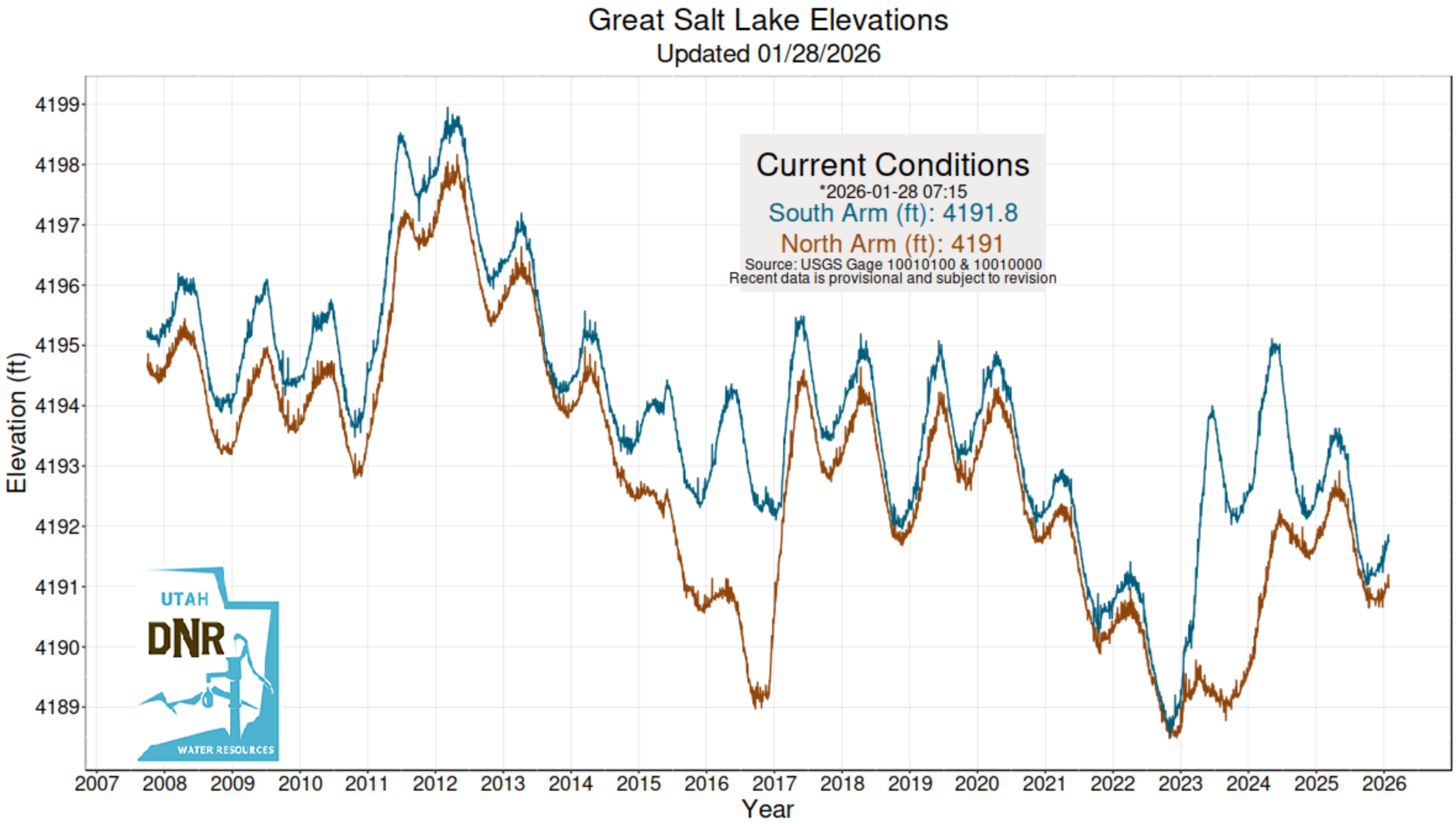
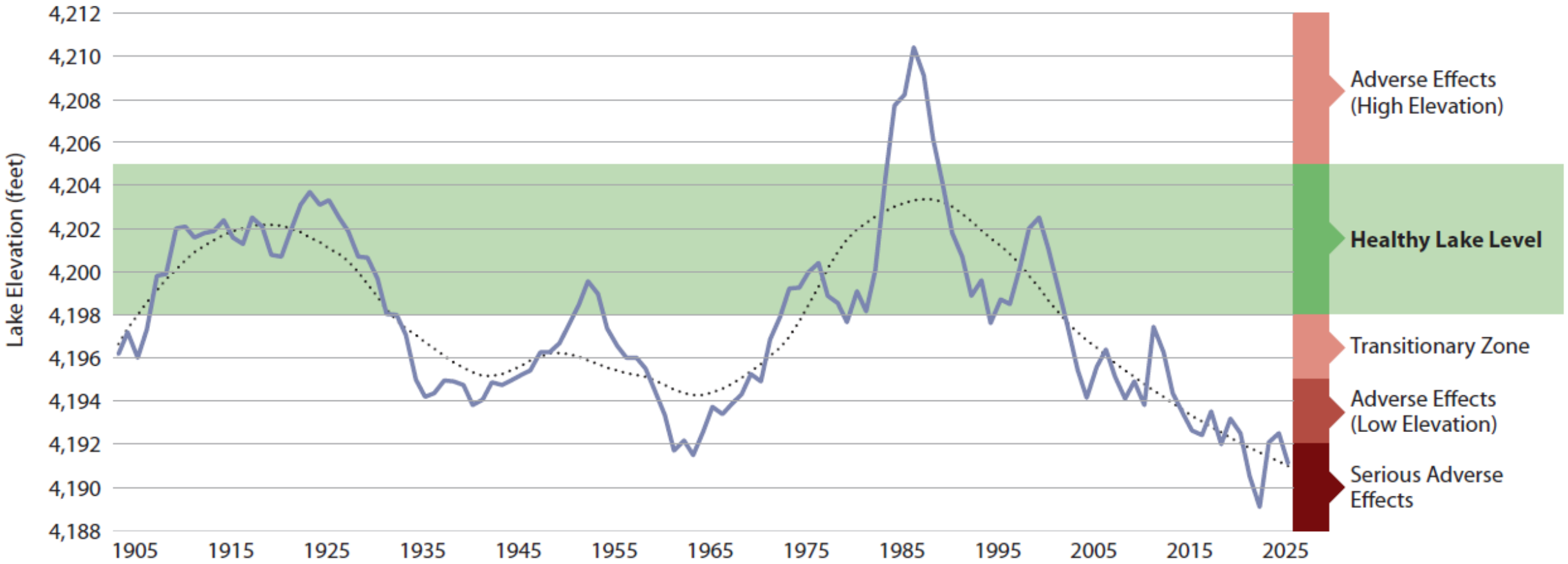
Great Salt Lake Commissioner's Office

2026 Appropriations Update


June 9, 2025 (NASA MODIS Satellite Image)
https://modis.gsfc.nasa.gov/gallery/individual.php?db_date=2025-06-16

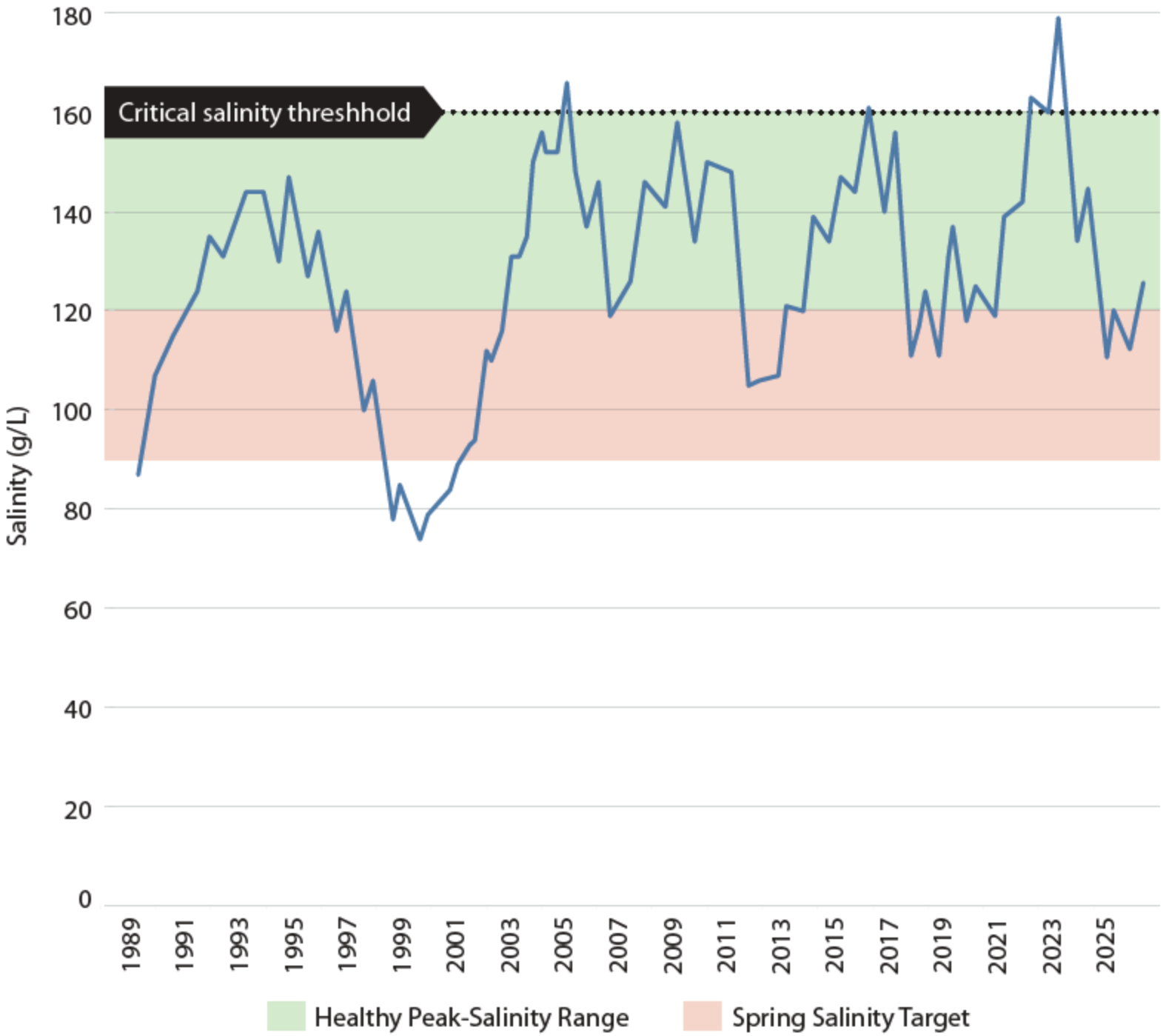

Great Salt Lake Elevations
Updated 01/28/2026
Current Conditions
*2026-01-28 07:15
South Arm (ft): 4191.8
North Arm (ft): 4191
Source: USGS Gage 10010100 & 10010000
Recent data is provisional and subject to revision
Elevation (ft)
4199
4198
4197
4196
4195
4194
4193
4192
4191
4190
4189
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
Year
UTAH
DNR
WATER RESOURCES

Elevation of Great Salt Lake South Arm, 1903-2025 Water-year-end Elevation

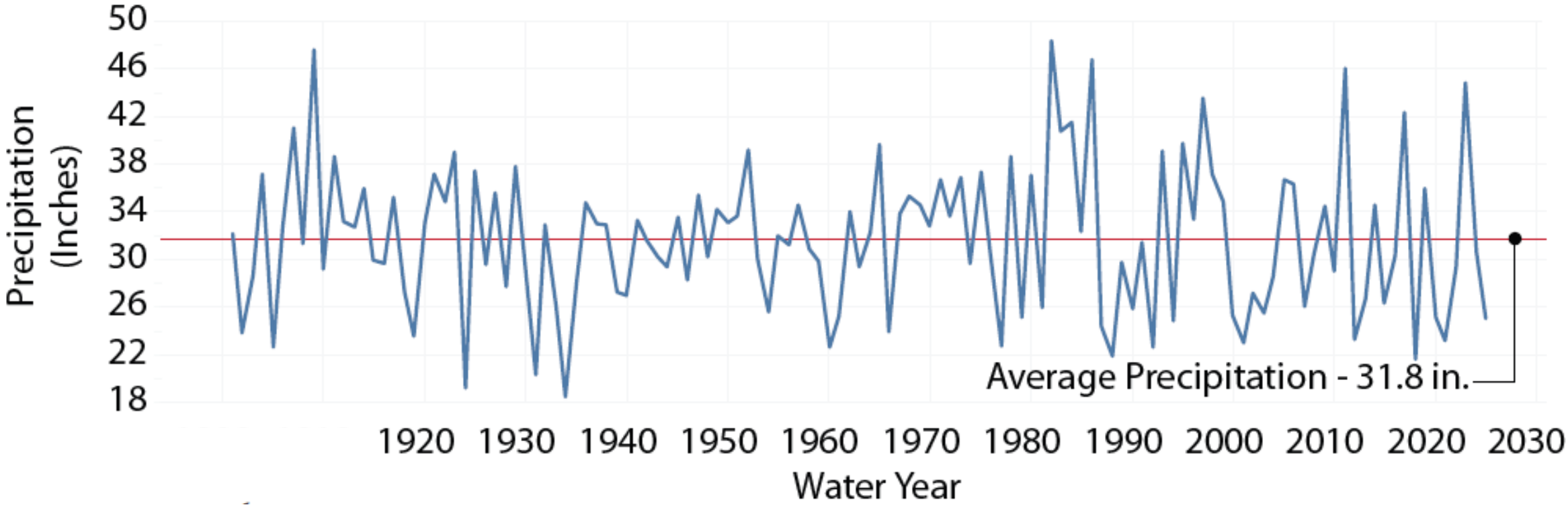


Good News:

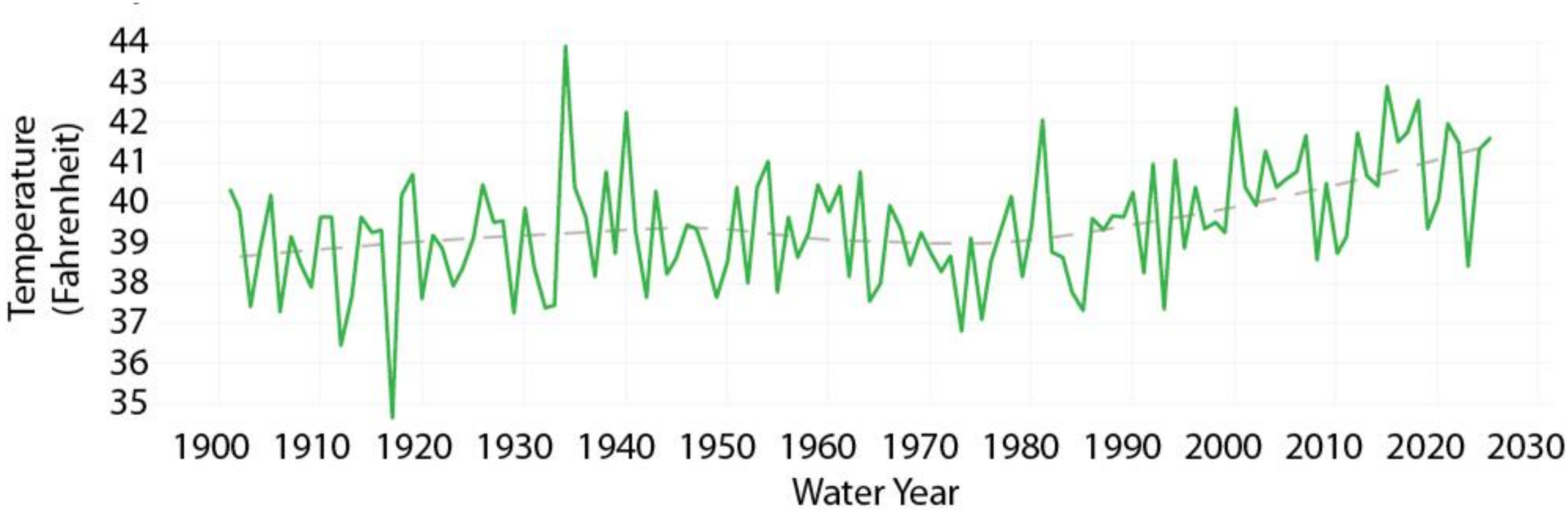
Salinity of Great Salt Lake South Arm, 1989-2025



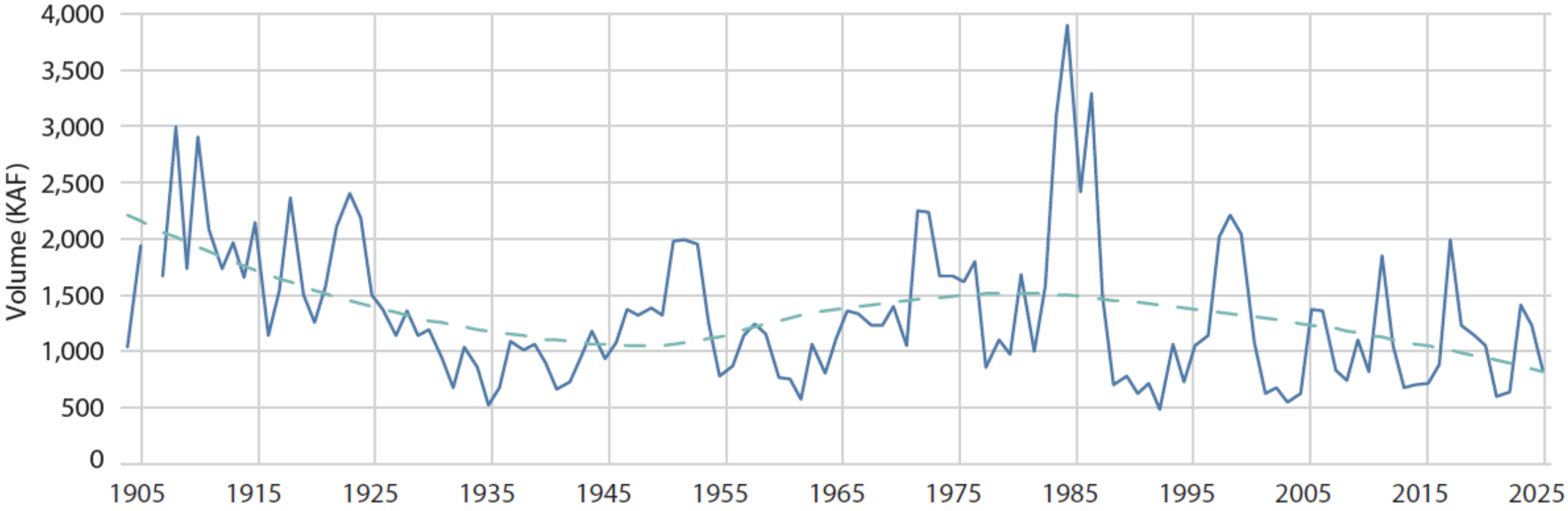
Historical **Precipitation** in Great Salt Lake Headwaters, 1901-2025



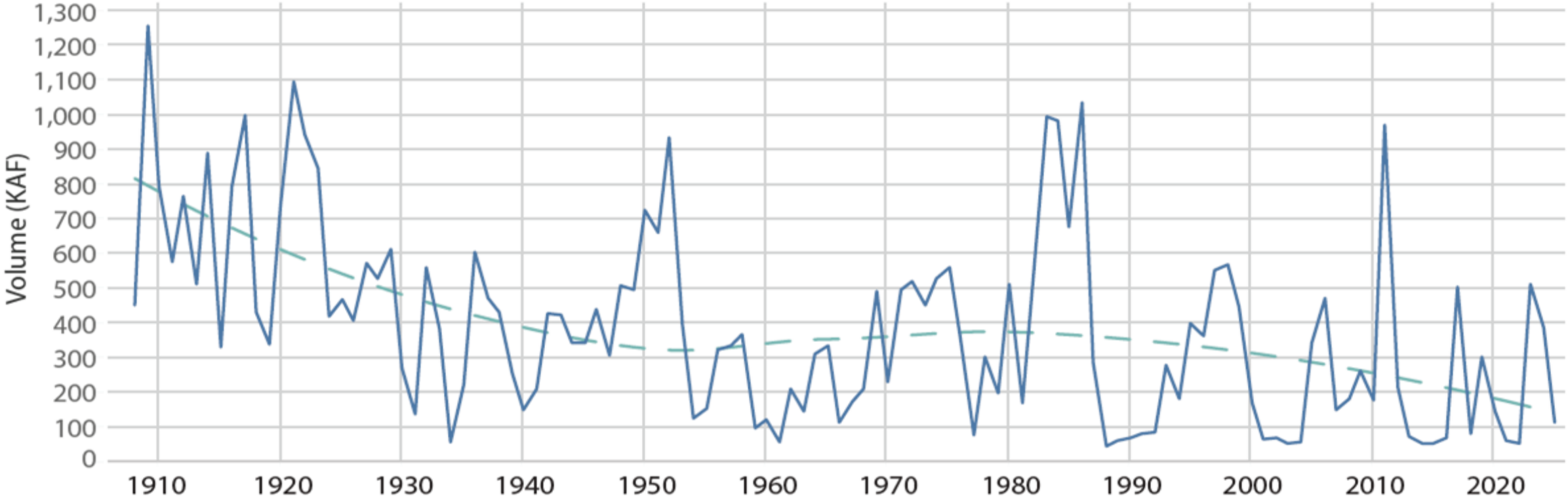
Historical **Air Temperature** in Great Salt Lake Headwaters, 1901-2025



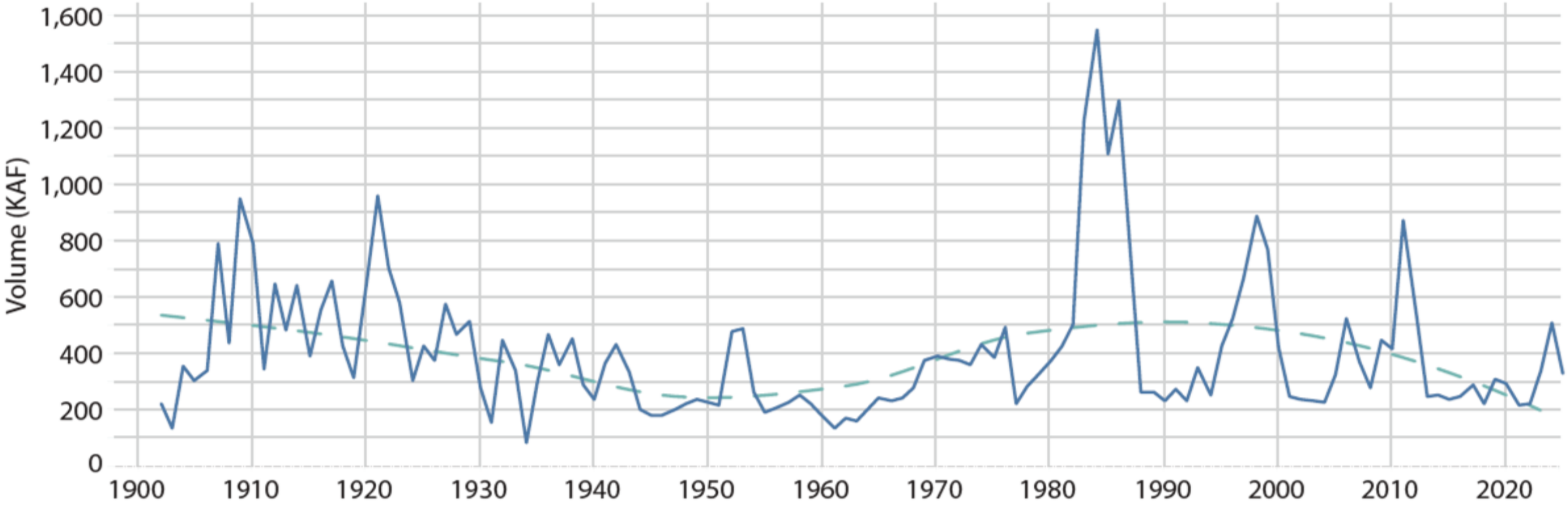
Bear River Streamflow, 1903-2025



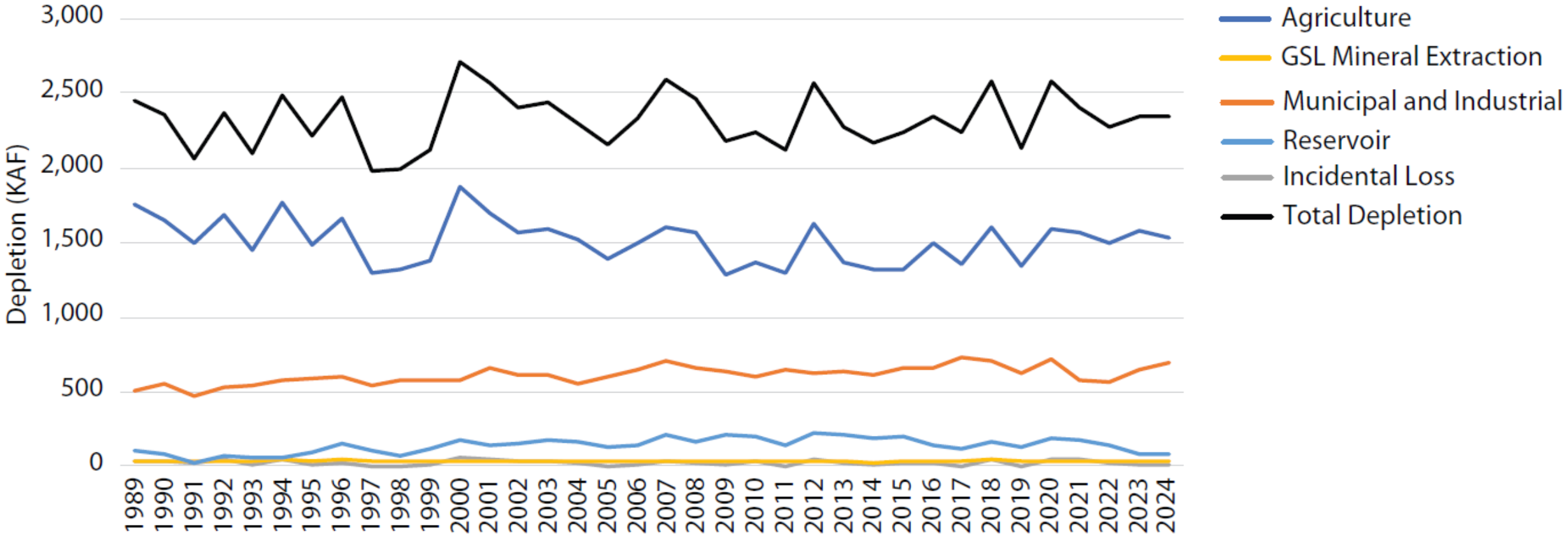
Weber River Streamflow, 1908-2025



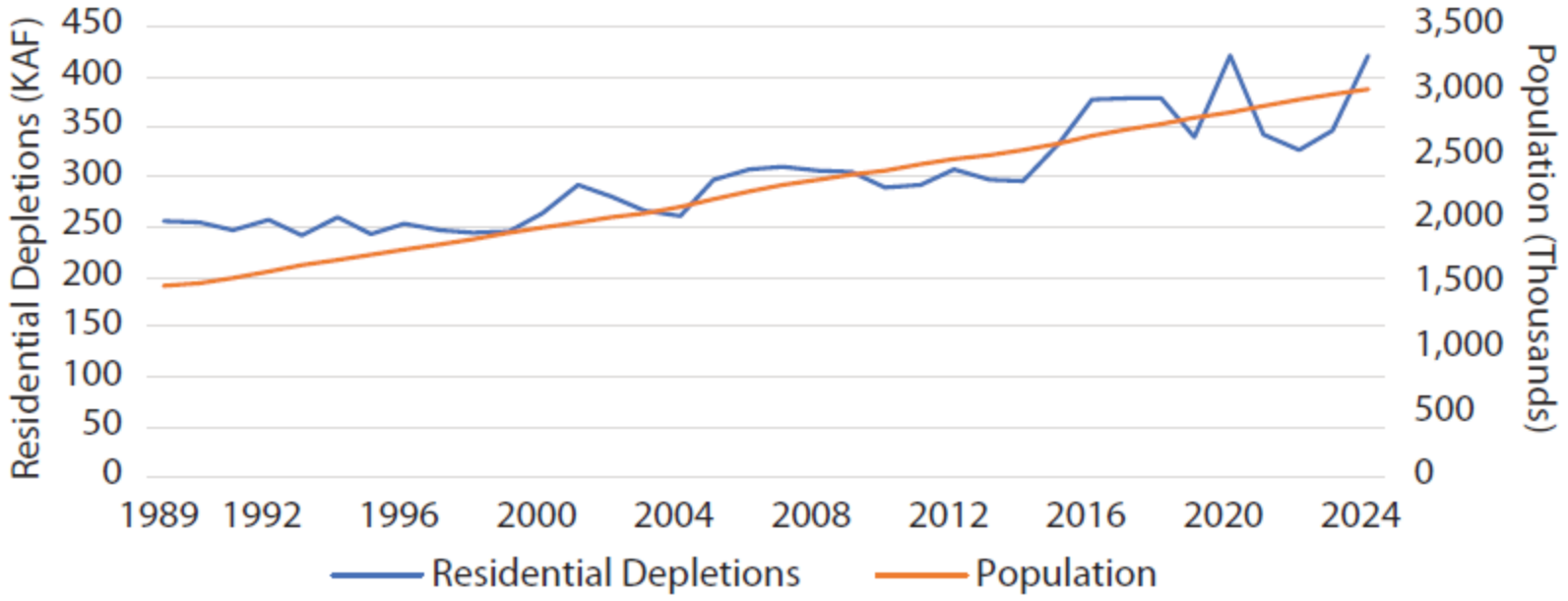
Jordan River Streamflow, 1902-2025

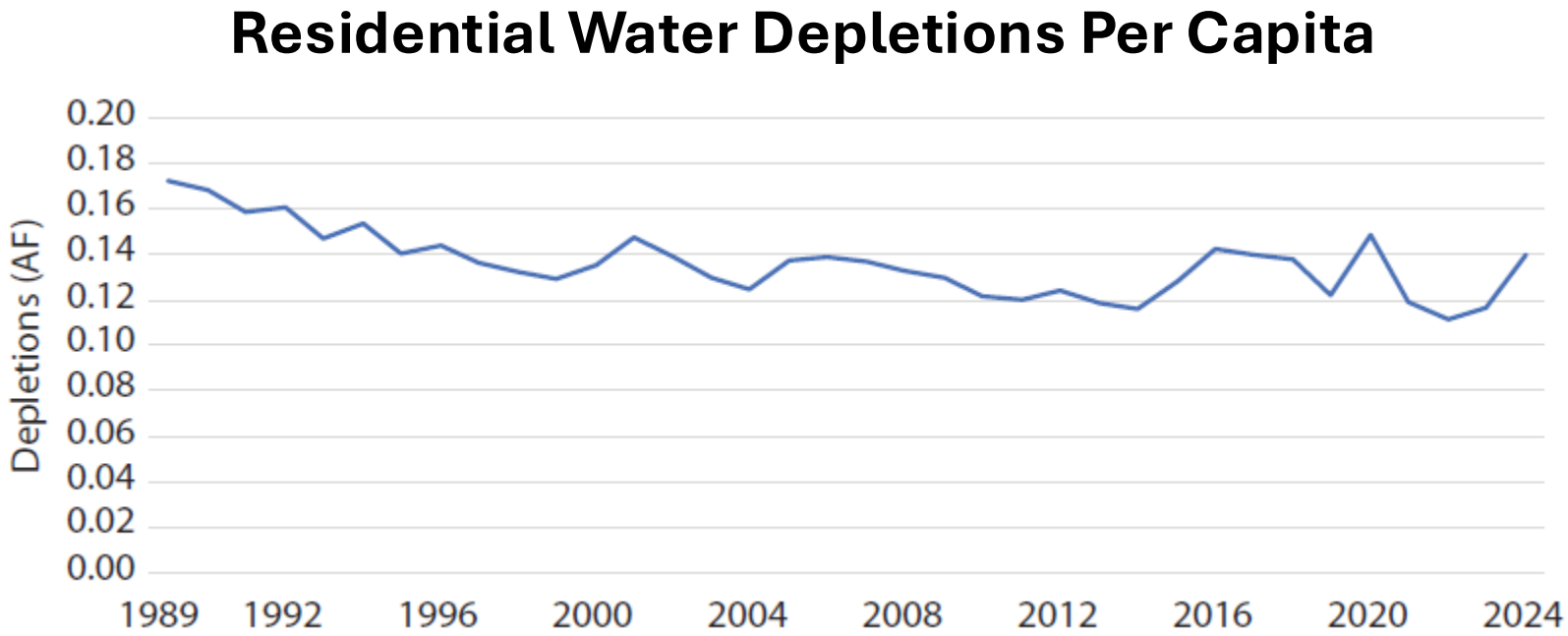


Human Water Depletions by Type, 1989-2024

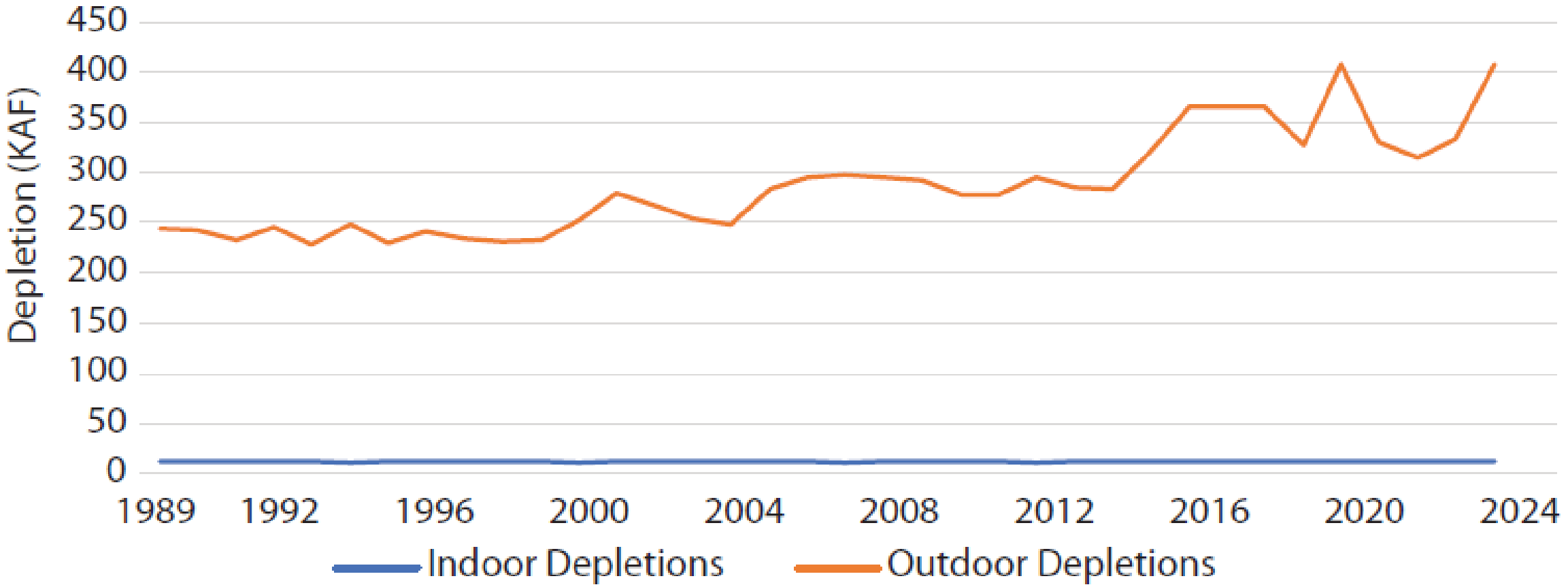


Residential Depletions and Population, 1989-2024





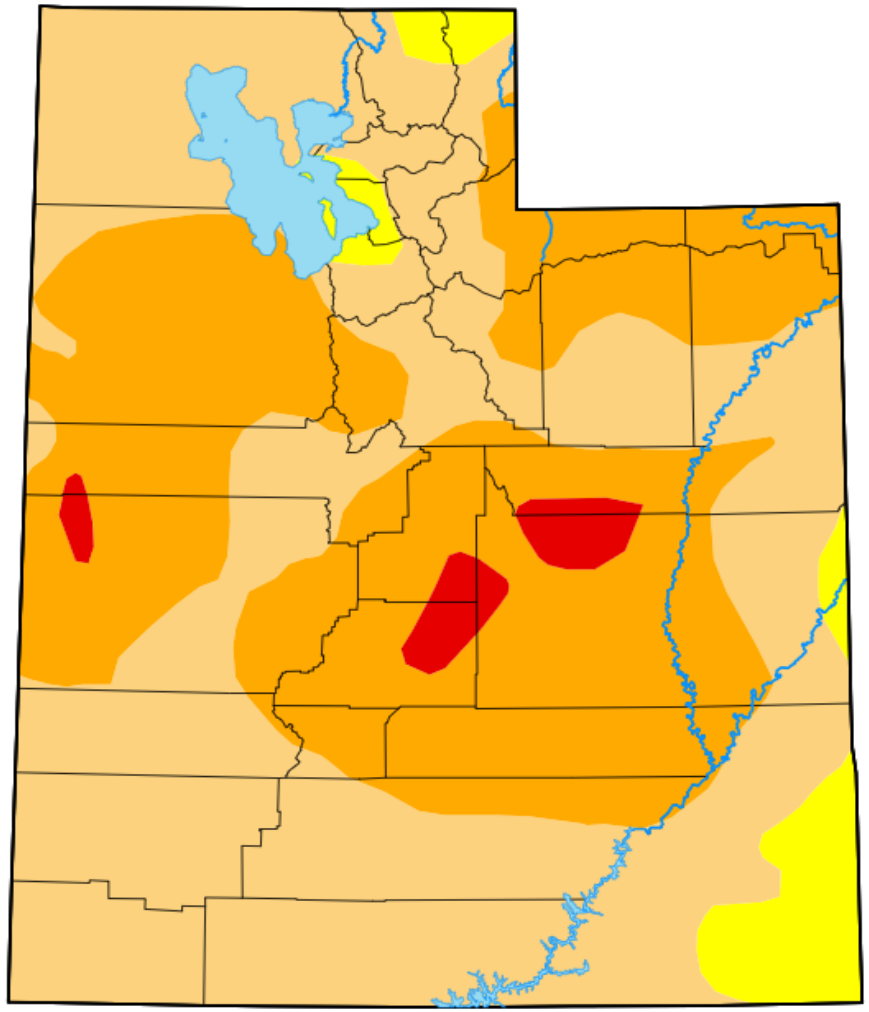
Residential Indoor and Outdoor Depletions



Emerging Concerns

Concern
Drought and extremely low snowpack
Exposed lakebed
Endangered Species Listing Petition
Litigation
Exposed Microbialites

Utah



Map released: Thurs. January 22, 2026

Data valid: January 20, 2026 at 7 a.m. EST

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

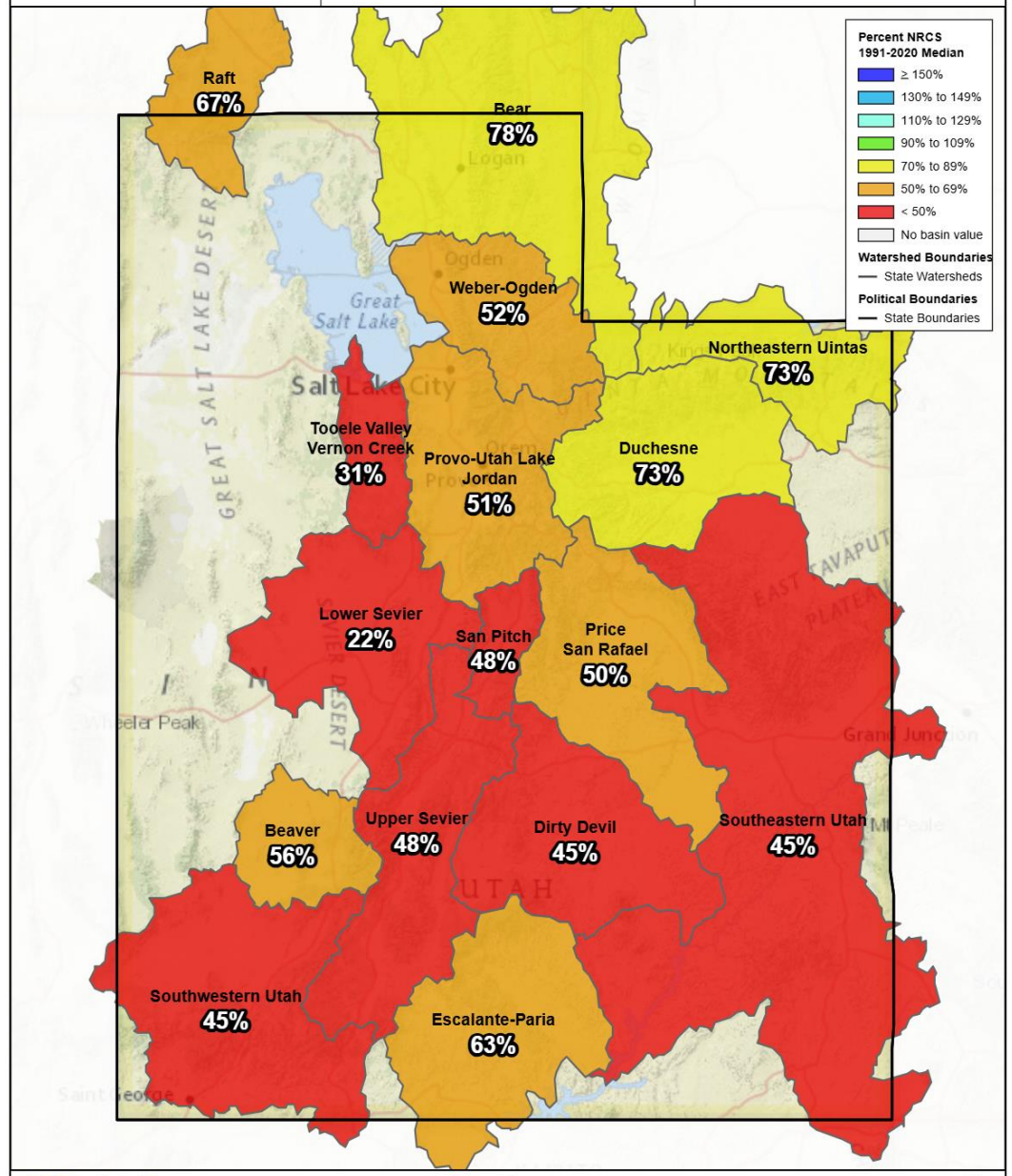
United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

Brad Rippey, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

Lindsay Johnson, National Drought Mitigation Center

Snow Water Equivalent	Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median	January 27, 2026, end of day



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

N

0 10 20 40 60 80 100 Miles

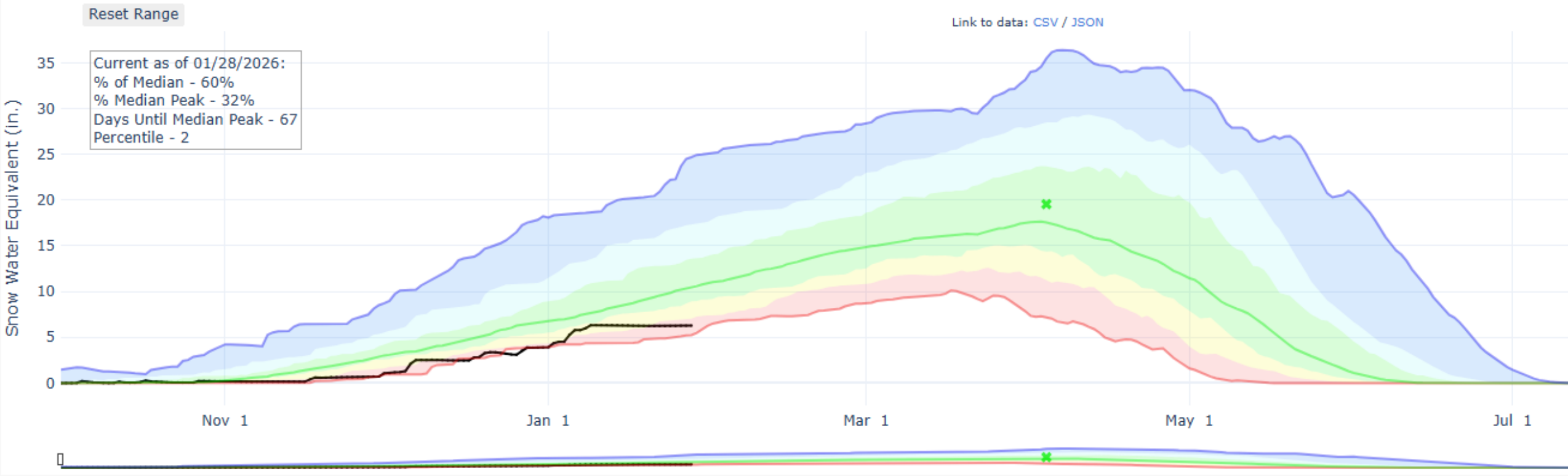
Created 1-28-2026

Natural Resources Conservation Service

AWS Plot | SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN GREAT SALT LAKE

This page can auto-populate with URL encoded arguments. Click here for more information.

Add Title | Active Only | Greyscale Stats. | Clear Controls



Exposed Lakebed—Bear River

Exposed Lakebed—Farmington Bay

ESA Listing Petition

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilson%27s_phalarope#/media/File:Wilson's_Phalarope,_Oregon_03_(cropped).jpg

Litigation

https://mybestplace.com/uploads/2024/8/Mono-Lake-California-USA-COVER-1.jpg

Decreased Ecologic Functions

Great Salt Lake Strategic Plan

Better coordinating efforts

Best available science

Getting more water to the lake

Managing salinity, dust, and water quality

GSL Strategic Plan Year 1:

Better Coordinating Efforts on the Lake

- **State agencies**
  Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan
- **Federal government**
  $50 million from Bureau of Reclamation

GSL Strategic Plan:

Best Available Science

Contracted Entity	Description
Utah State University	Opportunities and Costs for Ag Water Optimization
Hansen, Allen and Luce	Opportunities and Costs for M&I Conservation
Utah State University	Functional Inflows
University of Utah and Division of Water Resources	Options and Cost for GSL Dust Control
Division of Wildlife Resources	Great Salt Lake Shorebird Survey

GSL Strategic Plan:

Monitoring and Management

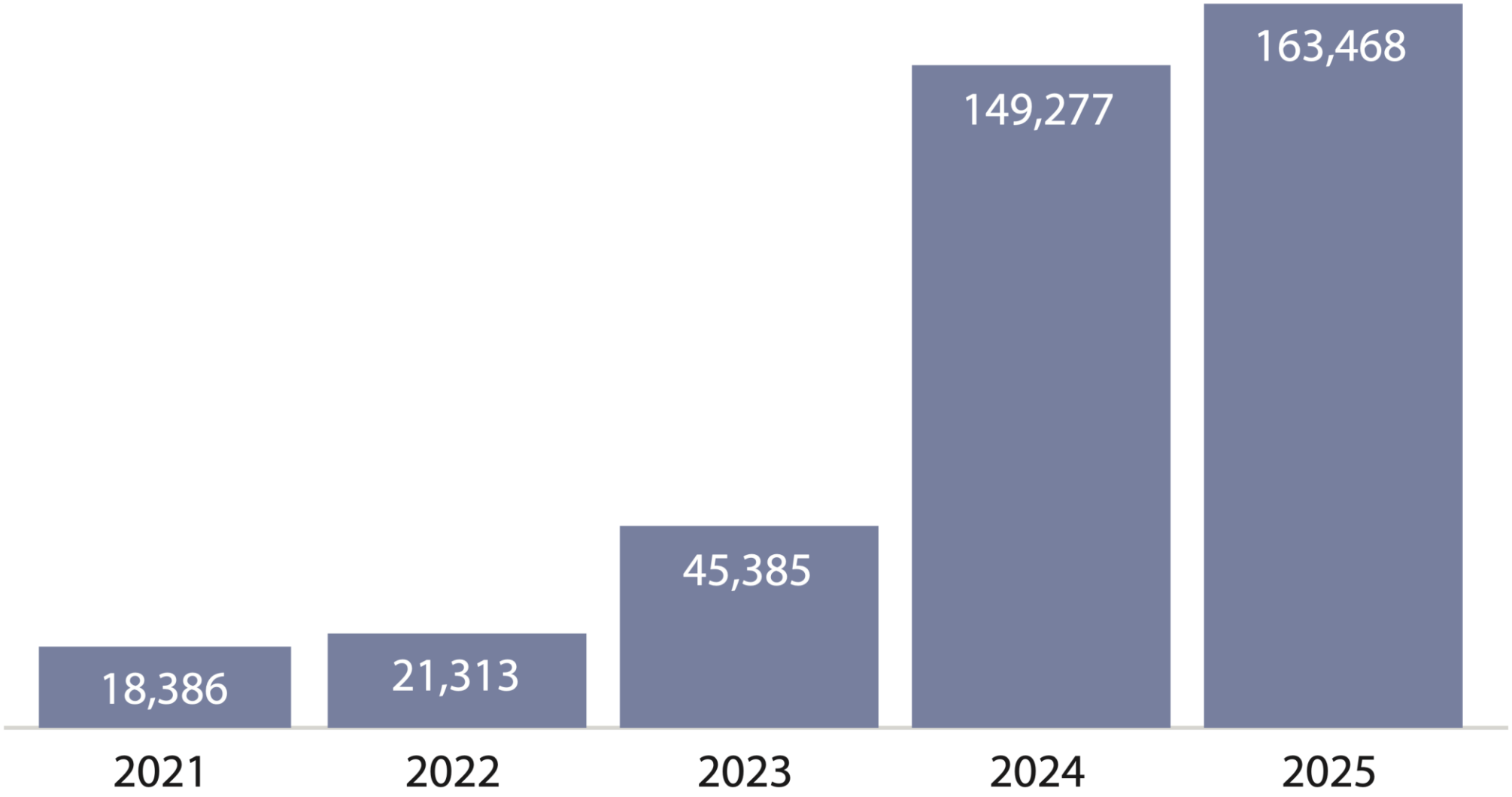
Contracted Entity	Description
Department of Environmental Quality	Utah Dust Observation and Research Network
Div. Of Water Resources and Utah Geologic Survey	Great Salt Lake Groundwater Monitoring
Div. Of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands	Phragmites Mitigation and Management
Utah Geologic Survey	Bathymetric Mapping of GSL

GSL Strategic Plan:

Getting Water to the Lake

Stakeholder Partnership	Description
GSL Trust Council	Coordinating ongoing leasing efforts 163,468 Acre Feet delivered to the Lake
UDAF and Farm Bureau	Developing Agricultural Water Leasing Program (HB 410)
Water Districts	Getting Stored Water to the Lake
Private Canal Companies	Change Applications and Shareholder Leasing Opportunities

Figure 2: Water Dedicated and Delivered to Great Salt Lake in Acre-feet, 2021-2025



GSL Strategic Plan:

Additional Key Efforts

Stakeholder	Description
State Engineer	Great Salt Lake Distribution Management Plan
Mineral Companies	Voluntary agreements to reduce water usage
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	$50 Million in Grant Funding
Coordinating Private Efforts	Great Salt Lake Rising, Great Salt Lake Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, and the Great Salt Lake 2034 Charter

GSL Strategic Plan:

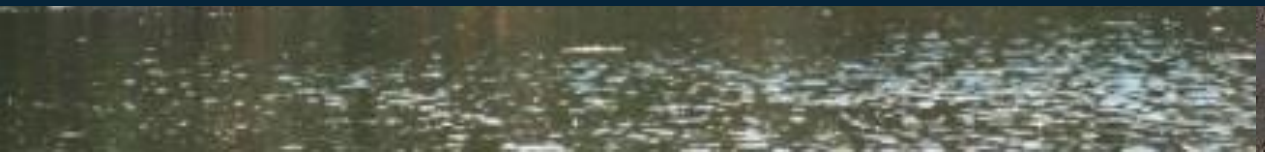
Going Forward in 2026

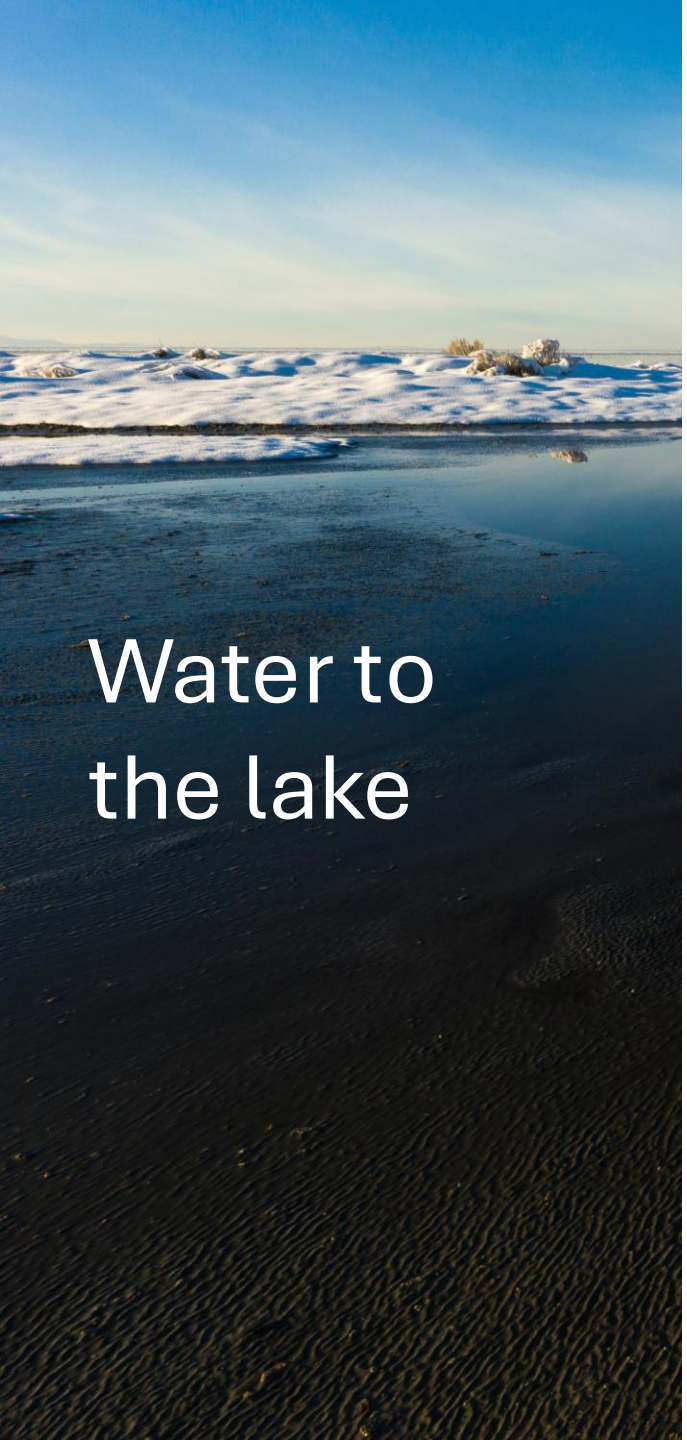
Action	Description
Additional Ag Water Leasing	Working with the agricultural community to deliver additional water to the lake—$5 Million
Aggressive Removal of Invasive Species	Working with FFSL and Others to aggressively target phragmites and other invasives
M&I Water Conservation	Working with Cities and Counties to reduce water consumption
Coordinating Private Efforts	Great Salt Lake Rising, Great Salt Lake Alliance, Ducks Unlimited

Agricultural Water Leasing Program

https://img.ksl.com/slc/2956/295651/29565193.jpeg?filter=kslv2/inline_lg

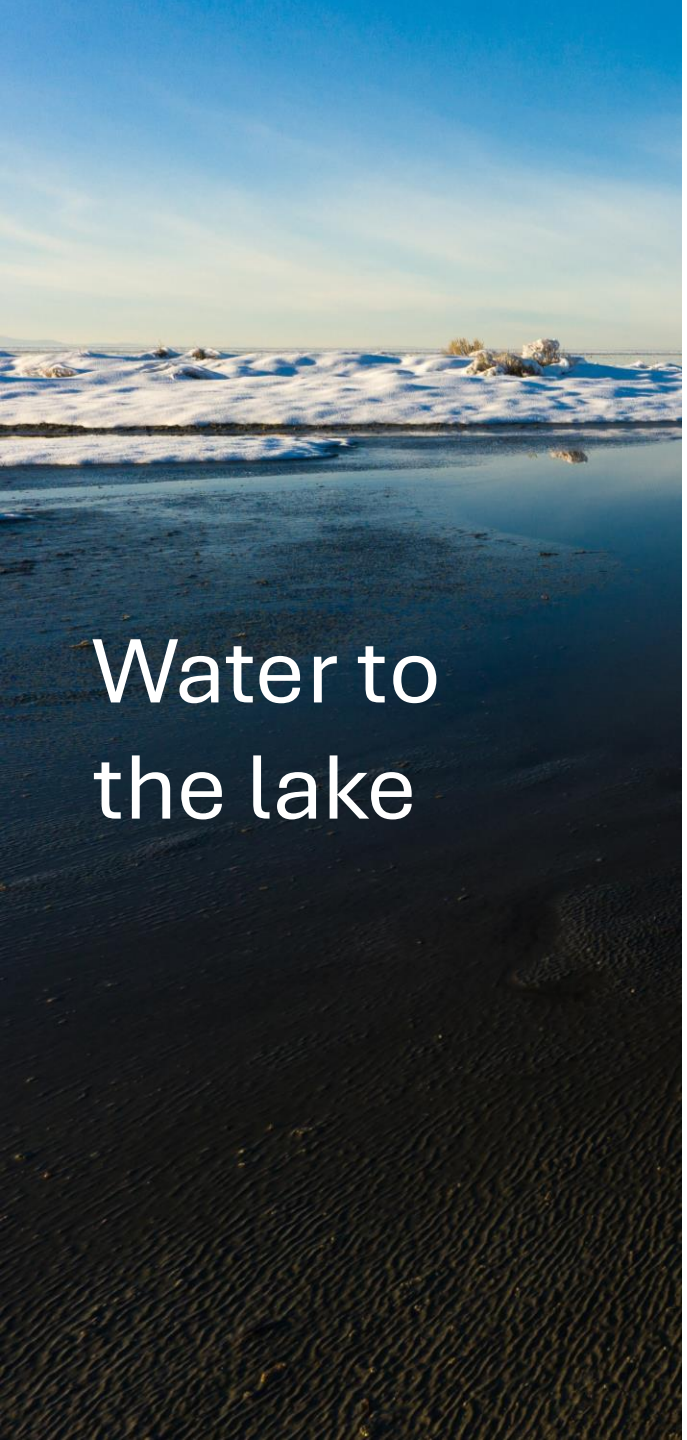
Aggressive removal water-sucking invasive species





Removing invasive species

- 20-40K acres of phragmites still on Great Salt Lake
- 80K acres in surrounding wetlands
- 1 acre of phragmites may consume as much as 4 acre-feet of water/year
- Phragmites removal could save 300 KAF/yr of water
- At $500/acre, cost=$60 million

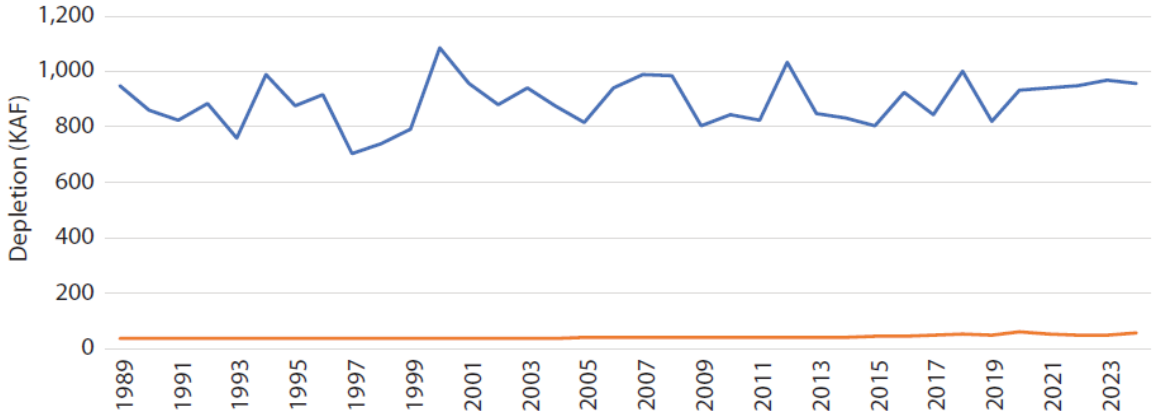


More municipal and industrial conservation

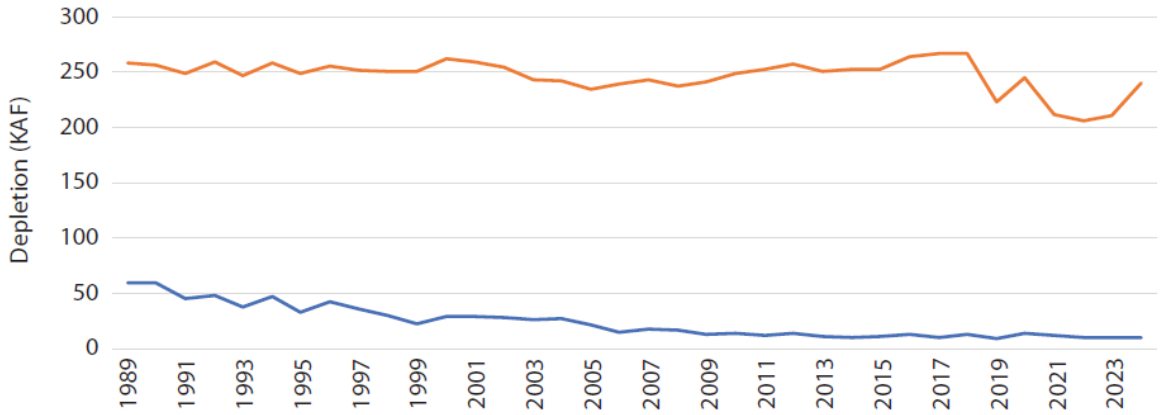
- Reductions in use from secondary metering
- Tiered water rates
- Reductions in watering
- Reductions in less utilized turf

Agriculture and M&I Depletion

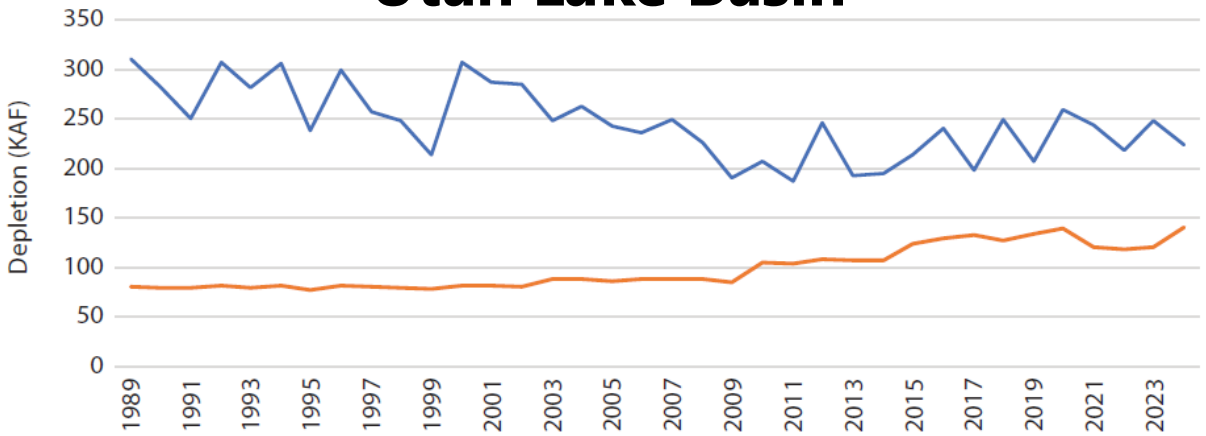
Bear River Basin



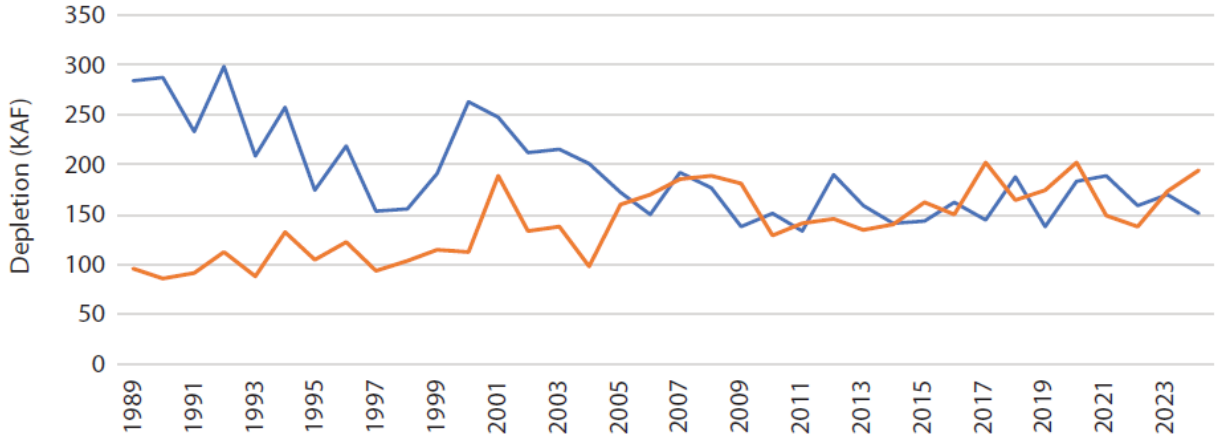
Jordan River Basin



Utah Lake Basin



Weber River Basin

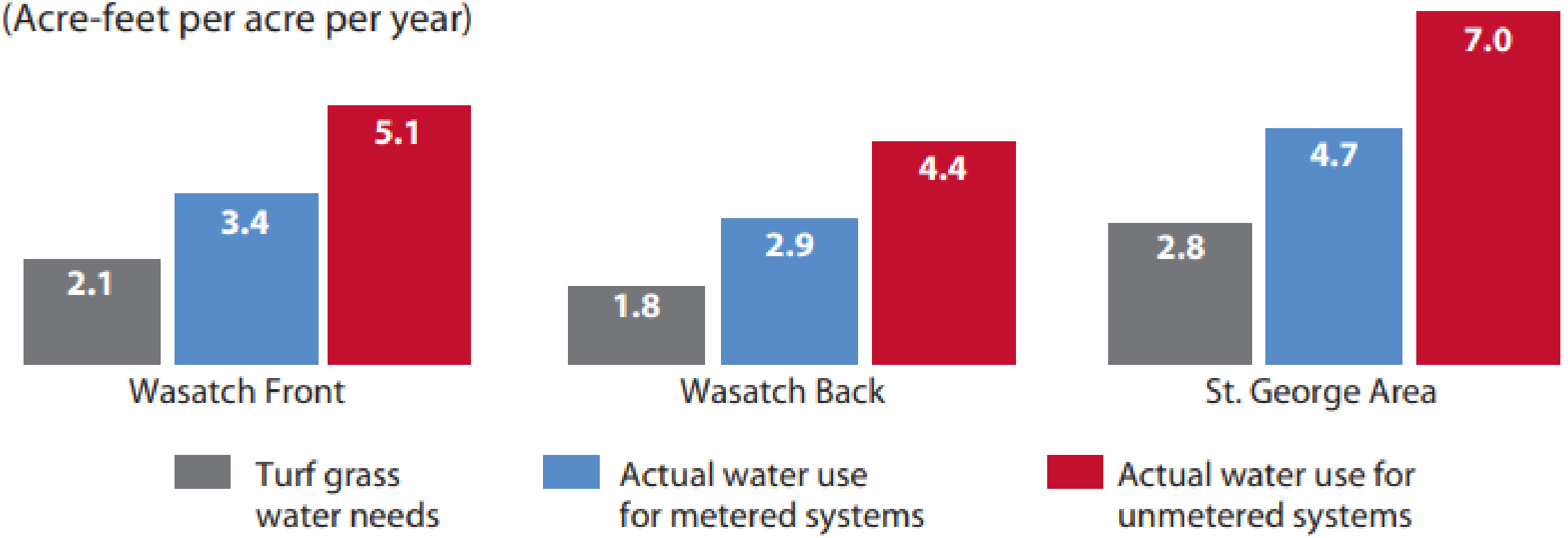


Agriculture Municipal and Industrial

More conservation in municipal/industrial

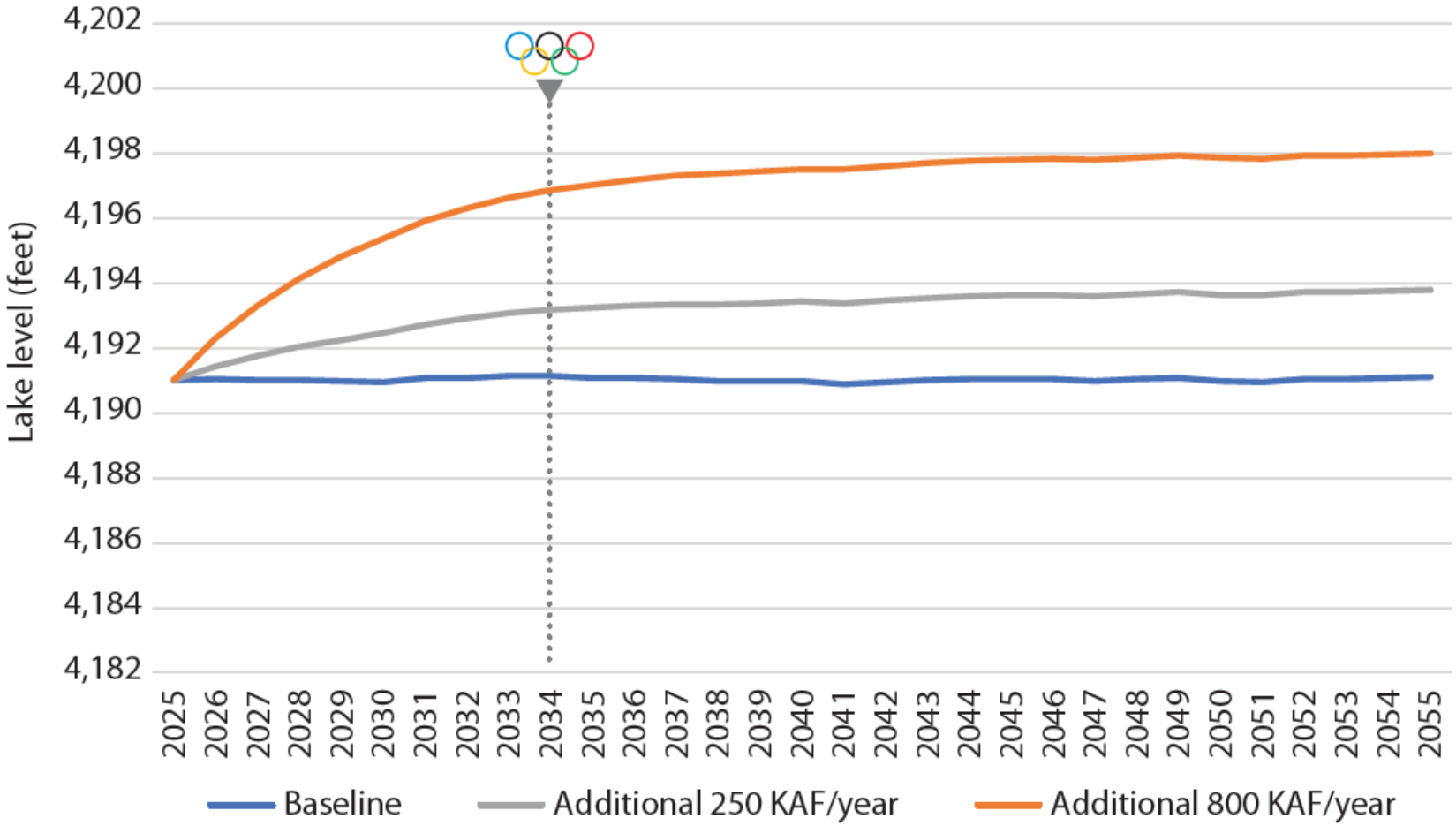
Figure 14: Estimated Lawn Watering Use Compared to Plant Needs, 2018

(Acre-feet per acre per year)



Source: Utah Department of Natural Resources - State of Utah Water Use Data Collection Program Report

The Good News:
Additional Inflows Can Raise Lake Levels



Multiple interests of Great Salt Lake

Dust

Salinity

Habitat

Legal Obligations

Lake Effect Precipitation

Five Critical Criteria for Great Salt Lake Solutions

Ecologically sustainable

Economically viable

Politically possible

Technically feasible

Legally sound


We are all in this together!