

Duchesne County Plan Division of Water Resources Comments

In the 2023 general legislative session, legislators passed SB 76 Water Amendments. The bill requires counties to consult with the Division of Water Resources on several items. See excerpts from the plan and comments below.

- “Value/Goal Statements: A Framework for Action” seems like an appropriate section to include your water elements and steps toward action and implementation. I did see mention of water and growth on Page 12 line 14-22, but it needs to be expanded on.
- Under SB89, Cities are responsible for hitting regional conservation percent reduction goals by 2030. For Duchesne County, this metric is an 18% reduction by 2030. SB110 and SB76 would like you to consider this goal. A discussion about how your Water Element will impact this goal is important to include in your plan.
- Is the land use described in your general plan accurate and reflect current planning? Is the population information still accurate? Accurate land use and population is important because it will impact your water budget, which we would like you to develop.
- Please expand and update Page 25 lines 37-40. This describes coordination between agricultural water users and municipalities in regards to future demand/availability. What does this coordination look like? How do you coordinate with these entities and track data from them? How is this data used to predict future demand/availability?
- Page 49 Line 26-32 discusses water consideration. I would like to see action steps for the water conservation and zoning ordinance standards for drought tolerant landscaping. What is the county going to do in the future to help this vision?
- Page 177 Table WAT1 “Summary of Overall Existing and Future Demands” should be updated (data from 2007).
- The discussion found on Page 178 Lines 12-24 is exactly what we are looking for, but needs to be updated as data is from 2010 and 2014.
- Page 179 urges conservation and discusses the importance of balancing supply and demand, which is great. The following action items on Page 180 and 181 are good too. Have these conservation items been completed? When will they be completed? How much water savings will come from these projects (reuse, water conservation plans, metering all connections)?

Duchesne County Plan Division of Drinking Water Comments

In the 2023 general legislative session, legislators passed SB 76 Water Amendments. The bill requires counties to consult with the Division of Drinking Water on several items. See excerpts from the plan and comments below.

- I would really like to see evidence that you have coordinated with their local water systems.
- Page 180 line 34 is the county policy with conservation recommendations to water suppliers. This is very good.
- Page 181 reflects the need for regionalization of water supply planning. Any action items or recommendations about this?
- I would like to see action steps. What is the county going to do in the future? They capture current (2019) situations and potential future problems but no policy recommendations for how to overcome these.
- Needs to tie in population growth and land use changes with water supply availability projections.
- Current/future water demand is based on a 2007 engineering study. That may need to be updated.
- I would like to see an overview of current water sources and their production levels, storage capacity, etc. and what they think that will need to be to support population growth over the next several decades.

Duchesne County Plan UDAF's Comments

In the 2023 general legislative session, legislators passed SB 76 Water Amendments. The bill requires counties to consult with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) on several items. See specific code below. UDAF has reviewed Duchesne's General Plan. See excerpts from the plan and comments below.

Objective: Duchesne County has identified the need to improve communication and coordination among planning entities and service providers. A specific example identified is the lack of coordination between agricultural water users and municipalities in respect to current use and future demand/availability.¹

UDAF Comments: The Resource Management section of the Plan has an in-depth description of the county's agriculture, including sections on Agriculture, Livestock Grazing, Water Quality and Hydrology, Water Rights, Irrigation, and Ditches and Canals, with objectives and policies. Those objectives and policies, however, are not specifically reflected in the Value/Goal Statements section of the General Plan.

The Agriculture section discusses agriculture statistics showing an increase in agricultural producers and a slight decline in agriculture land, but the 2022 Census of Agriculture shows a decline in the number of agriculture producers by 165 from the 2017 report and a loss of 4% of producers in the last 20 years. Land in farms has been declining for the past 20 years with net loss of 247,303 acres or a 20% loss of farm ground. This is the first time in the last 20 years there has been a decline in the number of agriculture producers in the state. Land in farms has been declining for the last 20 years with a total loss of 1.2 million acres. This is the area of Wasatch or Cache county.

The General Plan could be strengthened in the following ways to meet the new statutory requirements:

1. Identify prime agricultural land the county would like to protect.
2. Include a goal to meet with agriculture landowners to determine their long-term plans for their land.
3. Encourage agricultural producers to either place their land in an Agricultural Protection Area and/or in a conservation easement
4. Identify the value of agriculture as a source for food security, wildlife habitat, and open space.
5. Identify all irrigation companies within the county.
6. Work with irrigation companies to create a map of all their canal/ditch systems.
7. Include a goal to involve the irrigation companies in all land use changes which impact their delivery system.
8. Encourage irrigation companies to implement water optimization projects that would support regional water conservation goals.

UDAF is ready and willing to provide technical support and encourages adding us as a collaborator within the stakeholder lists.

Utah Code References:

¹ Duchesne County Plan page 25. 37-40

Subsection 17-27a-403-(2)

(c) In drafting the land use element, the planning commission shall:

(i) identify and consider each agriculture protection area within the unincorporated area of the county or mountainous planning district;

(ii) avoid proposing a use of land within an agriculture protection area that is inconsistent with or detrimental to the use of the land for agriculture

Subsection 17-27a-403-(2)(f)

(v) shall consult with the Department of Agriculture and Food for information and technical resources regarding the potential benefits of agriculture conservation easements and potential implementation of agriculture water optimization projects that would support regional water conservation goals

(vi) shall notify an irrigation or canal company located in the county so that the irrigation or canal company can be involved in the protection and integrity of the irrigation or canal company's delivery systems