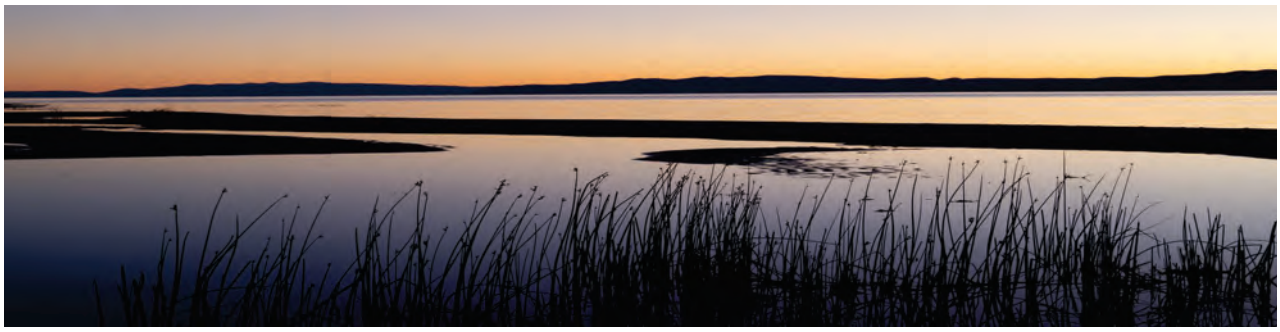
Water Use and Preservation Element of the Rich County Comprehensive Plan



Water Resource Section

Rich County was named after Mormon Pioneer Charles C. Rich who settled the area in 1864. Charles C. Rich was directed by Brigham Young, to colonize the areas in and around Bear Lake. Initially, Rich was sent to what is now known as Paris, Idaho from Cache Valley to establish a community. Several years later, after Paris was established, settlers moved to the southern end of the lake, near the present towns of Meadowville and Laketown. By 1870, Randolph and Woodruff had become the first settlements in the Bear River Valley. The largest community, Randolph, became the county seat in Rich County in 1872.

Agricultural practices have largely shaped the culture and landscape of Rich County. Early settlers to the valley identified the abundant meadow hay as advantageous to raising cattle. It was determined early in the settlement of the county that the arable acreage of the county could be increased by irrigation. a practice developed to move water from areas of plenty to drier areas by using gravity and conveyance canals.

Rich County is part of the Bear River Watershed. The main tributary flowing through the county is the Bear River which starts in the High Uintas in Wyoming and meanders several hundred miles where it terminates in Willard Bay which is part of the Great Salt Lake and only about 90 miles from its headwaters. Bear Lake, is a bi-state lake straddling the border of Utah and Idaho where Bear River is diverted, then released. The Bear River Commission serves as engineer-manager to administer the Bear River Compact which defines water distribution between the three states and water right holders.

Residential density in Rich County is one unit per acre with no limitations on external landscaping or turf grass. Subdivisions created prior to the adoption of land use regulations delineated smaller size lots with an average being .33 acres. New subdivisions created under the Rich County Development Code code consist of larger lots sizes with smaller manicured yards with much of the property left in native species. For example, 85% of lots in the South Eden Ranch are .15 acres. Contrasted with Sweetwater Subdivision on the opposite side of the lake that was platted 40 years ago. The lots are on average .33 acres and 66% have no lawn. Those with lawn the area irrigated averages .05 acres. Other residential structures in the county such as condo's, townhomes, and apartments have not been proposed for development.

Each water system in the county has been identified and contacted. There are 8 water systems in the county. The majority are recreational housing subdivisions with some full-time residents. There are two water systems providing water to full time residents . The county does not officially own or maintain a water system. There are 4 municipal water systems providing service to the communities of Garden City, Laketown, Randolph, and Woodruff.

It would be advantageous and highly encouraged for water systems to connect when possible to create redundancy within their systems and create more efficient delivery. This is only feasible in areas near existing incorporated communities or when individual private systems are within close proximity of one another.

The average household in Rich County uses approximately 274 gallons/capita/day while the goal of Utah is less than 305 gallons/capita/day by 2030.

To prevent excessive use of a limited resource and to fund infrastructure replacement most municipal water companies charge a base rate with a tiered fee structure for excess use. The base rate covers the water to maintain the house and all usage over the amount is billed extra. This has provided a revenue stream that can be used for system improvements while making it known to water users that conservation is important.

When considering methods to reduce consumption, large scale reduction is ideal but individual usage should be considered as a means to encourage conservation at all levels. Below are a list of actions that can be implemented by individual homeowners to address the growing need to be greater stewards for the common good.

1. Efficiency Retrofits & Incentives

- **High-efficiency fixtures/appliances**: Encourage or require retrofits of toilets, faucets, showerheads, dishwashers, and clothes washers with WaterSense/Energy Star certified products.
- **Rebate programs**: Offer financial incentives for replacing old appliances, fixtures, or irrigation systems.
- **Leak detection and repair programs**: Utilities can provide free audits or smart meters to detect leaks in homes and businesses.

---

2. Landscaping & Outdoor Water Use

- **Xeriscaping and native plants**: Encourage residents to replace turf with drought-tolerant landscaping.
- **Smart irrigation systems**: Promote weather-based controllers, drip irrigation, and soil moisture sensors.
- **Watering ordinances**: Restrict outdoor watering to certain times/days to reduce evaporation losses.
- **Conversion incentives**: Rebates for turf removal and replacement with low-water alternatives.

---

3. Building Operations & Retrofits

- **Graywater reuse**: Encourage installation of systems to reuse laundry/shower water for irrigation.
- **Rainwater harvesting**: Promote rain barrels or cisterns for outdoor watering.
- **Cooling system efficiency**: Encourage conversion from once-through cooling to recirculating systems in commercial/industrial buildings.

---

4. Utility-Level Tools

- **Tiered water pricing**: Charge higher rates for excessive use to incentivize conservation.
- **Real-time usage feedback**: Smart meters that show households/businesses daily consumption.
- **Water audits**: Utility-provided assessments for households, schools, and businesses.

---

5. Public Education & Outreach

- **Conservation campaigns**: "Slow the flow, Save H2O" style messaging on simple behaviors (shorter showers, turning off taps, full loads of laundry/dishwashing).
- **School-based education**: Engage students as advocates for home conservation.
- **Business engagement**: Work with hotels, restaurants, and offices on industry-specific water efficiency practices.

---

6. Policy & Regulatory Approaches

- All new developments over 4 lots to have sufficient water rights for development.
- New subdivisions should connect to existing community systems when feasible.

---

7. Long-term Cultural Shifts

- Foster community norms that value conservation, e.g., pride in water-wise landscaping or recognition programs for businesses/households that lead in water savings.

Future residential water demand can be reduced through application of various techniques when developments are approved. As Rich County is only anticipated to have a 1%-3% growth rate the number of projected subdivisions are minimal. There have been two subdivisions totalling 40 lots approved in Rich County in the last 10 years.

Despite the slow rate of future projected growth there are actions that can be implemented in new developments that will conserve water and curtail usage. Future water management could consist of the following:

1. **Mandatory / Restraint Ordinances in Subdivisions**
    - Prohibit dry subdivisions and hauling water to provide for culinary use.
    - Restrict combined interior and exterior use to .9 acre feet per connection.
2. **Landscape / Irrigation Standards**
    - Require lawn water scheduling in CC&R's and specify watering before 8:00 a.m. and after 8:00 p.m. when evapotranspiration is less and restrict using sprinklers during windy days.
    - Require maintenance of broken or misaligned sprinkler heads in CC&R's.
    - Discourage the use of turf and encourage xeriscaping in CC&R's.
3. **Ordinances / Rules About Watering Practice**
    - Prohibit water running onto streets, sidewalks, or other hardened surface.
    - Prohibit the use of water to clean hardened surfaces.
4. **Incentive Programs-rebates can be available if the following are followed:**
    - No lawn on parking strips.
    - In new development, no lawn in areas less than 8 feet in width.
    - No more than 50% of front and side yard landscaped area in new residential developments is lawn. Lawn limitations do not apply to small residential lots with less than 250 square feet of landscaped area.
    - In new commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family development common-area landscapes, lawn areas shall not exceed 20% of the total landscaped area outside of active recreation areas.
    - Replacement of toilet with water efficient models
    - Upgrade to smart irrigation controllers
5. **Secondary Water Metering**
    - Installing meters on secondary (untreated or irrigation) water connections has been a focus: many systems were unmetered, and metering has been shown to reduce usage ~20-30%.

Best Practices and additional measures

1. Use **native and drought-tolerant plants** in communal and private landscaping. Less water, less upkeep.

2. Design **landscapes to minimize** turf (lawn) unless it's for a functional area (play, access, aesthetics).

3. Use **drip or subsurface irrigation** for planting beds, trees, shrubs in lieu of spray systems.

4. Install **smart irrigation controllers** (weather-based, soil moisture-based), proper zoning, timers.

5. Use **efficient sprinkler heads** (e.g. low pressure, matched nozzles, WaterSense or similar) to reduce overspray, misting, wind drift.

6. Use **mulch**, organic soil amendment to improve water retention in soil.

7. Limit pavement and impervious surfaces; encourage pervious surfaces to allow recharge and reduce runoff.

8. Require **irrigation meters** separate from domestic water meters so that outdoor water use is measured and priced properly.

9. Use **tiered pricing** or increasing block rates for water to reward conservation and penalize excessive use.

10. Incorporate **stormwater capture / rainwater harvesting** (where legal) for irrigation, landscape, etc.

11. Educate homeowners: best watering times (morning/evening), avoid watering during hot/dry/windy times, regular system checks so leaks / misaligned sprinklers don't waste water.

Rich County as a municipality has centralized most governmental facilities either in, or near the courthouse in Randolph. Methods to reduce municipal water consumption are as follows:

1. Water Use & Management for County Facilities

- **Upgrade plumbing fixtures**: Replace old toilets, faucets, and showerheads with low-flow versions in county buildings, and jails.
- **Leak detection and repair**: Regular inspections of county-owned buildings, water lines, and irrigation systems.
- **Smart irrigation**: Use weather-based controllers for parks, road medians, cemeteries, and other landscaped areas.
- **Rainwater capture**: Collect rainwater from county buildings for irrigation or non-potable uses.

---

2. Water-Efficient Landscaping

- **Xeriscaping**: Replace turf grass with drought-tolerant native plants around county offices, parks, and public spaces.
- **Pervious surfaces**: Use gravel or permeable pavement in parking lots and walkways to reduce runoff and improve groundwater recharge.

- **Mulching and soil improvements**: Reduce evaporation from landscaped areas.

---

3. Policy & Ordinances

- **Outdoor watering restrictions**: Adopt county-wide restrictions (watering days/hours) especially during drought periods.
- **Greywater / reuse policies**: Facilitate or incentivize non-potable reuse of greywater for irrigation or industrial use.

---

4. Infrastructure Improvements

- **Metering and monitoring**: Ensure county-owned systems (e.g., community buildings) are metered to track usage.
- **Water loss audits**: Regularly assess leaks, especially in older distribution lines or storage tanks.
- **Upgrade irrigation systems**: Retrofit open canals or inefficient handlines with pipelines, drip systems, or sprinklers.
- **Recharge and storage projects**: Enhance groundwater recharge areas, small reservoirs, or cisterns.

---

5. Community Engagement & Education

- **Public education campaigns**: Teach residents about low-water landscaping, indoor conservation, and water-smart behaviors.
- **Workshops and training**: Partner with local Extension offices or Rural Water Association of Utah to teach conservation best practices.

---

6. Incentives & Financial Measures

- **Rebates and grants**: Partner with state programs (e.g., Utah Water Savers) to provide rebates for water-efficient appliances, irrigation upgrades, or rainwater harvesting.

---

7. Operational Strategies

- **Prioritize drought planning**: Have a county-level drought response plan with triggers for restrictions and emergency management.
- **Coordinate with municipalities and water districts**: Share resources, data, and best practices for conservation.

- **Inventory and track usage**: Maintain water consumption data for county facilities, parks, and public spaces to identify savings opportunities.

Special Considerations for Rural Rich County

- Sparse population means cost per household for infrastructure improvements may be higher—prioritize high-impact measures.
- Groundwater is often the main source of residential use; protect aquifers from overuse or contamination.
- Outreach and local buy-in are crucial—residents may resist measures seen as “urban-style regulations.”

Water Budget

Rich County Water Providers				
Name of provider	Connections	Storage (gal.)	Potential Connections	Rights(acre-feet)
Bear Lake Water Company	617	2,000,000	1988	375
Swan Creek	240	495,000	980	441.7
Mountain Meadows	22		22	216
Vista Grande	16	30,000	36	28.2
Eden Ranch	13	320,000	35	72.18
Edge of Eden	12	28,000	15	19.5
North Eden	11	35,000	13	34.3
Deseret Land	9	20,000	15	10.62
Bridgerland Village	195	495,000	410	723
Laketown	165	450,000		362
City of Randolph	232	1,000,000		1085
Town of Woodruff	89	700,000		79
Town of Garden City	1000	2,500,000		3162
Total	2621	8,073,000	3514	6608.5

Projected Future Demand

2023 Rich County Population: 2,588

2060 project population: 5,175

Change in population: 2,587

Water Usage Rate:

Current: 274 gallons/capita/day

Goal (per Utah state): <305 gallons/capita/day by 2030

Projected Daily Demand by 2060

5175 people X 274 gallons/capita/day= 1,417,950 gallons/capita/day

(full build out) x (current usage)

Annual Water Demand

1,417,950 x 365 =517,551,750 gallons/yr

Convert to Acre-Feet

517,551,750 gallons/year ÷325,851 = 1588 acre-feet/yr

Total water rights: 6,602 Ac. Ft.

Result: The current use of 274 gallons/capita/day rate of consumption is less than the sum total water rights of 6,602 Ac ft/year by 5,014 Acre-Feet/year.

Water Company	Annual Consumption (gal)	Connections	Unit Consumption(gal)
Bear Lake Water Co.	55,316,466	617	89,654
Swan Creek Village Water Co.	19,906,238	240	82,943
Vista Grande	609,341	47	12,965
Mountain Meadow Imp. Dist.	2,766,475	22	125,749
South Eden Ranch	12,555,039	14	896,789
Edge of Eden	no report		
North Eden	no report	11	
Deseret Land and Livestock	1,557,568	9	173,063
Bridgerland Water Co.	5,858,801	192	30,515
Garden City	98,579,703	713	138,260
Laketown	30,920,001	155	199,484
Randolph	54,260,709	500	108,521
Woodruff	29,326,590	170	172,509

Countywide Water Budget Summary

Category	Estimate
2023 Water Use	~ 794 Acre-feet (based on current pop.)
2060 Projected Use	~1,588 Acre-feet
Total water rights	6608 Acre-Feet (various providers)
Existing Storage	8 million gallons

Population projections for Rich County were completed in 2012 as part of the Bear Lake Valley Blueprint managed by Envision Utah. Projections at the time estimated that Rich County population would see consistent growth into the future from 1%-3%. This rate is unlikely to exceed the ability of water system capacity.

Given that Rich County has no jurisdiction over any of the existing water systems in the county, they can only provide guidance and recommendations from information collected. These recommendations do not apply to the Town of Garden City as they are currently updating their existing plan.

Policy and Building code Recommendations for Water Conservation

Building Code Standards

- Update building code to require EPA WaterSense -certified fixtures for all new construction
- Mandate low-water landscaping on new development; restrict turfgrass to <20% of landscaped areas.
- Enforce use of drip irrigation for all new landscaped areas
- Require water budgets with all new subdivisions

Land Use & Planning Policies

- Prohibit building permits in subdivisions lacking secure water infrastructure
- Create a land use ordinance water conservation element
- Encourage developments close to incorporated communities to connect to their water system.
- When feasible, encourage existing systems to connect creating redundancy and greater storage.

Monitoring & Enforcement

- All new developments shall incorporate water conservation policies into CC&R's.
- Recommend water providers use leak detection systems and make repairs quickly.
- Restrict issuance of building permits until CC&R's updated to include water conservation requirements.

County Efforts

- Rich County could set the standard by installing low flow bathroom fixtures in all restroom facilities.
- Lawn at the courthouse could be replaced with xeriscaping.
- Current watering could be set on a timer for optimal watering

Education & Incentives

- Encourage water providers to offer rebates for turf removal, efficient appliances, drip irrigation.
- Recommend water conservation certification programs for developers
- Meet with all commissioners, realtors, and engineers on a yearly basis to educate them on water conservation plans.
- Recommend water systems review funding opportunities quarterly.

Compliance with State

- Align all county water policy with Utah's 14-22% Gallons Per Capita Per Day (GPCD) reduction targets.
- Adopt a local ordinance based on Utah's Model Landscape Ordinance for consistent enforcement.

Recommendations for Water Sustainability.

- Upgrade infrastructure: Prioritize SCADA, new wells, leak detection.
- Conservation: Native landscaping
- Policy Enforcement: Tie subdivision approvals to water rights acquisition.

Recommendations:

1. Expand Storage.
    - Water tanks will need to be expanded in some of the older subdivisions to accommodate growth. Newer subdivisions the inverse is the problem. There isn't enough use to minimize stagnation in tanks.
2. Upgrade infrastructure.
    - Implement SCADA in the larger systems. Upgrade existing distribution.
3. Conservation measures:
    - Develop information and education outreach programs that encourage sustainable use. Drought tolerant landscaping ordinances/CC&R's.
4. Monitoring:
    - Monitor usage regularly to detect system leakage.

Implementation

The strategies that have been proposed to protect water resources will fall on the management of individual water companies and desire of individual landowners to take a position on preservation. The county can take a leadership role in promoting wise water use by implementing strategies contained in this section. The result will be an overall reduction in water consumption and a statement on conservation.

Conclusion

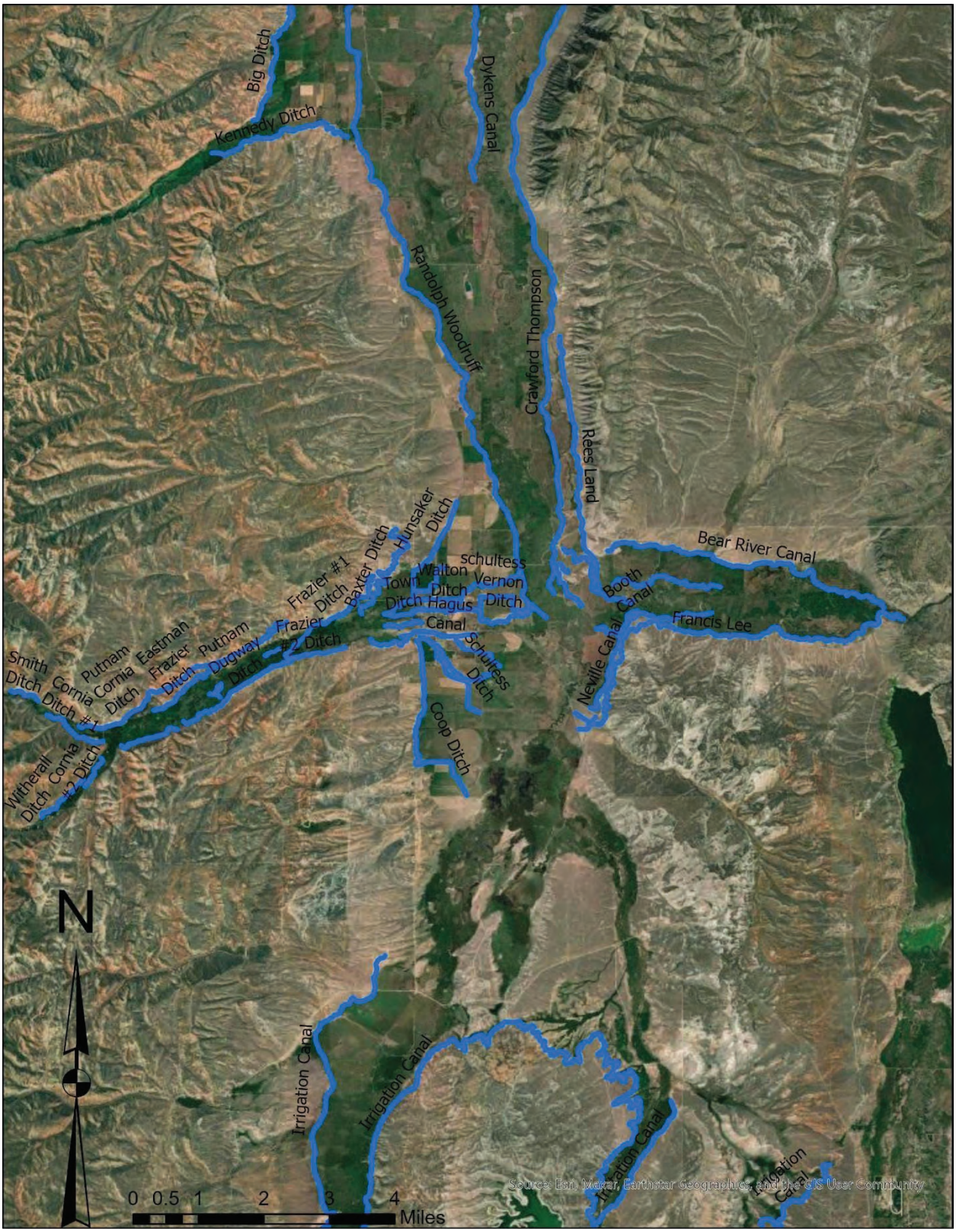
All affected parties in Rich County are in a favorable position to implement more water use actions as conservation hasn't been a priority for most. Many systems already have tiered pricing structure in place although that is not comprehensive. However, there is an attitude of change on the horizon as more systems are recognizing the need to meet future growth projections. Most of the subdivisions in Rich County have sufficient legal water rights for full build out. Infrastructure investments, information and education outreach, and policy development will be necessary to meet future demand and encourage a pro-conservation mindset. This effort will not only ensure the goals for sustainable development are achieved but will also help to keep water in Bear Lake.

Agriculture Section

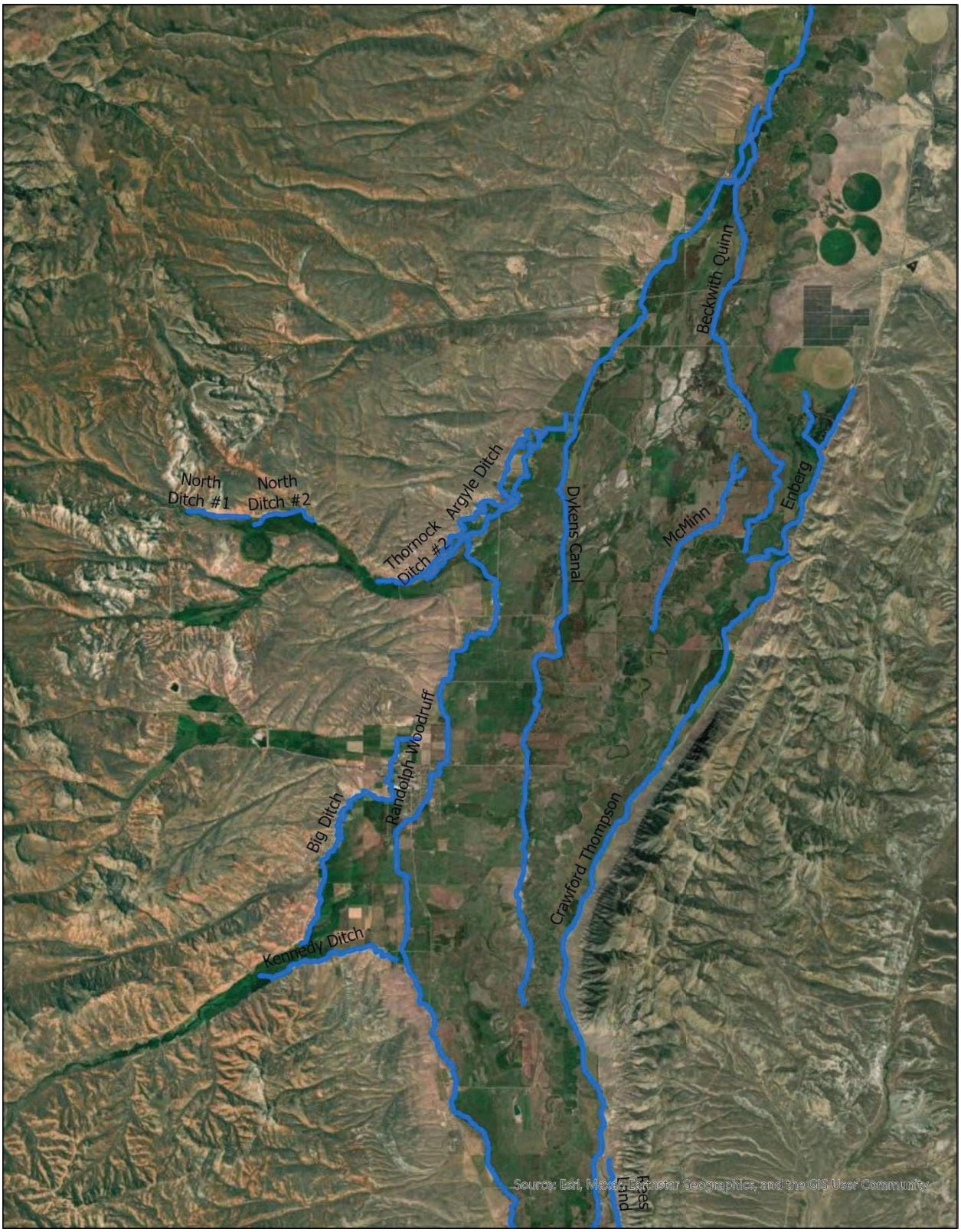
Agriculture Protection Areas

In 2019 the Utah Legislature passed the agricultural protection act which provided additional protections to agricultural areas. The protection allows a landowner to place property serving an agricultural purpose to be set aside for a period time as the highest use. In 2025 the act was amended to allow 100% of rollback taxes to be used in establishing a conservation easement or to fund similar methods to preserve open land or agricultural land. The amendment is found in 17-41-401 of the Utah Code. Rich County has not adopted an ordinance to protect agricultural areas. Currently, there are 363,470.01 acres in Rich County that qualify for greenbelt status.

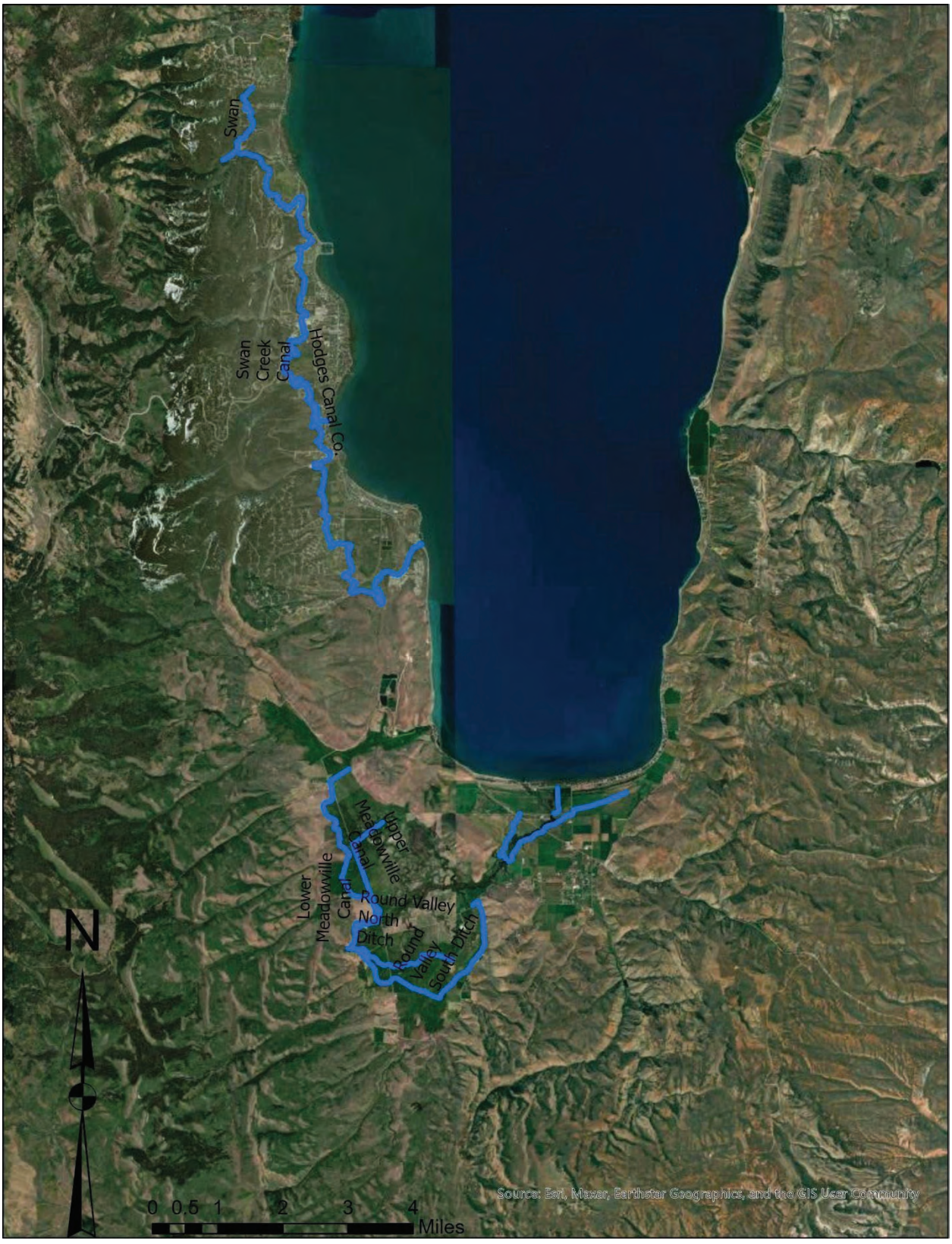
Rich County has had a strong interest in the agricultural community since settled by Charles C. Rich. With limited natural precipitation it was imperative to create a network of irrigation canals to distribute water. Canals were mapped using electronic sources obtained from the state of Utah website. Greater detail was obtained from a study commissioned by the Woodruff Irrigation Company and discussion will local water users. The following figures identify the name and location of the primary irrigation canals in the county.



Irrigation canals in the southern end of Rich County.



Location of irrigation canals near Randolph, Utah.



Location of irrigation canals in the northern portion of Rich County adjacent to Bear Lake.

Coordination of irrigation companies within the city and county is important to develop a working relationship to protect canal integrity, public health and share information generally. Representatives from the town of Garden City and the Swan and Hodges Canal Company meet together frequently to discuss integrity of the canal systems and ways to safeguard the public and protect the irrigation companies. An ordinance has been adopted in Rich County protecting irrigation canal integrity by requiring stability analysis prior to building permit approval for structures within 33 feet and written approval by the canal company. Other companies meet together with city officials but on a less formal basis.

An electronic search was conducted of irrigation companies in Rich County with water rights. Contact information for each irrigation company is provided below.

Water Co.	Address	City	State	Zip	Pres.
Bear River Canal Co.	P.O. Box 69	Woodruff	Ut.		
Beckwith Quinn	P.O. Box 424	Randolph	Ut.	84064	Ralph Johnson
Booth Canal	P.O. Box 189	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	Charles Rex
Chapman Canal Co.	P.O. Box 250	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	
Cottonwood Water & Reservoir	P.O. Box 67	Laketown	Ut.		Nick Wamsley
Crawford Thompson	P.O. Box 189	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	Charles Rex
Deseret Land and Livestock	40 Main Ranch Way	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	
Dykins Canal	P.O. Box 183	Randolph	Ut.	84064	
Enberg Canal	P.O. Box 13	Laketown	Ut.		
Francis Lee Canal	P.O. Box 69	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	
Hodges Irrigation Co.	P.O. Box 251	Garden City	Ut.	84028	Brad Davis
Laketown Irrigation	P.O. Box 185	Laketown	Ut.		Eldon Robinson
Little Creek Reservoir Co.	P.O. Box 241	Randolph	Ut.	84064	Bryan Thompson
Lower Meadowville Canal	271 S. Meadowville Rd	Laketown	Ut.		
McMinn Canal	P.O. Box 74	Randolph	Ut.	84064	
Meadowville Canal Co.	P. O. Box 145	Laketown	Ut.	84038	Yale Johnson
Neville Canal Co.	part of putnam ranch				
Putnam Ranch	35 W. 100 S.	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	
Randolph and Sage Cr.	P.O. Box 181	Randolph	Ut	84064	Doug Hatch
Randolph and Woodruff Ext. Canal	P.O. Box 328	Randolph	Ut.	84064	
Randolph Irrigation Co.	P.O. Box 241	Randolph	Ut.	84064	Ben Argyle
Randolph Woodruff Canal Co.	P.O. Box 114	Randolph	Ut.	84064	GR Peart
Rees Land and Livestock	P.O. Box 185	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	
Rich County Otter Cr. Orr. Co	P.O. Box 216	Randoph	Ut.	84064	Bart Argyle
Round Valley Dam & Canal	P.O. Box 67	Laketown	Ut.	84064	Greg Wamsley
Swan Canal Co.	P.O. Box 251	Garden City	Ut.	84028	Kim Erikson
Swan Creek Canal Co.	P.O. Box 499	Garden City	Ut.	84028	Paul Webb
Woodruff Irrigation Co.	P.O. Box 142	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	Ocie Frazier
Woodruff Narrows Res. Co.	P.O. Box 142	Woodruff	Ut.	84086	Ralph Johnson

Canal companies and contact information in Rich County.

To curtail losses associated with agriculture, specifically the use of irrigation canals, pivots, and other piped conveyances the following actions have been implemented effectively in other areas.

🚜 Center Pivots

- **Low-Energy Precision Application (LEPA):** Replace high-pressure impact sprinklers with low-pressure drop nozzles that apply water close to the ground.
- **Drop Tubes & Socks:** Reduce evaporation and wind drift by delivering water just above the crop canopy or directly onto the soil.
- **Variable Rate Irrigation (VRI):** Use GPS and soil maps to apply different amounts of water across a field, reducing overwatering.
- **Pressure Regulation:** Install regulators to keep nozzle pressure consistent and reduce misting.
- **Maintenance:** Check for leaks, nozzle wear, and misalignment that waste water.

🚿 Handlines (Moveable Sprinkler Systems)

- **Low-Pressure Nozzles:** Upgrade to more efficient, lower-pressure nozzles to reduce evaporation.
- **Nozzle Spacing Optimization:** Ensure uniform overlap so some areas aren't overwatered while others are under-watered.
- **Scheduling Improvements:** Water in the early morning or evening to cut evaporative losses.
- **Reduce Set Time:** Shorter, more frequent sets can reduce runoff on sloped or compact soils.
- **Portable Soil Moisture Monitoring:** Adjust irrigation only when the soil actually needs water.

💧 Irrigation Canals

- **Lining Canals:** Concrete, plastic, or geomembrane linings prevent seepage losses.
- **Pipe Conversion:** Replacing open canals with buried pipelines eliminates evaporation and seepage entirely.
- **Automation & Control Gates:** Modern gates and sensors allow precise delivery, reducing excess flows.
- **Laser or GPS Leveling of Fields:** Ensures uniform distribution, reducing deep percolation losses.
- **Weed & Sediment Management:** Keeps canals clear to maintain flow efficiency.
- **On-Farm Water Storage & Tailwater Recovery:** Capture excess flows for reuse instead of letting them drain away.

The downside to maximizing irrigation efficiency is that irrigation water is used over and over as it makes its way to a final destination. Unlined irrigation canals convey water from a source to a sink. As the conveyance material is native soil, it is prone to leakage. Reuse of water has been used to provide life giving water to areas that historically had none.

In urbanizing areas of the county there is an effort to combine the efforts of recreational use, water conservation, and public safety. A foundation has been formed to create and maintain pedestrian pathways in and around the Bear Lake area specifically targeting irrigation canals as a priority. To support this effort, the county has recently formed a trail committee to map and improve all pedestrian pathways in Rich County. Membership in the committee consists of residents of Rich County and Garden City. A focus area where city and county officials will work together is the piping of existing irrigation canals within the town of Garden City. This effort will create pedestrian pathways, improve irrigation efficiency and reduce the probability of property damage from bank instability.

This is a winning solution for all parties as there is a growing demand for pathways that allow visitors to connect with the natural environment using level surfaces that provide commanding views of the Bear Lake area. Greater development pressure near irrigation canals creates opportunity for flooded basements or other property damage from leaky irrigation canals. Significant efficiencies will be gained as water conveyance systems will be contained and no longer subject to evaporative losses.

Total distance of irrigation canals in the town of Garden City area is approximately 10.5 miles spanning a distance of 8 miles.

Rotational grazing

Rich County has two rotational grazing programs that serve to improve soil moisture and consolidate water sources. Rotational grazing was developed as a practice on Deseret Land and Livestock to improve range conditions through grazing rotation on various pastures. This model was adapted to the Three Creeks area where significant improvements were made to improve grazing conditions and water conservation. Over 130 miles of pipe have been installed between water sources and troughs with an additional 50 miles of existing pipe replaced. Over 300 Water efficient troughs were installed that cycle water back to the source when not used. Grazing pastures are separated and 20% of those are rested each year which improves soil moisture and reduces evapotranspiration by maintaining greater pasture grass.

The Rich County Soil and Water Conservation District has taken a leadership role in water conservation practices that affect soil moisture and water efficiency. The district rents a no-till drill to farmers which helps to improve soil moisture conditions. Each year approximately 7-8 producers take advantage of this opportunity to participate.

They also administer the Agricultural Water Optimization Program which provides up to 50% match on various actions to enhance water efficiency. This program has two avenues to enhance efficiency: 1) through irrigation proposals for practices related to conveyance and 2) through flood irrigation and land leveling.

Funding sources:

Utah office of Outdoor Recreation

The Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG) is for new outdoor recreation infrastructure projects and helps communities build recreation amenities that support local economic development, tourism, and quality of life improvements for Utah's residents. Check out the program guide for more information on which types of projects UORG funds!

Recreational trails program

Funding Amount

- $10,000 - $200,000

Cycle Dates: The 2025 cycle is now closed. Check back for the next cycle dates

Eligible Applicants:

Municipalities, state agencies, federal agencies, non-profits and tribal governments

Contact Us:

- Evan Beitsch, Federal Grants Coordinator - ebeitsch@utah.gov (385) 835-0778

Environmental Quality Implementation Program

EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners to address natural resource concerns, such as:

- Improved water and air quality;
- Conserved ground and surface water;
- Increased soil health ;
- Reduced soil erosion and sedimentation;
- Improved or created wildlife habitat; and
- Mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility.

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/environmental-quality-incentives-program

The Utah Governors office of Planning and Budget provides a central clearinghouse for various funding sources that can be applied to water conservation efforts.

Board of Water Resources

The Board's Revolving Loan Funds provide low-interest loans to incorporated groups, such as mutual irrigation and water companies, municipalities, and other entities for many types of projects, including flood control projects. Interest rates and repayment terms are based on the Board's affordability guidelines and the project area's Median Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). Funding is not available for regular operation and maintenance, or where fewer than 50% of the residents live in the project area year-round, or for projects sponsored by developers, individuals or families.

https://water.utah.gov/development-branch/funding/

The Agriculture Resource and Development Loan Program (ARDL)

The ARDL program provides low-interest rate loans to agricultural producers, irrigation companies, and water conservancy districts for a wide variety of conservation projects. Loan applications for on farm equipment projects and irrigation improvement projects are common types of applications received for this program. ARDL Loans can be used to match Water Optimization Grants.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

The DWSRF provides low-interest loans and grants for drinking infrastructure and associated engineering and planning to public and non-profit water systems in Utah. Disadvantaged communities that meet hardship criteria can apply for a grant or principal forgiveness.

https://deq.utah.gov/drinking-water/federal-state-revolving-fund-srf-program-drinking-water

Permanent Community Impact Board (CIB)

The CIB works to maximize the long-term benefit of funds from mineral lease revenues and bonus payments, with priority given to those communities designated as impacted by the development of natural resources covered by the Mineral Leasing Act. Political Subdivisions as defined in state statute may apply for this funding.

https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/community/cib/index.html

Department of Natural Resources

https://naturalresources.utah.gov/dnr-newsfeed/utah-100-million-gallons-water-saved