



Utah Anglers Coalition • P.O. Box 522220 • Salt Lake City, UT • 84152

February 26, 2026

Utah Legislature
House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee

RE: SB209, Gooseberry Narrows State Park Study

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Jeff Salt, Secretary of the Utah Anglers Coalition. Our organization represents a wide variety of sport fishing interests statewide. Utah has approximately 450,000 licensed resident anglers. The economic impact of sport fishing to Utah's economy is estimated at just over \$2B.

Our organization is strongly opposed to SB209S03, Gooseberry Narrows State Park Study. Our opposition to this legislation is based on numerous issues of concern. First, this bill is really a "Stalking Horse" or a front for eventual funding and construction of a controversial water storage reservoir for the Sanpete Water Conservancy District; creation of a new state park is not the primary purpose of this project. If the Sanpete Water Conservancy District wants to build a storage reservoir, they should pay for their own feasibility study, secure necessary state and federal approvals themselves, apply for a construction loan through the Division of Water Resources, and repay the construction loan by charging the water users they serve, not the taxpayers of Utah. Using State Parks as a front is simply unacceptable.

Second, the Sanpete Water Conservancy has previously attempted, and failed, to get the Gooseberry Narrows Dam and Reservoir project approved and built. This project has a long history dating back more than ninety years. A feasibility study has already been prepared and soundly rejected for this project. Most recently, during 2012 – 2013, the Bureau of Reclamation gave this project the green light (BOR EIS, FEIS, and ROD). However, in 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers refused to accept the studies and reports prepared by Sanpete Water Conservancy's consultants and rejected the BOR's EIS, FEIS, and ROD. The Corps found that the project would: 1) cause significant harm to the human environment; 2) directly impact 5 miles of perennial headwater stream channels of Gooseberry and Fish Creeks; 3) directly impact 72 acres of adjacent wetlands; and, 4) result in immeasurable indirect impacts to streams and wetlands and their associated fish and wildlife habitats. In addition, the Corps directed the Sanpete Water Conservancy District to start over and hire more qualified and unbiased

consultants to redo their studies and alternatives analysis to comply with the Corps' regulatory requirements.

Of specific concern to Utah anglers are potential flow reductions to Gooseberry Creek, Upper Fish Creek, and the Blue Ribbon Fishery at Scofield Reservoir. Reductions in flows to Scofield could result in lower reservoir levels and water quality problems resulting in significant mortality of sport fish during dry years. We are also concerned that flow reduction may impact species of concern in the lower reaches of the Price River including Bluehead sucker, Roundtail chub, and the Flannelmouth sucker.

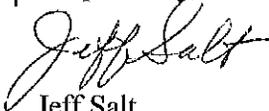
If a new feasibility study is authorized, it must be more comprehensive and allow sufficient time so the final report addresses the concerns previously stated by the Corps and meets their regulatory requirements. The parameters outlined in the bill as drafted fail to cover the scope and breadth of impacts stated by the Corps and do not allow sufficient time for a credible feasibility study.

Third, Gooseberry Narrows is not a high priority location for the creation of a new state park. There are several other locations in Utah that rank higher in priority for creating new state parks. Some of the higher priority areas would include Pineview Reservoir, Monte Cristo area, Little Sahara Recreation Area, and Flaming Gorge Reservoir. All of these locations have been called out in H.C.R. 5, State Management of Federal Public lands.

Fourth, this proposal creates a transbasin transfer of water from the Colorado River Basin to the Sevier River basin. If a feasibility study is authorized, it should take into consideration this transbasin transfer and determine whether or not it would be allowed given current negotiations to renew the Colorado River Compact.

There is broad opposition within the angling community to authorizing this study and construction of a dam and reservoir at the Gooseberry Narrows. The Utah Anglers Coalition urges this committee to vote to table this bill or vote with an unfavorable recommendation.

Respectfully,



Jeff Salt
Secretary,
Utah Anglers Coalition
(801) 485-2550



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SACRAMENTO DISTRICT
1326 J STREET
SACRAMENTO CA 95814-2922

May 27, 2016

Regulatory Division (SPK-1992-50255)

Sanpete Water Conservancy District
Attn: Mr. Edwin Sunderland
90 West Union Street
Manti, Utah 84642

Dear Mr. Sunderland:

This letter concerns the Sanpete Water Conservancy District's proposed Narrows Dam and Reservoir project. An application package was initially submitted on January 19, 2016. The project area is located 9 miles east of Fairview, Utah, on State Road 31, on or near Gooseberry Creek, in portions of Sections 24 and 25, Township 13 South, Range 5 East, and western portions of Sections 19 and 30, Township 13 South, Range 6 East, Sanpete County, Utah.

After review of the comments and concerns related to your application and in response to our Public Notice Number SPK-1992-50255 for your proposed project, we have determined that development of the proposed project has the potential to cause significant adverse effects to the quality of the human environment. Your proposed project would result in direct impacts to approximately 5 miles of perennial headwater stream channels of Gooseberry and Fish Creeks and 72 acres of adjacent wetlands and unquantified indirect impacts to streams and wetlands, in addition to their associated fish and wildlife habitats. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in November of 2012 and a subsequent Record of Decision (ROD) was issued in January of 2013. However, we have remaining concerns with the adequacy of this FEIS relative to the Corps' Regulatory Program.

We have determined that the alternatives analysis contained in the BOR's FEIS is insufficient to satisfy the requirements of a reasonable range of alternatives under NEPA and to meet the requirements of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines. In addition the specifics of the project's purpose and need remain unclear and problematic. Further, the analysis of many of the public interest review and 404(b)(1) factors that the Corps would evaluate under NEPA is insufficient or absent altogether in the FEIS. Some important data used to establish baseline conditions and for the alternatives impacts analysis ranges from 8 to more than 20 years old, which will require updating. Finally, new information

concerning state-sensitive and federally-listed species not considered in the FEIS has become available since the ROD was signed. Therefore, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, we will need to prepare a Supplement to the BOR's FEIS that appropriately addresses the above concerns before we can make a permit decision for your project.

As stipulated in 40 CFR 1506.5(c), Federal agencies may use third party contracts to prepare an EIS. The term "third party contract" refers to contractors paid by the applicant but selected and directed by the agency. The information obtained by third-party contract must be consistent with the Corps' statutory requirements to take a hard, objective look at public interest and environmental factors. As such, the third-party contractor must provide unbiased and acceptable information which can be used as the basis for making a permit decision.

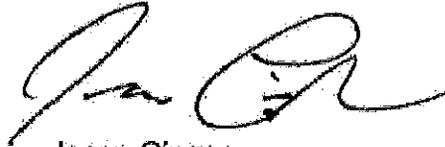
In order to initiate this EIS process, you shall identify 3 qualified contracting firms to act as the Corps third party contractor. When selecting the potential contractors, characteristics the Corps will consider include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Experience working in the area of the proposed project
2. Experience with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
3. Experience with NEPA, including writing Draft and Final EISs, specifically Draft and Final EISs for the Corps Regulatory Program
4. Experience working on the specific type of project being proposed (i.e. water supply, dam construction). Some specific disciplines necessary for the Corps contractor team include:
 - a) Structural/Geotechnical Engineering
 - b) Economics
 - c) Hydrology
 - d) Fisheries Biology
 - e) Geo-fluvial Morphology
 - f) Water Quality
 - g) Wetlands/Riparian Biology
 - h) Water Rights

This assessment would be used to identify the experience of all individuals on the team and not just the experience of the firm. Once you have identified three qualified contracting firms, please identify your preferred firm for the Corps to consider. As a note, it is generally not acceptable to include a firm currently under contract to you so as to avoid any conflict of interest or perceptions thereof.

Please contact us if you would like to schedule a meeting to further discuss the details of our decision and the process for moving forward. Refer to identification number SPK-1992-50255 in any correspondence concerning this project. If you have any questions, please contact Jason Gipson at the Bountiful Regulatory Office, 533 West 2600 South, Suite 150, Bountiful, Utah 84010, by email at Jason.A.Gipson@usace.army.mil, or telephone at 801-295-8380 x14. For more information regarding our program, please visit our website at the following link: www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Gipson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Gipson".

Jason Gipson
Chief, Utah/Nevada Branch
Regulatory Division

cc:

Bob Thomas, Bio-West, Inc. (bthomas@bio-west.com)
Barry McLerran, Rep. Love (UT) (barry.mclerran@mail.house.gov)
Julia McCarthy, EPA Region 8 (McCarthy.Julia@epa.gov)