



Utah Department of
Natural Resources

Annual 20
Report 26



Securing Utah's Future Through Responsible Stewardship

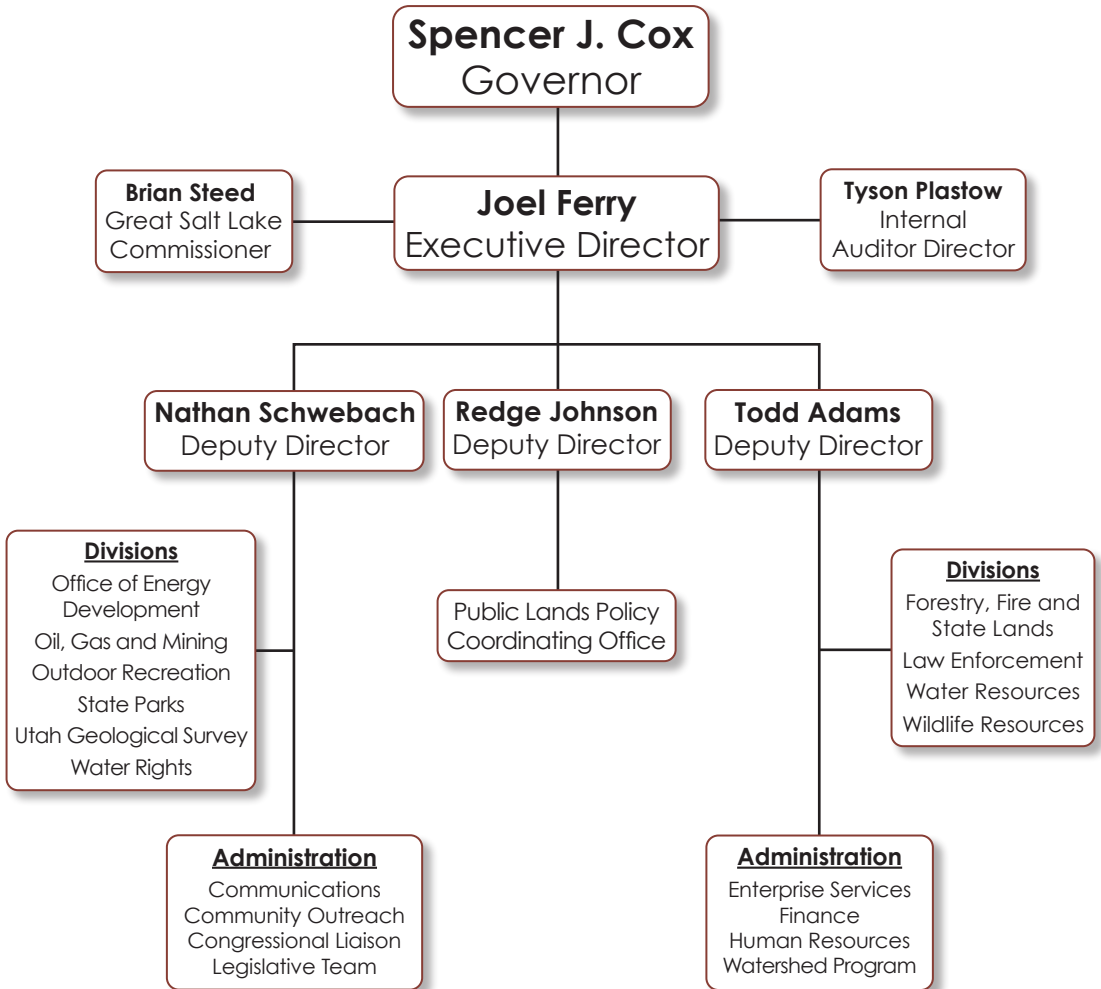
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Front cover: *Paddle boarding on the Colorado River, which is also a key source of municipal water for the Wasatch Front and the rapidly growing Southwestern region of the state.*

Back cover: *The mighty Colorado River provides water to 40 million people in the U.S. and Mexico.*

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



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Utah's Energy Resources Web Experience

[energy.utah.gov/homepage/about/
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Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner

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DEPARTMENT UPDATE



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*



Executive Director's Commitment

As we reflect on the past year, I am immensely proud of the work we have accomplished at the Department of Natural Resources. This past fiscal year was defined by our unwavering commitment to protecting and wisely managing Utah's invaluable natural resources for the benefit of all who call this state home.

A top priority this year has been our continued focus on water management. We have made significant strides in implementing solutions to address Utah's ongoing water challenges, particularly with Great Salt Lake. Through initiatives like the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan, we have taken a collaborative, data-driven approach to understanding and addressing water supply and demand. We continually refine how we measure, manage and account for water as it moves through our system, ensuring both current needs and future demands are met. Efforts in secondary water metering, conservation education and agricultural optimization have laid a strong foundation for a resilient future.

Beyond water, we have strengthened Utah's energy security. In the 2025 legislative session, we championed an "any-of-the-above" energy strategy, advancing geothermal, nuclear and other next-generation technologies. Our scientists are surveying the state's energy resources, critical minerals, groundwater, wetlands and geologic hazards, positioning Utah as a leader in innovation.

Our stewardship extends to lands, wildlife and recreation. Crews restored thousands of acres of burned terrain, protected migration corridors and enhanced state parks to improve outdoor opportunities. We defended access to public lands under principles of multiple-use and sustained yield, and awarded over \$24 million to projects across the state, improving trails, parks, water access and safety. This fire year was among the busiest since 2021, with eight large fires, and our fire staff worked tirelessly to protect homes and communities. We also unified four natural resources law enforcement sections into the new Utah Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division.

Looking ahead, we remain guided by stewardship, innovation and collaboration to ensure a prosperous future for all Utahns.

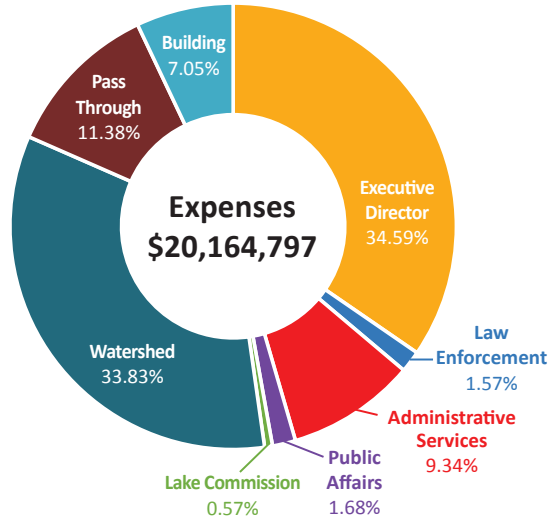
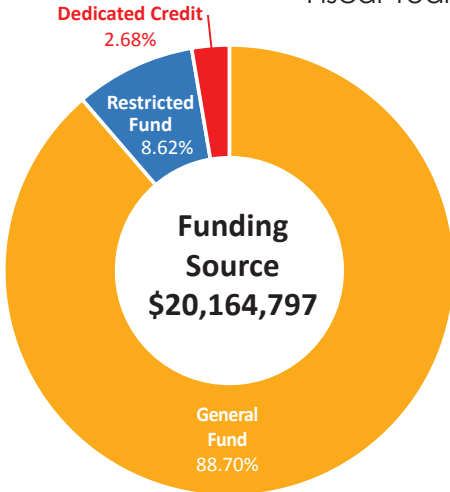


Joel Ferry
DNR Executive Director



Department Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Department Case Study

WRI Project Improves Mule Deer Winter Range and Reduces Risk of Wildfire

Problem – Expanding stands of pinyon pine and juniper trees into sagebrush winter ranges reduces the quality and quantity of forage available for mule deer and increases the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Solution – Targeted reduction of pinyon pine and juniper trees using the lop and scatter method.

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 Parowan Front area located in Iron County. The Parowan Front Maple Hollow Lop and Scatter WRI project is the latest effort to enhance winter range for mule deer and reduce hazardous fuels near Parowan Utah. The Parowan Front Maple Hollow project area is dominated by stands of pinyon and juniper trees with a high percentage of young trees encroaching into areas of remaining stands of sagebrush, bitterbrush, cliffrose, and other shrubs causing a downward trend in herbaceous cover. In addition, Mule deer winter range in this area is constrained by the I-15 corridor which has severed access to traditional wintering areas on the west side of the freeway. As pinyon pine and juniper stands increase and close canopy, the area becomes more likely to be lost to catastrophic wildfire. To reduce this downward trend, several prior projects were completed in this area using masticators (machine mobile tree mulching) to reduce pinyon pine and juniper trees and expand wintering habitat. This project employed the use of the lop and scatter treatment method (hand thinning with chainsaws) to access the higher elevation benches that were not accessible to masticators.

Looking Ahead to FY 2026-2027

Active management of resources like watersheds, wildlife, water, minerals, oil and gas allows the state to forecast challenges, solve complex challenges and anticipate and meet future needs. Here are some of the focus areas for the upcoming year:

- **The Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands** continues to address forest health issues, wildfire risk and issues that face our state's sovereign lands.
- **The Division of Law Enforcement** is committed to fostering partnerships with County Sheriffs, land management agencies and local communities. These relationships are crucial for safeguarding Utah's natural resources.
- **The Office of Energy Development** is building resilient energy ecosystems and advancing critical mineral development to secure a reliable, affordable, clean and secure energy future for the West.
- **The Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner** is developing a long-term strategy for the lake's sustainability by prioritizing data, strategic water management and collaboration with all stakeholders – from farmers and industry leaders to environmental advocates.
- **The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining** will continue to promote responsible development, ensure compliance, and support Utah's economy.
- **The Division of Outdoor Recreation** will continue to work to ensure every Utahn can live a healthy and active lifestyle through outdoor recreation and access to natural space.
- **The Division of State Parks** will continue expanding and improving infrastructure to meet growing demand. We remain focused on creating safe, enjoyable experiences and well-maintained facilities for exploring our parks.
- **The Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office** is committed to building relationships, using the tools at our disposal to ensure consistency with state and local planning documents, and protecting access to our public lands.
- **The Utah Geological Survey** will continue to study, disseminate and promote information about Utah's geologic resources, energy and minerals, groundwater, wetlands, paleontology and geologic hazards, as well as the unique geologic features that attract people to our state.
- **The Division of Water Resources** is continually monitoring drought conditions and impacts on the water supply and looking for ways to stretch this finite resource. Continued conservation, planning and funding opportunities are needed across all sectors to protect our quality of life and provide water security for future generations.
- **The Division of Water Rights** will continue to oversee the measurement, appropriation, apportionment and distribution of Utah's water resources while improving operations, increasing efficiency, and strengthening the Water Right Network through better data and greater transparency.
- **The Division of Wildlife Resources** continues to meet with partners and constituents to identify strategies for increasing the state's deer population. The division is also working with partners to implement Utah's updated Wildlife Action Plan, which prioritizes species conservation and habitat improvement to prevent federal listings.

DIVISION UPDATES



FORESTRY, FIRE & STATE LANDS



LAW ENFORCEMENT



OIL, GAS & MINING



STATE PARKS



RECREATION



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WATER RESOURCES



WATER RIGHTS



WILDLIFE RESOURCES



UTAH OFFICE OF ENERGY DEVELOPMENT



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

As we memorialize the successes of another year, we reflect on the results tied to our strategic planning, proactive management practices and partnerships we have cultivated across the state. Much of the work we do is successful because of the people we work with, the partnerships we have built and the dedication of our staff. The support we receive from leadership and local, state and federal partners set us up for success at every level.

The management and preservation of state sovereign lands remains a primary focus of the division, with unique challenges facing these natural resources. Work on Great Salt Lake continues despite the resurgence of drought conditions. Over the last year, the division has entered into voluntary agreements with almost every mineral company on the lake. This has allowed us to balance both industry and conservation as we move forward with work on the lake. The team continues to focus on battling invasive species, restoring native vegetation and enhancing wetlands on our sovereign land resources.

Even amid shifting federal priorities and uncertainties around program funding, our forestry and fire teams pressed forward, strengthening Utah's forests, building resilience and seeking new opportunities to meet challenges head-on. Our forest products program is focused on finding innovative uses for wood and its byproducts from fuels projects that turn low-quality timber into merchantable products, which reduces waste while creating value.

2025 brought eight large wildfires over 1,000 acres, making it one of the busiest fire years since 2021. Utah's fire crews rose to the challenge, safeguarding homes, families and communities. The division embraces emerging technologies to stay at the forefront of wildfire detection and safe and effective response. We continue advancing proactive, strategic and targeted approaches to fuels work statewide, while building both capacity and efficiency. The division prioritizes collaboration across its three programs to expand work on the landscape and strengthen long-term resiliency.

Our work directly benefits Utahns, from protecting resources for wildfire suppression to ensuring lands remain places of enjoyment. Leading such a passionate, service-driven team is a true honor.

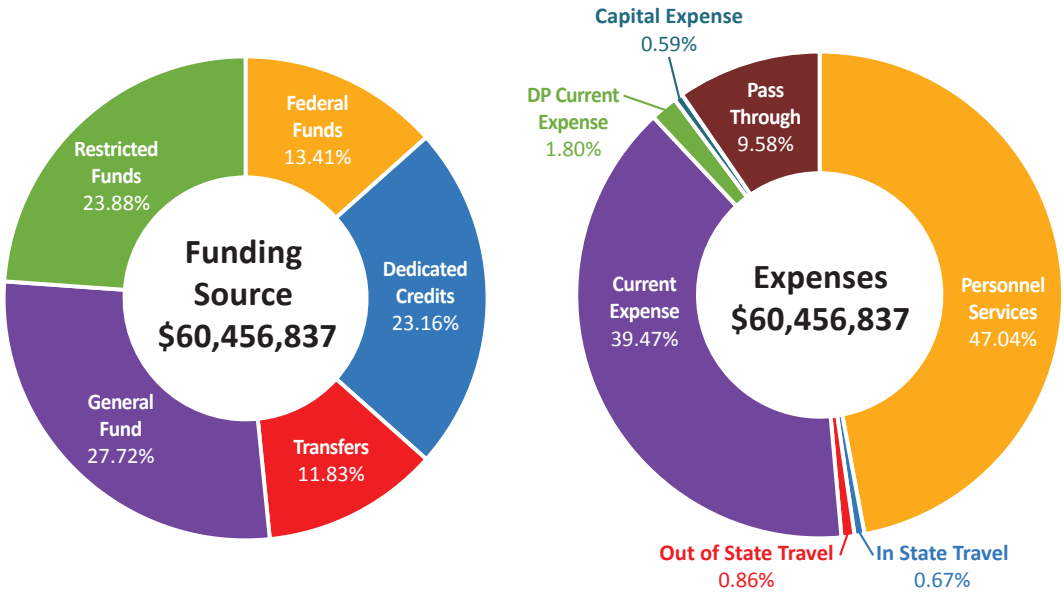


Jamie Barnes
Director/State Forester



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(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.

Sovereign Lands – Administer 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

Increasing Forest Management in Utah in an Era of Diminished Forest Products Capacity

Problem – Declining state-wide forest health, sustained drought and high temperatures require a renewed emphasis on forest management and fuels reduction work to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire. A lack of capacity in the forest products industry sector makes that work more expensive, less likely to happen and forces reliance on piling and burning residual material.

Solution – Partnering with our forest products partners and the USFS to acquire grant funding to upgrade old technology and expand production of raw materials that align with the needs of local communities, industry partners and forest management objectives.

Outcome – In August 2024, the K&D Forest Products sawmill in Panguitch suffered severe fire damage. This family-owned mill, a major employer in Garfield County with 25 employees, was a vital part of the community and Utah's wood products industry.

State, federal and local partners, including the Governor's Office, FFSL, USFS, PLPCO and Garfield County, convened to aid recovery. Coincidentally, King's Peak Lumber (KPL) of Mountain Grove, MO, was exploring a new sawmill in Panguitch. This coalition helped KPL acquire the K&D site and secure a large USFS Wood Innovation Program grant for rebuilding.

KPL then partnered with Barcco, LLC, a local logging contractor, for a sustainable log supply. Barcco hauls timber from National Forests to KPL's yard, where high-value sawlogs are processed into lumber, and lower-quality logs become firewood at Barcco's site. This arrangement optimizes timber use, supports KPL's expansion, and fosters increased forest management in Utah.

This collaboration exemplifies how public-private partnerships, even without a crisis, can leverage grant opportunities, industry demand, and available timber to create effective, lasting solutions.



Leveraging Technology for Wildfire Management

Problem – As homes and communities move more into the Wildland-Urban Interface, response time and evaluating risk are becoming more important to protect homes and communities.

Solution – FFSL is leveraging current and emerging technologies to increase its wildfire management. These technologies are used to map fire perimeters, identify hotspots, assess wildfire risk and identify new starts. Faster detection could reduce suppression costs, protect more acres, and save communities.

Outcome – FFSL is leveraging current technology to enhance its wildfire management. This focus includes utilizing current and emerging technologies to enhance wildfire detection, managing drone incursions, and modeling fire behavior.

With the growth of AI, FFSL is exploring options to utilize AI-powered cameras that identify smoke plumes early and reduce the response time of firefighting resources. Detecting wildfires in their early stages allows for resources to respond quicker, which in turn limits the amount of burned acreage and dollars spent on suppression.

Drone incursions can put firefighters at risk and ground critical air operations. FFSL has invested in drone detection systems that will allow fire managers the ability to identify unauthorized drone users who violate the temporary flight restrictions. During the Buckley Draw Fire in Utah County, there were 23 drone incursions over two days. Through these measures, the division aims to reduce these incursions and ensure the safety of both aircraft and firefighters.

Faster detection and safer operations mean fewer evacuations, less property loss, and lower risk for firefighters working on the front lines. These efforts directly protect Utah's people, landscapes and communities.

Sovereign Lands Phragmites Treatment

Problem – Invasive species on Utah's sovereign lands pose a threat to wildlife habitat, navigability, and recreation opportunities. Invasive plant species can impact water flow and take over wetlands, which can change the ecology of the lake.

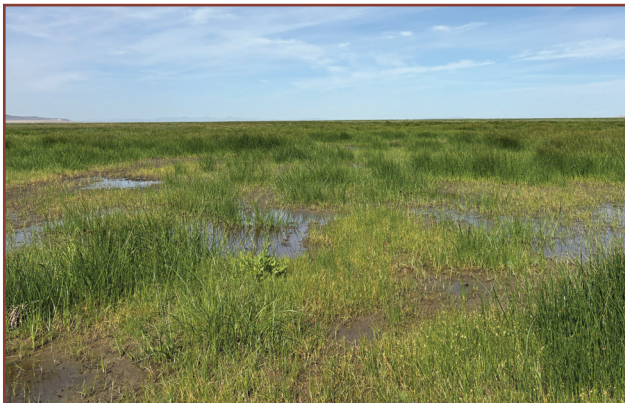
Solution – FFSL continues to address the issue of phragmites around Great Salt Lake, Jordan River, and Utah Lake by collaborating with partners to increase the acres treated around the shoreline of each water body.

Outcome – Through strategic partnerships, the division continues to reduce the impacts of invasive phragmites by targeting the Great Salt Lake, Jordan River and Utah Lake.

In fiscal year 2025, FFSL, along with other government and nongovernmental organizations, continued its efforts to execute effective treatments along Great Salt Lake, Utah Lake, and Jordan River. The division continues to decrease the number of acres of invasive phragmites on and adjacent to State Sovereign Lands. On Utah Lake, the percent reduction in phragmites cover increased from 74% reduction to 77% reduction. The division was able to treat more

acres of Great Salt Lake shoreline this year than it has in any previous years of treatment. This year, FFSL treated 11,425 acres of phragmites around GSL. FFSL also established 11 pilot project sites on the Jordan River.

Through this collaborative work, the division continues to work towards its goal to restore native vegetation and habitat and improve water availability in each of these unique ecosystems. The long-term goal is to reduce the amount of phragmites and allow native plants to populate the wetlands.



Division of Law Enforcement

Mission Statement

Safeguarding Utah's natural resources and people through professional law enforcement and public service.

Director's Commitment

In 2025, the Utah Department of Natural Resources unified four natural resources law enforcement sections into a single division: the Utah Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division (DNRLE). The core mission is to provide law enforcement services for four vital DNR divisions: Forestry, Fire, and State Lands; Outdoor Recreation; State Parks; and Wildlife Resources. Effective coordination with these divisions is important for safeguarding Utah's natural resources. This year, we have made progress in establishing our divisional structure, streamlining administrative processes and enhancing coordination with our local partners.

The shared services section delivers division-wide support, contributing to overall efficiency. All supervisor positions within our ranger sections have been filled, and we are actively staffing field positions. The conservation officer section has been integrated into our division. With our teams united, we are now focused on establishing roles that will improve efficiency and service.

This new organizational structure is allowing us to streamline administrative processes. Our field officers can focus their energy and expertise on responding to daily natural resource law enforcement activities, while our support staff handles administrative tasks. These essential functions include policies, procedures, training and recruitment. These efficiencies have improved internal operations and created opportunities for enhancing coordination with local partners.

Partnerships with local partners are vital to our daily success in natural resource law enforcement. We have dedicated the past year to coordinating with every Sheriff's Office, ensuring a clear understanding of how we can be a valuable partner. Our assistance has extended to the strategic use of equipment and law enforcement support for large-scale operations. This collaborative spirit contributes to our effectiveness.

This is the beginning of our story in safeguarding Utah's natural resources. Our actions will demonstrate our dedication. We will continue to improve, adapt and address the challenges that arise. This year, we are officially the Utah Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division.



Todd Royce
Chief





Note: Division of Law Enforcement was formally established in January 2025, and its budget is reflected in the DNR Administration budget on page 11. DLE will have its own budget in 2026.

Key Services

Forestry, Fire and State Lands, Sovereign Land Enforcement – Administer law enforcement services, patrolling state-owned lakebed and riverbed lands. Our efforts are dedicated to safeguarding these lands and their visitors. We also build and maintain community partnerships and offer advisory services, all focused on promoting responsible use and protecting these valuable resources.

Outdoor Recreation, Boating and Off-Highway Vehicle Enforcement – Enhancing safety for boaters and off-highway vehicle users through education and enforcement. This is achieved by supporting safety education programs, ensuring consistent enforcement and fostering community partnerships. These partnerships include training other law enforcement agencies, administering safety courses for youth OHV operators, and advising local communities on best practices for safe boating and OHV operation.

Enforcement within State Parks – Ensuring a safe experience for visitors enjoying Utah State Parks, from the campers at Sand Hollow State Park to the beachgoers at the turquoise waters near Bear Lake State Park. We are dedicated to protecting both visitors and the natural resources within Utah's State Parks.

Wildlife Resources, Conservation Law Enforcement – Protect Utah's wildlife and habitats, and work to ensure the safety of outdoor enthusiasts across the state. The long-term viability of Utah's wildlife depends on citizens who care passionately about natural resource issues and support law enforcement efforts. We work continually to build and strengthen relationships with the communities and partner organizations they serve.

Case Studies

Sheriff Coordination

Problem – Continued coordination with the 29 local sheriff's offices is crucial to the agency's success. With the creation of the DNRLE, sheriffs have expressed concerns that agency priorities and interagency coordination may be negatively impacted.

Solution – We coordinated meetings with all 29 county sheriffs and clarified legislative updates associated with DNRLE, our continued services to both natural resource law enforcement and interagency assistance, as well as other ways we can partner to help each other ensure public safety efforts within the county are maintained.

Outcome – Following these meetings, we designated a regional lieutenant as a point of contact to establish and enhance coordination and communication with the county sheriff. We also established a framework for ongoing annual meetings in an effort to always improve our collaborative efforts.

Restructuring the Utah Department of Natural Resources Division of Law Enforcement

Problem – January 1, 2025, we officially combined the law enforcement sections from four divisions within the Department of Natural Resources. The unification of DNRLE presents the challenge of uniting the efforts, visions and cultures of approximately 160 sworn and civilian staff from four distinctly different divisions to collectively safeguard Utah's natural resources.

Solution – This unification prompted a realignment of policies, procedures, evidence handling, organizational structure, sectional cross-training, administrative coordination and rank-appropriate tasking of assignments.

Outcome – One year into the operation of the new division, Natural Resource Officers operate under a unified chain of command, with a clear mission of safeguarding Utah's natural resources, consistent policy and evidence procedures, and have begun to create a consistent training process for all law enforcement within DNRLE. These efforts are ongoing.





Enhanced Messaging and Education

Problem – Our ability to protect Utah's natural resources is well-established, but our constituents may lack a full understanding of our capabilities.

Solution – We aim to clearly communicate what the public can expect when interacting with a DNRLE officer, and our proactive messaging accurately reflects those expectations. We are accomplishing this by establishing dedicated policies, procedures and training personnel to create clear and standardized public messaging. This will provide consistent and beneficial educational content for our constituents, helping to establish DNRLE's brand.

Outcome – The communications team, policies and standard operating procedures have been established. Throughout this year, educational messages have been consistently delivered to our constituents. Our educational outreach and law enforcement objectives prioritize:

- **Helmets:** Promoting the importance of helmet use.
- **Life Jackets:** Emphasizing safety through the use of life jackets.
- **State Parks Safety:** Ensuring visitor safety within our park systems.
- **Lawful Take of Wildlife:** Educating on legal practices for harvesting game.
- **Salt Lake Homeless Partnerships:** Collaborating along the Jordan River to support the homeless community.

Daily collaboration occurs with partner divisions as well as federal, state, and local agencies. Updates are provided to our media partners in a timely manner to ensure appropriate information release and as a result, the brand of the Utah DNRLE is gaining recognition within local communities.

Office of Energy Development

Mission Statement

Advancing Utah's energy and mineral economies to create affordable, reliable and sustainable outcomes that provide significant and lasting value to the state.

Director's Commitment

A lot has happened in the last year since I joined the Utah Office of Energy Development (OED) as its director. We've seen Operation Gigawatt move from concept to action. We've signed agreements with leading organizations to advance nuclear energy technologies and develop our future energy workforce, welcomed groundbreaking nuclear energy research projects to the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab (USREL) and established multiple legislatively mandated boards and committees to help guide our energy future.

But Operation Gigawatt is about more than putting extra electrons on the grid. It's about working together to turn challenges into opportunities, using innovation to open new frontiers while protecting our quality of life. Past generations of Utahns built an energy legacy that powered the West for generations. Today, we are honoring and building on that legacy by creating energy ecosystems that will usher in an era of energy superabundance.

OED is leading the West and the nation with a comprehensive energy strategy that values every resource, from traditional to intermittent to emerging. Our already diverse energy mix is expanding with Operation Gigawatt bringing nuclear, geothermal and storage technologies online. Whether it's powering a child's computer for homework or fueling entire industries, our work is focused on meeting the full spectrum of Utah's energy needs.

A future of energy superabundance requires partnerships and innovations. OED continually expands its network of partners across academia, industry, education, local governments and community organizations, and USREL is closing the gap between research and deployment. Cross-disciplinary collaboration accelerates solutions, provides high-quality outcomes and amplifies our impact.

Our resource diversity, cross-sector collaborations and commitment to innovation will create energy ecosystems, securing an energy future that is resilient and abundant. Through research, partnerships and innovation, Operation Gigawatt will secure prosperity for future generations. I can think of no better way to honor our proud energy legacy.



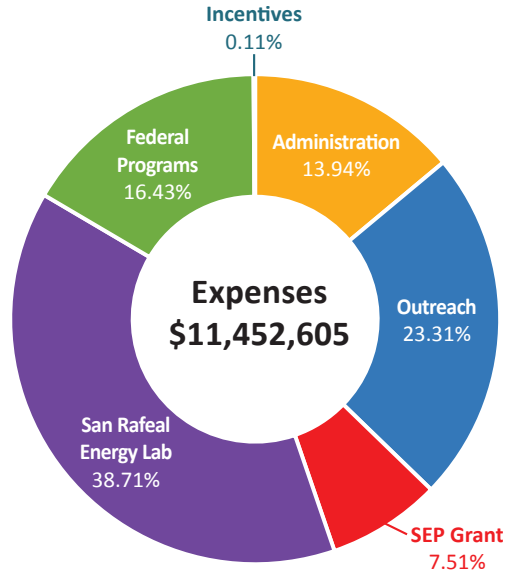
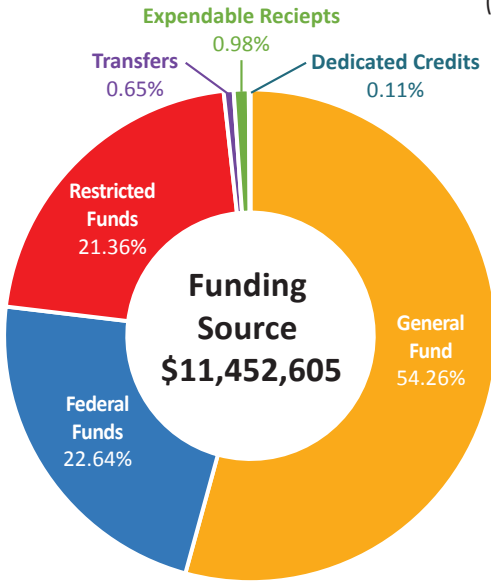
Emy Lesofski
Director/Energy Advisor to the Governor



UTAH OFFICE OF
ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Programs – The U.S. Department of Energy provides funding for most of OED's programs, with support from matching state funds. Programs encompass the entire spectrum of energy and critical mineral development, from public education to energy efficiency and security, to real-world projects that enhance infrastructure and grid resiliency. We also design and maintain energy and minerals curricula for elementary, middle and secondary school teachers, all of which meet state educational standards.

Outreach – We partner with academic and industry stakeholders across various mediums to advance Utah's energy future. Our efforts include assisting in the production of the One Utah Summit, bringing public and private research projects to the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab and implementing educational and training pipelines that strengthen Utah's energy workforce. OED will soon begin a statewide nuclear education and community outreach campaign, adding to our outreach work with local counties, non-government boards and committees and our K-12 STEM fests.

Research – Through the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab, we guide research projects that align with Utah's energy priorities. We also develop advanced energy modeling tools to support long-term planning and maintain an interactive website highlighting Utah's diverse energy resources.

Tax Credits – We award tax credits that spur new energy development. These include the Renewable Energy Systems Tax Credit, High-Cost Infrastructure Tax Credit, Production Tax Credit and Well Recompletion.

Case Studies

Tapping the Heat Beneath Our Feet

Problem – Utah holds vast geothermal potential, but commercialization of this powerful resource is lagging due to perceived investment risks.

Solution – At The Point in Draper, Utah, is an existing geothermal well – once used to heat buildings at the State Prison – that offered an opportunity to demonstrate the resource’s modern potential. OED funded testing and analysis of the well to evaluate the feasibility of district heating/cooling for The Point. This effort was designed to build a proof-of-performance business case to inform and inspire similar geothermal projects statewide.



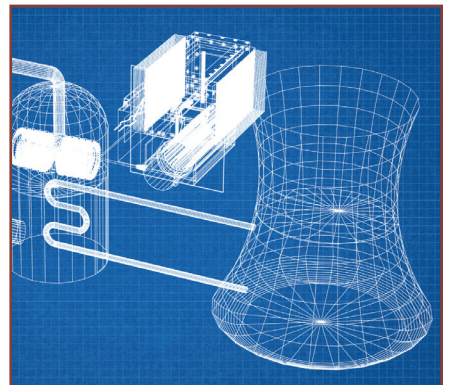
Outcome – Data analysis is currently in progress, but early results indicate significant potential for modern district heating/cooling systems using geothermal. Utah is well-positioned to realize its full geothermal potential, and projects like The Point provide a template for future commercialization efforts.

Nuclear Power In Utah

Problem – Utah and the West are anticipating increased energy demands. Proactively preparing for our energy future requires novel solutions, including new nuclear technologies.

Solution – OED has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with TerraPower and Flagship Companies to explore the siting of sodium reactors in Utah. This public-private partnership will accelerate the deployment of nuclear technologies, securing the state’s access to reliable, dispatchable, adequate, sustainable, secure and clean energy for decades.

Outcome – The MOU outlines seven key outcomes: Site Identification and Evaluation; Regulatory and Policy Review; Stakeholder Engagement; Information Sharing; Land Access and Coordination; Water Availability; and Timeline Alignment. Targeted outcomes in the exploration phase will avoid delays, and preliminary site selection is expected by Q4 2025.



Research to Support State Energy Priorities

Problem – Emerging energy technologies offer greater efficiency, lower resource demands and reduced environmental impacts. However, high costs and investment risks often slow deployment.

Solution – By securing ownership of the San Rafael Energy Lab, OED created a strategic platform for advancing new energy technologies. Since then, OED has built upon this effort through partnerships with Idaho National Laboratory, one of the nation's premier research labs, three private nuclear innovators (Valar Atomics, Natura and NuCube) and established leaders in the nuclear energy space (Hi Tech and Holtec).

Outcome – Expanding OED's research collaborations and efforts with public and private partners derisks investment opportunities through data sharing and research efforts that align with Utah's energy goals. These collaborations strengthen research capacity, accelerate technology development and prepare Utah's workforce to support next-generation energy technologies – ultimately lowering costs and accelerating market adoption.



Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner

Mission Statement

Lead a dynamic and coordinated effort to protect the Great Salt Lake while balancing the competing needs of the ecosystem, economy and communities throughout the watershed.

Director's Commitment

The Great Salt Lake is vital to Utah's identity, ecology and economy, and its health reflects our state's commitment to water stewardship. The lake's recent rise from historic lows is a testament to the collective efforts of our state agencies and the public. This progress is encouraging, but it's not a finish line – it's an invitation to re-double our efforts.

The Great Salt Lake Commissioner's Office was established with a clear mandate: to protect and ensure the health of this irreplaceable resource. Our focus has been on developing a long-term strategy for the lake's sustainability. We've prioritized data, strategic water management and collaboration with all stakeholders – from farmers and industry leaders to environmental advocates.

This year, we will build on this foundation. We will advocate for policies that incentivize conservation and new technologies. We will also work to secure the funding needed for large-scale projects and innovative water infrastructure.

We must protect the economic contributions of the lake and preserve its vital functions that increase our snowpack, enhance our watershed, provide habitat for more than 10 million migratory birds, and support the highest quality of life in the nation. My office and I are committed to working to further Utah's standing as a healthy, beautiful and prosperous state.

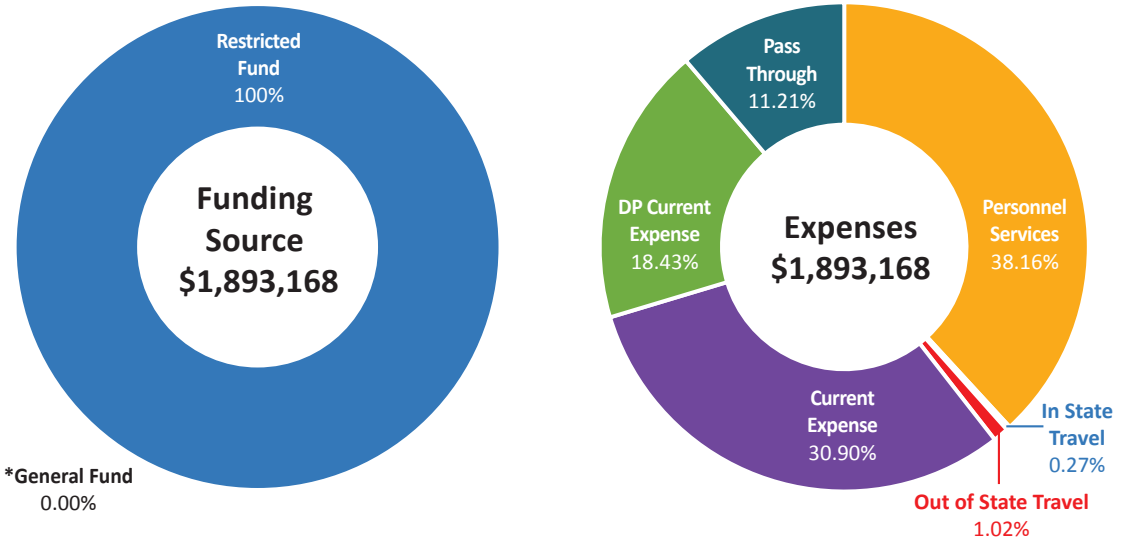


Brian Steed
Commissioner



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Developing and Implementing a Strategic Plan – Responsible for overseeing a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan with the goal of raising the Great Salt Lake to a healthier and sustainable elevation. This plan outlines specific actions, objectives and milestones to guide restoration efforts.

Coordinating Partner Efforts – Acts as a central hub, coordinating the efforts of numerous state and federal agencies, local communities, businesses and other stakeholders to ensure everyone is working together for the benefit of the lake.

Leveraging Science and Data – Works closely with the Great Salt Lake Strike Team, a group of university researchers, to ensure that decisions are based on the best available science and data. This scientific foundation helps inform policy and management practices.

Facilitating water conservation and delivery – Facilitate efforts to get more water to the lake by working with various water users, from agriculture to industry and municipalities, to promote conservation and create mechanisms, such as water leasing, to dedicate conserved water to the lake.

Securing funding and partnerships – Actively seek and manage funding from state, federal and private sources to support projects that benefit the lake. Develop partnerships to implement water conservation projects, restore wetlands and protect wildlife habitat.

Case Studies

Water Delivery Program

Problem – Low lake levels have highlighted the need for improvements and enhancements of the lake's wetlands, habitats and ecosystems, as well as the need for durable solutions to address water infrastructure and delivery shortfalls.

Solution – The Bureau of Reclamation, in a landmark agreement with the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner and the Department of Natural Resources, committed \$50 million to address problems caused by drought. As a result, the Commissioner's Office has been working to make this funding available for voluntary water transactions, system conservation projects, and ecosystem and habitat projects that yield a measurable benefit to the lake.

Outcome – The Commissioner's Office created and implemented the Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program. This five-year program, which opened its first round of funding in July of 2025, provides groups working on lake-related issues an opportunity to secure funding for voluntary water transactions, system conservation projects, and/or ecosystem and habitat projects. Projects are selected through a competitive grant review process, in coordination with experts from partner agencies and subject matter experts, to ensure that selected projects yield the greatest possible benefit.

Water Inflow Study

Problem – A better understanding of historical surface water flows is needed to better comprehend how the waters of Great Salt Lake have reached record lows.

Solution – Researchers at Utah State University have initiated a study to quantify water inflows to the lake, supported by the coordinated funding provided by the Commissioner's Office and the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. Together, these agencies have committed up to \$200,000 for this significant research effort.



Outcome – Through this research, the state of Utah and the Commissioner's Office will have better data to inform decisions that make impactful improvements that help restore the lake to healthier levels.

Conservation and Leasing Efforts with the Water Districts

Problem – Declining lake levels pose a serious threat to the long-term health of Great Salt Lake and Utah's most populated areas. Exposed lakebed introduces dust into surrounding population centers, raising the possibility of negative health effects, decreased quality of life and lowering home values. Concerns over federal intervention in the lake's management, should a native species be listed as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act, also make action imperative.

Solution – To reverse the lake's decline, water must be conserved, dedicated and delivered to the lake. The Commissioner's Office is actively seeking water rights holders interested in engaging in long- or short-term lease arrangements. Through these agreements, water users are paid to forgo their water use and instead dedicate some or all of their water to the lake. Rights holders are paid a market rate, offsetting any costs or lost revenue resulting from their decreased water use.

Outcome – The Commissioner's Office has approximately 3,500 acre-feet of water under contract with rights holders. This amount includes agricultural, and municipal and industrial water. Change applications for these lease agreements are still pending with the State Engineer. While this amount represents a small portion of the total water needed to bring the lake to healthier levels, it is an important first step in securing new water.



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

The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining is committed to the responsible development of Utah's natural resources, balancing economic growth with sustainable energy development through careful stewardship. OGM enables compliance with operators through education, hands-on support and appropriate enforcement when necessary. In doing this, we protect the state's future and ensure resources are developed responsibly for generations to come.

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in enhancing our customer service to the oil, gas and mining industry, strengthening cooperation with state and federal partners, and modernizing practices to improve the response time of both the board and the division. In oil and gas, we are updating bonding requirements to protect the people of Utah while supporting industry growth. These measures strengthen operator accountability, support growth and provide better transparency for both the operators and taxpayers.

In minerals, we continue to support Utah's growing role in critical mineral development, which is vital for national security and advanced manufacturing. We are promoting responsible exploration and permitting while launching a new initiative to strengthen collaboration with state and federal partners. These partnerships will improve communication, streamline procedures, reduce permitting times, and provide applicants with more predictable and transparent results, ultimately improving customer service and efficiency.

We remain committed to fostering trust and innovation through investments in data transparency, improved communication and robust partnerships with industry, government agencies, local governments and communities. Internally, we are focusing on staff development, process improvements and technology upgrades that allow us to deliver services more effectively and respond quickly to emerging needs.

With the growing demand for domestic energy and minerals, our mission is more vital than ever. We proudly serve Utah by fostering responsible resource development that benefits communities, protects the environment and strengthens the state's future.

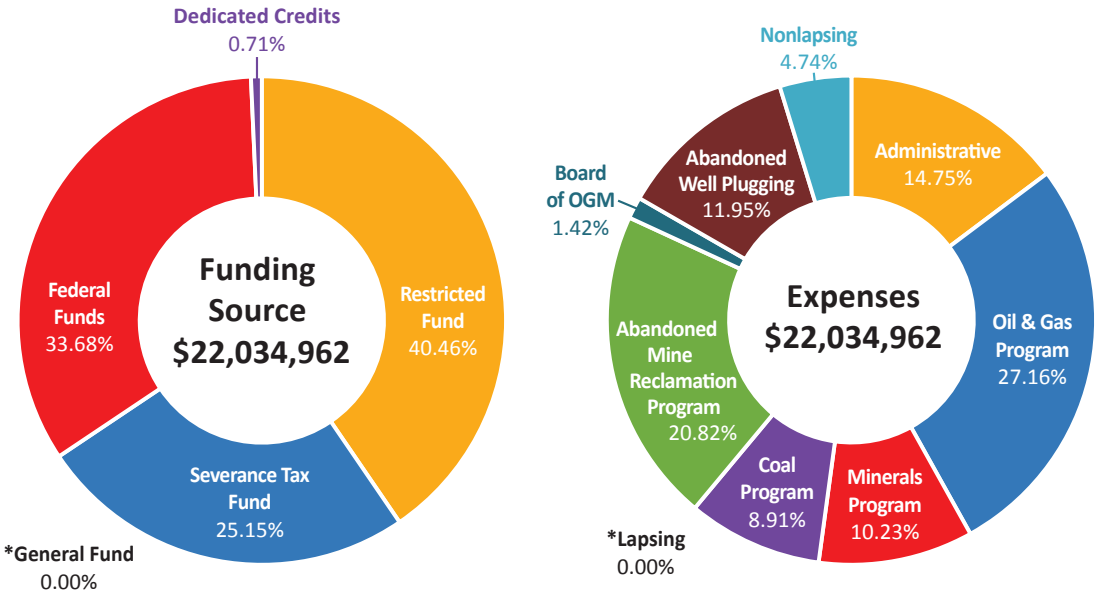


Mick Thomas
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(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. This database is a work in progress, and additional features are planned for this coming year.

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

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

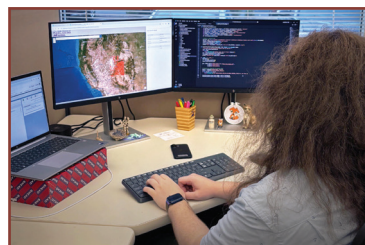
Case Studies

Technology Upgrade

Problem – In 2024, the Oil and Gas Program database and related applications were using outdated technology that would soon lose support. They were also scattered across different systems and applications, requiring integration for improved efficiency.

Solution – OGM received legislative funding for digital transformation in FY 2026, along with annual funds for maintenance and licenses. These funds continue to be used to migrate databases and applications to Salesforce, meeting DTS requirements and enhancing workflow access both in-office and remotely.

Outcome – Completing the migration will reduce maintenance costs, enhance security and create a flexible, scalable environment that supports the division's programs and the Board of Oil, Gas and Mining. This will enable quicker and more reliable access to essential data for all stakeholders, including the databases and licenses supporting four programs and the board.



Kenilworth Coal Mine Fire Emergency

Problem – Since 2021, a smoldering underground fire in the abandoned Kenilworth coal mine has produced minimal surface signs. In August 2024, a subsidence fissure opened, releasing heavy smoke near the Kenilworth and Helper communities, which significantly raised health concerns and reduced visibility in the area.

Solution – In late November 2024, the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program declared an emergency. Contractors were airdropped in by helicopter to access remote ventilation portals. Crews systematically sealed seven identified ventilation shafts and other openings with fire-resistant expanding foam to cut off the oxygen supply feeding the fire.

Outcome – By mid-December 2024, sealing operations reduced visible smoke emissions, significantly lowering air quality risks and public concerns. Although the underground fire still burns, the emergency threat to residents has been alleviated, with ongoing monitoring continuing. The total project cost was roughly \$1 million and was funded with federal money.



Minerals Improvement Project

Problem – Minerals Program staff faced challenges due to heavy workloads and staffing limitations in response to growing industry demands. All team members put in a lot of effort, but many felt burned out; however, there was no apparent improvement in timeliness.

Solution – Recognizing that convincing legislators to approve ongoing funding for full-time employees would be challenging without evidence of efficiency efforts with current staff, the division requested a building block to hire an external contractor to perform a mini-audit of the program, identifying effective areas and potential improvements through process adjustments with existing personnel. This initiative began in July 2024 with one-on-one interviews with the entire team.

Outcome – In late September 2024, key team members conducted a Value Stream Mapping session with the consultant. Afterward, they assigned improvement projects to team members with deadlines and scheduled follow-up meetings to ensure accountability. The process changes resulting from the project increased timeliness from 34% to 57%.



Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

Mission Statement

The Division of Outdoor Recreation is committed to ensuring every Utahn can live a healthy and active lifestyle through outdoor recreation and access to natural space.

Director's Commitment

Utah's love for the outdoors continues to grow, and so does our responsibility to keep these places accessible, sustainable and safe for everyone. The Division of Outdoor Recreation is focused on practical, high-impact work that strengthens access and stewardship across the state.

This year, we set a new benchmark for investment. Through the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant, Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Grant and Recreational Trails Program, we awarded more than \$23.2 million to 142 projects in all 29 counties. These projects improve trails, parks, water access and safety so communities can enjoy the outdoors close to home and visitors can experience Utah responsibly.

Our Trails and Planning Program expanded its capacity statewide. Four regional trail crews completed 126 projects and improved more than 500 miles of trail, supported by more than 10,000 crew hours and strong volunteer help. Crews also transition to winter grooming to keep snow trails open. To build local know-how, we launched multi-year trail skills workshops and activated Adopt-the-Outdoors. We also increased planning support through the Outdoor Recreation Planning Assistance program, providing \$1.5 million to help communities design durable, maintainable systems.

The Outdoor Recreation Initiative is closing critical gaps and improving safety on high-use corridors by aligning partners and funding. It is the kind of coordinated approach that turns good plans into great projects on the ground.

Partnerships remain our edge. We work shoulder to shoulder with local governments, federal land managers, nonprofits and volunteers to solve complex recreation challenges and advise on Utah's public lands policy.

Our mission is clear: ensure health, safety, enjoyment and economic benefit through high-quality outdoor recreation for all who live in and visit Utah. We will continue to lead with access, safety and stewardship at the center of everything we do.

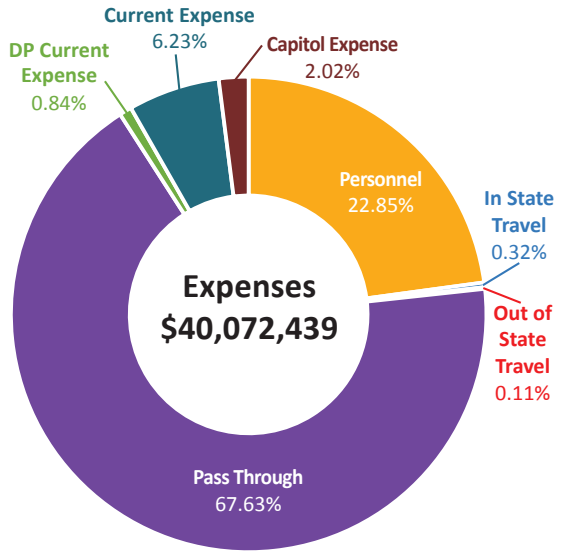
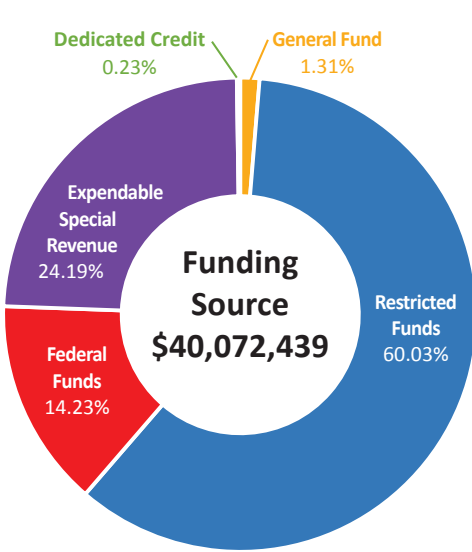


Jason Curry
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Grants Program – Administer the state's recreation grant programs that total more than \$40 million per year. Programs include the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant, Recreation Restoration Infrastructure Grant, Recreational Trails Program Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation & Education Grant, Recreational Trail Program Grant, OHV Recreation Grant, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and others.

Utah's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program – Working with the OHV community and other partnering agencies, the state's OHV Program advocates for recreation users and offers recreational opportunities, safety and education resources for OHV use on over 80,000 miles of trails throughout the state.

Utah's Boating Program – Preserves and maintains high-quality and safe 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. Utah's Boating Program also oversees commercial boating licensing and regulation.

Planning & Trails Program – Provides state leadership to Utah's professional trail-building community through technical training and conferences. The planning arm of the program leads statewide strategic planning efforts to support the Outdoor Recreation Initiative, stewards a GIS recreation asset database and provides technical planning assistance for smaller communities through the Outdoor Recreation Planning Assistance program.

Utah's Statewide Trail Crews – Dedicated to the long-term sustainability of outdoor recreation infrastructure across Utah. The program focuses on maintaining, enhancing, and ensuring the resilience of recreational assets across all of Utah's public lands. The trail crews operate across four regions in Utah – northern, central, southwest and southeast – each with its unique geographical features and community-driven recreational needs.

Case Studies

Outdoor Recreation Initiative closes a critical gap: Colorado River Pathway

Problem – Grand County's iconic stretch of SR-128 following the Colorado River Corridor outside of Moab is home to a world-renowned section of scenic paved trail. It provides an accessible pathway to experience the river corridor and a safe facility for recreationists to connect back to one of Moab's most central trail junctions, where famous trails, including the Whole Enchilada and the Procupine Rim Trail, terminate. Given the constraints within the canyon, a half-mile gap in the paved connector trail has created significant safety concerns, forcing recreators to bike or walk on the road with insufficient shoulder space. This poses considerable safety risks for both recreators and motorists on the high-use scenic byway.

Solution – Utah's Outdoor Recreation Initiative (ORI) – created by the Legislature and overseen by DOR – aligns regional partners and deploys state investment to advance access, sustainability, safety and stewardship of outdoor recreation assets. Through ORI, the BLM Moab Field Office received \$2.5 million to complete the Colorado River Pathway, leveraging \$10 million in matching funds from UDOT's Utah Trails Network program toward a \$15 million total project. The construction will finish the missing segment and create a shared-use path linking Porcupine Rim Trail to Lion's Park and the transportation hub at U.S. 191.



Outcome – In 2024, ORI awarded \$20 million to 31 projects statewide, establishing a coordinated framework for high-impact recreation investments. Completing the Colorado River Pathway will eliminate a long-standing gap, improve safety for drivers and cyclists along SR-128, and expand recreation options for residents, families and visitors. Through these vital connections, the project reduces road conflicts and encourages active transportation, delivering the kind of community benefits the ORI was designed to scale across Utah.

Expanding Outdoor Recreation Access through Record-Breaking Grant Funding

Problem – Utah's national reputation as a premier outdoor recreation destination has fueled increasing demand for improved trails, parks and access. To support this growth, continued investment in sustainable recreation infrastructure is essential.

Solution – The division leverages three complementary grant programs to meet this need: the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG) for broad recreation amenities and infrastructure rehabilitation, Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation (OHVR) Grant for OHV infrastructure and safety, and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for motorized and non-motorized trail projects and education.

Outcome – In 2025, the division awarded a record \$23.2 million across 142 projects in all 29 counties, the largest reach and investment in program history.

Breakdown: UORG \$17.9 million (84 projects), OHVR \$3.3 million (32 projects), RTP \$2 million (26 projects).

Funded work includes trail construction and maintenance, water access, community park improvements, OHV infrastructure and safety initiatives. Since their inception, UORG has invested \$83+ million statewide, and OHVR has funded \$19+ million in OHV projects, strengthening local economies and long-term stewardship while expanding safe access for all Utahns.

Trails and Planning Program is Strengthening Utah's Trails through Access and Stewardship

Problem – Utah's trail network spans over 90,000 miles (80,000 motorized; 10,000 non-motorized). Heavy use, storms and wildfires impact outpace local capacity, creating maintenance backlogs and safety issues across diverse terrain.

Solution – The division established a dedicated trails and planning program and expanded its statewide trail crew from one crew to four regional teams (north, central, southwest, southeast). The trail crews provide tread repair, rock work, drainage, hazard tree removal, site stabilization and more – delivered in partnership with federal land managers. The program also builds long-term capacity through technical trail skills workshops, its new Adopt-the-Outdoors stewardship program, planning support via the revamped Outdoor Recreation Planning Assistance (ORPA) program and support for winter grooming operations that maintain over 1,000 miles of snowmobile trails.

Outcome – In 2024, trail crews completed 126 projects and improved more than 500 miles of trail statewide. Most work occurred on U.S. Forest Service lands, with volunteers contributing 436 hours alongside division crews. The program logged more than 10,000 crew hours and transitions each season to grooming operations to keep snow trails open. Building for the future, the division launched multi-year trail skills workshops, activated Adopt-the-Outdoors and increased planning capacity through ORPA, providing \$1.5 million this year to help communities design durable and maintainable trail systems.

These investments elevate safety and access, reduce maintenance backlogs and empower local partners, ensuring Utah's trails remain resilient, well-loved and ready for year-round adventure.

Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office

Mission Statement

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

Director's Commitment

The Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO) is steadfast in its commitment to preserving Utah's public lands and natural resources. We continue to cultivate relationships with state and federal agencies, tribal governments, local governments and various stakeholders invested in Utah's land and resources. These connections enable us to coordinate public land uses and present a unified stance on management, safeguarding the state's interests and helping build a future for every Utahn. We work to facilitate the celebration of culture, tradition and heritage on public lands. We are committed to helping the state "speak with one voice" across all agencies.

Our active engagement in coordinating land management, planning and policy discussions empowers us to protect state interests from federal actions that could adversely affect Utah or its citizens. Through these efforts, we work to fulfill our vision: to empower all to enjoy and flourish from Utah's public lands, providing Utahns with unique and lasting opportunities for access, economic prosperity and stewardship. We rigorously uphold the state code, promote Utah's policies and code that enhance the enjoyment and stewardship of public lands, and advocate for the goals, objectives and policies in the State and County Resource Management Plans. This ensures the promotion of multiple-use, sustained yield and exemplary stewardship on public lands, and enables better coordination, collaboration, consultation and consistency across jurisdictions.

The federal government controls nearly 70% of Utah. PLPCO is dedicated to defending access to and the use of our public lands in accordance with the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield. As the director of PLPCO, my team and I are dedicated to leveraging every available tool—including legal validation of rights-of-way and active engagement in Federal Travel Management Plan revisions—to coordinate, promote and implement Utah's public land priorities. We remain unwavering in our goal of enhancing Utah's stewardship of our public lands and natural resources to benefit present and future generations.

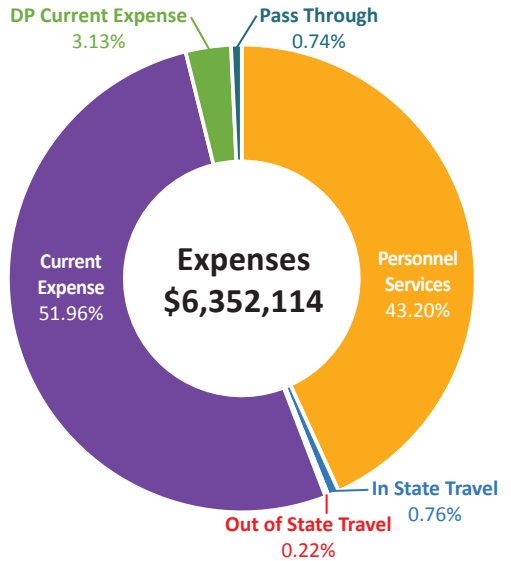
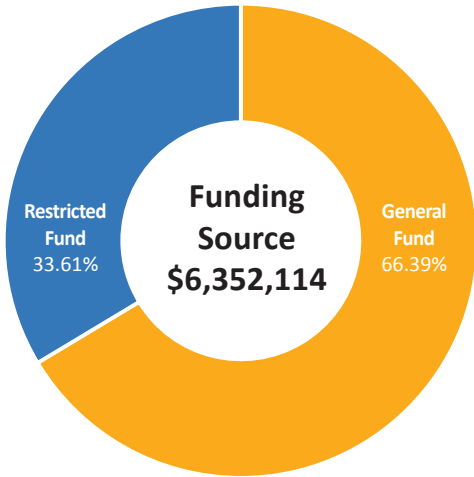


Redge Johnson
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

R.S. 2477 – Revised Statute 2477 is a federal law that authorized the construction of roads across federally managed public lands. PLPCO and the Office of the Attorney General are working to force the federal government to recognize the state and counties as owners of these R.S. 2477 rights-of-way.

Resource Development Coordinating Committee (RDCC) – The RDCC reviews and coordinates technical and policy actions that may affect the state’s physical resources.

Resource Management Planning – The state and each of its counties have adopted resource management plans to enhance coordination and consistency.

Public Lands Education – PLPCO seeks to inform and involve the public about public lands issues.

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

Litigation – The Public Lands Section of the Office of the Attorney General is housed within PLPCO and manages more than 70 public lands lawsuits.

Governor’s Consistency Review – Federal law grants the governor a 60-day Governor’s Consistency Review opportunity to identify inconsistencies in BLM Land Use Plans. PLPCO coordinates and drafts these reviews for the governor.

Case Studies

Protecting Access to Public Lands

Problem – Section 701 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) preserved all R.S. 2477 rights-of-way that existed at the time FLPMA was passed in October 1976. Today, the state and counties rely on R.S. 2477 to establish ownership and management authority over 12,326 road rights-of-way across BLM lands. The federal government refuses to recognize these rights.

Solution – The Utah Attorney General's Office and PLPCO are actively addressing these rights-of-way through litigation, preserving witness testimony, creating a virtual platform for remote road assessments and extensive data collection.



Outcome – Ongoing litigation has resulted in several key rulings. In August and September 2024, and July 2025, the court confirmed that the state holds vested property rights in specific R.S. 2477 claims. These rights include the authority to manage, sign, regulate, police and conduct search and rescue operations on the roads. Additionally, in August 2025, a decision was issued stating that the federal government failed to provide evidence of its exclusive possession and control over any of the R.S. 2477 rights-of-way in question.

Public Lands Identified for Disposal

Problem – Utah faces a significant affordable housing crisis, consistently ranking among the most expensive markets in the nation. The federal government manages 37.4 million acres of land in the state, an area larger than Illinois. However, this land is currently unavailable for housing, depriving Utah communities of the needed land and inhibiting growth.

Solution – PLPCO collaborates with federal land management agencies to identify and prioritize orphaned public land parcels near or within communities for disposal. Our office then coordinates with these agencies to update Resource Management Plans, which allows for the analysis of those parcels for affordable housing and recreational opportunities. Some properties identified for disposal can be leased or transferred to state and local governments for public use through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Outcome – Our office assisted federal legislators and state leaders in creating maps and identifying orphaned federal parcels. In addition, we met with news reporters to quell disinformation presented to the public by special interest groups.

Travel Management Planning

Problem – As a result of a 2017 settlement agreement, the BLM agreed to complete Travel Management Plans (TMPs) for 11 travel management areas in Utah. Whenever a TMP is created, it limits multiple-use and sustained yield activities on public lands. Road closures under the TMPs significantly limit public access to the public lands, restrict access to state trust lands, and limit wildlife and wildfire management efforts. These closures and other related limitations have become a major issue for recreationalists and public safety.

Solution – The state has filed litigation opposing finalized plans. The state argues that the roads closed in the already issued plans should be reconsidered and be consistent with state and county resource management plans.

Outcome – The state is optimistic that litigation and ongoing policy discussions will result in the restoration of access on many of the currently closed roads. The BLM has begun reassessing the Labyrinth Rims and Gemini Bridges decision, and we anticipate the same reassessment for other finalized TMPs. The six remaining TMPs should be completed during the Trump Administration. Learn more at publiclands.utah.gov/tmp.



Utah Division of State Parks

Mission Statement

The Division of State Parks enhances the quality of life of Utahns and visitors by preserving and providing natural, cultural and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

Director's Commitment

From the breathtaking vistas of Dead Horse Point State Park to the cool waters of Bear Lake State Park, Utahns and visitors alike continue to flock to our incredible 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 of our stunning, scenic locations.

State park visitation continues to trend upward, and we are seeing our parks grow and expand alongside this increased interest. Over this past year, we were happy to host grand openings for new state parks, day-use areas, marinas and more — all designed to meet evolving recreational needs.

We continue to see the vital role that state parks play in the well-being of 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, dining and guide services — all have a cumulative impact. This positive effect generates employment opportunities, catalyzes growth and cultivates thriving communities across Utah.

When you purchase an annual pass, campsite or day-use pass for Utah State Parks, you're gaining access to natural landscapes and unforgettable experiences. But did you know that you're also directly contributing to the betterment of these beautiful parks?

The Utah Division of State Parks takes great pride in its self-sufficiency, meaning that every dollar visitors spend accessing these parks goes back into enhancing and operating the Utah State Parks system. This includes maintaining facilities, improving the visitor experience, preserving the park's natural resources, and strengthening our dedicated Utah State Parks team.

We want to express our gratitude to our visitors who conscientiously adhere to responsible recreation practices when visiting these cherished outdoor spaces. We create opportunities for visitors to enjoy, discover, learn, connect, and be inspired through memorable experiences at Utah's State Parks.

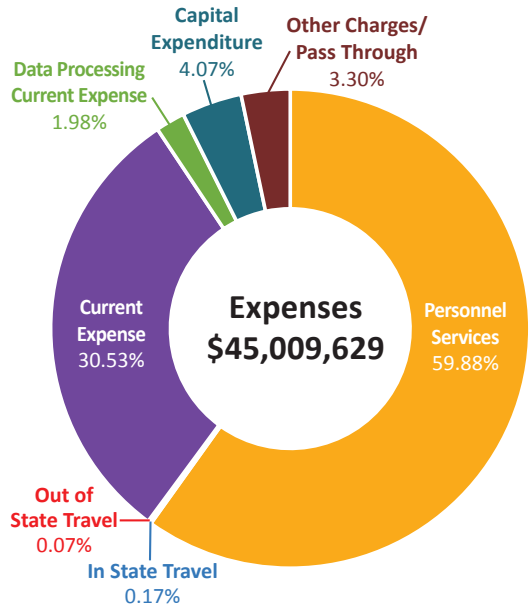
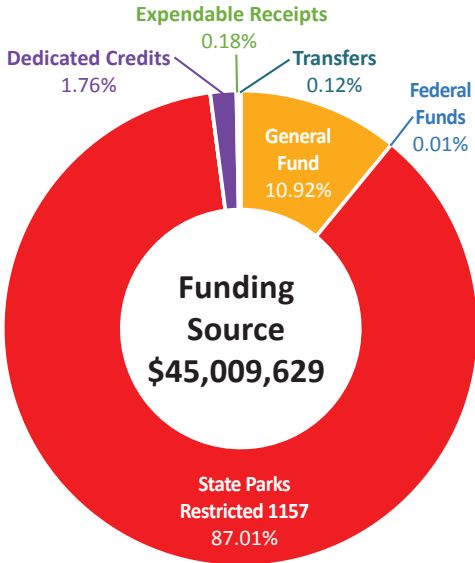


Scott Strong
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

46 State Parks – The Division of State Parks manages Utah's state park system, which encompasses operations, planning, administration, and protection of 46 state parks and museums, as well as multiple state monuments and a handful of undeveloped areas. Services at these parks include day-use, reservoir 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.

Strategic Planning – The division works to develop and enhance facilities that meet the needs and expectations of our guests. Park staff develop short and long-term site strategies to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences while providing new opportunities.

Publications – The division oversees the design and compilation of dozens of publications, including park brochures, signage, merchandise and a statewide field guide. The purpose is to adequately inform and prepare our guests and visitors for the conditions and opportunities for our parks and programs while also providing them with ways to remember their experience when they return home.

Online Customer Service – The division provides an abundance of online information, tools and services. Customers can look up current 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. These services help keep our visitors informed and engaged with our parks before getting on the road.

Case Studies

Park Improvements, Expansion & Visitation

Problem – Utah's 46 state parks have seen continued visitation increases in recent years. Increased visitation adds strain on the available amenities at state parks. Our state parks must continue to invest in existing areas, as well as expand infrastructure to accommodate visitors responsibly.

Solution – In recent years, millions of dollars have been directed to our agency to continue improving and expanding our parks. This money has been directly allocated toward the design and construction of new state parks, park redesigns, and improvements to existing park infrastructure. These improved amenities will help us better meet this increase in demand.

Outcome – We are excited to share that the new and improved Utahraptor State Park has officially opened and is available to visitors to the Moab area. This park includes a visitor center with exhibits highlighting the area's rich history, day-use access to trail systems, and modern campsites with electricity and water hookups. This park serves as a fantastic base camp for those on their next desert exploration. The division also celebrated the grand opening of the improved Red Fleet State Park, which has seen a completely revamped campground, day-use areas, general store, overnight lodging options, and more. This park is a cornerstone for the community and has already begun hosting events. Additional projects underway across the state include campgrounds, marinas, day-use areas, and more.



Utilizing Technology to Improve Park Access

Problem – The Utah State Parks annual day-use pass is a great way for Utahns to access state parks. We have continued our collaboration with Utah universities through the Parkspass program, where we introduced a new and innovative mobile application that allowed visitors to carry their annual pass on their phone. Visitors could also purchase single-day-use passes in advance. However, these visitors are still asked to wait in the same entrance lines as all other park visitors, which can add to extended wait times at parks.

Solution – The Division of State Parks collaborated with Parkspass to implement “fast pass” lanes at Snow Canyon State Park — one of our most popular parks and one where annual passes are used consistently by regular visitors. These lanes included kiosks where visitors could scan their annual pass to gain access to the state park, bypassing the regular entrance gate line and proceeding directly into the park. This solution included one lane for motor vehicles, and another along a trail for those accessing the park on-foot or by bicycle. Both the digital passes and physical card passes can be used.

Outcome – The solution debuted at the end of June 2025, and has been well received by both park visitors and park staff, with thousands of guests having already utilized the new lanes. The division is happy with these results, and are now looking for ways to continue improving this process, with the goal of expanding an improved version of these fast lanes to more parks in the future.



Feedback & Improving the Visitor Experience

Problem – For over a decade now, Utah State Parks has only utilized phone calls, social media and online forms as the main points of contact for collecting visitor feedback. While these avenues are good for initial conversations, answering visitor questions and addressing concerns, they are not as apt to collect feedback on overall experiences in a quantifiable way that allows to show improvement.

Solution – The Division has partnered with Qualtrics and Parkspass to create standardized surveys for our customers to utilize during and after their park visit. These surveys will be available for those purchasing day-use passes online, as well as through QR codes at our visitor centers, general stores, and gift shops.

Outcome – These surveys are currently being rolled out for all of our park, and while they may be new, we are already receiving valuable feedback. We plan to monitor these surveys to identify needs and trends in order to improve the customer experience while also responsibly managing these natural resources. We are also examining how we can continue to expand these surveys in the future.

Utah Geological Survey

Mission Statement

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

Director's Commitment

Our statute directs us to “assist and advise state and local agencies ... collect and distribute reliable information” and “survey the state.” Our scientists cover the state when mapping and surveying energy resources, critical minerals, groundwater, wetlands, the Great Salt Lake and geologic hazards. Over the past year, we have provided objective data to state and local agencies in the pursuit of utilizing Utah's energy and mineral resources, as well as provided critical new information to support Utah's water and Great Salt Lake management. The UGS disseminates data-rich information through accessible publications and interactive websites.

Water remains one of Utah's most pressing issues. The UGS provides essential data to support water managers and policymakers balancing drought, development and agricultural needs. We prepare groundwater basin studies that include estimates of recharge, yields, quality and availability. Our studies of groundwater and wetlands shape insights and management strategies (e.g., the contribution of groundwater inflow and impacts of phragmites on Great Salt Lake). With funding from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, the UGS is conducting an innovative bathymetric lidar survey of Great Salt Lake in a first-of-its-kind effort to create a high-resolution representation of the bed of a hypersaline lake.

The UGS produces geologic maps that support exploration of natural resources, as well as land-use planning and infrastructure development. Geologic hazard mapping remains essential to protecting lives and property – from earthquake-prone areas along the Wasatch Front to post-fire landslide and debris flow risks. UGS paleontologists continue to unearth fossil treasures that astound us and spark our curiosity about the history of life on earth. We are proud to be a foundational part of Utah's newest destination, Utahraptor State Park.

The UGS serves Utah as your “bedrock” of reliable data about Utah's geologic resources. Our work doesn't just answer questions – it anticipates them, equipping the state with the information to make responsible decisions in the face of change.

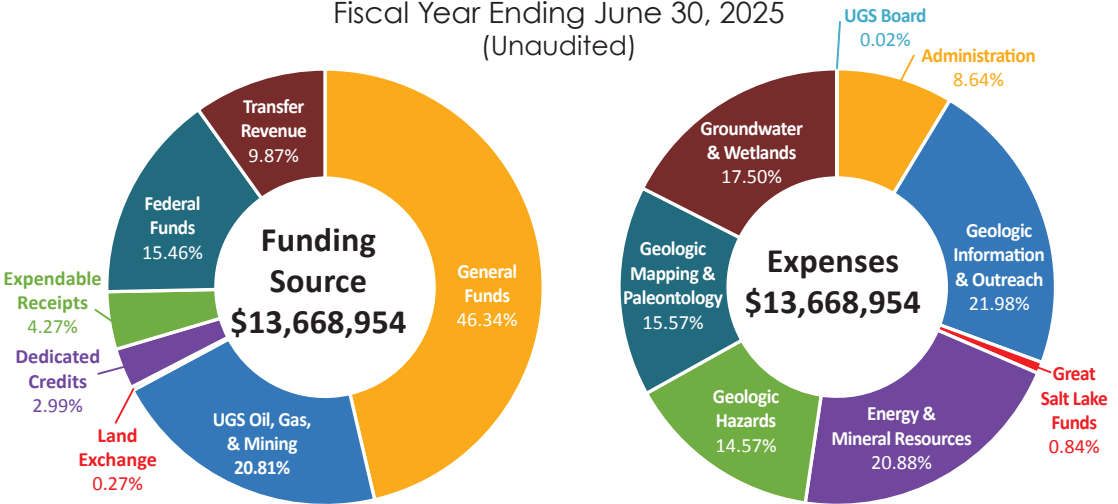


Darlene Batatian
Director/State Geologist



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Energy and Minerals Program – Provides accurate research and data on Utah's energy and mineral resources and communicates this information to public and private stakeholders.

Geologic Mapping – Improves coverage and availability of detailed geologic mapping to meet regional land management, resource exploration, scientific research and other needs.

Geologic-Hazard Assistance – Assists local governments in response to geologic-hazard emergencies, reviews geologic-hazard reports for school districts, investigates geologic hazards and prepares geologic-hazard maps for local governments, consultants and the public.

Groundwater and Wetlands – Assesses and quantifies Utah's wetland and groundwater resources, measures hydrologic processes in watersheds and consumptive use of vegetation, and communicates our data and its implications to the public and partner agencies.

Paleontological Services – Evaluates paleontological sites, excavates critical fossils in danger of destruction and issues paleontological excavation permits.

Data Management Program – Develops, updates and maintains web-based applications to ensure information is timely and readily available to the public and industry.

Utah Core Research Center (UCRC) – The UCRC contains the region's only publicly available and most complete collection of geologic core, cuttings and rock samples from Utah. This collection is invaluable for companies looking to develop Utah's energy and mineral resources and is also widely used by the academic community to gain a deeper understanding of Utah's geologic history.

Public Inquiry – Provides information on Utah geology and geologic issues to governments, industry, educators and the general public.

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

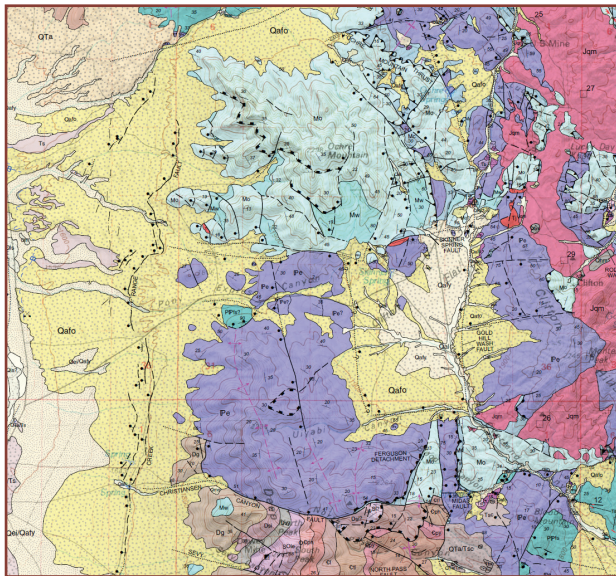
Case Studies

Geologic Maps for Areas with Critical Mineral Resources

Problem – Geologic maps are a vital asset for critical mineral resource appraisal and characterization. Despite this, several prospective areas in Utah's west desert lack modern, high-quality geologic mapping necessary to facilitate resource exploration and assessment.

Solution – The Geologic Mapping Program, in collaboration with the Energy and Minerals group, is currently completing geologic maps that cover parts of western Utah. The first of these new maps was published as a deliverable to the USGS STATEMAP program in June of 2025.

Outcome – The geologic map of the Wildcat Mountain 30' x 60' quadrangle (available at <https://doi.org/10.34191/OFR-773>) covers approximately 500 square miles of west central Utah, including the resource-rich Gold Hill area. This map highlights new geologic interpretations, both at a regional and local scale, that could facilitate critical mineral exploration. The map was produced as part of the Geologic Mapping Program's mission to provide high-quality intermediate-scale geologic maps that cover all of Utah. This map delineates a range of geology relevant to current and future exploration of critical minerals near the Gold Hill area in western Tooele County. It also forms the basis for future mineral assessments in adjoining unexplored areas.

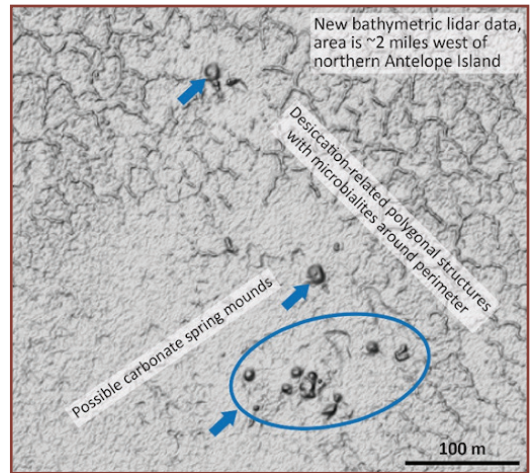


Acquiring Bathymetric Lidar Data at Great Salt Lake

Problem – Great Salt Lake is a large saline lake that hosts a unique natural ecosystem, but it is also important for recreation and mineral extraction. A detailed understanding of the GSL lakebed would be invaluable for researchers studying its ecology, natural resources, and relationship to local geology and geologic hazards. Because the lake elevation has recently reached historic lows, posing threats to the ecosystem and surrounding communities, accurate modeling of lakebed exposure and changing water volumes is critical.

Solution – Similar to terrestrial high-resolution topographic lidar, bathymetric lidar systems use a visible green laser pulse to penetrate the water column, bounce off the floor of the water body, and generate a high-resolution representation of a lake, river or ocean bed. The UGS is applying bathymetric lidar to survey and map the GSL lake bed, deploying this advanced technology for the first time ever in a saline lake environment.

Outcome – High-resolution bathymetric lidar data has been collected within the south arm of GSL in water depths of up to nearly 16 feet. This new data will allow for the calculation of highly accurate bathymetric contours in the near-shore environments, which can be used to better model lakebed exposure areas and changing water volumes. This information will also improve our understanding of the location and number of GSL microbialites, the base of the GSL food web, and the impacts of exposure on these structures.



Groundwater Decline and Management in Pahvant Valley, Utah

Problem – Many areas in Utah are experiencing rapid changes in population, climate, and water and land use that significantly stress groundwater resources. Water managers need impartial accounting and unbiased scientific studies of groundwater to understand how water can be fairly distributed and managed by and for the people of Utah, while mitigating the adverse effects of groundwater pumping.

Solution – The UGS conducted a detailed hydrogeologic investigation to assess recharge, discharge, aquifer characteristics, and water use in Pahvant Valley, one of the most highly stressed aquifer systems in Utah. The study integrated water-level monitoring, aquifer testing, chemical and isotope analyses, satellite-based evapotranspiration estimates, and InSAR subsidence mapping. This data informs conceptual groundwater models, recharge-discharge mapping and water budget calculations. The information was used by the Division of Water Rights to initiate a groundwater management plan with the Pahvant community.

Outcome – Findings confirmed that agricultural pumping is the primary driver of groundwater decline, with evapotranspiration increasing by 23,400 acre-feet from 2000 to 2021. Correlation analysis showed that increased pumping leads to decreased spring flow after a two-year lag. Subsidence of up to 5 inches has been detected, permanently reducing aquifer storage capacity. The study underscores the need for sustainable water management strategies to preserve agricultural productivity and ecological health. The UGS's investigation into the valley's groundwater system characterized the imbalance between extraction and recharge. InSAR analysis linked groundwater declines to up to 5 inches of land subsidence, causing irreversible aquifer compaction. Our study provides critical input for an area-specific groundwater management plan. Such plans aim to maintain safe yield, manage water rights and protect aquifer health through tailored measures, such as pumping restrictions, voluntary agreements, and rigorous monitoring. Public involvement is integral, ensuring that strategies address local needs while safeguarding long-term water availability. Coordinated science-based management is essential to sustaining Pahvant Valley's agricultural productivity, ecological integrity and community water security.

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 have gone from having a time of plentiful water supply, to moving back toward drought conditions. On April 1, our statewide snow water equivalent was at 92% of normal. This represented a 40% decrease from the previous year, with the southern Utah basins being particularly affected. These conditions led to the governor's drought declaration on April 24, 2025 for 17 counties. Declining reservoir levels due to reduced runoff, increased demand and minimal precipitation have further exacerbated our water supply conditions.

Our exceptional team is working on many projects that support our division's mission to plan, conserve, develop and protect Utah's water resources. This year, we have achieved some hallmark successes. This includes meeting some of the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan milestones through the completion of the Existing Funds Study and Relevant Agency plans. Another success includes replacing over 6 million square feet of grass with waterwise landscaping through the statewide landscape conversion incentive program and facilitating the creation of nearly all local watershed councils. Additionally, the Board of Water Resources has contracted all \$265 million in secondary metering grant money with water suppliers and has proudly supported the work on the Sevier Bridge dam safety project, which was recognized as the 2025 National Rehabilitation Project of the Year.

Looking forward, we are excited about efforts already underway, such as completing the State Water Plan, Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan and the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan. Collaboration will be key to delivering these plans, requiring input from a diverse range of stakeholders.

The success of the state and Water Resources only occurs because of our fantastic team. I am grateful for them, their passion and all of their diligent work. We must continue our commitment to collaboration and working transparently with our partner agencies and the water community in this complex world of water that we all share.

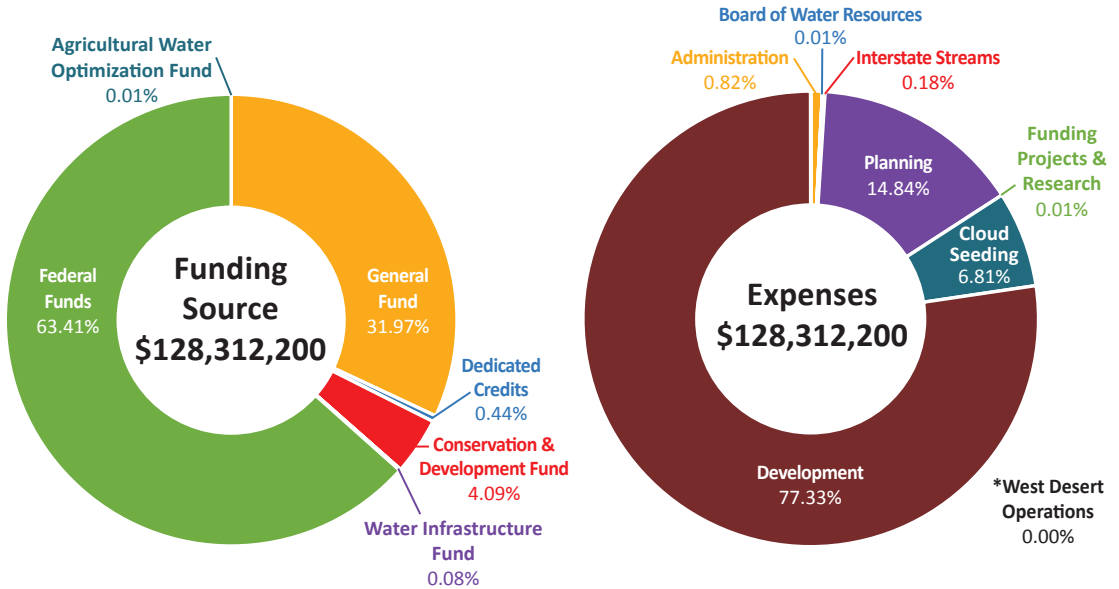


Candice Hasenyager
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Plan – The division plans 50 years into the future to understand our current and long-term water-related needs. This knowledge allows the division to inform decision-makers and create plans such as the State Water Plan, Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan and the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan.

Conserve – The division coordinates with local water agencies, individuals and professional groups to develop and implement water conservation programs to reduce water use across the state. It also partners with several water districts to run Slow the Flow. Additionally, the division offers water-wise education through various resources and publishes the Weekly Lawn Watering Guide.

Develop – The Board of Water Resources administers two revolving state water development and conservation funds that have contributed over \$1.2 billion to help build over 1,600 water projects across the state.

Protect – The division makes a concerted effort to protect critical waterbodies. It achieves this through water enhancement strategies, such as cloud seeding and salinity control, on the Colorado River.

Case Studies

Utah's New Water Infrastructure Fund

Problem – As the state population continues to grow and the existing water infrastructure ages, the cost of maintaining and providing the necessary infrastructure to meet the demands of the state's population is a significant issue.

Solution – In 2024, the Utah Legislature passed HB280. Among other things, this bill established the Water Infrastructure Fund, directed the completion of two studies and created the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan (UWIP).

Outcome – The division has completed the Integration of Existing Funds Study and the Infrastructure Fee Study. The UWIP is on track to be completed by March 1, 2026. The UWIP creates a comprehensive, prioritized water project plan that guides inter-agency funding.



2026 State Water Plan – Increasing Collaboration

Problem – Previous iterations of the state water plan lacked the necessary cooperation from other state agencies and coordination with regional and local entities.

Solution – In 2024, HB280 better defined what a state water plan is and directed state and local entities to collaborate with the division to develop the plan moving forward. The bill also directs the division to update the plan at least every 10 years. The division has an internal goal to update the plan every five years.

Outcome – Division staff is collaborating with partner agencies in drafting the plan content. In addition, staff is presenting to the watershed councils hosting public meetings in each of the 11 basins and engaging with other local entities such as water conservancy districts as they work to complete the plan by Dec. 31, 2026.

Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan

Problem – The Great Salt Lake and all water uses in its basin are facing water supply challenges.

Solution – We will be able to collaboratively explore options to address water supply and demand issues in the basin through the use of a newly developed comprehensive water resource management tool. The process will include a trade-off analysis of a range of possible strategies throughout the basin and the completion of several studies to inform improved water management decisions within the basin.

Outcome – The division is optimistic that this first-ever, basin-wide planning tool will be completed and adopted by water users and the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner by the end of 2027. Today, the division coordinates and develops projects, work, data and models that will shape future water management recommendations. Studies currently underway include lakewide evaporation, groundwater measurement, lakebed dust mitigation strategies, opportunities and costs of agricultural, municipal and industrial water conservation.



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

Since 1897, our office has been the administrative branch trusted to oversee the state's most valuable resource. Through this stewardship, we work to ensure that water is allocated and appropriated fairly and in adherence to state law.

Every day, our team works to keep the process clear and transparent. We make data-centered decisions, balance the needs throughout our communities, negotiate complicated situations and critical agreements, administer the processes and maintain the records that are the foundation of Utah's water management system.

As the State Engineer, I am privileged to steward Utah's water resources through informed, responsible and forward-looking management. In an era where water remains a scarce and vital resource, our work requires constant innovation. We continually refine how we measure, manage and account for water as it moves through our system, ensuring both current needs and future demands are met.

Our approach emphasizes measuring water, automating data collection and reporting, applying hydroinformatics to manage large datasets and integrating information into the Water Right Network geodata system. The development of new tools for records management, measurement, distribution and administrative processes has not only reduced processing times but also strengthened tracking, reporting and overall operational efficiency.

I appreciate the dedication and expertise of our staff. I am grateful for the great collaboration we enjoy with our partner divisions. Finally, I value the support and leadership of the Department of Natural Resources and the Utah State Legislature. We have accomplished great things together, and look forward to what we can accomplish in the year to come.

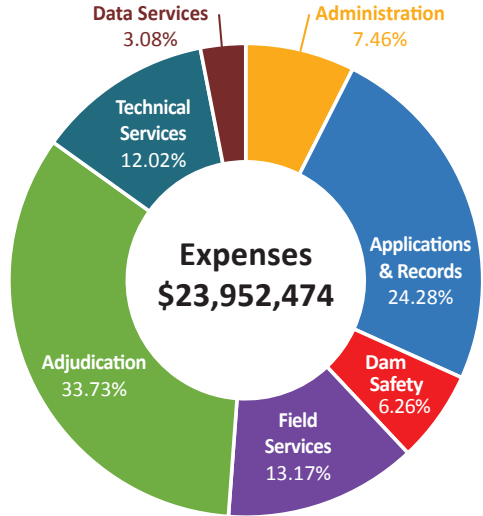
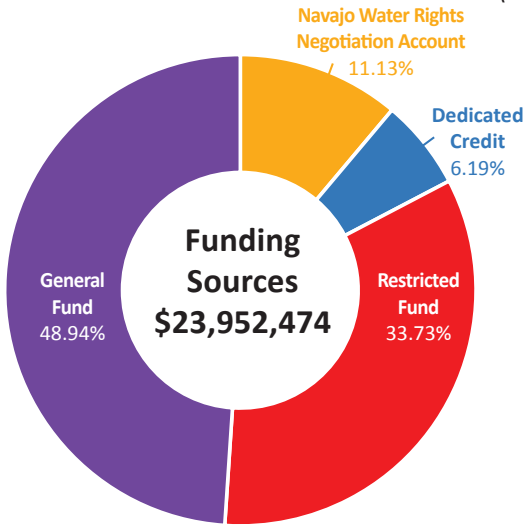


Teresa Wilhelmsen
Director/State Engineer



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Adjudication – WRi prepares and submits proposed determinations of water rights for specific hydrologic areas to the district courts. Following a court-ordered adjudication, WRi presents its findings so the court can issue a final adjudication order – legally establishing and confirming water rights in that area.

Application Processing & Recordkeeping – WRi processes applications and maintains permanent records for all water rights in the state. Employees help the public access water rights information and complete any required applications and forms.

Dam Safety – Division engineers conduct on-site inspections and monitor the operations of public and private dams. They approve new dam construction, consult and approve dam upgrades and provide technical support in the event of an emergency. Inspections and monitoring efforts are based on each dam’s hazard rating for potential loss of life and property.

Data Services – WRi gathers, curates and disseminates critical water data that is necessary to manage the state’s water resources.

Enforcement – Enforcement engineers investigate violations of Utah water law and take appropriate actions to promote compliance.

Geothermal Permitting and Oversight – WRi processes applications and issues permits for the use of Utah’s geothermal resources. The division also inspects geothermal facilities and monitors pressure tests.

Perform Studies & Provide Technical Services – Engineers collect data to evaluate surface water, groundwater and water use throughout the state. They perform studies to determine water availability and suggest management alternatives. They work to improve the integration of data, using advanced technology to automate processes and streamline operations.

Stream Channel Alterations – WRi processes and issues applications and issues permits for altering the banks or beds of natural streams, as explained under the terms of the Utah Code and the general permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Water Distribution & Measurement – Distribution engineering managers work with area water commissioners to make sure water is delivered fairly to those holding water rights. They verify that water-measurement devices are properly installed, maintained and calibrated to ensure accurate distribution.

Well Drilling Regulations and Licensing – WRi regulates water-well drilling and administers statewide training and licensing programs for well drillers.

Case Studies

Panguitch Dam Breach, Response & Rehabilitation

Problem – In early April 2024, a 60-foot-long transverse crack appeared in the upper expansion section of the Panguitch Lake dam. The crack was caused by heavy ice pressure and high water levels. The crack allowed water to pour into the downstream creek, triggering a Level 2 breach risk, prompting road closures, suspending activity in the area and necessitating emergency preparations to ready 1,800 residents downstream for potential evacuations.

Solution – Crews responded quickly by cutting trenches into the ice to relieve pressure and reinforced the area with boulders. This helped to lower the reservoir (at roughly 260 cubic feet per second) and spared the dam from further collapse. For about a week, 24/7 monitoring and regular inspections were implemented.

Outcome – After mitigating the immediate risk, engineers did site assessments, developed rehabilitation plans and worked on designs. The Legislature graciously approved \$5 million to support the restoration project, with construction set to begin before the end of 2025. Completion is expected by fall 2026.



Parowan Valley Groundwater Management Plan

Problem – Over the past 50 years, the Parowan Valley has experienced significant declines in groundwater levels due to water use consistently exceeding the natural rate of aquifer recharge. Since 2012, WRi has been investigating the area to prepare for the official plan.

Solution – Recognizing that this area was a priority, WRi began collecting data, soliciting public comment, and creating and finalizing the plan.



Outcome – WRi adopted the Parowan Valley Groundwater Management Plan in order to reduce actual depletion and to balance the aquifer. The formal plan outlines how water rights will be regulated and distributed according to a formalized priority schedule, utilizing a gradual implementation.

Proposed Determination of Navajo Nation Water Rights and Interlocutory Decree

Problem – For decades, the Navajo Nation's water rights in Utah have remained unsolved. For the Tribe to secure funding, develop infrastructure and plan for future needs, water rights needed to be juridically recognized.

Solution – Because WRi, under the State Engineer, is the administrative agency responsible for quantifying and adjudicating all water rights in Utah, WRi staff set adjudication efforts in motion. Staff gathered records, analyzed hydrologic data, held public meetings and prepared recommendations for the court. WRi also provided the technical and legal framework necessary to ensure that the Navajo Nation's rights would be integrated into Utah's broader water rights system. The division also worked to review historical water use, created models to evaluate needed supply and ensured that all efforts complied with state law and the Navajo Nation/State of Utah Water Settlement Agreement.



Outcome – On Jan. 31, 2025, Judge Torgerson of the 7th District Court signed the final Interlocutory Decree quantifying the Navajo Nation's water rights in Utah. This decree officially recognizes and quantifies the Navajo Nation's reserved water rights in Utah, totaling 81,500 acre-feet annually. A formal ceremony, celebrating completion of the Interlocutory Decree, was held on Feb. 19, 2025. In attendance were Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, leaders of the Navajo Nation, various contributors from DNR and WRi, and representatives from the state and federal governments.

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

In my years at the Division of Wildlife Resources, planning for the future has always been an essential part of our work. Responsibly managing the state's fish and wildlife is more than a job – it's a stewardship we take to heart. We care deeply about the animals we manage and the people we serve.

I see examples of our employees' passion and dedication throughout the agency. Even as the Monroe Canyon Fire was winding down, our habitat-restoration crews were finalizing plans to reseed and restore more than 46,000 acres of burned terrain. And it's become clear that our years of fuels-reduction work on Monroe Mountain helped to limit the growth of the fire.

Every winter, our wildlife teams conduct big game research projects that require extensive planning and hands-on commitment. They are outdoors in all types of weather to learn more about the animals' health, migration and survival. This effort has been ongoing for the past decade and has produced results we can use to protect migration corridors and grow our deer herds.

Our fisheries team recently put together a 30-year plan that accounts for drought, population growth and other changes that might emerge over time. They want the next generation of anglers to enjoy Utah's world-class fishing and are working to manage our fisheries with the future in mind. We also just finished the 2025-2035 Utah Wildlife Action Plan, which provides a solid roadmap for conserving the state's native species and preventing federal listings.

In all of these efforts, we've worked closely with our partners. We value our relationships with conservation groups, agricultural producers, private landowners, universities, other government agencies and all Utahns who care about wildlife. We are listening to each other and forging win-win solutions. I'm grateful and proud to work with so many extraordinary people as we shape a brighter future for the fish and wildlife of Utah.

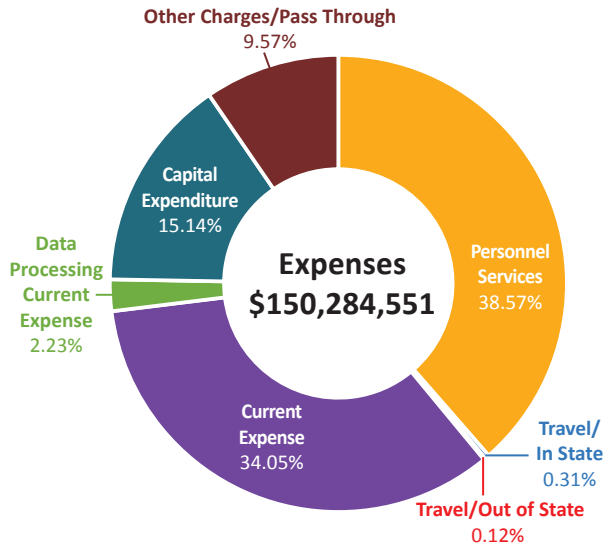
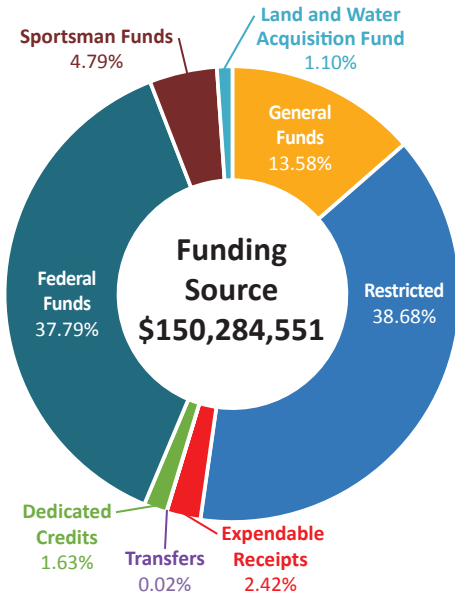


Riley Peck
Director



Financials

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025
(Unaudited)



Key Services

Aquatic Animal Health and Research Center – Monitors the health of Utah’s wild fish populations and those in state 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 wild-life 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 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 to buy hunting and fishing licenses, download regulation guidebooks and find a wealth of information about Utah’s wildlife.

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

Case Studies

Growing More Deer and Increasing Public Engagement in that Effort

Problem – In recent decades, Utah’s deer herds have experienced cycles of growth and decline. The 2024 post-hunting season population estimate was approximately 295,200 deer, which was 73% of the long-term management objective of 404,900 deer. Utah’s hunters, conservation groups and others have expressed concern about seeing fewer deer on the landscape.

Solution – At the end of 2024, after extensive work and collaboration with stakeholders, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources took a new statewide mule deer management plan out to the public and to the Utah Wildlife Board. The primary focus of that plan was how to grow more deer in Utah. The board approved the plan and the division has started using it to manage the state’s deer herds.

Outcome – Although it is still too soon to gauge the extent of the plan’s success – and there are other factors, like drought, that play a role in deer survival – the division has prioritized deer growth and encouraged the public to share their ideas. In July and August of 2025, the division held nine meetings around the state to get Utahns’ ideas and input about growing more deer. Attendance and enthusiasm were high at all of the meetings. The division plans to set up regional working groups to focus on this issue at a local level. In August 2025, the division also released a mule deer dashboard to provide an open, transparent look at all of the issues that affect deer and how the agency is actively helping them. That dashboard and the new Utah Mule Deer Statewide Management Plan are available at wildlife.utah.gov/deer.



Helping Hunters Affected by the Monroe Canyon Fire

Problem – Utah's largest wildfire of 2025, the Monroe Canyon Fire, started in mid-July and had burned over 55,000 acres by Aug. 1 (with only 7% containment). The fire resulted in multiple closures throughout the area, preventing access to more than half of the hunting unit and over two-thirds of its deer and elk habitat. More than 1,200 hunters had permits for the area and were concerned about access, safety and the quality of their hunts, some of which were scheduled to start on Aug. 16.

Solution – The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources called an emergency meeting of the Utah Wildlife Board on Aug. 1. The board members wanted to fully understand the situation and provide options for hunters affected by the Monroe Canyon Fire.

Outcome – Because of the intensity of the wildfire and the scope of the associated closures, the board approved the division's recommended options for hunters. Hunters could choose one of the following options:

- Keep their permits and hunt any open, accessible areas not closed by the wildfire.
- Surrender their permits up to the day before their hunt started to obtain a refund (minus a \$25 handling fee) and the restoration of their bonus/preference points.
- Extend their hunt to the 2026 hunting season.

The division reached out to all of the affected hunters by email and had follow-up conversations with many of them over the phone. Hunters were grateful for the quick action of the division and the board and appreciated the flexibility of the available options.

Using Updated Utah Wildlife Action Plan and Steady Funding to Prevent Federal Listings

Problem – Utah's Wildlife Action Plan is a detailed 10-year plan that identifies native species in need of conservation attention, as well as their habitats. It also pinpoints threats to those species and guides the division and its many conservation partners in addressing those threats. The 2015–2025 plan expired in 2025.

Solution – Division employees worked closely with more than 35 conservation partners to complete an updated Wildlife Action Plan. The newest plan – which will be in effect from 2025 to 2035 – was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in August 2025, and the division began implementing the plan immediately.

Outcome – The updated Wildlife Action Plan provides strong, clear guidance for improving habitats and strengthening Utah's native wildlife populations. It is a strategic tool that will benefit hundreds of species, especially when fully implemented and paired with new Species Protection Account funding from HB 378 (passed by the Utah Legislature in 2025). Together, the updated plan and reliable funding will help reduce and prevent listings under the Endangered Species Act. The updated plan is available online at wildlife.utah.gov/wildlife-action-plan.html.

