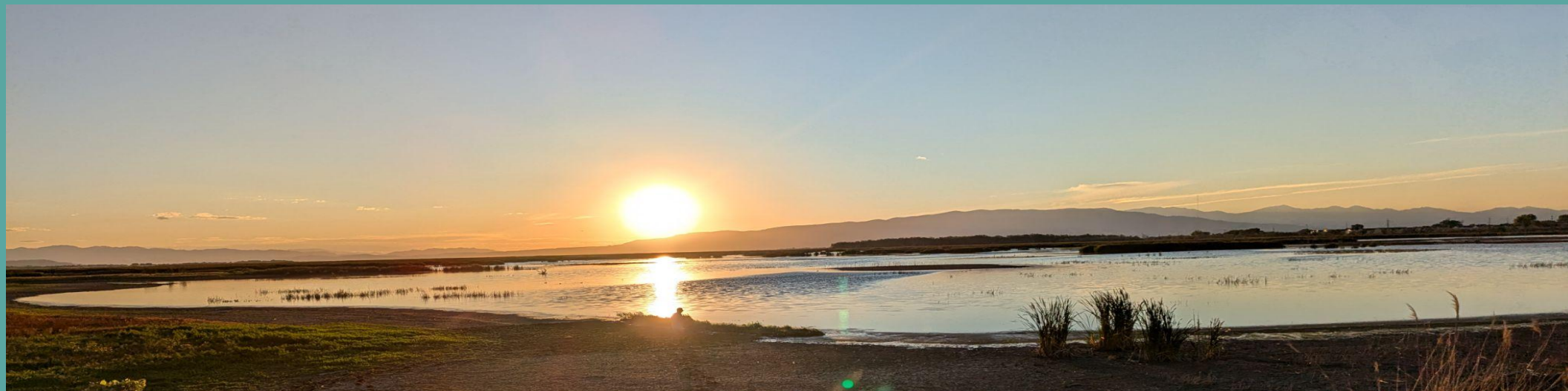


2026 Annual Monitoring Report

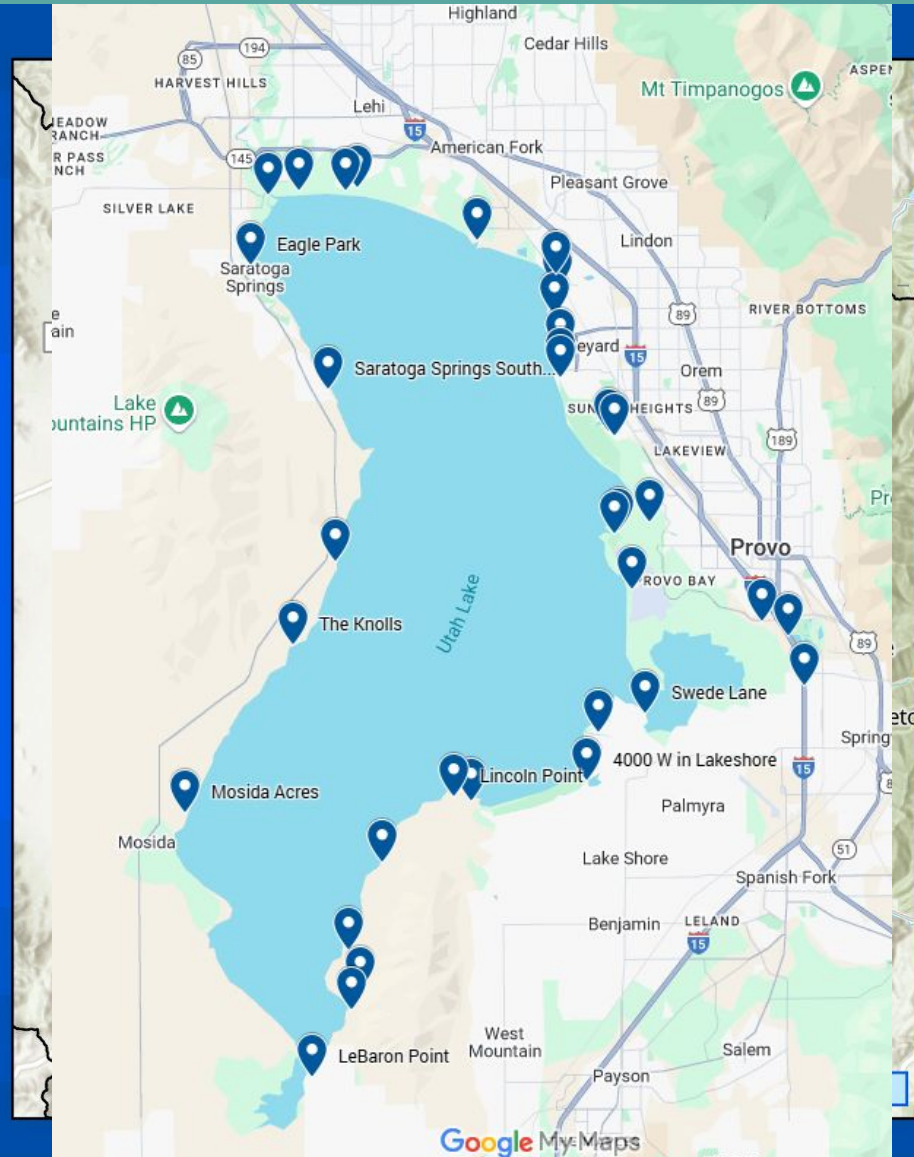
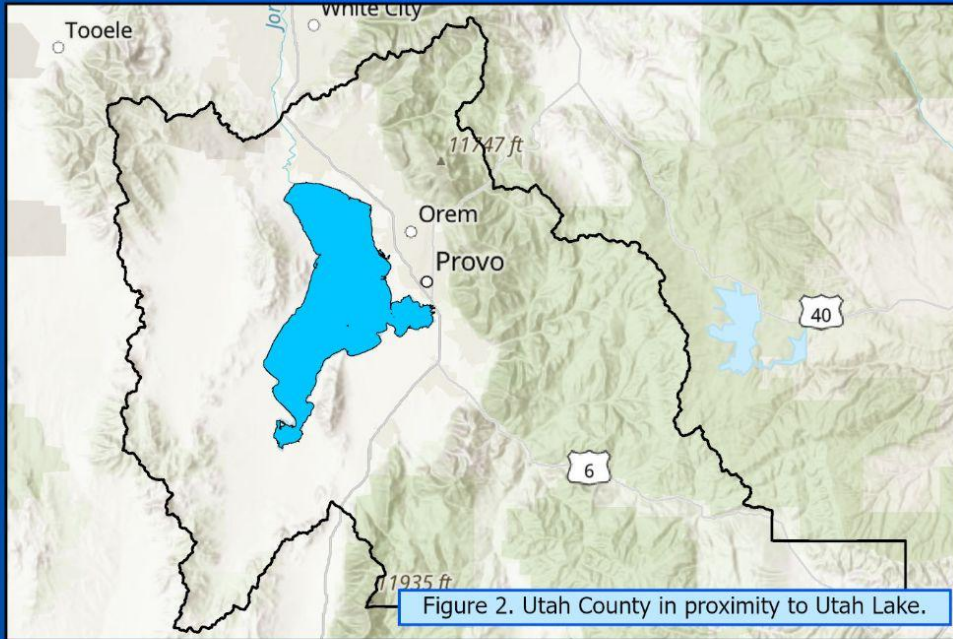
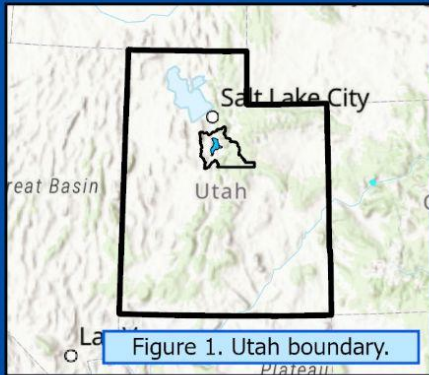


INTRODUCTION - What is Utah Lake?

- 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 strain on the native fish populations, water quality and shoreline vegetation.



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

Carolyn Lundberg, Chair (Lindon Mayor)
Skyler Beltran, Vice-Chair (Utah County Commissioner)
Curtis Blair, (Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce)
Brady Brammer (Utah State Senator)
Audrey Barton (Saratoga Springs City Council)
Ben Stireman (Forestry Fire & State Lands)
Kamron Dalton (Governor's Office Seat)
Hilary Hungerford (UVU Professor)
Karen McCandless (Orem City Mayor)
Zack Stratton (Vineyard Mayor)
Neil Brown (Genola Mayor)
Candice Hasenyager (DWQ Director)
Paul Binns (Lehi Mayor)
Stephanie Gricius (Utah State Representative)
Marsha Judkins (Provo Mayor)

Staff

- Luke Peterson, Executive Director
- Sam Braegger, Deputy Director
- Addy Valdez, Conservation & Education Program Manager
- Shelby Kozak, Development Director
- Kelly Cannon-O'Day, Communications & Events Manager
- Heather McEwen, Events & Programs Coordinator
- Alex Stosich, Restoration Coordinator (hired in 2026)
- Courtney Thomas, Education Program Coordinator (hired in 2026)

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 pivoting with a focus nine-element watershed plan and creating improvement strategies.
- Total phosphorus dropped during the high-water year of 2023 & 2024 in comparison to 2021 and 2022. Concentrations remain high during low lake levels.
- Research did not detect substantial improvements in the water quality characteristics we have examined to date, which suggests carp removal alone has not yet impacted water quality in Utah Lake.
- The date of the first HAB advisory on Utah Lake was May 28th, 2025 and last advisory issued on October 20th, 2025.
- Over 31 Utah water bodies experienced HABs in recreation season.



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. Diversity has increased since carp removal began.
- 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 the project to understand impacts on the ecosystem.



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

- 73 acres of invasive trees and tamarisk were removed in 2024.
- Where phragmites and other vegetation have been cleared, native seed will be broadcast onto 52 acres.
- The entire shoreline was evaluated for phragmites regrowth in fall 2025 and 779 acres received an aerial herbicide treatment with 916 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 189 acres of the shoreline in winter of 2025.



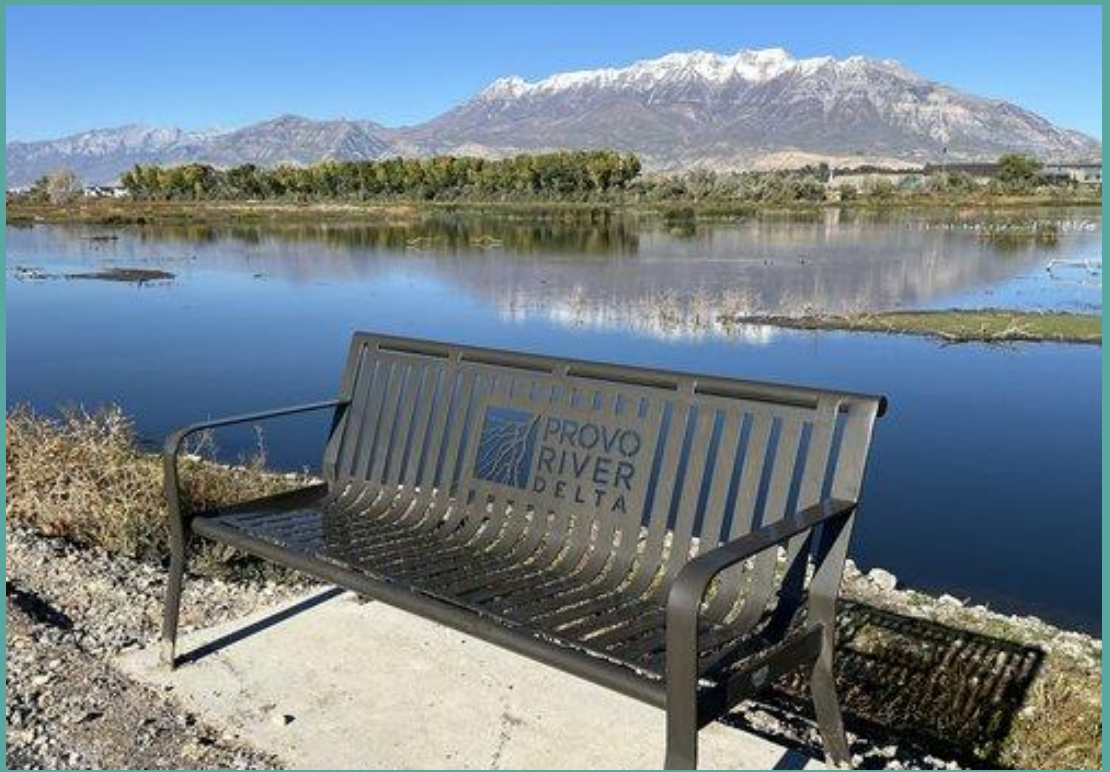
Revegetation

- 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.
- **100,000** plugs of mixed wetland species have been planted across Utah Lake's shoreline utilizing volunteers.
- The ULA additionally received over **11,000** individual plants from the UDAF pollinator habitat program that were planted in the fall of 2025.



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	FY2025	FY2026			FY2027	
	Actual	Budgeted	Projected	Difference	Proposed	% Change from FY26
Utah Lake State Appropriation	\$ 1,495,200	\$ 1,495,200	\$ 1,495,200	\$ -	\$ 1,420,200	-5.02%
Additional Ongoing Income	\$ 71,020	\$ 33,000	\$ 33,000	\$ -	\$ 32,000	-3.03%
Additional One-Time Income	\$ 1,057,329	\$ 1,573,716	\$ 1,573,716	\$ -	\$ 4,613,256	193.14%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$ 2,623,548	\$ 3,101,916	\$ 3,101,916	\$ -	\$ 6,065,456	95.54%
Expenditures						
Description	FY2025	FY2026			FY2027	
	Actual	Budgeted	Projected	Difference	Proposed	% Change from FY25
Staff	\$721,966.64	\$862,637.39	\$862,637.39	\$ -	\$1,095,236.24	26.96%
Administration	\$94,190.00	\$111,118.00	\$111,118.00	\$ -	\$137,307.00	23.57%
Professional Services	\$801,963.06	\$836,650.00	\$836,650.00	\$ -	\$1,060,785.32	26.79%
Operations	\$23,350.65	\$68,180.00	\$68,180.00	\$ -	\$38,590.00	-43.40%
Federally Funded Projects	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ -	\$2,430,000.00	#DIV/0!
Events	\$58,172.21	\$111,850.00	\$111,850.00	\$ -	\$119,850.00	7.15%
Education and Programs	\$349,582.24	\$136,100.00	\$136,100.00	\$ -	\$197,750.00	45.30%
Shoreline Restoration	\$277,959.83	\$919,480.34	\$919,480.34	\$ -	\$652,342.00	-29.05%
Lake Monitoring Program	\$26,558.67	\$55,900.00	\$55,900.00	\$ -	\$20,000.00	-64.22%
Capital Projects Fund Contribution	\$134,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$313,596.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 2,487,743	\$ 3,101,916	\$ 3,101,916	\$ -	\$ 6,065,457	95.54%

Funding

Utah Lake Capitol Projects Fund

Revenues

Description	FY2025	FY2026		FY2027		
	Actual Amount	Budgeted Amount	Projected Revenues	Difference	Proposed Budget	% Change from FY26
Transfer from General Fund	\$ 134,000	\$ 217,268	\$ -	\$ (217,268)	\$34,500.00	-84.12%
Interest	\$ 17,339	\$ 50,000	\$ 17,000	\$ (33,000)	\$20,000.00	-60.00%
Contract Revenue	\$ 311,420	\$ 105,000	\$ -	\$ (105,000)	\$0.00	-100.00%
Grants	\$ -	\$ 740,640	\$ 232,060	\$ (508,580)	\$493,560.00	-33.36%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 462,759	\$ 1,112,908	\$ 249,060	\$ (863,848)	\$ 548,060	-50.75%
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 403,995	\$ 420,394	\$ 403,143	\$ -	\$ 129,397	-69.22%
Available for Use	\$ 866,754	\$ 1,533,302	\$ 652,203	\$ (881,099)	\$ 677,457	-55.82%

Expenditures

Description	FY2025	FY2026		FY2027		
	Actual Amount	Budgeted Amount	Projected Revenues	Difference	Proposed Budget	% Change from FY25
Access Enhancements	\$445,937.67	\$965,640.00	\$437,106.00	\$ (528,534)	\$554,606.00	-42.57%
Ecosystem Projects	\$17,672.63	\$150,000.00	\$85,500.00	\$ (64,500)	\$0.00	-100.00%
Admin	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$ -	\$0.00	-100.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 463,610	\$ 1,115,840	\$ 522,806	\$ (593,034)	\$ 554,606	-50.30%
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 403,143	\$ 417,462	\$ 129,397	\$ (288,065)	\$ 122,851	-70.57%

FY 25/26 Budget Highlights

Events

- Introduced Great Carp Hunt, angler removal of carp with 27,000+ lbs removed.
- Two-Day Utah Lake Symposium in partnership with UVU Herbert Institute
- Annual Utah Lake Festival held with 6,000+ attendees

Lake-Wide Signage Plan

- Plan in process. Creation of a brand guide for signage around the entire lake for wayfinding and interpretive signs for all trails and access points.
- 280+ signs planned for installation in 2026-2027.

Vegetation Plantings

- 50,000+ plants were purchased and put in the ground in 2024 and 170,000 plants planned in 2026.
- Hundreds of volunteers at over a dozen planting events

Vegetation Management

- Approximately 1,700 acres of shoreline treated, due to ~88% 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. Began in 2025, the campaign includes social media ads, billboards, local movie theatre pre-movie ads and local TV. Promoting the lake and educating on harmful algae blooms and other lake topics.

Economic Impact Analysis

- First ever EIA for the lake demonstrated visitors from outside Utah County who visit Utah Lake add up to over 1 million visitor-days and generate over \$74M in economic impact.

Recreation Planning and Projects

- Completed first ever 10-year recreation plan (improvements, priorities, conservation, strategies, funding) for recreation at the lake.
- Began creation of park master plans for 11 of the 34 public access points. Targeted to finish January 2027.
- Worked with Utah Lake State Park marina to replace asphalt, construct life jacket loaner stations and a storage shed.

External Funding Secured

Federal Funding - \$7.7M

- \$2.5M From Congressman Owens for Recreation Improvements
- \$4M from Congressman Kennedy for a Utah Lake Nature Center
- \$1.2M from Senator Curtis for Invasive Species Management

Grant Funding - \$1.1M

- Including state and local grants and private partners.



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: 14/20
- In Progress: 5/20
- To Do: 1/20

Mid-term (FY 27-30)

- Complete: 12/32
- In Progress: 8/32
- To Do: 12/32

Programs

Adopt A Shoreline

- Over 1,250 volunteers this year
- 37 dedicated hunter projects in partnership with DWR
- 1 community clean-up for 9-11 National Day of Service with Vineyard & Orem City (300 volunteers)
- 1,789.5 hours of trash clean-up completed around Utah Lake

Life Jacket Loaner Station

- Around 230 Life Jackets in stock; 80 were donated this fall
- Donations have been given for the new life jacket stations. Two more will be built at the Utah Lake State Park by May 2026.
- 5 volunteers help operate all the stations for the season

Volunteer Sign Up

- We recently started a new Ambassador Program to help increase volunteer numbers
- Volunteers sign up monthly for various projects.



Events

Utah Lake Festival

- 6,000 attendees (double from 2024)
- Partnered with the Provo Farmers Market
- Activities included paddleboard jousting, cardboard boat race, sailboat rides, food trucks and more.



Utah Lake Symposium

- Nearly 200 participants
- Keynote addresses by Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, former Provo Mayor Michelle Kaufusi, and Grow the Flow Director Ben Abbott



Utah Lake Scavenger Hunt

- High participation with winners receiving state park passes.

Events Continued

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
- 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



Photo Contest

- Over 140 submissions

Outreach

- **Tabling Events**
 - Interacted with thousands of community members at various city festivals.
 - Highest volume was at the Freedom Festival.
- **News Media**
 - 34 news articles and videos published by media outlets about Utah Lake
- **Site Visits**
 - Gov. Spencer Cox, Lt. Gov Henderson, Rep. Burgess Owens and many other elected officials visited Utah Lake to see the ongoing work.



Educatio n

Field Trips

- Over 2,000 students in attendance
- Nearly two dozen schools

New Curriculum

- Teachers used a new curriculum with lesson plans developed by local educators to be in line with state standards



Final Note

Some of the details in this report are considered preliminary and there may be changes after the issuance of the document.

For any questions, please contact:

Executive Director Luke Peterson at luke@utahlake.gov.

