

Utah Lake Study Committee Meeting

March 24, 2005

7:30 - 9:15 a.m.

Utah County Conference Room, Room 2300
100 East Center, Provo, Utah

ATTENDEES:

Members

Mayor Randy Farnworth, Vineyard
Mayor Lewis Billings, Provo

Mayor E. Fritz Boyer, Springville
Mayor Jim Cates, American Fork
Mayor Jerry Washburn, Orem
Mayor Jeff Acerson, Lindon

Larry A. Ellertson, Utah County Commissioner

Other Interested Parties

Dan Nelson, Mountainland AOG
Karl Kappe, Div. of Forestry,
Fire/State Lands

Reed Price, Orem City (Technical Co.)

Jarret Whicker, UTA

Tim Watkins, Envision Utah

David Wham, Utah Div. of Water
Quality

Chris Keleher, JSRIP

Allen Harrison, Bear Lake Regional Comm.

Greg Beckstrom, Provo City

Robert West, Provo City

The Utah Lake Study Committee Minutes of January 27, 2005, were approved.

Technical Committee Report

The Technical Committee has been reviewing the recreational uses and water quality at the Lake.

- The initial opinion was that Utah Lake is not currently utilized as extensively as it was in the past because of the many competing uses of time (TV), other facilities (cleaner appearing lakes, parks, pools and picnic areas) and cost (\$8 entrance fee.)

Ty Hunter, Utah Lake State Park Manager, presented a different opinion stating Utah Lake had the 4th highest usage in 2000 of all Utah State Parks. There were over 400,000 visitors to the State Park in 2001 (does not include other lake access points), averaging 2,500 visitors per day in June and July. 75% of the usage is by boaters and fisherman. Obviously usage is down when water levels are low.

- The public perception of water quality at Utah Lake is that it is unhealthy and polluted—it looks dirty compared to Deer Creek and other reservoirs. In reality, there are only two parameters where the Lake is out of compliance and those are phosphorus and total dissolved solids (TDS). TDS is directly related to water level which is not something that can be regulated.

- Natural inflows of water have a concentration of phosphorous that supports algae blooms and is detrimental whether treatment plants are regulated or not. To achieve 400% reduction in phosphorus levels to come into compliance would be tremendously expensive.
- Please submit in writing specific questions for the Technical Committee to research. Questions raised included the impact of the rising Lake elevations on the phragmites, and the drought impact on the June Sucker.

New Information Sharing:

- Greg Beckstom said the snow levels at Trial Lake are about 2" higher than normal for this time of year (not including the recent storms.) There is greater potential for run-off from Timp Divide. However, most of the run-off will be captured by the reservoirs and will not reach Utah Lake.
- The open house at the Utah Lake Visitor's Center was a success. The new displays on the history of the Lake are great. The construction at the marina was explained. Ty Hunter, Park Manager, has invited this group to hold their next meeting at the Visitor's Center where he will give an update on the Lake.

Bear Lake Regional Commission Presentation by Allen Harrison

- Mr. Harrison, Director of the Bear Lake Regional Commission for 31 years, said the Commission has had no on-going funding and has raised funds annually through the legislature, grants and other resources. They receive funding from both Utah and Idaho, the two counties and involved cities. The 319 Water Quality grant and UP&L funds were received to collect data. He started with a two-person staff. Funding is now available as a line item in some budgets. It took 6-8 years to determine how to manage Bear Lake which involves two states and various jurisdictions. The Bear Lake Regional commission was created in 1973 after meeting with governors from both Utah and Idaho. Their annual budget now is \$300-400,000 and includes consultants and grant writers.
- Coordination and cooperation between entities is critical to the success of his program. The Commission is strictly advisory; the county or city involved provides necessary policy and ordinances. Grantors love to fund multi-jurisdictional cooperative projects. Interlocal agreements or MOUs between entities shows local support for a broader project.
- A common shoreline ordinance was adopted by all entities to protect shoreline integrity provide setbacks for a corridor around the lake. The Commission reviewed the Tahoe Regional Planning Ordinance and made necessary adjustments to fit their needs. Mr. Harrison will send a copy of the Tahoe Shoreline Ordinance for distribution and review.

- The Bear Lake Commission was patterned after the Tahoe Regional Authority, but chose not to have the same power or check writing power as does the Tahoe Authority. They wanted that authority to remain with elected officials.
- The lake and water quality issues were commenced only after the cities and counties were “whole” and the jurisdictions had joined on other projects such as a regional sewer system, water systems and fire department and ambulance needs.
- The Commission is currently working on controlling phosphorus problems in water shed areas.
- Staff and funding is needed to look daily at problems and solutions. The Commission originally did all the planning for both counties and all cities in the region. With growth, some cities have established their own commissions. The staff has expanded to include a person to address tourism. He and his staff also do much of the “on the ground” physical work for projects. They stay neutral of all political entities and haven’t had problems with “force account work” or “sole source” providers.
- Keeping everyone involved and informed of progress is critical to public relations and good will.
- Management of Bear Lake is mostly done by UP&L which coordinates through the Commission.
- Mr. Harrison supports not forcing recreational development, but letting the market dictate.
- He believes an independent organization has more ability to speak for everyone and gives others a vested interest in the voice.
- The Bear Lake Commission currently has 10 members including a county commissioner from each county, a representative of each town over 500 population, and a representative of recreational interests and the irrigation community. The committee size has grown as needed over the years.
- It was suggested that members of this group meet with the Tahoe and Bear Lake Regional Planning groups.

TMDL Study Update and Presentation by David Wham

- Costs of waste water treatment plants as a solution to water quality is very premature “to even go down that road.”
- Department of Water Quality is approaching the problem in two phases: 1) preparation of a Beneficial Use Assessment which will identify the impairments in the Lake, and 2) methods to remove the impairments as needed and feasible.

Impairments could include the changing ecology of the Lake impacted by carp which constitute 85% of lake bio mass, excess nutrients such as salt and phosphorus, and water fluctuations. The Beneficial Use Assessment will be available mid-summer; Technical Memo #1 has already been delivered for comment.

- Sequential science and modeling will be required by the EPA before recommendations are made to reduce phosphorus levels in the Lake.
- A new regional waste water sewage plant is being discussed for South Utah County. Selection of a treatment technology that would allow flexibility to address the findings and recommendations regarding phosphorus in the Lake was encouraged.
- About 20 years of projected population growth will be incorporated into the second phase of the study.
- This committee would be key in forming a local water shed group as recommended by the State. The water shed group should include elected officials of cities and the county, associations of government representatives, landowners, local residents and a technical advisory committee including public works staff, personnel from the Army Corps., Fish and Wildlife and Department of Water Quality.
- Mayor Billings will meet with Mr. Wham to discuss a local water shed organization and formulate an approach to be presented at a future meeting.
- Funding for a local water shed position is available and, combined with a match and cost sharing with the local community, a person could be hired to address water shed issues.

Items for Future Discussion

- An update on the Wasatch Choices transportation model. (Chad Worthin)
- Review the final report and findings of the first year study conducted by the June Sucker Recovery Program. An Executive Summary of the report was requested and it was suggested that the first presentation be to the Technical Committee.
- Refinement of the previously identified purposes of the committee to address recent issues such as interlocal agreements, staff, etc.
- A 3-D regional visual presentation by Envision Utah.

Date, place and time for next meeting.

April 28, 2005, 7:30 a.m. at the Utah Lake State Park Visitor's Center Conference Room.

May 26, 2005, 7:30 a.m. at the Central Utah Water Conservancy District Office at 355 West University Parkway, Orem.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.