

April 19, 2021

Meeting Reminder

The next Wetland Working Group meeting will be on April 29 from 1 pm to 3 pm. We have three great talks focusing on Great Basin wetlands. The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom; you can join using this [link](#) and call in at 669-900-6833; Meeting ID: 878 9310 6134; Passcode: 86707473.

Our speakers include:

Danielle Finlayson, wildlife ecology graduate student at BYU, discussing wildlife and water sources in Utah's West Desert.

Brian Tavernia, saline lakes ecologist with the National Audubon Society, speaking about his Great Salt Lake bird count analysis and highlighting trends and relationships between bird counts and Bear River Bay water conditions .

Diane Menuz and Miles McCoy-Sulentic, wetland ecologists with the State of Utah, presenting the results of their recent wetland assessment study in the Great Basin.

Snake Valley 10-Year Monitoring Report

The UGS recently completed Open-File Report 732, [Snake Valley hydrologic monitoring: Ten-year report](#). This report summarizes ten years of hydrologic monitoring data in Snake Valley along the Nevada-Utah border. Wetlands in Snake Valley provide important habitat for least chub, Columbia spotted frog, and several uncommon mollusk species and are threatened by proposed increases in groundwater withdrawal and drought. The report identifies additional analyses that could better link hydrologic conditions with wildlife population parameters and also provides recommendations for the future of the monitoring network.

Three New EPA-Funded Projects for UGS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently awarded three new Wetland Program Development to the UGS. These grants will fund projects to 1) assess montane wetlands, 2) update National Wetlands Inventory data around Utah Lake, and 3) develop a guide to Central Basin wetland plants. These projects will start later this spring and are funded for a three year period. We'll send out periodic updates about these projects once they get underway.

Updated UGS Webpages

As part of an update to the UGS website, the Wetland program recently developed new website material, including foundational information about wetlands, their importance, and an overview of wetland protection and regulation. The [website](#) includes pages on Wetlands in Utah, Wildlife and Plants, Functions and Values, Health and Restoration, and Wetlands on Private Land. We hope the new webpages will make it easier for people to understand the importance of Utah's wetlands and to find wetland reports and applications for further learning.

Great Salt Lake Needs Report

Janice Gardner (Wild Utah Project) and Ashley Kijowski (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources) spoke at the Wetland Working Group meeting last spring about their project interviewing wetland managers around Great Salt Lake. The final report from their work, [Great Salt Lake wetland habitats: A needs report based on interviews with the managers](#), came out in the fall. The report details their findings and recommendations for issues such as communication, Phragmites, and water supply. This report is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in Utah's wetlands.

Permitting Workshop

Wild Utah Project and Trout Unlimited are hosting a webinar on the federal Programmatic General Permit 10 (PGP-10), which is required for projects affecting streams, including low-tech stream restoration projects like installing beaver dam analogues. This workshop will discuss changes in the PGP-10 and lead participants through completing Utah's Joint Stream Alteration Permit Application. Nicole Fresard and Samantha Jones with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers will be presenting and Daren Rasmussen with the Utah Division of Water Rights will be available to answer questions. For more details or to be emailed a calendar invitation, please email janice@wildutahproject.org

NRCS Spring Webinar

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is hosting a free webinar on the Hydrology, Geology, and Biology of Springs. The NRCS's Spring Development Practice Standard criteria includes conducting a site evaluation to evaluate impacts and potential losses associated with spring development projects. This webinar will provide information on the ecological functions of springs and considerations when planning spring development projects. The Webinar is on May 6 at 12 pm Mountain Time; more information is available [online](#).

Wetland Preserve Audio Tours

The Nature Conservancy has developed audio tours for the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve in Layton and the Scott and Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve in Moab. The audio tours are available through the TravelStorys app and allow visitors to hear natural history and other fun facts relevant to specific location in the preserves through a link to a phone's GPS. It is also possible to take the tours remotely. Check out this [link](#) for more information.

In Defense of Undervalued Ecosystems

Having spent much of the last two years focused on field work in the West Desert, I appreciated the article [*All systems are equal: In defense of undervalued ecosystems*](#) by Louis Provencher and others out of The Nature Conservancy office in Nevada. The paper discusses how the idea of “biodiversity hotspots” undervalues widespread, low-biodiversity ecosystems and proposes an alternate “biodiversity potential” concept that could more accurately value these ecosystems. The paper presents a case study on greasewood ecosystems, highlighting their important ecological role and the functional losses that occur with degradation.