

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PLAN



Prepared by



**THE
LANGDON
GROUP**

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the Utah Division of Water Resources

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Work Plan for the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan

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GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN PROJECT SUMMARY



In the 2022 Utah legislative general session, the legislature passed [HB 429](https://le.utah.gov/~2022/bills/static/HB0429.html) (<https://le.utah.gov/~2022/bills/static/HB0429.html>) which directs the Utah Division of Water Resources to develop and implement the Great Salt Lake Watershed Integrated Water Assessment. Later that year, the division was also awarded a Bureau of Reclamation [WaterSMART grant](https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/4396) (<https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/4396>) to develop a Great Salt Lake [Basin Study](https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/bsp/) (<https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/bsp/>). The objectives of HB 429 and the basin study are both to better understand the complex water supply and demand in the Great Salt Lake Basin. Therefore, these two timely projects merged to become the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan (GSLBIP).

The GSLBIP is a collaborative project between multiple federal and state agencies, most notably the Utah Division of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). The goal of this project is to ensure a resilient water supply for Great Salt Lake and all water uses, including people and the environment, throughout the watershed. The GSLBIP will help identify resilient adaptation strategies that align with water use and available water supply in our communities.

COMMUNICATION PLAN PURPOSE

As part of this collaborative project, the division is directed to consult and coordinate with other state, local, regional and federal governmental entities as well as water users and other stakeholders. In addition, the division is responsible for initiating public engagement, developing a shared understanding and facilitating an agreed approach to integrated watershed management.

In order to deliver robust, implementable solutions and policies, the GSLBIP requires an effective communications plan to help achieve its goals. Communicating the efforts of this project, as well as facilitating a collaborative and transparent approach to decision-making is a critical piece of the GSLBIP. Partners and stakeholders need to be consistently and efficiently engaged, and policymakers and the general public must be well-informed. Therefore, this communications plan must:

1. Engage stakeholders
2. Foster collaboration and a shared understanding
3. Raise public awareness

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



GOAL 1: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Objectives:

- a. Forge connections and shared understanding between diverse stakeholders and enhance internal communications across the GSLBIP project team and partners.
- b. Integrate lessons learned from the Situational Assessment completed during the work plan stage and continue to assess stakeholder's perception of the problems and potential solutions.
- c. Coordinate project timelines and objectives with the GSL Commissioner.



GOAL 2: FOSTER COLLABORATION AND A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Objectives:

- a. Utilize the five constituent local watershed councils (Bear, Weber, Jordan, West Desert, and Utah Lake) to involve and ensure a representation of diverse interests that balances and integrates different backgrounds, geographies, and perspectives from throughout GSL's watershed.
- b. Ensure regular and effective communication with priority policymakers in the GSL Basin through resource tours, testimony at committee meetings, individual meetings, and conferences for city and county leadership.
- c. Support and inform the project Steering Committee's efforts to represent the GSLBIP.
- d. Build and communicate consensus around actionable and defensible actions and policy recommendations.

GOAL 3: RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS

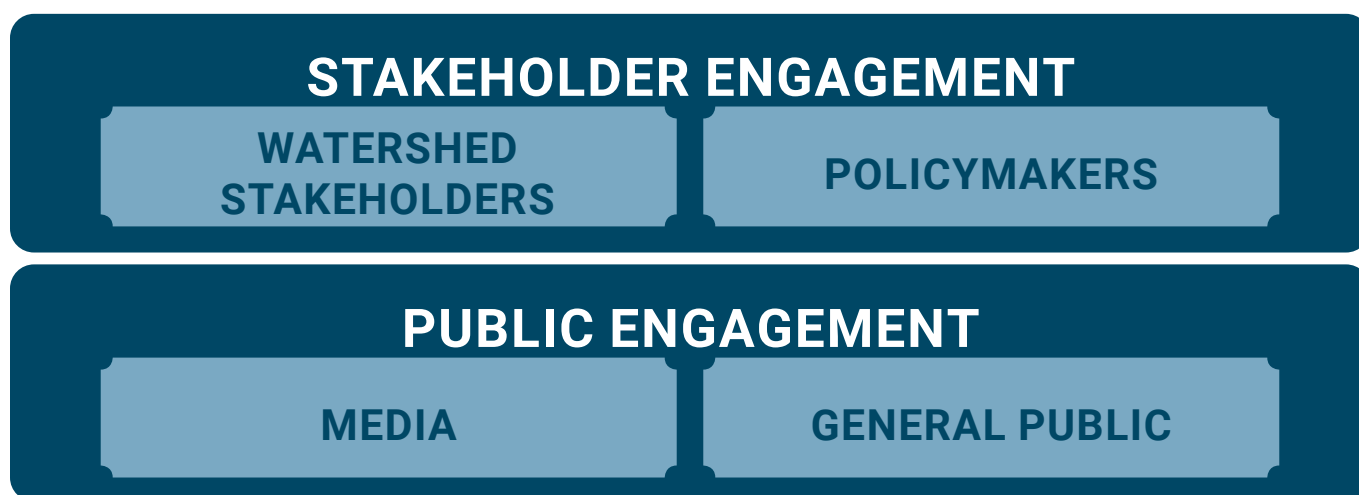
Objectives:

- a. Leverage new opportunities to inform the public about the work of the GSLBIP team, its partners, and the importance of protecting and restoring a resilient water supply in the watershed.
- b. Organize and/or participate in public meetings.
- c. Maintain and provide relevant and timely information via the project web site and division social media platforms.
- d. Prepare press releases at strategic points and milestones.

SUCCESS METRICS

1. Meeting all required benchmarks for federal and state partners
2. Meet all requirements for updating state legislative committees
3. Continued engagement and interest in the GSLBIP by all partners
4. Increased website visits and social media engagement specific to GSLBIP
5. Positive interaction with media and the general public
6. Facilitation of efficient progress is made by connecting all the right partners to do the right work

AUDIENCE



Key stakeholder groups were identified through a complete Situational Assessment performed by the consultant team comprised of Jacobs and the Langdon Group in the work plan phase.

Engaging stakeholders in management strategies and decisions can help encourage support from local communities, but it can also inform project management and policy by introducing new and creative solutions. The knowledge and experiences of resource users in the GSL Basin can prove to be extremely valuable.

For the purposes of this plan, the audiences have been divided into two main groups with two subgroups each.

1. Stakeholders

- a. Watershed Stakeholders.** Plan partners, water and resource users, non-governmental and conservation organizations, research entities, and especially local watershed councils.

Why: This is the largest, most diverse, and most influential group for consistent communication. It is critical that these stakeholders are regularly engaged with direct and personal communication.

How: Participation, coordination, and collaboration with the GSLBIP Steering Committee and local watershed councils. GSLBIP's collaborative process implements a model that engages and cross-connects diverse interests at multiple levels to build consensus-driven decision making. Stakeholders throughout the watershed will have multiple venues to participate in the analyses and discussion. Local watershed councils and their technical advisory committees will need to consider input from the diverse interests they represent to make recommendations to groups and decision makers above them.

- GSLBIP Steering Committee, GSLBIP Advisory Group, and Local watershed councils will be the primary means of communication and coordination for stakeholders
- WRe Director (Candice Hasenyager), Assistant Director (Todd Stonely), and Project Manager (Laura Vernon) will brief and coordinate with GSL Steering Committee and Advisory Group council
- WRe Area Planning Specialists (APS) to brief the local councils with regular updated

- b. Policymakers.** Federal, state, and local office holders. These audience members will also receive direct and consistent communication.

Why: The GSLBIP was created by, and reports to, the Utah legislature. The success of the GSLBIP relies upon cooperative relationships and open communication with legislators and local municipal officials such as mayors, city councils and county commissions. Additionally, the GSLBIP is a partnership with federal agencies, and it is likely that there will need to be communication and coordination with the offices of Utah's congressional delegation.

How: The GSLBIP Advisory Group is to engage and represent state and federal agencies with a stake in managing water in the GSL watershed. Utah's Division of Water Resources (WRe) GSL Coordinator and Area Planning Specialists will engage this audience as outlined below.

- Legislative briefings and testimony: WRe Director (Candice Hasenyager), Assistant Director (Todd Stonely), and Project Manager (Laura Vernon)
- Presentations to municipal conferences and other symposia:
- WRe Director (Candice Hasenyager), Assistant Director (Todd Stonely), Project Manager (Laura Vernon), and WRe APS

2. Public

- a. **Media.** Print, radio, and television, both local and national. The media need to be proactively engaged at regular intervals throughout the Plan process.

Why: The health of the GSL ecosystem has become national news in recent years. Utah media has organized a GSL collaborative to coordinate print media stories about the lake. It is imperative the media is familiar with the work of GSLBIP and has accurate and up to date information.

How: Press releases will go out periodically to members of the Great Salt Lake collaborative, and other members of the media, to update the public on GSLBIP project and potential public meetings. Additionally, members of the Great Salt Lake collaborative will be invited for media tours of the various aspects of the Basin and GSLBIP at strategic points in the development of the Plan such as:

- When gaps in data are filled
- When redundancies are reduced and/or integrated studies initiated
- When collaborative efforts result in new information
- When another partner joins GSLBIP
- Anytime the public has an opportunity to share input
- Summer Dawn Shumway and WRe Communications staff will be primarily responsible for drafting press releases.
- WRe Area Planning Specialists will lead site tours with appropriate partners and stakeholders.

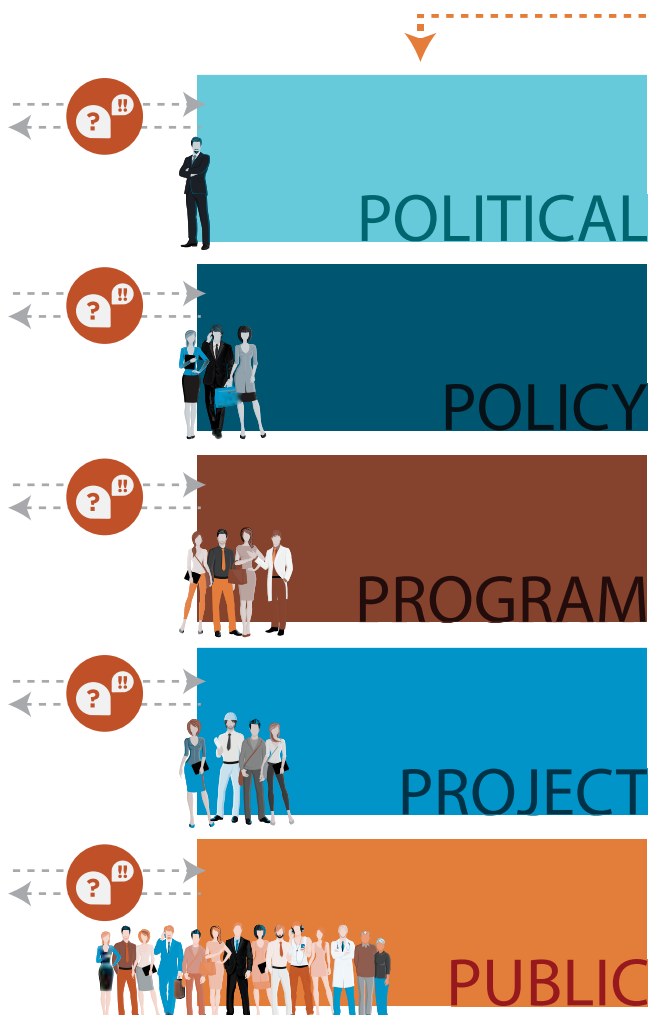
b. **General Public.**

Why: It is important that the public be educated about GSL, the need for water budgeting in the basin, the challenges of securing a resilient water supply for all uses in the basin, and the progress of the GSLBIP in addressing those needs and challenges.

How: Provide the public with several touch points with the project, including, but not limited to:

- Website
- Press releases/News stories
- Social Media
- Local Watershed Councils
- Open legislative hearings
- Public Meetings (if needed, sponsored by local watershed councils)
- Summer Dawn Shumway and Rebekah Holt will maintain project website.
- Crystal Ross will manage social media posts and engagement.
- WRe Director (Candice Hasenyager), Assistant Director (Todd Stonely), and Project Manager (Laura Vernon) will work with WRe communications staff to integrate findings of public surveying into key messages.

FIVE Ps MODEL



The GSLBIP brings together stakeholders from federal, state, and local agencies along with the general public. As a framework for effective multi-agency coordination, Dan Adams of The Langdon Group created the 5Ps model. The basic premise of the 5Ps Model is that all agencies (local, state, and federal) have individual stakeholders at five levels of engagement.

1. **Political.** Elected officials. Examples: congressional, legislative, county commissioner, mayor, city council offices, etc.
2. **Policy.** Individuals that are usually appointed by the Political level. Policy individuals are those that implement the vision of the people as directed by the Political level. Examples: regional administrators, state department directors, city managers, etc.
3. **Program.** Program managers that lead the various programs within an agency. Examples: public works directors, agency NEPA and 404 program managers, planning directors, etc.
4. **Project.** Those assigned to specific projects or planning efforts. They

oversee the day-to-day projects for their specific organization. They work directly with representatives of other agencies on a regular basis for the specific project or planning effort.

5. **Public.** The public at large. Examples: general public, regional stakeholders, NGO's, neighborhoods, etc. *These stakeholders may have their own version of the 5P's (board of directors, executive director/president, members, etc.).*

The proposition is that whenever there are two or more agencies engaging in a collaborative effort (for any purpose), the 5Ps should be identified and given meaningful engagement from concept through completion of the project. This avoids surprises, helps improve speed and project efficiency, and models appropriate communication and collaboration in a world where trust of the government is at an all-time low.

As part of the adoption of this communications plan, the project team will identify the 5Ps of each of the relevant state and federal agencies, including, but not limited to:

- Utah Division of Water Resources
- Utah Division of Forestry Fire & State Lands
- Utah Division of Water Rights
- Utah Division of Water Quality
- Utah Division of Wildlife
- Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Each interagency communication effort made by the GSLBIP project team and WRe will consider which level of the 5Ps model is being targeted, and if and how other levels need to be targeted with similar messaging.

KEY MESSAGES

Key communications messages should be short and convey the essence of the GSLBIP and its process. These messages will be consistent throughout all communications to the stakeholders and to the general public.

1. Ensuring a resilient water supply requires extraordinary vision and collaborative effort. Solutions remain socially and technically complex as demands on this limited resource continue to increase.
2. The GSLBIP will implement unprecedented collaboration and will result in a recommended action plan.
3. The GSLBIP will leverage the success of existing tools, data, and plans and seek to integrate and streamline successful partnerships and programs; it should not duplicate efforts.
4. Today's water management decisions shape tomorrow's possibilities.
5. The state of Utah is a responsible steward of the Great Salt Lake and is actively engaged in working with stakeholders to find solutions to secure a resilient water supply for the lake, its basin and all uses.
6. The state of Utah's role is to set policy, provide assistance, and protect statewide water resource interests (WRe 2001). Where appropriate, the state will establish a framework, provide tools and data, and define the direction.
7. The GSLBIP will foster a culture of trust where different perspectives and water uses are respected and concerns can be raised and then addressed.

COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS AND MATERIALS

1. [Web page \(https://water.utah.gov/gsl-basin-integrated-plan/\)](https://water.utah.gov/gsl-basin-integrated-plan/) (to be built into an independent site GSLBasinPlan.utah.gov)
2. [Project info sheet \(https://water.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GSL-Basin-Integrated-Plan-Info-Sheet-Feb2023FINAL-1.pdf\)](https://water.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GSL-Basin-Integrated-Plan-Info-Sheet-Feb2023FINAL-1.pdf) (and other informational flyers as needed)
3. Press releases
4. PowerPoint presentations
5. Social media
6. Email updates
7. Media kit
8. Newsletter (via WRe, Partners or Steering Committee - TBD)
9. Branding, logo & style guide (WRe communications staff has designed a brand and logo for the GSLBIP. All messaging and collateral will use the same logo, brand, and style throughout the project)
10. Mailing lists (Constant Contact)
11. GSLBIP stakeholder database
12. GSLBIP and GSL Watershed FAQs
13. Email address for Public Comment gslbasinplan@utah.gov
14. Project Story Map

COMMUNICATION METHODS

1. Press conferences
2. Open houses
3. Legislative updates
4. GSL basin site visits
5. Public outreach and communication meetings
6. Public opinion surveys

COMMUNICATION MESSENGERS

1. Utah Division of Water Resources
2. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
3. GSLBIP Steering Committee
4. GSLBIP Advisory Group
5. Local Watershed Councils
6. Area Planning Specialists
7. Great Salt Lake Collaborative
8. Other media organizations

KEY ROLES

1. Project Manager: Laura Vernon
2. Communications and Website Lead: Summer Dawn Shumway
3. Media Lead: Michael Sanchez
4. Social Media Lead: Crystal Ross
5. Steering Committee/Advisory Group Facilitator: Laura Vernon or hired professional facilitator
6. Watershed Councils Facilitator: Laura Vernon or hired professional facilitator
7. Public response Lead: Michael Sanchez

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

FEDERAL POLICY EDUCATION & UNDERSTANDING

If the products of the GSLBIP include environmental studies as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project team will seek opportunities to educate and inform the public about the NEPA process and how they can engage.

If there is a possibility of an Endangered Species Act proclamation or other federal action, the WRe would take proactive action to inform and educate the public about the federal process and action to decrease uncertainty and improve understanding.

TRUST AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

As uncertainty increases in natural resource management, trust often decreases. By providing clear messages and regularly including stakeholders in discussions of GSLBIP progress and possible management proposals, a more trusting relationship can be cultivated between resource users, managers, and the public. Building and maintaining trust is important throughout the entire communication process.

But even with the best processes, conflict still arises. Especially when diverse groups of people come together to talk about controversial issues. When dealing with difficult discussions, it is helpful to manage conflict instead of trying to resolve it. Understanding that conflict is a productive part of collaboration can help partners and stakeholders feel more confident when situations feel tense. To better manage conflict, the project team will need to identify why the conflict exists. Thinking through the reasons why a conflict has emerged can help all understand a stakeholder's interests—the reasons behind their decisions and opinions. Facing conflict can be exhausting, and even scary, but in many cases the process of working through conflict can lead to stronger relationships and innovative solutions to complex issues.

The strategic recommendation is for there to be trained, professional mediators and facilitators available for all meetings throughout the duration of the GSLBIP planning process. The following diagram illustrates the flow of information. "Steering Committee" is the local watershed council or their designated subcommittee.

COMMUNICATION PLAN TIMELINE

GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN INTEGRATED PLAN PHASES

2023: Plan - Work plan development

2024: Assess - Foundation for decision making

2025: Evaluate - Trade-off analysis

2026: Recommend - Balance decision process and solution implementation

COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE

Suggested GSLBIP Release Strategy

Stakeholder Engagement:

1. Michael Sanchez and Summer Dawn Shumway

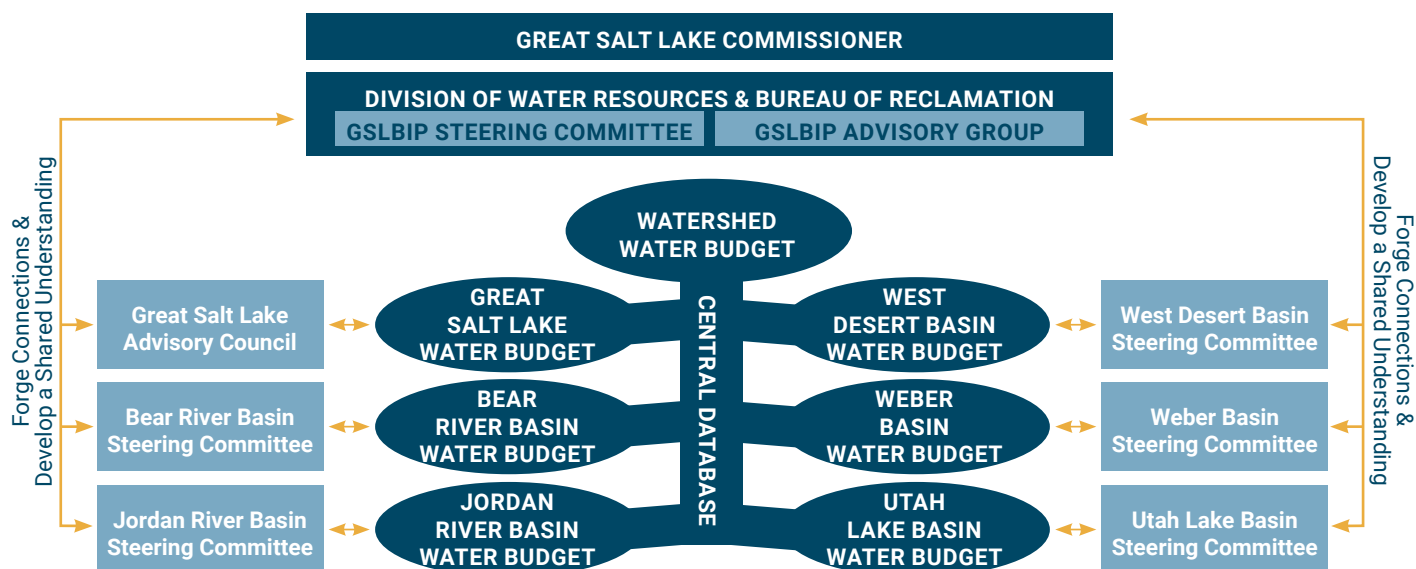
Notification statements for:

- Placement on GSLBasinPlan.utah.gov
- GSL basin Water User Association newsletters and sites
- The Utah Water Users Association newsletters and sites
- GSL basin water conservancy district newsletters and sites

2. Laura Vernon and the Area Planning Specialists

Notify the five constituent local watershed councils (Bear, Weber, Jordan, West Desert, and Utah Lake):

- Of the release of the plan
- Availability to present to the local councils



General Public Engagement:

1. Michael Sanchez, Summer Dawn Shumway, Laura Vernon

Media strategy options

- a. Release press conference, organized through the office of the GSL Commissioner or the Governor's office, held at the State Capitol building, highlighting the key messages and collaborative nature of the Plan process.
- b. Press releases to all major Utah media outlets, with offers for interviews with Commissioner Steed, Candice Hasenyager, or Laura Vernon. This option should include a strong emphasis on generating stories in the media covering the release of GSLBIP

2. Michael Sanchez, Summer Dawn Shumway, Laura Vernon

Public Meeting

- a. Notices for a public meeting placed the same time as the press conference/release, and two weeks in advance of the planned meeting in the Salt Lake Tribune, Deseret News, Ogden Standard Examiner, Herald Journal in Logan, and the Daily Herald in Provo.
- b. Public meeting will include a presentation by Laura Vernon on the GSLBIP.
- c. The entire project management team will take questions and comments from the public
- d. The questions, comments, and responses will be noted and placed on the WRe project website

3. Crystal Ross

Social Media

- a. Craft and post content the week prior to the press conference/release and during the two weeks between the press conference/release and the public meeting
- b. Post content will include key messages, facts, and other information from the project website and the one-page fact sheet, as well as announcements for the public meeting

Full Timeline

October 2023

- Update project website (HB 429 and USBR)
- Distribute partner contact info (USBR)
- Create mailing lists for coordination, outreach and updates (USBR)
- Build public comment form
- Draft Press Release
- Draft PowerPoints for Interim presentation
- Quarterly Update to USBR

November 2023

- Present work plan to Legislative Natural Resources Interim Committee (HB 429)
- Press release regarding presentation of work plan and public comment period
- Update project website (HB 429 and USBR)
- Open public comment (HB 429)
- Initial social media post
- Public Meetings (USBR)

December 2023

- Open House (HB 429)
- Continue public comment

January 2024

- Close public comment
- Review public comment
- Incorporate public comment
- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

February 2024-Ongoing

- Work with the five local watershed councils (Bear River, Weber River, Jordan River, Utah Lake, West Desert) to determine how they want to contribute and help build the database and model for their basin. They may engage as a full council or create subcommittees.
- Site visits as determined by Steering Committee, GSL watershed council, and project management team
- Regular social media engagement
- Regular press releases at project milestones

April 2024

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

July 2024

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

October 2024

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

November 2024

- Annual Report to NRAE Interim (HB 429)
- Annual Report to Legislative Water Dev Commission (HB 429)
- Annual Update to GSL Advisory Council (HB 429)
- Annual Progress Report published on site (HB 429)

January 2025 - Ongoing

- Site visits as determined by Steering Committee, GSL watershed council, and project management team
- Regular social media engagement
- Regular press releases at project milestones

April 2025

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

July 2025

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

October 2025

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

November 2025

- Annual Report to NRAE Interim (HB 429)
- Annual Report to Legislative Water Dev Commission (HB 429)
- Annual Update to GSL Advisory Council (HB 429)
- Annual Progress Report published on site (HB 429)

January 2026-Ongoing

- Site visits as determined by Steering Committee, GSL watershed council, and project management team
- Regular social media engagement
- Regular press releases at project milestones

April 2026

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

July 2026

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

October 2026

- Quarterly update to USBR and local watershed councils

November 2026

- Project completion
- Final Report

