

# 2025 Annual Report

May

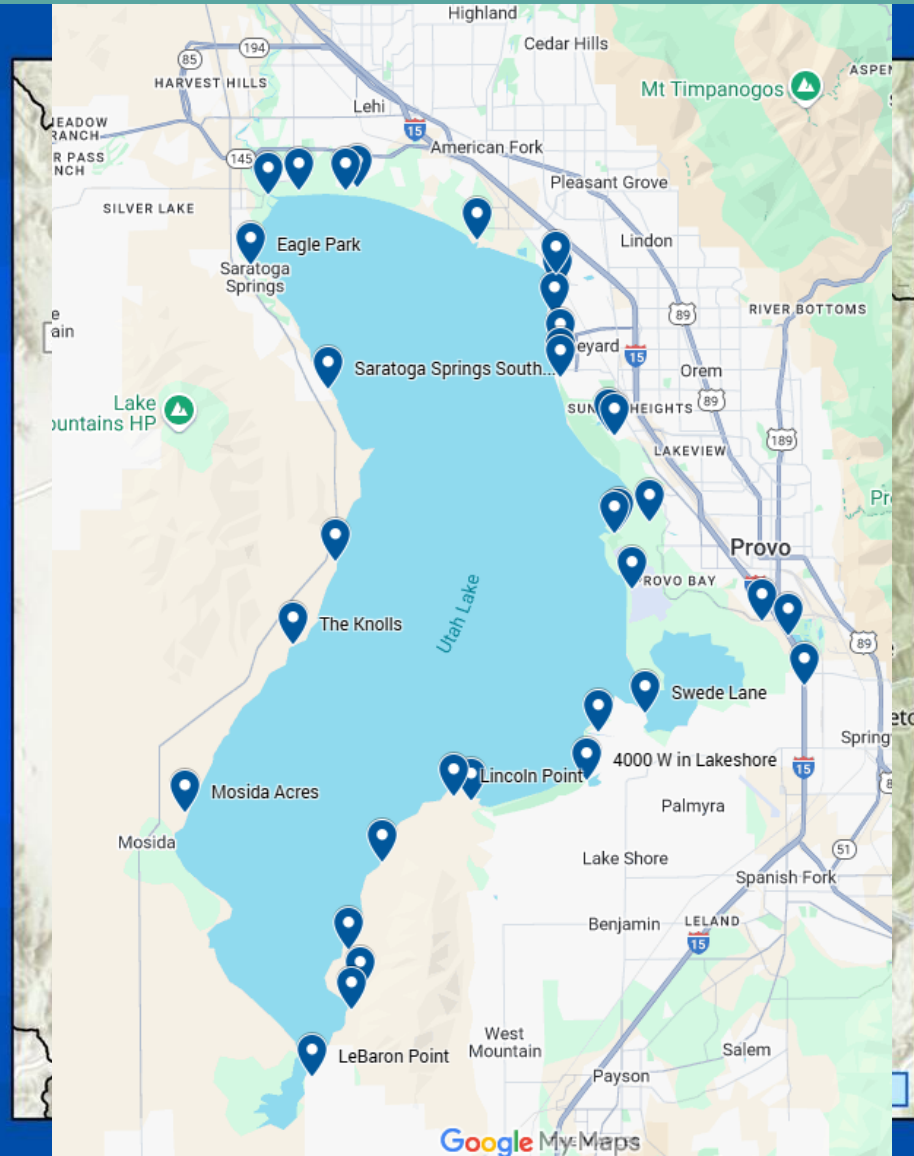
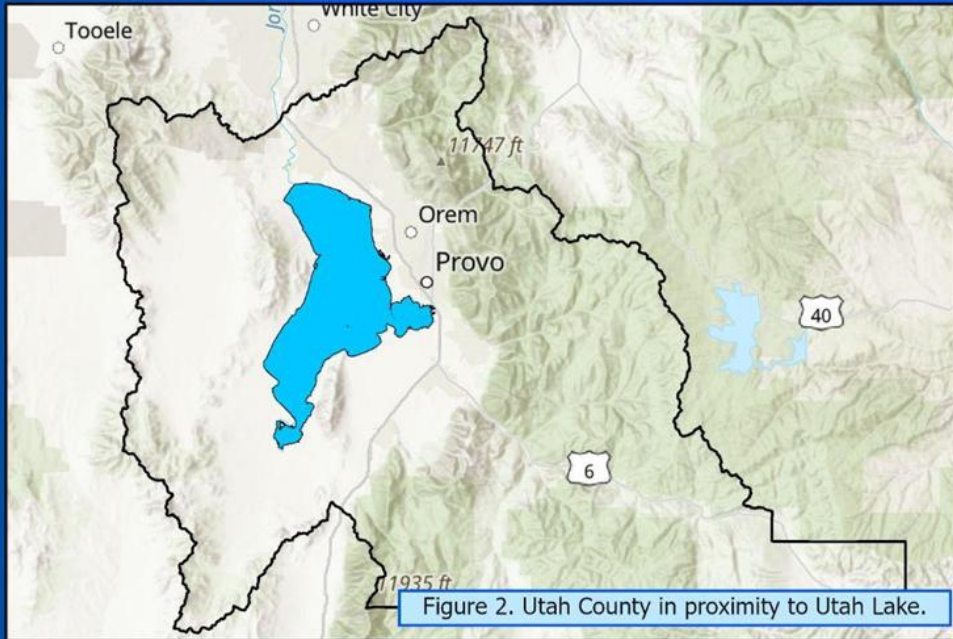


# INTRODUCTION - What is Utah Lake?

- Utah Lake (Map 1) is the third largest naturally occurring lake west of the Mississippi River, with a surface area of approximately 148 square miles.
- Average depth: 10 feet.
- The lake bed consists of thousands of feet of sediment, which contributes to its shallow character and naturally turbid appearance.
- Nearly 98% of its inflow is from annual snowfall in Utah's mountain regions.
- Between June and September, the water levels decrease three to four feet due to evaporation.
- Water levels also fluctuate due to withdrawal of water from the lake itself and its tributaries for municipal use and irrigation.
- Utah Lake is surrounded by urban development. The population living around the lake has grown exponentially. This human influence has put



# Utah Lake in Relation to Utah County and Utah



Map 1. Utah County and Utah Lake in relation to each other with access point locations.

# ABOUT THE UTAH LAKE AUTHORITY



## Board Members

Michelle Kaufusi, Chair (Provo Mayor)  
Carolyn Lundberg, Vice-Chair (Lindon Mayor)  
Curtis Blair, (Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce)  
Brady Brammer (State House of Representatives)  
Skyler Beltran (Utah County Commissioner)  
Chris Carn (Saratoga Springs City Council)  
Ben Stireman (Forestry Fire & State Lands)  
Kamron Dalton (Governor's Office Seat)  
Hilary Hungerford (UVU Professor)  
LaNae Millett (Orem City Council)  
Julie Fullmer (Vineyard Mayor)  
Marty Larson (Genola Mayor)  
John Mackey (DWQ Director)  
Mark Johnson (Lehi Mayor)  
Mike McKell (Utah Senator)

## Staff

- Luke Peterson, Executive Director
- Sam Braegger, Deputy Director
- Addy Valdez, Conservation & Education Program Manager
- Shelby Kozak, Development Director (hired in 2025)
- Kelly Cannon-O'Day, Communications & Events Manager (hired in 2025)
- Heather McEwen, Events Coordinator

## WHO WE ARE

The Utah Lake Authority (ULA) works with government entities, property owners, stakeholders, and private parties to encourage recreation, facilitate improvements, and implement management strategies at Utah Lake. We do everything we can to make the lake a fun, safe, accessible place for everyone.

The Utah Lake Authority was created by the Utah Legislature to replace the Utah Lake Commission in 2022. We strive to promote multiple public uses of the lake and facilitate orderly planning and development in and around the lake.

## Mission Statement

The ULA leads a cooperative effort to identify, fund and implement projects and programs to enhance the lake's ecosystems, recreational opportunities, and thriving communities.

## We strive to:

Foster communication and coordination between ULA members and the public:

- Promote resource utilization and protection
- Maintain and develop recreation access
- Monitor and promote responsible economic development

**As we address these issues, we seek to protect, preserve, and enhance the lake for present and future generations to enjoy.**

# Partners (some of them)

US Bureau of Reclamation

Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission

Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

Utah Division of Water Quality

Utah Division of State Parks

Utah Division of Recreation

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

June Sucker Recovery Implementation Program

Central Utah Water Conservancy District

Utah County

Provo City

Lindon City

Orem City

Saratoga Springs City

Bike Utah

Conserve Utah Valley

Utah Open Lands



# Water Quality

- The Utah Lake Water Quality Study is almost complete with water quality improvement strategies in process.
- Water quality has shown no significant changes since carp removal began.
- Total phosphorus dropped during the high water year of 2023 & 2024 in comparison to 2021 and 2022.
- Turbidity decreased in 2024 to similar levels to 2017. Results show lake level has a stronger effect on most water quality changes compared to carp population biomass.
- The date of the first HAB advisory on Utah Lake was May 31st, 2024 with 98 samples collected over the monitoring season.
- Over 31 Utah water bodies



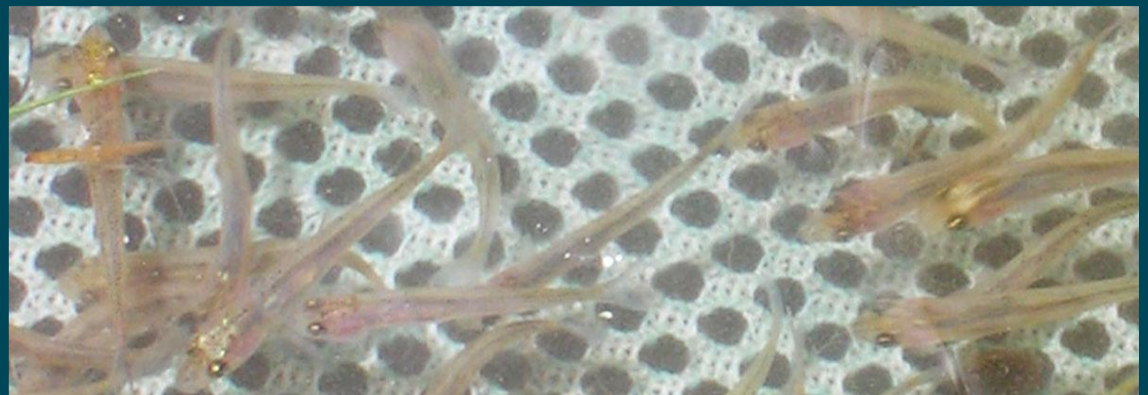
# Ecosystem Monitoring

- The project aims to evaluate the status and trends of aquatic resources in Utah Lake and how they are impacted by carp removal and other factors like nutrient pollution and lake level fluctuations.
- Monitoring includes water quality parameters, phytoplankton, zooplankton, macrophytes, macroinvertebrates, and fish populations. Data has been collected since 2009.
- Increased lake levels in 2023/2024 led to an increase in emergent and submerged native vegetation communities.
- Fish body condition and diet studies found bullheads and carp had higher body condition with lower carp biomass, while catch rates increased for some species.
- Avian, mosquito, plant, and temperature monitoring were also discussed as ongoing components of



# June Sucker

- Trammel netting was done in spring to capture June suckers and collect data on length, weight, etc. Over 378 suckers captured and 302 were PIT tagged.
- Backpack electrofishing and seining was used over summer to sample larvae. More juveniles were found in Hobble Creek (376 caught) than in the Delta (312 caught).
- Spawning numbers of June sucker in the Provo river remained lower in 2024 than recent years contrary to Hobble creek with a second consecutive year of high spawning.
- Young-of-year June Sucker were found in a remote pond near Hobble creek that has historically been investigated less than the main channel.



# Non-Native Removals: Carp

- Carp biomass and density have remained relatively stable over the past three years after being reduced from peak levels in 2016-2017, but remain well above the target level.
- Recruitment is highly variable and influenced by lake levels, with higher recruitment during high water years
- After contract-ending circumstances, it was decided to explore new technology rather than seine netting.
- Box trap piloting completed the first year of study with the second beginning in 2025.
- General agreement was expressed that multiple years of data are needed under different hydrologic conditions to fully understand impacts of new pilot study techniques.



# Non-Native Removals: Phragmites

- 88.56 acres of invasive trees and tamarisk were removed in 2024.
- Where phragmites and other vegetation has been cleared, native seed will broadcast onto 126 acres.
- The entire shoreline was evaluated for phragmites regrowth in fall 2024 and 2,717 acres received an aerial herbicide treatment with 648 acres of ground treatment.
- Marsh Masters made a pass around the lake with roller choppers and cutter mowers and completed phase two smashing/mowing treatment on 4,166 acres of the shoreline in winter of 2023/2024.



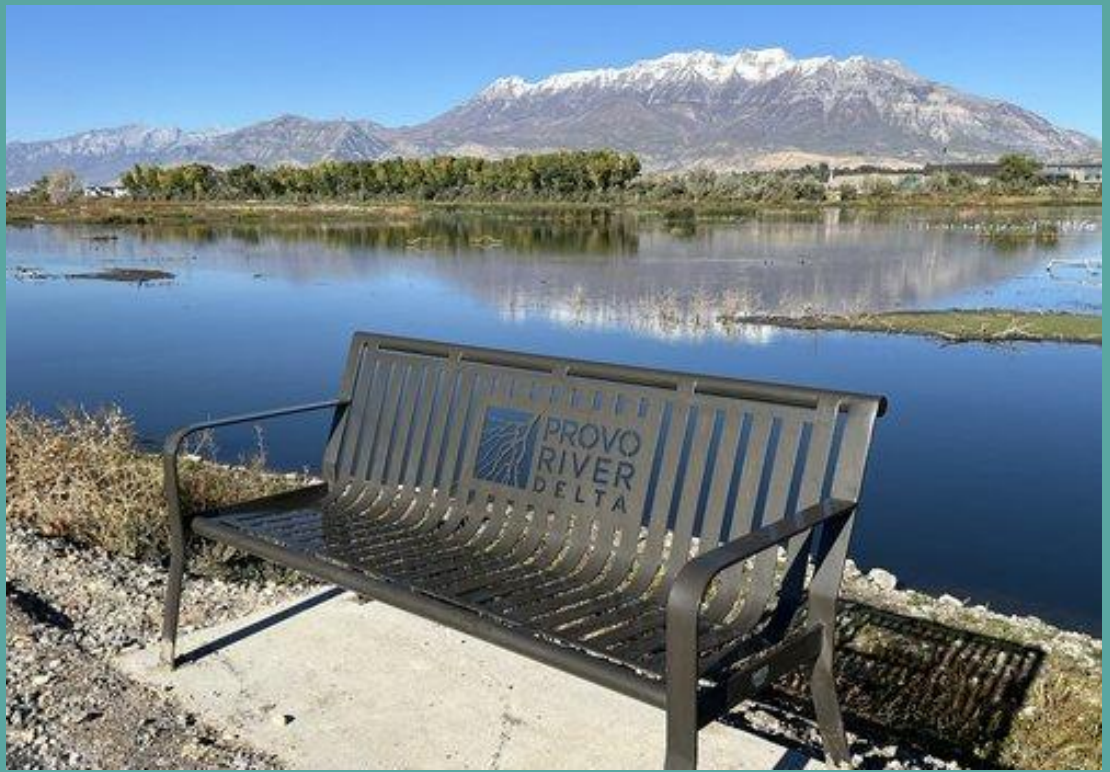
# Revegetation

- A new revegetation program has begun to plant a diversity of native and desirable wetland and emergent rushes, forbes, and grasses beginning in spring of 2024.
- 10,000 plugs of mixed wetland species have been planted across Utah Lake's shoreline utilizing volunteers.
- The ULA additionally received over 15,450 individual plants from the UDAF pollinator habitat program that were planted in the fall of 2024.



# Provo River Delta Restoration Project

- Construction began in 2020 and is now complete with finishing work still to be done on supplement revegetation.
- Over 450,000 plants have been installed and hydroseeding was used to establish more vegetation. Cottonwoods have also naturally recruited.
- June sucker monitoring involves tracking spawning, larvae, juveniles, and overwintering fish as well as non-native species. Some juveniles and small pike have been observed.
- Ongoing work includes aquatic vegetation monitoring, mosquito monitoring, and avian surveys to understand project impacts and inform management.



# Funding

## General Fund

### Revenues

Description	FY2024	FY2025			FY2026	
	Actual	Budgeted	Projected	Difference	Proposed	% Change from FY25
Utah Lake State Appropriation	\$ 1,495,200	\$ 1,495,200	\$ 1,495,200	\$ -	\$ 1,495,200	0.00%
Additional Income	\$ 305,304	\$ 1,306,344	\$ 1,306,344	\$ 0	\$ 1,817,120	39.10%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE:</b>	<b>\$ 1,800,504</b>	<b>\$ 2,801,544</b>	<b>\$ 2,801,544</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 3,312,320</b>	<b>18.23%</b>

### Expenditures

Description	FY2024	FY2025			FY2026	
	Actual	Budgeted	Projected	Difference	Proposed	% Change from FY25
Staff	\$ 495,402	\$ 780,700	\$ 741,500	\$ (39,200)	\$ 881,000	12.85%
Administration	\$ 46,452	\$ 100,000	\$ 94,950	\$ (5,050)	\$ 110,600	10.60%
Professional Services	\$ 354,952	\$ 915,900	\$ 803,300	\$ (112,600)	\$ 1,235,220	34.86%
Equipment and Operations	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 17,000	\$ (3,000)	\$ 39,700	98.50%
Events	\$ 22,751	\$ 53,450	\$ 47,450	\$ (6,000)	\$ 72,000	34.71%
Outreach and Education	\$ 26,345	\$ 241,494	\$ 219,494	\$ (22,000)	\$ 141,000	-41.61%
Ecosystems Programs	\$ 126,560	\$ 526,000	\$ 496,000	\$ (30,000)	\$ 811,700	54.32%
Small Grants Program	\$ 12,932	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 18,000	-40.00%
Capital Projects Fund	\$ 355,000.00	\$ 134,000.00	\$ 134,000.00	\$ -	\$ 3,100	-97.69%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$ 1,440,395</b>	<b>\$ 2,801,544</b>	<b>\$ 2,583,694</b>	<b>\$ (217,850)</b>	<b>\$ 3,312,320</b>	<b>18.23%</b>

# Funding

## Utah Lake Capitol Projects Fund

### Revenues

Description	FY2024	FY2025			FY2026	
	Actual Amount	Budgeted Amount	Projected Revenues	Difference	Proposed Budget	% Change from FY25
Transfer from General Fund	\$ 355,000	\$ 134,000	\$ 134,000	\$ -	\$3,100.00	-97.69%
Interest	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 17,000	\$ (3,000)	\$20,000.00	0.00%
Contract Revenue	\$ -	\$ 340,000	\$ 320,000	\$ (20,000)	\$350,000.00	2.94%
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$240,640.00	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 355,000</b>	<b>\$ 494,000</b>	<b>\$ 471,000</b>	<b>\$ (23,000)</b>	<b>\$ 613,740</b>	<b>24.24%</b>
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 913,678	\$ 403,994	\$ 403,994	\$ -	\$ 282,994	-29.95%
Available for Use	<b>\$ 1,268,678</b>	<b>\$ 897,994</b>	<b>\$ 874,994</b>	<b>\$ (23,000)</b>	<b>\$ 896,734</b>	<b>-0.14%</b>

### Expenditures

Description	FY2024	FY2025			FY2026	
	Actual Amount	Budgeted Amount	Projected Revenues	Difference	Proposed Budget	% Change from FY25
Access Enhancements	\$ 645,586	\$ 545,000	\$ 497,000	\$ (48,000)	\$ 626,340	14.92%
Ecosystem Projects	\$ 219,097	\$ 95,000	\$ 95,000	\$ -	\$ 150,000	57.89%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 864,683</b>	<b>\$ 640,000</b>	<b>\$ 592,000</b>	<b>\$ (48,000)</b>	<b>\$ 776,340</b>	<b>21.30%</b>
Ending Fund Balance	<b>\$ 403,995</b>	<b>\$ 257,994</b>	<b>\$ 282,994</b>	<b>\$ 25,000</b>	<b>\$ 120,394</b>	<b>-53.33%</b>

# FY 24/25 Budget Highlights

## Events

- Lake-wide Scavenger Hunt (hundreds of participants from around the county)
- Two-Day Utah Lake Symposium in partnership with UVU Herbert Institute
- Annual Utah Lake Festival held with 2,500+ attendees

## Utah Lake Market Research

- Conducted a public perceptions survey, recreation user interviews and an economic impact analysis.
- Developing annual user feedback process for agile management decision making.

## Vegetation Plantings

- 25,000+ plants were purchased and put in the ground in 2024 and 50,000 plants planned in 2025
- Hundreds of volunteers at over a dozen planting events

## Vegetation Management

- Approximately 2,000 acres of shoreline treated, due to +/- 80% reduction in phragmites over the last decade
- Partnership with Utah County, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, WRI and others

## Utah Lake is My Lake Campaign

- The first ever large-scale ad campaign to improve public awareness and perception of Utah Lake. Initiating May 2025, the campaign will include social media ads, billboards, local movie theatre pre-movie ads and local TV.

## Eco-Counters Installation

- ULA acquired Eco-Counter pedestrian and vehicle counters to document year-round visitation at all 35 public access points at the lake.

## Utah Lake Recreation Access Plan

- First ever 10-year recreation plan (improvements, priorities, conservation, strategies, funding) for recreation at the lake. Wrapping up Summer 2025.

## Great Carp Hunt

- Year-long carp fishing tournament, 10 tournaments at Utah Lake, monthly and annual prizes.
- Supplemental to JSRIP and DWR carp removal and useful as an outreach tool.

# Utah Lake Management Plan Progress Details

- 10-year timeline
- Strategies organized by the Three Pillars and Short/Mid/Long term timeline
  - Thriving Ecosystem,
  - World-Class Recreation
  - Vibrant Communities
- Infrastructure projects, education and marketing campaigns, planning efforts, etc.

## Short-term (FY 24-26)

- Complete: 10/20
- In Progress: 7/20
- To Do: 3/20

## Mid-term (FY 27-30)

- Complete: 5/32
- In Progress: 12/32
- To Do: 15/32

# Programs

## Adopt A Shoreline

- Over 250 volunteers this year
- 4 dedicated hunter projects (100 volunteers)
- 1 community clean up for 9-11 National Day of Service (150 volunteers)
- 367 hours completed, and over 320 bags of trash removed; not including big objects that were taken to the landfill.

## Life Jacket Loener Station

- Around 145 Life Jackets in stock; 27 were donated this spring
- Donations have been given for new life jacket stations. We hope to gain one at the Utah Lake State Park this next year.

## Volunteer Sign Up

- We continue to recruit volunteers and benefited from over 500 volunteers this year.
- Volunteers sign up monthly on various projects.



# Events

## Public Planting parties

- 5 public plantings & many small private group plantings were held
  - Groups were from churches, high schools, UVU, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Earth Day Planting in Vineyard- 120 volunteers arrived
- Smaller plantings had about 20 volunteers each



## Paddle with Care

- 40 people came to kayak and learn about safety
- Many more partners came to help teach the public about water safety



# Events Continued...

## Utah Lake Festival

- 2,500+ Participants. Over 500 more than the previous year

## Utah Lake Scavenger Hunt

- Scavenger Hunt- 20 participating team, the number of teams that did more than 10 missions was over 50%

## Utah Lake Symposium

- Over 150 participants
- Keynote addresses by Representatives Burgess Owens and John Curtis



# Outreach

- **Social Media**
  - 638 new followers on Facebook and Instagram combined
  - Average of 925 views and 86 interactions per post
- **Mailing List**
  - Over 100 new subscribers
  - Newsletter with volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, and updates, as well as a community spotlight
- **Tabling Events**
  - Spoke with over 1,000 people at 16 tabling events
- **News Media**
  - Over 2 dozen stories written or broadcast about Utah Lake and surrounding events

UTAH

## Utah Lake, a story of success and struggles

Lawmakers hear details in report outlining progress for lake that has long had a bad reputation.

Published: Oct 16, 2024, 8:00 p.m. MDT

VIEW 5 COMM



Birds land on Utah Lake near Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022. Stakeholders gathered at Utah Valley University this week to discuss the future of the lake, including scientists, lawmakers, government officials and the public. | Kristin Murphy, Deseret News

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue

# Education

## Field Trips

- Over 2,000 students in attendance
- Over 2 dozen participating teachers

## New Curriculum

- 4 teachers with backgrounds in curriculum creation and teaching
- New lessons to begin production in 2025



# Final Note

Due to changing our reporting from November to May, this report may contain duplicate information from the previous report.

For any questions, please contact:

Executive Director Luke Peterson at [luke@utahlake.gov](mailto:luke@utahlake.gov).

