

New Analysis Reveals Bear River Development Unaffordable for Wasatch Front

A new economic analysis on proposed Bear River Development demonstrates the destructive project's costs are completely unaffordable to the local communities the project is intended to serve. The analysis found the project's costs would require gigantic increases in water rates, impact fees and property taxes to Wasatch Front residents.

The analysis was performed by Dr. Gabriel Lozada alongside Dr. Steven Bannister from the University of Utah Economic Evaluation Unit. The analysis was commissioned by U.S. Magnesium, a mineral industry business on the shores of the Great Salt Lake concerned about dropping Lake levels.

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The Bear River at Oneida Narrows. A new economic analysis reveals that Bear River Development's massive costs will require gigantic increases in water rates, impact fees, and property taxes in Wasatch Front Cities.

Utah Rivers Council launches Save 2% for Utah Campaign

The Utah Rivers Council has launched a campaign to usher in a new era of water conservation in Utah. Save 2% for Utah seeks to reduce Utah's municipal water use by 2% each year. Utahns are the #1 highest per person municipal water users in the country with most of this water used outdoors to water grass, and for that matter sidewalks, streets, and gutters.

More than 55 businesses have signed on to a letter to Governor Herbert urging him to set a 2% annual water use reduction as the official goal for Utah. This list of businesses includes many of your favorite brand leaders like Uinta Brewing, Mark Miller Subaru, PETZL, and many more. We continue to add businesses across a broad array of industries. These partnerships are critical as we create pressure on Utah's leadership to take water conservation seriously.

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Sign our Change.org petition to make 2% Utah's annual water conservation goal! Visit Save2ForUtah.org or Scan the QR Code to access the petition!



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2019 Water Conservatives Conference A Success

The Dollars and Sense of Water Efficiency

Over 100 people joined us at the Blair Education Center in Park City on September 5th as we hosted our first annual Water Conservatives Conference. Participants heard how they could conserve water and save money while protecting Utah's precious aquatic landscapes. We were pleased to host a diverse array of legislators, mayors, city councilmembers, county commissioners, candidates for office, water managers and supporters who learned how to reduce water spending in their communities by saving water.

Our keynote speaker was Peter Mayer, a water efficiency expert who wowed the crowd with lessons from other local governments across the country that reduced water use and saved money. Peter dismissed the claim that water conservation costs more than new water development projects, with one case study from Seattle, showing how conservation saved residents \$725 Million. Peter proved that total water use can decrease even as population increases. (See page 8 for more)



A diverse audience of business leaders, elected officials, and more enjoyed interactive presentations with speakers like Dr. Gabriel Lozada. Our keynote speaker, Peter Mayer, wowed the crowd with his presentation on water conservation and efficiency.

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Dr. Gabriel Lozada unveiled a new report: Debt Repayment Obligations of Proposed Bear River Development, authored by the Economic Evaluation Unit of the University of Utah's Department of Economics. The report demonstrated how and why Bear River Development is unaffordable for Wasatch Front residents who will be encumbered by debt for generations to come. (See Cover Story)

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Utah Rivers Council Launches Save 2% for Utah Campaign

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This 2% water conservation goal has been achieved by an array of communities around the Western U.S. with many exceeding their conservation and efficiency goals. Between 2008 and 2013 Denver reduced their water waste by 4% annually while California decreased water use by 25% in a single year. By comparison, the Utah Division of Water Resources, which is proposing both the \$2.9 billion Bear River Development and \$2-3 billion Lake Powell Pipeline, has proposed an anemic statewide water conservation goal. This agency seeks to lower municipal water use by just 0.5% per year between 2015 and 2065.

Know a business that might sign on to Save 2%?

Scan the QR Code to visit Save2ForUtah.org.

There's no financial obligation or water saving requirement to join!



The water drops show the yearly water savings for communities in the West. Utah's proposed conservation goal pales in comparison to what our neighbors have been achieving.

Utah is America's highest, #1 municipal water user per person in the country. In spite of this waste, the Division of Water Resources lowered Utah's water conservation goal to 0.5% per year.

State Water Agency Wants Utahns to Conserve Less Water

The Utah Division of Water Resources has adopted a new water plan which cuts Utah's current statewide water conservation goals by 50%, lowering it from a 1% savings per year to 0.5% savings per year over the next 50 years. The agency wants water use to be high enough to justify its \$5-6 billion in new spending on water projects.

The Division allowed lobbyists working to advance \$2.9 billion Bear River Development and the \$3 billion Lake Powell Pipeline to create the plan which reduces water conservation efforts in Utah. For the last 18 years, the water conservation goal for Utah has been to lower urban water use by 1% per year. The new water-wasting plan is so anemic it proposes that the counties of Kane, Weber, Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake and Tooele use more water in the year 2065 than Denver uses in 2019. The Washington County area, slated for the Lake Powell Pipeline, has an annual water conservation goal of just 0.44 % per year water use reduction.

New Analysis Reveals Bear River Development Water Unaffordable for Wasatch Front Cities and Residents

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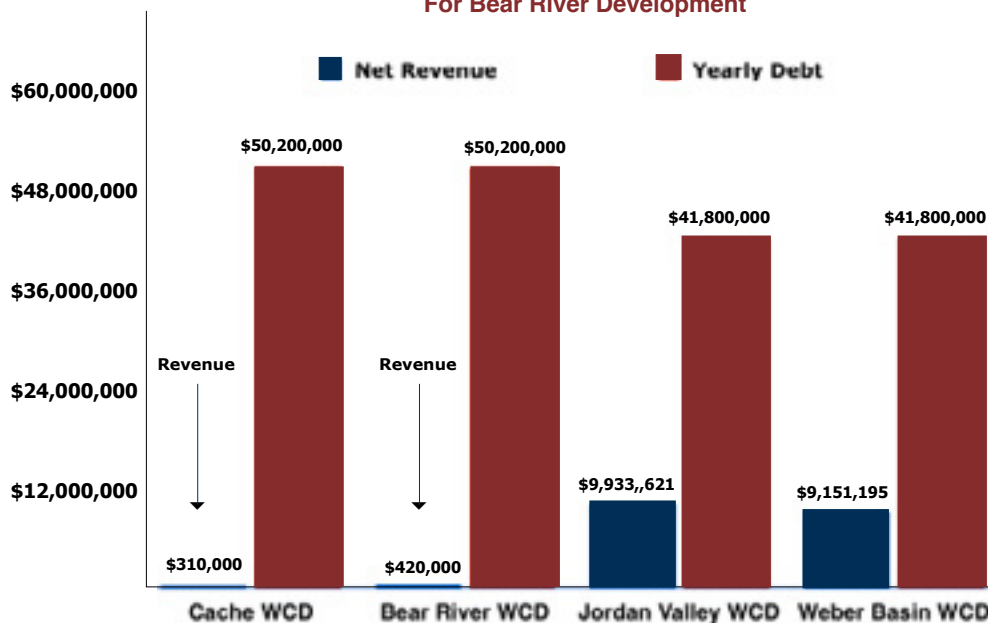
The new economic analysis means the costs of Bear River Development are so massive that unlucky residents in cities receiving Bear River water would be forced to pay much more for the water that they currently use. These rate increases would lead to a big drop in water use in these communities, meaning that Bear River water is entirely unnecessary for Wasatch Front growth.

The economists based their analysis on Bear River Development engineering reports commissioned by the Division of Water Resources. Project costs were adjusted for inflation, which included a nominal mitigation cost for the massive impacts to wetlands. This brought the cost of proposed Bear River Development up to \$2.935 billion, which is likely still an underestimate given the many destructive impacts from the project.

When this \$2.935 billion construction cost is financed with interest, just like a home mortgage loan over 30 years, the annual debt payments spell serious trouble to the communities slated to receive Bear River water. Lending practices are based on the concept that annual debt payments should be less than a borrower's annual revenues. But the Division of Water Resources, an agency demonstrating wanton disregard for the impacts to ratepayers and taxpayers of the Lake Powell Pipeline, is entirely unconcerned about the impacts this \$2.9 billion in spending will have on Northern Utah residents and their water bills.

Come and see the Linkages Between the Great Salt Lake & Air Quality Presentation
at the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium
Nov 20 at 10:50 am by Dr. Kevin Perry & Jon Carter
Sign up at <https://watershedsymposium2019.sched.com/>

**Water District Net Revenues vs Annual Debt Payments
For Bear River Development**



The bar graph compares the current annual net revenues of each of the four water districts with their annual debt payment for Bear River Development. To increase these revenues, water districts will have to significantly raise water rates on Utah residents.

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The only way such debt payments could be made is with a gigantic increase in water rates, impact fees and property taxes along the Wasatch Front. The table at right shows the annual debt each of the cities in Salt Lake County would be encumbered by for proposed Bear River Development water.

BELOW: The Great Salt Lake's surface levels are heavily dependent on the Bear River, with the Bear providing upwards of 70% of the Great Salt Lake's total surface water.



Jordan Valley WCD Debt from Bear River Development

Water System	Annual Payments for Bear River Development	Total Debt from Bear River Development
Bluffdale	\$5,150,000	\$79,200,000
Draper City Water	\$2,650,000	\$40,700,000
Water Pro	\$4,380,000	\$67,300,000
Granger-Hunter ID	\$8,470,000	\$130,200,000
Herriman	\$6,160,000	\$94,700,000
Kearns ID	\$15,790,000	\$242,700,000
Magna Water	\$6,520,000	\$100,200,000
Midvale City Water	\$1,450,000	\$22,300,000
Riverton Water	\$6,870,000	\$105,600,000
South Jordan	\$12,700,000	\$195,200,000
South Salt Lake Water	\$1,230,000	\$18,900,000
Taylorsville-Bennion ID	\$3,810,000	\$58,600,000
West Jordan City Water	\$11,820,000	\$181,700,000
Total	\$87,000,000	\$1,337,000,000

The table ABOVE breaks down the immense debt that will be put on cities who make the mistake of accepting Bear River Development water.

Bear River Development Advancing in Spite of Impacts

The Division of Water Resources is advancing \$2.9 billion Bear River Development in spite of immense opposition to the destructive project. The Division is releasing a new Bear River engineering report and their surrogates have been lobbying legislators to advance the project.

The Bear River is the single largest source of surface water entering the Great Salt Lake, providing 60% of the inflow each year. Bear River Development would divert 20-25% of the Bear River's annual flows upstream of the Great Salt Lake which would lower Lake levels by 2-4 feet, drying up tens of thousands of acres of shoreline wetlands.

History shows how climate change, drought, and water diversions quickly reduce once thriving lake ecosystems to a fraction of their former size. Entire ecosystems were disrupted, economies threatened, & local populations suffered. The Great Salt Lake is on track to suffer a similar fate due to upstream diversions on the Bear River. These diversions have already exposed more than 757 mi² of Great Salt Lake playa. Dust plumes emanating from the playa now frequently degrade Wasatch Front airsheds, impacting the health of more than 2 millions residents.

Find out about the debt *you* could take on to pay for Bear River Development during a workshop at the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium
Nov 21 at 2:15 pm by Dr. Gabriel Lozada, Zachary Frankel, and Dan Tuttle
Sign up at <https://watershedsymposium2019.sched.com/>

Lake Powell Pipeline Salesmen Suffer Defeat, But Spin Loss as Gain

The URC scored a major victory when the Lake Powell Pipeline suffered a reeling blow from the federal agency Utah hand-picked for an ‘easy’ approval of the project 12 years ago. The Division of Water Resources withdrew its \$37 million application to the federal agency permitting the project, signaling a costly dead end. URC staff worked for years to spotlight the many false claims made by Pipeline lobbyists to this federal agency about the project’s disastrous economics and energy production fantasies.

FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, had been permitting the 140 mile long Pipeline since 2009 but because of a lack of need for Pipeline water alongside its spiraling costs, the Division requested three delays totaling 6 years in length. Although Pipeline salesmen claim Washington County needs water, they have quietly announced that because Pipeline water isn’t needed for many decades, they plan to take small increments of Colorado River water in any given year. This incremental use of Pipeline water meant that virtually no hydropower can be created through the project’s costly generating stations. When the URC brought this and other revelations to the attention of FERC it had major impacts on permitting.

In August 2018, FERC announced they were narrowing the scope of their jurisdiction for the 140 mile long project to just a short section of the hydropower generating stations. Then in September 2019, the Division withdrew the entire application and have now talked the Bureau of Reclamation to lead the permitting for this costly and unnecessary boondoggle.

The Division’s error in judgment shows incompetence at the highest level, with billions of taxpayer dollars at stake in the future. Their hubris demonstrates there should be no confidence in the Division’s justification for the Pipeline since its more about getting tax money than on future water needs.



Check out our new website
www.lake-powell-pipeline.org



In a textbook definition of marketing spin, the Division claimed this dead end was somehow a victory. The Division’s lobbying arm selling this fiasco claimed that scrapping the hydropower would save \$100 million. They failed to mention that the revenue from generating hydropower was meant to offset the project’s gigantic electricity demands of pumping water 2,000 feet uphill and across 140 miles of desert.

The Lake Powell Pipeline is attracting concern and criticism from across the Colorado River Basin because it is the largest new water diversion in a permitting in the 7 state region. This lobbyist gravy train comes during an era of unprecedented climate change and declining Colorado River flows. The URC will continue our advocacy to defeat this boondoggle and protect taxpayers and ratepayers from wasteful spending.

Auditor General's Report Blasts Pipeline Repayment Plan

A new Audit by the Legislative Auditor General confirmed what the Utah Rivers Council has been saying for 7 years: the Lake Powell Pipeline will require massive increases in water rates, property taxes and impact fees on Washington County residents. This Audit comes in stark contrast to the nonsense Pipeline salesmen have been selling for 5 years.

***Auditors were barred from asking the most important question:
is the Lake Powell Pipeline needed?***

Pipeline lobbyists at the Washington County Water District claimed the project could be repaid with just a 28-cent, or 21%, increase in water rates. The 2019 Audit found that Washington County residents would face a 357% increase in water rates, a 108% increase in impact fees and a 54% increase in property taxes. The Audit confirms the work of University of Utah economists who found that water rates would have to increase 527% alongside a 120% increase in impact fees. In response, the Washington County Water District wrote a letter endorsing a repayment plan that would exempt them from repaying \$600 million of Utah taxpayer's costs on the pipeline. The agency employs an army of lobbyists, including two former house speakers, seeking to commit legislators to the Pipeline.

Drilling in Wildlife Refuge Approved by Green River

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave the nod to new oil and gas drilling inside the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge on the banks of the Green River. The Wildlife Refuge was created to protect precious wildlife habitat for some 250+ wildlife species in and around the Green River but the federal government doesn't own the subsurface mineral rights. The approval means that new infrastructure will be built including above ground gas pipelines, crude storage tanks and constant traffic of tanker trucks for the next 30-40 years. The approval likely means more oil and gas companies may seek approval to pump oil and gas around the Refuge.

The Ouray Refuge provides feeding and nesting habitat for 237 migratory bird species and the Green River is a migratory corridor for waterfowl and big game like pronghorn antelope, mule deer, elk and bear. The Ouray National Fish Hatchery is rearing endangered fish for introduction into area rivers and may be affected. The hatchery's water source is shallow groundwater but oil and gas contamination could effectively eliminate this sole water source.

Utah is ranked 11th in the U.S. for crude oil production and 10th in natural gas output with over 11,000 active oil and gas wells. Recent oil pipeline failures impacting Red Butte Creek, Willard Bay, the Escalante watershed and the Green River are likely to become more common in the future due to the expansion and age of oil and gas infrastructure.



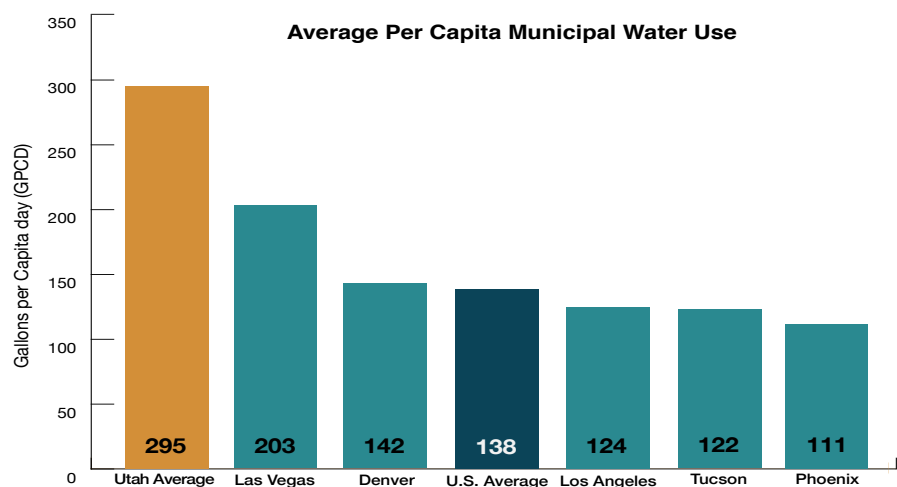
The diverse wildlife of the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge will be impacted by approval of new oil and gas development inside of the Refuge.

Utah's Biggest Water Source: Conservation and Efficiency

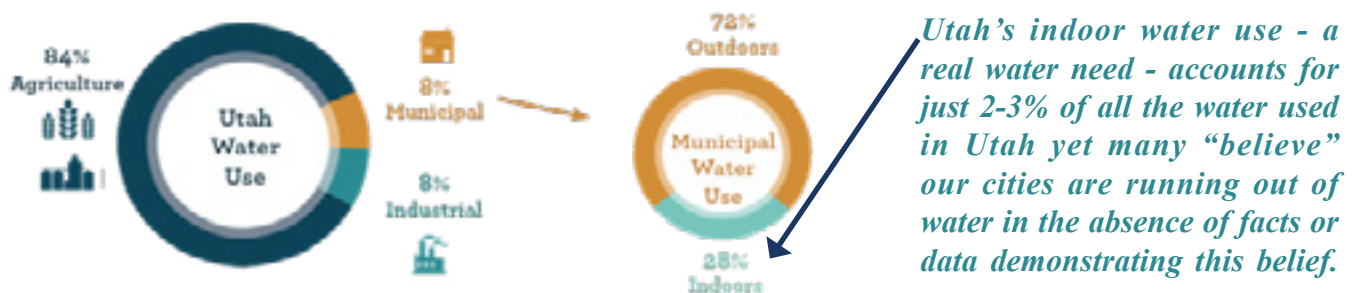
We often talk about water conservation and efficiency as the alternative to water projects like proposed Bear River Development or the Lake Powell Pipeline but can conserving water alone and really provide enough water for the future? Many embrace the fear we are running out of municipal water in the second most arid state in the country. People struggle to see water conservation as a salvation to this apocalyptic future but water conservation is a great deal more than education programs like kindergarten coloring books and ad campaigns.

Water conservation and efficiency includes an entire world of programs from tiered water rates to municipal landscape codes, to installing meters on secondary water users, to eliminating leakage of canals and pipes before and after water arrives at your house, and much more. A vast array of conservation programs are being run in thousands of cities across the country which have lowered total water use in the face of population growth, thereby saving billions of dollars in future spending. That's the problem, the Utah lobbyists who want those billions of dollars are the people writing your state water policies.

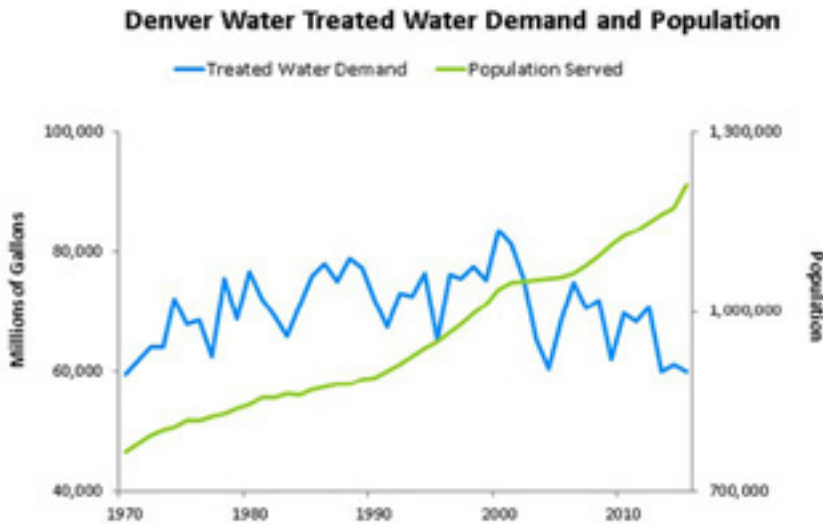
Utah is America's #1, highest municipal water user, per capita. If we lowered our water use to that of Denver we would have twice as much water in Utah's cities.



Consider that Utah is America's #1 highest municipal water user (per person). If Utah lowered its municipal water use to that of Denver, it would equate to a 51% reduction in water use, effectively doubling our municipal water supply. But proponents of the \$5-6 billion in spending for Bear River Development and the Lake Powell Pipeline claim Utah can't conserve much more water. The Division of Water Resources and the other lobbyists working the halls of the Utah Capitol claim the only way we will have enough water for the future is if they themselves are paid billions of dollars to build these two destructive water projects.



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Like the rest of the U.S., Denver's total water use declined over several decades in the face of population growth because of their success in conserving water.

Go to utahrivers.org/reports for our Bear River Alternatives Report



But our farms and ranches use roughly 84% of Utah's water each year while our municipal water use accounts for just 8% of all the water used in Utah. Utah's urban population uses 5-6% of our statewide water use on grass during the summer with only 2-3% of all the water in Utah used indoors by homes, businesses and institutions.

The reality is that total municipal water use has been declining across the country in the face of population growth. As the graph above shows, Denver saw a near doubling of population between 1970 and 2015, yet their total water use was roughly the same over this period because they saved water through conservation and efficiency programs.

Utah's water conservation opportunities are endless. Water conservation and efficiency can easily provide plenty of municipal water for the next 50 years without Bear River Development or the Lake Powell Pipeline. We only have to stop letting lobbyists dictate our fate. Otherwise we will continue the era of building unnecessary, expensive, and destructive projects.

URC Wraps Another Season of Bear River Field Trips

The URC had another successful season of field trips to the Bear River, bringing elected officials and supporters to potential dam sites to see the destructive consequences of proposed Bear River Development firsthand.

Nearly 100 people visited the proposed Fielding Reservoir dam site near Logan and another proposed dam site near the Willard Bay. We partnered with the Ogden Gun Club and the Boy Scout Camp at Camp Fife who hosted our field trips.



The Boy Scouts of America facility Camp Fife would be inundated by the proposed Fielding Reservoir on the Bear River.

Kanab Aquifer to be Mined to Mine Frac Sands

The Kane County Water District is once-again proposing to waste water and money in an effort to help friends and relatives. The Water District and Kanab City are working to mine the aquifers north of Kanab by leasing these ancient waters to a private company whose leadership is related to Mike Noel.

A private company named Southern Red Sands is being allowed to withdraw more groundwater from local aquifers than is currently returned from precipitation in an area north of Kanab. Groundwater would be used to wash fine sands that are to be shipped across the West for fracking for oil and gas development.

The proposed groundwater withdrawal is an extractive use of water, aka mining the aquifer, because the amount of water taken from the ground is more than what returns each year. This is based in part on a new study by Kane County's largest employer, Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. The project would deplete 1200 acre-feet per year from the aquifer, enough for a city of 6,000 peoples' annual use — almost as many people as currently live in all of Kane County.

In a shocking give-away of public resources for private gain, the city foolishly negotiated a 20 year contract to sell its groundwater at bargain basement rates, charging just \$2 per 1,000 gallons of water. The price of water in wet Seattle is \$15 per 1,000 gallons by comparison. As if to add insult to injury, the city also agreed to tie its hands if the aquifer is depleted by the open pit mine in the future.

According to the agreement between Kanab City and Southern Red Sands, the city must effectively convince the company the decline in aquifer levels is because of Southern Red Sands' operations and not for any other reason. But the city must wait for 5 years to pass with declining levels before they can even make this claim. If Southern Red Sands disagrees with the city, Kanab is powerless to protect its water supply without litigation.

Noel has led the effort to industrialize Kane County and force gigantic water rate increases to its residents by building the unnecessary \$3 billion Lake Powell Pipeline. The Pipeline will deliver all the water to an unpopulated area of Kane County a stone's throw from Noel's ranch. Noel is related to the Operations Manager of Southern Red Sands, who is also a Kane County Commissioner, according to a story published by the Salt Lake Tribune.



Groundwater withdrawal from Kanab aquifers for a proposed frac sand mining operation could heavily impact surrounding landscapes like Kanab Creek, depleting a public resource for a private interest's gain.

Yes, I want to support Utah's rivers!

Become a proud advocate of Utah's rivers. They need your help, now more than ever.

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

Annual Membership Levels

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Harvesting the Rain

Our 2019 RainHarvest program was a great success as we distributed over 750 barrels with our wonderful municipal partners of Salt Lake County Watershed Program, Millcreek City and Murray City. In addition to conserving water, rain barrels improve water quality by reducing runoff which collects pollution from dirty streets and gutters. Over 4300 barrels have been distributed since the URC started Rain Harvest, enough to save 215,000 gallons of water every time it rains enough to fill a 50 gallon water barrel!



Interested in a Spring Rainbarrel?
Get on our waitlist by
info@utahrivers.org
or call (801) 486-4776.

