

Hello and happy fall!

I hope this newsletter finds you well, and that you're fully enjoying this record-breaking rain-filled October. I'm excited to share the Wetland Working Group Newsletter in this updated format!

This newsletter is packed with updates regarding the Utah Geological Survey's (UGS) Wetland Program Plan, results from this summer's survey, news from our sister state agencies, and news and announcements from our partners and collaborators across the federal, academic, and non-profit sectors.

Since this newsletter is long, much of it gets clipped. Go ahead and follow the message in the orange box above to access the full newsletter and read it in its optimal formatting.

Enjoy!

Jess Stern

UGS State Wetland Coordinator, jsstern@utah.gov

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Wetland Working Group Updates

Wetland Working Group

In-Person Meeting

Join Online via Google Meet!

The next Wetland Working Group will be held on December 4, 2025. A follow-up email will be sent out soon with directions and a calendar invite. Registration is not necessary, but having a head count will be helpful! If you plan on attending, please be sure to mark Yes on your calendar invite. Please feel free to reach out to me for more information.

Call for Presenters

Would you like to present at the upcoming in-person Wetland Working Group Meeting? We are looking for 3-5 presenters.

Presentations will be capped at 20-25 minutes long and will include questions and discussion. All wetland-related research, case studies, and updates within the Intermountain West / Southwest will be considered.

Email jstern@utah.gov with a title and brief description of your presentation.

Wetland Program Plan Updates

A big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the Wetland Program Plan survey and focus group meetings over the summer. Your input has been invaluable in shaping the Wetland Program Plan and the direction of future UGS wetland research projects.

Focus Groups

- * Three focus groups
- * Over 20 participants
- * Generated creative project ideas and research questions
- * Many of those ideas are in the next Wetland Program Plan

Survey

- * 48 respondents
- * 22% response rate from the Wetland Working Group
- * Open-response answers were coded to identify themes and keywords

Select survey results are downloadable via this [PDF](#).

UGS Updates

UGS wetland ecologists and hydrogeologists have been hard at work this summer and out in the field across much of the state! We have ground-truthed wetlands in the Duchesne basin against our mapping efforts, have spent weeks assessing wetland condition across the Central Basin and Range ecoregion using an in-development wetland monitoring methodology, and have used drones to capture aerial imagery for a model that will map phragmites extent in Farmington Bay Wildlife Management Area.

Survey Notes Articles

The Utah Geological Survey publishes Survey Notes, an informative, non-technical magazine on noteworthy and interesting geologic topics in Utah, and serves as the official UGS newsletter.

Subscribe to receive a free digital or physical copy of Survey Notes:
(<https://forms.gle/y7K8MH8oZxGspCJk9>)

The May 2025 issue of Survey Notes included an article highlighting UGS's work, in collaboration with Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that mapped and modeled vegetation at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge to map phragmites for FFSL models and testing modeling workflows. You can read the Survey Notes article here (<https://geology.utah.gov/map-pub/survey-notes/mapping-and-modeling-phragmites-at-the-bear-river-migratory-bird-refuge/>). Utah Public Radio also covered this work as well as similar mapping efforts, and you can read or listen to that segment here (<https://www.upr.org/utah-news/2025-06-03/mapping-an-invasive-grass-will-help-state-land-managers-restore-wetlands>). Contact Pete Goodwin (pgoodwin@utah.gov) with any questions.

The September 2025 issue of Survey Notes included an article outlining UGS's study on the water budget of the Scott and Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve. To assess how much water flows into and out of the Preserve, UGS calculated a water budget (the sum of hydrologic contributions and losses) using field measurements, remote sensing, and the U.S. Geological Survey Soil-Water Balance Model, version 2. Researchers found that just over 1000 acre-feet of water passes through the Preserve annually. You can read the Survey Notes article here (<https://geology.utah.gov/map-pub/survey-notes/the-hydrogeology-and-ecology-of-the-matheson-wetlands-preserve-a-connected-story/>). Contact Kathryn Ladig (kladig@utah.gov) with any questions.

The Nature Conservancy's Shorelands Preserve Water Budget and Mapping Report

The Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve Water Budget, Stream Monitoring, Vegetation Mapping, and Remote Sensing Analysis (RI-289) by Claire Spangenberg Kellner, Rebecca Molinari, Diane Menuz, Peter Goodwin, and Hugh Hurlow

Contact Claire Spangenberg Kellner (cspangenberg@utah.gov) with any questions.

<https://geology.utah.gov/publication-details/?pub=RI-289>

Published this summer, this report details a project that collected and analyzed hydrologic and vegetation data for the nearly 5,000-acre Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve, an expanse of wetlands, ponds, ditches, and uplands. Data includes surface water flows and groundwater levels, streamflow monitoring, development of an annual water budget, vegetation mapping, and analysis of decadal vegetation trends. This study provides a framework for planning, management, and evaluating restoration efforts considering pressures from invasive phragmites plants and associated high evapotranspiration rates, droughts, and land-use changes in an area adjacent to the Great Salt Lake and the densely populated Wasatch urban corridor.

Utah's Montane Ecoregion Wetlands: Report and StoryMap

Montane Ecoregion Wetland Assessment—Spatial Data, Field Studies, and Multi-Metric Index (RI-291) by Diane Menuz, Elisabeth Stimmel, and Miles McCoy-Sulentic

Contact Diane Menuz (dmenez@utah.gov) with any questions.

<https://geology.utah.gov/publication-details/?pub=RI-291>

UGS wetland ecologists recently published a report (<https://geology.utah.gov/publication-details/?pub=RI-291>) on montane wetlands in Utah. This study builds off previous work in the Weber

(https://ugspub.nr.utah.gov/publications/non_lib_pubs/contract_deliverables/WCD-9.pdf) and Jordan

(https://ugspub.nr.utah.gov/publications/non_lib_pubs/contract_deliverables/WCD-14.pdf) watersheds.

In part one of the report, we created a new spatial layer to more accurately describe montane wetland types and distribution by combining several existing datasets together.

For part 2, we conducted field surveys to collect wetland stressor, condition, and function data in previously un-surveyed parts of the montane region. In the last part, we developed a quantitative tool for wetlands in mountain valleys and foothills to more accurately identify wetlands in good, fair, and poor condition. Check out our project StoryMap (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/079efa99ef60453b8d03261acd617b30>) to learn more about montane wetlands and our survey results.

State, Academic, Local, and National Updates

Forestry, Fire and State Lands Research Grants

Are you a researcher who works in or around Great Salt Lake?

The Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL) requests proposals for research projects that will improve management of Great Salt Lake (GSL). Research projects will provide lake managers with a better understanding of the complexities of GSL in order to best inform management decisions. Research project deliverables will be publicly accessible for use and dissemination.

FFSL will launch the Fiscal Year 2027 Great Salt Lake Research Grants (Tech Team grants) on Monday, October 20, 2025! Applications are due by 5pm on Monday, December 1st, 2025. Funded projects will run from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027 (or 2028, for two-year projects).

Look for grant details and application materials on the FFSL website (<https://ffsl.utah.gov/grants/great-salt-lake-research-grants/>)!

Wetland Management Documents from Utah State University

Dr. Karin Kettenring and colleagues at Utah State University (USU) have developed a new wetland management document that is now freely available online:

Christine Rohal, Keith Hambrecht, Chad Cranney, and Karin M. Kettenring, "Reeds Run Amok: A Practical Guide to Managing Phragmites-Invaded Wetlands (https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/2543/) "

They also have quite a few other free resources on their USU Extension page (<https://extension.usu.edu/wetlands/>) for wetland management and restoration, including:

- * Emergent and aquatic wetland plant identification guides
- * Seed collecting and viability testing (and shortly...within ~2 weeks...seed dormancy break and germination guide)
- * Revegetation approaches for lakeshores and Great Salt Lake wetlands
- * Phragmites management with grazing

Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium

November 19-20

Utah Cultural Celebration Center

1355 West 3100 South

West Valley City, UT 84119

UGS will be tabling at the Symposium! Stop by and say hi!

You can find more information on the event here

(<https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/watershed/get-involved/watershed-symposium/>), and can register to attend here (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-salt-lake-county-watershed-symposium-registration-1326039693419?aff=oddttdtcreator>).

Free and open to all, the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium encourages a comprehensive review of the current state of our watershed while creating learning and networking opportunities for a broad array of stakeholders. Sessions cover water quality and watershed issues with local, regional, and national relevance. The Symposium is hosted annually by Salt Lake County's Watershed Planning & Restoration Program.

\$53 Million Funding Opportunity for Great Salt Lake and Its Wetlands

The Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner (GSLCO), the Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust (the Trust), and FFSL are excited to announce that up to \$53 million in grant funding is available for projects that support Great Salt Lake and its wetlands.

GSLCO and FFSL have extended the grant due date to January 16, 2026 because of the current federal government closures.

Funding is available for projects in three categories:

- * Voluntary Water Transactions
- * System Conservation Projects
- * Ecosystem and Habitat Projects

Look for grant details and application materials on the Trust's website (<https://www.gslwatertrust.org/wetland-grants>)!

National News

Based on the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (filed on 7/24/2025), the recommended funding for the 2026 Federal budget for wetland related grants remains unchanged. There is still much uncertainty, especially with the current federal closures, but this is the information that we have from those congressional reports:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- * Wetland Program Development Grants - No change in budget from the House or Senate (\$14,104,000 for both Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026)
- * Nonpoint Source Fund - No change in budget from House or Senate
- * Information Exchange/Outreach - Average 39% decrease

U.S. Geological Survey:

* National Groundwater and Streamflow Information - Senate 1.8% increase, House 2.6% increase

Bureau of Land Management:

* Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Management - Senate 0.7% decrease, House no change

Here are the links to review the Senate Report

(<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/download/fy26-interior-senate-report>) and House Report (<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP00/20250722/118542/HMKP-119-AP00-20250722-SD002.pdf>).

EPA has postponed their Competition Process Webinar on applying for their grants. If you're interested in receiving the Request for Proposal information related to Wetland Program Development Grants, feel free to email jstern@utah.gov and I can forward along the email when that process has re-opened.

Contact:

Jessica Stern

State Wetlands Coordinator

If you would like to submit information for the next newsletter, or no longer wish to receive these emails, please email jstern@utah.gov