



Kodachrome State Park

Department of Natural Resources



January 24, 2024
NRAE Appropriations Subcommittee

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Managing Our Natural Resources

DNR is one of the state's largest agencies with eight divisions and two offices, often with competing demands.

- Forestry, Fire & State Lands
- Office of Energy Development
- Oil, Gas & Mining
- Outdoor Recreation
- Public Lands Office
- State Parks
- Water Resources
- Water Rights
- Wildlife Resources
- Utah Geological Survey



Department of Natural Resources



Managing and protecting the state's natural resources by:

- Enhancing water certainty and security
- Improving the health and resilience of our lands, resources, watersheds and wildlife
- Advancing the stewardship of our public lands and natural history
- Elevating outdoor recreation
- Expanding Utah's energy and minerals portfolio



Water Impacts

- Drought dominated much of our work the past few years and highlighted the importance of investing in infrastructure and policy changes to effectively manage our water supply
- Then record snowpack of 2023 caused flooding and landslides, and impacted crops, livestock, wildlife and more
- Mother Nature is unpredictable, so continued planning and investment are essential to protect our quality of life



2023 Legislative Session Highlights

- Agricultural Water Optimization
- Cloud Seeding Appropriation
- Water Reuse Reservoir and Desalination
- Utah Water Ways
- Water Efficient Landscaping Incentives
- Groundwater Monitoring and Investigation
- Water Infrastructure Study
- Great Salt Lake Commissioner
- Great Salt Lake Amendments



Water Conservation Progress

- Taking steps to use our limited water supply more efficiently and become more drought-resilient
- Despite record snowpack, water-wise behavior continued
 - Washington County decreased total water use by 1.2 billion gallons between 2022 to 2023, despite a nearly 5% increase in service connections
- Utahns replaced nearly 4 million square feet of thirsty grass with water-efficient landscaping utilizing the landscape conversion incentive
- 63 communities adopted water efficiency standards so they can grow AND use less water



Secondary Meter Grants



- \$167 million in grants contracted for the purchase and installation of secondary meters so far
- \$38 million in Board loans contracted for meter projects
- Over 24,000 meters installed
- Average water reduction of 20-30%
- Long-term investment will yield continued savings



Sound Policy is Based on Good Science

- Utah Geological Survey reports:
 - Critical Minerals of Utah
 - Economic Contribution of Utah's Energy and Mining Industries
 - Utah Mining Report
- Groundwater Monitoring
 - GSL Groundwater Flow Study
 - Groundwater Monitoring Data Portal
 - Utah Flux Network



The Utah Flux Network includes this weather station on the Bonneville Salt Flats



Energy

- Policies from federal government and other states may negatively impact Utah's energy
- OED is building a modeling tool to assess Utah's energy resources and demand
 - Modeling tool will help identify areas where Utah can challenge overreach
- Energy generation assets are retiring faster than suitable replacements are coming online
- Working to develop strategies to protect Utah's energy supply



Energy

- Oil production for 2023 will outpace 2022 – which was also a record year – and contributes substantially to the economic dynamics of rural Utah



State Park Visitation Continues to Grow

- Visitation continues to surge across our 46 state parks and museums
- We expect to see this visitation trend continue
- Hosted multiple groundbreakings and grand openings for new campgrounds, day-use areas, archery ranges and more



Campground at East Canyon



Outdoor Recreation Impacts

- Outdoor recreation economy grew by a stunning 32.8% last year!
 - Adds \$8.1 billion to our economy; supports over 71,000 jobs
- Division of Outdoor Recreation awarded over \$20 million in grants to communities across the state
- Grant projects boost our local economies and enhance Utah's reputation as a premier outdoor recreation destination



Wildlife Resources

- Legislative funding is allowing the DWR to rebuild the Loa Fish Hatchery, which will help meet the annual angling demands and improve fishing in Utah
- Recently worked with partners to launch a new desert bighorn sheep nursery herd in Box Elder County to grow the species' population
- Over 5,800 Utahns went hunting for the first time, and over 51,000 Utahns fished for the first time in 2023!



Water Impacts Fire Season and More

- Despite a wet year that fueled vegetation growth, Utah celebrated another year with decreasing wildfire numbers
- Data from 2020 to 2023 shows that human-caused wildfires were reduced by 52% from the first year and another 56% over the past two years
- We will continue to encourage people to use their Fire Sense
 - Fire Sense campaign was recognized on a national level with the bronze-level Smokey Bear Award



FFSL – Sovereign Lands

- Working on mineral leases and royalty agreements to extract Great Salt Lake elements and minerals



Forestry – Working Together

FFSL continues to foster collaborative partnerships that enable us to leverage state and federal funding to support forest health and hazardous fuels mitigation projects and safe and effective wildfire response thorough programs such as:

- Shared Stewardship (\$3.5m)
- Forest Legacy Program (\$14.4m)
- Urban and Community Forestry (\$750k)
- Community Wildfire Defense Grants (\$4.7m)
- Landscape Scale Restoration Projects (\$600k)



PLPCO

- PLPCO has been diligently working to protect access to Utah's public lands
- The office continues to collect depositions on RS 2477 right of ways and advocate for access during BLM Travel Management Planning



Preserving and Protecting Great Salt Lake

- Working with the Commissioner's Office on short- and long-term solutions to restoring the lake to a healthy range
 - Newly released Strategic Plan provides a roadmap
- Since we can't control the weather, we need to plan for a drier future and continue to take action
- Elected officials, state agencies and other stakeholders are working together to find solutions
- No one "silver bullet" solution – it's more of a silver buckshot approach – with a suite of actions and recommendations



Threats and Challenges

- Growth – Utah is a great place to live and do business – and visit
- Many competing interests for our natural resources – everything from water to wildlife to recreation and energy
- Policies and solutions strive for balance, better understanding and improved efficiencies



Keeping Our Foot on the Gas

- Our natural resources directly impact the quality of life of all Utahns
- Strategic investments today yield both short-term and long-term benefits and help ensure our future
- We must continue to invest in our future generations and protect a lifestyle that cherishes and sustains Utah's natural beauty





Thank you.

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