

Legislature Funds Lake Powell Pipeline and Bear River Dams Senate Bill 80 Passes Committee by Just One Vote

The URC staff fought to stop Lake Powell Pipeline and Bear River Water Grab funding for 44 days of this year’s legislative session. Unfortunately, the water development industry’s Senate Bill 80 passed the Legislature by just 5 votes in the Senate, 11 votes in the House, and by just 1 vote in House committee.

Starting next year, the bill will take millions of sales tax dollars away from transportation every year and funnel it into an account set up to fund the Lake Powell Pipeline and Bear River Development. Over \$165 million will be available for these devastating projects by 2023 at the expense of crucial state programs like education, transportation and healthcare.

Continued on page 4



*Dead Horse Point of the Colorado River in 1978.
P: Richard Schreyer*

Gooseberry Narrows Dam Seeking Wetland Alteration Permit



The Gooseberry Narrows Dam would inundate pristine cutthroat trout spawning habitat. P: B. Anderson

A proposed 120 foot-high dam and trans-basin diversion would spell disaster for aquatic species like native cutthroat trout that rely on the Price River and key tributaries Gooseberry and Fish Creeks. The Army Corps of Engineers is now deciding whether to issue a critical 404 wetland alteration permit for the so-called Narrows Project in Sanpete County. The URC has been fighting this proposed dam and diversion of Gooseberry Creek for 18 years and after decades of environmental studies and litigation this is one of the last federal permits proponents need to move forward with the Project. *Continued on page 3*

In this Issue

Why Harvest the Rain?
URC Fights for LPP Transparency

PAGE 2
PAGE 5

2016 Legislature Wrap Up
Earth Day with Conservation Heroes

PAGE 3
PAGE 6



P: USFWS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Janelle Eurick Bauer

Rob Bero

Celeste Kelty

Dave Mock

Ron Penner, Treasurer

Chris Peterson

Osmann Sanyer

Deeda Seed

Andy Wallace, Vice Chair

Roy Webb

Andy Yorkin, Chair

STAFF

Zachary Frankel

Executive Director

Zach@utahrivers.org

Gordon Rowe

Research Director

Gordon@utahrivers.org

Nick Schou

Conservation Director

Nick@utahrivers.org

Weston Wood

Conservation Associate

Weston@utahrivers.org

Utah Rivers Council

1055 East 2100 South

Suite 204

Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

801.486.4776

www.utahrivers.org

Many thanks to



for hosting our website.

Saving Utah's Aquatic Ecosystems One Barrel At a Time

Northern Utah residents don't need to look far to be reminded of the importance of water conservation. According to a recent white paper by scientists from Utah State University, the shrinking Great Salt Lake would be 11 feet higher today without the litany of dams and diversions on its tributaries. The whitepaper, "*Impacts of Water Development on Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch Front*," found that because of our State's high water use, the volume of the Lake has been reduced by 48 percent and proposed Bear River development would cause the Lake to retreat even more.

Since urban Utah residents have the highest per-person water use in America, water conservation is a crucial part of creating a sustainable water future for the Beehive State. Conservation is also essential if we are to preserve the largest remaining wetland ecosystem in the American West, the iconic Great Salt Lake.



Rainwater scours streets and gutters picking up urban pollutants and carrying them into our urban streams. Our RainHarvest program improves water quality impacts to urban waterways and key aquatic ecosystems like the Great Salt Lake by reducing urban water runoff.

In order to achieve a sustainable water future and save crucial ecosystems at the same time we have to engage more Utahns who are eager to do their part to help, even if we do it one barrel at a time.



The URC partnered with 6 municipalities to get over 2300 discounted rain barrels out in the community last summer and we're excited to bring RainHarvest back for 2016. We are finalizing our partnerships now so if you are interested in learning more go to utahrivers.org or send an email to [nick@utahrivers](mailto:nick@utahrivers.org) to get on the waitlist and be notified when we launch the program.

A Splash of Light at the 2016 Legislature

In the midst of fighting off Senate Bill 80 which funded the Lake Powell Pipeline and the Bear River Water Grab, the URC also tracked, fought and supported a dozen other bills affecting Utah's rivers, some of them good steps forward. Here is a collection of some of the more important bills brought up this session:

Senate Bill 28 – The passage of SB 28 now requires water suppliers in Utah to implement inclining water rate structures to promote water conservation. Inclining rate structures charge wasteful water users more for their use and reward conscientious water users with lower water rates, promoting free-market water conservation. This bill is a great step forward in reducing Utah's wasteful water use.

House Bill 82 – This bill would have reduced property tax collections by water suppliers that encourage water waste. The bill failed to even make it to a committee hearing. After years of advocating to remove these wasteful taxes, it is disappointing to see the Republican legislature refuse to even talk about the issue.

House Bill 305 – HB 305 requires water suppliers to hire a certified staff member to verify the accuracy of their water data. This bill's passage is one of the responses to the May 2015 legislative audit initiated by the URC which found the state's water supply and demand data was hugely inaccurate.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 – SCR 1, a resolution encouraging water suppliers with unmetered secondary water to install meters passed the House and Senate with just 3 dissenting votes. SCR 1 is a good step forward because secondary water users are some of the most wasteful water users since most of them have no way of knowing how much water they use. Unfortunately, this bill was just an expression of the legislature's will and does not have any binding authority.

Developers Seeking Gooseberry Creek Dam Permit

Continued from cover

This \$60 million proposed dam and trans-basin diversion would have devastating impacts on the entire Price River watershed. Headwater tributaries like Gooseberry Creek deserve protection not just because they are valuable fisheries, but because of the functions they perform influencing the quality of downstream waters. Gooseberry and Fish Creeks have outstanding values, including wildlife, habitat quality, and species diversity that make them eligible for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The proposed Narrows Project would inundate and destroy several miles of pristine high-mountain streams, over 100 acres of sensitive wetlands, and countless acres of riparian habitat. The project would reduce habitat for spawning populations of native cutthroat trout and increase the likelihood of fish kills in Scofield reservoir as water quantity and quality decline. The project would also reduce flows in the lower Price River and harm spawning habitat for the endangered Colorado River pikeminnow, the river's top predator.

The Narrows Project is a relic of a bygone era and is neither economically sound nor environmentally responsible. The fight to save the Price River headwaters is far from over and we hope you'll stay with us as we continue to fight to stop this destructive proposal, even if it takes another 18 years.

Special-Interest Lobbyists Push Lake Powell Pipeline and Bear River Development Funding Through by One Vote

Continued from cover

We want to give a huge thank you to everyone who tried to stop this legislation by contacting their legislators, attending hearings and lobbying at the Capitol. This year's session was one of the toughest legislatures ever for the URC. This will go down as the special interest legislative session marked by handouts to the interests who hired hordes of lobbyists to ensure passage of bills that benefit their ventures.

The water development industry had more lobbyists than any other special interest in the state, with 36 lobbyists. The single entity with the most registered lobbyists for the 2016 session was the Central Utah Water District with 13 lobbyists. Incredibly, these figures don't include the scores of water district staff members who are not required to register as lobbyists but still showed up to influence legislation.

But the fight is not over! The Lake Powell Pipeline has entered the federal permitting process, with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement due out within a year. Also, the funding appropriated for Bear River Development has fired up the many Utahns concerned about the Great Salt Lake and Wasatch Front air quality. Our opportunity to stop these projects once and for all is now. We will need all the support we can get to keep these nightmares from becoming a reality.



*The Colorado River near Moab in 1969
P: Larry Royer*

URC Supporters Crash Board of Water Resources Hearing

After being ignored in Lake Powell Pipeline and Bear River Dams discussions for years, the URC and our supporters crashed a Utah Board of Water Resources meeting, demanding to have our voices heard. This body is receiving the millions of dollars generated by the recently passed SB 80 to build these projects and they have continuously overlooked the Wasatch Front for public input. So we decided to create our own venue to voice our concerns with these destructive projects.

This came as a big surprise to Water Resources since these shadowy board meetings usually receive little to no public attention or oversight, yet the board routinely hands out millions of your tax dollars to divert rivers every year. Over 100 concerned Utahns came out to speak against these terrible river diversions. We would like to thank everyone who helped spread the word and came to the meeting!



Over 100 concerned Utahns came to the water industry salesmen's home court to voice their concerns with the Lake Powell Pipeline

Washington County Water District Caught Hiding 600% Water Rate Increase From Public

Last October, a group of PhD economists from the three biggest Utah universities published a study revealing that repaying the Lake Powell Pipeline would require draconian increases to water rates and impact fees. The economists' analysis showed Washington County water rates must be raised from \$1 to \$7 per thousand gallons alongside a doubling of impact fees to pay the costs of the multibillion pipeline.

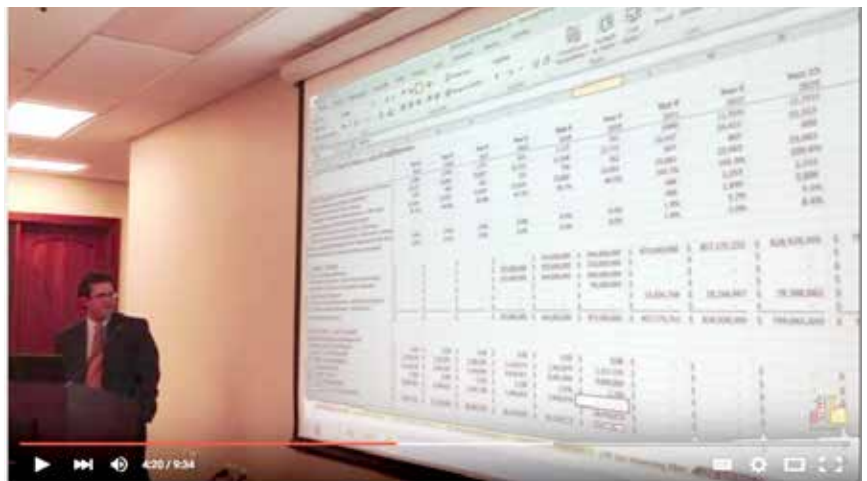
The Washington County Water District refuted these findings before receiving the economists' analysis, because they claimed their own financial model showed they could finance the project with only a 28-cent increase in water rates instead of a 600% increase. We requested a copy of the District's model via the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA), but the District refused to share this model with us. In April, we appealed to the State Records Committee, and testified in a trial-like proceeding before the committee.

Amazingly, the District's lobbyist told the Records Committee that they never had any such model. This was shocking because the District presented this secret model to city councils and referred to it widely in media interviews and with elected officials. The District cited their model as proof the economists were flat out wrong.

The URC presented a copy of a screenshot of a YouTube video from a November 2013 public meeting held at the Washington County Water District where the model was presented to the public. Once they wiped the egg off their face, the District said the model was "proprietary" and they did not receive a copy from their consultant even though they have presented it to scores of community leaders.

At the end of the nearly two hours of debate between the URC and the Washington County Water District's lobbyist, the Records Committee ruled for a continuance. They sought to know whether the District's contract with their consultant specified the model was "proprietary property."

After examining a copy of the contract between the district and their consultant we believe the public has a right to examine this document. Stay tuned to hear more about the next meeting scheduled this May!



This video shows the consultant hired by the Lake Powell Pipeline proponents presenting the "financial model" at the Water District's office. The District claims the model does not exist and that they never had a copy of it.

We've Moved Offices!

The URC office has moved down the hall in the same building.
1055 East 2100 South, Suite 201, SLC, UT 84106

Farewell Gordon

After four years of hard work, many laughs, and innumerable accomplishments its time to bid farewell to Gordon Rowe, our Research Director and wizard of all logical things. Gordon led the organization in answering an array of complicated questions over the years and his deep analytical skills allowed the organization to overcome some enormous research challenges to frame the water dialogue to our advantage.



Gordon is going to law school at the University of Utah in the Fall and although we tried for years to keep him from leaving, we could only hide his car keys for so long. We greatly enjoyed Gordon's intelligence, maturity, strong moral compass, soft spoken wit, and his easygoing nature. Thank you, Gordon, for your service to Utah's rivers and the ecosystems they support.

Thanks to Wasatch!

Thanks to everyone who joined the URC and Breathe Utah at our Love Utah Give UT open house at the Wasatch Brew Pub in Sugar House. It was great to connect with those who care about Utah's clean air and flowing rivers on such a special day.

We would also like to give a special thank you to Wasatch Brew Pub for hosting such a fun event.



URC Celebrates Earth Day with Conservation Heroes

The URC and our friends at Utah Open Lands hosted an Earth Day breakfast at Wasatch Brew Pub in Sugar House with national conservation legend Brock Evans. Evans visited Utah to speak about how to persevere in the fight to protect the Earth. He has 50+ years experience fighting environmental battles across the country and has been involved in protecting many iconic American landscapes, including several here in Utah.

The URC presented a lifetime achievement award to veteran Utah conservationist, Steve Erickson, for his many decades in public service working to protect Utah's incredible landscapes and the people that love them. Erickson personifies the concept of selfless public service and is widely known across many Utah circles for his tireless dedication to both our environment and our community. It was an inspiring morning and we hope to see you at our next Earth Day breakfast.



*Left: Steve Erickson receiving a lifetime achievement award for his career in conservation.
Right: Conservation legend Brock Evans with URC Board Vice Chair, Andy Wallace. P: Ed Kosmicki*

Yes! I Want to Support the Utah Rivers Council!

To be a strong voice for your rivers we need your help, now more than ever.

Questions? Call 801-486-4776 or email nick@utahrivers.org

Name(s) Email (optional)

My check is enclosed

Phone

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 River Sage | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 River Protector | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 River Guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Founder | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Other | |

Please charge my: Visa Mastercard (circle one)

Credit card number Exp. date Signature

Address City Zip

I'd like to contribute monthly as part of the *River Defender Club*.
Charge the above card every month the following amount: _____

URC Merchandise

- URC Steel River Mug:** \$18 (includes shipping)



URC Stickers



- A Walk Along the Jordan* with my \$100 donation

- The Ordinary Truth* by Jana Richman: \$15

- Fight & Win: Brock Evans's Strategies for the New Eco-warrior:** \$12



Front



- URC Logo Stickers:** Free!

- URC T-Shirt:** \$15

Circle size:

Large X-Large XXL

Charcoal Grey

Contributions to Utah Rivers Council are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Utah Rivers Council
1055 E. 2100 S., Suite 204
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SLC, UT
PERMIT NO. 7032

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Stay Connected to the URC

-  www.utahrivers.org
-  www.facebook.com/utahrivers
-  www.twitter.com/utahrivers

Sign Up for RainHarvest 2016!



Email nick@utahrivers.org for more info
on how you can be part of this year's
RainHarvest program!