

UACD

POLICY POSITIONS



2007

Utah Association of Conservation Districts Since 1948

The Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD) is a nonprofit corporation representing Utah's 38 conservation districts. The primary function of the nation's 3000 conservation districts is to protect the soil, water quality and the related natural resources. The districts in Utah are governed by five elected supervisors and use a voluntary, incentive-based approach to assess resource conditions and deliver technical, financial and educational assistance.

The UACD supports the work of the districts by:

- Representing their interests and initiatives with state and federal agencies, the Utah Legislature and the U.S. Congress;
- Providing services to and assisting in the education of supervisors;
- Promoting conservation and the wise use and management of Utah's natural resources;
- Helping secure technical, financial, educational and scientific resources needed to assess and address local resource needs;
- Facilitating the coordination of conservation work on both private and public lands;
- Encouraging cooperation among districts and public and private conservation agencies and groups; and
- Providing a structure whereby district officials can communicate with one another, combine resources, develop policy and take action.

The UACD acknowledges the importance of Utah's local elected leaders and thanks you for your support and commitment to protect and improve the state's soil, water and related natural resources.

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LAND USE

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

Utah Partners for Conservation and Development Shrub Steppe Restoration Initiative:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts to prevent the listing of the Sage Grouse as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act by providing staff support for the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development Watershed Restoration Initiative and by assisting local sage grouse working groups efforts to restore habitat. 2004, 2007

Encouragement of Tax and Energy Incentives for On-Farm Methane Generation:

...that UACD encourage lawmakers, agencies, and utility companies to offer tax and other incentives to encourage technology that produces methane by using bacteria to digest manure in order to generate electricity. (Green power, purchase of methane-generated power at market rates, carbon credits, etc.) 2004, 2007

Support of RS 2477 to maintain local control granting right-of-way across public lands:

...UACD supports RS 2477 and other rights of way across public lands. 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Archaeology studies on Utah state owned lands:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts opposes the leaseholder being held financially responsible for archeological studies on Utah State owned lands;

...that the State of Utah bear the cost of needed studies. 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Proper Use and Management of Riparian Areas:

...that we urge riparian area management programs use the Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) in developing and implementing resource management plans. 1990, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Utah Grazinglands Network (UGN) Coalition Support:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD) continue its support of Utah's Grazing Network Initiative (UGN). 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Grazing and/or agriculture practices as management tools for lands acquired for habitat protection:

...that UACD work with the State Legislature, National Congress, Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, private organizations, the Utah Grazing Improvement Program Board, and others to educate national leaders on the benefits of livestock grazing and farming to maintain critical habitats and increase forage and water production. 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Noxious weed control:

...that the UACD supports the prudent use of chemical and biological weed control agents on federal, state, county, city, and private lands, and,

...that the UACD supports the continued control of noxious weeds on federal, state, county, and city lands in accordance with the Utah State Noxious Weed Law and wise and prudent practices and appropriate application rates. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

Wilderness management:

...that UACD oppose the concept of wilderness management on non-wilderness lands and areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and strongly urge federal land management agencies to not adopt such management practices, and to maintain multiple use status. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

Conservation tree planting program:

...that the UACD support the continuation of a conservation tree planting program for Utah by:

- 1) Memorandums of Understanding between UACD, USCC, UFFSL, NRCS and other interested organizations facilitating tree sales and planting programs by individual CDs.
- 2) Developing a cooperative effort of tree planting services between private landowners and CDs, with state and federal programs. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

City and County Planning Commission Involvement:

...that the CD Boards offer assistance and expertise in urban development. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

Whole Farm Conservation Planning

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support:

1. Resource Management System Planning (RMS) with increased emphasis on Whole Farm Conservation Planning,
2. Local work groups as identified in the Farm Bill, be led by the local Conservation District Boards and that they meet regularly to update and review goals and objectives,
3. NRCS Resource Management System plans (RMS) be approved by respective Conservation Districts,
4. NRCS planning be based on Whole Farm Conservation Planning objectives, identifying all resource concerns rather than single resource issues,
5. NRCS place more emphasis on the role and responsibility of the elected Conservation District Board members, coordinating all conservation efforts within their jurisdiction set forth by definition in state law. 2006

Wildlife Management Policies

... that we seek the enactment of legislation or administrative directive which will:

1. Require wildlife management agencies to pay total actual damages resulting from depredation by wildlife caused by their wildlife management actions.
2. Require that wildlife management agencies adhere to a designated allotment management plan, particularly as they relate to numbers for use of the resource by wildlife species, and not submit to public pressures for increased numbers of wildlife.
3. Require that when trespass by wildlife on private property is reported, the agency managing such wildlife take steps immediately to remove such wildlife from the private property and arrange for payment of damages.
4. Require notification in person by wildlife management agencies to private landowners before any action is taken.
5. Involve landowners in the decisions of what actions are to be taken to remediate the problems, and that property owners should have the final say in actions taken on their land. 2006

Streamlining of Cultural Resources Clearances:

...that UACD take action to make the cultural resources clearance process more efficient and less costly by considering the following actions:

- a. Sponsor a meeting of State Historical Preservation Office, affected agencies, and other stakeholders to begin discussions of how to comply with the law in the best-organized and cost-efficient manner possible. An important objective of these discussions would be to standardize procedures among agencies.
- b. Encourage the hiring and sharing of more archaeologists or other trained professionals to speed up the process. The money saved by reducing the need to use expensive consultants would more than pay for the additional salaries.
- c. Consider approaching the legislature for changes in existing laws if State laws are more restrictive or impractical than Federal laws.
- d. Re-evaluate to include exempt undertakings such as range seedings on abandoned cropland and/or previously surveyed range seedings and repairing or replacing fences. 2005

Increased Federal and State Funding for Pest Control:

...that the Conservation Districts and the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts to have the Utah Legislature and the U.S. Congress allocate regular, adequate funding for insect control on Utah's public and private lands. 1999, 2002, 2005

Local coordination of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources habitat authorization program:

...(1) that the Conservation Districts will work with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in the development and coordination of **all** habitat projects under the Habitat Authorization Program located in the respective CD's geographical area prior to committing funds;

...that (2) local UDWR officials will be invited to meet with the corresponding CD board periodically to discuss program goals and objectives used in determining project priorities and accomplishments;

...and, (3) that the zone coordinator contact the local UDWR office to establish working arrangements. 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

Land resource and development:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) repealed Revised Statute (RS) 2477 which provided: "The right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses is hereby granted".

Under this section (RS 2477) many of the roads, paths and ways on public lands were constructed. They serve as trails, mining and timber roads, recreation access roads, ingress and egress roads to state and private lands, (even those state and private lands captured within federal reservation areas). In fact, they are roads, paths and ways which remain under the jurisdiction of the highway authorities of the states, counties, cities or towns where they are located.

The repeal of this section has caused the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to inventory these roads, paths and ways described above and to determine if they are valid rights-of-ways.

...UACD will seek a definitive ruling which will protect and adequately define these valid traditional rights-of-ways over public lands. 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

Endangered Species Act:

...UACD should support efforts that would declare that when private landowners are deprived of the desired use of their property under the provisions of this act, that it would constitute a "taking," and that the owner of such property be adequately compensated for such "taking." 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

Local input on public land issue:

Current proposals before Congress are attempting to change public land policy by administrative rule on legislation such as the Endangered Species Act, grazing fee formula, designation of wilderness areas, Wild and Scenic River designation, RS 2477 rights-of way across public land, federal reserved water rights and many other public land issues without proper consideration or input from local conservation districts.

...that UACD supports the requirement that adequate and ongoing communication between Congress and/or federal agencies and local conservation districts take place when any public land issues are involved before any final decisions are made that will adversely affect the quality of life for those constituents which the conservation districts represent. 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

Maintain current formula for determining grazing prices on public lands:

...that UACD use its influence to insure that any increase in grazing fees be used to improve the range resource; and

...that UACD engage in efforts to educate the public regarding the positive aspects of grazing on public lands.

...that UACD continues to support the grazing fee on public lands based upon the formula mandated in the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978.

...that UACD further strongly oppose the proposed administrative rules which have been published by the Department of Interior in their publication “Rangeland 94 Reform” or any other publication in or out of the Federal Register, or which would dramatically increase fees on public lands and create severe economic hardship on many livestock operations in the West. 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

Fiscal responsibility attached to litigation and appeals brought against resource management decisions, practices and projects on public lands:

...UACD recommends that the National Association of Conservation Districts use its influence whereby laws may be enacted that require plaintiffs and appellants to be financially responsible for all legal fees, and for the associated environmental and societal costs resulting from the inordinate delay or stoppage of prudent resource management decisions, practices, projects, or actions. 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005

WATER RESOURCES

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

Continued support for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program’s (CRBSCP) 2.5% “earmark” as a National Priority

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (1) encourage the continued earmark funding and support for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, (2) encourage NRCS to maintain the 75% cost-share rates throughout the life of the program, and (3) utilize the local workgroups in making program rules and recommendations. 2007

Due Process Requirement for Relinquishing Water Rights:

...that no government agency, be it Federal, State or Local, shall demand that water right holders relinquish water or water rights, for any purpose, without due process and fair market value compensation. 2003, 2006

Support for the Central Utah Project:

...UACD supports the completion of the Central Utah Project Completion Act. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Proposed National Priority Environmental Quality Incentive Program:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD), and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), work with the National Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture to keep the Colorado River Salinity Control Program as a national priority area (with the 2.5% earmark) under EQIP and make the following changes in the rules. 2004

1. NRCS rules need to conform to the intent language of legislation and not penalize states that utilize a 75% cost-share in salinity control areas, and
2. Rule changes are also needed to allow irrigators to participate in the CRBSCP and EQIP programs when they have not been able to irrigate in previous seasons (currently irrigation history must be two of the last five years) because of events not in their control such as drought, and
3. Increased funding from the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) is needed so that off-farm projects keep up with on-farm funding from USDA, (currently USBR funding is lagging behind USDA/EQIP funds) and,
4. There is a need for continued support for USBR, NRCS and local partnerships, at the same time encouraging more control at the local workgroup level when considering cost share rates and maximum contract amounts.

EDUCATION

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

Soil and water stewardship activity at zone meetings:

...that the NACD annual theme materials on Soil/Water Stewardship be encouraged to be part of the UACD Zone Meetings. 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Statewide Envirothon competition:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts sponsor, as well as provide, staff and financial assistance of a minimum of \$2000 annually to a Utah Envirothon competition. Partnerships with both private and public entities will also be actively pursued.

...that local Conservation Districts encourage and provide resources to local high schools to participate in the Utah Envirothon. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

UACD support of education programs:

...that UACD will provide teachers with information and knowledge about Ag-in-the-classroom, envirothon, and other conservation education programs.

...that UACD will support Agriculture-In-The-Classroom, Envirothon, and other conservation education programs by requesting each of Utah's 38 conservation districts to contribute a minimum of \$100 each year to be used for these purposes.

...that the UACD Education Committee develop an education budget for the expenditure of funds so received under this resolution; that the UACD executive vice president will see to their appropriate disbursement; and that the UACD Board of Directors shall have oversight responsibility for the budget and the Education Committee will receive an annual report at the annual business session. 1966, 1999, 2002, 2005

STRENGTHENING DISTRICTS

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

Communication and Education:

...by this convention, that we request the officers of UACD to prepare and send to the districts within this state, the minutes and actions of the Board of Directors convened in regular or special meeting, in order that the elected supervisors may fully support the actions of the Directors of the Association. 2007

CD Long-Range Plans:

...that the UACD encourage each district to: 1) make a revision of their current long range plan, 2) include in the long range plan methods and goals for building the district's capacity to improve effectiveness and obtain funding, and, 3) distribute these plans to appropriate partners. 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007

Support of Agriculture Protection Area Law:

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts oppose any legislation that would weaken the Agriculture Protection Area law and work with other organizations and legislators to maintain the integrity and strength of the law. 2001, 2004, 2007

Funding Sources:

... that UACD continue to monitor and encourage financial support from the State Legislature and other funding sources for resource conservation. In addition, Conservation Districts are encouraged to seek local financial support from their county and city governments, and other groups and individuals to promote the wise use of our soil and water resources; and the expansion and protection of the states agricultural base and natural resources.

...that UACD support the funding of conservation practices/projects with the State Revolving Loan Fund of the Utah Water Quality Board, provided this program, including related administrative and technical assistance, is in coordination with, and does not duplicate the ARDL Program. All new state appropriations for agricultural purposes will be to the ARDL program. 2000, 2003, 2006

Conservation Funding Initiative for Utah Legislature: (substitute resolution)

...that the UACD, with the support of 38 Conservation Districts, seek to have the previous funding cuts restored with on-going General Fund Appropriations. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006

Supervisor Expense Reimbursement Account (SERA)

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts work with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to obtain increased funding to adequately fund an updated SERA policy and increased participation and training. 2006

EQIP on Private Lands:

...that the United States Department of Agriculture and the NRCS comply with the Standard State Conservation Districts Law and that local Conservation Districts be given responsibilities in administering and/or prioritizing funding for conservation projects through USDA. 2005

New Funding/Appropriations for Conservation District Technical Assistance:

...that the 38 Conservation Districts in Utah update the Resource Assessment and CD long-range plans for their respective counties to fully take advantage of proposed new program funding under the 2002 Farm Bill, and meet with their respective NRCS area and district conservationists and State legislators to brief them on local conservation needs, existing staff and funding levels, and any additional staff and funding, needed to satisfy the future workload.

...that UACD assist the districts with obtaining funding that may become available under the technical provider provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill and recruit and employ related staff. In addition, when the revenues of the State of Utah increase, then seek to restore previously cut funding and/or obtain new funds for conservation districts to be able to maintain and build upon existing staff levels, only as sufficient to achieve the needs documented by the districts. 2002, 2005