

Utah Lake Study Committee Meeting
August 25, 2005
County Commission Conference Room
100 East Center

ATTENDEES:

Members

Mayor Randy Farnworth, Vineyard
Mayor Jerry Washburn, Orem
Mayor Burnell C. Evans, Payson
Mayor Lewis Billings, Provo
Larry Ellertson, Ut. County Commissioner
Keith Blake, American Fork

Other Interested Parties

Rich Valdez, SWCA
Bruce Chesnut, Orem (Technical Committee)
Kris Buelow, CUWCD/JSRIP
Ty Hunter, Utah Lake State Park
Chris Keleher, JSRIP
Greg Beckstrom, Provo
Robert West, Provo
Dan Nelson, Mountainland AOG
Clyde Naylor, Utah County
Steve Densley, Chamber of Commerce
Chris Erb, Payson

- 1) Mayor Billings welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.
- 2) Minutes of May 26, 2005 were reviewed and approved.
- 3) **New Information Sharing**

The Utah Lake Symposium will be held September 22, at UVSC beginning at 8:30 am. The agenda includes sessions on the history of Utah Lake and lakeshore and lake management. The guest speaker is Dick Osgood, Minnesota, who will speak on shallow lake ecology and restoration. Mayor Billings will also present. Videoing the symposium was strongly suggested.

4) **Technical Committee Report**

Dave Lamb, Utah State, made a presentation two months ago regarding the TMDL study. He had hoped to get the technical information to the Technical Committee prior to their meeting this week, but was not able to do so because of the state review process. The committee will review the report when it comes, provide their comments and then present it to the Study Committee. The Technical Committee plans to review the document within the next month. There is a 30-45 day comment period allowed for responses. The Technical Committee was thanked for their work in this area.

5) **Report on joint meeting and visit with Bear Lake Regional Commission**

- Very productive. Good delegation from Utah County.
- Commission crosses state and county boundaries and is well coordinated.
- Commission has no legal authority to exact things from people. The power comes from an earned authority by doing the right thing in a way that brings people to consensus.
- Allen Harrison is the key to their success. He has the personality, skills and expertise.
- Mr. Harrison said communities around Utah Lake should unite on a shoreline ordinance. The plan should include a common development agreement for the lakeshore, transportation and other amenities.

- The Commission is the “keeper of the data” - - the resource of information.
- The states involved (Idaho and Utah) trust the Commission so don’t impose other restrictions.
- All stake holders have input–recreation, tourism, visitors bureau, water users, etc.
- Bear Lake has not experienced the same rapid development that Utah Lake faces, including the incorporated cities on the shores of the lake.
- Utah Lake issues that differ from Bear Lake are the number of tributaries, the demands on the water, ownership of the water and the operation as a federal reservoir.
- A copy of their bylaws and governing documents was offered for review.
- The Commission seems to be more involved in development as it occurs around Bear Lake.
- Allen Harrison has a passion for what happens around the lake, has brought the entities together and “gets in the dirt” working on the projects. A person like him is needed to manage daily and full-time the affairs of the Commission and to push the effort forward.
- Mr. Harrison meets with community leaders to find the common thread. He leaves the relationship with individual citizens to the community leaders.
- The leadership has an impact on funding received. The Commission stands out and has kept a very positive image.
- The Commission organization has stayed small rather than adding layers of administration. The perception is that it is small, very efficient and gets things done, even without taxing authority.
- Mayor Washburn will visit the Lake Tahoe Authority to review their model. It is a larger model and has taxing authority. Others are invited to attend.

6) **Technical Presentation – “Common Carp in Utah Lake” Richard A. Valdez, Ph.D. Certified Fisheries Scientist**

Chris Keleher said carp represent a dominant force in the fish community, the environment of the lake and the June Sucker recovery effort. Options to reduce the population were discussed and an RFP for carp control was sent out. The SWCA environmental consulting firm was selected for the study. They started last year and need another year to gather information before making a decision on what can be done to reduce the carp population in Utah Lake.

Presentation by Richard Valdez, Ph.D. Certified Fisheries Scientist.

- There are 13 native fish to Utah Lake which were important to the early pioneers. Thirty additional species have been introduced–some established and others did not.
- Four kinds of carp were identified. Utah Lake has mostly common carp. Caution should be taken to not introduce the other types because they create problems.
 - a) Silver Carp jump and cause problems with personal water craft and people.
 - b) Grass Carp can legally be introduced to the lake. They are sterile and help in plant and algae control.
 - c) Black Carp are huge fish that will eat 2-3 times their weight in vegetation in a single day and will eliminate all vegetation that is food for other fish, ducks, etc.
 - d) Common Carp.
 - Can weigh up to 82 pounds. The average is about 5 pounds.
 - Are difficult to catch and are great competitors.
 - Feeding behavior is to suck mud, spew it out and pick out the food they want. This decreases water quality and uproots and destroys the vegetation.
 - Reduction will increase water quality and improve the TMDL numbers. (Phosphorus and nitrogen would stay bound in the mud.)
- Carp Control
 - Chemical control** - not desirable because it kills everything in the lake.

Biological control - working on ways to sterilize fish so can't reproduce.

Mechanical control or use of commercial fishermen to remove fish with nets. Bill Loy is doing this at Utah Lake and, of the ton of fish caught in each net, 75% were carp. Game fish constitute 5-6% of the total fish population in the lake. He currently harvests about 23-30,000 pounds a year and could take more if he had a larger market. Commercial uses are mostly for human and animal consumption. They believe it would take 6 years to reduce the carp population by 75%, assuming 50,000 pounds per day could be harvested for 120 days per year. Reducing carp would increase the chances of survival for the June Sucker and other more desirable fish. The June Sucker is federally listed as endangered and is native only to Utah Lake. If the June Sucker were no longer endangered and off the endangered list, there would be more management opportunities and options for Utah Lake. Also, entities must comply with the Endangered Species Act to maintain federal funding for water projects.

80% reduction of carp is desirable and once achieved could be maintained through mechanical removal every 2-3 years. Complete elimination is very difficult.

There are about 80 million age 0 carp in the lake, 15 million age 1 carp, and 7.5 million age 2+ carp in the lake on any given year. Age 2+ carp are the size (8 to 10 inches) that can be caught by commercial fishing nets. There are about 100 million carp in the 100,000 acre Utah Lake that weigh in total about 40 million pounds. Age and growth of carp is determined by the cover of the gills which shows growth lines similar to tree rings.

Carp distribution. 59% of lake is open water and contains 15% of the fish. Provo Bay has 7% of the area and 27% of the fish, Goshen Bay has 7% of the area and 30% of the fish. The East Shoreline has 16% of the area and 19% of the fish while the West Shoreline has 11% of the area and 9% of the fish. Knowing where the fish are provides a target for commercial harvesters.

Potential uses and revenues for carp include human consumption (\$.10-\$.20 cents/pound), pet food (\$.03-\$.05/pound), livestock and poultry feed (\$.01 to \$.03/pound), fertilizer and compost (0 - \$.01/pound). Costs include harvest (\$.15-\$.20/pound), transportation (\$.01-\$.03/pound), pre-processing (\$.01-\$.03/pound), and marketing (unknown).

Fish caught in the net that are not carp must be returned to the lake.

A fishery in Illinois has been contacted that may be interested in setting up a temporary processing plant for the carp.

A person at BYU is also looking at processing carp to produce a protein substance. A marketing class has also been given the option of researching markets and uses for carp or the liquified protein. Fish bones can be ground for bone meal and calcium, but the skins and scales are very difficult to grind.

Natural predators, if introduced, would eat other fish as well. Dredging the lake 10 feet deeper would not impact the carp population significantly because they mostly live in the shallow areas of the lake.

7) **Other business and items for discussion at upcoming meeting**

Report from Mayor Washburn on his visit to Lake Tahoe.

8) There was no public comment.

9) **Set date, place and time for the next meeting**

Unanimous support was given to the motion and second to have the September meeting be attendance at the Utah Lake Symposium. The October meeting would be held on October 27 at 7:30 a.m. in the Commission Chambers.

10) **Meeting Adjourned**