

## UTAH DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES UTAH BOARD OF WATER RESOURCES

The Division and Board of Water Resources were created in 1967. They replaced the Utah Water and Power Board established in 1947 and were assigned the functions of the Water and Power Board enumerated in the *Utah Code Annotated, Title 73, Chapter 10*.

The division and board are responsible for promoting the orderly and timely planning, conservation, development, utilization, and protection of Utah's water resources and to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of the state. The division is one of seven agencies of the Utah Department of Natural Resources. The eight members of the Board of Water Resources are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. They represent individual river basins and work with local government and private interests to develop local water resources and water distribution systems. Division and board policies encourage water development from local initiatives rather than from state or federal mandates.

Responsibilities of the Board/Division of Water Resources are:

A. Protect Utah's Rights to Interstate Waters - The director of the division is Utah's Interstate Streams Commissioner and helps protect Utah's rights in interstate streams from infringement by the federal government or other states. Utah is a party to interstate compacts on the Colorado and Bear rivers. The Board with the concurrence of the governor appoints commissioners to serve on the Bear River Commission. The division is associated with several interstate and state/federal organizations including the Western States Water Council, Upper Colorado River Commission, Bear River Commission, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, National Water Resources Association and the Colorado River Water Users Association.

B. Comprehensive State Water Planning - The division formulated a *State Water Plan*, published in 1990, and has developed eleven individual river basin plans through a coordinated process to evaluate existing water resources in the state, assess future needs and determine water-related issues, and recommend how and by whom they can be resolved. The plan identifies programs and practices of state and federal agencies, water users groups, and environmental interests and describes the state's current and future water-related needs. The basin plans are continually updated using current population and demographic projections, hydrologic data, river basin simulations, water supply and demand models, and water-related land use inventories. The plans are reviewed and approved by the Board.

C. Weather Modification (Cloud Seeding) - *The 1973 Weather Modification Act* instructed the Division of Water Resources to authorize, sponsor and develop weather modification projects that conform to state water planning objectives. A project to augment naturally occurring snowpack in central and southern counties was started in 1975 in affiliation with the Water Resources Development Corporation. Each year approximately 15 northern, central and southern counties, involving city and county governments and water conservancy districts, participate in the program that costs an estimated \$400,000. The division allocated \$150,000 to this effort, but local county officials control the cloud seeding operation in their counties.

D. Administer State Funds to Investigate, Design and Construct Water Development and Conservation Projects - The Division and the Board of Water Resources administer the state's Revolving Construction Fund, Cities Water Loan Fund, and Conservation and Development Fund that are available to and have been used by cities and towns, private irrigation companies,

water conservancy or improvement districts and others to help pay for construction of dams and reservoirs, canals, wells, pipelines, sprinkler irrigation systems, and culinary and dual water systems. Since 1947, the state has invested more than \$356 million in more than 1,100 cost-share projects costing more than \$708 million to construct. Projects are located in all of Utah's 29 counties. To optimize the availability of funding for the overall water development and conservation program of the state, project sponsors are required to share in the cost of their projects and repay board funds.

E. Water Conservation and Education - The division develops and distributes water conservation and Education instructional materials to teachers and students in Utah's public schools. A statewide Young Artists' Water Education Poster Contest for grades kindergarten through sixth grade, started in 1984, is offered to more than 10,000 classrooms each year in conjunction with Water Education Month in October. The division also promotes Water Fairs that involve fourth and fifth grade students and is teamed with the National Project WET (Water Education for Teachers). To promote water conservation, the division supports the nonprofit Utah Water Conservation Forum, evaluates water conservation plans submitted by cities and districts, and works with local water agencies, citizens and professional groups to develop and implement water conservation programs. The division promotes modification of state and local laws, ordinances and regulations for efficient water use.

### **Historical Background of the Board of Water Resources and its Predecessor Organizations Through Utah's State Legislatures**

- 1897 - State Board of Land Commissioners created to select, locate, appraise, protect, sell, rent and generally manage the state's public lands.
- 1903 - Arid Land Reclamation Fund Commission established.
- 1907 - State Board of Land Commissioners empowered to loan reservoir land grant funds.
- 1909 - Utah State Conservation Commission established to prevent waste of Utah's natural resources.
- 1911 - Utah State Conservation Commission asked to inquire whether the waters of any stream or other source of water supply could be wholly utilized for irrigation on lands lying under that source of water supply and whether or not such waters could be used for purposes other than irrigation.
- 1921 - Utah Water Storage Commission created to formulate a definite plan for the ultimate development and utilization of the state's water resources.
- 1941 - Publicity and Industrial Development Department replaced the Utah Water Storage Commission but retained the commissions duties.
- 1947 - Utah Water and Power Board replaced the Publicity and Industrial Development Department. All waters of the state, whether above or below ground, were declared to be property of the public subject to existing rights.
- 1953 - Water and Power Board responsibilities expanded to include appointment and supervision of intra-state stream commissioners.
- 1967 - Board of Water Resources and Division of Water Resources created to replace the Utah Water and Power Board.