



# Utah Department of Natural Resources

Annual  
Report  
2024



***Tackling extreme weather conditions  
with exceptional resolve***

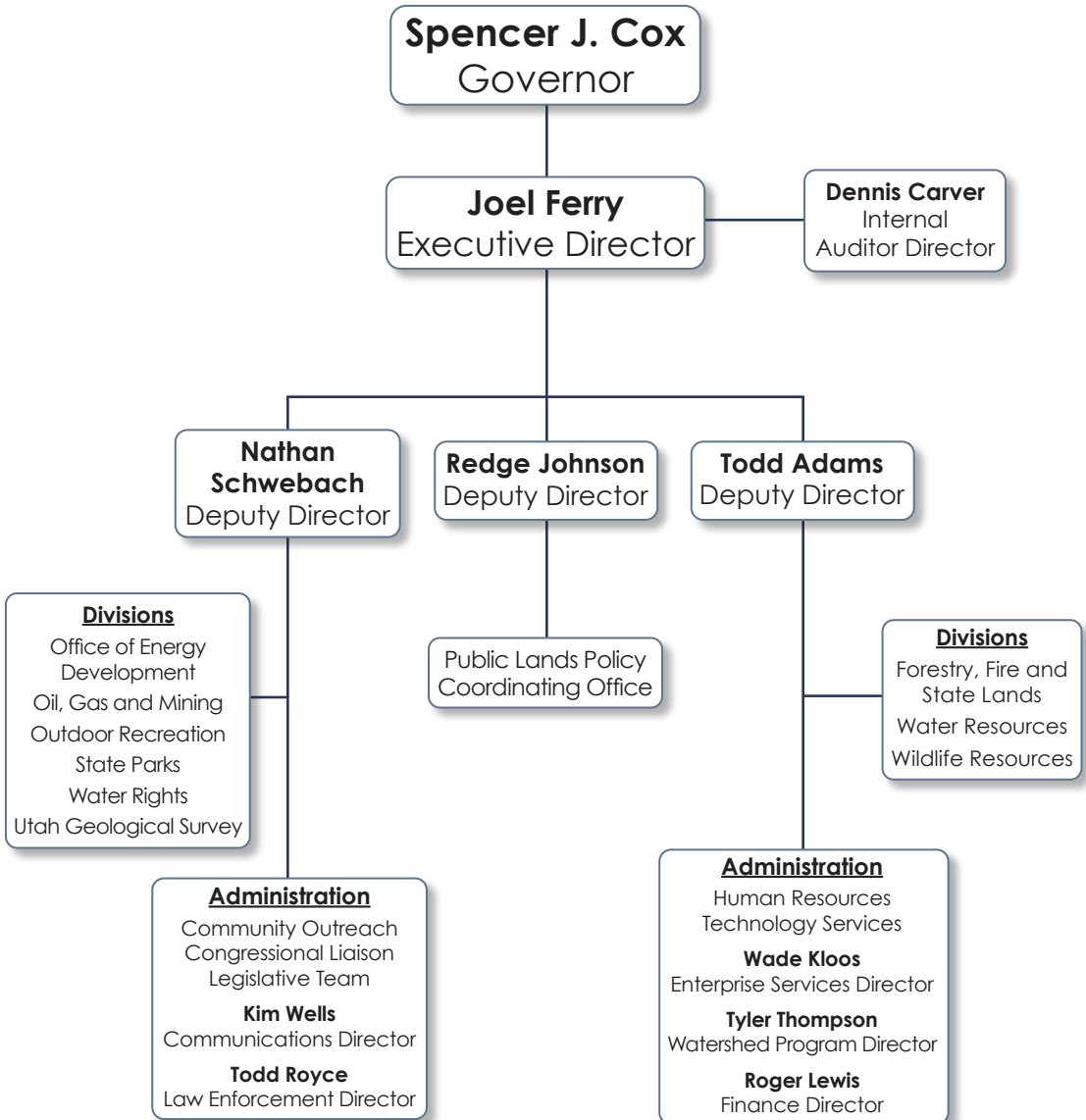
# CONTENTS

Organizational Chart.....	1
Department Directory.....	2
Division Directories.....	3–7
Department Update.....	9
Division and Office Updates	
Forestry, Fire and State Lands.....	14
Office of Energy Development .....	18
Oil, Gas and Mining.....	22
Outdoor Recreation.....	26
Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office.....	30
State Parks.....	34
Utah Geological Survey.....	38
Water Resources.....	42
Water Rights.....	46
Wildlife Resources.....	50

**Front cover:** Record-breaking snowpack blanketed the state and helped improve drought conditons.

**Back cover:** 95% of the state's water supply comes from snowpack, which is stored in reservoirs that also offer stellar recreation opportunities.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# DIRECTORY

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## Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

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## Mission Statement

*The Utah Department of Natural Resources helps ensure the quality of life of Utah residents by managing and protecting the state's natural resources by:*

- *Enhancing the certainty and security of Utah's water*
- *Improving the health and resilience of our lands, resources, watersheds and wildlife*
- *Advancing the stewardship of our public lands and natural history*
- *Elevating outdoor recreation*
- *Expanding Utah's energy and minerals portfolio*



# DEPARTMENT UPDATE



*Winter snowpack at Jordanelle Reservoir*

## Executive Director's Commitment

Utah's record-breaking snowfall this year has been a blessing and a challenge for our state. As someone who has always had a deep connection to our natural resources, I have seen firsthand the impact these weather patterns can have on our land, wildlife and water supply. While the snow has provided much-needed moisture, it also presented obstacles for wildlife and recreation, in addition to causing landslides and flooding.

Thanks to unprecedented investment and policy advancements by the Legislature and water-saving actions by Utahns across the state, Utah has made significant progress in water conservation, including changing water policy to benefit our Great Salt Lake and its surrounding wetlands. The new Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner also adds to the effort to preserve and protect the lake. However, we know that restoring the lake to healthy levels will take time, and we must continue to plan for a drier future and take proactive measures to become more drought-resilient.

We are also working with the newly created public/private partnership, Utah Water Ways, to encourage long-term water-saving behaviors across the state. Even though a record-wet winter has restored most of our reservoirs, we can't rely on Mother Nature to solve long-term water challenges. All Utahns across all sectors must look for ways to use our limited water supply more efficiently.

As part of our water conservation commitment, we assembled a delegation and traveled to Israel to learn more from this worldwide water management leader. Israel went from water-stressed to water-rich. It was fascinating to see how they have successfully achieved water security. We recognize not all ideas will work in Utah. However, Israel's innovation mindset, education efforts and water-saving technologies are ideas we are exploring.

Utah's energy needs are also top-of-mind as we develop plans to provide all Utahns with affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. Collaboration with partners to employ an approach for maintaining a steady and reliable energy supply that will power our growing population and advance industries is critical, and I'm grateful for the ongoing teamwork.

As executive director of Utah's Department of Natural Resources, I appreciate the many talented, committed staff who work to protect and preserve our natural resources. I pledge to prioritize the protection of our natural resources and to work with elected officials, state agencies, stakeholders and partners to innovate and continue developing solutions to the challenges we face. I am committed to leading the department in continuing the meaningful work that happens to effectively manage our natural resources so they can thrive and support our quality of life for years to come.

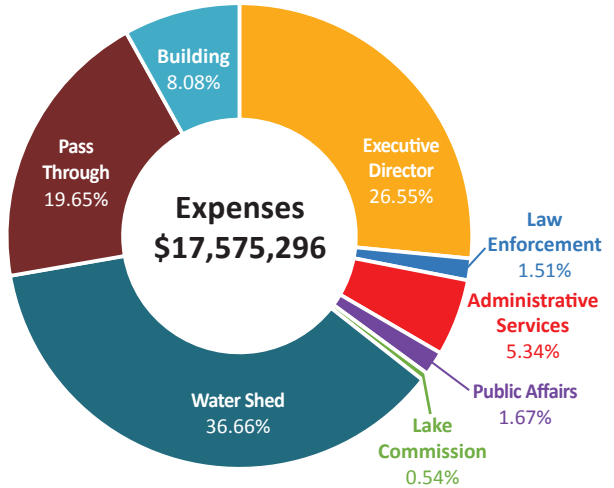
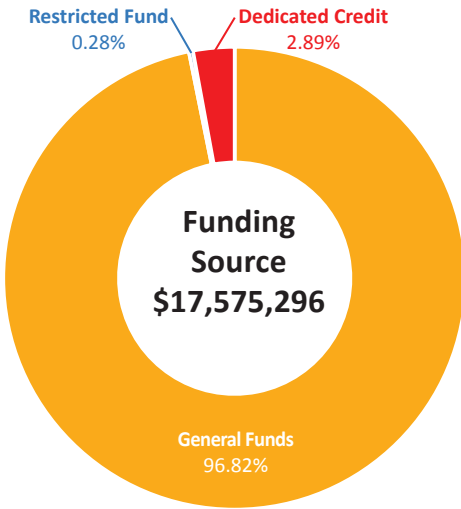


**Joel Ferry**  
DNR Executive Director



# Department Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Department Case Study

### WRI Project Improves Watershed Health and Water Quality

**Problem:** Degraded streams and associated riparian areas reduce wildlife habitat value and increase sedimentation downstream.

**Solution:** Watershed scale restoration, including upland fuels reduction and in-stream low-tech process-based stream restoration.

**Outcome:** Over the past several years, multiple partners have worked together through Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) to complete important restoration projects in the Mill Creek Canyon watershed in Salt Lake and Summit counties. The Mill Creek Watershed Restoration WRI project is an ongoing landscape-scale effort located on Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests and Salt Lake County lands that aims to restore the health of the forest vegetation and improve stream and riparian health by restoring ecological function.

The forest management portions include removing dead or dying conifers impacted by infestation and disease using various methods, including lop and scatter and cut, pile and burn. The stream restoration portions involve installing several low-tech process-based stream restoration structures known as beaver dam analogs.



## Looking Ahead to FY 2023-2024

Active natural resource management allows the state to forecast challenges, solve complex opportunities, and anticipate and meet future needs. Focus areas for the upcoming year include:

- The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands is addressing the ongoing wildfire crisis through the implementation of a statewide fuels program to target high-priority areas within the wildland-urban interface. The division is committed to the conservation of our state's sovereign lands, including the preservation of Great Salt Lake.
- The Office of Energy Development is developing a human-centric State Energy Plan founded in the Utah principles of economic stability and growth, innovation and prudent use of natural resources. We are partnering with private industry and government to bring new energy projects to the state to ensure energy security and innovation.
- The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining continues digital transformation to optimize performance, improve data quality and digitize documents. We are also using innovation in applying for Class VI primacy for carbon sequestration and establishing a forward-thinking bonding rule.
- The Division of Outdoor Recreation is working to ensure the quality of life and economic benefit through safe and high-quality outdoor recreation for all of Utah's residents and visitors and continues to strengthen safety and education efforts through its boating, OHV, recreational law enforcement and grants programs.
- State Parks is actively enhancing park infrastructure to accommodate growing demand, with ongoing construction at two new state parks — Utahraptor and Lost Creek — and other projects. As progress unfolds, we will hold ribbon-cutting ceremonies and groundbreaking events.
- The Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office continues to build relationships and use all the tools at our disposal to ensure consistency with state and local planning documents, and protect access to our public land.
- The Utah Geological Survey is working to better quantify groundwater location and quality to best manage its use for future generations.
- The Division of Water Resources is aggressively increasing drought resiliency through water conservation programs and initiatives, including committing grant funds for secondary metering, implementing the landscape conversion incentive program, providing technical assistance to cities and towns to integrate land use and water planning, and public education.
- The Division of Water Rights is focused on reducing application processing time, enhancing access to water measurement data, and addressing complex interstate and intrastate water right issues, including developing additional online tools, installing additional water measurement infrastructure throughout the state, and working collaboratively with local, state and federal partners to tackle the challenging issues facing Utah, such as groundwater management, agricultural water optimization and federal reserved water rights.
- The Division of Wildlife Resources is working to grow the state's mule deer populations and improve their habitat. We are also working with our partners and stakeholders on multiple advisory committees to propose changes to the technology allowed in archery and muzzleloader hunting, as well as changes to shed antler gathering. The proposed changes will go out for public feedback.

# DIVISION UPDATES



FORESTRY



OIL, GAS & MINING



STATE PARKS



RECREATION



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WATER RESOURCES



WATER RIGHTS



WILDLIFE RESOURCES



Kayaking on Great Salt Lake

# Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands manages, sustains and strengthens Utah's forests, rangelands, sovereign lands and watersheds for its citizens and visitors.*

## Director's Commitment

This past year was remarkable for the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL). The division remains focused on improving forest health through effective forest management practices, reducing the risk of wildfires to our communities and improving our sovereign lands for the benefit of the public and future generations.

Great Salt Lake continues to be a focus for our Sovereign Lands program. Significant snow pack this past winter was a blessing as far as increasing lake levels, but we must keep seeking solutions to improve the health of the lake. There are multiple ongoing projects on all the state's sovereign lands to improve the resource benefits.

Increased moisture and good "Fire Sense" led to a decrease in fire activity this summer. This allowed for a focus on completing much-needed fire mitigation projects across the state, as well as support for our neighboring states and federal and local partners. The division broke ground on the new State of Utah Wildland Fire Operation Center, which will serve as the new headquarters for the state's wildland fire program.

Our Forestry program continues to address the needs of Utah's private and state forestlands. The division has received an influx of funding from Infrastructure Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money, which has been critical in addressing the wildfire crisis, serving rural communities and building capacity. We celebrate another successful year with our Shared Stewardship agreement with the Forest Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service as we continue to collaborate on the best practices for managing Utah's public forests and addressing the wildfire crisis in the state.

Our team continues to exemplify the department's and division's mission of managing and preserving the state's forests, sovereign lands and providing emergency response. It's an honor to lead a staff of diverse and passionate individuals dedicated to serving the state of Utah.



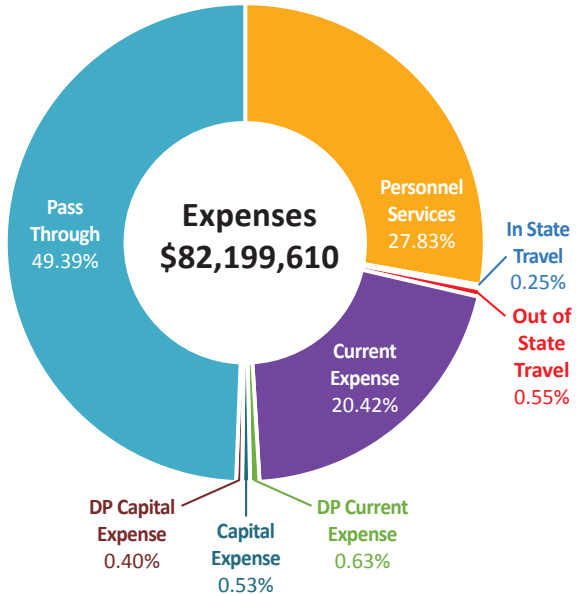
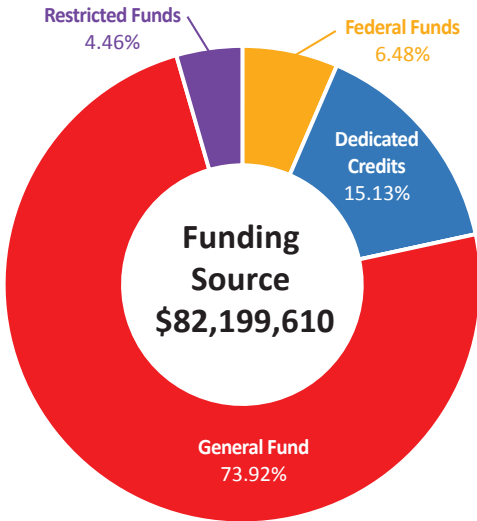
**Jamie Barnes**  
Division Director / State Forester





# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Forestry** – Manage the state's cooperative forestry programs, including Shared Stewardship, Forest Health, Forest Legacy, and Urban & Community Forestry.

**Wildland Fire** – Responsible for wildfire management and suppression on Utah's state and private lands in partnership with county and municipal governments.

**Lone Peak Conservation Center** – Provides the state's wildland fire resources, including highly trained crews to fight wildfires and undertake natural resource projects, such as fuel reduction.

**Sovereign Lands** – Administers public, private and commercial uses of state-owned lakebed and riverbed lands under the public trust doctrine and principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

## Case Studies

### Fuels Crew and Mitigation

**Problem:** With an increase in wildfires and wildfire season extending throughout much of the year, a lack of capacity to achieve forest fuel management goals has made it challenging to address the wildfire crisis in the state.

**Solution:** The state added a fuels crew out of the Lone Peak Conservation Center and one in the Wasatch Front area.

**Outcome:** The state's fuels crew, Thunder Mountain, serves the entire state and, in its first year, logged 3,122 hours over three mitigation projects in their first three months. Thunder Mountain is a 10-person crew with red-carded wildland firefighters available to assist with initial attack if requested.

The Wasatch Front fuels crew serves Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah and Tooele counties by conducting fire mitigation work. The four-person crew is qualified to assist fire wardens along the Wasatch Front in initial attack when called upon.

Adding fuels crews allows the state to conduct fire mitigation work in areas considered at high fire risk in the wildland-urban interface across the state and build our capacity to respond to wildfires.



### Colorado River Restoration

**Problem:** Invasive species have been an ongoing issue on the Colorado River. The river has experienced side channels drying up, which has impacted the river's natural flow, as well as fish and wildlife habitat.

**Solution:** Staff from FFSL, other state and federal agencies and nonprofits have worked to control invasive species along the river bank to restore habitat by rewatering side channels.

**Outcome:** FFSL has been working on controlling invasive plant species along portions of the banks of the Colorado River since 2018. This year, staff from FFSL, the BLM, the Utah Conservation Corps and NGOs targeted priority side channels with the best chance of being rewatered with minimal expense.

Since 2018, FFSL has invested \$557,500 and 7,200 person-hours on channel restoration. In 2023, one of these side channels was reconnected to the main river channel. Making small changes to the terrain using hand tools allowed the water to flow through this previously dried-up area.

What began as a Watershed Restoration Initiative project has grown into its own effort over the years. This is just one example of a larger channel restoration initiative along the river across eastern Utah. Current project sites are in Grand, Emery, San Juan and Uintah counties.



## CWDG and Forest Legacy Funding (Overview of Federal Funding and Capacity)

**Problem:** The Forest Action Plan outlines forest health and management goals for Utah's forested lands. One of the issues in achieving these goals has been a lack of funding.

**Solution:** Funding for forest health and fuels management projects was sought through outside sources. These sources included the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) and Forest Legacy Grants.

**Outcome:** In 2023, the state received \$4.7 million of funding through the CWDG and \$14.4 million for two Forest Legacy projects.

FFSL was awarded \$4.7 million for the upcoming fiscal year to expand fire education and awareness, create community fire hazard mitigation methodologies, and remove hazardous fuel loading around structures.

Also, in the federal funding cycle, \$14.4 million was awarded to the Forest Legacy program to fund two projects in Cache and Rich counties that total over 18,000 acres. The Coldwater and Goring projects are private forest lands that will benefit from this funding. Both projects seek to preserve forestlands that continue to benefit the public and surrounding communities.



# Office of Energy Development

## Mission Statement

*Advancing the Governor's energy vision. Implementing Utah's Energy Policy.  
Building a better energy future for Utah.*

## Director's Commitment

Meeting Utah's energy needs now and in the future requires a prudent State Energy Plan. Our office is charged with creating and implementing a plan that falls in line with the state's energy policy. We work with key stakeholders to enable the state's development of the resources necessary to meet current and projected energy needs. The Office of Energy Development (OED) recently began Phase 2 for creating the energy plan, and we're using the vision established in Phase 1 to guide our efforts. At the heart of our plan lies a commitment to providing all Utahns with affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy.

Utah employs an "any of the above" approach to the energy market, allowing us to pursue a range of energy resources, from traditional to cutting-edge technologies. A cornerstone of our work is ensuring a diversified energy mix that enables both base load power and dispatchable resources. This approach is crucial for maintaining a steady and reliable energy supply capable of powering our growing population and advancing industries.

As we advocate for sound energy policies, we believe fostering an environment of free market principles and technological ingenuity allows us to unlock solutions that not only meet our energy needs but also drive the state's economy forward. We must especially keep in mind our rural communities, who have traditionally powered the Wasatch Front. The energy industry is evolving, and it's our duty to assist those rural areas as they seek to diversify their economies.

The energy landscape is complex and rapidly changing, and there are a variety of efforts that manipulate the market in ways that may not serve our needs. As such, it becomes incumbent upon us to create guardrails for energy policies. The creation of those guardrails will enable innovation in the free market while ensuring the wise use of our resources, providing an energy landscape that is essential for both our present circumstances and for the legacy we leave for future generations.



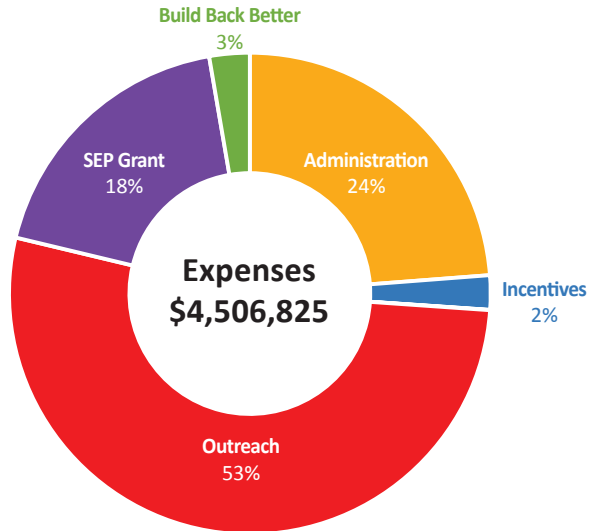
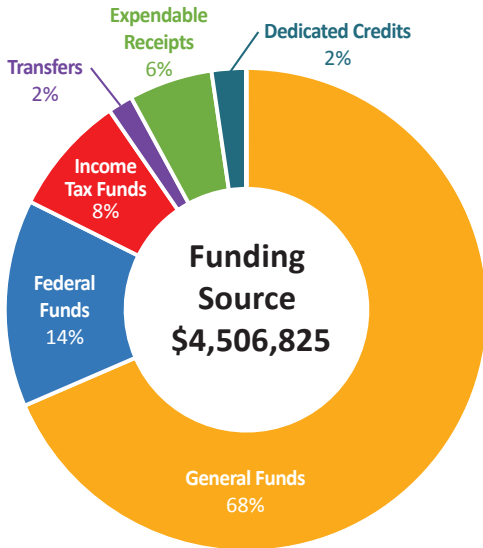
**Greg Todd**  
Office Director



UTAH OFFICE OF  
**ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Tax Credits** – Award tax credits to new energy development projects, including the Renewable Energy Systems Tax Credit, High-Cost Infrastructure Tax Credit, Alternative Energy Development Incentive, Production Tax Credit, and Well Recompletion.

**State Energy Program** – Funding for this program is provided by the U.S. Department of Energy and supports public education, energy efficiency programs and more. It also develops and maintains energy and minerals curricula for elementary, middle and secondary school teachers.

**Outreach** – Engage with industry stakeholders in a variety of mediums, including co-producing the One Utah Summits, seek out innovations in the energy industry and encourage the development of energy projects in the state from workforce education to energy diversification.

**U-REDI** – Help plan and begin the development of projects aimed at diversifying the economies of rural areas that primarily rely on energy production for their economic development.

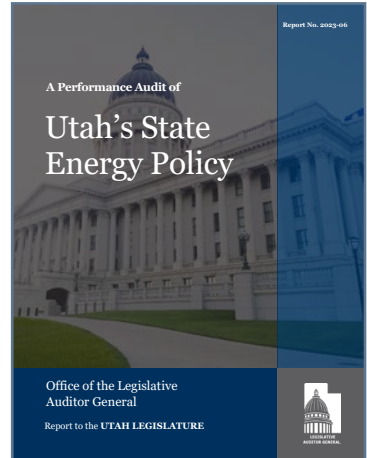
# Case Studies

## Building on Past Foundations

**Problem:** The transition of reporting responsibilities from the governor's office to DNR resulted in a re-imagining of OED and its roles and responsibilities.

**Solution:** Working with OED leadership, the Office of the State Auditor conducted a comprehensive audit in FY2023. This collaborative process helped identify key focus areas for optimal efficiency and furthered the work OED was already undertaking to orient its goals, priorities and duties around policy and policy-related activities.

**Outcome:** OED is implementing the recommendations outlined in the audit and will surpass those recommendations in multiple domains. Currently, the office is building on its past successes and is poised to make significant gains in the coming year.



## Leveraging Federal Grants to Turn Energy Challenges into Opportunities

**Problem:** The energy sector is experiencing the emergence of new or updated technologies, but those technologies can be unattainable for some families and disruptive to energy-producing rural communities.

**Solution:** OED is applying for several federal energy-related grants.

**Outcome:** A prudent leveraging of grants will allow Utah to advance the state's energy goals of reliability, affordability and sustainability in alignment with our any-of-the-above approach. Utahns most in need of help, mid- to lower-income families, that participate in our upcoming efficiency and electrification incentive programs will benefit, increasing their access to energy without financial burden. Our office is also seeking to support reliable and affordable energy through the Energy Contractor Training program, which ensures a pipeline of highly skilled workers for the energy sector, including in rural, energy-producing communities. A grid innovation grant will benefit the state through updates and improvements to Utah's electrical grid.



## Understanding Gas Prices

**Problem:** In 2022, Utah experienced historically high gasoline prices that were trending higher than the national average. This trend ran counter to the lower-than-national average gas prices the state had enjoyed in years past.

**Solution:** OED analyzed the state's petroleum supply chain and determined how each link in that process impacts consumer gas prices. Price pressures, both in and outside of Utah, were identified.

**Outcome:** A comprehensive report on why gas prices were rising across the state was provided to the Utah Legislature and made publicly available on the OED website. The report included recommendations for lawmakers to consider, such as:

- Free market solutions like additional pipelines that could bring more crude into the state
- Establishing an energy oversight group for additional research on the independent and separate business units along the supply chain and how they impact pricing
- Managing demand through programs that focus on getting vehicles off the road (e.g., public transportation, telework options, consumer awareness)
- Controlling prices with an inflationary tax freeze
- Maintenance of the any-of-the-above approach
- Continued collaboration and partnership with oil and gas producers
- Producing summer-grade gasoline in the winter and storing it for summertime



# Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining regulates and ensures industry compliance and site restoration while facilitating oil, gas and mining activities.*

## Director's Commitment

In 2022, Utah experienced high oil, gas and mining activity. Historically, these industries exhibit a cyclical pattern known as the "boom and bust" cycle, characterized by alternating periods of rapid expansion and sharp contraction. During boom phases, increased demand for natural resources — often driven by economic growth and development — leads to a surge in exploration, production and investment. This results in high profits, job creation and a positive economic impact on regions dependent on these industries.

For crude oil production alone, petroleum operators in Utah achieved a record-high output of over 45 million barrels of oil. In the almost 80 years of petroleum production in Utah, that much volume has never been produced in a single calendar year. Much of this increased production is attributed to applying recent horizontal drilling technologies coupled with hydraulic fracturing of underground sands and shales to extract more hydrocarbon from individual wells than was capable in the past. The science behind this technology is fascinating to observe and comprehend, and such operations are carefully monitored by the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (OGM) staff to ensure proper public health and safety protection and avoid adverse environmental impacts.

All other energy and mineral development also contribute to robust economic activity in the state. In the 2023 Economic Report to the Governor, the Utah Geological Survey estimated that the total 2022 monetary value of production of crude oil, natural gas, coal, metals and industrial minerals in Utah amounts to over \$9.9 billion, generating tax dollars and providing royalty payments to mineral landowners.

OGM staff is committed to being catalysts for such important industrial activity in Utah, and we look forward to fulfilling our objective of ensuring such responsible development in the future.



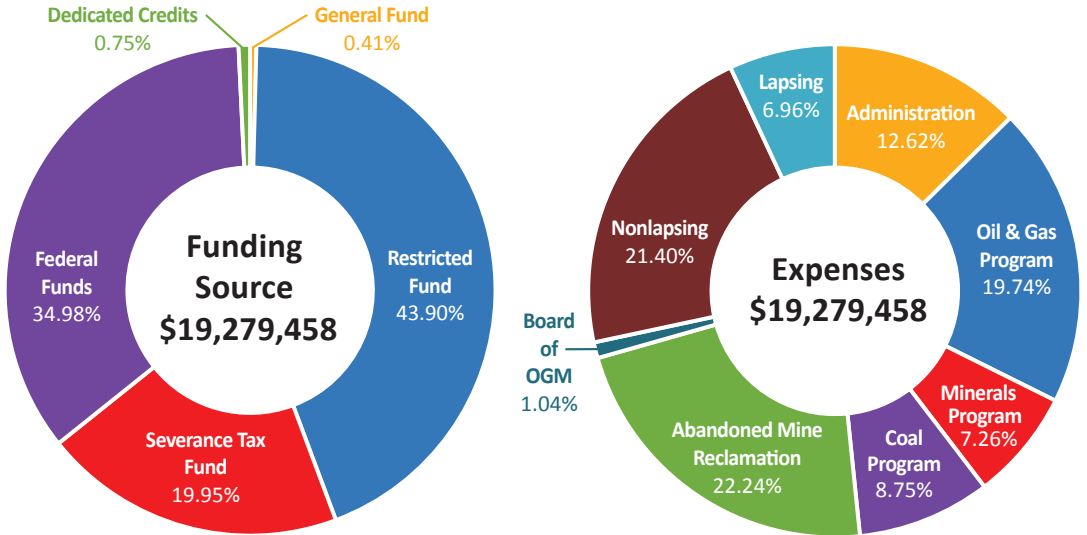
**John R. Baza**  
Division Director





# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Oil and Gas** – Permits, inspects and monitors oil and gas wells statewide. Staff maintains a database of information regarding ownership, production, disposition and status of oil and gas exploration, production wells and facilities.

**Coal and Mineral Permitting** – Issues permits and monitors coal and mineral mining operations to ensure compliance with federal laws and regulations.

**Abandoned Mine Reclamation** – Identifies abandoned mines and permanently seals off access to reduce accidents and hidden hazards. Division staff also provide outreach programs to schools and communities, educating the public about the dangers of abandoned mines.

## Case Studies

### Carbon Sequestration Program

**Problem:** The division's Oil and Gas Program was directed by legislators (2022 General Session House Bill 244) to seek primacy for and create a state-regulated carbon sequestration program that includes an underground injection control (UIC) program, which is currently a program managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**Solution:** During the 2023 General Session, the division requested ongoing funding to establish a regulatory program and seek primacy for Class VI UIC wells from the EPA as directed by General Session H.B. 244.

**Outcome:** Oil and Gas Program management is contracting with a third-party source that specializes in preparing the documentation required for a class VI UIC primacy application. Primacy transfers enforcement authority from the EPA to the state to oversee the class VI UIC wells. Management hired a UIC program manager and a geologist to manage the contract and provide technical review of the primacy application. Application for primacy and approval from the EPA will take multiple years; however, a plan is in place moving forward.



### Oil and Gas Program Review

**Problem:** The Oil and Gas Program experienced changes in staff, priorities and needs and wanted a third party to evaluate the current program to identify potential improvements.

**Solution:** Oil and Gas Program management hired consultants Adaptovate to perform an internal review to identify the challenges and current successes to increase overall efficiencies.



**Outcome:** The review looked at existing positions and responsibilities and provided recommendations to improve efficiencies and address employee concerns, including succession planning, hiring additional staff and reorganizing current functions to maximize strengths and productivity.



## Minerals Program Efficiencies

**Problem:** The Minerals Program had almost 70% new employees at the beginning of this past fiscal year, creating an urgency to train staff and prioritize projects. Though these team members were new to the division, they came with years of experience in hydrogeology, engineering and archaeology. Still, they needed to learn division regulatory rules and procedures and become collaborative team members.

**Solution:** Every week, employees trained staff on their area of expertise and how it pertained to the program and regulatory rules, creating opportunities for idea sharing, team building and positive program growth. Cross training was also implemented to ensure at least two inspectors were familiar with each mine site.

**Outcome:** In one year, the staff has become one of the more collaborative teams working together to develop new processes, remove backlogs, establish new priorities and continuously look for opportunities to be more efficient. Staff turned this temporary setback into an opportunity to create a solid and dedicated team.

# Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Outdoor Recreation is committed to ensure health, safety, enjoyment, and economic benefit through life-enriching, high quality outdoor recreation for all of Utah's residents and visitors.*

## Director's Commitment

More people are recreating outdoors than ever before in Utah. As our state continues to grow, the Division of Outdoor Recreation is striving to grow the infrastructure that supports outdoor recreation. Each year, dozens of local government and nonprofit partners request grant funding through our programs, which means we get to work together to build world-class opportunities. I have always had a love of trails and exploring outdoors, so I feel blessed and fortunate to be part of that progress.

Utah is growing in population, in business opportunities and as a destination for work. Utah businesses list outdoor recreation as the most-used tool for recruiting talent from out of state. In addition, more than half of people moving to Utah cite outdoor recreation as "extremely important" in the factors that led them here. Developers who are building neighborhoods are planning communities with access to trails and other recreation opportunities. When you consider all of these findings, it's no wonder I get asked by recreation leaders in other states, "What has made outdoor recreation in Utah so successful?"

Utah is a leader in outdoor recreation, and as the division continues to help build and enhance recreation sites throughout the state, we're putting significant emphasis on planning. We begin with the end in mind, and that end is more people gaining the health and wellness benefits of playing outside, and it means that users share an ethic of responsible recreation. Many recreation destinations throughout the state keep search and rescue teams busy, so we're committed to reducing the burden on those groups by educating the public on how to stay safe in the backcountry.

We have a lot going for us, and one of our most significant advantages is an ethic of partnerships. With most of the state's public lands being federally managed, there are often challenges with policy. The people who work for our federal land management agencies are great partners who want solutions to those challenges, and I am continually impressed by Utah's partnership culture.

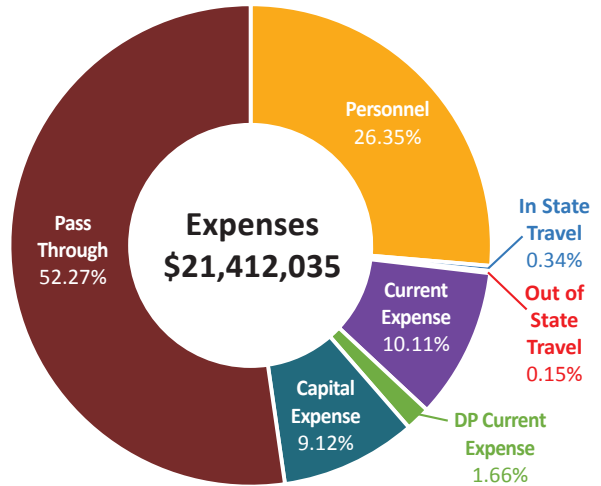
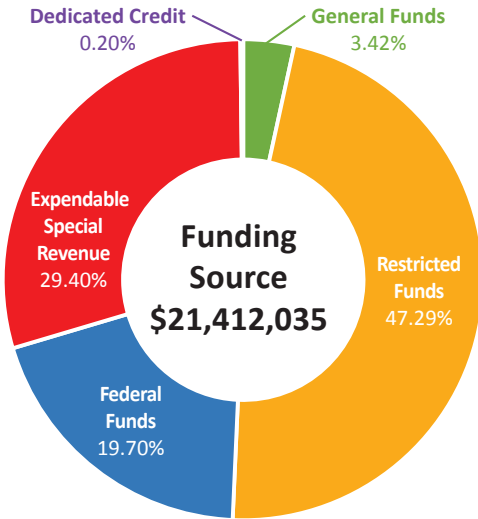


**Jason Curry**  
Division Director



# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Grants Program** – The Division of Outdoor Recreation administers the state's recreation grant programs that total more than \$32 million per year. Programs include the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant, Recreation Restoration Infrastructure Grant, Outdoor Classroom Grant, Recreational Trail Program Grant, Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Grant and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

**Utah Off-Highway Vehicle Program (OHV)** – Working with the OHV community and partnering agencies, the state's OHV Program offers recreational opportunities, safety and education resources for OHV use on over 80,000 miles of trails throughout the state. Additionally, the program oversees the youth and adult OHV education programs and its statewide trail crew oversees the development and maintenance of trails and other facilities for OHV use.

**State Boating Program** – This program serves to preserve and maintain quality for the best possible boating experiences on Utah's waterways. The program embraces passionate boating enthusiasts as team members to coordinate and enhance safety, education and facilities to protect waters for future boating generations.

**Every Kid Outdoors Initiative (EKO)** – The division oversees Utah's Every Kid Outdoors Initiative that supports parents, caregivers and youngsters by promoting fun outdoor activities to connect with nature. EKO promotes a healthy, active lifestyle and encourages youth to spend more time outdoors engaging in activities that will benefit their physical and emotional well-being.

**Recreation Law Enforcement Program** – This program has 12 law enforcement rangers stationed across the state. Their primary focus is improving the safety of boating and OHV experiences on Utah’s vast public lands including rivers, lakes, trails and pathways, patrolling by truck, boat, OHV, motorcycle, bicycle and snowmobile. They provide education and enforcement of Utah’s boating and off-highway vehicle laws and rules. Recreation rangers train other state and county agencies to be proficient in operation of boat and OHV patrol equipment, in understanding the law and to provide consistent and effective enforcement efforts. The division also funds law enforcement efforts performed by State Park Rangers related to boating and OHV.

**Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit** – The division oversees the nation’s largest state-based outdoor recreation conference to improve the way we participate, plan and prioritize outdoor recreation for everyone. The annual two-day conference brings together hundreds of outdoor recreation community members, including land managers, city and state employees, nonprofits, educational institutions and the biggest outdoor brands in the industry.

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## Case Studies

### Expanding Access and Economic Growth through Grant Awards

**Problem:** Utah faces a growing demand for expanded and new outdoor recreation infrastructure and facilities to accommodate the increasing number of residents and visitors. With this increased interest in outdoor recreation, there is a need to invest in projects that will enhance existing outdoor recreation opportunities and create new ones.

**Solution:** The Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) leveraged its Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG) and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation grant to address the need for and support outdoor recreation infrastructure projects throughout the state.

The UORG helps fund an array of outdoor recreation projects, including park development, trail maintenance, and conservation efforts. These efforts improve accessibility to outdoor spaces and recreation opportunities, as well as enhance overall user experiences. The OHV Recreation Grant supports projects that improve OHV trails, increases user access, promotes safety and education and enriches the overall OHV experience for residents and visitors.

**Outcome:** In 2023, the DOR awarded over \$20 million in state-funded grants, the largest amount ever awarded by the state for such initiatives. In past years, rural counties often struggled with 50/50 match requirements. This year, a new variable match requirement was created to help align the match with available resources to further support rural county needs. UORG allocated more than \$16 million to 90 outdoor recreation infrastructure projects in 24 counties, while the OHV Recreation Grant provided \$4.2 million to 51 OHV-related projects in 28 counties. These projects included infrastructure for water recreation, OHV use, climbing and various other recreational activities. Notably, the grant funding supported the restoration of nearly 800 miles of existing multi-use trails and facilitated the construction of approximately 150 miles of new multi-use trails throughout the state.

## Utah's Innovative Adult OHV Education Course

**Problem:** The rising popularity of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) in Utah is accompanied by an increasing number of complaints about irresponsible riding behavior and damage to public lands. To sustain the growth of Utah's OHV community while ensuring responsible and safe riding practices, broad education to help equip riders with the necessary knowledge, skills and ethical understanding is needed.

**Solution:** Thanks to the OHV community, and as a result of the passage of HB180 during the 2022 legislative session, DOR developed and launched Utah's adult OHV education course, with input from OHV clubs, organizations, T.R.E.A.D.Lightly!, federal land management agencies and local partners. The course aimed to equip riders with the skills necessary for safe and responsible OHV operation. By promoting responsible riding practices, the course sought to protect public lands and enhance the overall OHV experience in Utah.

**Outcome:** The successful launch of Utah's new adult OHV education course in January 2023 marked a significant step forward in promoting responsible OHV riding and enhancing rider safety. The course quickly gained traction, garnering over 200,000 completions within the first few months of its launch.

Overall, the new, award-winning adult OHV education course has contributed to safer riding practices, fewer injuries, and enhanced respect for the natural landscapes, and it will continue to foster a culture of responsible OHV riding and positively impact Utah's outdoor recreation community.

## Enhancing Safety and Saving Lives

**Problem:** The surge in outdoor recreation activities brought about a corresponding increase in accidents and incidents, particularly among new recreators and visitors who more often lack sufficient knowledge about safe outdoor practices. DOR faced a challenge in addressing the growing need for proactive measures to enhance safety and reduce the strain on emergency response teams.

**Solution:** The division took a proactive approach by increasing active recreation ranger patrols. The solution involved creating new outdoor recreation ranger positions and expanding the division's law enforcement team. The increased personnel facilitated more frequent and thorough patrols in popular recreation areas, using an education-centered approach.

**Outcome:** Expanding active recreation ranger patrols has proven to be a key to improving preventative search and rescue operations and ensuring the safety of outdoor recreators.

The creation of new ranger positions and the commitment to proactive patrolling in high-activity areas has brought about a notable shift in the division's approach to outdoor recreation safety. Investing in personnel and resources has enhanced the safety of recreators and reduced the need for emergency search and rescue operations, and contributed to fostering a culture of safe and responsible outdoor recreation in Utah.

# Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office

## Mission Statement

*To coordinate, promote, and implement Utah's public land priorities.*

## Director's Commitment

Our team at the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO) continues to build relationships with state and federal agencies, tribal governments, local governments and other stakeholders with interests in Utah's public lands and natural resources. These relationships and frequent interactions are paramount in helping the state to "speak with one voice" on public land and natural resource management actions. Furthermore, these relationships and our continual involvement in land management activities, planning and policy changes allow the state to "hold the line" against federal land use policies that are not in the best interest of Utah or our citizens.

PLPCO staff have been thoroughly engaged in ensuring that the goals, objectives and policies contained in the state and county Resource Management Plans are adhered to when working with land management agencies. These plans build on the fundamental concepts of coordination, collaboration, consultation and consistency with state and local plans. An example of this work includes the state, through PLPCO, opposing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Conservation and Landscape Health proposed rule change.

Water quality and quantity, air quality, wildlife habitat and other environmental and economic benefits are essential to our quality of life and require active management and long-term planning. To that end, PLPCO has been actively involved in the Ashley National Forest planning process as well as Shared Stewardship projects across the state. We are committed to increasing collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders to actively manage our natural resources and plan for landscape-scale restoration of our watersheds, forests and rangelands.

PLPCO, in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General, is involved in more than 50 lawsuits to protect access to and the utilization of public lands that encompass two-thirds of the state of Utah. We continue to litigate against federal land use designations, actions and policies that reduce, restrict or impede multiple-use and sustained yield activities.

As the director at PLPCO, I am committed to using all the tools at our disposal to coordinate, promote and implement Utah's public land priorities.



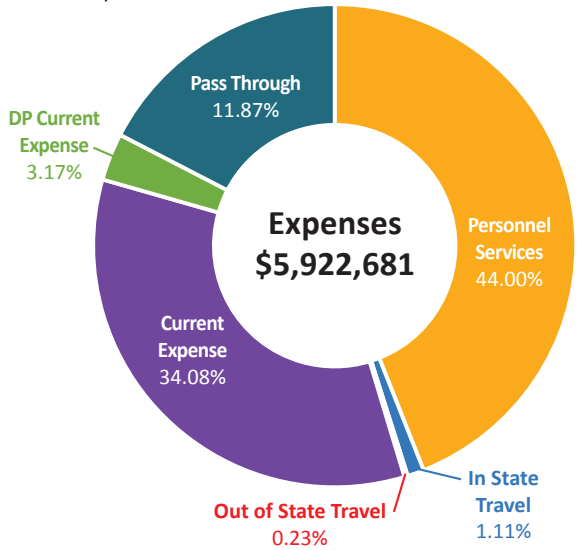
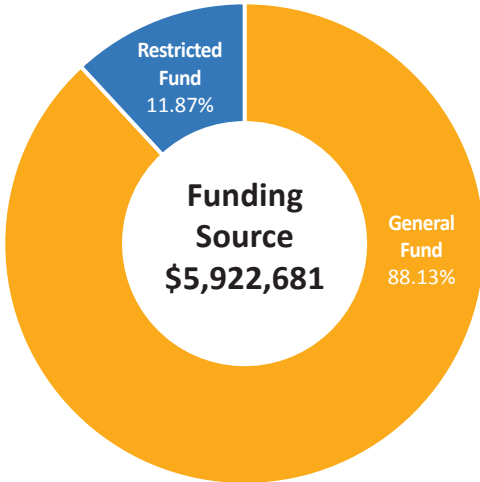
**Redge Johnson**  
Office Director





# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**R.S. 2477** – Revised Statute 2477 is a federal law that authorized construction of roads across federal public lands. PLPCO and the Attorney General’s office are working to confirm the state and counties as owners of the R.S. 2477 rights-of-way to ensure public access to federal public lands for multiple uses.

**Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC)** – The RDCC reviews and coordinates technical and policy actions that may affect the physical resources of the state and facilitates the exchange of information on those actions among state agencies and other levels of government.

**Resource Management Planning** – The state and each of its counties have adopted resource management plans, which address topics ranging from agriculture and livestock grazing to wilderness and wild and scenic rivers.

**Public Lands Education** – PLPCO seeks to educate the Utah public about public lands issues through the Management Makes the Difference Public education campaign and social media to improve public awareness of the issues facing Utah.

**Archeology** – PLPCO has a unique role of issuing permits for professional archeology work in Utah to regulate proper survey and excavation of archaeological resources.

**Litigation** – A full section of the Natural Resources Division of the Utah Attorney General’s Office is housed full-time with PLPCO and is engaged in a tremendous amount of public lands litigation (currently over 50 cases).

# Case Studies

## BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Proposed Rule

**Problem:** The state of Utah, through PLPCO, strongly opposed the proposed rule on Conservation and Landscape Health that was released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on April 3, 2023. This proposed rule, if adopted, could fundamentally alter the future management of BLM lands to the detriment of recreation, livestock grazing, mineral extraction, renewable energy production and other common uses on BLM lands. In 1976, Congress declared in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) that the BLM must manage BLM lands “on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.” Yet this proposed rule seeks to define “conservation” as a “use” within FLPMA’s multiple-use framework. This reframing of the term “multiple-use” would contravene FLPMA and violate federal case law.

**Solution:** The team at PLPCO in collaboration with the Public Lands Section at the Office of the Attorney General coordinated and assembled an extensive comment brief in preparation for impending litigation in the event that the BLM does not withdraw the proposed rule. The comment brief repeatedly cited case law and inconsistencies between the proposed rule and FLPMA.

**Outcome:** While the BLM has not officially adopted the proposed rule, it is anticipated that they will move forward with the proposed rule after reviewing public comments and that the state of Utah (and countless other plaintiffs) will be required to file a lawsuit against the BLM. The comment brief that has been prepared will put the state in a good position to pursue litigation.



## The Importance of Collaboration

**Problem:** The Ashley National Forest Plan revision kicked off in 2016 to revise the current land use plan written in 1986. Since the current forest plan was completed, there have been many changes in ecological, social and economic conditions in the area, as well as changes in resource demands, availability of new scientific information and new policies, including the 2012 planning rule. These numerous changes necessitated a plan revision to ensure that management direction is responsive to current issues, conditions and stakeholders.

These forest plan revisions and similar planning processes that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and other federal agencies engage in, such as the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments planning, are called collaborative but frequently fail to meet even the minimum threshold of collaboration. State and local governments participate, but their plans, comments, expertise, traditional knowledge, cultural practices and locally conducted research are all too often not given due consideration.

**Solution:** PLPCO contracted with the Langdon Group in 2021 to provide facilitation services for meetings and planning processes like these. The Forest Service was open to using this contract for the collaboration meetings centered around Shared Stewardship. Those facilitated meetings combined with numerous Cooperating Agency meetings, field tours, “deep dive” meetings on specific topics, single issue “hot topic” meetings, alternative development workshops, scoping and five public open houses throughout multiple states, led to a truly collaborative process where everyone involved felt that they were heard.

**Outcome:** This collaborative process resulted in a forest plan that is workable for most Utah stakeholders. The group thoroughly vetted difficult topics such as grazing, bighorn sheep management, wildfire management, timber harvest, wilderness inventory evaluation and wild and scenic river and wildlife issues as a means to create workable solutions. The Forest Service worked diligently on making the new Ashley Forest Plan consistent with the State of Utah’s Resource Management Plan (SRMP). Through these efforts, the Ashley National Forest will soon have a plan that will serve the forest, its resources and stakeholders well for years to come. While the plan is not perfect, and PLPCO has made some suggestions in an objection letter, it is nevertheless a quality plan derived from a truly collaborative process by the USFS. PLPCO hopes the USFS, BLM and other federal agencies will look to the Ashley Forest Plan Revision process as a model for all other future planning efforts.



# Utah Division of State Parks

## Mission Statement

*The Division of State Parks preserves and provides natural, cultural and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.*

## Director's Commitment

From the blue waters of Bear Lake State Park to the stunning cliffs of Snow Canyon State Park, Utahns and visitors alike continue to flock to our state parks. It is our mission to provide opportunities for guests to experience first-class facilities and unmatched customer service while relaxing and recreating at any one of our locations.

Our state park system is growing with the unprecedented investments recently made by the Utah State Legislature. Over the last three years, over \$250 million has been directed to our agency to build two new state parks and to pave the way for extensive infrastructure expansion! This last year we hosted many ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking events for new campgrounds, tiny home cottages, day-use areas, beaches and even brand-new state parks.

We continue to see how vital the role of state parks is to the well-being of both visitors and local communities. When you visit a state park, your direct contributions to the local economy extend beyond the park gates. Purchases such as groceries, fuel, hotel stays and guide services, have a cumulative impact. This positive effect generates employment opportunities, catalyzes growth and cultivates thriving communities.

Following last year's record snowfall, most of our water-based state parks surpassed 90% capacity, offering ample space for boating, paddling, swimming and fishing activities. Parks with water access continue to be among our most sought-after destinations, and our staff rose to the occasion in order to help visitors have a great time and stay safe and well-informed.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our visitors who conscientiously adhere to safety regulations and explore these outdoor spaces with responsibility and respect. Utah's state parks cater to a diverse range of interests. Our aim is to provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy, discover, learn, connect and find inspiration through the lasting memories they create while spending time with loved ones.

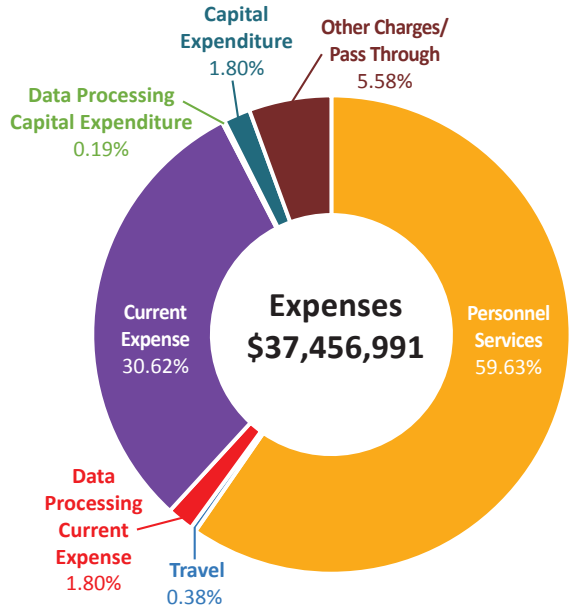
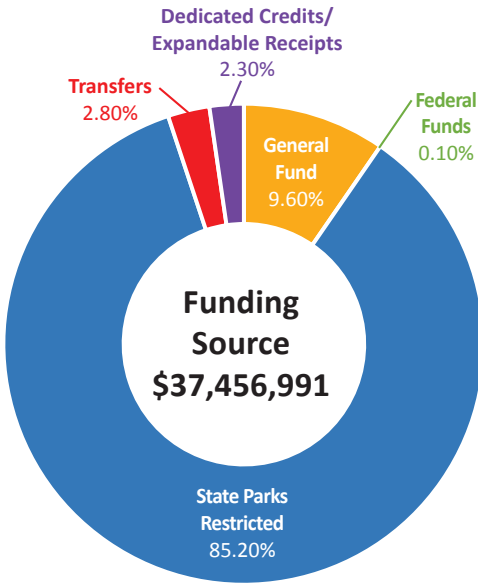


**Jeff Rasmussen**  
Division Director



# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**46 State Parks** – The Division of State Parks manages Utah’s state park system, which includes operations, planning, administration and protection of 46 state parks and museums, three state monuments and a handful of undeveloped areas. Services at these parks include day-use, reservoir access, OHV trail access, camping, overnight lodging, educational programs, museum tours, community events and more.

**Heritage Program** – This program provides expertise and resources to our historical, archeological and paleontological properties within the state park system, working with heritage entities around the state to preserve our shared cultural resources.

**Law Enforcement Program** – This program provides public safety services through law enforcement, safety, education and outreach for visitors to our 46 state parks. They also provide services to 80,000 miles of off-highway vehicle trails and 668 square miles of freshwater lakes and reservoirs through partnerships with other agencies.

**Strategic Planning** – The division works to develop and enhance facilities to meet guest needs and expectations. This unit provides guidance for both short- and long-term site management strategies for the protection and interpretation of each park’s natural and cultural resources. Planning works to ensure safe and enjoyable visitor experiences while providing new opportunities for visitors.

**Publications** – The division oversees the design and compilation of dozens of publications including park brochures and a statewide field guide. The purpose of these publications is to adequately inform and prepare our constituents for the conditions and opportunities for our parks and programs.

**Online Customer Service** – The division provides an abundance of online information, tools and services. Customers can look up recent park conditions, facility information and upcoming events. They can also reserve a campsite, purchase an annual or day-use pass and engage directly with park staff and other visitors on social media.

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## Case Studies

### Temporary Staffing Increases at High-Visitation Parks

**Problem:** This season's abundant snowpack resulted in higher water levels at numerous state parks. When combined with elevated temperatures, this led to greater numbers of visitors at water-access state parks. At times, visitation was so substantial that regular park staff numbers were insufficient to cater to the needs of visitors. One example of this was the resurgence of the waterfalls at Gunlock State Park and the large number of visitors who flocked to them.

**Solution:** Park and regional staff worked together to identify the areas in most need of staffing assistance and temporarily moved staff from one park or region to another in order to accommodate these visitation increases.

**Outcome:** The additional staff improved park operations and enhanced the visitor experience. The increased staffing enabled us to engage more effectively with visitors in busy areas, enhance customer service, identify potential issues and improve facility maintenance. At Gunlock State Park, these staffing enhancements enabled consistent patrolling and interaction with visitors around the waterfalls and the nearby areas.



## Park Improvements, Expansion & Visitation

**Problem:** Utah's 46 state parks continue to see an increase in visitation. This adds strain on the available amenities at state parks. With year-over-year visitation growth, our state parks must continue expanding their infrastructure to accommodate this trend.

**Solution:** In recent years, over \$250 million has been directed to our agency to build two new state parks and pave the way for extensive infrastructure expansion! This money has gone directly toward the design and creation of two brand-new state parks and has helped provide extensive park improvement and expansion projects. This additional infrastructure will help us better meet this increase in demand.

**Outcome:** \$36.5 million of the \$250,000 was set aside for the creation of the two new state parks: Utahraptor State Park and Lost Creek State Park. Planning and construction for both of these parks have already begun, and both parks are open to the public for day-use and primitive camping while additional infrastructure building continues. Many additional projects have broken ground or have already been completed and opened to the public. These projects included new campgrounds, day-use areas, parking lots, bathrooms and beach areas. While these funds have gone a long way, it remains essential that the Division of State Parks continues to expand and grow our infrastructure to meet visitor demands.



## Utilizing Technology to Solve Issues

**Problem:** Booking accommodations, golf tee times and other amenities at Utah's state parks have traditionally been managed using Aspira's reservation platforms. Aspira is a private reservations company based in Dallas, Texas. While there have been occasional updates over time, Aspira's digital interfaces are not particularly user-friendly, and the platform's outages and system failures have financial implications for our parks. These issues hinder our ability to offer the exceptional customer service that visitors have come to expect.

**Solution:** The Division of State Parks is collaborating with ParksPass to introduce innovative technology into parks to tackle these challenges. ParksPass collaborates regularly with field personnel to pinpoint specific concerns and swiftly devise effective solutions. ParksPass is a partnership between Division of State Parks and Utah Tech University.

**Outcome:** The solutions ParksPass has aided in implementing include enhanced internet access, updated point-of-sale systems and streamlined reservation and event ticketing options. These solutions not only tackled existing concerns linked to the Aspria platform, but have also equipped us to preemptively resolve potential future issues. Our goal is to continue exploring new technology to improve our visitor's experience while providing unmatched customer service. Additionally, ParksPass offers university students hands-on involvement in actual projects, effectively preparing them for their post-graduation endeavors.

# Utah Geological Survey

## Mission Statement

*The Utah Geological Survey provides timely scientific information about Utah's geologic environment, resources, and hazards.*

## Director's Commitment

Utah's record-breaking snowfall led to many landslides throughout Utah and was the most active season since 2011. Soils became saturated from snowpack and runoff, leading to hillsides giving way, debris flows and rock falls.

Geologists with the UGS Hazards Program visited over 240 landslides from April to September to investigate and document landslide activity. Many visits included landslide evaluations for local governments, emergency managers and homeowners. Geologists also spent numerous hours responding to media inquiries, even riding in the KSL Chopper 5 helicopter and a surveillance Black Hawk flight with the Utah Air National Guard.

In addition to landslides, parts of Utah experienced extreme flooding this spring due to high water tables caused by increased runoff. Geologists were contacted by homeowners experiencing basement flooding in several areas not typically prone to flooding, making it a new and unexpected challenge for many Utah residents. Historically, flooding is Utah's most prevalent, costly and destructive hazard.

An online reporting system was developed for residents experiencing basement flooding, and a landslide database was created documenting current landslides. Geologists are using these science-based tools to compile data for future hazard mapping reference.

Fortunately, landslide and flood-related damage were localized, partly due to infrastructure and development improvements that are increasingly being implemented as awareness of geologic hazards grows. In Utah, nearly all recent landslides have occurred as reactivations of pre-existing landslides. As urbanization and development continue in landslide-prone areas, thorough investigations before development activities are essential in preventing future damage.

As we tackle the challenges of population growth and increases in geologic hazards, the UGS is dedicated to gathering good scientific data. We are the stewards of Utah's geologic resources and resolve to continuously assess and monitor geologic hazards using the latest scientific methods and technologies.



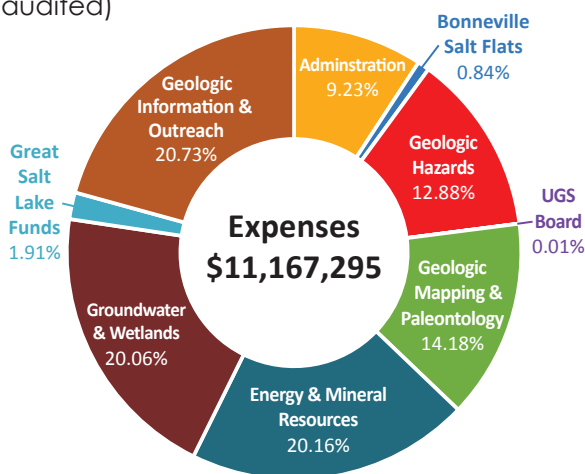
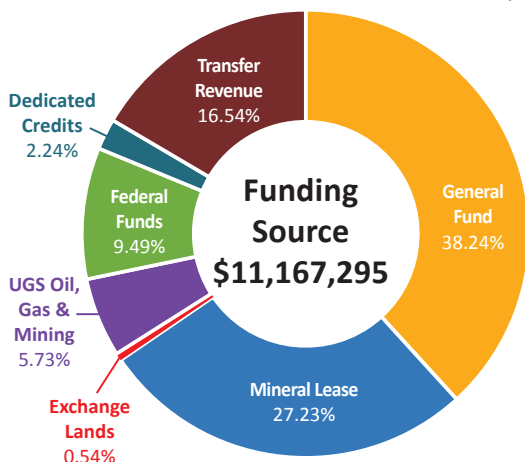
**Bill Keach**  
Division Director / State Geologist





# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Utah Core Research Center (UCRC)** – The UCRC serves as a repository and laboratory for Utah well cuttings and core, providing petroleum, coal and geologic samples for industry and academic research as well as public education.

**Geologic-Hazard Assistance** – The Geologic Hazards Program assists governments in responding to geologic-hazard emergencies, reviews geologic-hazard reports for school districts, investigates geologic hazards and prepares geologic-hazard maps for use by local governments, consultants and the public.

**Natural Resources Map & Bookstore** – In addition to offering a selection of publications and maps on Utah geology and other natural resource topics, the bookstore is the only retail outlet that maintains an inventory of topographic maps for the entire state.

**Water Resource/Environmental Evaluations** – The Groundwater Program evaluates groundwater resources and protects drinking water supplies by investigating the environmental impacts of waste disposal, storage, and treatment facilities for local, state and federal agencies.

**Public Inquiry** – The Geologic Information and Outreach Program provides information on Utah geology and geologic issues to governments, industry, educators and the general public.

**Energy and Mineral Evaluations** – Geologists specializing in Utah’s various energy resources and minerals investigate and provide energy and mineral resource information on county, state or federal lands to local, state and federal agencies.

**Paleontological Services** – The Paleontology Section evaluates paleontological sites, excavates critical fossils in danger of destruction and issues paleontological excavation permits.

# Case Studies

## Landslide Risk

**Problem:** Landslides and landslide-prone geologic bedrock and soils are common in Utah. Unprecedented population growth puts expanding communities at risk of geologic hazards, including slope instability. The UGS maintains a geodatabase of landslides in the state, but when and where landslides occur is often unpredictable, especially during wet years. With the record-setting snowpack of 2022–23, the UGS anticipated an especially active spring landslide season.

**Solution:** The UGS monitors over 100 landslides every spring, focusing on populated areas where people, property and infrastructure may be at risk. Prior to the expected high snowmelt-induced runoff and groundwater levels in spring 2023, the UGS tracked climate data — including snow water content — prepared a landslide monitoring and response plan and developed a GIS-based field data collection system. Beginning in mid-April, UGS staff began responding to landslide events to assess both immediate and longer-term risk, collect field data and document conditions through ground- and drone-based photos and videos.

**Outcome:** The UGS provided technical assistance to several cities, counties, private landowners and other state and federal agencies. We responded to dozens of public inquiries and media requests for information and were part of the Division of Emergency Management's multi-agency team, providing regular updates and briefings. Our data-collection methods allowed our geologists to post their field observations, photos and drone-acquired videos within hours of a site visit, making them publicly available to our interagency partners, local officials, the interested public and the media. Ultimately, the data we collect advances our understanding of landslide occurrence and behavior and improves our hazard mapping capabilities to benefit communities across the state.



## Aqueduct Seismic Resilience

**Problem:** Earthquake hazards exist across much of Utah, particularly the Wasatch Front. Fault rupture induced by large-magnitude earthquakes poses a high risk to important facilities such as energy, transportation and water infrastructure. Detailed geologic mapping is essential to delineating the location of potentially active faults and facilitating appropriate engineering to protect critical infrastructure.

**Solution:** The UGS has partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey in the long-running cooperative STATEMAP program to create modern geologic maps throughout Utah, emphasizing areas of rapid urban growth. These maps delineate potential geologic resources and hazards, providing key information for cost-effective land-use planning and engineering solutions to protect critical infrastructure.

**Outcome:** The UGS hosted field trips and presented geologic map data to legislative and local government representatives, highlighting locations where water infrastructure is vulnerable to damage from fault rupture. Following these discussions, the Utah Legislature allocated \$50 million to improve the resiliency of several major Wasatch Front aqueducts. These seismic upgrades will reduce the risk of losing critical water supply in the event of a major earthquake.



## Critical Minerals

**Problem:** Modern society and technology require a greater amount and diversity of mined materials than at any previous point in human history. However, many mineral commodities essential to the modern economy are not mined domestically and have supply chains vulnerable to disruption. Utah's unique geology and mineral endowment may position it as a significant contributor to domestic critical mineral production.

**Solution:** Understanding Utah's known critical mineral resources and improving the availability of framework geologic data to support exploration for new critical mineral deposits will empower Utah's mineral industry. The UGS is working with federal and other state surveys to assess Utah's critical mineral resources and exploration potential and to make the information available to industry and public stakeholders.

**Outcome:** The UGS has, to date, facilitated over \$10 million in federal funding for the acquisition of new, high-quality geologic data in Utah. Projects include targeted studies of critical mineral deposits, regional geophysical surveys to evaluate subsurface geology in the western half of Utah and support exploration targeting and statewide coverage of lidar elevation data. The new data will usher in a step-change in understanding and exploring Utah's critical mineral wealth. The UGS has also conducted significant public outreach related to critical minerals, such as news interviews, public and university lectures, scientific meeting presentations and *Survey Notes* articles.

# Utah Division of Water Resources

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Water Resources plans, conserves, develops and protects Utah's water resources.*

## Director's Commitment

We received a gift, a reprieve. After multiple years of drought, low water supplies and dismal lake levels, we had an epic winter. Across the state, Mother Nature set record snow water equivalent (SWE) accumulation. Our previous record high was 26 inches of SWE; this year peaked at 30 inches. It was more than most of us hoped for. The potential flood risk was a big concern but overall, the runoff was well behaved with minimal flooding. Most of our reservoirs filled, and we saw significant increases at Great Salt Lake (five feet) and Lake Powell (nearly 65 feet).

While this won't solve all of our troubles, it gives us some breathing room while we meter secondary water, implement landscape incentives and help municipalities incorporate water into their general plans — all with the goal of making Utah more resilient to drought.

In addition to a fantastic winter, the legislature once again made a significant investment in water conservation and infrastructure. Considering this year and last, over \$1 billion has been appropriated and approximately \$431 million has been entrusted to Water Resources. State funds were appropriated for ongoing landscaping incentives, grants to assist cities with new general plan requirements and additional staff.

This year we have had some hallmark successes, including the completion of the Millsite Dam rehabilitation in Emery County, hosting our second Growing Water Smart Workshop, launching the statewide landscape conversion incentive program and facilitating the creation of multiple watershed councils. Additionally, the Board of Water Resources has received applications for all of the \$250 million secondary metering grant money and has contracted \$165 million with secondary water suppliers.

The success of the state and Water Resources only occurs because of our fantastic team. I am grateful for them and all of their diligent work.

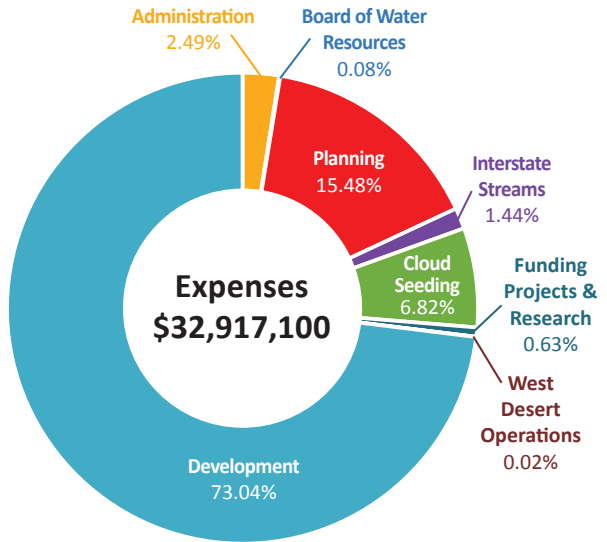
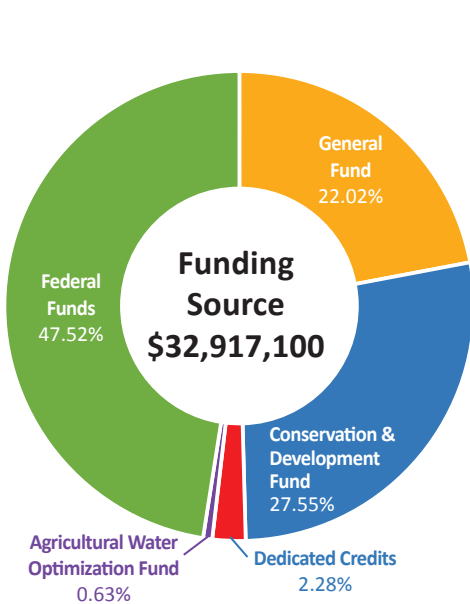


**Candice Hasenyager**  
Division Director



# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Water Education and Conservation** – Working with local water agencies, individuals and professional groups to develop and implement water conservation programs to reduce per capita water use. The division partners with several water districts to run the Slow The Flow campaign and operate the Utah Water Savers statewide rebate program and posts a Weekly Lawn Watering Guide via social media.

**Water Development and Conservation Funds** – The Board of Water Resources administers three revolving state water development and conservation funds that have contributed over \$900 million to help build over 1,600 water projects all across the state.

**Technical Assistance** – Providing technical assistance to Utah water users. Areas of expertise include design and construction engineering, geology, drafting, geographic information systems, feasibility studies and planning reports.

**Water Planning** – Tracking Utah's current and long-term water-related needs, preparing inventories of municipal and industrial water use and water-related land use, and performing water use studies.

**Hydrology and Modeling** – Developing and maintaining the state water budget. This accounts for and estimates all of the water used in the state over the last 30 years. In addition, our staff develops geographic information system applications, water demand/supply and hydrologic models to assist in the state's planning needs.

**Interstate Streams** – Helping to defend and protect Utah's right to develop and use its entitlements in the Colorado, Bear and Columbia rivers.

**Cloud Seeding** – Regulating and promoting cloud seeding by augmenting natural precipitation, which enhances snowpack.

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## Case Studies

### Conservation

**Problem:** In Utah, 60% of residential water use goes towards outdoor irrigation. To conserve, we need to plant grass in areas where it's actively used rather than treat grass as the default ground cover.

**Solution:** In the 2023 legislative session, SB118 was passed. The bill provides additional funds (\$5 million one-time and \$3 million ongoing) for the statewide landscape conversion incentive program.

**Outcome:** The division launched the landscape conversion incentive program on May 1, 2023, and it has already received over 2,100 applications. The division partnered with Central Utah, Jordan Valley, Washington County and Weber Basin Water Conservancy Districts to increase program awareness and funding.



### Watersheds Council

**Problem:** The need for increased discussion among stakeholders on issues such as water policy and resource issues at watershed and state levels.

**Solution:** In 2020, the Utah Legislature passed the Watershed Councils Act (HB 166), which authorized and directed the Division of Water Resources to create the Utah Watersheds Council (a state council) and 12 local watershed councils.

**Outcome:** The division facilitated the formation and conditional certification of the Bear River Watershed Council and the Jordan River Watershed Council earlier this year. The Weber River Watershed Council and Utah Lake Watershed Council were also organized and received full certification alongside the Bear River Watershed Council on July 13. This means that four out of the 12 local watershed councils are now established and three are fully certified. Our division is excited about this progress after COVID slowed down the formation of these councils.

## Growing Water Smart Utah

**Problem:** Integrating water considerations into land planning presents a significant opportunity to reduce municipal and industrial water use.

**Solution:** SB 110, passed in 2022, requires most municipalities (Utah Code 10-9a-403) and all counties (Utah Code 17-27a-401) to develop a water use and preservation element that is integrated with their land use planning and development (general plan).

**Outcome:** In order to help municipalities integrate water and land planning, the division has hosted two Growing Water Smart Utah workshops. These workshops have helped to integrate land use and water planning in 19 Utah communities.



## Millsite Dam Rehabilitation

**Problem:** The Millsite Dam, built in 1971 and owned by Ferron Canal & Reservoir Company (FCRC), faced reduced capacity due to sediment buildup in the reservoir. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) suggested raising the dam's height to restore lost capacity. Simultaneously, safety standards needed updating, including an undersized spillway, unstable downstream slope and outdated outlet works. Coordination with State Parks and Millsite Golf Course was necessary due to the project's impact from modifications to the dam.

**Solution:** The division collaborated with NRCS and FCRC for the dam's design and construction. The plan involved raising the dam and reservoir by four feet, enhancing the downstream slope's stability with a berm, updating outlet gates, building a larger spillway, elevating parts of Millsite State Park and improving affected areas of Millsite Golf Course. Combining funds from the Board of Water Resources dam safety grant, NRCS and FCRC ensured financial support for the project.

**Outcome:** Construction began in 2017 and is set to conclude this year. The project successfully addressed dam safety concerns, securing the reservoir's continued service to the local community.



# Utah Division of Water Rights

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Water Rights promotes order and certainty in administering the beneficial use of Utah's water.*

## Director's Commitment

As the custodian of a century and a quarter of expertise in the administrative supervision of the state's water, the State Engineer's Office is committed to the orderly measurement, appropriation and distribution of Utah's most precious resource. As we face evolving challenges, including the transition from water scarcity to a year of greater supply, we remain committed to the enduring legacy of technical expertise, resource stewardship and administrative leadership.

Recognizing the critical juncture in which we find ourselves as a state, I am dedicated to providing increased transparency and foresight relating to the measurement and accounting of Utah's water. We understand the need for enhanced water rights measurement to provide greater precision and promptness in distribution. Transparent accounting is critical, ensuring equitable access for all stakeholders and facilitating the beneficial use of water rights. With the support of the governor's office and the Utah Legislature, additional staffing and cutting-edge measurement equipment will provide for a more transparent water rights system.

The interstate and intrastate challenges we face here in Utah are complex. The general discourse continues to transition from supply development to optimization of our existing finite resources, including the need to secure and maintain our aging infrastructure. As State Engineer, I serve as chair to the Bear River Commission and alternate commissioner on the Upper Colorado River Commission. The partnerships associated with these commissions remain paramount to our efforts as we look to the future demands on these vital interstate rivers.

Finally, our successes would remain unrealized without the unwavering dedication of our remarkable team. I am both humbled and proud to lead the amazing team at the Division of Water Rights as we address the complex challenges that lay before us. With commitment and collaboration, the State Engineer will continue to protect this invaluable resource for future generations.



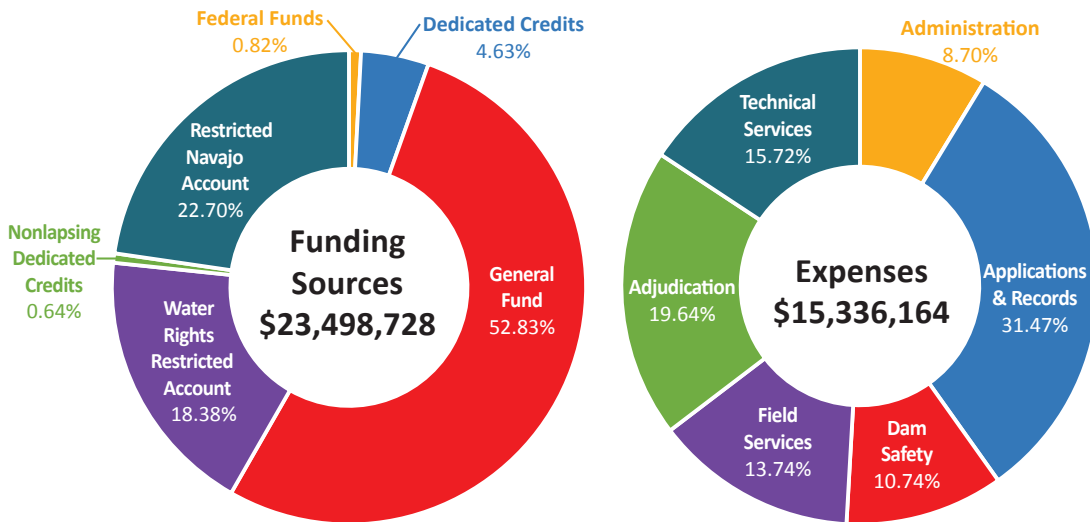
**Teresa Wilhelmsen**  
Division Director / State Engineer





# Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Water Right Applications** – Process water right applications and maintain permanent records for all water rights in the state. Assist the public to access water right information and complete application forms required by the agency.

**Measurement of Water** – Oversee water commissioners and provide support where the agency is directly involved in the daily distribution of water among water right holders.

**Adjudication** – Present to the district court a proposed determination of water rights within hydrologic areas of the state where such investigations have been ordered by the court and obtain an adjudication order decreeing those water rights.

**Dam Safety** – Physically inspect and monitor operation of public and private dams, approve new dam construction, consult and approve dam upgrades and intervene in emergencies. Inspections and monitoring efforts are based on each dam's hazard rating for potential loss of life and property.

**Stream Channel Alterations** – Process permits to alter the banks or beds of natural streams under terms of the Utah Code and a general permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Geothermal** – Process permits to use geothermal resources in the state. Inspect facilities and monitor pressure tests.

**Well Drilling Regulations and Licensing** – Oversee licensing and regulation of water well drillers in the state.

**Studies and Technical Services** – Collect water resources data for surface water, groundwater and water use throughout the state. Perform studies to determine water availability and management alternatives. Support the integration of data automation technology in operations of the agency.

**Enforcement** – Administer the division's water rights, dam safety and stream alteration enforcement program as authorized by statute and administrative rule. Investigate violations of Utah water right law and initiate actions that encourage compliance.

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## Case Studies

### Automation

**Problem:** Ongoing drought and Great Salt Lake's water level hitting its historic low highlighted the need for increased measurement and automation. Water managers, river commissioners and water users throughout the state rely on flow data to distribute water. Timely flow data is critical for good management of a limited resource.

**Solution:** Additional funding and personnel have allowed for an increase in the installation of automated measurement sites. The additional resources also allow the division to devote the time and manpower necessary to maintain existing automated measurement sites and ensure they are operating accurately.

**Outcome:** Automating water measurement provides reliable, accurate and timely flow data and allows for better distribution and management of water. The data that automated measurement devices provide promotes conservation and increases efficiency in water use. Key automated gauges have been installed and real-time data on the Sevier River and on select tributaries to Great Salt Lake have been made available.

### Enforcement

**Problem:** Historically, one employee has been responsible for all enforcement referral activity across the entire state. However, one employee could not keep up with the workload, which resulted in slow processing times. Additionally, stakeholders felt that filing an enforcement referral was cumbersome and resulting actions by the State Engineer lacked transparency.

**Solution:** To address the challenges associated with the Enforcement Program, the State Engineer sought legislative funding to expand the program by adding staff. The program also produced an enforcement engineer process manual to ensure all enforcement activities are being equitably conducted across the entire state.

**Outcome:** Responsibility for enforcement referrals originating in different parts of the state is now assigned to specific enforcement engineers. A new enforcement manual was created to guide the enforcement engineer in equitably processing referrals. Additionally, the division developed a new electronic enforcement submittal process that increases transparency and reduces processing times by allowing for email communication with the referent.

## Dam Safety

**Problem:** Prolonged drought and increasing demand for water in the state have placed a renewed focus on dams and reservoirs. Aging dams are in need of rehabilitation, operating dams require maintenance and new dam sites need to be investigated for feasibility.

**Solution:** The division is actively working to rehabilitate high-hazard dams based on a prioritized listing and in coordination with the Division of Water Resources, including \$25 million one-time funding provided in 2023. Division inspectors visit over 300 high-, moderate- and low-hazard dams each year to identify necessary maintenance. In 2022, the legislature appropriated \$500,000 to study the feasibility of reconstructing the Hatch Town Dam in Garfield County. Division personnel oversaw the feasibility study and participated in the consideration of other potential reservoir sites and projects.

**Outcome:** With the increase in funding, rehabilitation of high-hazard dams has increased. Three projects are currently under construction, and additional rehabilitation projects are in the design phase, with construction scheduled for 2024. The Hatch Town Dam feasibility study was completed and provided to the legislature and public.



## Adjudication

**Problem:** The division must accelerate adjudication work throughout the state, with a primary focus on the Utah Lake and Jordan River adjudication. The momentum of prior years should lead to the filing of additional proposed determinations and the commencement of new subdivisions.

**Solution:** In the prior year, the division expanded the number of adjudication field teams by 25%. Additionally, the division fully built out two engineering teams focused on reviewing and filing proposed determinations. This was accomplished by focusing on increasing retention rate for adjudication team members. Due to this, less time is spent on training new staff and more time is spent productively moving the adjudication work forward.

**Outcome:** The division's pace of filing proposed determinations remains rapid, with five being filed in FY 2023. These proposed determinations were in areas with very complex water rights that serve as the backbone of the water systems in Salt Lake Valley. Also, the division commenced the final two areas within the Provo Division, bringing all of the Provo River drainage into the adjudication. Finally, the division filed the List of Unclaimed Rights in the Navajo subdivision, bringing this important adjudication to the midpoint of the process.

# Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

## Mission Statement

*The Division of Wildlife Resources serves the people of Utah as trustee and guardian of the state's fish and wildlife.*

## Director's Commitment

The winter of 2022-23 was incredible. Record snowfall provided a much-needed boost to our water supply, but it also posed daunting wildlife challenges, especially in northern and central Utah. We were feeding deer in the hardest-hit counties, moving elk herds off the interstate, relocating moose out of neighborhoods and receiving thousands more calls for wildlife-related help than we get in a typical winter.

The extreme weather continued for months and required an extraordinary response from our employees. We had an all-hands-on-deck approach to deal with the increased workload. I can't overstate how proud I am of the effort that our employees put in, being ready at all hours — in the toughest conditions — to help wildlife and keep Utahns safer in their communities. I'm grateful for their unwavering dedication and teamwork.

We also took some emergency measures to protect wildlife last winter. These included a closure on shed antler collection and extending seasonal closures on some wildlife management areas. Both closures lasted through the end of April and allowed many animals — particularly deer — to conserve energy and have a better chance of survival. Statewide, our officers patrolled around 7,900 hours to enforce these closures and protect wintering wildlife.

Exceptional efforts came from others, too. Our conservation partners and volunteers provided support in a huge way. Our emergency deer-feeding work would not have been possible without their assistance. More than 50 volunteers helped us feed nearly 6,000 deer daily at multiple sites in Summit and Rich counties. And we're thankful to all the landowners and members of the public who were patient with us — and with hungry wildlife — as we worked to respond to their calls.

Everyone stepped up to the challenge this past winter. And although we received a stunning amount of moisture, we needed it to address multiple years of severe drought. We are already seeing improvements in habitat and are hopeful for longer-term benefits to Utah's fish and wildlife in the years to come.

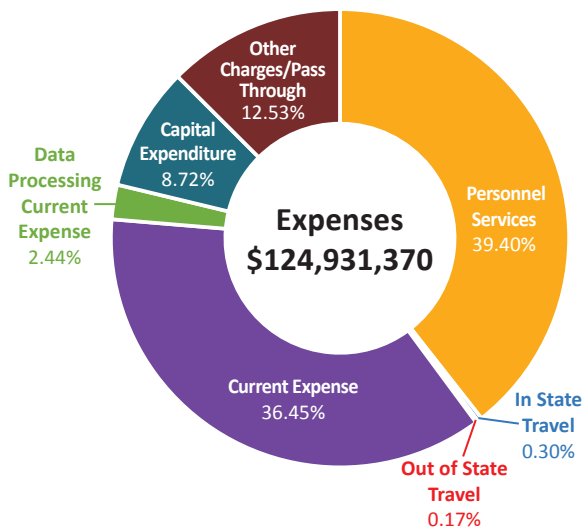
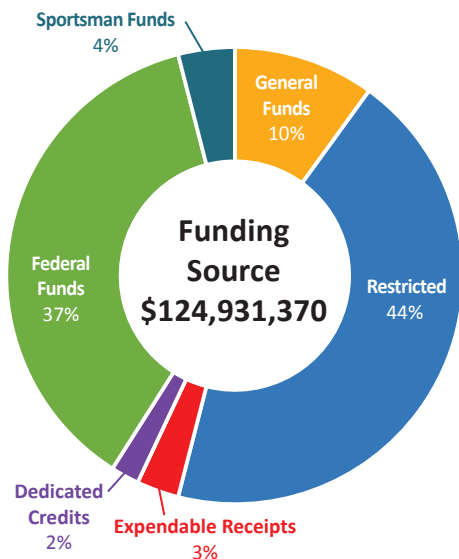


**J. Shirley**  
Division Director



## Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023  
(Unaudited)



## Key Services

**Aquatic Animal Health and Research Center (formerly Fisheries Experiment Station)** – Monitors the health of Utah's wild fish populations and the division's fish hatcheries. Provides hatcheries with disease assessment and treatments.

**Certificates of Registration** – Issues licenses and certificates of registration to falconers, private pond owners and people who want to own exotic pets.

**Community Fisheries Program** – Partners with local governments to provide community fishing opportunities for Utah youth and families.

**Dedicated Hunter Program** – Provides additional hunting opportunities for Utah deer hunters who perform volunteer service benefiting wildlife.

**George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Wildlife Education Center** – Features an education center (801-451-5536) and nature trails to educate visitors about the Great Salt Lake wetlands and active wildlife management.

**Great Basin Research Center and Seed Warehouse** – Conducts rangeland-rehabilitation research. Also stores, mixes and distributes seed for restoration projects.

**Hardware Wildlife Education Center** – Provides opportunities to learn about elk and other wildlife species through an assortment of exhibits, displays and activities. Primarily open during the winter months (435-753-6206) when sleigh rides occur on the Hardware Wildlife Management Area, but other special displays are offered seasonally.

**Hatcheries** – Owns and operates Utah’s state fish hatcheries.

**Hunter Education** – Trains individuals in the safe handling of firearms and responsible hunting ethics. The Lee Kay Center for Hunter Education (801-972-1326) and the Cache Valley Hunter Education Center (435-753-4600) provide Hunter Education courses and public shooting ranges.

**Licenses and Permits** – Sells hunting and fishing licenses and permits.

**Natural Heritage Program** – Identifies and monitors a variety of plant and animal species, and maintains a database for making natural resource decisions.

**Website and Communications** – Provides many online services and tools. Customers can visit [wildlife.utah.gov](http://wildlife.utah.gov) to buy hunting and fishing licenses, download regulation guidebooks and find a wealth of information about Utah’s wildlife.

**Wildlife Recreation Program** – Offers many wildlife-viewing events as well as hands-on clinics and seminars that provide instruction on hunting, fishing, shooting and more.

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## Case Studies

### Emergency Deer Feeding in Northern Utah

**Problem:** The winter of 2022-23 broke snowfall records across northern and central Utah. We had multiple deer herds in jeopardy — primarily in Summit and Rich counties — because the snow was too deep for the animals to access the vegetation they normally feed on.

**Solution:** Starting Jan. 19, we began feeding deer in the hardest-hit areas. Feeding continued every day until May 10, and during that time, we fed approximately 5,800 deer. We delivered more than 1 million pounds of specially formulated feed pellets to multiple sites. Fifteen of our personnel were directly involved, and more than 50 volunteers helped with the feeding. The total cost of this feeding effort was \$367,500. This was a massive, expensive, time-intensive effort that wouldn’t have been possible without the generosity and assistance of our conservation partners.

**Outcome:** Because we had GPS-collared deer in the area, we were able to gather and track data about the effectiveness of the feeding effort. Both the adult deer and the 6-month-old fawns that were fed had a higher survival rate than deer from nearby areas that weren’t fed. (By April 30, the survival rate of fed adults was 81%, while the survival rate of non-fed adults was 55%. For fawns, the numbers were much starker — 53% of the fed fawns survived, while none of the non-fed collared fawns survived.) The deer that were fed also made it through the winter in better physical condition than the non-fed deer. Despite these results, there are some serious risks and concerns associated with feeding deer, including the increased likelihood of disease, roadkill incidents and habitat damage as well as possible altered migration and behavior patterns. We believe feeding should only be done as a last resort, when there is no other way to save deer.



## Installing New Decontamination Dip Tanks to Combat Invasive Mussels

**Problem:** Invasive quagga and zebra mussels pose an ongoing threat to Utah's waterbodies and water infrastructure. To prevent the spread of these mussels, we partnered with a company named Clean Wake LLC on a hot-water decontamination dip tank. The tank is large enough that a boat owner can simply back a boat down into it. The tank's scalding water circulates through the boat's complex systems, killing any mussels that may be present in about 5–10 minutes. An initial dip tank installation at Lake Powell in 2021 proved highly successful, and we were eager to install more tanks across the state. Unfortunately, the cost to install additional tanks across the state is quite high.

**Solution:** In 2022, the Utah Legislature approved \$4 million in funding for the installation of additional dip tanks across Utah. By May 2023, a new dip tank was installed and operating at Utah Lake. In addition to the dip tanks at Lake Powell and Utah Lake, dip tanks have also been announced for Sand Hollow State Park and for Flaming Gorge, Pineview and Willard Bay reservoirs, with installation tentatively planned for either later this year or in the first half of 2024.

**Outcome:** The dip tanks currently in operation have provided a substantially faster decontamination option for boaters at Lake Powell and Utah Lake. (Watercraft decontamination times have dropped from 45–60 minutes down to 10 minutes.) There is excitement that the upcoming installations will provide an important additional safety net for some of Utah's most popular reservoirs. Utah is the only state currently using this innovative decontamination method.



## Establishing a New Waterfowl Management Area Near the Great Salt Lake

**Problem:** The health of the Great Salt Lake — and the people and wildlife that depend on it — are top priorities for Utahns. There have been multiple efforts in recent years to try and conserve the lake and its wetlands. Recently, one of the lake's wetland areas, located north and west of the Salt Lake International Airport, went up for sale. We wanted to purchase it and turn it into a waterfowl management area but did not have enough funding on hand for the purchase.

**Solution:** In early 2023, the Utah Legislature allocated \$6 million for the purchase of the 658-acre wetland area. We were grateful for the funding and worked to secure the remaining amount needed to make the purchase. In September 2023, we completed the purchase and acquired the property.

**Outcome:** After we make some access and habitat improvements to the property, it will open to the public as the state's newest waterfowl management area. We anticipate that it should be ready and open by fall of 2024. We are looking forward to carefully managing this new WMA, providing more public access to hunters, and conserving yet another critical wetland area near the Great Salt Lake.

