

Utah Board of Water Resources
Board Briefing and Action Meeting
June 25, 2026
Department of Natural Resources Auditorium
1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84114

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM

CHAIR MIKE DAVIS introduced himself and board members present and those online introduced themselves.

DIRECTOR JOEL WILLIAMS introduced himself and the staff present and online.

DISCUSSION OF BOARD PROJECTS:

Project Number	Applicant	County	Manager
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COMMITTAL OF FUNDS:

RE499	Lake Creek Irrigation Company	Wasatch	Ben Marett
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GREG MCPHIE and JAKE ANDERSON were introduced.

BEN MARETT presented the report.

BLAINE IPSON asked what is the approximate time frame for getting the project going.

GREG MCPHIE stated October 1st.

DALE BUXTON inquired regarding the operational scale and coverage area of the district, specifically requesting details on the total number of shares and acreage currently serviced.

GREG MCPHIE we cover the whole east end of the valley. It's a mix between ag use and secondary irrigation for new growth. And part of the reason for this project is because of what growth has done. Our system is outdated and needs to be upgraded and upsized for capacity and pressure issues and things. There are several hundred primary shareholders. There are large shareholders that are mostly ag folks still and then lots of small incremental shareholders for the residential secondary that we also serve. We work closely with the Twin Creek Special Service District. They handle some of that as it gets converted to municipal and industrial use.

DALE BUXTON do you levy this on a per share basis? With the secondary users I'm curious how this works.

GREG MCPHIE we have reserved water for additional growth and as they convert that will help repay this loan in addition to assessments of the current shareholders. This is on a per share basis.

RE501 Cache Highline Water Association Cache Brad Caldwell

JOHN WELLS AND STEVE WOOD were introduced.

BRAD CALDWELL presented the report.

STEVE WOOD expressed appreciation for the board's patience and work with the applicant.

JOHN WELLS added context about the age of the structure and need for the project.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

RC067 Twin Creeks Special Service District Wasatch Ethan Stayner

MAX COVEY, JAKE ANDERSON and THAYNE CLARK introduced themselves.

ETHAN STAYNER presented the report.

MAX COVEY thanked the board for all the funds they have provided. With the upgrades done so far they were finally able to fill the dam after being on a half-fill order for 15-20 years.

THAYNE CLARK with the half-fill order, we were not able to understand how much seepage would have come around the abutments. And so, this project became necessary as we filled the reservoir up for the first time in a long time. And that was new information for us and Dam Safety to see how there was a lot of seepage coming through those abutments. The first project was to get a toe drain system in. The second project is to capture additional leakage that was discovered once we filled the reservoir to the top.

Board members and applicants discussed the size of the reservoir and extent of seepage.

RE505 Wolf Creek Irrigation Company Weber Ben Marett

STEPHEN NOEL and EJ HARRIS were introduced.

BEN MARETT presented the report.

EJ HARRIS expressed appreciation for the board and staff's assistance, and STEPHEN NOEL agreed.

RM016 Highland City

Utah

Ethan Stayner

CHRIS TRUSTY was introduced.

ETHAN STAYNER presented the report.

APPLICATION SUMMARY:

RE506 Moab City

Grand

Ethan Stayner

BRIEFING INFORMATION TO THE BOARD:

STATUS OF FUNDS:

SHALAINE DEBERNARDI presented the report. There has not been much change since our last update. During our last meeting, we discussed possibly adding a page regarding the investigation account. I was unable to gather and prepare that information for today's report, but I will work on it for our next session. Postponing this update to the next meeting is likely ideal, as we will be in the new fiscal year. This will allow us to provide insight into our work over the past fiscal year and begin providing regular updates moving forward.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

DIRECTOR JOEL WILLIAMS Interim meetings were last week. During the Senate confirmation special session, the new Supreme Court appointees were confirmed, alongside members of the Weber Basin Water Conservancy District and another water district. The legislature made no attempts to extend the Governor's drought declaration. We are also undergoing an accountable budget review by the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's Office, which happens about every five years. We have invited the legislative fiscal analyst to our office next week to meet with staff, discuss our work, and answer questions. The analyst will likely make recommendations heading into the fall interim meetings, which may include budget adjustments or performance measures. We will collaborate with them and keep the board updated throughout this process

ATTORNEY GENERAL UPDATE:

SARAH SCHECTER I wanted to provide an update on our litigation status. Our only active litigation is the public trust lawsuit regarding the Great Salt Lake. As discussed during our last closed session, the plaintiffs are challenging the assignment of the three-judge panel. Briefing on this issue is ongoing and is scheduled to conclude around July 10th. Additionally, both the plaintiffs and defendants have agreed to enter mediation on July 15th. Director Williams and I will be attending pre-meetings with our co-defendants to discuss our strategy for the mediation. While I do not believe we need to convene a closed session for this update, I am happy to do so if you have any questions or require further discussion.

BLAINE IPSON moved for a recess. WILLIAM MERKLEY seconded the motion. Meeting recessed at 9:20 AM and will reconvene at 9:30 AM.

CHAIR MIKE DAVIS ended the recess at 9:32 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

BLAINE IPSON moved to approve the May 14, 2026 minutes. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

BOARD ACTIONS (see project list above):

COMMITTAL OF FUNDS:

RE499 Lake Creek Irrigation Company Wasatch Ben Marett

DANA VAN HORN moved the board commit 85% of the project cost, up to \$7,604,000, and that the project be purchased at 1.24% interest over about 26 years, with annual payments of \$346,000. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE501 Cache Highline Water Association Cache Brad Caldwell

DALE BUXTON moved the board commit 32.1% of the project cost, up to \$255,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 25 years with annual payments of approximately \$10,200. WILLIAM MERKLEY seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

RC067 Twin Creeks Special Service District Wasatch Ethan Stayner

DAN VAN HORN moved the board commit an additional \$1,476,000 in dam safety grant funds, and that the contract be amended to state the board will provide 80% of the project cost, up to \$3,668,000, as a dam safety grant. BLAINE IPSON seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE505 Wolf Creek Irrigation Company Weber Ben Marett

BLAINE IPSON moved the board authorize and commit 85% of the project cost, up to \$255,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 15 years with annual payments of approximately \$17,000. DANA VAN HORN seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RM016 Highland City Utah Ethan Stayner

DANA VAN HORN moved the board amend the grant contract to provide 70% of the non-grant portion of project costs, up to \$5,000,000, as a secondary meter grant. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

STATE WATER PLAN UPDATE:

STEPHANIE MCGINNIS presented the current status of the State Water Plan.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

JOEL WILLIAMS Welcome to our guests, Carmen Gondhaleker and Christian Hearn. Congratulations to Stephanie and her team for completing the collaborative, multi-agency state water plan within an impressive 18-month timeline. The level of coordination they have done is astounding. I encourage everyone to review the plan during the public comment period. The current drought conditions are horrible. It has been so dry and we are now seeing the effects. Severe wildfires have burned over 140,000 acres—including the Hastings, Iron, and Cottonwood fires—threatening our watersheds with potential mudslides, flooding, and water quality issues. Communities are also facing acute water shortages. The town of Emery depends on Muddy Creek for its drinking water, and its flows are at just 6% of normal, forcing them to eliminate outdoor and agricultural watering, prioritize immediate drinking needs, and prepare to haul water while executing a four-prong well and spring rehabilitation plan. Similarly, wells in Apple Valley have gone dry due to the dropping water table. While some areas can currently rely on reservoir storage, we must treat these resources prudently to prepare for next year. We don't know what next year holds, but we know that it's going to get worse this year. This urgency was echoed at this week's Upper Colorado River Commission meetings in Denver, where member states shared updates on shortages and water right curtailments. Furthermore, the seven basin states have not yet reached an agreement, introducing future uncertainty. While Flaming Gorge releases should help protect Lake Powell's power pool this year, continued dry conditions will worsen the situation next year. We are all crossing our fingers for improved hydrology, it could help in a lot of ways. As a silver lining, we are seeing an encouraging response from the agricultural community and residents who want to help. Because outdoor watering causes the highest depletion, we advise focusing reduction efforts there, and we greatly appreciate everyone stepping up to do what they can and by converting landscapes and reducing watering frequency.

ADJOURNMENT

DANA VAN HORN made a motion to adjourn at 10:06 AM.