2023 September

Hello and happy fall! It was great to see everyone who turned out for the field tour and pub talk yesterday.

I've scheduled the next wetland working group meeting for Tuesday November 14th. The meeting will feature three great speakers presenting on Great Salt Lake research and planning activities. Read below for more details and additional updates and resources about wetlands.

Wetland Group Meeting

Mark your calendars! The next wetland working group meeting will be held November 14th from 10 am to 12 pm at the Utah Core Research Center. This building is located on 240 North Redwood Road behind the main Department of Natural Resources building in Salt Lake City. I will send out additional directions and a link for remote attendance when the meeting gets closer.

The speakers we have lined up include:

- Laura Vernon, Great Salt Lake Basin Planner, Utah Division of Water Resources, talking about the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan
- Janice Gardner, Interim Executive Director and Conservation Ecologist, Sageland Collaborative, talking about the Intermountain West Shorebird Survey
- Meghan Ann Dovick, Director and Instructor, Professional Master of Science and Technology, University of Utah, talking about a research project at The Nature Conservancy's Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve

Integrated Water Planning in the Great Salt Lake Basin

Here is a little more information about the Great Salt Lake Integrated Plan, provided by Laura Vernon.

Attaining long-term water supply resiliency for water users in the Great Salt Lake basin — including the lake — requires a plan. For this reason, the Utah Division of Water Resources is working with federal, state and local partners to complete the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan.
The first-ever water resources plan for the entire Great Salt Lake basin integrates surface and groundwater modeling; existing plans, studies, research, data, models, tools and strategies; and water user collaboration at an unprecedented scale. The plan provides a holistic understanding of current and future water supplies and demands throughout the basin, then identifies and evaluates actions that reduce water supply risks, minimize harm to future generations and preserve ecosystems.

Wetland Mitigation and Permit Data

Becka Downard and I recently published a study on the feasibility of developing a state-run in-lieu-fee (ILF) wetland mitigation program. Such a program would collect Clean Water Act fees when wetlands are impacted and then combine fees together to fund bigger and better wetland mitigation projects. However, there are challenges to running an ILF program in arid states where impacts are less common than in wetter states. The report builds off a study conducted for the Utah Legislature to fulfill requirements under 2022 House Bill 118, taking into account the recent Sackett v. EPA court decision that will likely reduce permitting levels even further. Check out the recent report and public-interest article published in Survey Notes. Wetland and stream permit data analyzed for the report and obtained from the Army Corps of Engineers through Freedom of Information Act requests, is now available from the UGS website. These data are minimally processed with some explanatory information to help users better understand the dataset.

Recent UGS Wetland Mapping Projects

The UGS recently completed two wetland mapping projects. The first, at the Matheson Preserve in Moab, is part of a larger study quantifying the water budget for the Preserve and examining vegetation change over time. UGS wetland ecologist Pete Goodwin mapped out major vegetation and wetland communities across the preserve. The rest of the Matheson study will be published in 2024.The second project provided local governments with updated wetland data along the Wasatch Back. UGS mappers Pete Goodwin, Elisabeth Stimmel, and Grant Mauk mapped wetlands and riparian areas following federal mapping standards and the dataset will become a part of the National Wetlands Inventory.

Volunteer Opportunities with Sageland Collaborative

Sageland Collaborative's Riverscape Restoration season is in full swing. They have 17 volunteer events between now and Halloween and take a lot of pride in the quality and inclusiveness of their volunteer events, and the conservation outcomes of the work. You can view upcoming volunteer days and sign up online. Sageland Collaborative will provide waders and all other essential gear, and no experience or prior training is necessary.

Other Interesting Resources

- Updated version of the Wetland Evaluation Tool allows users to evaluate the timing and duration of seasonal flooding in wetlands and agricultural fields across the West: https://iwjv.org/solution-based-science/wet/
- Publication on nutrient assimilation in impounded wetlands around Great Salt Lake from researchers at Utah State University: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13157-023-01711-5
- Information from the Environmental Protection Agency about the newly amended rule on the definition of the “Waters of the United States”: https://www.epa.gov/wotus/amendments-2023-rule
- Report from the Environmental Law Institute about strategies for states and tribes to protect wetlands that are not federally regulated: https://www.eli.org/research-report/filling-gaps-strategies-statestribes-protection-non-wotus-waters
- New pocket field guide to floating and submerged plants of Utah from researchers at Utah State University: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/2348/
- Resources from the low-tech restoration workshop that was recently held in Utah: https://www.partnersinthesage.com/ut-lowtech-resources
- Report and data dashboard from the EPA’s National Condition Assessment Survey in 2016. Note that wetlands in Utah were surveyed as part of the Xeric and Western Mountains systems: https://wetlandassessment.epa.gov/webreport/

And…something to make you laugh

Thanks to Kevin Wheeler for sharing this with me

Rosemary Mosco (Bird And Moon)
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Ahem, it's called "wetland ecologist"

> **Laura Feinstein** @LauraFFeinstein · 27m
> Next career goal: bog ghost
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