



REPORT ON GIP AND WATERSHED

NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
STAFF: IVAN DJAMBOV & ANGELA OH

ISSUE BRIEF

The purpose of this brief is to provide background information about the Grazing Improvement Program and the Watershed Restoration Program, in preparation for the program managers' report required by legislative intent language from the 2013 Legislative General Session stating:

The Legislature intends that the managers of the Grazing Improvement Program and the Watershed Restoration Program present to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee by November 2013 a plan to improve the coordination and collaboration between the two programs. The Legislature further intends that each program identify performance measures that track and report the public benefits from their projects.

This brief includes programs description, identifies major similarities and differences, provides funding flowchart, and includes lists of all projects where the two programs have shared equipment over time.

Background

In recent past, reports from the Governor's Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst have expressed concerns about the transparency and the accountability of the Grazing Improvement Program. In September 2012, the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee passed a motion requiring the Department of Agriculture to present during the 2013 General Session a "detailed plan" on how the Grazing Improvement Program will "track and report the public benefits from the GIP projects." Such plan was never provided to the Legislature.

Most recently, the 2013 Legislature included the legislative intent language quoted above requiring the Grazing Improvement Program and the Watershed Restoration Program to "identify performance measures that track and report the public benefits from their projects" and to provide "a plan to improve the coordination and collaboration between the two programs."

At the time of publication of this brief, the managers the two programs were preparing their presentations and plans to respond to the legislative intent language.

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 4.4 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 also 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 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 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 2012 is \$8.8 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 \$10.8 million.

Performance Measures

GIP has used the following performance measures in the past:

- Acres impacted (in addition to the number of acres treated, it includes the estimated impact on the areas adjacent),
- Meetings attended (staff meeting landowners and land managers), 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
- opportunities for sustainable uses."

The WRI was developed to restore and improve Utah's watersheds by bringing together state, federal, and private land owners 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; 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 come from partner agencies.

Process

WRI has the following process for deciding which 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 Team ranks project (numeric and then high-medium-low).
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, acreages treated, and costs including in-kind contributions.

Funding

The total funding appropriated by the Legislature for the Watershed program between FY 2006 and FY 2012 is \$14.5 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 \$69.7 million for watershed projects.

Performance Measures

The WRI program has used the following measures in the past:

- Acres treated (tracks the number of acres treated),
- Funding leverage (how many times each appropriated dollar is matched by partners),
- Number of partners (number of partners involved in the projects).

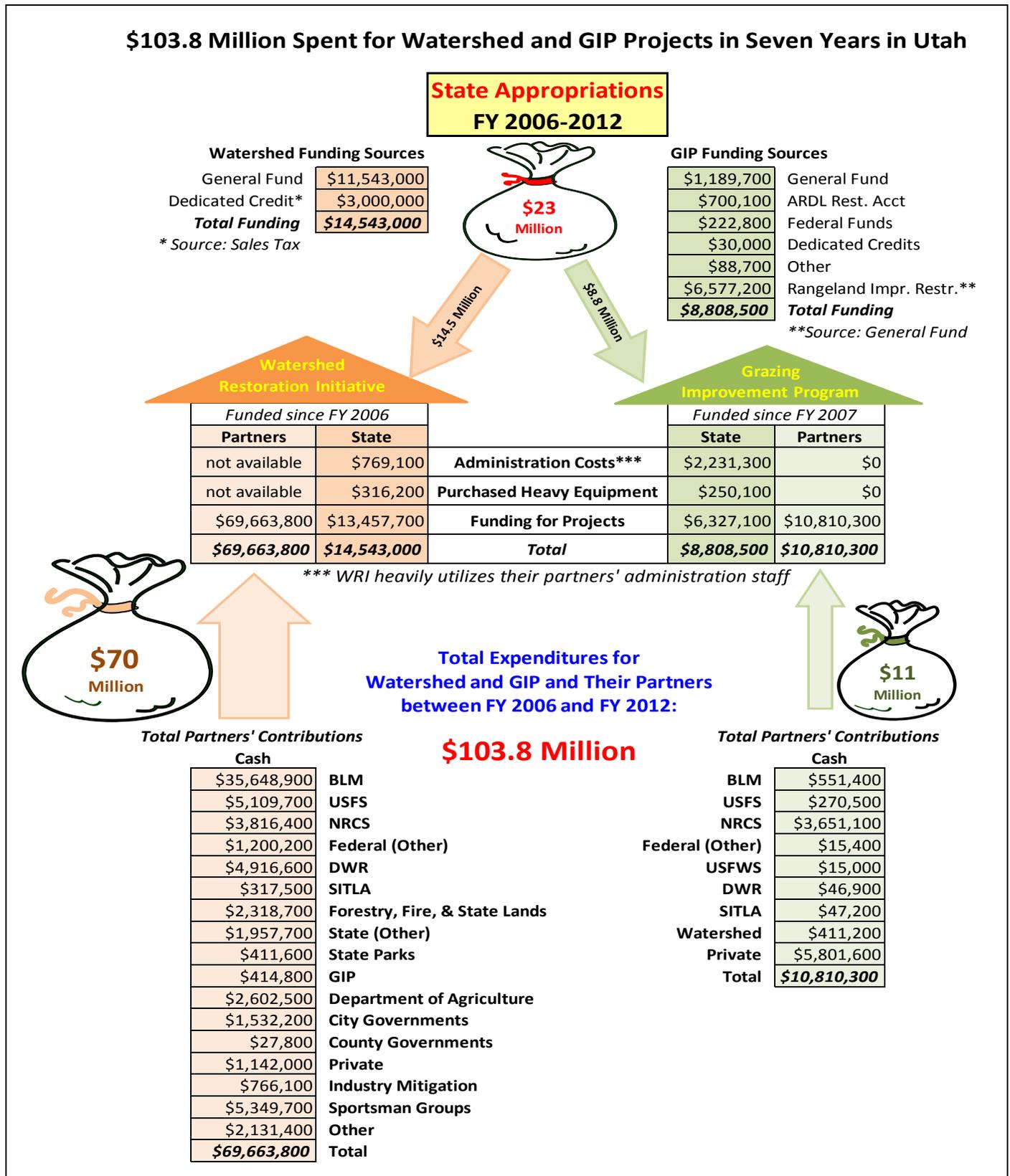
Similarities and Differences

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 for the 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 \$4.7 and GIP \$1.2.
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.

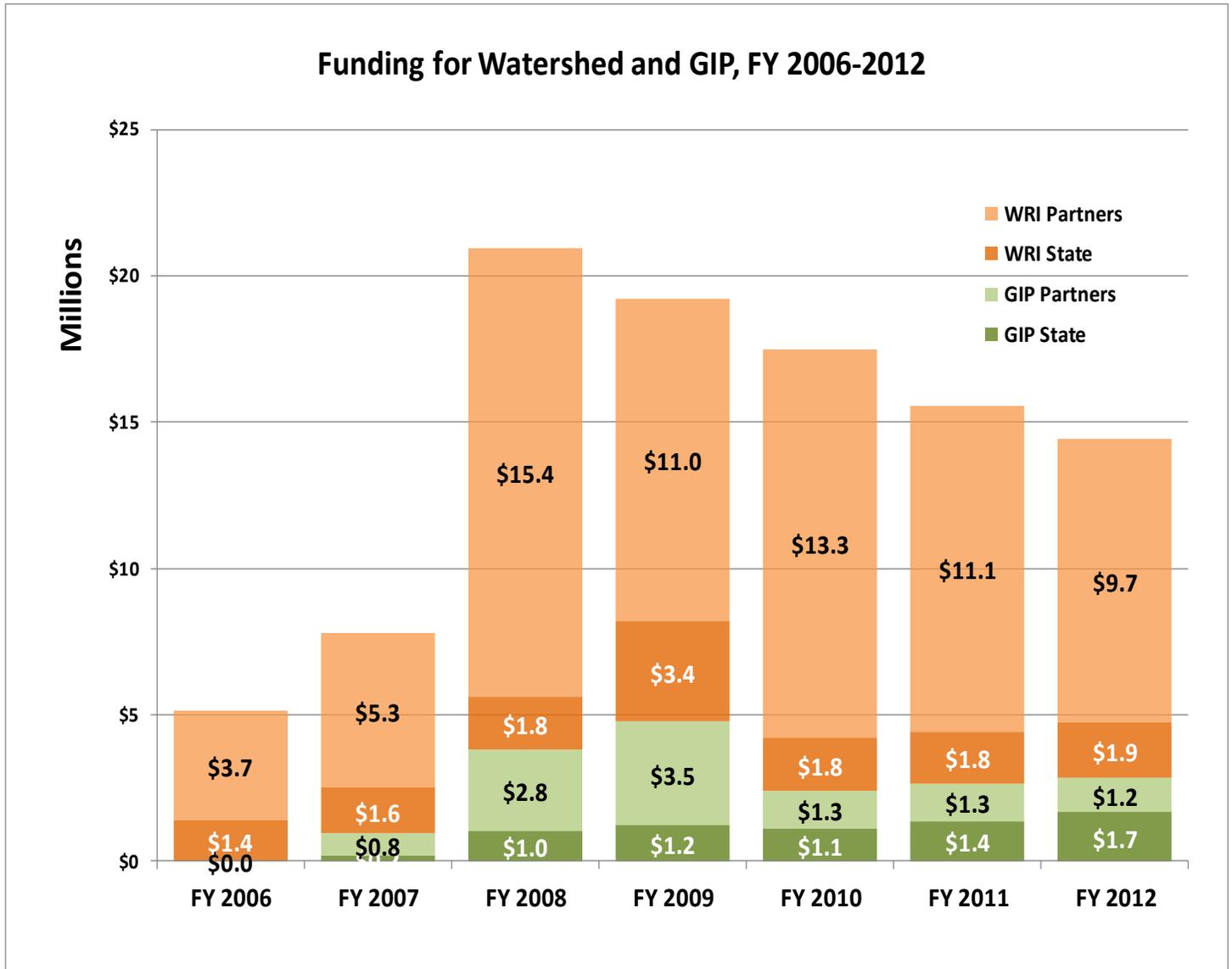
Flow of Funds for Both Programs

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 2012 is almost \$104 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 2012.



Level of Collaboration Between the Two Programs

The 2013 Legislature requested that the managers of GIP and WRI provide “a plan to improve the coordination and collaboration between the two programs.” Their report is forthcoming.

The following table lists all the projects where the two programs have shared heavy equipment.

List of All Instances of Equipment Sharing Between GIP and Watershed

Project Name	Fiscal Year	County	Land Ownership	Type of Equipment Shared	Equipment Owner
Standrod Chaining	2011	Box Elder	Private	Anchor Chain - Ely	WRI
Grouse Creek Sage Grouse Initiative Project	2011	Box Elder	Private	Anchor Chain - Smooth	GIP
Yost Chaining	2012	Box Elder	Private	Anchor Chain - Ely	WRI
Clay Springs Fire Rehab	2013	Millard/Juab	USFS/BLM/SITLA/Private	Drill Seeder	GIP
Wood Hollow Fire Rehab	2013	Sanpete	Private	Anchor Chain - Ely	GIP
New Harmony Private Lands Fire Rehab	2013	Iron	Private	Drill Seeder	GIP
Vandenberg 2011 Fire Rehab	2013	Iron	Private	Drill Seeder	GIP
Faust Fire Rehab	2013	Tooele	Private	Drill Seeder/Harrow	WRI

The information in the table indicates that in the past year there was an increase in sharing of heavy equipment between the two programs.

GIP and WRI also occasionally have provided funding for projects managed by the other program. A list of those projects can be made available upon request.