



Tropic Reservoir & Otter Creek Water Storage Update



Teresa Wilhelmsen, P.E. | State Engineer, Division Director
Utah Division of Water Rights

Introduction

- Tropic and East Fork Irrigation and Otter Creek Reservoir have a long history of cooperative water storage.
- A lapse in legal agreements has brought renewed attention and regulation.
- The Division of Water Rights is working on a resolution and ensuring compliance.



Background

1898-1901 →

Tropic Dam is documented as early as 1898, but likely built earlier

1936 →

Dam failed, additional storage was constructed

1942 →

Additional storage was requested but rejected

1961

Two-year, Temporary Informal Storage Agreement “Napkin Agreement”

1977 →

Spillway rebuilt; Otter Creek filed change application a9528 to store up to 3,000 af in Tropic

2005 →

State Engineer approved change a9528

2010 →

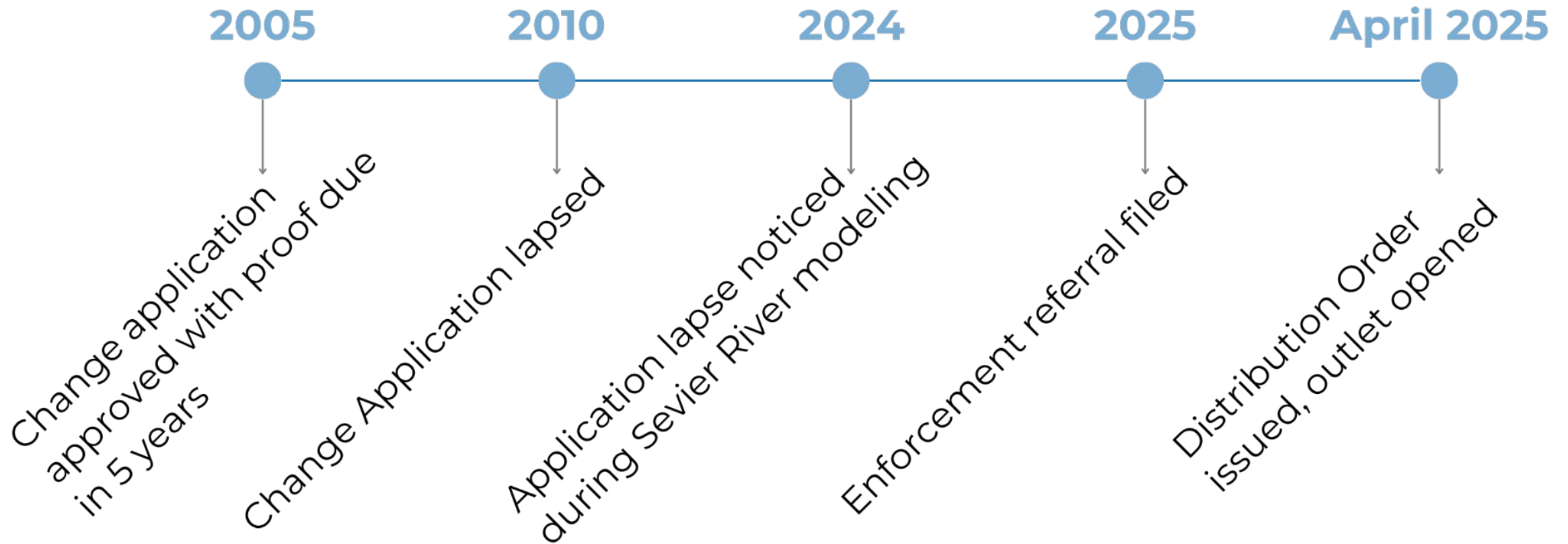
Application lapsed; notices returned undeliverable

until **2025**

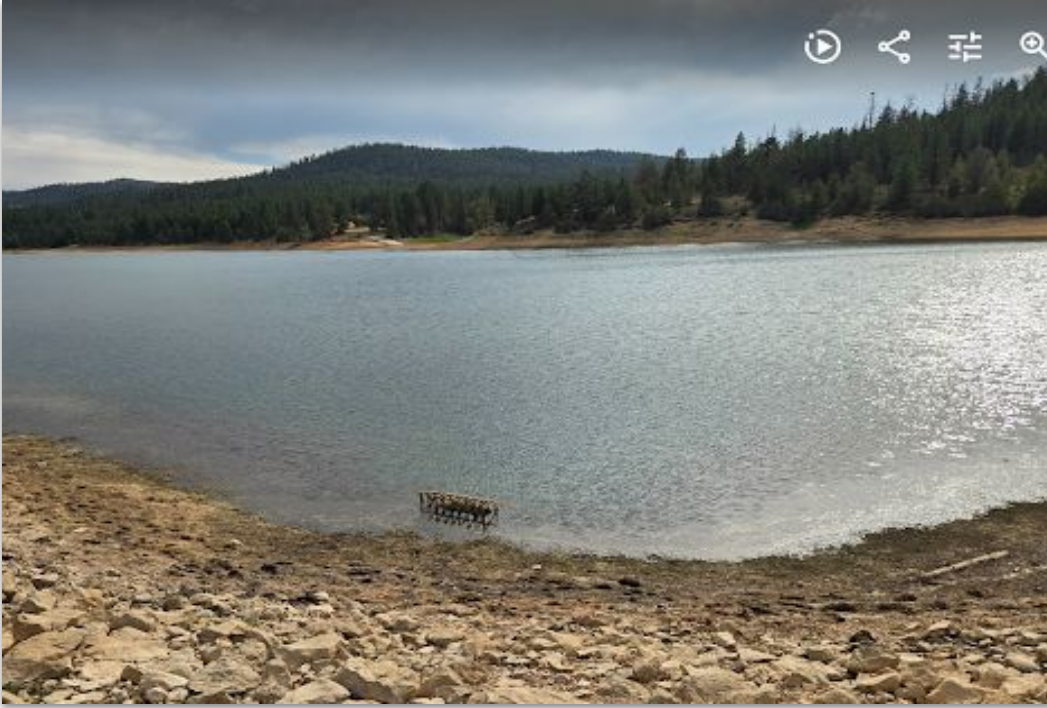
Tropic continued storing water without a valid water right



Timeline of Recent Administrative Actions



Tropic: What is legally allowed



- Direct Flow:
 - 20 cfs 4/15 to 6/1
 - 15 cfs 6/1 to 10/15
- Tropic is allowed to store no more than 540 acre-feet between May 1 and Oct. 15
- Winter storage is not allowed without a valid change application.



Otter Creek: Decreed right & storage



- Otter Creek owns the water right, a change application has not been made, and they have declined to refile a change application.



Measurement installed to improve distribution



- To improve monitoring and to accurately assess the situation, the division added measurement, installed telemetry, and updated existing devices.
- Measurement devices have been added on three locations and one more is planned.



Status Report: June 2025



- The unauthorized water in Tropic has been released and legal storage resumed.
- State Engineer continues to work with all parties toward compliance and best next steps.



Looking ahead

- Measurement and monitoring systems expanding
- Development of WCAT Model for the Sevier underway
- New agreements must follow legal procedure
- Commitment to transparency and sustainable water use
- Working to alleviate concerns about irrigation season
- Continued collaboration encouraged.





Thank you.

Teresa Wilhelmsen, P.E. | State Engineer, Division Director
teresawilhelmsen@utah.gov

Terry Monroe, P.E. | Regional Engineer
Sevier River/Southern Region
terrymonroe@utah.gov



Utah Division of Water Rights

waterrights.utah.gov