

## Utah Lake Watershed Council Meeting

### Attendees:

Joe Crawford – Provo River Watershed Council  
Cory Pierce - Spanish Fork City  
Marty Larson – Highline Canal Company  
Sterling Brown – Strawberry Water Users Association  
Jeff Budge – Provo River Water Users Association  
Rich Mickelsen – Timpanogos Special Service District  
Gary Bimley - CUWCD  
Carly Payne -  
Stephanie McGinnis -  
Marlo Smith - Spanish Fork City  
Soren Simonsen -  
Joe Borgine -

Derek Bruton - CUWCD  
Gary Calder - Provo City  
Eric McCulley - USBR  
Josh Zimmerman -  
Kay Mullen -  
Luke Peterson -  
Mark Illum -  
Scott Bergendorg -  
John Hilbert - JVVCD  
Olga Isupov  
Becca Frei

### Approval of Minutes. May 12, 2025 Meeting:

Motion to approve minutes from ULWC May 12, 2025 meeting

- Motion made by Rich Mickelsen
- Motion seconded by Sterling Brown
- Motion passed unanimously

Discussion took place about including the AI mission statement discussion from the prior meeting to the minutes. It was later recognized that this discussion took place during the February 2, 2025 meeting and therefore, no addition to the May 12, 2025 meeting minutes is necessary.

### Expiring Council Members:

Joe reviewed the Council's organizing document and noted that six members' terms are scheduled to expire on December 31, 2025: Marty Larson (Agriculture), Belva Parr (Agriculture), Shazelle Terry (Watershed Management), Jeff Budge (Provo River Water Users/Local Reclamation Sponsors), Jared Hanson (Central Utah Water/Local Reclamation Sponsors), and Mike Rau (Public Water Supply). Joe explained that under the organizing document, members whose terms expire may continue to serve until they are reappointed or replaced, and that vacancies are to be filled by a majority vote of the Council from a list of at least two nominees.

Joe also noted there is an existing vacancy (formerly held by Jed) that had previously not been filled by Council decision.

Council members discussed whether expiring members wished to continue serving. Belva Parr and Shazelle Terry indicated they were willing to remain on the Council. It was agreed that Gary Calder would reach out to the remaining affected members to confirm their interest. The Council discussed the bylaw requirement for two nominees per vacancy and expressed concern that the requirement may not be

practical when an existing member wishes to continue serving. Joe suggested bringing forward a future agenda item to consider amending the bylaws to revise this provision.

Motion to keep current members in their positions who wish to continue serving, subject to a future review and possible amendment of the bylaws.

- Motion made by Rich Mickelsen
- Motion seconded by Shazelle Terry
- Motion passed unanimously

Utah Watersheds Council report (Sterling Brown):

Sterling provided an update on activities of the Utah Watershed Council. He reported that there are currently twelve local watershed councils statewide, all of which have provided updates to the State Council. Joe attended the July State Council meeting and presented on this Council's efforts. Sterling noted the wide variation among councils, ranging from this Council, which is geographically small, to councils such as the West Desert, Northeast, and Southeast Councils, which span hundreds of miles and face significant geographic and coordination challenges. Despite these differences, all councils are functioning, meeting, and identifying priority issues and tasks.

Sterling also noted that at the previous Council meeting, members heard a presentation from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands regarding forest management efforts in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service.

By statute, the State Council prepares an annual report, which was recently presented to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Legislative Interim Committee. Legislators asked whether the watershed councils remain necessary, whether local councils are active, and whether they are effectively providing recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor's Office.

Sterling reported that the State Council is exploring ways to provide regular legislative updates to local councils during the legislative session, focused on water-related bills. The Division of Water Resources has taken on the task of developing a potential weekly legislative update for distribution to state and local council members.

Sterling also announced that Scott Paxman was reelected as State Council Chair, and Sterling was reelected as Vice Chair.

Belva Parr asked about how legislative bill updates would be provided and emphasized the importance of tracking water-related legislation. Sterling explained that legislative information changes rapidly and that compiling consistent reports would require staff resources. He noted that Candice (State Director) is exploring options. Shazelle Terry added that many organizations already distribute legislative updates and suggested sharing or centralizing those resources rather than duplicating efforts. Joe noted that the Utah Water Task Force meetings are another way to stay informed on interim water issues. Belva expressed willingness to assist if needed. The Council agreed to first rely on the Division of Water Resources' efforts and revisit the need for additional support later.

Members discussed the Council's advisory role in water policy. Soren Simonsen emphasized that the Watershed Council Act envisions local councils providing input on water legislation and suggested developing a clearer pathway for communication with legislators. Joe agreed and noted this Council had previously submitted comments to the Legislature. Shazelle Terry suggested engaging State Council leadership and staff (including Scott Paxman, Candice, and Carly) to help ensure watershed councils are included earlier in the legislative process.

Josh Zimmerman (Division of Water Resources) stated that his office could provide a legislative bill tracker and regular updates, clarifying that the Division does not advocate policy but can provide information and support. He noted that staff could work with the Council to tailor the frequency and format of updates based on Council needs.

No formal action was taken. The Council will monitor the development of legislative tracking and updates through the Division of Water Resources and continue discussions on improving communication and advisory input during the legislative session.

Great Salt Lake Basin Water Council report (Ben Abbot):

Not in attendance

2026 - State water Plan (Sandy Wingert):

Sandy Wingert introduced Becca Frei (Division of Water Resources), who is working with Steph McInness on development of the State Water Plan. Becca explained that the Plan will include short basin vignettes highlighting needs, challenges, and successes, and that each local watershed council has been asked to identify **one** success story to feature in its basin chapter. The primary intended audience for the Plan is the Utah Legislature.

Sandy presented three potential agricultural success stories from within the Utah Lake Basin, each reflecting a different form of success:

1. **Bateman's Modesta Farms** – innovation and large-scale nutrient management and technology investments;
2. **Main Creek (Wallsburg area)** – long-term, producer-led stewardship and trust-based restoration; and
3. **Heber Valley Watershed Plan** – collaborative planning at the agricultural–urban interface.

Sandy described each project, including location, partners, funding sources, and outcomes. She emphasized that the Council's role is to select the single story that best represents the basin's agricultural identity and values for inclusion in the Utah Lake chapter of the State Water Plan. While only one project will be featured in the basin chapter, the others may be referenced elsewhere in the Plan as examples of agricultural success.

Council members discussed the projects, the importance of audience (legislative focus), upstream and downstream perspectives, the value of measurable data, and the strengths of innovation, stewardship, and collaboration. Sandy noted that extensive monitoring data exists for the Main Creek project, while

the Heber Valley effort is newer and the Bateman project includes ongoing soil and groundwater-related monitoring.

By consensus, it was agreed that Sandy will distribute a brief survey to Council members with one voting question to select the preferred success story, along with an option to provide comments. Sandy will compile the results and feedback and report back to the Council. The selected story will then be fully developed for inclusion in the State Water Plan.

Vision Statement:

Rich explained that he was asked to revisit development of a mission statement for the Utah Lake Watershed Council based on ideas generated during a meeting approximately one year ago. He noted that an initial AI-generated draft had been created previously and was used as a starting point, but he worked with a communications consultant to refine the concept and structure.

Rich presented a draft framework that includes a **slogan, mission statement, and core values**. He proposed the slogan *"Making the Most of Every Drop,"* with a suggested shorter alternative, *"Making Every Drop Count."* He reviewed a draft mission statement focused on increasing understanding and communication among agencies and entities responsible for water capture, storage, use, transportation, treatment, and reclamation within the Utah Lake watershed, and on developing a shared vision and unified plan to make the most of every drop of water.

Rich also presented proposed core values (including conservation, ownership, understanding, nature, change, improvement, and limits) and explained that these were intended as a starting point for broader Council input. He emphasized that none of the language is final and encouraged members to suggest edits, additions, and refinements, including potential emphasis on agriculture and tradition, and adjustments to wording related to change, science, and values.

Council members expressed appreciation for the draft and general support for using *"Making Every Drop Count"* as a shorter, more memorable slogan. It was agreed that members will review the document outside of the meeting and provide feedback using tracked changes so all members can view and consider proposed edits. Cory indicated he would resend the document to the group with instructions and a shared location for submitting comments.

No formal action was taken. The item will return to a future meeting after member feedback is compiled.

United Water Infrastructure Plan/Funding Discussion (Rich Mickelsen):

Rich provided an overview of recent information he received at a Unified Water Infrastructure Funding discussion hosted by Zions, related to the United Water Infrastructure Plan and associated funding framework authorized under **House Bill 280 (2024)**. He emphasized that he was not advocating for or against the program, but wanted to bring it to the Council's attention because of its potential impacts and relevance to the Council's role.

Rich explained that preliminary funding scenarios presented by Zions indicated a possible statewide increase in water and wastewater charges, previously estimated at approximately **\$16 per month per**

**household**, noting that this figure is not final and continues to change. He stated that this issue is significant given the major capital projects currently underway by agencies such as TSSD.

Rich further noted that under the proposed framework, watershed councils may be asked to **assist in reviewing and ranking projects** and to provide recommendations to the **Water Development Coordinating Committee (WDCC)**. He explained that this could affect how the Council conducts its business and may formalize a role for the Council in project prioritization and funding recommendations.

Rich summarized key elements of the UWIP process, including separation of planning and financing tracks, the role of state agencies in collecting and evaluating project information, ongoing public meetings, and the aggressive timeline to complete the plan and funding structure. He encouraged members to attend upcoming public meetings to learn more and provide input.

Rich also shared how this potential statewide funding approach intersects with existing local capital improvement and rate planning, including significant long-term infrastructure investments already being planned.

Council discussion included a question regarding whether water shares would be included in potential monthly charges. Rich stated that he did not have that information and recommended that the question be raised at an upcoming public meeting.

Rich concluded by reiterating that this initiative could increase the importance of the Council's role by providing a basin-level perspective and recommendations to the WDCC. No action was taken.

#### Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule:

Cory reviewed the proposed meeting dates for 2026 are as follows: January 26, April 20, July 20, and October 19. These are consistent with the Council's typical quarterly schedule. These dates are being presented earlier than in previous years to allow members to plan accordingly. If there are no conflicts identified, calendar invitations will be distributed. There were no conflicts discussed.

#### Public Comments:

No public comments

#### Adjourn

Motion to adjourn ULWC meeting

- Motion made by Belva Parr
- Motion seconded by Marty Larson
- Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm.