

August 21, 2024

Natural Resources Agriculture and Environment Interim
Committee

Watershed Councils

Candice Hasenyager | Director
Division of Water Resources
Scott Paxman | Chair
Utah Watersheds Council



Utah Division of Water Resources

water.utah.gov

Watershed Councils Act Summary

(Utah Code §73-10g-Part 3)

Purpose:

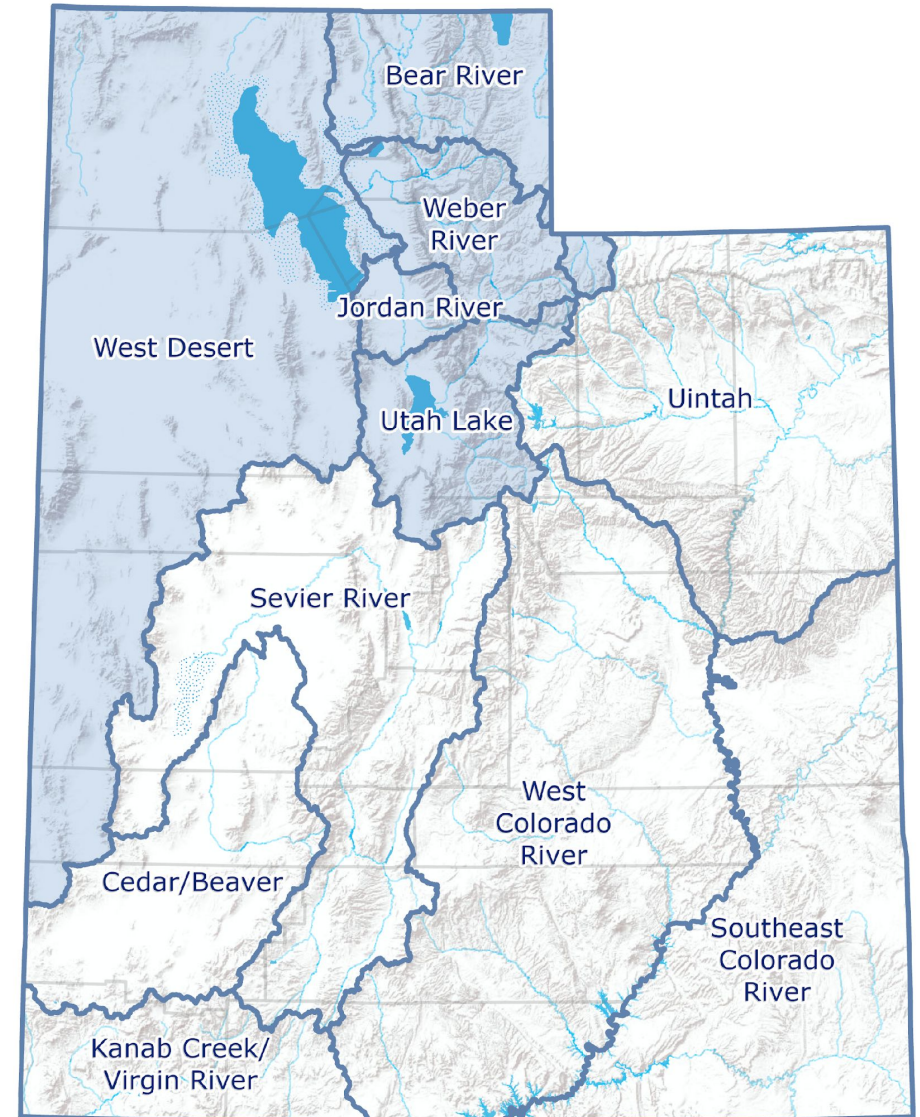
To “develop diverse and balanced stakeholder forums for discussion of water policy and resource issues at watershed and state levels...”

Councils “are not vested with regulatory, infrastructure financing, or enforcement powers or responsibilities...”



13 Watershed Councils

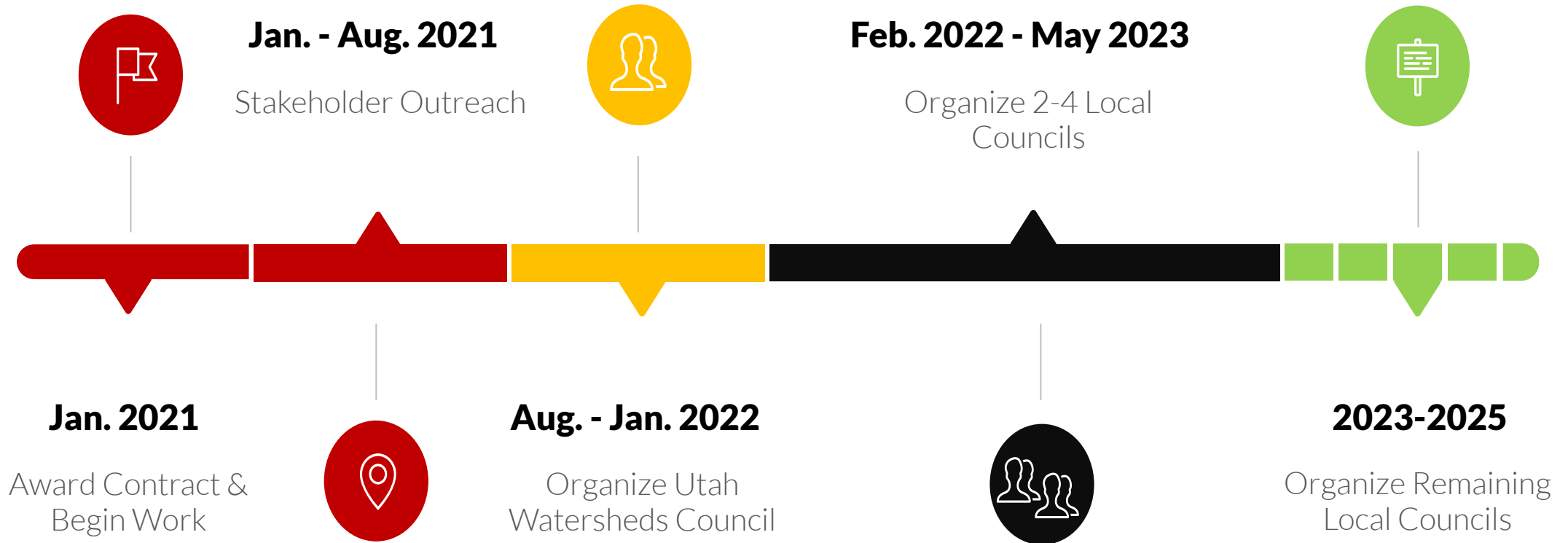
- Utah Watersheds Council (statewide)
- 11 Local councils
- GSL council



- 11 Utah Watershed Councils
- Great Salt Lake Watershed Council



Timeline



Utah Watersheds Council

(statewide council)

Role:

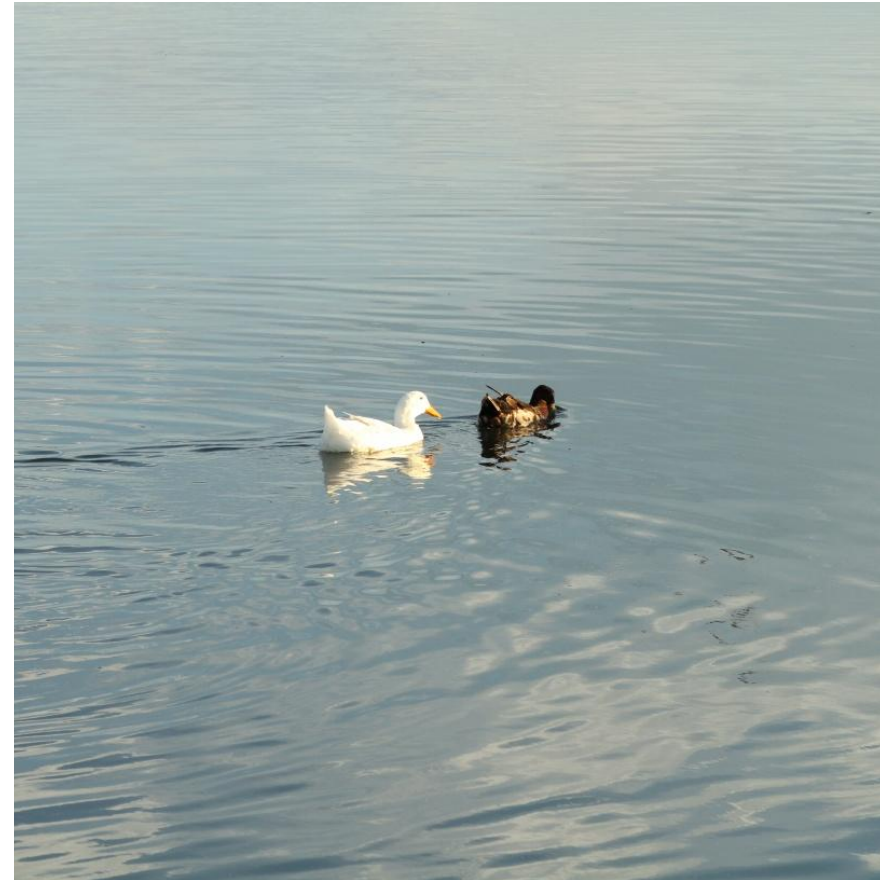
(a) Discuss and collaborate among stakeholders relative to the water-related interests of the state

(b) Communicate and coordinate between DNR, UDAF, DEQ, and other state and federal agencies



Utah Watersheds Council (Cont.)

- (c) facilitate establishment of local watershed councils
- (d) provide resources and support for administration of local councils
- (e) consult and seek guidance from local councils
- (f) provide advice to the governor and Legislature on water issues



Utah Watersheds Council

Members:

DNR Executive Director
DEQ Executive Director
DAF Commissioner
Director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs
USU Ext. Vice President
Director of DEM
Rep. designated by the UAC
Rep. designated by the ULCT
Rep. designated by the UASD
Rep. of Reclamation Projects
Rep. of Agricultural
Rep. of Business and Industry water interests
Rep. of Environmental/Conservation interests
Rep. Water Attorneys
Division of Water Rights/State Engineer
Division of Water Resources

Joel Ferry
Kim Shelley
Craig Buttars
Dustin Jansen
Ken White
Kris Hamlet
Victor Iverson
Mark Stratford
Robert Moore
Scott Paxman (**Chair**)
ValJay Rigby
Rikki Hrenko-Browning
Marcelle Shoop
Warren Peterson
Teresa Wilhelmsen (non-voting)
Candice Hasenyager (non-voting)

Local Council Designees:

Nate Daus (Bear River)
Rick Smith (Weber River)
Sterling Brown (Utah Lake) (**Vice Chair**)
Laura Briefer (Jordan River)
Brett Palmer (West Desert)
TBD (GSL)
Peggy Killian (Uintah)
Andy Nickle (Sevier River)
Cody Allred (West Colorado River)
Bill Winfield (Southeastern Utah)
Tammy Pearson (Cedar/Beaver)
Mike Noel (Kanab Creek/Virgin River)



Council Accomplishments

- Certified all 11 local watershed councils as of July 2024
 - GSL Watershed Council currently being met through GSLAC
- Recommended minor changes to the Watershed Councils Act
- Elected new officers (Scott Paxman, Chair; Sterling Brown, Vice Chair)
- Continue to educate members on water resources topics
- Quarterly reports from local watershed councils on their watersheds, activities, local challenges



Local Watershed Councils

Role:

(a) Encourage and facilitate discussion and collaboration on local watershed issues

(b) Provide guidance to the Utah Watersheds Council

→ A voice for local and rural communities and stakeholders



Utah Lake Watershed Council members on a tour of the Jordan River pump house, sewer district, and Utah Lake shoreline.



Local Watershed Councils

Coordinate the following local interests:

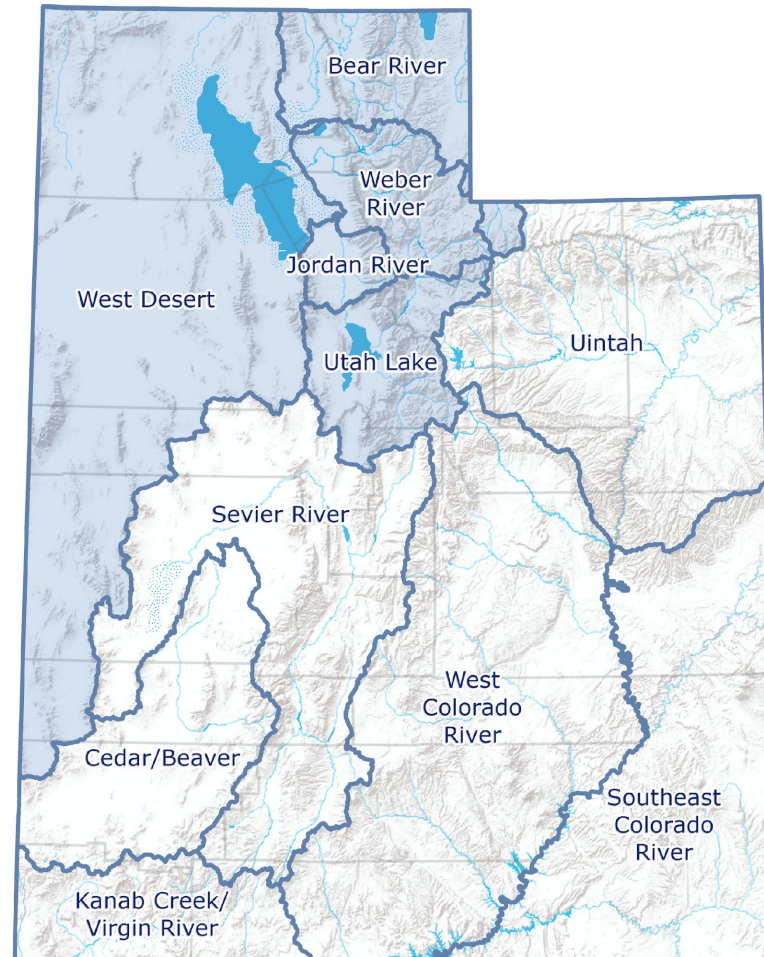
- Agriculture
- Industry
- Utah tribal nations
- Public water suppliers
- Water planning and research institutions
- Water quality
- Fish and Wildlife
- Water dependent habitat and environments
- Watershed management
- Mutual irrigation companies
- Local sponsors of reclamation projects
- Land use planning agencies
- Federal and state agencies (liaisons)



Weber River Watershed Council members on an airboat tour of Ogden Bay Wildlife Management Area and the GSL wetlands.



Local Watershed Councils Convened to Date



- 11 Utah Watershed Councils
- Great Salt Lake Watershed Council



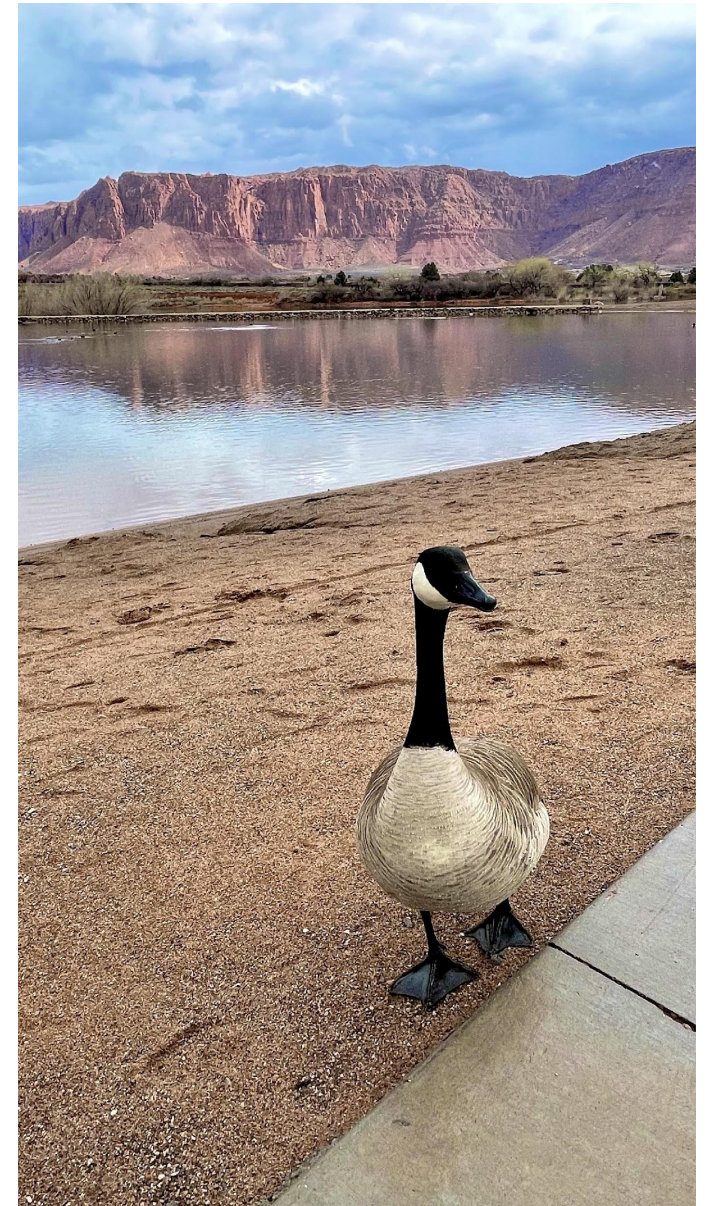
Successes

- All watershed councils established or underway
- First-ever watershed councils event
- Hired full-time Watershed Councils Coordinator
- State and federal agencies are interested in and attending council meetings
 - DWRe area planning specialists
 - DWRi regional engineers
 - UDAF watershed coordinators
 - Wildlife regional employees
 - NRCS, BLM, BOR, Air Force, Army and growing



Opportunities

- State Water Plan (HB 280)
- GSL Basin Integrated Plan
- Convenient, built-in stakeholder groups for state agencies
 - DWRe, DWRI, UDAF, DWR, DWQ, FFSL, and more
- Federal agencies and NGOs can communicate funding opportunities to diverse local groups



Questions?

