

BOATING ADVISORY COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Minutes Of The Meeting Held on **May 19th, 2026, at 4:00PM**

Hybrid

Topic: Boating Advisory Council - May 2026

Date: May 19th, 2026 - **Time:** 4:00-6:00 PM - **Location:** Soldier Hollow/Hybrid

Meeting Point:

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/izq-umqj-ydc>

Or dial: (US) +1 218-301-8660 PIN: 798 724 349#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/izq-umqj-ydc?pin=1816031488720>

Council Members: Jeff Salt (Chair), Jason Taylor (Co-Chair), Adam Eakle, DeWitt Smith, Zachary Williams, Jenny Knudsen, George Sommer, Tim Herzog

Department Staff: Jason Curry, Patrick Morrison, Ty Hunter, Brain Kurta, Maureen Casper, Laura Haskell Jorge Vazquez

Members of the Public: Herbert Lay, Blake Millett, Kent Singleton, Cameron Phillips, Josh Phillips

AGENDA - MEETING MINUTES

1. Information (4:00PM) - Welcome

a. Introduction of the Attendees

i. Members - Respective Positions

- ii. **Department Staff**
- iii. **Members of the Public**

(00:00) - Council Chair Jeff Salt opened the meeting virtually. The council members and agency staff conducted a roll-call introduction:

2. Action (4:10PM) - Approval of meeting minutes - Chair

(06:40) – Two adjustments were requested:

- George Summer suggested a change on page 10 where the phrase "a total of multiple applications" was used without specifying the exact number.
- Zach Williams noted his name was omitted from the "in attendance" section of the previous notes.

(7:11) – MOTION: Jeff Salt moved to approve the January meeting minutes with the noted corrections. Minutes were approved unanimously.

SHAYNE WITTLER MADE THE MOTION. SHERIFF SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Information (4:15PM) - Public Comment

- a. **During this time members of the public will be given 3 minutes to inform the Council about boating issues or topics not listed on the meeting agenda. No actions can be taken by the Council. Rules of decorum and respect will be adhered to.**

(10:23) – Public Comment (Kent Singleton): Expressed concerns regarding river infrastructure, safety, and private property boundaries. He highlighted implementation issues regarding how the state differentiates between official public boat ramps, informal access points, and private property along the Weber River. He also noted a statewide river access webinar hosted by Utah State University.

(14:12) – Public Comment (Bert Lelay, Utah Stream Access Coalition): Raised safety concerns regarding livestock fences strung completely across popular paddling waterways. He cited Utah Code Title 73-29-207, which permits fences but mandates they must not create an unreasonably dangerous



condition and must provide a portage gate or ladder. He proposed a collaborative state inventory to locate hazardous fences and install proper portage ladders.

4. Information (4:20PM) - Reservoir and Stream conditions Outlook – Laura Haskell

a. Overview of current reservoir, and stream conditions

(18:17) – Statewide Hydrology Data: Laura Haskell presented the Division of Water Resources briefing. She explained that Utah's snowpack (which accounts for 95% of the state's water supply) peaked three weeks early this year. Total water content reached only 8.5 inches compared to the historical 16-inch normal average.

Stream Gauge & Reservoir Status: Managed rivers are fluctuating based on upstream irrigation pullouts. Reservoir health is split into two distinct categories:

- Multi-year Reservoirs: Larger bodies (e.g., Deer Creek, Sand Hollow) remain in stable condition because they are holding over water storage from the historically wet 2023 season.
- Smaller/Single-year Reservoirs: Struggling severely due to minimal spring runoff. Yuba Reservoir is experiencing multi-year depletion and is already down to 20% capacity. Pine View peaked early and is dropping, while Willard Bay sits at 55%. Lake Powell is hovering at 24% and is expected to stay there due to power-generation management agreements with Flaming Gorge.

Soil Content & Weather Projections: Tim Herzog asked about the impact of recent heavy rain versus snow. Haskell explained that while heavy autumn rainfall saturated deep soil levels (20 to 40 inches) to benefit groundwater aquifers, topsoil (2 inches) is drying rapidly. Long-term weather models forecast an unusually hot summer, accelerating reservoir evaporation.

(32:06) – Cyanobacteria (Algae Bloom) Forecast: Chair Jeff Salt inquired about algae threats compared to last year. Haskell noted that lower runoff means fewer agricultural nutrients are entering the water basins. However, extreme heat means existing algae blooms will likely be persistent and elongated, though less prone to sudden spikes. Willard Bay is already receiving bentonite chemical pre-treatments at its swimming areas to suppress blooms.

5. Information (4:35PM) - Utah Boating Recreation Grant Overview - Jorge



- a. Overview of Grant Policy**
- b. Overview of Application**
- c. Recommendations**

(36:38) – Jorge Vazquez presented the application blueprint for the new \$2 million Utah Boating Recreation Grant program, which is funded through state watercraft registration fees. The funding cycle is targeted to open on September 1st and close on October 15th to align with federal Clean Vessel Act grants.

The program caps individual requests at \$500,000. It splits the fund into two categories: \$1.3 million for infrastructure/access/erosion protection and \$700,000 for Search and Rescue (SAR) equipment. Any infrastructure applicant requesting over \$300,000 (or SAR requesting over \$100,000) must present directly to the council. Applicants must provide a 25% matching fund (cash or documented in-kind labor/land), though a hardship waiver request question is included.

Ty Hunter and the council discussed how to handle major infrastructure requests. The council agreed to allow projects to be broken down into multi-year phases (e.g., funding engineering/NEPA in Phase 1, construction in Phase 2) with the caveat that approving Phase 1 guarantees no pre-commitment or automation of Phase 2 funding.

Chair Jeff Salt asked if regional planning bodies or watershed councils could apply. Ty Hunter clarified that eligibility is rigidly locked by state statute to cities, towns, counties, state agencies, and water conservancy districts. Non-eligible entities must partner with a qualified municipality to sponsor their application.

6. Information (5:10PM) - Legislative Session Update - Ty

(1:07:56) – HB 54: Mandatory Boating Safety Education: Ty Hunter summarized the passed legislation, taking effect January 1st, 2027. It combines the existing aquatic invasive species (AIS/quagga mussel) course with standard boating safety into a mandatory, annual 20-minute online course.

- Core Focus Areas: Life jacket compliance, DUI laws, and speed/proximity (wakeless) rules.
- Testing Logistics: The exam must be taken annually by every individual operator of a registered motorboat or sailboat in a household, not just the primary registrant. A fast-track "test-out" option will be available at the start of the portal.



- Livery Exemption: Rental companies can bypass verifying client certificates if they incorporate a state-approved, specialized safety briefing directly into their checkout terminal orientation.

Tim Herzog voiced frustration regarding rental fleet logistics under current systems, noting it took him four hours to run through identical AIS tests individually for 30 commercial boats. Hunter assured him the division is reprogramming the dealer portal so owners can complete the course once, input their hull/HIN roster, and batch-purchase registration decals.

(1:18:35) – Ty Hunter confirmed that watercraft exempt from state AIS decals (such as non-motorized, standard inflatable rafts) are exempt from the HB 54 educational requirements.

7. Information (5:30PM) - Administrative Rules – Ty

a. R650-205 – Cutler Reservoir / Newton Reservoir

- i. Overview**
- ii. Council Discussion**

(1:31:40) – Cutler: Pacific Corp is investigating rule updates. They have posted physical signs banning ballasted wake-enhancement craft due to shoreline erosion impacts along their 10,000-acre hydroelectric property. Newton: Characterized as a severe user-conflict hotbed. The division, backed by the DWR, Bureau of Reclamation, and local water users, is moving to change the current elevation-dependent wakeless rule into a permanent, full-body wakeless designation.

b. R650-206 – Carrying Passengers For Hire (CPFH)

- i. Overview**
- ii. Council Discussion**

(1:36:43) – Carrying Passengers for Hire (R650-206): Lt. Brian Kurt detailed updates collaborated with Utah Guides and Outfitters (Yugo). The rule standardizes first-aid requirements by removing generalized wilderness certifications in favor of courses recognized by the National Registry of EMTs and the Wilderness Medicine Education Collaborative. It also merges trip logs and manifests into a singular document format and drops the corporate record retention mandate from six years down to five.

c. R650-215 – Personal Flotation Devices on Rivers

- i. Overview**
- ii. Council Discussion**



(1:40:14) – PFD/Life Jacket Rule Overhaul (R650-215): Currently, PFDs are required on all rivers unless explicitly exempted as flatwater. The new rule states PFDs are not universally required on state rivers except on a strictly designated list of high-risk rivers (e.g., sections of the Bear, Jordan, Provo, Weber, Green, and Colorado rivers). Additionally, a strict life jacket mandate will be enforced on "non-standard watercraft" (defined as standard pool floats, blow-up mattresses, or novelties purchased from retail stores) when launched on high-risk river sections.

d. R650-221 – Liveries Vessel Requirements

- i. Overview**
- ii. Council Discussion**

(1:43:34) – Liveries Vessel Requirements (R650-221): Was already previously discussed.

8. Action (5:50PM) - Council Leadership Appointments

- a. Selection of Chair**
- b. Selection of Vice-Chair**

(01:51:11) – In compliance with council bylaws, the floor opened for the annual election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Jeff Salt and Jason Taylor expressed willingness to maintain their current leadership positions.

7. Adjourn - Close (3:00PM)

(01:48:37) – The council discussed scheduling its next session. To avoid reviewing the incoming Boating Recreation Grants during holiday blocks, the board agreed to bypass meetings in peak vacation months (June/July). Jorge Vazquez will issue a scheduling poll focused on the final week of August and the first two weeks of September.

ADAM EAGLE MADE A MOTION TO OFFICIALLY ADJOURN THE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING. SECONDED BY UNSPECIFIED COUNCIL VOICE. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AND THE MEETING CONCLUDED.

