

# UTAH WATERSHEDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 12th, 2023

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Department of Natural Resources Auditorium  
1594 W. North Temple  
Salt Lake City, UT

YouTube 'LIVE' stream:

<https://youtube.com/live/0AHSjlrYEFa>

## COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- **Scott Paxman**, Vice Chair, Reclamation Project Rep.
- **Rikki Hrenko-Browning**, Industry Rep.
- **Nathan Daug**s, Bear River Local Watershed Council
- **Marcelle Shoop**, Environmental and Conservation Groups Rep. (Virtual)
- **Warren Peterson**, Water Attorney
- **Mark Stratford**, Utah League of Cities and Towns (Virtual)
- **Ken White**, USU Extension VP (Virtual)
- **Sterling Brown**, Utah Lake Watershed Council
- **Eric McCulley**, acting as proxy for Laura Briefer, Jordan River Watershed Council
- **Kris Hamlet**, DEM Director (Virtual)
- **Dustin Jansen**, Division of Indian Affairs Director (Virtual, joined late)

## EXCUSED:

- **Corey Cram**, Chair
- **Joel Ferry**
- **Kim Shelley**

## OTHERS PRESENT:

- **Todd Stonely**, Division of Water Resources (DWRe)
- **Grace Patrick**, Utah Shared Stewardship (Presenter)
- **Brian Steed**, Great Salt Lake Commissioner (Presenter)
- **Laura Vernon**, DWRe (Presenter)
- **Candace Hasenyager**, DWRe Director (Virtual)
- **Andy Rasmussen**, The Langdon Group
- **Peter Gessell**, Smith Hartvigsen
- **Christie Hansen**, Bear River Watershed Council
- **Brett Prevedel**, Uintah Watershed Council (Virtual)
- **Carly Payne**, DWRe
- **Summer Dawn Shumway**, DWRe
- **Gay Lynn Bennion**, Utah House of Representatives
- **Brett Palmer**, West Desert Watershed Council
- **Marty Bushman**, Utah Attorney General's Office
- **Soren Simonson**, Jordan River Watershed Council and Jordan River Commission

- **Rick Smith**, Weber River Watershed Council
- **Paul Monroe**, West Desert Watershed Council
- **Peggy Killian**, Uintah Watershed Council

**Meeting started at 1:00 p.m.**

**1:00 - 1:10 p.m. Welcome and introductions**

Chairman Corey Cram was excused, so Vice Chairman Scott Paxman conducted the meeting. He and Todd Stonely confirmed that the council had enough members in attendance to constitute a quorum.

**1:10 - 1:11 p.m. Approval of minutes, July 13 meeting**

Rikki Hrenko-Browning motioned to approve the July 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Nathan Daugs seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**1:11 - 1:20 p.m. Review of member terms & election of officers**

Todd Stonely reviewed “Council Member Terms” and “Election of Officers” in the [Utah Watersheds Council Rules of Order and Procedure](#). Current Chairman Corey Cram communicated to Scott Paxman that he felt unable to continue as chair due to other duties, and he would not like to be nominated for re-election.

Warren Peterson motioned to elect Scott Paxman as the new Chair. Nathan Daugs seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

To give council members time to consider candidates, Warren Peterson motioned to table the election of Vice Chair until the next council meeting in January 2024. Rikki Hrenko-Browning seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. This will also allow for a larger candidate pool as local watershed councils continue to be certified and designate one of their members to serve on the Utah Watersheds Council.

**1:20 - 2:04 p.m. Anticipated certification of Uintah, West Desert, and Jordan River watershed councils**

**Uintah Watershed Council**

Brett Prevedel, Jeff Crozier, and Peggy Killian attended the meeting on behalf of the Uintah Watershed Council. Rikki Hrenko-Browning and Warren Peterson complimented the diverse stakeholder group represented in the proposed council. Marty Bushman of the General Attorney’s Office previously reviewed their organizing document and recommended some minor clerical corrections, but no substantive changes.

Rikki Hrenko-Browning motioned to approve the Uintah Watershed Council for certification. Nathan Daugs seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

### **West Desert Watershed Council**

Paul Monroe and Brett Palmer attended the meeting on behalf of the West Desert Watershed Council. Monroe discussed the unique nature of the council because of its large geographic area, lack of major lakes and rivers, and high proportion of federally-owned land.

(Rikki Hrenko-Browning) There is no tribal representation on your council despite two recognized tribes being listed. What is your plan going forward?

(Paul Monroe) We finally found someone from the Indian Peaks band of the Paiute tribe who is willing to sit on the council. We are still waiting to hear back from the Goshute tribe despite continuously reaching out.

Warren Peterson motioned to approve conditional certification of the West Desert Watershed Council, with the condition that the council fills the tribal seat and reports back at the January meeting of the UWC.

Marty Bushman previously reviewed the council's organizing document and marked several changes that the council must make to be compliant with the Watershed Councils Act. As one of these changes, he noted that if the local watershed councils need to have the Utah Watersheds Council certify their organizing documents, they should have the Utah Watersheds Council certify any amendments to their organizing documents as well.

(Paul Monroe) One thing we were very concerned with is having, at a minimum, one representative from every county within our basin. Can that be included with the comments you just suggested?

(Marty Bushman) As a council, you have enough latitude in the statute to do that. I just recommend you don't put a fixed number for the majority of the council, since that number may fluctuate.

Warren Peterson made an amended motion to approve conditional certification of the West Desert Watershed Council, with the conditions that the council 1) fills the tribal seat and reports back at the January meeting of the UWC, and 2) makes the corrections suggested by legal counsel and Chairman Paul Monroe to their organizing document. Upon conditional certification, the West Desert Watershed Council's representative to the UWC will become an active member of the Utah Watersheds Council. Nathan Daugs seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(Rikki Hrenko-Browning) Do we need to ensure that other councils must have any amendments to their organizing documents approved by us as well? It may be worth looking into.

### **Jordan River Watershed Council**

Eric McCulley and Soren Simonsen attended the meeting on behalf of the Jordan River Watershed Council.

(Eric McCulley) We have added an agriculture representative to the governing board of the Jordan River Commission to make sure all the interests required by the act are represented. Additionally, the governing board just approved some changes to our Bylaws to better align with the statute. Legal counsel had a few comments on the new Bylaws, which we will address.

(Soren Simonsen) We have appointed Laura Briefer as both the Vice Chair of our watershed council and our representative to the state watershed council. Heidi Hoven of the National Audubon Society was appointed to represent us on the Great Salt Lake Watershed Council.

(Marty Bushman) There are a couple of easily-fixed issues in the Commission's Bylaws.

Marty Bushman, Warren Peterson, and Soren Simonsen discussed the Commission's structure and Bylaws. Soren explained that part of the provision in Section 5.4 of the Bylaws is to align those representatives who are not interlocal agencies with the provision of the Watershed Councils Act, so that all of the necessary interests are represented. The representatives for Interlocal agencies and Ex-Officio organizations will be considered equal members of the watershed council.

(Soren Simonsen) When I build the roster, I will identify the eligibility of each member and the interest they represent. We will have several liaisons because the Commission includes members from state and federal agencies. We are ready to suggest legal counsel's changes at the Commission meeting in December and present for final certification at the UWC meeting in January.

(Mark Stratford) Please make clear in your Bylaws that any future amendments to Article 12 must be approved by the Utah Watersheds Council.

Because the Jordan River Watershed Council has already received conditional certification, no action was taken by the Utah Watersheds Council at this time.

#### **2:04 - 2:08 p.m. - Discussion about the formation of the Great Salt Lake Watershed Council**

(Andy Rasmussen) Nothing has been decided regarding the formation of the Great Salt Lake Council. We should have an update by January.

(Sterling Brown) Does the statute require us to fully assemble ourselves by a certain date? Which councils are remaining?

(Todd Stonely) The statute does not require local watershed councils to be organized at all, only in the basins that want one. As of today, six of the twelve local watershed councils are organized and operating. The remaining councils to be created are Cedar/Beaver, Great Salt Lake, Kanab Creek/Virgin River, Sevier River, Southeast Colorado River, and West Colorado River.

#### **2:08 - 2:43 p.m. Presentation on the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan & thoughts from Great Salt Lake Commissioner**

Great Salt Lake Commissioner Brian Steed and Division of Water Resources employee Laura Vernon presented together on the Great Salt Lake. Commissioner Steed explained the severity of the issues accompanying the decreasing lake levels. Vernon explained the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan (GSL BIP) and its current progress. This was followed by discussion of the GSL Advisory Council potentially becoming the Great Salt Lake Watershed Council, depending on upcoming legislation. The Utah Watersheds Council expressed support for this idea. Vernon offered to return in future UWC meetings to update on the GSL BIP as necessary.

#### **2:43 - 3:10 p.m. Presentation on Shared Stewardship**

Grace Patrick presented on the Shared Stewardship program. The program rose from a commitment to work collaboratively with many land resource management partners. It focuses on identifying, prioritizing, and improving forested areas in high risk communities and watersheds. They are working to grow their partnerships with water utilities.

**3:10 - 3:13 p.m. Planning and discussion of future meeting dates and times**

Meetings will be held on the following dates from 1- 3 p.m.:

- January 18, 2024
- April 4, 2024
- July 11, 2024
- October 9, 2024

Nathan Daus motioned to set January 18, April 4, July 11, and October 9 as the UWC meeting dates for 2024. Warren Peterson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**3:13 - 3:14 p.m. Public comments**

There were no public comments.

**3:15 p.m. Adjourn**

Eric McCulley motioned to adjourn. Warren Peterson seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

