



# FROM THE FIELD

*Utah residents' quality of life relies on the active management and protection of diverse natural resources. The **From the Field** newsletter by the Department of Natural Resources provides a snapshot of current department initiatives, developments and trends impacting Utah.*

## Mick Thomas appointed director of the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining



Utah Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Joel Ferry has appointed Richard "Mick" Thomas as the new director of the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining. He began his new position Monday, Jan. 8, and replaces John Baza, who served as the division's director for 18 years and retired after 30 years in the industry. "Mick brings a wealth of technical, regulatory and industry experience that will help shape the future of Utah's energy landscape," Ferry said. "His proactive collaboration with state leaders and stakeholders underscores his commitment to driving positive change."

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## DWR stocks more than 10 million fish throughout Utah in 2023



In an effort to enhance fishing and boost native fish populations, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources stocks a variety of fish species throughout Utah every year, and in 2023, over 10 million fish were stocked into waterbodies across the state. A whopping 10,634,431 fish — totaling a combined 1,171,098

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pounds — were stocked into 604 Utah waterbodies this year. That was a moderate increase over the [8.2 million fish that the DWR stocked last](#) \_\_\_ year.

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## Coal has a bright future in Utah



From the moment the first lump of coal was thrown into a fire by our early ancestors to today's coal-fired power plants, this combustible rock has played a major role in providing us with heat and energy. But in a quickly changing energy landscape, many wonder if coal has a future. Argus Coal Daily sat down with Utah Office of Energy Development (OED) Director Greg Todd and Deputy Director Harry Hansen to talk about coal's future in Utah.

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## DWR, conservation partners relocate bighorn sheep to new nursery facility



The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources recently partnered with Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife and the Utah Wild Sheep Foundation to create a new nursery facility for desert bighorn sheep in Utah in an effort to help grow the species' population in the state. Bighorn sheep were released onto an [initial nursery facility in Duchesne County in 2022](#). In the spring of 2023...

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## Outdoor recreation contributes \$8.1 billion to Utah's economy

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has released economic data for 2022 exhibiting outdoor recreation's powerful and positive economic impact on the U.S. economy. The outdoor recreation economy in Utah grew an impressive 32.8% from 2021 to 2022, according to the BEA Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account. This year's report shows that outdoor recreation creates \$8.1 billion in value-added for Utah, accounts for



3.2% of Utah's GDP and includes 71,677 jobs.

the largest recorded measure for Utah since the BEA started calculating the size of the outdoor recreation economy in 2012.

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## Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan Work Plan comment period now closed



The comment period for the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan Work Plan is now closed. The Work Plan has received 24 comments since the beginning of the comment period on November 15. These contributions have provided the project with diverse perspectives and suggestions. With the excitement generated by comments on the Work Plan, project coordinators are eager to transition into phase 2,

development of a water planning tool that will inform future water management decisions in the Great Salt Lake Basin.

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## The future of geologic mapping in Utah, new tools and techniques



Geologic maps form the basis for a multitude of natural resource-related decisions. The maps and their derivatives define the character and extent of Earth's geologic history, resources, and hazards. As such, geologic maps are essential to discovering, researching, and obtaining the natural resources humans rely on daily. To satisfy the need for this information, the Utah Geological Survey (UGS) has been creating and publishing geologic maps since its inception nearly 75 years ago.

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## Utah Division of State Parks director retires after 31 years



After an illustrious 31-year career with the Utah Division of State Parks, Division Director Jeff Rasmussen has announced his well-deserved retirement. As the Division of State Parks embarks on the search for a new director, Scott Strong, deputy director of business management, will serve as interim director.

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## DNR provides information for new Great Salt Lake Data and Insights Summary



A new summary — published Jan. 10 by the Great Salt Lake Strike Team — synthesizes essential data and insights so decision-makers have the information they need to improve water management, increase water deliveries to the lake, mitigate adverse impacts and recover the lake to a healthy range. Department of Natural Resources employees are pleased to be part of the Strike Team and to provide critical data on an ongoing basis.

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