Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

1st Annual Report to the Utah State Legislature
Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee
February 2011

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"The Great Salt Lake Advisory Council is playing a vital role in helping to balance the many important uses of the Great Salt Lake. Now is the time to ensure this valuable natural treasure is protected for future generations."

– Governor Gary Herbert

GREAT
SALT LAKE
ADVISORY
COUNCIL

Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

BACKGROUND

The Great Salt Lake Advisory Council ("Council") was established by House Bill 343 in the 2010 session of the Utah State Legislature. Council members were appointed by Governor Herbert, with consent of the Utah Senate, in June 2010. Governor Herbert kicked off the initial Council meeting on June 30, 2010.

Duties of the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

Legislation creating the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council identifies five specific "duties" of the Council:

1) ADVISE the governor, the Department of Natural Resources ("DNR"), and the Department of Environmental Quality ("DEQ") *"on the sustainable use, protection, and development of the Great Salt Lake"* ("GSL") *"in terms of balancing: (i) sustainable use; (ii) environmental health; and (iii) reasonable access for existing and future development."*

2) ASSIST the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands ("FFSL") in its statutory responsibilities for the Great Salt Lake (i.e. to prepare and implement a comprehensive management plan, initiate and publish studies of the lake, coordinate activities of DNR divisions with respect to the lake).

3) RECOMMEND appointments to the GSL technical team and utilize technical support from that team.

4) ASSIST DNR and DEQ and their boards in their responsibilities for the Great Salt Lake.

5) REPORT *"annually"* to the Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee *"on the council's activities."*

2010 Activities of the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

Consistent with its five statutory duties, the Council initiated the following activities in 2010:

1) The Council prepared itself to provide substantive advice on Great Salt Lake to the statutorily-designated recipients by holding six formal meetings in 2010 that included: briefings (industry, agency, environmental); tours (Antelope Island, Gilbert Bay, GSL Minerals, Promontory Point, Bear River Bird Refuge, Farmington Bay, GSL Marina, Stansbury, South-shore industries); formal discussions about governance, issues and priorities; and other fact-finding and evaluation activities regarding GSL.

The Great Salt Lake supports important mineral and aquaculture industries. Brine shrimpers at work. ©Don Leonard

2) The Council began assisting FFSL in its statutory responsibility to prepare a comprehensive management plan ("CMP") by meeting with the FFSL planning team staff and representatives three times in 2010 to discuss the plan and process. The Council has established a formal process and will provide input and feedback to the FFSL planning team and staff through completion of the plan in 2011-2012 and during subsequent plan implementation.

3) Council members agreed to assist FFSL in strengthening its GSL technical team by identifying and recommending candidates for the GSL technical team, focusing on technical experience and qualifications. During 2011 and beyond, the Council will forward its formal recommendations to FFSL and will utilize the GSL technical team for its expertise.

4) The Council took its first step in assisting departments and boards by responding favorably to a formal DEQ request for a Council representative to serve as liaison for the Council on a GSL-related water quality standards Steering Committee. Pursuant to its statutory duties, the Council will continue to assist state departments and boards in their responsibilities related to GSL.

5) The Council will fulfill its annual report responsibility to the legislature, beginning with this report on 2010 activities and 2011 tasks, provided to the Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee in February 2011.

The Great Salt Lake is Utah's most important natural landmark, and supports one of the most significant wetland ecosystems in the world. ©Dan Campbell

2011 Tasks and Activities of the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

During 2011, the Council will continue to focus on its five statutory duties and will advise, assist, and report to the governor, state agencies and the legislature on their responsibilities regarding Great Salt Lake, including tasks initiated in 2010 that carry over into 2011.

As a result of 2010 fact-finding activities and evaluations, the Council has identified four (4) critical areas of immediate inquiry for 2011 that Council members *unanimously* believe are necessary to fulfill the Council's statutory duties and which will provide valuable, essential data on GSL to the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Legislature:

1) Economic Impacts/Benefits – The Council will prepare a report identifying the economic impacts of the Great Salt Lake on the State of Utah. Areas of consideration include, but are not limited to: recreation, tourism, mineral extraction, brine shrimp harvest, other economic activity, air quality, wildlife viewing, wildlife hunting, education, overall employment, lake effect, etc. The report will identify the economic benefits the State of Utah and local communities derive from the Great Salt Lake.

2) Definition of Lake Health – The Council will prepare a report identifying a scientific definition of what constitutes a healthy Great Salt Lake. Areas of consideration will include, but are not limited to: identification of key ecological targets, their essential attributes, what indicators to use to measure GSL health, current conditions, stresses on chosen targets, scientific recommendations for desired condition, and a monitoring program to track key indicators over time.

3) Water Budget/Audit – The Council will help to develop a report that provides a clear picture of the sources and uses of water in the GSL watershed as these affect Lake health. Areas of evaluation will include flows in and out, major diversions, evaporation, seasonal variations, Great Salt Lake water quantity and quality, etc.

4) Research Needs – The Council will prepare a report identifying GSL research needs that require further understanding in order to address the statutory subjects of "(i) sustainable use; (ii) environmental health; and (iii) reasonable access for existing and future development." The report will include a description and justification for each research topic and an estimate of the time and money required to complete each task. Working with the GSL technical team, the Council will include a priority ranking for the research.

The Great Salt Lake is a key destination for sportsmen and waterfowl enthusiasts yielding millions in tourist dollars annually. ©W.F. Kubicheck

Great Salt Lake Advisory Council Summary of 2010 Council Meetings

June 30, 2010 – Antelope Island State Park

Formal Announcement of the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council by Governor Gary Herbert

Introductory Meeting of the Council:

- Council member introductions
- Review of legislation establishing the Council (House Bill 343)
- Introductions by Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Establish schedule, including meeting dates, briefings and tours

Through field tours and information sessions, the Great Salt Lake Council is hearing from all stakeholders. ©Chris Montague

July 29, 2010 – Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Overview of Great Salt Lake from the Division of Water Quality (DWQ)

Briefing on State Agency responsibilities and activities pertaining to Great Salt Lake by:

- Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL)
- Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)
- Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality (DWQ)
- Tour of Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

August 26, 2010 – Fort Buenaventura Park

State Agency Briefings:

- Briefing on Pressures on the Great Salt Lake Resource by DWQ
- Briefing on the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem Program (GSLEP) and on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) by DWR

Interest Group Briefings:

- Brine Shimp Industry by the Utah Artemia Association
- Mineral Extraction Industry by Great Salt Lake Minerals
- Environmental Interests by The Nature Conservancy

Briefing on the Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan (GSL CMP) by FFSL

September 30, 2010 – Great Salt Lake Marina to Farmington Bay

Tour of GSL Marina, Gilbert Bay, Promontory Point and Harbor, U.P. Causeway, GSL Minerals, Farmington Bay, etc.

November 3, 2010 – Great Salt Lake Marina to Stansbury

Update on Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan by FFSL and SWCA Environmental Consultants

Tour of Stansbury Interpretive Area, Stansbury South Pump House, U.S. Magnesium, etc.

Briefing by Great Salt Lake South-shore Industries:

- U.S. Magnesium
- Cargill Salt Company
- Allegheny Technologies
- Morton Salt Company
- Broken Arrow Inc.

December 1, 2010 – Utah Department of Natural Resources

Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan

- Update on plan and process by FFSL
- Discussion of plan issues and of process for Council input on plan

Discussion of role of Council on GSL issues

Discussion and outline of annual report to legislature by Council

Discussion, evaluation and prioritization of 2011 tasks by Council

Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

Chair: Leland Myers

Box Elder County
Commissioner
Ryan Tingey

Davis County
Commissioner
Louenda H. Downs

Salt Lake County
Julie Peck-Dabling

Tooele County
Dan Tuttle

Weber County
Commissioner
Jan M. Zogmaister

Salt Lake City
Councilman Carlton Christensen

Conservation Interests
David Livermore

Migrating Bird Protection Area
Jeff Richards

Extractive Industry
Nicol Gagstetter

Aquaculture
Don Leonard

Publicly Owned Treatment Works
Leland Myers

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