

Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program
Ecosystem & Habitat
Request for Proposals
July 2025

Background

Drought, climate change and continued water demand are threatening the Great Salt Lake. As acknowledged by the United States Department of the Interior and specifically the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), many tools and actions are needed to protect and preserve the lake. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has awarded \$50 million of Inflation Reduction Act funds to the Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner (GSLCO) to implement the Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program (GSLWDP or Program). DNR and GSLCO will administer the Program, one of the key tools to protect the future health of the Great Salt Lake. Collectively, the program will result in delivering conserved water to the lake, depleting less water within the Great Salt Lake basin, and enhancing the surface water flow monitoring network throughout the complex ecosystem. The GSLWDP has three focus areas, or project categories: voluntary water transactions, system conservation, and ecosystem and habitat restoration. This Request for Proposal focuses on ecosystem and habitat projects in the Great Salt Lake Basin.

This GSLWDP project category concentrates on protecting and restoring wetlands that surround the Great Salt Lake to benefit lake hydrology, and is similar to the wetlands and habitat grant program offered by the Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust and Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.

Request for Proposals Announcement

The Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner is seeking proposals from eligible entities (defined below) for GSLWDP funds to protect and restore wetlands around the Great Salt Lake and improve lake hydrology.

Proposed projects anywhere in the Great Salt Lake basin will be eligible for funds, but projects that result in the greatest hydrologic benefit to the lake will be given preference. There is no cap on funding requests, but no additional funding beyond the \$50 million provided by the GSLWDP will be made available. The application period will open July 23, 2025, and will close October 24, 2025. **All proposals must be submitted to the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner at GreatSaltLake@utah.gov no later than 11:59 PM on October 24, 2025.**

Guiding Principles of the Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program

These guiding principles are established to ensure the maximal, longest-lasting benefit to the Great Salt Lake is achieved through the use of the funding provided. All project applications must comply with these guiding principles. If a proposed project is found to be not in compliance with these principles, the project will not be considered for funding.

1. Do no harm.

The intent of the Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program is to provide the maximum possible benefit to the Great Salt Lake through the implementation of a diverse set of project varieties that will yield multiple benefits to the Great Salt Lake. Proposals that could lead to an increase in consumptive use of water, harmful impacts to the watershed's ecology, ecosystems, or habitats, or other harmful or negative consequences will not be considered eligible for GSLWDP funding.

2. Measure and monitor.

Benefits provided for the Great Salt Lake through the implementation of GSLWDP proposals must be measurable and verifiable. Projects that include measurement and/or telemetry monitoring must include a long-term monitoring plan. Such measurement infrastructure must be made accessible and available to the Division of Water Rights to ensure the long-term viability of the project, and to provide a method to verifiably deliver water to the Great Salt Lake.

3. Use available resources responsibly.

There is substantial need for financial resources in order to meet many of the challenges faced by the Great Salt Lake. This highlights the need to make the most responsible use of the resources available. If a project proposal is found to have a potential risk of failure to complete the project within the proposed timeframe, or if the benefits that would result from the implementation of a project are found to be insufficient relative to the cost of the project, or another concern that a project proposal may not represent a responsible use of GSLWDP funds arises, then that project will not be considered eligible for funding.

4. Maintain consistency with the Great Salt Lake Strategic Plan

[The Great Salt Lake Strategic Plan](#) defines criteria for viable solutions to the challenges faced by the Great Salt Lake. Project proposals should be able to meet this same criteria. Project proposals must be:

- ecologically sustainable,
- economically feasible,
- politically possible,
- technically feasible, and
- legally sound.

Funding Availability

Up to \$50 million is available to be allocated to the three different project categories based on several factors, including but not limited to: project readiness/feasibility, connectivity to other projects that benefit the GSL ecosystem and water delivered to the Great Salt Lake. Therefore, the funding distribution will be determined by the GSLWDP Evaluation Committee after reviewing project submissions and making final determinations.

Eligible Entities:

Entities eligible to receive GSLWDP funds for ecosystem restoration projects are:

- Government entities - State of Utah agencies, federal, local governments (i.e., municipal, county or other political subdivisions of the state).
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - Non-profit organizations registered as Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Private landowners, private entities, or institutes of higher education (public or private).

Application Requirements

Proposed projects must:

- comply with the Great Salt Lake Water Delivery Program Guiding Principles,
- describe the type of wetland improvements and/or restoration activities that would be implemented,
- quantify the amount of water savings that would result from the improvements, if any, and
- define and quantify the necessary planning, design, and engineering expenditures required in the budget sheet provided.

When applicable, applicants are expected to make their best, reasonable attempt to estimate and explain the potential water savings, with the understanding that it is only an estimate. In cases where the project involves the dedication and delivery of water to the Great Salt Lake, such water must be permanently dedicated and delivered to the Great Salt Lake through an approved change application with the Division of Water Rights. Incomplete applications may not be considered eligible for funding.

Project Eligibility

To be eligible, projects must be within the Great Salt Lake basin, and must provide a hydrologic benefit to the lake, its ecology, habitats, and/or ecosystems. This includes projects in the general vicinity of the Great Salt Lake, defined as being within seven (7) miles distance from the Great Salt Lake meander line (Figure 1). Projects that are located outside this general vicinity are eligible if the applicant can adequately demonstrate benefit(s) to the hydrology of the Great Salt Lake.

Wetland restoration refers to activities that improve or restore the hydrological and ecological function of wetlands and connected habitats. Activities can include those that restore the hydrological connectivity between wetland habitats and the Great Salt Lake, establish new

conservation easements for protected wetlands, or otherwise facilitate water flows into wetlands and the Great Salt Lake. Alternative funding for wetland protection projects is available through the [Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust](#) and the [Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands funding opportunity](#).

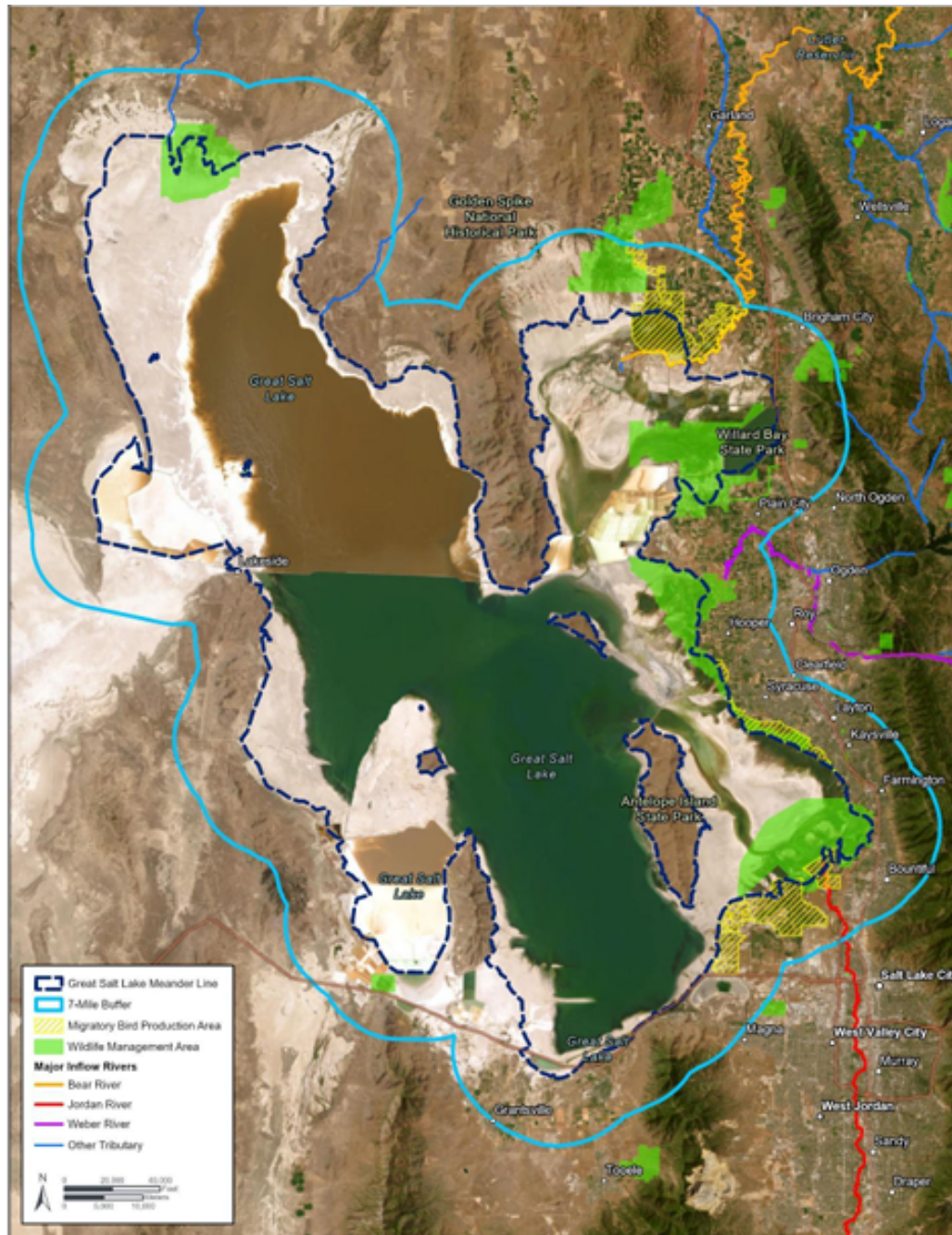


Figure 1. Great Salt Lake and the 7-mile meander line.

If you are unsure of whether your proposal meets these criteria, or is suitable for consideration for Ecosystem & Habitat funding, please submit your proposal anyway. All applications received before the application deadline will be reviewed to determine if it is eligible for funding through the GSLWDP. Applicants may be contacted for more information regarding their application if it is needed by the Evaluation Committee to make an accurate determination regarding the application.

Matching Funds

There is no funding match requirement for GSLWDP applications. However, projects that provide matching funds will be scored higher. The higher the percentage match, the more preference the application will receive in ranking.

Permitting and Access Requirements

The Lead Applicant will be required to complete any necessary federal and state permitting, change application, or regulatory compliance requirements, and obtain access permission prior to project construction.

Projects funded under the GSLWDP must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable federal environmental laws. The Bureau of Reclamation is willing to consult with Lead Applicants prior to application submission to make a preliminary determination of the documentation that will be required to comply with the applicable NEPA standard, and other applicable environmental laws. To arrange for a consultation, contact the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner at GreatSaltLake@utah.gov. The Bureau of Reclamation will make the final determination of the documentation requirements during the project selection phase of the program. Funding recipients will be responsible for preparing the necessary documentation for Reclamation's review and signature.

The Lead Applicant is responsible for ensuring legal access to project locations, including any necessary landowner agreements if possible. Appropriate consultation and approved change applications with the Division of Water Rights will also be required prior to project commencement.

Annual and Project Completion and Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to submit annual reporting updates, due upon the date of contract execution. The annual reporting will include a summary of project activities, a financial summary and a project completion estimation. A brief summary of project progress and budget information will be required with submission of reimbursement requests. A project close-out report will also be required for Bureau of Reclamation documentation within 90 days of project completion.

Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest or Relationships

The applicant (i.e., project team) must disclose any potential conflict of interest or relationships between the project team and any of the following: Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, or GSLWDP Evaluation Committee members. The following agencies and organizations are represented on the GSLWDP Evaluation Committee:

- Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner
- Utah Department of Natural Resources
- Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
- Utah Division of Water Rights
- Utah Division of Water Resources
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands
- Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
- Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust

Timelines and Process

- **July 23, 2025:** First day to submit applications
- **October 24, 2025:** Last day to submit applications
- **October 27 - November 28, 2025:** Select grant award recipients
- **December 2025 - January 2026:** Contracting
- **December 2025 - August 2030:** Execute projects
- **August 2030 - July 2031:** Closeout project contracts

Applications will be reviewed and selected by the GSLWDP Evaluation Committee, composed of state resource experts, after applications are due. The committee, inclusive of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner, will make recommendations to USBR, who will make a final determination on recommended projects. Successful applicants will be notified of award at the conclusion of the evaluation process. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the reasoning behind why their application was not selected for funding by January 2026.

Process for Application Submission

GSLWDP application materials (i.e., application form and budget template) can be found on the [GSLCO website](#). Once complete, email application materials to the Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner at GreatSaltLake@utah.gov. If your application is too large to email, please send a link to a shared folder and download permissions to GreatSaltLake@utah.gov. All proposals must be submitted by 11:59 PM on October 24, 2025.

Contracting and Invoicing

Contracts for GSLWDP funding will be awarded through the Department of Natural Resources and will be finalized within 60 days of project award. Invoicing for completed work will occur on a quarterly basis and include a brief explanation of project activities, budget information and an estimate of percentage of work completed. A complete W9 form and a complete FI-170 or FI-171 (whichever is applicable) must be provided prior to any funds being awarded.

Project Evaluation Criteria

Project applications will be evaluated against the priorities outlined in the table below. Each application will receive a ranking for each priority.

The relative importance of the priorities listed below is as follows: Fundamental Priorities are of the greatest importance, followed by High Priorities as the next most important, and Moderate Priorities as the third-most important. Priorities of the same classification are of comparatively equal importance. All priorities must be addressed by a proposed project.

Criteria	
Criteria	Priority
Hydrologic benefit to the Great Salt Lake	Fundamental Priority
Ecosystem and wildlife benefits	Fundamental Priority
Clear project budget and matching funds	High Priority
Long-term monitoring and reporting	High Priority
Project durability	High Priority
Pre-consultation with Division of Water Rights	Moderate Priority