Utah's Coordinated Action Plan for Water

Vibrant Communities

April 2022

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Utah is committed to using our existing water supply as wisely as possible, reducing the amount of water used in our communities, and ensuring the continued vibrancy, success, and growth of the state's cities and towns.

Introduction

Utah's enviable economic success and unmatched quality of life have not gone unnoticed. Year after year, Utah continues to be one of the fastest-growing states in the nation. While this growth expands economic and cultural opportunities, it also requires thoughtful planning to ensure wise use of limited natural resources. No natural resource has shaped development in Utah more than water. While modern water storage and delivery systems have allowed our state to develop and thrive in a semi-arid climate, continued efforts will be needed to ensure adequate supplies of high-quality water for municipal, agricultural, recreational, wildlife, and commercial uses.

Just as water shaped settlement patterns throughout our state's history, water continues to play a critical role in shaping the vitality and vibrancy of our communities today. Vibrant communities thrive on access to jobs, recreational opportunities, diverse housing options, and supporting an economically healthy agriculture sector. Water quantity and quality are foundational to enabling this vibrancy.

Maintaining vibrant communities will require a holistic approach to water management. This includes conserving, managing, and becoming more efficient with our existing supplies, developing new water supplies, optimizing agricultural water, innovating water rights agreements that benefit both agriculture and the environment, integrating water with land use planning and development standards, ensuring there is adequate drinking water capacity, implementing stormwater management, ensuring fiscal sustainability while maintaining infrastructure, setting optimal water rates, and considering downstream users and water quality impacts.

Utah's rapid population growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future; however, the amount of water available to supply that growth is limited. Just as we owe much of our prosperity to the investments and efforts of past generations, proactive planning and strategic investments will allow us to prepare for growth in a way that maintains and amplifies attractive communities, economic growth and opportunities for all, abundant recreation, and strong ecosystems.

State Priorities

The state has an interest in facilitating livable and beautiful communities. Facilitating this vibrancy requires that we manage and plan our water systems in a way that supports:

- Economic opportunities for all
- Attractive, livable communities
- Clean drinking water
- Water-based recreation
- Healthy ecosystems and waterways
- Thriving agriculture

To achieve these outcomes in Utah's semi-arid climate, purposeful coordination and strategic investments must be made. Utah must:

- **Integrate land use planning and water planning.** While it may have been possible in the past for land use planning to occur separately from water planning, future land use decisions must take water into consideration. The Division of Water Resources is currently working with The Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy at the Lincoln Land Institute to find ways to more fully integrate water and land use planning in Utah. In 2021, the legislature approved $270,000 to fund this effort.

  The design and density of our communities impacts the amount of water and infrastructure needed for landscaping and residential uses. Considering water use and infrastructure costs in planning and designing our cities can save water, land, and investment dollars. This will make water system management more efficient and cost-effective.

  While local governments have the primary responsibility for directing local land use decisions, state law establishes certain elements that must be included as part of a community's general plan. With the passage of SB 110, *Water as Part of General Plan* (M. McKell), in the 2022 General Legislative Session, counties and municipalities are now required to include a water use and preservation element as well as drinking water source and storage capacity in their general plan.

- **Harness market mechanisms to promote optimal economic growth and decision-making.** Communities should consider how the economic factors of supply, demand, and price impact the allocation of water as a scarce resource across agriculture, households, firms, recreation outlets, and other uses. If a community's economic development strategy is not integrated with these foundational principles of market structures, achieving positive, robust, and durable economic outcomes will be challenging.

- **Invest in conservation programs such as secondary water metering, turf removal programs, smart irrigation timers, and plumbing fixture rebates.** The state has set a goal to reduce per capita water use by 25 percent by 2025 (Utah Division of Water Resources, 2019). The state has also developed regional water conservation goals that call for additional water conservation beyond 2025 (Utah Division of Water Resources, 2019). Recent legislation requires water suppliers to incorporate these regional goals into their Water Conservation Plans (SB 89, *Water Amendments* (J. Iwamoto)). To support the achievement of these goals, policies and incentives must be implemented across the state to ensure wise use of our water resources. Unprecedented state funding has been allocated to these efforts in recent years—including $250 million for secondary meter installation, $5 million for turf removal efforts, and $5.25 million for water-saving devices. The state collaborates with water conservancy districts and other local governments to leverage this funding. Water is a finite resource in Utah.

We have a shared responsibility to manage it wisely to enable continued growth.

- **Recognize the importance of water in outdoor recreation and wildlife management and align goals and resources accordingly.** Participation in outdoor recreation has grown significantly in recent years and represents an increasingly important economic sector. Many outdoor activities are water-based or enhanced by the presence of water. In addition to fishers, boaters, and swimmers, waterways draw joggers, bikers, and wildlife watchers—contributing to a community's vibrancy while also providing an urban sanctuary. As Utah's population grows and becomes increasingly urbanized, close-to-home recreational opportunities will become increasingly important in our communities. Riparian areas are often ideal areas for trails and parks while also offering prime wildlife habitats and migration corridors. Additionally, public-private partnerships, such as the Division of Wildlife Resources' Walk-In Access and Community Fisheries programs or conservation easement funding through the LeRay McAllister Critical Lands Conservation Program, can provide win-win opportunities that incentivize communities and landowners to maintain working agriculture, open spaces, and recreational opportunities that also serve as wildlife habitat and flood plains in proximity to our growing urban and rural communities.

- **Rehabilitate urban waterways.** Urban waterways can provide a unique amenity that improves quality of life, spurs economic development and urban renewal, and encourages outdoor recreation. Unfortunately, many of our urban waterways have been subjected to years of neglect. Communities throughout the state have demonstrated the benefits of urban stream restoration. Ogden City, in collaboration with the Division of Wildlife and others, invested significant resources into the Ogden River Restoration Project. The effort removed more than 6,000 tons of recyclable debris, 9,000 tons of trash, 7 automobiles, 2,500 tires, and 200 batteries from the river and floodplain. Additionally, the city's innovative efforts improved fish habitat, provided flood control, and expanded active transportation opportunities. The Ogden River is now a crucial asset in revitalizing Ogden's downtown and attracting businesses and residents alike (Adopt a River, Ogden).

- **Provide state leadership through education and training resources to highlight and share best practices, policies, and plans that have proven successful in improving water management in our state.** The state can assist local governments, individuals, and businesses in minimizing their water consumption. These resources may include case studies or model plans and ordinances.

- **Innovate new technologies to protect our water quality.** As population grows and water supplies decline, it will be necessary to improve and increase wastewater treatment to maintain current water quality. Improving the quality of water beyond current levels will take a deliberate investment of resources and focus, but will result in clean and attractive communities, recreational areas, and ecosystems.

- **Recognize the importance of water in the agricultural industry and align goals and resources accordingly.** Agriculture, or the production of food, fiber, and resources, is an essential industry that makes our modern economy and life possible. The farming and ranching lifestyle is an iconic aspect of Utah's heritage and continues to play an important role in many Utah communities. As Utah's population grows, the state and local communities must work to balance decisions about land and water

use to ensure we meet both our agricultural production and future drinking water needs. A critical component of this will be continued agricultural optimization efforts to reduce the consumptive use of water.

The Role of the State

While many of the decisions that impact planning, development, and water use happen at the local government level, effective management and use of water resources takes collaboration across all levels of government and the private sector. Each entity has a role to play in creating vibrant and resilient communities.

The state of Utah has identified three primary roles in planning for and managing the state's water future:

1. **Preparing the state for growth.** To support vibrant communities, Utah must prepare statewide and basin-level water resource planning, and the establishment of conservation goals. All communities must have access to safe and reliable drinking water. A common misconception is that to support the increasing demand for municipal and industrial water in Utah, we must shrink our state's agricultural sector. This is a false choice. By continuing to fund agriculture water optimization projects that result in reduced consumptive use, we can meet both farm and non-farm water needs in Utah. In some instances, optimizing agricultural water use may create the opportunity for this water to become available for municipal or other uses.

2. **Protecting important public resources.** Cities and towns must understand their quantity of water and maintain water quality for a wide range of beneficial uses including agricultural uses, recreation, drinking water, and aquatic wildlife. While water in Utah is public, a regulated system of water rights governs the use of this public resource. As part of its statutory mandate, the Division of Water Rights maintains a publicly available central repository for all rights to the use of Utah's water (waterrights.utah.gov). Administrative supervision of water rights protects resources and provides order and certainty of use.

3. **Assisting in the development of projects that require the convening and facilitation power of the state.** Since political boundaries do not align with watersheds, water management requires significant regional and statewide coordination and cooperation. The state can play a convening role and provide forums for stakeholder engagement. For instance, HB 166, *Watershed Councils* (T. Hawkes), created a statewide watershed council and the opportunity for 12 basin councils. While these councils have no regulatory or enforcement authority, they can play a valuable role in bringing together balanced stakeholders to tailor solutions to the unique needs of our state and its distinct regions.

   This facilitating role can also include water conservation education, development of technical assistance tools, promotion of best practices, discussion forums, or assistance in developing ordinances, source protection plans, or infrastructure reviews. It also means setting an example for Utah communities to follow, such as implementing low water use landscaping at state facilities. The Division of Water Resources irrigation guide can provide region-specific information on the amount of irrigation needed for parks and other landscaping (conservewater.utah.gov). State assistance is particularly beneficial in small communities with limited staffing. The state can play a supportive role to businesses, homeowners, and individuals by providing education and financial incentives that enable wise water use in each of our communities.

Conservation

Meeting the water needs of a growing Utah depends on every Utahn making a concerted effort to conserve water. Meaningful conservation actions can occur at the state, regional, local, neighborhood, business, and household levels.

Conservation at the State Level:

Conservation at a state level includes investing state resources into conservation programs and water-saving infrastructure and providing leadership.

- **Resources -** The state has played an active role in assisting homeowners with conserving water. The Utah Water Savers program—in cooperation with Utah's water conservancy districts—offers financial incentives and rebates for homeowners who install water-efficient plumbing fixtures or purchase smart irrigation timers (utahwatersavers.com). The legislature appropriated $5 million during the 2022 General Session to reimburse homeowners, business owners, and institutional water users who replace all or part of their turf with drought-resistant plants (HB 121, *Water Conservation Modifications* (R. Spendlove)). The Flip Your Strip program, which incentivizes residents to remove turf from their park strip (the area that lies between the sidewalk and the street) can save anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 gallons of water per year (Flip Your Strip, utahwatersavers.com). The state will earmark over $100 million in Fiscal Year 2022 in state collected general sales taxes to support various water programs and projects.

  The Slow the Flow campaign, a partnership between the Utah Division of Water Resources and the state's large water conservation districts was initiated nearly 20 years ago (slowtheflow.org). It has been successful in educating Utah residents on ways to reduce their individual and household water consumption. In addition to providing targeted conservation messaging through regular and seasonal advertising, the program offers a lawn watering guide, tips for reducing internal and external water use, information about rebate programs, and more.

  In addition, the Division of Water Resources is in the process of developing a program to advance the integration of water and land use planning (Division of Water Resources). Phase I of the effort produced the "Integrated Water and Land Use Planning Assessment Framework" (Division of Water Resources, 2021). Phase 2 will focus on collaborative approaches and practical application efforts as demonstrated in pilot cases by municipalities, counties, and other stakeholders.

- **Infrastructure Investments -** The state has invested $250 million to accelerate the installation of secondary water meters to measure non-potable irrigation water to protect drinking water supplies. Based on analysis from the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District, there was a reduction of 22-40 percent in water use when secondary meters were installed on residential connections (2018).

- **Leadership -** As the third-largest statewide employer and the second-largest land manager, managing more than 10 percent of the state's land area, the state government has an important role to play in many communities throughout the state (Department of Workforce Services, 2021). Residents take note of how state buildings use water. Through careful implementation of best practices, state buildings can become attractive demonstrations of wise stewardship of water resources. HB 121, *Water Conservation Modifications* (R. Spendlove), requires the state to implement certain conservation measures at state buildings, such as following recommended

watering schedules, implementing a leak detection and repair program, and limiting turf to 20 percent in buildings constructed after 2022.

Conservation at the Local Government Level:
Most non-agricultural water use occurs at the municipal level. Cities and counties have the authority to establish standards and expectations for how their communities grow–and consequently, how much water they use. Locally elected officials shape land and water use by crafting long-term visions and plans for our communities and implementing them through daily development decisions. Additionally, political subdivisions own and maintain much of the state's water infrastructure.

Within these roles of local governments, there are ample opportunities to promote and advance water conservation:

- **Planning, Zoning, and Building Codes -** The way we grow and develop our land has significant long-term impacts on our water demand. Outdoor water use for landscaping irrigation comprises the largest portion of household water use. Smaller lot sizes and waterwise landscaping ordinances can result in significantly less outdoor water use. Multi-family housing results in less outdoor water use per household than a typical single-family detached home. Local governments set the vision for the future of our communities through a local general plan and land use ordinance which determines allowable uses of land, types and density of housing, location and types of commercial and industrial development, landscaping requirements, and stormwater infrastructure that will be built.

  In addition to understanding and adapting to the preferences of growing residential populations, cities must also coordinate with water managers to ensure adequate water supplies. Developments and landscaping set the stage for water use for generations to come, and localities should consider that plumbing fixtures are often in use for decades once installed.

  Proactive, thoughtful planning and ordinances that consider the impacts to a community's water future are imperative to ensure vibrancy. Communities should consider the impacts of current landscaping ordinances, building setbacks, building codes, and stormwater requirements to find appropriate ways to make meaningful adjustments that will positively impact water use within the community. Thoughtful ordinances can mitigate downstream impacts on water quality and quantity.

- **Water Infrastructure and Pricing -** Nearly all water and sewer infrastructure in Utah is owned or managed by local governments, and these same entities often establish water rates as well. Between optimally pricing water use, clearly communicating how water is funded, and building water infrastructure, municipalities and water districts have the opportunity to conserve a tremendous amount of water. Funding is available at the state and federal levels for construction and implementation of conservation infrastructure.

  Brigham City is using existing water rights for aquifer storage and recovery. The city diverts water into a series of injection wells, which is later recovered for use. Aquifer recharge and aquifer storage and recovery reduce evaporation losses, improve the integrity and health of groundwater aquifers, and store water for future use.

  Provo City is developing infrastructure that will allow the city to manage surface and groundwater supplies to achieve the greatest benefit for the city and its citizens. The city plans to construct a new treatment plant near the Provo River and pump the

treated water through existing infrastructure and new pipes to the mouth of Rock Canyon. During periods of low demand, the city will release water into the normally dry streambed of Rock Creek, where it will infiltrate into the aquifer for future use. This unique aquifer storage project will allow Provo City to use its surface water rights on the Provo River, and help ensure the long-term sustainability of its groundwater rights.

The city of Santaquin constructed a water reclamation facility in 2013 to save on outdoor water use in the city. Municipal wastewater from residential homes and commercial businesses is piped to the facility. The wastewater is treated in an advanced treatment facility to a level that can be used for outdoor irrigation. 25 percent of Santaquin's outdoor water needs are met from this system. (Source: Norm Beagley, Assistant City Manager, Santaquin City) This type of infrastructure is an important contribution to water conservation in the state.

Transportation infrastructure can also impact the water cycle. Normal pavement such as concrete or asphalt does not allow water to seep through and recharge the groundwater aquifers. This type of pavement can also increase floodwaters by concentrating stormwater runoff. Pervious pavement, by contrast, is a type of pavement that allows storm water to seep through and enter the ground and can recharge the aquifers and reduce stormwater runoff. Using pervious pavement is also a more efficient land use type because it reduces the need for retention ponds, basins, or other stormwater management areas (Pervious Concrete Pavement).

- **Leadership -** Local government elected officials and staff can provide critical leadership that is tailored to their community's unique needs. Local leaders set the tone for community planning and can engage with local residents to encourage wise stewardship of water resources. Additionally, community facilities, such as public buildings and parks, can serve as demonstration areas for attractive water-wise landscaping that is appropriate to the local climate and water resources. While turf at parks may require substantial irrigation, communities can use best practices to irrigate wisely while providing green spaces for residents to enjoy as an alternative to individual yards—particularly in urban settings.

  Local governments can also amplify education for homeowners and businesses. In cooperation with Utah State University Extension, cities can provide information on drought-tolerant plants that are suited to Utah's soils and climate (extension.usu.edu). In addition to informing irrigation for localities, the Division of Water Resources irrigation guide can help homeowners and businesses make informed decisions based on current climate conditions (conservewater.utah.gov).

Conservation at the Business, Neighborhood, and Household Level

Each business, household, and individual in our state impacts water use. We all have a role to play in water conservation to ensure the long-term vibrancy of our communities.

- **Water Efficient Landscaping, Fixtures, and Practices -** Our total water use is the cumulative effect of a myriad of individual decisions. Each homeowner and business can make a positive contribution by making water-wise choices when installing new plumbing fixtures or landscaping. Well-designed products and landscaping result in significant water savings without losing functionality. Incentive programs or rebates can be effective in motivating

individuals to implement these types of conservation efforts.

The Utah Water Savers program maintains a list of current rebates and programs geared toward homeowners (utahwatersavers.com). Replacing aging toilets with newer low-flow models can save water with each flush. Similarly, replacing a traditional irrigation timer with a smart timer provides the convenience of a smartphone interface with the ability to automatically adjust watering schedules to adapt to real-time weather information. The Flip Your Strip program results in long-term water savings by providing financial incentives for removing non-functional turf areas (Flip Your Strip, Utah Water Savers). The Localscapes program prioritizes aesthetically pleasing and functional designs in a manner that requires much less water than traditional landscaping, demonstrating that water conservation can be an attractive option (localscapes.com).

Policy Issues

Economic Growth and Water

Utah's competitive tax structure, highly-educated workforce, accumulated social capital, investments in public infrastructure, smart regulations, entrepreneurial spirit, natural growth and migration patterns, and pragmatic government policies have made the state's economy one of the most successful in the country. Workers and businesses have prospered in our state, supporting Utah's growing and thriving communities. Adequate water is a necessary condition for Utah's continued economic growth.

As Utah's population and economy expand, water considerations must be an ongoing part of economic development and land use planning to ensure that state and community goals and resources are aligned. Utah currently has among the lowest water and sewer prices in the nation because our population is located close to high-quality water supplies. Some of the full cost of water at a household or business level may be included within property tax rates, which is less visible to the water user, and therefore and not connected to water use. As businesses make expansion and relocation decisions in Utah, the cost of water as an input to production will shape the industrial mix and make-up of our state's local economies. In turn, these decisions have implications for job growth, tax revenue collections, water availability for non-commercial purposes, and general social and economic well-being. Without efficient water usage that takes into account the equilibrium price of water at given levels of use, water will increasingly become a constraint on long-term economic growth.

Transbasin Delivery and Directing Growth

Initial settlements in Utah were shaped by existing water availability. Modern storage and delivery methods have allowed for growth to take place further from water sources. Interbasin water transfers have been vital to the economic growth of the Wasatch Front and have allowed Utah to utilize its share of the Colorado River in our most populous regions. Additionally, interbasin transfers increase the resilience of the water supply by decreasing a region's reliance on a single watershed. By expanding the area from which a region can draw water, each region becomes less impacted by low precipitation or snowpack in a localized area. While these interbasin transfers provide significant benefits, it will be crucial that potential outcomes are fully understood to mitigate unintended negative impacts to agriculture, the environment, or the economies and communities in the originating basins.

While interbasin transfers remain an important water management strategy, the state can also facilitate remote work and economic development in rural areas with closer proximity to potential water supplies. Facilitating growth in originating basins is one option to leverage existing infrastructure, bolster rural economies, and reduce infrastructure costs - providing more affordable options for residents and increasing

the vibrancy of rural communities.

Energy and Water

Energy enables vibrant communities. Most of our current energy sources require water. In the face of growing demand for both water and energy and decreasing water supplies due to drought and a changing climate, it will become increasingly important to understand the water and energy nexus.

The state and private entities must understand the impact of emerging energy technologies on water supplies and the water cycle. The Division of Water Rights has been tasked under HB 393, *Water Reporting Amendments* (J. Ferry), with conducting a study to better understand how emerging energy technologies may impact the water cycle. HB 168, *Preferences for Water Rights Amendments* (C. Albrecht), also addresses the nexus between water, drought, and competing needs.

Water Quality

Vibrant communities thrive on high-quality water, in their homes, businesses, and environment. Utah is fortunate to derive most of its water from mountain snowpack and groundwater, waters that are clean, pure, and mostly unaffected by upstream users. The ways that we use water to grow our communities and economy affect the quality of our downstream water, which has become increasingly important for our future. Communities must work together and with the state to:

- Protect upstream waters with healthy watersheds,
- Protect groundwater aquifers and recharge areas from sources of pollution,
- Protect and restore downstream waters from wastewater and stormwater pollutants, and
- Balance effluent water reuse opportunities with instream flow benefits.

Prioritization in a Crisis

Recent research shows that the current drought is the most severe that our region has experienced in 1,200 years (Harvey, 2022). If this trend continues to persist and the population continues to grow, the western United States will face difficult decisions. This includes determining who receives priority for water if all legal rights cannot be met with available water supplies.

HB 231, *Water Rights Priorities in Times of Shortage* (K. Gibson), from the 2010 General Legislative Session enacted Utah Code 73-3-21.1 to establish direction for the Division of Water Rights if a temporary water shortage occurs. HB 168, *Preferences of Water Rights Amendments* (C. Albrecht), from the 2022 General Legislative Session requires the Division of Water Rights to evaluate this state code and make recommendations to improve the state's crisis response procedures to minimize harm.

Action Plan

Previous water planning efforts have identified over 200 unique recommendations to better secure Utah's water future. The implementation of many of these recommendations will require changes to state water law, other legislative actions, or partnerships with non-state entities. The intent of this report is to identify specific actions that Utah's executive branch can undertake immediately to help move some of these many recommendations forward.

Many of the water needs of Utah's communities are related to infrastructure. The Investing in Infrastructure chapter of this report addresses these needs. This chapter includes action plans for continuing to invest in water infrastructure, conservation incentive programs, and secondary water meters.

The state has identified six key priority actions, and associated implementation steps, to advance Utah's strategic goal to support vibrant communities:

ACTION 1 Determine and quantify the contributions that increasing water use efficiencies and conservation, including water rates, can make to future water supplies.

ACTION 2 Continue to expand secondary metering throughout the state, along with education for Utah residents on the importance of water conservation.

ACTION 3 Initiate and facilitate ongoing conversations to link economic growth strategies with improved and reduced water usage.

ACTION 4 Assist local governments with the development of plans, ordinances, policies, regulations, and programs to link land use and water planning, encourage conservation, improve water quality, and protect drinking water.

ACTION 5 Assist local governments with the implementation of low-impact development and stormwater treatment systems to reduce pollution from development and increase conservation.

ACTION 6 Look for opportunities for water initiatives to serve multiple goals and priorities for communities, including water quality, outdoor recreation access, and wildlife management.

ACTION 1 Determine and quantify the contributions that increasing water use efficiencies and conservation, including water rates, can make to future water supplies.

TASK Evaluate and review existing research and identify data gaps

Champion: DNR Executive Director
Timeline: Spring 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Critical information, data, or knowledge gaps have been identified

TASK Develop a research proposal, scope of work, and budget

Champion: DNR Executive Director, DWRe
Timeline: Spring 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: A scope of work and research needs have been identified

TASK Governor's budget and policy review, and corresponding recommendations

Champion: DWRe, GOPB
Timeline: Fall/Winter 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Consensus interpretation of data gaps, research proposal, and corresponding resource needs

TASK Procurement of technical consulting assistance, if necessary

Champion: DWRe
Timeline: Spring 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential consulting contract
Benchmark: Contractor is under contract, or DWRe staff time has been assigned to project, and project is advancing

ACTION 2 Continue to expand secondary metering throughout the state.

TASK Develop secondary water metering program rules

Champion: DNR Executive Director in collaboration with DEQ Executive Director
Timeline: Spring 2022
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, up to five (5) additional FTEs to develop and manage program
Benchmark: Program rules have been established and adopted

TASK Promote program availability and solicit applications

Champion: DNR Executive Director
Timeline: Spring 2022
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Program is publicly available and applications are being received

TASK Evaluate applications and award funds

Champion: Board of Water Resources
Timeline: Summer 2022-ongoing
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Program funding is being dispersed to local governments

TASK Track implementation and reporting

Champion: DNR Executive Director in collaboration with GOPB
Timeline: Ongoing
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Program funds are being implemented as intended

TASK Identify any funding gaps between available resources and the needs of local governments

Champion: DNR Executive Director
Timeline: Summer 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Funding gap for meter implementation is known and can be demonstrated with data

TASK Evaluate the need for expansion of the secondary metering program

Champion: DNR Executive Director and GOPB
Timeline: Fall 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, up to five (5) additional FTEs to develop and manage program
Benchmark: Program rules have been established and adopted

TASK Governor's Budget Recommendations and legislative budget process, if necessary

Champion: GOPB
Timeline: Fall/Winter 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Budget has been submitted to GOPB

ACTION 3 Initiate and facilitate ongoing conversations to link economic growth strategies with improved and reduced water usage.

TASK Identify a facilitator to design and conduct a situational assessment

Champion: Go Utah Executive Director in collaboration with DNR Executive Director, State Planning Coordinator (GOPB), and GOPB Chief Economist
Timeline: Spring 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential contractor
Benchmark: Facilitator identified and assessment process defined

TASK Conduct a Situational Assessment to identify stakeholders, build relationships, and gauge their willingness to engage in a collaborative process to explore the relationship between water availability and consumption and economic growth

Champion: Go Utah Executive Director in collaboration with DNR Executive Director, State Planning Coordinator (GOPB), and Chief Economist (GOPB)
Timeline: Spring 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential contractor assistance
Benchmark: Assessment completed

TASK If the Situational Assessment suggests stakeholders readiness, design a collaborative process around addressing the relationships between economic development and water policy

Champion: Go Utah Executive Director in collaboration with DNR Executive Director, State Planning Coordinator (GOPB), and Chief Economist (GOPB)
Timeline: Spring 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential contractor assistance
Benchmark: Agreed-upon scope of work and identification of resource needs

TASK Implement collaborative process

Champion: Go Utah Executive Director in collaboration with DNR Executive Director, State Planning Coordinator, and GOPB Chief Economist
Timeline: Summer 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential contractor assistance
Benchmark: A robust conversation about the nexus of economic growth and water is occurring

ACTION 4

Assist local governments with the development of plans, ordinances, policies, regulations, and programs to link land use and water planning, encourage conservation, improved water quality, and protect drinking water.

TASK Develop land use and water planning integration curriculum

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: 2022
Resources needed: Existing Babbitt Center contract, dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Program curriculum is approved

TASK Promote the program and solicit applications from local governments

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: 2022
Resources needed: Existing Babbitt Center contract, dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Local governments are aware of the program availability and applications are being received

TASK Implement land use and water integration workshops

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: 2022
Resources needed: Existing Babbitt Center contract, dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Workshops with local governments are underway

TASK Provide technical assistance to partner communities with the development of local action plans

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: 2023
Resources needed: Existing Babbitt Center contract, dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Workshop participants are developing local action plans with assistance from the state

TASK Provide technical assistance to partner communities with the implementation of their action plans

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: 2024
Resources needed: Existing Babbitt Center contract, dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Workshop participants are implementing local action plans with assistance from the state

TASK Evaluate the merits of expanding the program

Champion: DNR Executive Director, Babbitt Center
Timeline: Fall 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time

TASK Governor's Budget Recommendations and legislative budget process, if necessary

Champion: GOPB
Timeline: Fall/Winter 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Approved budget for project

ACTION 5 Assist local governments with implementation of low impact development and/or stormwater treatment systems to reduce pollution from new and existing development.

TASK Conduct an inventory of existing stormwater systems and their conditions

Champion: DEQ Executive Director
Timeline: Spring 2024/2025
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: An inventory of stormwater system needs is complete

TASK Conduct a prioritization process to identify the most critical stormwater system needs and funding gaps

Champion: DEQ Executive Director
Timeline: 2025
Resouces needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: A prioritized list of stormwater treatment needs is completed and funding gaps are documented

TASK Bring stakeholders together to explore creating a mechanism to fund and address the stormwater treatment needs

Champion: DEQ Executive Director
Timeline: 2025
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Key stakeholders are working together to discuss the importance of water quality within communities and exploring mechanisms to fund critical needs

ACTION 6

Look for opportunities for water initiatives to serve multiple goals and priorities for communities, including water quality, outdoor recreation access, and wildlife management.

TASK Identify outdoor recreation, wildlife, and water quality programs and funding sources that communities could utilize and combine when planning water initiatives

Champion: DNR Executive Director, DEQ Executive Director, State Planning Coordinator (GOPB)
Timeline: Summer 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time
Benchmark: Evaluation completed

TASK Review state programs that can preserve, protect, or provide access to riparian corridors and waterways on private lands and develop recommendations on how they can be improved from a water standpoint

Champion: DNR Executive Director, UDAF Commissioner, Utah Land Conservation Board
Timeline: Spring 2024
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, LeRay McAllister Critical Land Fund, Walk-In Access program
Benchmark: Recommendations produced

TASK Evaluate how to work with/assist communities to improve waterways and riparian corridors to improve outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem services

Champion: DNR Executive Director, UDAF, DEQ
Timeline: Spring 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, Babbit center contract, potential additional FTE or funding for contract assistance, project specific funding (e.g. Ogden River Restoration)
Benchmark: Technical assistance program established, technical resources available on state websites or publications

TASK Develop strategy and tool to identify and prioritize waterbodies vulnerable to harmful algal blooms (HABs) for prevention and mitigation to minimize impacts to drinking water, recreation, wildlife, and agriculture

Champion: DEQ Executive Director, DNR Executive Director, UDAF Commissioner
Timeline: Fall 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential project specific funding requests
Benchmark: A statewide strategy and tool that prioritizes waterbodies to receive assistance in prevention or mitigation from HABs

TASK Development and outreach of strategic land use /in-lake actions to prevent and mitigate harmful algal blooms (HAB) to minimize impacts to drinking water, recreation, wildlife, and agriculture

Champion: DEQ Executive Director, DNR Executive Director, UDAF Commissioner
Timeline: Fall 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, potential project specific funding requests
Benchmark: A HAB prevention and treatment plan for local government

TASK Integrate water quality considerations into outdoor recreation funding applications and outreach materials

Champion: DWQ Director, Director of Division of Recreation
Timeline: Winter 2023
Resources needed: Dedicated staff time, printing costs
Benchmark: State outreach materials and grant applications include water quality and access considerations

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