

Director/State Forester’s Message



I am pleased to briefly share some of the achievements of the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands in 2023.

Despite our division’s daily challenges, our dedicated team has been hard at work as stewards of Utah’s forests, sovereign lands, and providing timely wildfire response.

The Forestry Program is increasing forest management work and utilizing federal funding that has become available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. This funding assists with implementing the goals of the Forest Action Plan to restore healthy and resilient forests, reduce the wildfire risk to communities and natural resources, increase collaborative landscape-scale forest restoration activities, and build capacity among, stakeholders and communities.

The Fire Program and the dedicated cooperators throughout the state continue to address the wildfire crisis through fire prevention, fuels mitigation, and a rapid suppression response. Utah only experienced 808 wildfire starts this year, most of which were naturally caused.

A slower fire season has allowed us to focus on fuels mitigation and project work, working with our forestry program to make sure we are doing the right work at the right time in the right place.

The Sovereign Lands program has worked tirelessly to preserve our state lands for the benefit of the public. The Great Salt Lake continues to be a primary focus of our staff as they continue to implement policies and work on the ground that is in the best interest of the lake, including the development of rules that pertain to mineral extraction and maintaining a healthy salinity level.

The division also spent countless hours working to preserve the corridors of our sovereign rivers, eradicate invasive species on sovereign lakes such as Utah Lake and Bear Lake, and partnering with stakeholders to ensure management responsibilities are being addressed.

As we look ahead, the division remains dedicated to adapting strategies to address the challenges our natural resources face. This includes cross-collaboration with stakeholders, inter-agency partnerships, and interdisciplinary approaches to work towards achieving our goals.

JAMIE BARNES
Director/State Forester

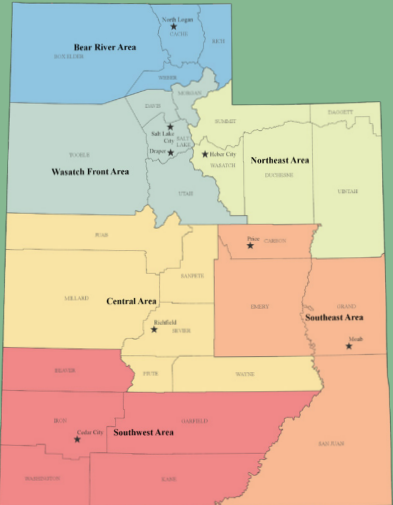
EXCELLENCE • RESPECT & TEAMWORK • ADAPTABILITY
INTEGRITY & TRANSPARENCY • EFFECTIVE PARTNERING

1
DIVISION
3
PROGRAMS
6
AREAS

Area Highlights & Challenges

Highlights

- Historically, it has been difficult to implement prescribed fire along the Wasatch Front due to the risks of putting fire on the landscape in an overgrown forest next to a highly urbanized WUI area, air quality risks that provide very restricted time frames, and the negative public perception of prescribed fire. These obstacles were overcome with significant collaboration efforts between local fire departments, the US Forest Service, and Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL). Cooperators completed three major RX burn projects in Big Cottonwood Canyon, Draper, and Tooele County. These on the ground projects demonstrate how the division and its cooperators are proactively reducing fuels in the Utah.
- FFSL partnered with BLM, USFS, and USU Blanding to provide fuel wood to underserved populations through the Wood For Life program. Staff have hauled approximately 15 chords of wood to the Bluff Mission.
- FFSL’s Central Area received a \$4.7 million grant from the USFS to enhance wildfire preparedness in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) communities. The funds support education, defensible space maintenance, and local fuels crew for hazardous fuels removal.
- Area staff worked with Daggett County to establish their fire district, which included training equipment and support throughout the transition.
- In 2023, money was appropriated for an additional Sovereign Lands position. This position will assist with the collaborative work being done in the area and focus on invasive species along the Bear River.
- Sovereign Lands staff patrolled 2,345 miles of shoreline along the Green & Colorado Rivers, a 69% increase from 2022.
- FFSL administered Good Neighbor Authorities with the Dixie and Fishlake National Forests in the amount of \$800,000.



Challenges

- The Wasatch Front is one of the highest-risk fire areas. Hazardous fuels work, WUI code enforcement, and home hardening all play a role in fire prevention. The division is working with the community, local officials, and representatives to update codes, encourage compliance, and reduce fuels.
- Area staff are limited in the number of acres they can treat due to the rising cost of conducting hazardous fuel work. Staff are taking a strategic approach to offset these increasing costs. These costs have doubled in some areas of the state over the last 12 months.
- FFSL area staff continue to look for strategic ways to encourage community engagement to reduce wildfire risk through proactive engagement rather than a reactive approach when there is a current wildfire.
- Through the Cooperative Wildfire System (CWS), FFSL staff and Participating Entities seek to streamline proposals for fire mitigation, preparedness, and prevention while advocating for improvements to CWS as a whole.
- Most areas continue to be exposed to large amounts of tourism and recreation, especially in our Southwest, Southeast and Northeast Areas. This increase in tourism and recreation has influenced the cost of living, and combined with the housing market, has made it challenging to keep and fill critical positions.

Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands Annual Summary

2023



“Our dedicated team has been hard at work as stewards of Utah’s forests, sovereign lands, and providing timely wildfire response”



Coordinated activities with Utah Shared Stewardship partners (USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Utah Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office) to plan educational and project activities for 2023 and to effectively allocate and leverage federal and state funding for priority projects.



An influx of funding has come into the state through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Examples of funding received in 2023 are:

- Awarded \$582,000 from the USDA Forest Service through the BIL to strengthen FFSL Forestry Program capacity to implement Utah Forest Action Plan priorities.
- Awarded \$600,000 from the USDA Forest Service for three Landscape-Scale Restoration Projects through the Council of Western State Foresters competitive grants process.
- Awarded \$14.4 million from the USDA Forest Service for the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) to protect the conservation values on 18,000 acres of private forestland in Cache and Rich counties by acquiring long-term conservation easements.
- Awarded \$750,000 from the USDA Forest Service through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for the Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) Program to provide technical assistance and grants to disadvantaged communities.



Forestry, Fire and State Lands’ Forestry and Fire programs worked with state partners to identify and support high-priority projects targeting forest health, watershed restoration, fuels reduction and other pressing natural resource concerns with state Comprehensive Watershed Restoration funding (\$3.25 million).



Hired two new shared NRCS-FFSL Forestry positions to engage private forest landowners and increase technical and financial assistance toward developing forest-health and fuels-reduction projects.



In 2023, FFSL Forestry faced significant new—but exciting—challenges: FFSL Forestry and Fire programs engaged with our USDA Forest Service partners to understand how to strengthen our capacity to apply for and effectively use the significant amounts of new Forestry and Fire program funding available through the BIL and IRA. We needed to build our staff capacity to apply and compete for new funding and to plan and develop priority projects to address the goals of the Forestry and Fire programs. We also needed to consider how to build sustainable capacity, considering long-term funding prospects, and how to respond to new requirements for financial accountability, including quarterly financial and performance reports, rather than previous annual reporting requirements.



Fire Sense continues to raise awareness regarding humans’ impact on preventing wildfires. The campaign is in its third year and, with an annual budget of \$600,000 per year, continues to see success.

- The campaign has reduced human-caused starts by 60% from a high in 2020.
- The campaign was honored this year with the Bronze-Level Smokey Bear Award. This award is given at the national level and recognizes wildfire prevention efforts at the state level.



This was year two of the exclusive use contract between Croman Helicopters and FFSL for two Type-1 helicopters. Each aircraft has a 90-day contract, and the Type 1 helicopter was chosen to complement our federal partners’ aircraft.

- In 2023, the helicopters flew 250.2 hours and deployed 699,644 gallons of water while engaged in wildland fire suppression activities.
- These helicopters have assisted in catching fire starts before they can grow in size. Only 30 fires exceeded 10 acres this year, which gave us a 96% catch rate.
- FFSL manages these helicopters with complete operational control, and they are not dispatched outside of Utah without FFSL approval.



Lone Peak Conservation Center added a fuels-specific crew, Thunder Mountain, to address the hazardous fuels work in the state. Thunder Mountain worked 5,098.5 hours on project work throughout Utah in its first season.



- A lot of fire mitigation work needs to be done across the state to help address the wildfire crisis. Dedicated funding for fuels reduction projects will assist the state in appropriately addressing fuel mitigation needs. The division currently has \$28 million of fuels work that needs to be done.
- Different agencies use different data sets to determine fire risk. Using a unified fire risk model to help state and federal agencies align priorities regarding fire and fuels work in and around the WUI and high fire danger areas would align priorities.
- Utah must remain competitive in the job market to retain and attract qualified personnel.
- We need to build depth on the county level by adding Assistant County Fire Wardens. Adding these roles will help current County Fire Wardens with a demanding workload and provide additional and adequate coverage across the state.



In partnership with Mother Nature, the division has averted an ecosystem collapse on the Great Salt Lake by raising the adaptive management berm in the Union Pacific Causeway.

- During November 2022, salinity levels reached 185 g/L in the South Arm, exceeding the acceptable range of salinity conditions.
- By raising the berm, salinity levels were lowered to 124 g/L during late spring of 2023,
- Salinity levels hit a high of 144 g/L in November of 2023, which is within the acceptable salinity range.



The division and its partners have collectively treated and mowed 7,580 acres of Phragmites on the Great Salt Lake, with thousands of additional acres being treated through partnerships on the Great Salt Lake.



FFSL has drafted rules related to HB 513 and has completed the informal rulemaking process. FFSL will submit the proposed rules to the Division of Administrative Rules for consideration and finalization during 2024.



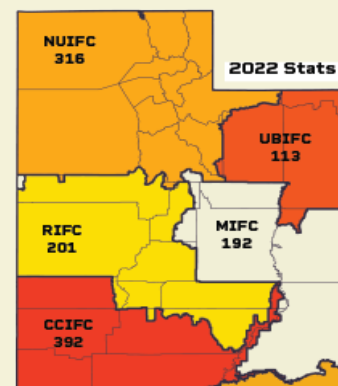
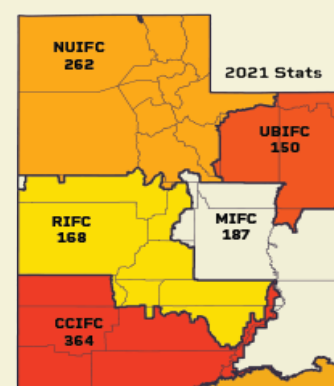
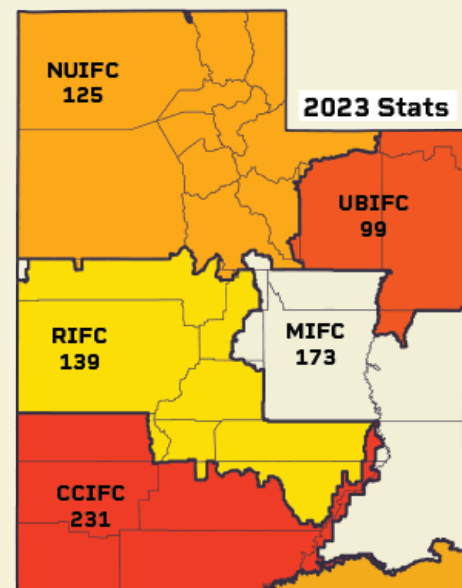
FFSL has added three dedicated staff members focused on removing invasive species and restoring vegetation.

- A position was added that will focus on the Bear River and Bear Lake
- A Vegetation and Restoration Coordinator position was added that will focus on the Jordan River. This position is in collaboration with the Jordan River Commission.



- GSL is still at the center of public and media attention. Salinity conditions and lake levels have created new challenges, including a lawsuit against DNR.
- Sovereign Lands continues to see increased visitation and use. The increased use of sovereign lands has created additional management challenges and expenses.
- Invasive species continue to be a persistent problem in riparian corridors and wetlands. FFSL has created partnerships to leverage funding and develop best management practices, as well as increased capacity and funding to combat invasive species.

Fires by Dispatch



The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is described as the populated areas that border our forests and rangelands. As communities expand into these wildfire-prone landscapes, fire suppression efforts become dangerous, complex, and expensive. Utah has 668 Communities at Risk located in, or near, the WUI. FFSL employees engage with communities at risk, building relationships, educating, and supporting them to become better fire adapted against future wildfire threats. Each approach varies and is specific to suit the area that we are assisting. The information below showcases our efforts over the last year to lay the groundwork for what must be done before wildfires come to these areas of our state. This proactive approach is a passion of all FFSL employees and has been proven to save homes and lives.



The #SunnyCove fire was a lightning caused fire that grew quickly forcing evacuations.

250.2 hours
Helicopters flew for fire suppression



Two Type 1 Helicopters for Wildfire Suppression in the State of Utah

This was year two of a five-year helicopter contract between Croman Helicopters and the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL). Two Type 1 Sikorsky S61 helicopters were again on contract, with one starting the season in Cedar City June 1st, and the other starting July 1st in Spanish Fork. Both contracts were for 90 days, with options to extend when mutually agreed upon.

Type 1 helicopters were chosen to complement the aircraft that our federal partners are contracting. These helicopters are managed by FFSL with full operational control, and not dispatched outside of Utah without FFSL approval.

699,644 gallons
of water dropped for fire suppression
by both state helicopters

Interagency Wildfire Response

Most of Utah has a Federal, State, and/or local wildfire suppression resource assigned to it. Regardless of agency affiliation, when a fire is reported, the closest firefighting resource will respond and take appropriate action. After safety and area objectives have been provided for, all fires are fought aggressively. When resources are spread thin responding to fires, other firefighting personnel from around the country will respond and assist with suppression needs when necessary.

96%
Initial Attack Rate
Only 30 fires
exceeded 10 acres

4,333
Red Carded
Firefighters Certified
and active wildland



Lone Peak Conservation Center

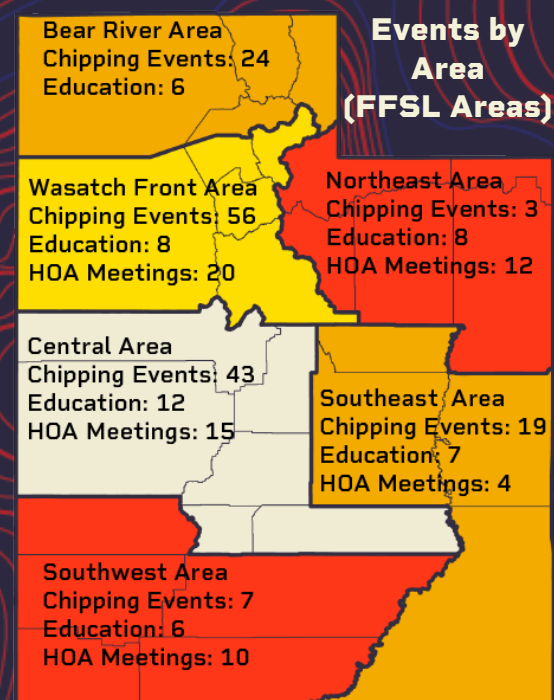
The Lone Peak Conservation Center (LPCC) is a State of Utah Wildfire Management Program. Located in Draper, Utah, the LPCC consists of several wildfire suppression resources: Two Hotshot crews, two Initial Attack hand crews, and two Heavy Engines. This year, the Thunder Mountain fuels crew was added. This crew primarily works on fuel reduction projects throughout the state, weather permitting. Thunder Mountain plans to expand from 10 to 20 crew members. LPCC resources are available for fire suppression, hazardous fuels reduction projects, and natural resource projects locally and nationally from April through November.

140,000
hours assigned to an incident
380,000
Total Miles Driven
82,000
hazard hours worked
26,000
hours worked on state fuels
reduction projects
6,044
chainsaw tanks ran



WUI Engagement Actions

47
Education Events
165
Active CWPP's
Community Wildfire
Preparedness Plan
61
HOA Meetings
Employees engage interested
communities
152
Chipping Events
Home Owners Dispose of slash
piles around homes



2023

'Utahns were vigilant': How Utah's 2023 wildfire season became a smashing success



Director/State Forester



As the 2023 fire year nears its end, we can celebrate our successes from this past year while addressing the challenges facing our state and staff. This year, Mother Nature aided in protecting Utah's beautiful landscapes. After years of drought conditions that stretched our resources in the past, we saw the peak of the 2023 fire season later than usual.

Fire activity remained low this year due to our record-setting winter snowpack and late summer monsoonal weather pattern.

When called upon this year, our staff successfully caught fires and kept 96 percent of them at 10 acres or less. Success would not be possible without the help of our local cooperators and interagency partners throughout the state. These men and women play an important role in assisting the state during all phases of fire, and the partnerships are instrumental in managing wildfires across the state.

Another big thanks this year to Utahns for practicing their Fire Sense. Due to their efforts, human-caused wildfire starts were down for the third year. Three years ago, the state started the

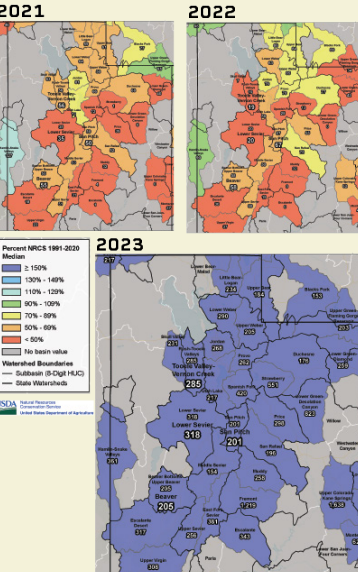
Fire Sense campaign to decrease the number of fires caused by human behavior. Now, in 2023, we continue to see this program's benefits. The program's success has not gone unnoticed and was honored nationally with the bronze-level Smokey Bear Award in September. While we always celebrate successes, 2023 has many notable ones, we always look ahead to the future and where our focus and priorities need to be. Our staff is committed to addressing wildfire threats in our communities through prevention, preparedness, and mitigation which play a key role in combating the wildfire crisis. We realize the true costs of wildfire and how that plays a role in every Utahn's life. We also value the partnerships we share with our interagency partners, and we will continue to build those relationships and support each other where we can.

Here in Utah, we will continue to lead out in all we do. We will work to ensure resilient landscapes and that our communities are adapted to wildfire. We are committed to safe, effective, and efficient response to wildfires and continued messaging to understand the risk and importance of wildfire prevention. It is our continued mission to protect Utah from the devastation of catastrophic wildfires.

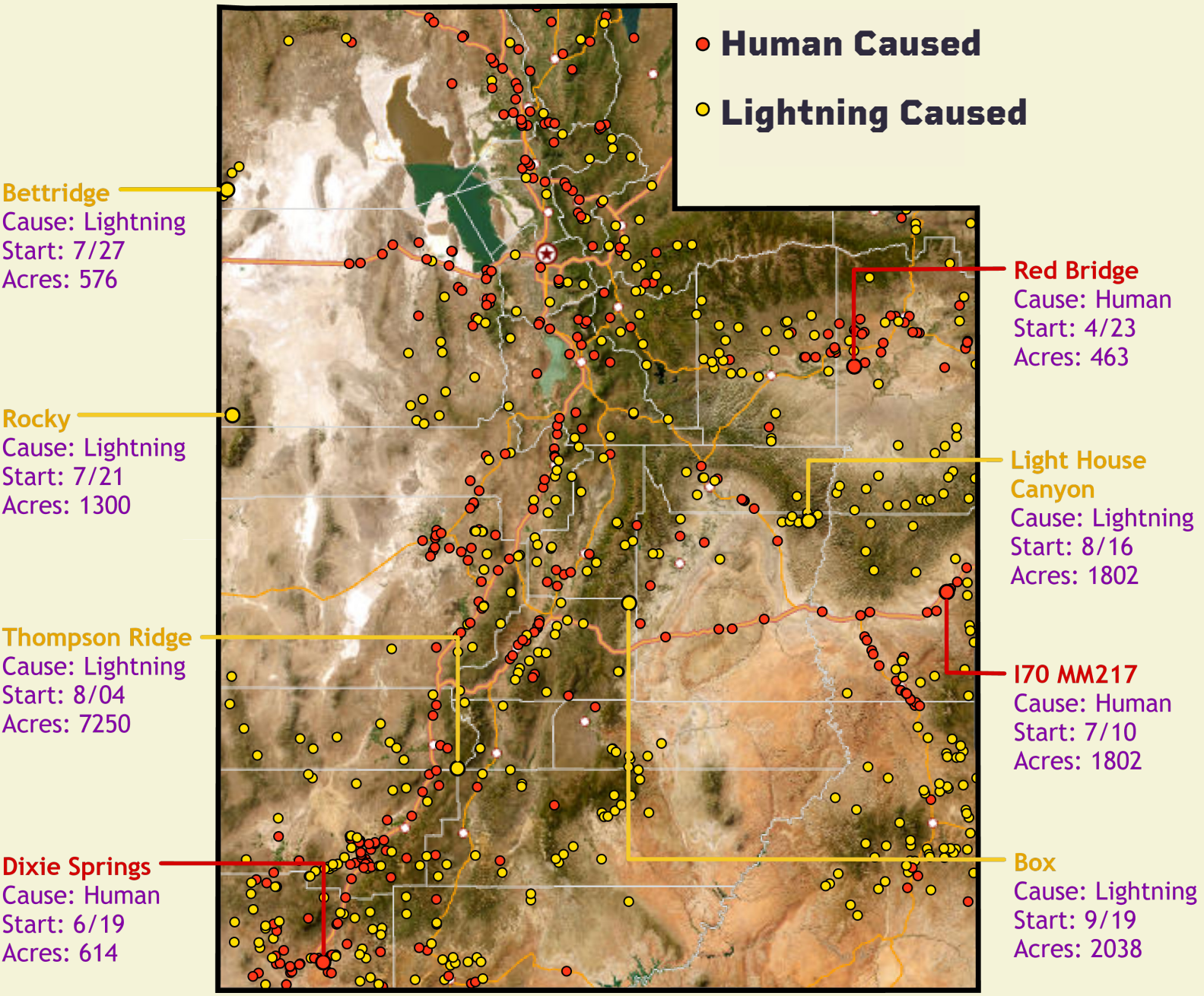
Weather Summary

The 2023 fire season in Utah started slowly due to record snowpack and above-average fuel moisture levels. The grass was green, causing a slow start to the fire season. El Nino enhanced cool and moist conditions statewide from May through early July. A few hot and dry days increased fire activity slightly in late July and early August, but it was still well below normal levels. Monsoonal moisture surges took the edge off fire activity in most areas into mid-August. Heavy rains followed in September, effectively ending the threat of significant fire potential. The year was one of the least active fire seasons in the past decade.

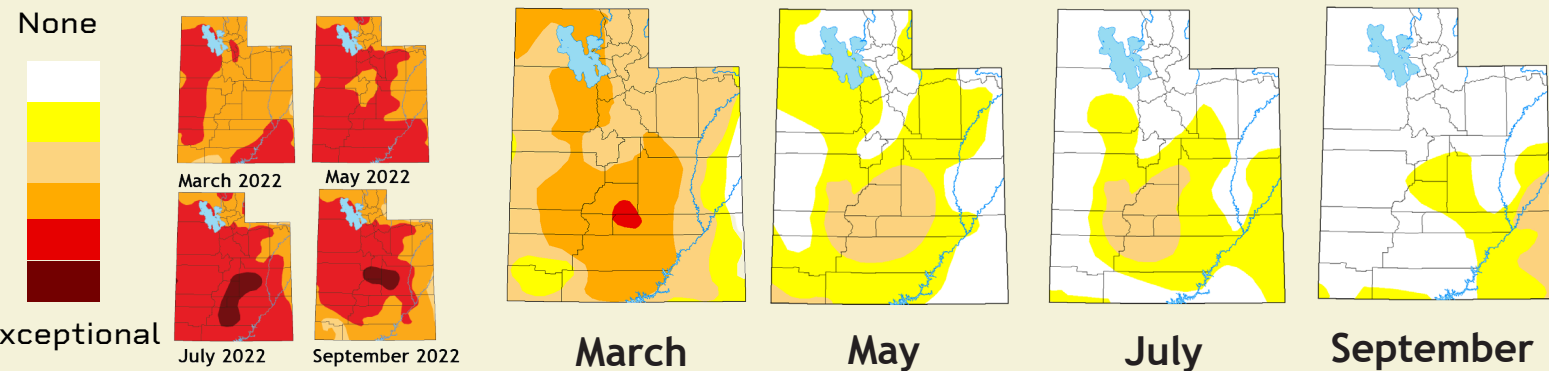
Percent of Snowpack



Top Eight Largest Wildfires in 2023



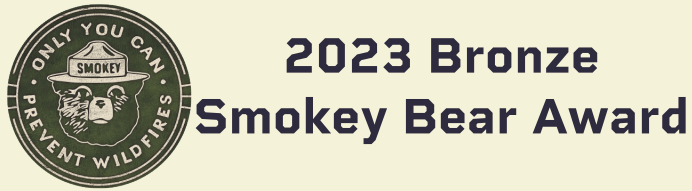
DROUGHT



2023 Fire Season SUMMARY

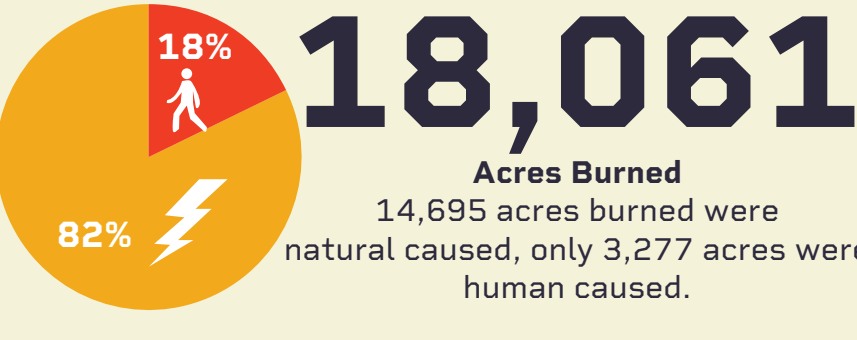
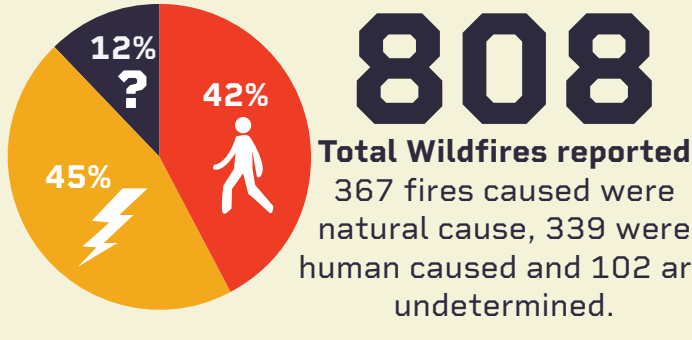
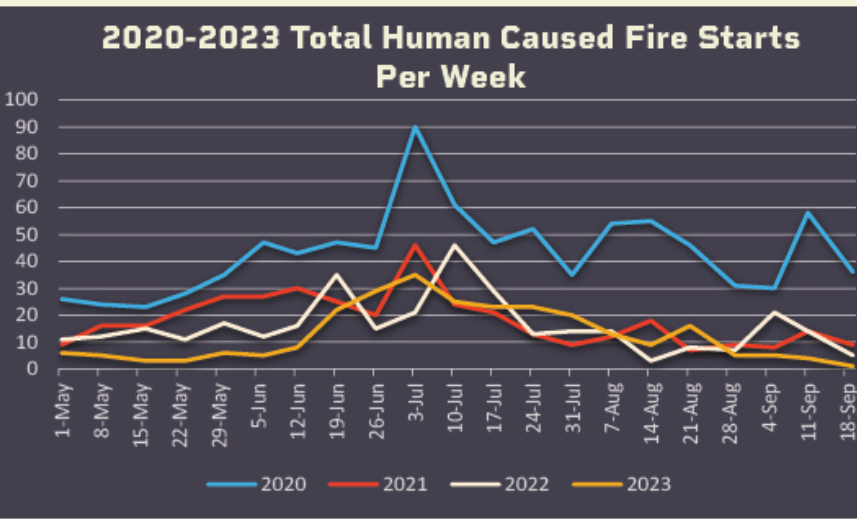
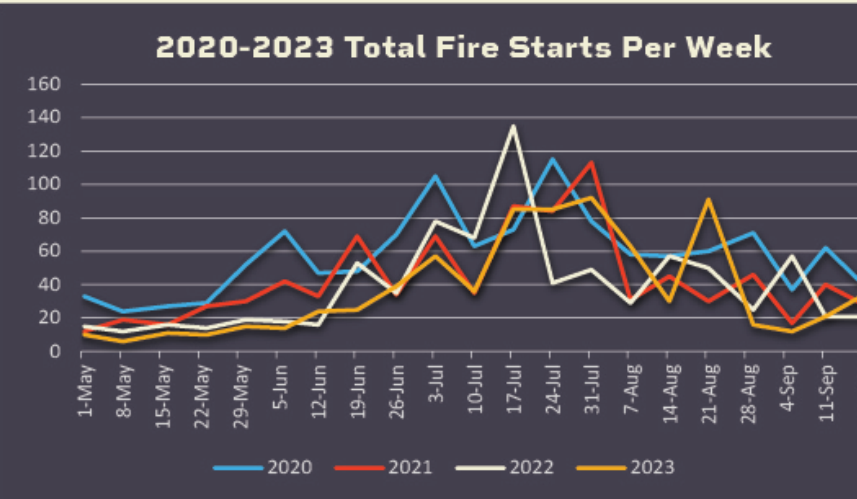
(11/13/23 data pulled)

- Total Wildfire Reports**
808
- Total Acres Burned**
18,061
- Total Human-Caused Acres**
3,277
- Human-Caused Starts**
339



42% of fires were human-caused
150 fewer human-caused fires
2022 vs 2023
30 fires larger than
10 acres for
96% CATCH RATE

Top Three Human-Caused Starts



808
Total Wildfires reported
367 fires caused were natural cause, 339 were human caused and 102 are undetermined.

18,061
Acres Burned
14,695 acres burned were natural caused, only 3,277 acres were human caused.

BEAR LAKE

AT A GLANCE



Managing Bear Lake under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Noxious Weed & Invasive Species Control

Identify, manage, and monitor noxious weed growth in riparian areas and on the lakebed, specifically targeting phragmites and Eurasian watermilfoil.

Coordinate weed management efforts with Utah State Parks, Idaho Department of Lands, and adjacent landowners

Work in collaboration with the Northern Utah and Highlands Cooperative Weed Management Areas

Work with the Division of Wildlife Resources to educate and inspect for Quagga and Zebra Mussel decontamination certificates



Funded several research projects related to Bear Lake, in conjunction with the needs assessment.

Meet with the Bear Lake Plan Implementation and Review Group (PIRG) bi-annually to assist with local planning and management concerns

Partnered with the Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water and Air at Utah State University to perform a needs assessment of Bear Lake to identify opportunities to improve collaboration and management of the Lake.

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Coordinate with Idaho Department of Lands, Utah State Parks, UDAF, and other government entities on treatment, monitoring, and mapping

Perform mechanical dredge removal of Eurasian watermilfoil and dive collecting; contract out chemical treatment

Recreation

Provide support and collaborate with Rich County, Garden City, and other groups to build and continue the Bear Lake Legacy Pathway around the entirety of the lake

Division law enforcement has partnered with other DNR law enforcement agencies and Rich County Sheriff's Department to patrol Bear Lake Sovereign Lands, and assist with visitor safety concerns

Permitting

Work with adjacent landowners and other entities to execute the following types of permits:

- Power/sewer/water line utilities
- Stormwater drainages and outfalls
- Trails, recreational infrastructure
- Education/Volunteer Projects
- Filming and photography
- Weddings, holiday celebrations, fireworks
- Restoration projects
- Public and private marinas/boat clubs/boat ramps

Uphold a cooperative agreement with Utah State Parks to provide a system for launch, buoy, and dock permits

Recently updated the Comprehensive Management Plan in 2022 in collaboration with stakeholders and other governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

BEAR RIVER

AT A GLANCE



Managing the Bear River under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Noxious Weed Control

Treat and monitor Goatsrue, Dyer's Woad, Russian Olive, and Purple Loosestrife weeds on the river bed and on upland parcels (with adjacent landowner partnership)

Member of the Northern Utah Cooperative Weed Management Area



Bank Restoration

Work with Box Elder County and Cache County on various projects to improve riparian conditions and stabilize banks where appropriate

Works closely with the Bear River Land Conservancy to facilitate and maintain bank stabilization in the Bear River Bottoms Property

Beginning to develop best management practices for bank restoration in the lower Bear River and demonstrate these practices.

Work closely with Cache County and Box Elder County Weeds Departments to mitigate noxious weeds on the river in their respective counties

Monitoring

Float the river from the Idaho border to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge to perform a river inventory

Monitor irrigation pumps, navigable hazards, and other issues on the river

Perform a weed status inventory

Collaborate with Cache County, Box Elder County, and other entities to build more access opportunities along the river



Permitting

Irrigation Pumps

Utility Easements

Trails, recreational infrastructure Education/Volunteer

Projects Filming and photography Road infrastructure

Restoration projects

Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

Forest Action Plan

AT A GLANCE



The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL) Utah Forest Action Plan (FAP) assesses threats and identifies strategies to ensure healthy trees and forests into the future.

The 2020 FAP integrates with Utah's Shared Stewardship initiative, a risk-and-outcome-based approach to address forestry and wildfire priorities across the State through collaborative, landscape-scale activities.

Utah's Forests

18.2 million acres (34%) of The State of Utah's land area are forest.

Additionally, Utah has 1.8 million acres of urban and community land with 300,000 acres of urban and community forests.

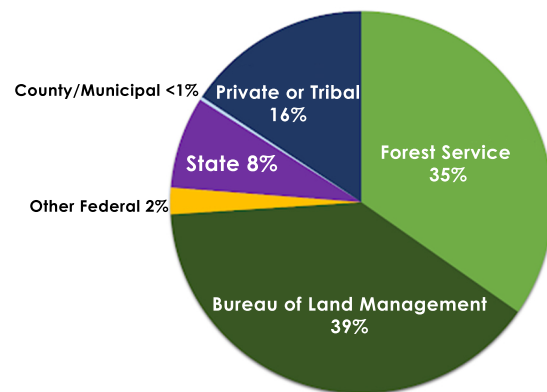
Utah's forests encompass a wide variety of environments and forest types that are valued for their scenic beauty; wood and non-timber forest products; wildlife habitat; and ecosystem services, such as clean air and water.



It is critical to actively manage federal, state, and private forests to create and maintain conditions that are resilient to threats

Threats to Utah's Forests

Declining forest health
Increasing wildfires
Effects of climate
Growth and development
Limited capacity for forest management



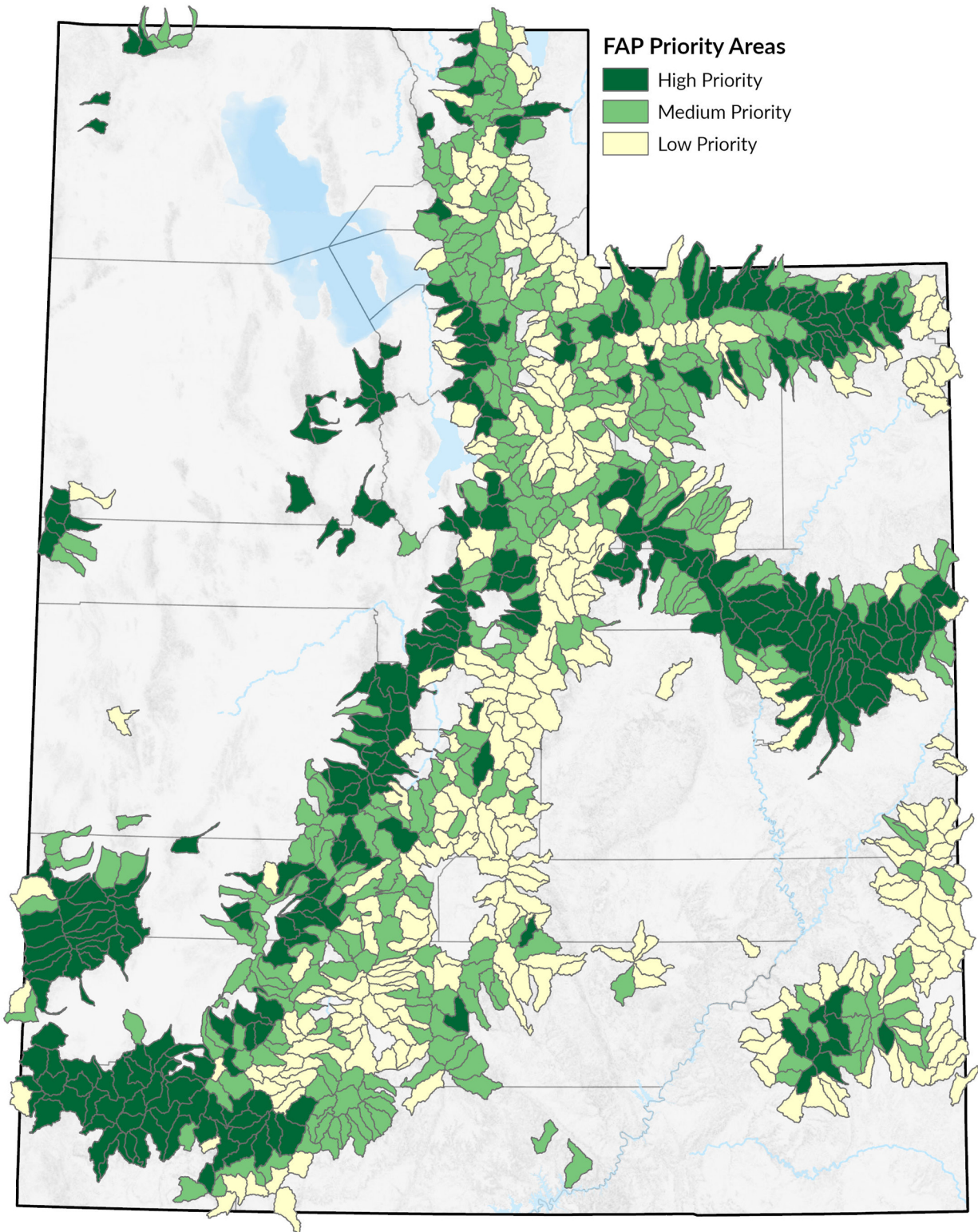
Percentage of forest land in each ownership category, Utah 2015.

Utah FAP's Goals

1. Restore healthy and resilient trees and forests across Utah
2. Reduce wildfire risk to communities, water resources, and other natural resource values
3. Increase collaborative landscape-scale forest restoration activities across the State
4. Build capacity among partners, stakeholders, and communities to engage in forest restoration activities across the State

Priority Landscapes

Based on the Shared Stewardship risk-and-outcome-based approach, the priority landscape map is a tool to help FFSL, the Forest Service and all their partners identify high-priority landscapes for forest restoration and wildfire risk-reduction projects through collaborative approaches.



Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

GREAT SALT LAKE

AT A GLANCE



Managing Great Salt Lake under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Phragmites Control

Treated over 15,600 acres of invasive Phragmites (the figure does not include other land management agencies)

Funds a research grant program to address knowledge gaps to better inform management of GSL

Provide oversight, technical guidance, & evaluation

Currently updating the 2013 Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan and Mineral Leasing Plan

Public Outreach

Along with USGS, developed a Great Salt Lake Hydromapper to inform stakeholders, legislators, and the public on lake levels, salinity, and inflows

Developing an education and outreach video series to inform the public about the importance of the lake

Increased law enforcement to reduce illegal activities with an emphasis on curtailing motorized travel on the exposed lake bed

Identified funding needs for project work by compiling the Great Salt Lake Enhancement Projects list in partnership with the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council and the Division of Water Resources

Collects an annual average of \$11,000,000 in royalties from Great Salt Lake mineral extraction operators (2019-2023)



Causeway Breach Modification

Implemented management recommendations from the Salinity Advisory Committee to raise the Union Pacific Railroad Causeway berm to help control salinity levels

Salinity concentrations were reduced by approximately 45 g/L through this action and an above average inflows



Lead the Tech Team and Salinity Advisory Committee, and provide staff support to the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

Water Trust

Working with the Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust to purchase or lease water rights and protect, conserve, and enhance GSL Wetlands

Completed the Fremont Island Management Plan in May 2023.

Permitting

Grazing
Mineral Extraction
Industrial work
Power/sewer/water line utilities

Sewer drainages and outfalls
Education/Volunteer Projects
Filming and photography
Restoration projects

Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

GREEN & COLORADO RIVERS

AT A GLANCE



Managing the Green and Colorado Rivers under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Habitat Conservation

Spent 4,700 “man-hours” during the 2023 calendar year improving conditions along the river corridors and educating visitors

Collaborated on interagency Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) project for noxious weed treatment and native plant revegetation

Concluded research regarding Tamarisk beetle efficacy; report forthcoming (June 2024)

Administered cooperative agreement with Grand County Noxious Weed Control Department for weed management on Green/Colorado Sovereign Lands

Provide technical assistance and support to USGS and Colorado River Authority of Utah for the operation of 2 streamflow gauges.

Partnered with the Division of Recreation law enforcement to conduct patrols for Labyrinth Canyon and Utahraptor State Park

Public Outreach

Participated in an expert panel at National Wilderness Skills Institute addressing students and prospective rangers about pathways to employment in river settings.

Participates in the annual Utah Guides and Outfitters Conference

Invited to the nationally recognized instructor cohort of the River Management Society

Moderating an expert panel on fish habitat projects at the RiversEdge West Riparian Restoration Conference

Notice and host public open houses for land management actions

Provide technical assistance to BLM Vernal Field Office, Grand County and City of Moab for river access infrastructure development

Management Planning

Concluded data collection and scoping for Recreation Resource Management Plan

Completed first draft of the GR/CR Recreation Management Plan, solicited initial comments from Department of Interior partners, and scheduling public stakeholder meetings

Collaborate with partner agencies and stakeholder groups on resource management issues



Conducted resource monitoring, habitat restoration, and maintenance on 1,177 miles of Green/Colorado River in Eastern Utah

Permitting

Administer the Right of Entry permit program for commercial and guided tours of Sovereign Lands

Issue special use lease agreements, easements, general permits, and grazing permits for authorized Sovereign Lands uses

Coordinate proposed land uses through the Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC)

Cooperate with adjacent landowners in the context of public trust obligations

Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

JORDAN RIVER

AT A GLANCE



Managing the Jordan River under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Land Rehabilitation & Weed Control

Partner with Salt Lake County and Jordan River Commission to coordinate and oversee projects and treatment

Development of best management practices to provide guidance to stakeholders

Provide oversight, technical guidance, & evaluation

Improve cross-boundary vegetation management by hiring of a new Jordan River Vegetation Project Coordinator in collaboration with the Jordan River Commission

Galena & Taylorsville Properties

(Jordan River State Lands)

Coordinate and implement noxious weed control and revegetation

Host volunteer projects and educational events

Monitor activities and address land use issues

Partner with the Jordan River Commission to carry out clean-up, tree planting, and restoration projects



Coordinate with multiple law enforcement, and social service organizations to improve safety along the Jordan River Corridor

Project Coordination

Partner with federal, state, local, and non-governmental entities to coordinate development and improvement projects such as the Big Bend project in West Valley City or the Salt Lake County Water Trail

Administer permits to contractors, landowners, farmers, agencies, and local entities per the Jordan River Comprehensive Management Plan

Coordinate proposed land uses through the Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC)

Cooperate with adjacent landowners in the context of public trust obligations

Grant Programs

Fund Jordan River Recreation and Restoration Projects from legislative appropriations

43 grant projects awarded funding since 2019

11 recreation and programming projects

27 vegetation improvement projects

5 bank stabilization projects

Approximately \$2.3 million awarded to projects since 2019 (approximately \$660,000 awarded in the current fiscal year)



PHOTO BY NEIL FRANTI

Coordinate with local municipalities and developers on river infrastructure plans and recreation

Jordan River Committees & Group

Jordan River Commission Governing Board & Executive Committee

Jordan River Technical Advisory Team

Jordan River Cooperative Weed Management Area

Phragmites Working Group for the Jordan River



Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands



February 5, 2024
NRAEQ Appropriations Subcommittee

Jamie Barnes
Director/State Forester

FFSL Mission

The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands manages, sustains and strengthens Utah's forests, rangelands, sovereign lands and watersheds for its citizens and visitors.



Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

ffsl.utah.gov

Utah Forest Action Plan

- Developed in 2020 and will guide the Forestry program through 2030
- FFSL collaborates with federal, state, and local partners to advance the UFAP
- Establishes 4 goals to improve forest health and resiliency

1. Restore healthy and resilient trees and forests across Utah.
2. Reduce wildfire risk to communities, water resources, and other natural resource values.
3. Increase collaborative landscape-scale forest restoration activities.
4. Build capacity among partners, stakeholders and communities to engage in forest restoration activities across Utah.



Forestry Program Accomplishments



Awarded funding for multiple projects through the USDA Forest Service:

- \$582,000 to strengthen Forestry Program capacity
- \$600,000 for three Landscape-scale Restoration Projects
- \$750,000 for the Urban & Community Forestry Program to go toward disadvantaged communities

Hired two shared NRCS-FFSL Forestry positions to engage private forest landowners.

Forest Legacy Program

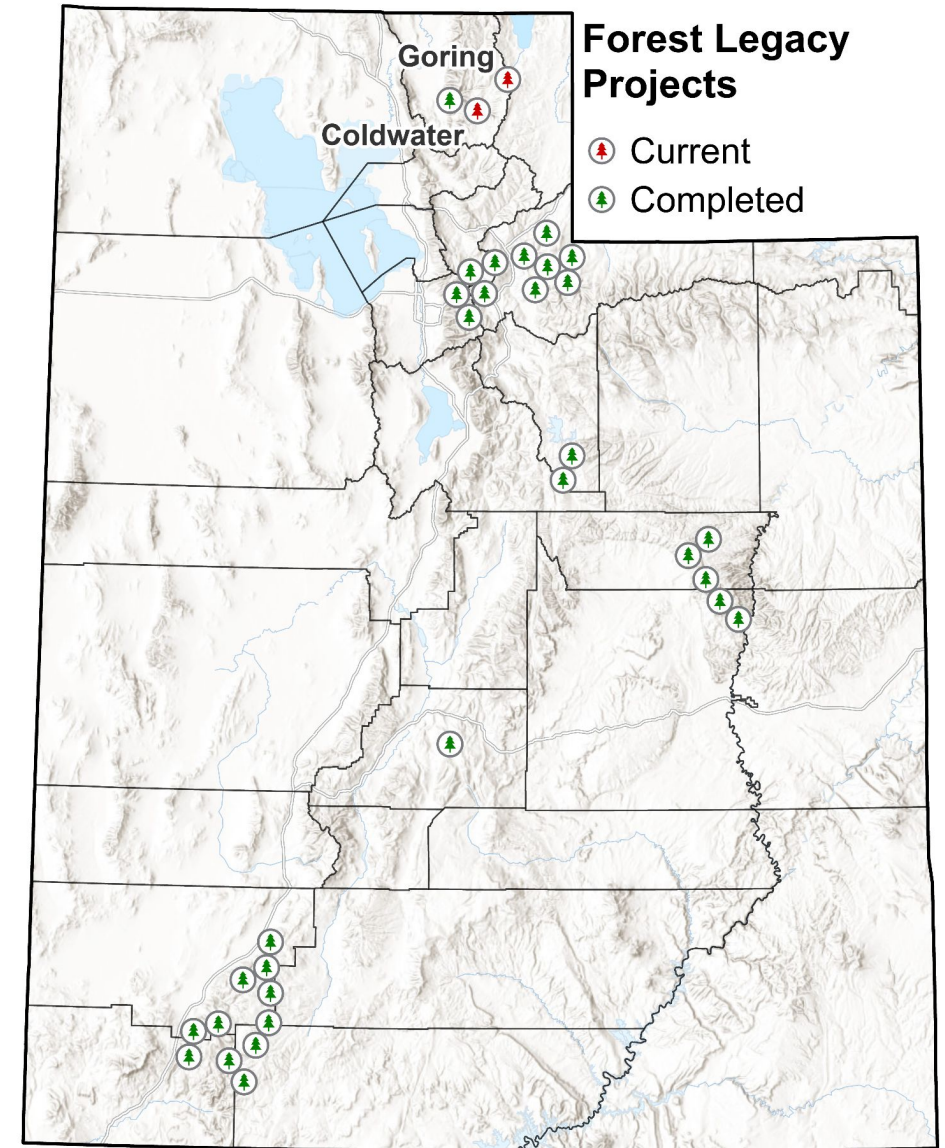


- Protects private forest lands at risk of conversion to non-forest uses.
- State-held and USDA Forest Service-funded conservation easements are used to protect forests.
- Landowners retain their property rights and the program encourages working forests and ranches to support local and rural economies.



Forest Legacy Program

- 31 Forest Legacy projects completed since 1999, protecting 84,000+ acres
- In 2023, awarded \$14.4 million to purchase conservation easements on two properties in Cache and Rich Counties:
 - Coldwater property - \$10,545,000 / 15,623 acres
 - Goring property - \$3,935,000 / 2,725 acres



Shared Stewardship



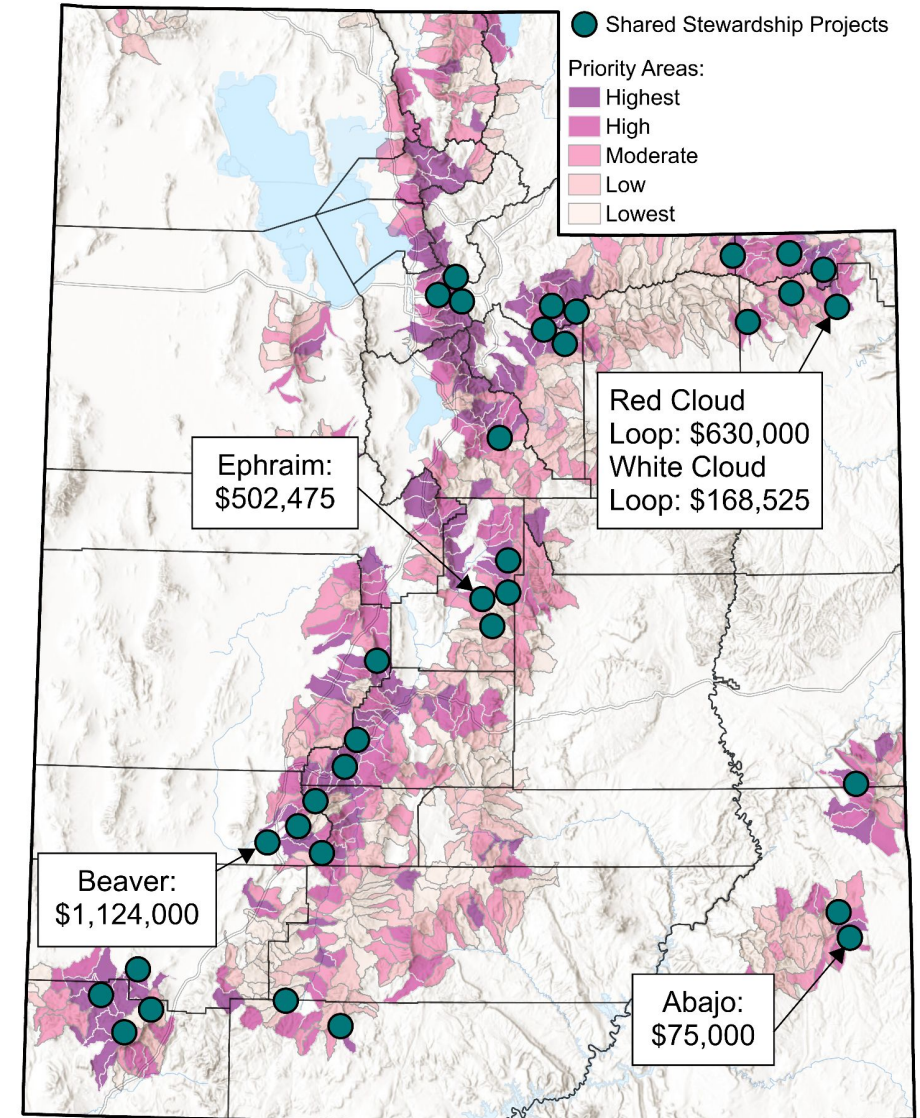
A Federal-State partnership initiative to plan forest health and fuels reduction projects

- USDA Forest Service, NRCS, FFSL, DNR, PLPCO
- \$2 million appropriations in FY 2023
- Forest Products & Business Coordinator assisted local companies in obtaining grant funding:
 - Paul Young Construction - \$596,825
 - Last Chance Lumber - \$300,000
 - University of Utah - \$175,000



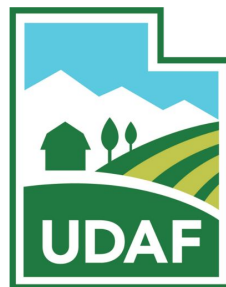
Shared Stewardship

- **Ephraim:** 1,000 acres Rx fire, fuels treatments, future Rx fire
- **Beaver:** Textbook example of shared stewardship objectives, scale, partnerships/collaboration, and cross-boundary work
- **Abajo:** Key to connecting previous and planned treatments in the area into a series of linked projects that collectively address almost 11,000 acres around Monticello
- **Red/White Cloud:** Red and White Cloud projects are part of a larger, 10,000 acre+ Vernal Municipal Watershed project, partially funded by CUWCD



Comprehensive Watershed Restoration Initiative

Collaborated with multiple partners to prioritize projects and allocate \$3.25 million of state funds

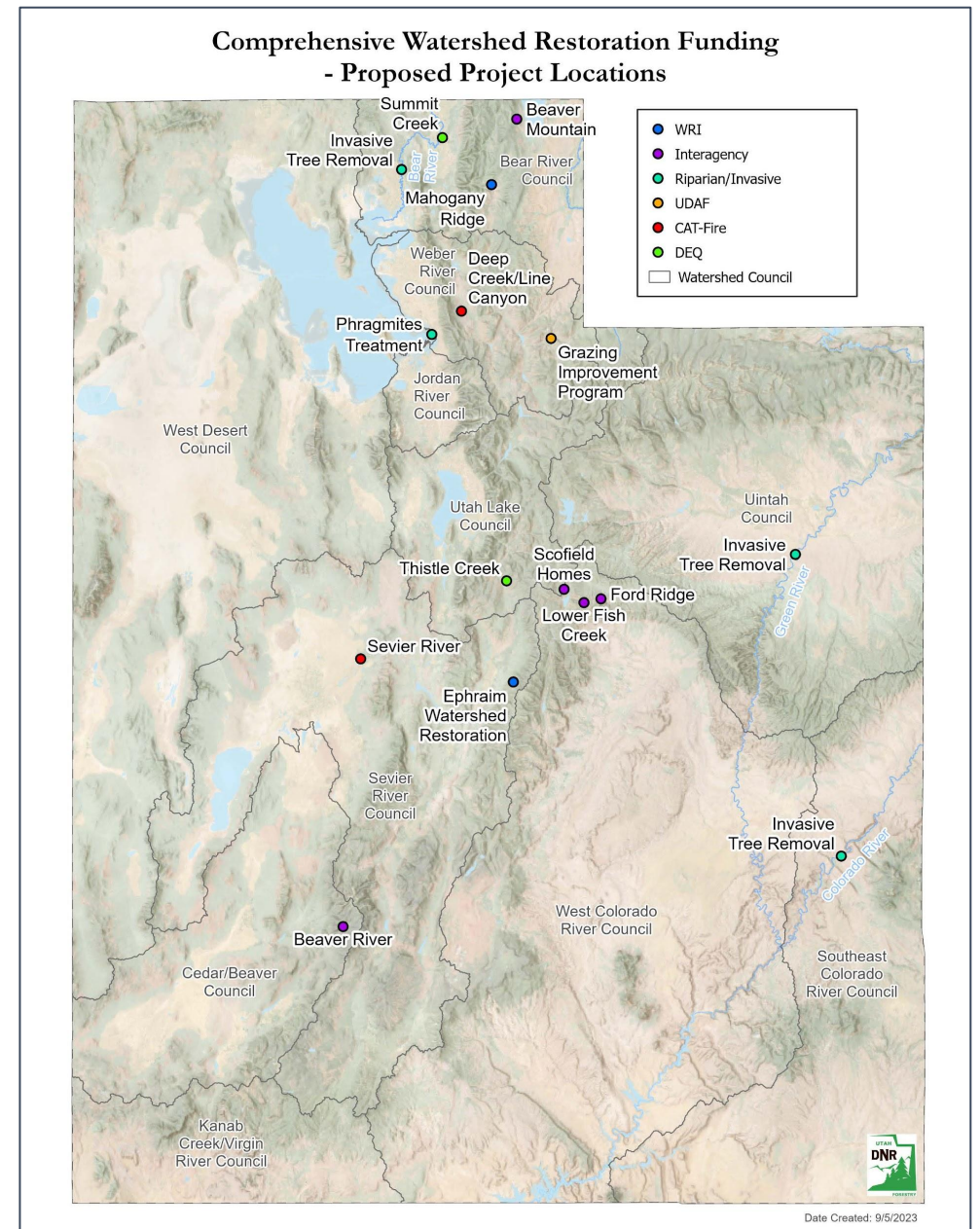


Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands

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Targeted high-priority project areas throughout the state focusing on:

- Forest health
- Watershed restoration
- Fuels reduction
- Fire burn scar rehabilitation
- Invasive species eradication
- Prescribed fire
- Other natural resource concerns



Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program

- CWDG is a 5-year program funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and administered by the USDA Forest Service in partnership with state forestry agencies.
- \$5 billion has been allocated over 5 years to help communities at risk of wildfires fund projects that support the three goals in the National Cohesive Strategy:
 1. Restoring and maintaining landscapes
 2. Creating fire-adapted communities
 3. Improving wildfire response



CWDG - Round 1

Utah was awarded over \$5m in 2023 to fund 2 projects:

\$4.7m to FFSL's Central Area

- Fire education and awareness
- Community Fire Hazard Mitigation Methodologies
- Hazardous fuel removal around structures

\$380,000 to North Tooele Fire District

- Promote Firewise and Utah Fire Sense
- Raise general wildfire awareness through public demonstrations
- Increase social media coverage
- Installed Fire Danger signage
- Code improvements



Wildland Urban Interface Preparedness, Prevention, and Mitigation (WUIPPM) Fund



- Funds to reduce wildfire hazard across the state, as sanctioned through House Bill 261, in 2023.
- \$2M was appropriated in FY24.



WUIPPM Supported Projects

<u>Area</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Project Type</u>	<u>SB 56 Goal(s)</u>	<u>Output</u>	<u>Funds Requested</u>
Bear River	Weber	Weber Fire District Uintah/Highlands Rapid Assessment	Outreach/Education	Fire Adapted	450 lot assess	\$32,130
Bear River	Rich	Garden City	Fuel Reduction	Wildfire Response	50 acres	\$59,000
Wasatch Front	Salt Lake	Big Cottonwood Canyon Phase II	Fuel Reduction	Fire Adapted	40 acres	\$157,000
Wasatch Front	Salt Lake	High Country Estates I Phase II	Fuel Reduction	Fire Adapted	15 acres	\$116,000
Wasatch Front	Davis	Farmington Canyon Road	Fuel Reduction	Wildfire Response	7 acres	\$59,800
Southwest	Iron, Kane, Washington	Cedar Mountain Aspen Restoration	Fuel Reduction	Resilient Landscapes	130 acres	\$280,000
Southeast	Carbon	East Carbon Fuel Break	Fuel Reduction	Fire Adapted	38 acres	\$83,000
Southeast	San Juan	Wray Mesa Mitigation	Fuel Reduction	Fire Adapted	40 acres	\$110,700
Forestry	Summit, Weber	Weber River Basin	Watershed Restoration/Forest Resilience	Resilient Landscapes	75 acres	\$75,000



2023 Fire Summary



808 total fire starts

- 18,061 total acres burned

339 human-caused starts

- 2020 - 1492
- 2021 - 570
- 2022 - 489

367 natural caused starts

102 undetermined starts



Top-3 Human-Caused Starts



#1

Motor Vehicles
69 Starts

120.8/year
(5-year Average)



#2

Ag/Debris Burning
48 Starts

110/year
(5-year Average)



#3

Campfires
28 Starts

76.8/year
(5-year Average)



2023 Fire Summary (cont.)



Thanks to our staff and cooperators, the state had a 96% catch rate

- 10 fires exceeded 10 acres

Helicopter contract continues to pay dividends

- Flew for 250.2 hours in 2023
- Deployed 699,644 gallons of water in fire suppression efforts.





Fire prevention efforts are working:

- Since 2021, the state has invested \$2.4 million
- In 2023, 42% of wildfires were human-caused
 - Nationally 89% are human-caused (2022)
- Fire Sense received national recognition with the bronze-level Smokey Bear Award for its success at preventing human-caused wildfires



Fire Suppression Cost

- State, local, & federal estimated cost of fire suppression \$18.2 million (2023 calendar year)

Reimbursement in calendar year 2023

Dollar Ridge - \$10,905,529.83
Canal - \$819,026.45
Knolls - \$153,577.91
Veyo West - \$149,117.96
Ether Hollow - \$155,761.76
Mammoth - \$233,088.91
Pack Creek - \$467,390.59
Parley's Canyon - \$324,621.18

Total for Calendar year 2023 \$13,208,114.59

Projected Amounts in Calendar year 2024

Canal - \$5,039,442.37
Knolls - \$502,899.63
Veyo West - \$399,734.79
Ether Hollow - \$23,649.64 (Received \$85,683.24 1/11/24)
Mammoth - \$1,033,388.18
Pack Creek - \$1,857,484.52
Parley's Canyon - \$14,748.16

***Projected 2024 \$9,084,961.28**



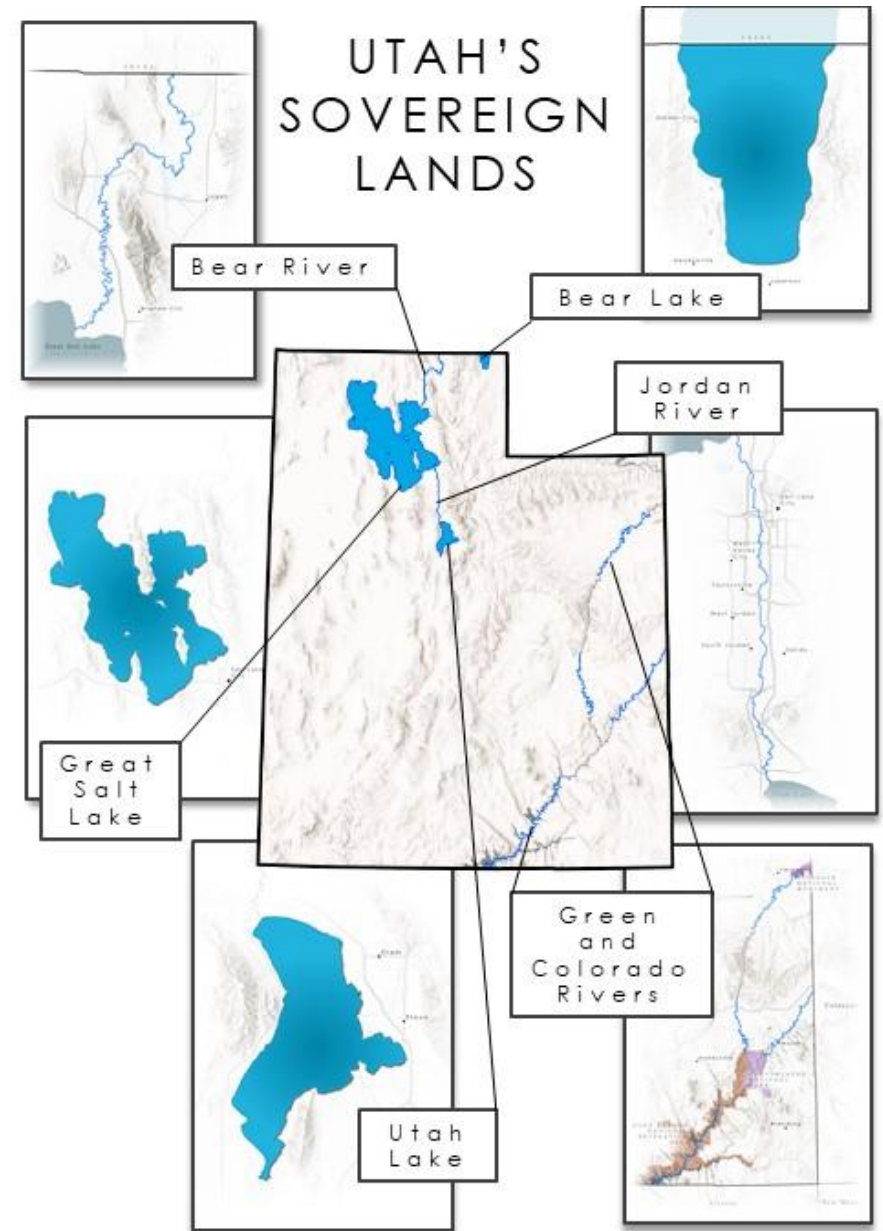
Sovereign Lands

Bear Lake	Bear River
Great Salt Lake	Jordan River
Utah Lake	Green River
	Colorado River

- Over 1.5 million acres of lakebed and riverbed
- Over 2,200 miles of shoreline

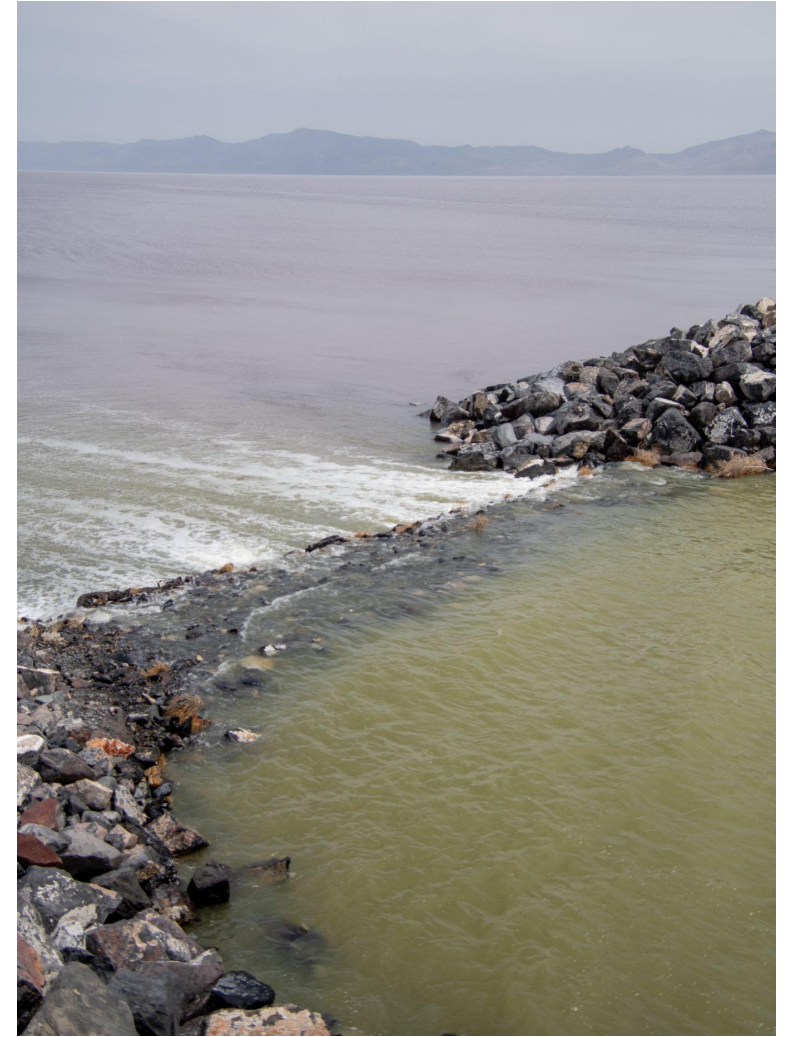
Additional Lands managed as Sovereign Lands include:

- Moab Exchange Lands (Prairie Dog Haven and Utahaptor State Park)
- Several upland parcels abutting sovereign lands



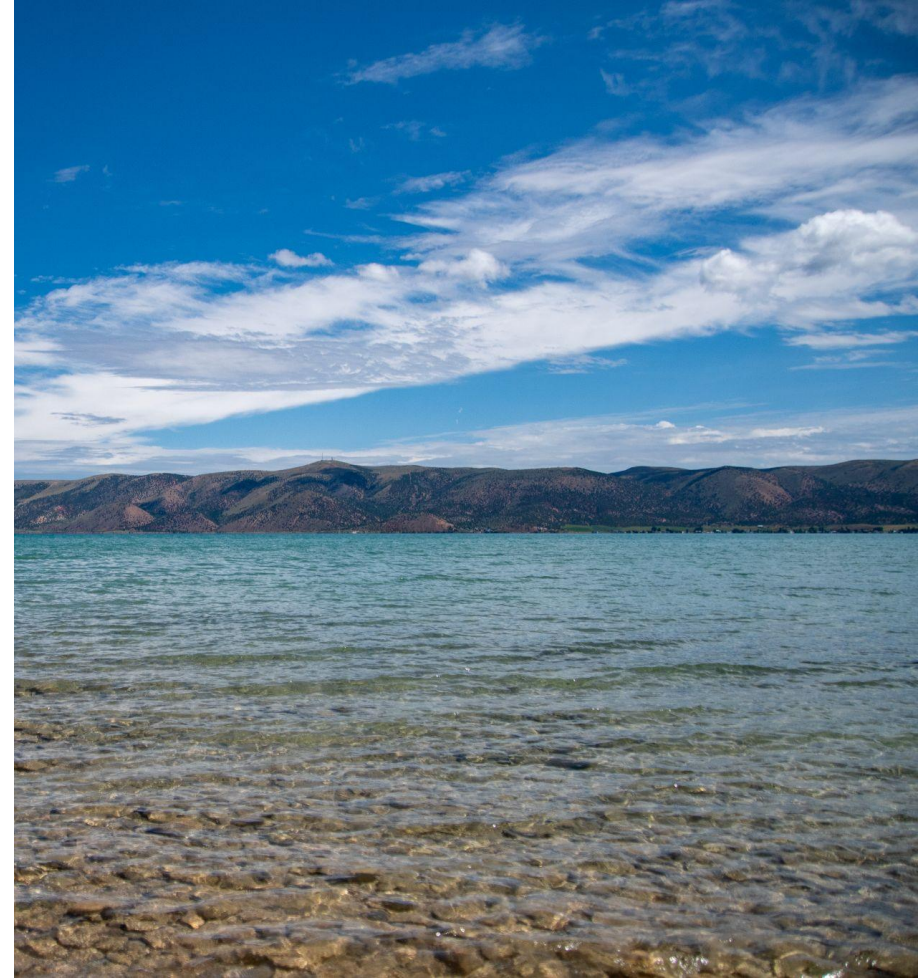
Sovereign Lands Projects

- Modified the Union Pacific Causeway Berm on GSL to prevent ecological collapse of the South Arm due to high salinity concentrations
 - This action coupled with above average snowpack reduced salinity by 45 g/L
- Began the process of updating the Utah Lake and Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plans
- Awarded over \$600,000 in research grants during FY 24 targeting knowledge gaps that will directly inform management of sovereign lands



Sovereign Lands Projects Cnt'd

- Awarded over \$5 million dollars in grants for recreational improvements, shoreline restoration, marina enhancements, and ecological restoration during FY24
- Collaborated with the GSL Watershed Enhancement Trust to acquire water rights and preserve and enhance GSL Wetlands.
- Increased field staff to focus on collaborative efforts to protect and restore sovereign lands



Sovereign Lands Projects Cnt'd



- FFSL conducted over 4,700 hours of project work, education and outreach on the Green and Colorado Rivers over the past year
- Nearly 12,000 acres of phragmites were treated on sovereign lands last year by FFSL and its partners (Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah County, Utah Lake Authority)
 - Approximately 74% reduction in phragmites coverage on Utah Lake
- We continue to develop best management practices for invasive species on sovereign lands including: phragmites, tamarisk, Russian olive, Eurasian watermilfoil, and more



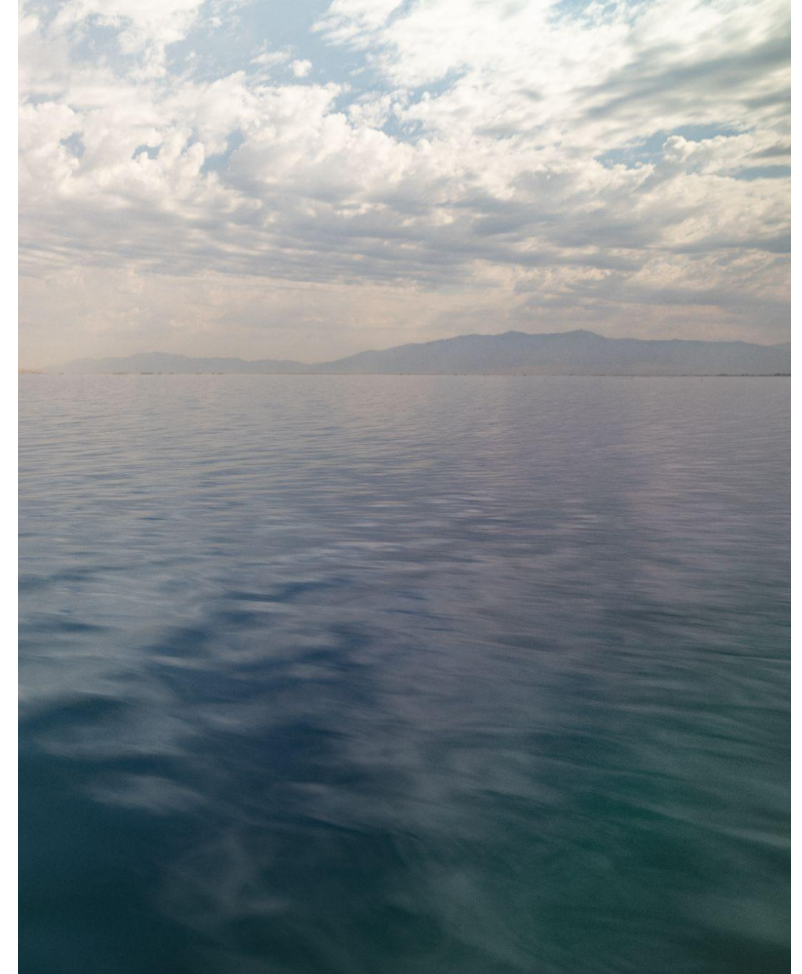
Sovereign Lands Projects Cnt'd

- Partnered with the Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water and Air at Utah State University to perform a needs assessment of Bear Lake to identify opportunities to improve collaboration and management of the Lake
- We played an important role in the Great Salt Lake Strike Team providing data, research and input to help decision makers stay informed
- Hosted and participated in several volunteer events focused on trash clean up, tree planting, and invasive species removal on each of our resources

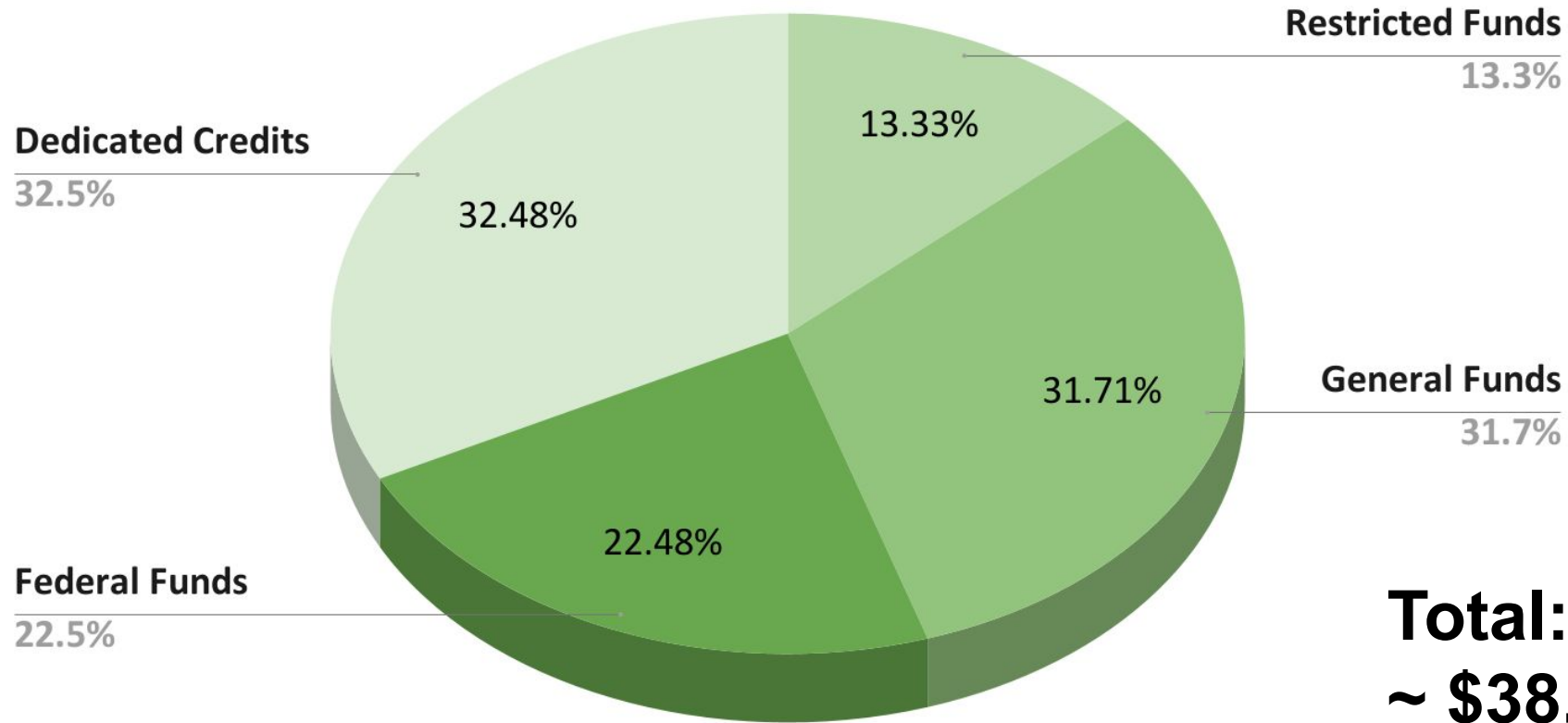


Sovereign Lands Projects Cnt'd

- Increased law enforcement presence through the hiring of an additional FTE LEO and partnerships with other agencies
- Conducted extensive outreach through the informal rule making process to develop rules related to lithium extraction on GSL
 - FFSL intends to submit the rules for formal rulemaking shortly after the 2024 legislative session



FY2025 Base Budget Request



Funding Requests for FY25

- Fire Sense Campaign
- Great Salt Lake Phragmites Eradication
- Shared Stewardship
- Sovereign Lands Management
- Increase Wildland Fire Capacity



Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

MINERALS PROGRAM



AT A GLANCE

Under the Public Trust Doctrine, the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands balances proposed uses of Sovereign Lands against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Additionally, the Division is tasked with managing the mineral assets on State Sovereign Lands and within Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) highway corridors

Great Salt Lake Lithium

7 mineral extraction companies operating on the lake:
Compass Minerals, US Magnesium, Morton Salt, North Shore, Cargill, Earth's Elements

FFSL has concluded informal rulemaking for HB 513, which governs lithium production on GSL. FFSL will submit rules for formal rulemaking during 2024

Generates an average annual revenue of approximately
\$11,000,000

FFSL is working with industry to minimize water depletion related to lithium extraction, protect GSL, and provide a full and fair return to the state

Mineral Royalties fund the Sovereign Lands Restricted Account, which is prioritized for the resource in which it is derived, but supports programs across all sovereign lands.

Utah Department of Transportation

Manage UDOT Special Use Leases (SLAs) within highway corridors

Arrange lease agreements and collect rental and royalty payments

Green & Colorado Rivers

Oil, Gas, and Hydrocarbon no-surface occupancy leases

Sulfate of Potash extraction operations along the river

Simultaneous Bidding

Coordinate simultaneous bidding for mineral extraction nominations on all sovereign and state land, with the exception of the School and Institutionalized Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) lands

Administered 2 Simultaneous Bidding events in 2023, with 5 new Oil, Gas, and Hydrocarbon leases issued on UDOT land

Revenue

Sovereign Lands' mineral revenue is deposited into the restricted account, and state lands' mineral revenue is routed to the land-owning agency

UDOT revenue is collected and dispersed at the end of each fiscal year



PHRAGMITES

AT A GLANCE



FFSL is the executive management authority of approximately 1.5 million acres of lakebed that includes critical wetlands of hemispheric importance. Invasive vegetation is actively managed by FFSL to enhance and maintain the crucial functions of these wetlands.

Background

Phragmites australis (Common Reed), or Phragmites, is an invasive grass-like plant that has taken over wetlands across North America.

Phragmites invasion can cause numerous negative impacts, including:

Alteration of hydrology and sediment transport

Conversion of diverse native wetland or riparian habitats into homogeneous, fire-prone lands – decimating migratory bird habitat

Significant impediment to access to recreation and rescue



In 2011, Phragmites covered approximately 23,000 acres of Great Salt Lake Wetlands. Utah Lake wetlands and the Jordan River riparian area have also been heavily invaded.



Scan this QR code to visit our StoryMap of the Phragmites removal success at Utah Lake.

Phragmites Control

Phragmites can be controlled with integrated treatments of herbicide, mowing or trampling, prescribed fire, grazing, water control, and re-vegetation over 3+ years

Herbicide use has been shown to be the most effective and crucial component of an integrated treatment approach because it is the only way kill the plant's root system.

The USU Wetland Ecology Lab has produced numerous research studies to develop well-established best management practices for controlling Phragmites.



Treatments on Sovereign Lands

(as of 2023)

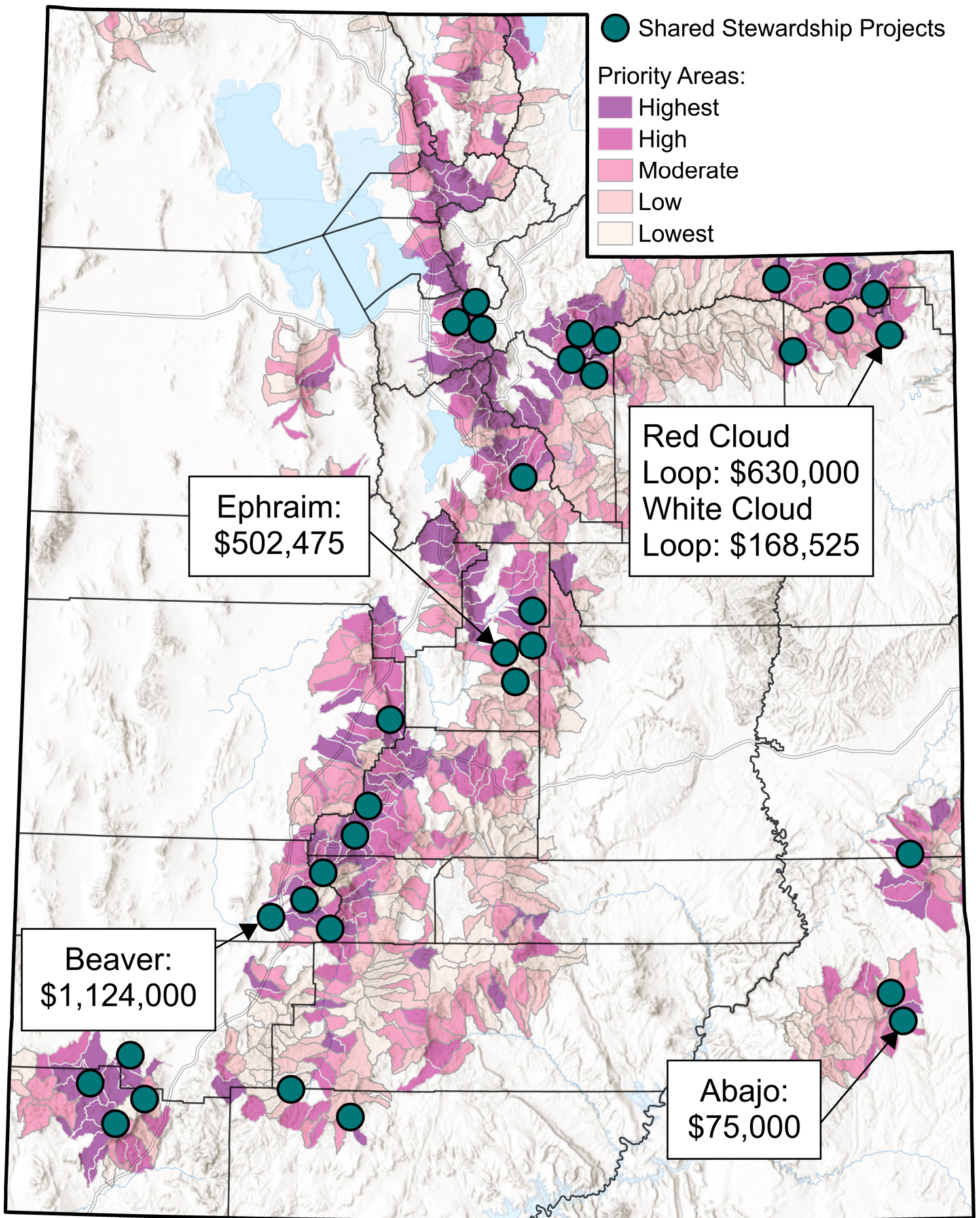
As the manager of the beds of the State's navigable waters, FFSL has been working collaboratively to control Phragmites over the past 10 years.

Great Salt Lake – over 15,600 acres have been treated by FFSL, plus many more by DWR, TNC, and BRMBR.

Utah Lake – over 10,000 acres have been treated, resulting in over 70% reduction in Phragmites cover.

Jordan River – many pilot projects are currently underway to establish best management practices for controlling Phragmites on the river.

Bear Lake – Pro-active control efforts have kept Phragmites cover limited to a few small patches.



UTAH LAKE

AT A GLANCE



Managing Utah Lake under the Public Trust Doctrine

Balance proposed uses against navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic beauty, public recreation, and water quality in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare

Phragmites Control

Starting in FY23, \$300,000 in on-going funding dedicated for Phragmites removal and shoreline vegetation restoration

Reduced Phragmites cover by over 74% (as of 2023) through partnerships with the Utah Lake Authority and Utah County

Coordinate research efforts through local universities to guide and inform ongoing projects

Participate as a Utah Lake Authority Board member and assist in drafting the ULA Plan.

North Shore / Sandy Beach

Monitor activities, coordinate law enforcement, and address land use issues

Partner with Utah County to plan and develop recreational infrastructure at Sandy Beach

Lead restoration projects for the North Shore open space and wetland area

Partner with the Utah Lake Authority to plan and implement restoration and recreation projects along the lakeshore

Marina Enhancement and Public Access Grant

Provide funding for marina and public access in a coordinated effort with the Utah Lake Authority

Awarded approximately \$4.5 million to several multi-year marina projects in fiscal year 2024

Began the process of updating the Utah Lake Comprehensive Management Plan

Coordinated with the Division of Water Quality to fund Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) mitigation and water quality monitoring in public marinas

Invasive Species Control & Restoration

Facilitate noxious weed spraying and monitoring, revegetation, and provide consultation on challenging weed control sites

Coordinate large-scale projects, guide and inform best management practices, and facilitate native tree planting

Work with adjacent landowners on Utah Lake to provide best practices expertise for invasive species removal

Support the Timpanogos Special Services District water quality studies through legislative funding



Permitting Program

Partner and coordinate activities and infrastructure on state lands with contractors, landowners, farmers, agencies, and local entities while adhering to the Public Trust Doctrine

Issue special use leases, easements, general permits, right of entry permits, and grazing permits for authorized Sovereign Lands uses; such as boat marinas, the Utah Lake Shoreline Trail, and volunteer projects

Coordinate proposed land uses through the Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC)