



GIP AND WATERSHED: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
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ISSUE BRIEF

The purpose of this brief is to provide updated information about the Grazing Improvement Program and the Watershed Restoration Program. The document includes programs description, identifies major similarities and differences, provides funding flowchart, and includes areas where the two programs have worked jointly.

Grazing Improvement Program

The Grazing Improvement Program (GIP) was created in FY 2007. The program is managed by the Department of Agriculture and Food and its mission is: “To improve the productivity, health and sustainability of our rangelands and watersheds.”

Staff

A portion of the funding appropriated by the Legislature is used to fund 4.75 FTE (on average over the years): a director and GIP coordinators. The GIP staff has the responsibility to take applications from producers and develop projects, along with costs, maps, and management plans. Coordinators are responsible for following up to make sure projects are complete so that payments can be made. They are also responsible for giving technical advice and expertise.

Process

GIP has the following process for deciding which projects are to be funded:

1. Landowner or permittee applies for a project by contacting the regional coordinator. At times they are assisted by staff from federal agencies (NRCS, BLM, US Forest Service) or SITLA rangeland management specialists to develop a proposal. A completed project has to include: goals/objectives, project description, monitoring and follow-up management plan, budget, maps and shape files.
2. GIP coordinators and partners rank the proposed projects. Each of the six Regional Grazing Advisory Boards meets to review and make recommendations on projects.
3. The State Grazing Board meets to review and make recommendations on projects.
4. Projects are sent to the Resource Development Coordinating Committee (a clearinghouse for information on activities affecting state and public lands), which gives other agencies an opportunity to comment on projects.
5. The Commissioner of Agriculture approves the use of GIP funding for projects.
6. GIP coordinators manage the projects, work with landowners and permittees to submit payments and prepare completion reports.

Funding

The funding for the administration of GIP is included in the Agriculture Administration line item, and the money for the projects is appropriated in a separate line item, the Rangeland Improvement line item. The total funding for GIP appropriated by the Legislature between FY 2007 and FY 2014 is \$17 million (see

figure on p. 5). This amount includes funding from the General Fund (appropriated directly and through the Rangeland Improvement Restricted Account), ARDL Restricted Account, Federal Funds, and Dedicated Credits. The total funding contributed by GIP partners for the same period is \$13.6 million.

Performance Measures

GIP is using the following performance measures:

- Acres impacted (in addition to the number of acres treated, it includes the estimated impact on the adjacent areas),
- Number of Annual Unit Month (AUM) affected, and
- Technical assistance (number of producers receiving technical assistance).

Watershed Restoration Initiative Program

The Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) program, housed in the Department of Natural Resources, is a broad partnership with the mission: “To conserve, restore and manage ecosystems in priority areas across the state to enhance Utah's:

- wildlife and biological diversity;
- water quality and yield for all uses; and
- opportunities for sustainable uses.”

The WRI was developed to restore and improve Utah’s watersheds by bringing together state, federal, and private land owners, NGOs, and land-management organizations to coordinate efforts and share resources. The WRI’s goals and direction are set at the state level but projects are developed, reviewed, and ranked at a local level through five regional teams.

Staff

The funding appropriated to WRI by the Legislature is used to fund only one employee, the WRI Director. The director’s responsibilities include: working with partners to identify needs, opportunities, and progress of projects; seeking new partners and funding sources; developing new measures of success; participating in project review meetings; recommending funding for projects; and monitoring research for new watershed restoration methods.

The WRI Director is not the only administrative staff in the process. The program extensively uses administrative staff employed by their partners. For example, the WRI is supported by two staff (habitat coordinator and database specialist) employed by the Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) who carry-out many of the detailed needs of the partnership, including contracting, coordinating partner funding, tracking project status from the proposal stage to completion, maintaining the WRI database, and providing technical assistance with projects. Also, DWR staff at the Seed Warehouse in Ephraim provides major logistical and technical support. All project proponents and managers are employed by partners, and all of the chairs of the regional teams and members of the project ranking committees come from partner agencies.

Process

WRI has the following process for deciding which standard projects are to be funded:

1. A project is submitted to the WRI database.
2. The project proposal is reviewed preliminarily and receives feedback in the database.
3. All completed project proposals are presented to one of the five Regional Teams (15-30 participants) at an open meeting.
4. Regional Teams vote to move project ahead for ranking or return for additional work.
5. Regional Ranking Committee evaluates and ranks project (numeric and then high-medium-low) using standardized scoring criteria.
6. WRI Director assigns matching funding from other partners. Often the money from partners ends up funding the entire project without any need to use the WRI appropriations from the Legislature.
7. DNR Executive Director approves use of WRI funding.
8. Project manager completes project, submits invoices for payment, and prepares completion report on final methods, acres treated, and costs, including in-kind contributions.

In addition to standard projects, WRI coordinates rehabilitation on state and private lands and participates with federal agencies on rehabilitation on federal lands following wild fires. Due to the short window of opportunities for rehabilitating a burned area in the fall and early winter, an abbreviated evaluation process is used, skipping steps 3-5 above.

Funding

The total funding appropriated by the Legislature for the Watershed program between FY 2006 and FY 2014 is \$19 million. This funding is a combination of direct appropriations from the General Fund and from the state's sales tax labeled as Dedicated Credits. During this same period, the WRI partners brought \$113 million for watershed projects.

Performance Measures

The WRI program uses the following measures:

- Acres treated.
- Funding leverage.
- Number of partners.
- Acres of high fire risk lands restored to a more fire resistant and resilient condition.
- Number of acres/miles of firebreaks installed to limit the spread of wild fire.
- Number of acres of impaired rangeland restored to a better functioning condition.
- Number of miles of streams and riparian areas restored to a more properly functioning condition.
- Number of acres of habitat impacted by wild fire and unlikely to recover naturally that are improved or restored.
- Number of miles of streams and riparian areas habitat impacted by wild fire and unlikely to recover naturally that are improved or restored.
- Acres of Greater Sage-grouse habitat improved or created to prevent the need to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act.
- Increased pounds of forage produced as a result of completed projects.

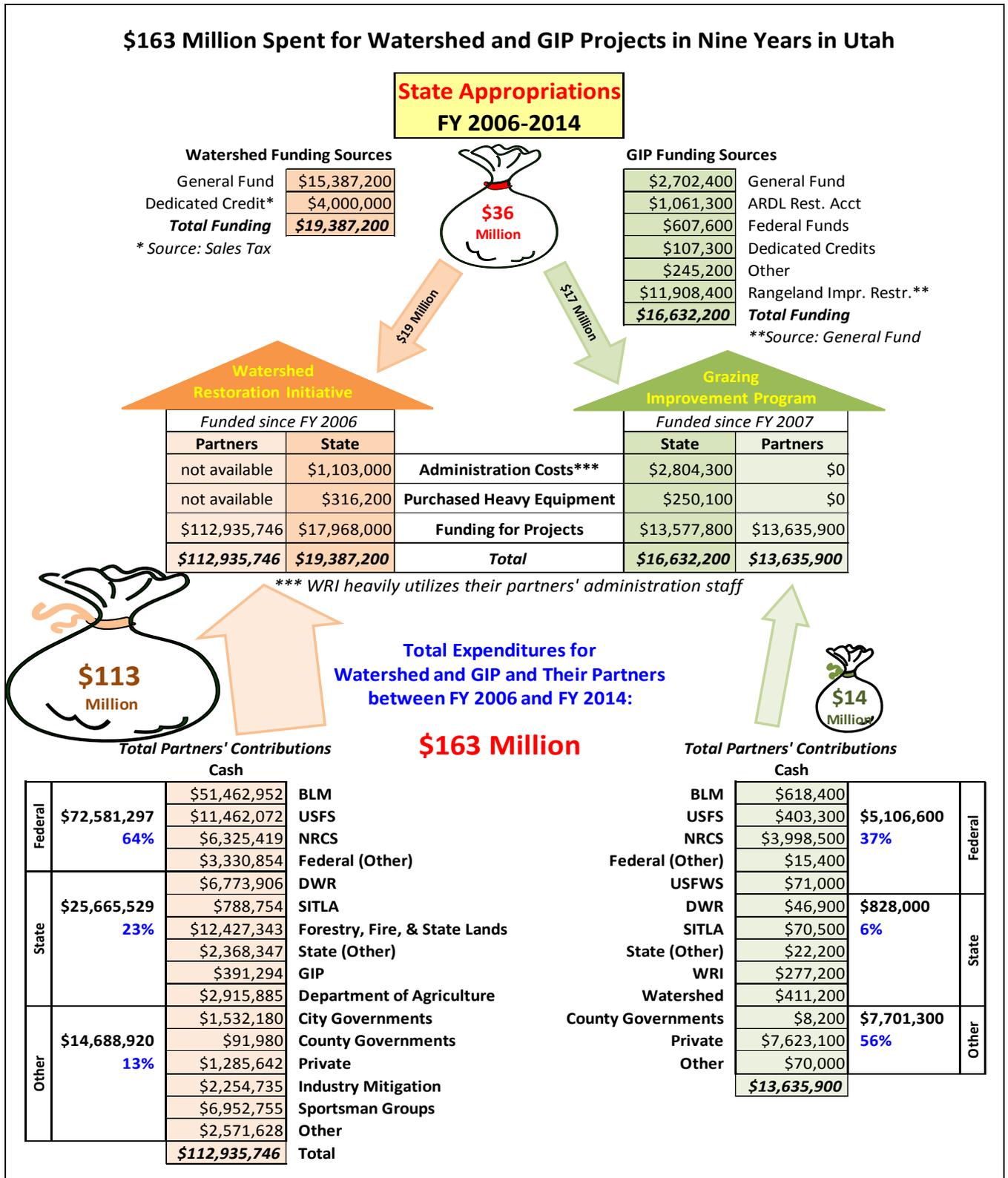
Similarities and Differences

Although both programs are similar in nature and often have similar objectives and purposes, there are also major differences. The figure below identifies some of the major similarities and differences between the two programs.

Index	Category	Similarities	Differences
1	Main Scope of Work	Focus on improving Utah’s rangelands and watershed. Projects concentrate on conservation and management of public and private lands throughout the state through collaboration of landowners, private organization, and state and federal agencies.	WRI focuses on public lands and improvements mainly for the benefit of wildlife. WRI is also involved in rehabilitation efforts following catastrophic wildland fires. GIP focuses on the benefit of livestock and the ranching community. GIP projects involve fencing and water development.
2	Measuring Acres	Use acreage in their reports.	WRI measures acres treated. GIP measures acres affected: a formula-driven number that attempts to determine the total area impacted not just the area treated.
3	Home Agency	Housed in state agencies.	WRI is housed in the Department of Natural Resources and GIP is part of the Department of Agriculture and Food.
4	Administration Costs	Provide details on administrative costs.	WRI has separated the director’s expenses but does not identify the costs of other administration staff nor does it keep track of time spent by technical staff preparing for the implementation of each project. WRI heavily utilizes administration staff and infrastructure of its partners. GIP has hired their own staff, and the main administrative expenditures for GIP are more easily identified in the regular budget reports.
5	State Funding	Receive direct appropriations from the Legislature.	WRI receives direct appropriations from the General Fund, as well as Sales Tax funding labeled as Dedicated Credits. GIP’s appropriations from the General Fund are split, one portion is appropriated directly for its administration, and the other one is mainly for projects and is channeled through the Rangeland Improvement Restricted Account.
6	Partners	Use partners extensively.	The majority of the partners working with the WRI are NGOs, federal, and state agencies managing public lands and resources; GIP’s partners are mainly private agricultural organizations and individuals.
7	Matching Funds	Match the state funds with resources from partners.	On average, for every \$1 appropriated to the program from the Legislature, WRI received from their partners \$5.8 and GIP \$0.8.
8	Searchable Database	Provide web-based searchable database to the partners and the public.	The WRI can be found at http://wri.utah.gov/WRI/ , and GIP’s is at http://grantreporting.udaf.utah.gov/Public .
9	Database Functionality	Project details are available to the public.	GIP reports the following information: project name, year, county, project description, affected area, project status, source of funds, and a map. In addition to the fields reported by GIP, the WRI data includes photos, and is also being used as a tool for planning and communication among the partners for each project.

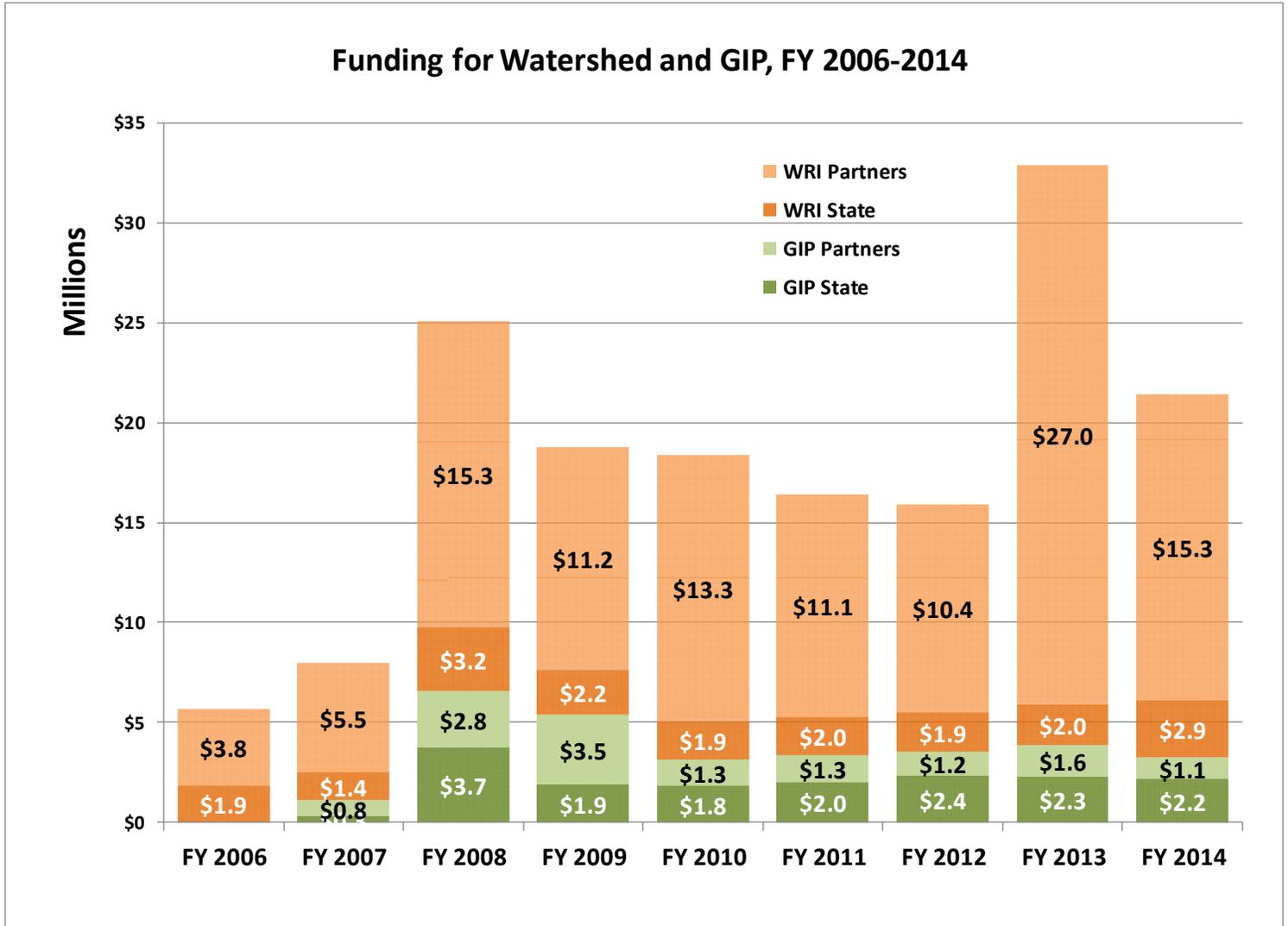
Flow of Funds for Both Programs

The following figure identifies the flow of funding (both from the Legislature and from various partners) through the two programs over time. The total funding expended on watershed restoration and grazing improvement in Utah between FY 2006 and FY 2014 is almost \$163 million.



Funding Spent by Program by Year

The figure below provides the amount of funding spent by each program and their partners by year between FY 2006 and FY 2014.



Level of Collaboration Between the Two Programs

GIP and WRI also provide funding for projects that benefit both livestock producers and watershed health. These projects involve both a fencing and water development component that GIP provides funding towards, as well as a habitat restoration and seeding component that WRI provides funding towards. These projects can be developed by either WRI partners or GIP staff. By sharing resources, the projects can occur at a larger scale and address most of the watershed needs in an area. These projects can occur on either public lands with a grazing allotment or private lands.

The following table lists the number of projects by year where the two programs have funded the projects jointly. The expenditures do not include in-kind contributions from GIP and WRI.

Projects by Year jointly Carried Out by GIP and WRI

Fiscal Year	# Projects	GIP Spent	WRI Spent	Partner Spent
2007	1	\$0	\$0	\$42,171
2008	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2009	5	\$81,556	\$95,276	\$120,039
2010	5	\$85,354	\$50,233	\$349,913
2011	8	\$122,568	\$97,622	\$126,523
2012	3	\$61,982	\$71,471	\$42,963
2013	3	\$32,520	\$11,680	\$226,884
2014*	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2015**	5	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Two large FY2014 projects were carried over and not completed until FY2015*

*** Final expenditure information for FY 2015 Projects is not yet available*

In addition to planning, funding, and managing projects together, GIP staff are participants on WRI regional teams and ranking committees and have chaired WRI regional teams.