



(/SEARCH)

(//Www.Standard.Net)

Utah critics speak out against new Clean Water Act rules

THURSDAY , MAY 28, 2015 - 12:42 PM



Image by: Standard-Examiner file photo

FILE - A huge line of farm machines sponsored by the Weber County Farm Bureau take part in the Ogden Pioneer Days Parade along Washington Blvd in Ogden Thursday, July 24, 2014.

By JESUS LOPEZ JR.

Standard-Examiner staff

SHARE
 TWEET
 SHARE

The Utah farm association and politicians expressed their disdain for new Environmental Protection Agency rules in the Clean Water Act.

On Wednesday, the Obama administration issued the new rules to clear up confusion over which waters the act protects.

According to the administration, the act protects navigable waterways such as rivers and their tributaries, including the flow of streams and creeks. The rules say pollution from farming and development could impact the health of rivers and lakes.

Various local trade groups and political offices issued statements responding to the rules.

Leland Hogan, president of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation, said his group, along with its national counterparts, are undertaking a thorough analysis of the final rule to determine whether the EPA listened to the substantive comments submitted by farmers and ranchers from Utah and throughout the country during the comment period.

“Based on EPA’s aggressive advocacy campaign in support of its original proposed rule — and the agency’s numerous misstatements about the content and impact of that proposal — we find little comfort in the agency’s assurances that our concerns have been addressed in any meaningful way,” Hogan said.

The farm federation called the rule an end-run around Congress and case law — including the U.S. Supreme Court — on limitations of regulatory reach.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said he was extremely disappointed to see the EPA’s Waters of the United States rule finalized, describing the rule as representing Washington’s regulatory bureaucracy at its worst.

“In devising this rule, the agency deliberately avoided the protections that Congress built into the rulemaking process to ensure the consideration of economic impacts and may have even violated the Anti-Lobbying Act in ‘astroturfing’ fabricated public support for its position,” Hatch said in a statement. “The result is a disastrous outcome that threatens to extend the federal government’s heavy-handed control over even small ponds and irrigation ditches on Utah’s family farms and ranches. I will continue to fight this egregious abuse of the EPA’s authority as well as the larger problem of regulatory overreach by the Obama administration.”

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said the rule safeguards waters such as wetlands that adjoin those waterways.

Artificial ponds and lakes on private property are exempt, along with the majority of ditches, according to an explanation on the agency’s website.

Through the new rules, the agency wanted to clear up confusion over whether a permit was

required to pollute everything from a stream near urban development to a ditch on a farm.

To create the rule, EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers looked at 1,200 peer-reviewed studies and held 400 meetings in communities with stakeholders to design the Waters of the United States rule.

Environmental groups support the rules.

Sierra Club Utah Chapter Manager Mark Clemens said the rules bring common sense and simplification to the protection of streams, waterways and wetlands.

He said in a phone interview that recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings muddled the issue and added confusion to the Clean Water Act.

"Although the Supreme Court is knowledgeable in many things," Clemens said, "biology is not one of them."

He also believes those opposed to the Act do not have the interests of residents.

"Basically, the people that are saying this will kill jobs and are saying that it is over the top regulation, are people who are lining up behind polluters," Clemens said. "They are preventing people from clean water, essentially."

The rules are essential to protect the state's access to water in the future, he said.

"Given the circumstances here in an arid state like Utah," Clemens said, "we need to be especially vigilant in protecting our water supplies."

Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, said the rule undermines states' rightful primacy in water management.

"The Obama administration's latest act of executive defiance-by-fiat, the WOTUS rule, expands the EPA into a regulatory behemoth that would have been unrecognizable by the founders of the Clean Water Act," Bishop said. "It gives the agency power to bully states, Congress, and local and private water users. The implications of this expanded authority on our nation's precious water resources are disturbing, especially as the drought and the bureaucratic mess that worsens its effects are felt throughout the West. This rule severely undermines the state's rightful primacy in water management and the Committee on Natural Resources will be fighting against its implementation."

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, described the rule as the EPA's latest power grab, which threatens every cog in Utah's economy

“Our farmers, ranchers, miners, oil and natural gas producers, will all face higher costs thanks to these new intrusive and unnecessary EPA regulations,” Lee said. “Perhaps most troubling, is the unprecedented lobbying campaign deployed by the EPA to sell its rule to a public that did not want it. This is not how federal agencies are supposed to operate and it is long passed time these bureaucrats were made accountable to the American people.”

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Contact Jesus Lopez Jr. at 801-625-4239 or jlopez@standard.net. Follow him on Twitter at [@jesuslopezSE](https://twitter.com/jesuslopezSE) and like him on Facebook at facebook.com/JesusLopezSE.

 Sign up (<https://2.dat-e-baseonline.com/front/deb.asp?Action=reg&zx=361>) for e-mail news updates.

High Country News

FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE WEST

More waterways likely protected under new EPA rule

The controversial Clean Water Act rule protects tributaries with any sign of water, no matter the flow.

Elizabeth Shogren | DC DISPATCH | May 28, 2015 | *Web Exclusive*

The Environmental Protection Agency and US Army Corps of Engineers released a long-awaited [rule \(http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/rule_preamble_web_version.pdf\)](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/rule_preamble_web_version.pdf) in late May that defines which streams and wetlands will be protected under the federal Clean Water Act.

"Too many of our waters have been left vulnerable to pollution," President Obama said in a statement. "This rule will provide the clarity and certainty businesses and industry need about which waters are protected by the Clean Water Act, and it will ensure polluters who knowingly threaten our waters can be held accountable."

Congressional Republicans and some industry groups attacked the rule as an overreach by the administration that would hurt businesses and job growth.

But EPA administrator Gina McCarthy said given the impacts of climate change on water resources, such as drought in the West, "it's more important than ever to protect the clean water that we have."



EPA's new rule would protect tributaries that flow only part of the year. Las Cruces Arroyo in New Mexico.

Significantly for the arid West, the rule protects tributaries—no matter how frequently water flows in them—as long as they have signs of flow such as beds, banks and high water marks. Nearby wetlands and ponds also would be protected. Ditches would be protected only if they behave like tributaries.

“If you still look and act like a stream, you’re a stream,” McCarthy said in a conference call with reporters.

Some regionally specific water bodies

([http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/fact_sheet_summary_final_1.pdf)

[05/documents/fact sheet summary final 1.pdf](http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/fact_sheet_summary_final_1.pdf)) such as prairie potholes and western vernal pools in California would be protected, but most playas would not, according to McCarthy. Playas, flat desert basins that at times become shallow pools, would be covered only if they are within a 100-year floodplain, or are near or flow into a stream, its tributaries or adjacent wetlands.



Most desert playas, such as this one in Colorado, would not be protected.

Courtesy USFWS

Opponents and supporters of the rule differed over whether this action expands the scope of the Clean Water Act. Some ephemeral streams, waters and wetlands were federally protected before a 2001 Supreme Court decision, under the justification that migratory birds use them; the new rule, in practice, likely will increase the number of waters and wetlands that receive federal protection.

The rule is intended to clear up confusion stemming from the 2001 Supreme Court ruling and another in 2006 that narrowed the scope of the Clean Water Act and sparked a lot of questions and litigation over which wetlands and streams were covered under federal law as Waters of the United States. Uncertainty following these rulings left many waterways and wetlands “vulnerable to pollution,” said Jo-Ellen Darcy, the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works.

“For ecologists and people who care about ecosystems, it’s a big victory,” said Ellen Wohl (<http://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/ellenwohl/>), a professor of geosciences at Colorado State University. “There’s enormous scientific agreement that little streams are very important.”

Streams that do not contain water year-round still play important roles, providing nutrients, sand and organisms for bigger rivers.

“From an environmental perspective, it’s wonderful,” Wohl added. “Scientifically, it’s very obvious these streams need to be protected.”

At issue is whether companies and individuals have to get permits before they pollute, fill in or destroy a waterway or wetland. In the wake of the 2001 and 2006 Supreme Court rulings, decisions about whether permits were necessary often have been subject to lengthy case-by-case consideration. The new rule is supposed to make it clear when wetlands and waterways are protected so case-by-case determinations are needed only rarely.

McCarthy said the rule would create no new permit requirements for businesses, but industry representatives disagreed, arguing that by expanding the scope of the waters and wetlands covered by federal law, the rule will increase bureaucratic burdens on all kinds of companies.

Industry groups predicted the rule would raise costs for people building homes and hurt job growth.

“EPA’s final water rule will needlessly raise housing costs and add more regulatory burdens to landowners and industries that rely on a functioning permitting process to spur job and economic growth,” said Tom Woods, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders.

Woods said the rule goes far beyond what Congress intended to be covered as Waters of the US by the 1972 Clean Water Act (<http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>), and predicted that it soon would end up back in court.

A more pressing challenge to the rule likely will be legislative efforts in Congress to block it, including a bill shepherded by Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyoming, which would cancel EPA's new rule and require the agency to rewrite a more limited rule that would exclude many types of waterways and wetlands.

"Under this outrageously broad rule, Washington will have control over how family farmers, ranchers and small businesses not only use their water, but also their privately owned land," Barrasso said in a statement. "Today's action ensures further momentum for our [bill \(https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1140/text\)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1140/text) that says yes to clean water -- and no to extreme bureaucracy."

Elizabeth Shogren is HCN's DC Correspondent.

Copyright © High Country News



(/SEARCH)

(//Www.Standard.Net)

EPA strengthens federal protections for small streams

WEDNESDAY , MAY 27, 2015 - 1:53 PM

Image by: BENJAMIN ZACK/STANDARD-EXAMINER

 Hikers cross Willard Creek as high water pours through Willard Canyon on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 following weeks of rain around Northern Utah. As of May 21, 3.7 inches of rainfall had been recorded in Ogden for the first three weeks of the month. On average, Ogden only receives around 2.2 inches for all of May.

Darryl Fears

The Washington Post



WASHINGTON — Nearly a decade after the Supreme Court pointed out the confusion over exactly which waters fall under the Clean Water Act, the Obama administration responded with a new rule Wednesday stating what is protected and what is not.

Navigable waterways such as rivers and their tributaries are protected because the flow of streams and creeks, if polluted by farming and development, could impact the health of rivers and lakes, the rule states.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, who announced the rule, said it safeguards waters such as wetlands that adjoin those waterways and also protects certain unique waters, including the Delmarva and Carolina bays, western vernal pools in California and Texas coastal prairie wetlands that flow into waters downstream.

"It's an important reminder that the Clean Water Act makes it illegal to pollute or destroy our waters without a permit," Jo-Ellen Darcy, assistant secretary of the Army for Civil Works, said during a telephone news conference.

Darcy said that previously there was confusion over whether a permit was required to pollute everything from a stream near urban development to a ditch on a farm. "Needless to say it didn't make sense," she said. "We've always known streams and wetlands determine water quality."

EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers looked at 1,200 peer-reviewed studies and held 400 meetings in communities with stakeholders to design the Waters of the United States rule.

In anticipation of criticism from members of Congress, farmers and developers, McCarthy and Darcy emphasized that the new rule does not add to the waters that the act already protected and does not seek to micro-manage farming.

"It will not get in the way of agriculture and recognizes the crucial role that farmers play," McCarthy said. "Farmers, ranchers and foresters are all original conservationists and we recognize that."

Artificial ponds and lakes on private property are exempt, along with the majority of ditches, according to an explanation on the agency's Web site. Darcy said that it covers navigable waters but not the large majority of ephemeral streams that do not impact waters downstream or ditches, Darcy said.

Only "ditches that are constructed out of streams or function like streams and can carry pollution downstream" are protected. "So ditches that are not constructed in streams and that flow only when it rains are not covered," according to the agency's explanation.

The explanations did not sway powerful critics in the Senate. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Environmental and Public Works Committee, blasted the new rule.

When the new rule was proposed, Inhofe and various Republican colleagues asked them to address elements he viewed as an overreach by adding protections for farmers. They wanted a rule that did not include waters in isolated ponds and ditches.

On top of that, they wanted exclusion for "agriculture water, storm water, groundwater, floodwater, municipal water supply systems, wastewater management systems, and streams without enough flow" to impact waters downstream, Inhofe said in a statement in response to Wednesday's announcement.

But "instead of fixing the overreach in the proposed rule, remarkably, EPA has made it even broader," Inhofe said. He called on Congress to craft legislation that better defines what the act can protect.

"The EPA has set themselves up to increase federal control over private lands, and I will not allow it," said Inhofe, whose constituents include farmers. He said his committee will take action in the summer "to halt EPA's unprecedented land grab and refocus its job on protecting traditional navigable waters from pollution."

The new rule stems from a 2006 Supreme Court case in which a Michigan developer fought an EPA fine for filling in 54 acres of wetlands on land he owned to build a shopping center without a permit. EPA and the Army Corps argued that the wetlands were covered by the 1972 Clean Water Act, but the court said the law's reach was unclear.

In an opinion, two justices wrote that all bodies of water "with a significant nexus" to "navigable waters" are covered by the act. The new rule was drafted to end confusion over the meaning of "significant nexus."

McCarthy argued that the rule does in fact address the concerns of Inhofe, his congressional allies and farmers.

"We made clear that we're looking at ditches only when they are tributaries," she said. "We've done a very good job of taking a look at the comments" to the proposed rule. "We are not going to do anything to add regulatory burdens on the agricultural community."

Brian Deese, a senior adviser at the White House, was more forceful. "This rule undoes confusion without getting in the way of farming," he said. "The only people with reason to oppose the rule are polluters who threaten our clean water . . . and they will be responsible for their actions."

Environmental groups and a number of prominent Democrats said the rule brings critical protection to the streams that are most vulnerable to development and pollution. Stopping upstream pollution is key to restoring the health of larger rivers and bays such as the Chesapeake and Puget Sound, said Margie Alt, executive director of Environment America, a Washington nonprofit.

"Our rivers, lakes, and drinking water can only be clean if the streams that flow into them are protected," Alt said. "That's why today's action is the biggest victory for clean water in a decade."

Whit Fosburgh, chief executive of the Theodore Roosevelt Partnership, for hunters and sportsmen, applauded the rule, calling it historic.

“We finally have a rule in place that will stem the tide of wetlands loss and . . . restore water quality protections to trout habitat and salmon spawning waters,” Fosburgh said. “Keeping these waters healthy will also help to ensure the health of local economies that rely on the \$200 billion a year generated by the outdoor recreation industry.”

 Sign up (<https://2.dat-e-baseonline.com/front/deb.asp?Action=reg&zx=361>) for e-mail news updates.



<http://www.standard.net/advantage>

POPULAR STORIES

search sltrib.com

DELIVERING THE BEST ONLINE EDUCATION.

Ranked 13th In The Nation

UtahStateUniversity ONLINE [LEARN MORE](#)

BEST ONLINE PROGRAMS USNews GRAD EDUCATION 2015

BEST ONLINE PROGRAMS USNews BACHELOR'S 2015

Utahns cheer new rules

water

By Brett Prettyman The Salt Lake Tribune

First Published May 27 2015 04:48PM • Last Updated May 27 2015 09:00 pm

[continue to article](#)



<http://csp/mediapool/sites/sltrib/pages/printfriendly.csp?id=2559336>

[Share This Article](#) [Single page \(?fullpage=1\)](#)

Utahns are panning and, alternatively, praising new federal environmental guidelines for small bodies of water.

The rules, released Wednesday by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers are meant to clarify which streams and tributaries fall under federal jurisdiction after two U.S. Supreme Court rulings dealing with the Clean Water Act muddled the issue.

Utahns echoed the complaints, and celebrations, of landowners across the country.

Land Tawney, executive director of Backcountry Hunter and Anglers, credited an "unprecedented effort to restore clarity to a bedrock natural resources law."

"The rule will conserve resources important to our fish, our wildlife, our citizens — and to the waters and wetlands that are central to our national identity," he said.

But Utah Farm Bureau CEO Randy Parker said the rules ignore everyday American property owners' rights.

"We don't think they took into account a lot of the concerns of America's food producers — farmers and ranchers across the country," Parker said.

Some farmers worry that every ditch and puddle could now be subject to federal oversight.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said the rule will only affect waters that have a "direct and significant" connection to larger bodies of water downstream that are already protected. The EPA has said 60 percent of the nation's streams and waterways are vulnerable, and these rules clarify which of those waters are protected. The regulations would only kick in if a business or landowner intends to pollute or destroy those waters.

Despite McCarthy's interpretation, conservatives are casting the rules as federal overreach.

Parker said the American Farm Bureau Federation repeatedly asked for clarification of the rules, but never got simple answers.

"If you don't follow certain guidelines in removing brush or fencing, for example, you could be in violation and fined substantially," he said. "How are those tied to clean water?"

U.S. House members voted to block the regulations earlier this month. Similar legislation is making its way through the Senate.

Utah Congressman Rob Bishop said the new rules would make the Clean Water Act "unrecognizable" to those who wrote it.

"It gives the agency power to bully states, Congress and local and private water users," said Bishop, who is chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources. "The implications of this expanded authority on our nation's precious water resources are disturbing, especially as the drought and the bureaucratic mess that worsens its effects are felt throughout the West."

He pledged that his committee will fight the rules' implementation.

Lawmakers argue the rules could greatly expand the reach of the clean water law and create confusion among officials in the field as to which bodies of water must be protected.

McCarthy acknowledged the proposed rules issued last year were confusing and said the final rules were written to be more clear. The regulations don't create any new permitting requirements for agriculture, she said, and even add some new exemptions for artificial lakes and ponds and water-filled depressions.

» Next page... (</news/2559336-155/utahns-cheer-jeer-new-epa-water?page=2>)

Single page (?fullpage=1)

2 (</news/2559336-155/utahns-cheer-jeer-new-epa-water?page=2>)



SERIOUS INJURIES
SERIOUS EXPERTISE



Robert J. DeBry
ASSOCIATES

Advertise with us

Report this ad

EPA: Fracking not source of widespread water contamination

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Follow @amyjoi16

Published: Friday, June 5 2015 3:45 p.m. MDT

Updated: Friday, June 5 2015 8:15 p.m. MDT

Print Font [+][-] Leave a comment »

What You May Have Missed



These three countries offer insights into the challenges families face in an aging society



Military families fight to stay connected, even on Father's Day



Churches need to refocus on the individual to attract the 'nones'



In this March 29, 2013 file photo, workers tend to a well head during a hydraulic fracturing operation at an Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc. gas well outside Rifle, in western Colorado.

Brennan Linsley, Associated Press

[Enlarge photo »](#)

Summary

Both sides in the fracking debate and its impact to water supplies are saying a new report by the federal government backs their position. The EPA said there is no evidence of widespread problems but did admit there are vulnerabilities.

SALT LAKE CITY — Both friends and foes of hydraulic fracturing are praising a new study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that warns of potential contamination to drinking water supplies but concedes no big problems have happened to date.

That preliminary conclusion in the [draft assessment](#) published Friday by the EPA comes after the agency reviewed data from nearly 25,000 oil and gas wells, including hundreds in the Uinta Basin, culled additional records from 333 wells across the United States, and examined 12,000 records.

The agency also released nine peer-reviewed scientific reports that are part of the overall analysis, initiated in 2009 at the request of Congress.

While the EPA did find incidences of contaminated drinking water wells, it said the number of identified cases was small in comparison to the number of hydraulically fractured wells. The EPA did admit that the margin may be small because of insufficient information or other "limiting" factors.

Some say the findings back assertions by Utah and three other states that a new federal rule on "fracking" is unnecessary because local regulatory oversight is sufficiently protective of public and environmental health.

Sign up for news updates

Email Address

5K Midsummer Night's Run *at the* Fairy Tale Festival

June 20

Register Now

THANKSGIVING POINT

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Most Popular

In Utah Across Site

- Meet the 51 contestants vying for the title...
- Rattlesnake painted pink from head to tail...
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building ablaze...
- Supreme Court reinstates wrongful death claim...
- Internet providers boosting speeds on the...
- Master violin maker Peter Prier dies at 73
- Boyfriend hits, kills teen girl with SUV;...
- Public gets its chance to weigh in on prison...

"This report is damaging for the (Obama) administration and contradicts a predominant claim the White House has used to justify a federal fracturing rule," said Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah.

In May, Gov. Gary Herbert announced that Utah would join North Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado in a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management that asserts the rule is unnecessary, duplicative of states' efforts and a burdensome cost to industry — as much as \$250,000 per well.

"I think what is safe to say from this report is that fracking is really not a water concern. It is not an issue that has had a widespread impact on the nation's water supply, and it is not going to," said Cody Stewart, Herbert's policy adviser. "This supports our position that the federal fracking rule is unwarranted and it is addressing an issue that is really not a problem."

But the EPA's assessment did warn there is ample reason for caution when it comes to fracking and safeguarding drinking water in oil and gas-producing regions.

The agency, relying on 950 sources of information, framed its research around five stages of the hydraulic fracturing water cycle:

- 1.) Water acquisition — the withdrawal of ground or surface water to use in hydraulic fracturing fluids.
- 2.) Chemical mixing to blend water, chemicals and other substances for the fluid.
- 3.) Well injection itself to fracture the geologic formations.
- 4.) The return of the injected fluid and water produced from the process and its transport.
- 5.) Wastewater treatment and waste.

The EPA picked five case study locations in Colorado, North Dakota, Texas and Pennsylvania, conducting two rounds of sampling at 70 domestic water wells, 15 monitoring wells, and 13 surface water sources.

The agency also is using computer models to identify conditions that may lead to impacts on drinking water supplies. In particular, the EPA has identified what is says are hypothetical but realistic scenarios around the five water cycles in the process.

"Potential impacts to drinking water sources from withdrawing large volumes of water in semi-arid and humid river basins — the Upper Colorado River Basin in the West and the Susquehanna River Basin in the East — are being compared and assessed," the report said.

Environmental groups say the study backs their fears.

"The EPA's water quality study confirms what millions of Americans already know — that dirty oil and gas fracking contaminates drinking water," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's director.

"Unfortunately, the EPA chose to leave many critical questions unanswered. For example, the study did not look at this issue under the lens of public health and

Get The Deseret News Everywhere



Most Commented

In Utah Across Site

- Public gets its chance to weigh in on... 43
- Police investigating violent hate... 24
- S.L. Mayor Ralph Becker defends police... 23
- Rancher Cliven Bundy denies firing... 20
- GOP 2016 field still 'scattered' after... 18
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building... 18
- Voters across Utah may consider tax... 15
- Farmers get 82 percent of Utah's water... 12

ignored numerous threats that fracking poses to drinking water. The EPA must conduct a comprehensive study that results in action to protect public health," Brune said.

Earthworks policy director Lauren Pagel said the assessment should serve as a call to action for the Obama administration, Congress and state governments to step in to protect water supplies.

The study will be finalized after review by the Science Advisory Board and public review and [comment](#).

Email: amyjoi@deseretnews.com, Twitter: [amyjoi16](#)

Recommended Stories



Southern Utah state parks
Utah is a gold mine of outdoor recreation, scenic sites and historical locations.



The Utes' best wide receivers
A look at the best players to ever play the wide receiver or split end position at the University of Utah.



Overcoming a major scare
Failure to collect trophies put added emphasis as RSL kept alive hopes of an Open Cup win by beating Sounders 2.

Comments

[Leave a comment »](#)

DeseretNews.com encourages a civil dialogue among its readers. We welcome your thoughtful comments.
— [About comments](#)

About the Author



Amy Joi O'Donoghue

Amy Joi O'Donoghue is the environmental reporter the Deseret News, specializing in coverage of issues that affect land, air, water and energy development. She has worked here since 1998 and has been an assistant city [more](#)

Connect:

FUTURE OF ENERGY QUIZ
TOPIC: ENERGY DIVERSITY

Approximately what percentage of America's electricity is provided by nuclear energy?

Take The Quiz

Advertise with us

Make Summer Even Hotter With Your New Audi.

[Learn more](#)

Report this ad

HUFFPOST TRAVEL

Edition: US ▾

Search The Huffington Post

Like **696k** Follow

FRONT PAGE

POLITICS

BUSINESS

ENTERTAINMENT

MEDIA

TASTE

STYLE

GREEN

HUFFPOST LIVE

Potash Evaporation Ponds Are A Technicolor Surprise In Utah's Desert



Suzy Strutner

Associate Lifestyle Editor, The Huffington Post

Posted: 06/01/2015

Is that a tropical beach, or the Utah desert?

If you're driving along [State Route 279](#) near [Arches National Park](#) outside Moab, Utah, you may notice some electric-blue bodies of water popping out from the red, rocky landscape. No, it's not a mirage: You've happened upon a strange surprise known as [Potash Ponds](#).

These man-made ponds are for collecting [potash](#), a potassium-containing salt used in farm fertilizers. [Workers pump the potash from way below the Earth's surface into the ground-level ponds](#), where sun evaporates the pond water and leaves potash behind. The water is dyed an eye-catching blue so that it'll absorb heat and evaporate more quickly, a process that typically takes about 300 days.

[Some passersby have found it jarring](#) when, seemingly out of nowhere, the mine pools make a surreal stark contrast to the mostly unspoiled landscape. And indeed, the ponds *do* look bizarrely tropical in their desert setting:







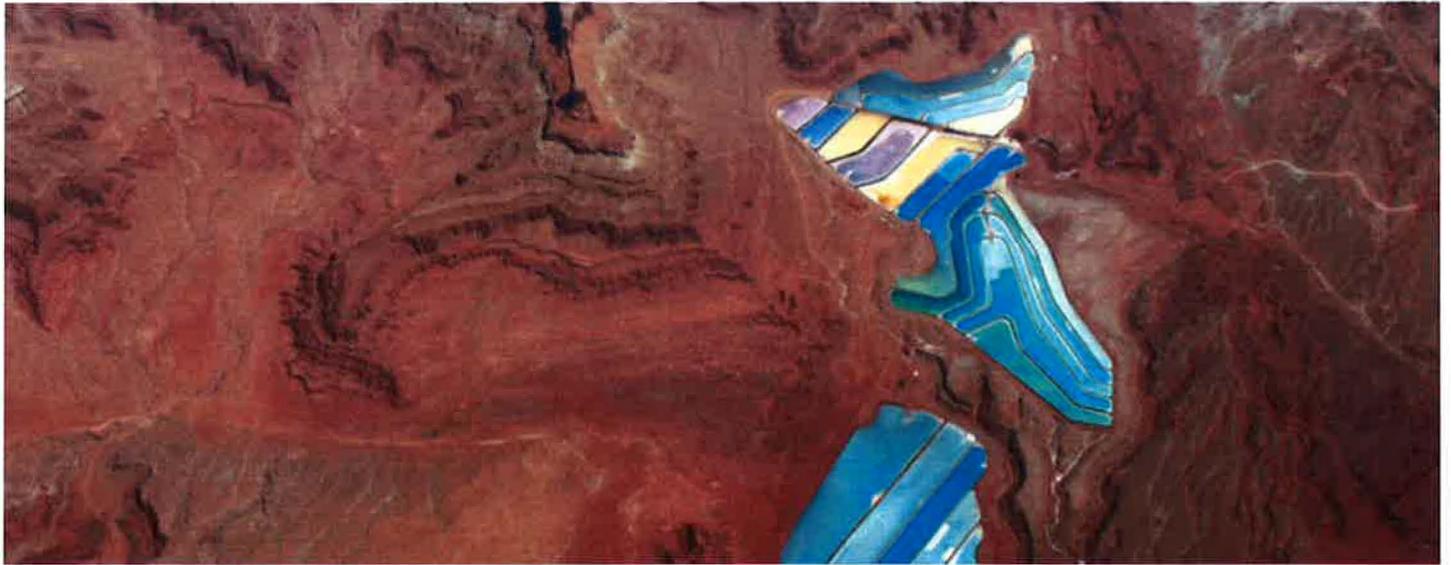
The ponds are closely monitored to make sure they comply with environmental guidelines. Intrepid Potash, the company that operates the ponds, monitors water quality around the ponds four times a year, vice president [Gary Kohn](#) told The Huffington Post.

"As long as they're meeting qualifications... there's no [negative] environmental impact," said [Donna Spangler](#), a spokesperson for the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

While walking right up to the ponds is not encouraged, you can glimpse them from [State Route 279](#), also known as the [Potash Scenic Byway](#) or Potash Road, as it follows the Colorado River through sandstone cliffs and rocky outcrops. A round-trip scenic drive will take about [two hours](#).

You can continue on to [Dead Horse Point State Park](#), popular for camping and biking. Canyonlands National Park is also nearby, with what visitors say are among [the most challenging whitewater rapids in the world](#).

And if you happen to travel by plane, you'll be able to see the ponds as a surprising series of stripes on an otherwise arid landscape.



H/T Amusing Planet

 *Best Places To Travel In 2015*

1 of 7 < >

AdChoice

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Upper Mill Creek Canyon to close temporarily

Published: Tuesday, June 2 2015 11:25 a.m. MDT
Updated: Wednesday, June 3 2015 4:54 p.m. MDT

Print Font [+][-] 1 Comment »



Millcreek Canyon in Salt Lake City Tuesday, May 1, 2012. A portion of Mill Creek Canyon will be closed next week as ongoing restoration work is done.

Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News

[Enlarge photo»](#)

Summary

A portion of Mill Creek Canyon will be closed next week as ongoing restoration work is done.

MT. OLYMPUS — A portion of Mill Creek Canyon will be closed later this month as ongoing restoration work is done.

The next phase of the Mill Creek Restoration Project will be implemented with the installation of two culverts. The temporary closure, beginning June 15, will extend from the winter gate at Maple Grove to the area 1 mile downstream of the Big Water trailhead.

The winter gate is closed annually Nov. 1 to June 30 to vehicle traffic. The June 15-30 closure will be for all walking, biking and vehicle traffic, and is necessary to accommodate large construction vehicles and equipment that could create hazards for the public.

No hiking, biking and motor vehicle access will be allowed on the road beyond the winter gate. The road and area should be open on July 1.

What You May Have Missed



These three countries offer insights into the challenges families face in an aging society



Military families fight to stay connected, even on Father's Day



Churches need to refocus on the Individual to attract the 'nones'

Sign up for news updates

Email Address



Advertise with us

Report this ad

Most Popular

In Utah Across Site

- Meet the 51 contestants vying for the title...
- Rattlesnake painted pink from head to tail...
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building ablaze...
- Supreme Court reinstates wrongful death claim...
- Internet providers boosting speeds on the...
- Master violin maker Peter Prier dies at 73
- Boyfriend hits, kills teen girl with SUV;...
- Public gets its chance to weigh in on prison...

Recommended Stories



The Utes' best wide receivers
A look at the best players to ever play the wide receiver or split



Overcoming a major scare
Failure to collect trophies put added emphasis on PST, but



Southern Utah state parks
Utah is a gold mine of outdoor recreation, scenic sites and

SPONSORED

[▶ Listen Live](#)

Agency Seeks Comment on Colorado River Basin Strategy

By [JUDY FAHYS \(/PEOPLE/JUDY-FAHYS\)](#) • MAY 27, 2015

[Twitter \(http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fpsr8jyz&text=Agency%20Seeks%20Comment%20on%20\)](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fpsr8jyz&text=Agency%20Seeks%20Comment%20on%20)



(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kuer/files/styles/x_large/public/201505/sand_hollow-3247.jpg)

Rethinking how the Colorado River Basin stores water is one of the subjects considered in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Moving Forward report. This is Sand Hollow Reservoir in southern Utah, a potential storage site for Colorado River water.

JUDY FAHYS/KUER

The U. S. Bureau of Reclamation has been taking a hard look at the Colorado River Basin, exploring ways to deal with the reality that the Colorado River can't always deliver all of the water that people demand.

The need for new coping strategies is clear to anyone who sees the vivid bathtub rings around Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The river serves more than 35 million people and irrigates 4.5 million acres of crops in seven states. And the pressures are only expected to grow. The agency has a new list of strategies (<http://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/detail.cfm?RecordID=49294>) to prepare for times when water demands exceed Colorado River supplies.

"Imbalance of supply and demand," says Carly, who led Reclamation's effort, "just puts a lot of stress on all of the things that are dependent on water."

That includes communities, businesses, farms, recreation and the environment. And it means conserving water, reusing it and updating the pipe network. Bart Forsyth, assistant general manager of the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (<https://jvwcd.org/>), served as Utah's representative in the cities and industry stakeholder group looking at the issue for the Bureau of Reclamation. He helped brainstorm dozens of water solutions. To him, the biggest change ahead has nothing to do with technology.

"What we're looking for is a mindset change -- a community value system," he says, "where we're all looking to save water, to understand how valuable it is as a natural resource and to basically incorporate a water conservation ethic."

One of the top ideas from Forsyth's stakeholder team is smart metering, which allows customers to monitor their water use online, as it happens. Around 8,500 of the systems will be installed and operational in a year in Salt Lake County.

The report is formally called "Moving Forward." The Bureau of Reclamation will take comments on the strategy through August 10.

TAGS: [DRINKING WATER \(/TERM/DRINKING-WATER\)](#)

[JORDAN VALLEY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT \(/TERM/JORDAN-VALLEY-WATER-CONSERVANCY-DISTRICT\)](#)

[COLORADO RIVER \(/TERM/COLORADO-RIVER\)](#)

Related Content

(/post/wanted-more-utahns-envision-utahs-future)
(/post/wanted-more-utahns-envision-utahs-future)
(/post/wanted-more-utahns-envision-utahs-future)

4 weeks ago



(/post/wanted-more-utahns-envision-utahs-future)

Wanted: More Utahns to Envision Utah's Future (/post/wanted-more-utahns-envision-utahs-future)

(/post/watershed-faucet-path-salt-lake-city-drinking-water)
(/post/watershed-faucet-path-salt-lake-city-drinking-water)
(/post/watershed-faucet-path-salt-lake-city-drinking-water)

1 month ago



(/post/watershed-faucet-path-salt-lake-city-drinking-water)

From Watershed to the Faucet: The Path of Salt Lake City Drinking Water (/post/watershed-faucet-path-salt-lake-city-drinking-water)

(/post/salt-lake-county-calling-water-conservation-efforts)

(/post/salt-lake-county-calling-water-conservation-efforts)

(/post/salt-lake-county-calling-water-conservation-efforts)

1 month ago



(/post/salt-lake-county-calling-water-conservation-efforts)

Salt Lake County Calling For Water Conservation Efforts (/post/salt-lake-county-calling-water-conservation-efforts)

(/post/state-federal-leaders-look-future-colorado-river)

(/post/state-federal-leaders-look-future-colorado-river)

(/post/state-federal-leaders-look-future-colorado-river)

2 years ago



(/post/state-federal-leaders-look-future-colorado-river)

State, Federal Leaders to Look at Future of the Colorado River (/post/state-federal-leaders-look-future-colorado-river)

(/post/should-utah-lease-its-share-colorado)

(/post/should-utah-lease-its-share-colorado)

(/post/should-utah-lease-its-share-colorado)

1 year ago



(/post/should-utah-lease-its-share-colorado)

Should Utah Lease Its Share of the Colorado? (/post/should-utah-lease-its-share-colorado)

(/post/study-colorado-river-s-economic-value-huge)

(/post/study-colorado-river-s-economic-value-huge)

(/post/study-colorado-river-s-economic-value-huge)

4 months ago



(/post/study-colorado-river-s-economic-value-huge)

Study: Colorado River's Economic Value Is Huge (/post/study-colorado-river-s-economic-value-huge)

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Quagga mussel inspections begin at Daniels Canyon

Published: Monday, June 1 2015 11:10 a.m. MDT
Updated: Monday, June 1 2015 11:14 a.m. MDT

Print Font [+][-] Leave a comment »



In this photo released by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources on April 17, 2008, quagga mussels cover a boat's hull.

Natalie Muth, AP

[Enlarge photo»](#)

Summary

The Utah Department of Natural Resources and the Utah Department of Transportation have opened a watercraft inspection station at the Daniels Canyon port of entry.

HEBER CITY — In an ongoing effort to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species, including quagga mussels, the Utah Department of Natural Resources and the Utah Department of Transportation have opened a watercraft inspection station at the Daniels Canyon port of entry.

Vehicles with watercraft, including boats, personal watercraft such as jet skis and WaveRunners, canoes, kayaks, float tubes and similar watercraft will be required to stop at the port of entry for inspection during hours when the station is open.

The port is along U.S. 40, just southeast of Heber City near mile marker 22.

Vehicles with watercraft traveling the opposite way down the canyon — northwest toward Heber City — will not be required to stop. When the inspection station is operating, all watercraft will be inspected.

Watercraft that have not been properly decontaminated must be decontaminated before leaving the port of entry.

To avoid the wait, watercraft owners can make an appointment at most major Utah State Parks to get your watercraft professionally decontaminated.

For a list of locations with hot water decontamination services, and for other information about aquatic invasive species and why it is critical to keep them out of Utah waters, visit www.stdoftthesea.com.

What You May Have Missed



These three countries offer insights into the challenges families face in an aging society



Military families fight to stay connected, even on Father's Day



Churches need to refocus on the individual to attract the 'hones'

Sign up for news updates

Email Address

5K Midsummer Night's Run *at the* Fairy Tale Festival

June 20

Register Now

THANKSGIVING POINT

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Most Popular

In Utah Across Site

- Meet the 51 contestants vying for the title...
- Rattlesnake painted pink from head to tail...
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building ablaze...
- Supreme Court reinstates wrongful death claim...
- Internet providers boosting speeds on the...
- Master violin maker Peter Prier dies at 73
- Boyfriend hits, kills teen girl with SUV;...
- Public gets its chance to weigh in on prison...

SERIOUS INJURIES
SERIOUS EXPERTISE



Robert J. DeBry
ASSOCIATES

Advertise with us

Report this ad

State launches planning effort for complicated Jordan River

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Follow @amyjoi16

Published: Monday, June 8 2015 3:40 p.m. MDT
Updated: Monday, June 8 2015 5:15 p.m. MDT

Print Font [+][-] 1 Comment »

What You May Have Missed



These three countries offer insights into the challenges families face in an aging society



Military families fight to stay connected, even on Father's Day



Churches need to refocus on the individual to attract the 'nones'



View 8 photos »

A drainage pipe lies on the opposite side of a TRAX station at the Redwood Trailhead Park in West Valley City, Tuesday, June 2, 2015.

Chris Samuels, Deseret News

Summary

Oversight of the Jordan River and its corridor is never simple, made complicated by an urbanized setting that traverses three counties and 15 cities. State officials are beginning the process of crafting a comprehensive management plan for the bed.

SALT LAKE CITY — The inherently complicated task of trying to figure out what works best for the 53-mile-long Jordan River may one day be easier as state officials embark on the effort to craft a comprehensive management plan for the river bed.

A series of three meetings that kicks off in Davis County Thursday is part of the initial push to develop a draft plan, slated to be released next spring.

While managing the river for water quality falls to the oversight of one state entity, and the flows to a river commissioner, the actual control of the river bed itself falls to the state Division of Forestry, Fire and Sovereign Lands — which is tasked with regulatory oversight of submerged lands navigable at statehood.

The division has crafted similar plans for Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake, but this is the first time the Jordan River will receive the benefit of a plan designed to streamline management of necessary permits that impact its river bed.

"With increasing development in the Salt Lake City area and on the Wasatch Front, there are increasing pressures to put in pipelines or infrastructure around the river," said Laura Vernon, the division's project manager. "Before (implementation of a management plan), we have to take each application as it comes in and make decisions on it and do site-specific plans on each of the proposed projects."

Sign up for news updates

Email Address



THANKSGIVING POINT
20 YEARS
UTAH SYMPHONY
AT THE WATERFALL AMPITHEATER
July 1, 2015
ZIONS BANK

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Most Popular

In Utah Across Site

- Meet the 51 contestants vying for the title...
- Rattlesnake painted pink from head to tail...
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building ablaze...
- Supreme Court reinstates wrongful death claim...
- Internet providers boosting speeds on the...
- Master violin maker Peter Prier dies at 73
- Boyfriend hits, kills teen girl with SUV...
- Public gets its chance to weigh in on prison...

each of the proposed projects.

The plan, once finalized and in effect, will help the division evaluate each application with an eye toward its overall impact on the river bed and identify best practices along the way, she said.

Managing the river and its resources has grown increasingly complicated over the decades, with 15 cities that border the Jordan River and development that has sprung up over time.

Vernon said the pipelines and other infrastructure that have accompanied that urbanization have created challenges or hazards that have their own management concerns.

As an example, a pipeline that cuts across the river at the Winchester bridge at about 6400 South creates a waterfall, and a series of rocks and concrete slab act as natural spillways.

In 2010, a pair of kayakers drowned in the river after going over these structures, becoming trapped in an undertow. Their family sued, [reaching a settlement with the state](#) and some of the involved cities that in part requires the hazard be addressed.

Remediation on that section of the river begins next week as a result of the agreement, and the plan — while not a direct result of the litigation — will help identify hazards, correct them and minimize new threats in the future, Vernon said.

"We want to identify areas of the river that are not safe, or not safely navigable," she said.

Vernon urged the public to get involved.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to get people together in the same room and talking about the same resource," she said. "Everybody has their own issue on the river, but they are often not talking together on how to collectively manage it. We are hoping to get the kind of collaboration and information that we can bottle for years to come and keep the discussion going."

Those meetings are:

- 6-8 p.m. Thursday at North Salt Lake City Hall, 10 E. Center.

- 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, June 16, at the Day Riverside Branch Library, 1575 W. 1000 North.

- 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, at the Saratoga Springs Fire Department, 995 W. 1200 North.

The planning process also includes an interactive feature on the state's [website](#) where people can mark spots along the river where they feel improvements are needed and submit suggestion cards.

Laura Hanson, executive director of the Jordan River Commission, said she hopes a list of capital improvement projects results from the development of the management plan — a list that will provide clear direction for all interested parties.

"Hopefully this will provide some consistency in how the corridor is managed," Hanson said.

Get The Deseret News Everywhere



Most Commented

In Utah Across Site

- Public gets its chance to weigh in on... 43
- Police investigating violent hate... 24
- S.L. Mayor Ralph Becker defends police... 23
- Rancher Cliven Bundy denies firing... 20
- GOP 2016 field still 'scattered' after... 18
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building... 18
- Voters across Utah may consider tax... 15
- Farmers get 82 percent of Utah's water;... 12

HELPED OVER 28,000
UTAH FAMILIES AND COUNTING

Robert J. DeBry
ASSOCIATES

Let Us Help You

Advertise with us Report this ad

While a city or other entity may put in an attractive pedestrian bridge to cross the river, that bridge may not be a suitable height for kayakers and others, she said.

"We want to make sure those bridges are the appropriate height and width, and that any pipeline or other structure going under the river or over the river follow certain standards," Hanson said. "The more people we get down to the river, the more people fall in love with it. As they engage and recreate in the river, we want to make it safe."

Email: amyjoi@deseretnews.com

Twitter: amyjoi16

Recommended Stories



Southern Utah state parks
Utah is a gold mine of outdoor recreation, scenic sites and historical locations.



The Utes' best wide receivers
A look at the best players to ever play the wide receiver or split end position at the University of Utah.



Overcoming a major scare
Failure to collect trophies put added emphasis as RSL kept alive hopes of an Open Cup win by beating Sounders 2.

★ Popular Comments

[See all 1 comment »](#)

TiCon2 Cedar City, UT

If the Jordan river were on the other side of the freeway, this would have been done 20 years ago and the river would be the jewel of the valley.

9:01 p.m. June 8, 2015 ★ Top comment

Comments

[Leave a comment »](#)

DeseretNews.com encourages a civil dialogue among its readers. We welcome your thoughtful comments. — [About comments](#)

About the Author



Amy Joi O'Donoghue

Amy Joi O'Donoghue is the environmental reporter the Deseret News, specializing in coverage of issues that affect land, air, water and energy development. She has worked here since 1998 and has been an assistant city [more](#)

..

Connect:

WE'LL FOCUS ON YOUR CASE. YOU FOCUS ON GETTING BETTER.
 Get a FREE Consultation

Robert J. DeBry
 ASSOCIATES

Advertise with us Report this ad

University of Utah engineers launch clean water initiative in Pakistan

By [Wendy Leonard](#), Deseret News

Follow [@wendyleonards](#)

Published: Saturday, June 6 2015 5:35 p.m. MDT
 Updated: Sunday, June 7 2015 7:41 p.m. MDT

[Print](#) [Font \[+\]\[-\]](#) [Leave a comment »](#)



The University of Utah embarked on a five-year plan to help bring clean water to parts of Pakistan.

Jordan Allred, Deseret News

[Enlarge photo»](#)

Summary

The University of Utah embarked on a five-year plan to help bring clean water to parts of Pakistan.

SALT LAKE CITY — The University of Utah embarked on a five-year plan to help bring clean water to parts of Pakistan.

The country is one of the most "water-stressed" in the world, according to the [World Resources Institute](#). Death of children from waterborne illness, drought and flood extremes led the global research organization to identify the South Asian country one most in need of help in 2013.

"Estimates indicate at least one quarter of Pakistanis do not have safe and reliable access to clean drinking water," Steven Burian, University of Utah associate professor of civil and environmental engineering. He said the project, announced Wednesday in Pakistan, will help in many ways, beyond providing sustainable, clean water.

"The project is contributing to curriculum advancement, applied research innovations, technology and venture commercialization, business growth, stakeholder engagement, network building and workforce development to achieve water security in Pakistan," Burian said.

To address current and ongoing needs, the project will focus on developing hydraulics, irrigation and drainage systems, provide for integrated water resources

What You May Have Missed

- These three countries offer insights into the challenges families face in an aging society
- Military families fight to stay connected, even on Father's Day
- Churches need to refocus on the individual to attract the 'nones'

Sign up for news updates

Email Address

THANKSGIVING POINT
 20 YEARS

UTAH SYMPHONY
 AT THE WATERFALL AMPITHEATER

July 1, 2015
 ZIONS BANK

Advertise with us Report this ad

Most Popular

In Utah [Across Site](#)

- [Meet the 51 contestants vying for the title...](#)
- [Rattlesnake painted pink from head to tail...](#)
- [Police: 18-year-old set LDS building ablaze...](#)
- [Supreme Court reinstates wrongful death claim...](#)
- [Internet providers boosting speeds on the...](#)
- [Master violin maker Peter Prier dies at 73](#)
- [Boyfriend hits, kills teen girl with SUV...](#)
- [Public gets its chance to weigh in on prison...](#)

management, standardize sanitation and hygiene processes and pioneer environmental engineering.

"By helping Pakistan, we help ourselves," Burian said. He said Utah faces many similar issues as Pakistan, including water management for resiliency to drought, rehabilitation of aging water infrastructure and protection of environmental quality and public health.

"We'll learn as we work with the Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, as well as conducting research and disseminating knowledge," Burian said.

David Pershing, University of Utah president, said the project "exemplifies a global collaboration," benefitting both Pakistan and academics at the university.

The announcement of future water security came at the launch of the [United States-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies Initiative](#), which intends to expand higher education research and training opportunities to the heavily populated country.

Burian and other experts from the U. were in attendance at the announcement, to represent the upcoming water project, though, a formal signing ceremony with Pakistani dignitaries and university officials will take place Aug. 11 at the University of Utah.

Email: wleonard@deseretnews.com Twitter: [wendyleonards](https://twitter.com/wendyleonards)

Get The Deseret News Everywhere



Most Commented

In Utah Across Site

- Public gets its chance to weigh in on... 43
- Police investigating violent hate... 24
- S.L. Mayor Ralph Becker defends police... 23
- Rancher Cliven Bundy denies firing... 20
- GOP 2016 field still 'scattered' after... 18
- Police: 18-year-old set LDS building... 18
- Voters across Utah may consider tax... 15
- Farmers get 82 percent of Utah's water... 12

Recommended Stories



SPONSORED

Southern Utah state parks

Utah is a gold mine of outdoor recreation, scenic sites and historical locations.



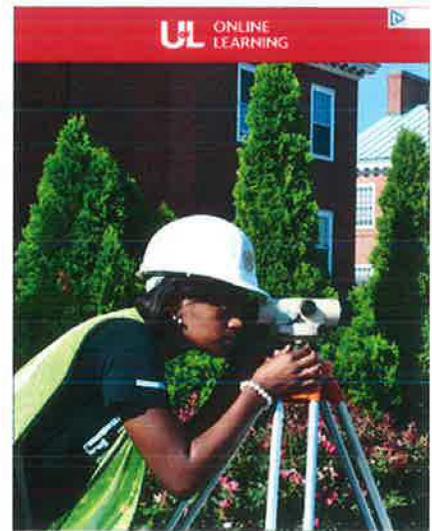
The Utes' best wide receivers

A look at the best players to ever play the wide receiver or split end position at the University of Utah.



Overcoming a major scare

Failure to collect trophies put added emphasis as RSL kept alive hopes of an Open Cup win by beating Sounders 2.



Master of Science in **Civil Engineering**

100% Online

► For professionals with a BS in Civil Engineering

[Learn More](#)

Advertise with us

Report this ad

Comments

Leave a comment »

DeseretNews.com encourages a civil dialogue among its readers. We welcome your thoughtful comments. — [About comments](#)

About the Author



Wendy Leonard

Wendy Leonard works as a reporter for the Deseret News, and while her daily duties are dictated by breaking news, she currently focuses on writing about issues involving health care, medicine and transportation. She began [more ..](#)

Connect:

