

# **UACD**

## **POLICY & POSITIONS**



**2022**

## **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 appointed 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 Watershed 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, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **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, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **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, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **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, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **Wild Horse Management:**

... the UACD advocate for national NACD policies that support existing legislation in the 1971 Wild and Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act that provides the BLM the ability to:

1. Maintain local population levels at or below herd objectives established for the Herd Management Area and Herd Areas through periodic gatherings and/or fertility control, and
2. Sell or dispose of unwanted and/or unadoptable horses without restrictions including humane euthanasia.
3. Compensate private landowners for range degradation caused from wild horses that occupy adjacent federal lands and
4. Prohibit extension of existing designated lands for wild horses.

...the UACD support efforts by the Secretary of the Interior to revise management guidelines for wild horse and burros, and encourage authorities of existing legislation.

...federal land management agencies should bear all costs of maintaining range improvements damaged by wild horses. 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **Allowance of Wild and Domestic Horse Processing:**

...the UACD advocate for national NACD policy that supports existing legislation and management provisions that allow the sale and/or processing of unwanted animals as a resource for protein, food sources for humans and animal agriculture without the unnecessary restrictions by Congress or the U.S. administration or other agency of the federal government and the Utah Congressional Delegation. 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **State Institutional Trust Lands Administration Land Trades:**

... that Utah Association of Conservation Districts strongly suggests that each land trade that is negotiated between SITLA and any other federal agencies be done only after weighing and valuing the opinion of the individual grazers currently using the land and that when possible all measures be taken to insure the perpetual continuance of grazing on traded lands. 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) Land Transfers:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts recommends SITLA land remain in the county it originated in, if there is a transfer made, and that SITLA land continues to support growth and stability in the future for that county. We oppose SITLA controlled land leaving the county which it originated in.

### **Support for Noxious Weed Control:**

...that Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts by county, state and federal governments and agencies that would require heavy equipment to be washed and cleaned, on-site, before being transported to another job site outside of the current work area.

...that Utah Association of Conservation Districts support educational efforts to encourage recreational vehicle users to clean their machines thoroughly before taking them from one watershed to another.  
2013, 2016, 2019

### **Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to Help Pay for Weed Control:**

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts requiring the DWR to help finance the fight against noxious and invasive species statewide; either by funding coming directly from each license fee or a direct budget payment to county weed boards and/or Cooperative Weed Management Areas.

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts supports efforts by county weed boards and CWMA's to distribute these funds in a manner that would have the greatest impact on noxious and invasive weed control on public and private lands. 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

**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, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Noxious weed control:**

...that the UACD advocates more targeted approaches to weed control including:

- Prioritized treatment of novel introductions while they are small
- Prioritized treatment of particular areas where there is high risk of spread to new areas
- Selective treatment along transportation corridors, focused on noxious weeds of highest concern,
- Secure consistent and adequate funding to promote education and eradication and/or control of invasive species,

...that the UACD promote more vigilant stewardship of real estate development sites against noxious weed invasion and spread to surrounding areas,

... that the UACD and conservation districts advocate increased resources be made available for the purpose of controlling noxious weeds in counties and cooperative weed management areas,

...that UACD and conservation districts support county weed boards and their enforcement of compliance to control state and county noxious weeds. 2014, 2017, 2020

**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, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Conservation tree planting program:**

...that the UACD support the continuation of a conservation tree planting program for Utah by: substituting to the current MOU with the Water Quality Task Force MOU. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**City and County Planning Commission Involvement:**

...that the CD Boards offer assistance and expertise in urban development. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

### **Predator/Raven/Eurasian Dove Control:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts encourage and support efforts to reduce raven and predator numbers in the State of Utah. 2015, 2018, amended 2021

### **Support Small Acreage Agricultural Operations:**

...that UACD support reduced property tax consideration for productive small agricultural operations and;

...that UACD support the passage of legislation consistent with the Agriculture Sustainability Taskforce recommendations, provided the existing Greenbelt Law is not affected. 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

### **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 as appraised by a third-party qualified, licensed appraiser and require said payments be made in a timely manner.
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 total actual damages as stated above. 2006, 2009, amendment 2011, 2014, 2017, amendment 2020

### **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, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

### **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, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

### **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, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

### **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, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

**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, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

**Penalties for theft and/or killing of livestock:**

...that UACD support the passage of legislation that would impose the same maximum penalties for the illegal killing of livestock as for the poaching of big game. In addition, those convicted of theft, mutilation, unauthorized release of animals or other crimes against livestock would be responsible for the payment of fines and treble damages.  
...that UACD support the passage of legislation that would compensate those who investigate theft, mutilation and/or poaching of livestock at the same rate of pay as those doing the same for wildlife crimes. 2014, 2017, amended 2020

**WATER RESOURCES**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

**Watersheds Councils Act**

... that UACD and the local Districts lobby and work to place a district board member (supervisor) on each of the watershed councils including the statewide council. 2021

**Continued support for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program's (CRBSCP)**

...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 (4) support system upgrades and replacement of systems that have completed their life expectancy. 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

**Funding for Watershed Planning Efforts:**

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts that would make funds available to assist in the development of watershed plans throughout the state of Utah, in order that improvements and maintenance of our watersheds can continue to take place and progress. 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

**Support Efforts to overturn the EPA and USACE Rule "Waters of the US" also known as WOTUS:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts along with its 38 supporting Conservation Districts, support any efforts by US Congress, US Supreme Court, State

Legislative Bodies, Farm Bureau, Cattlemen's groups, and others, to overturn the Water of the US Rule or make changes that are less regulative to landowners, farmers and ranchers, in the United States of America. 2016, 2019, 2022

**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, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Support for the Central Utah Project:**

...UACD supports the completion of the Central Utah Project Completion Act. 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Opposition to the Snake Valley Aquifer Pumping Agreement:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD) is adamantly opposed to the proposed draft agreement and the proposed Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) pipeline project. The UACD encourages the State of Utah to include in the final agreement stronger measures with respect to mitigation, agricultural interests, social and economic impacts, as well as environmental protection measures to better protect the resources and citizens of the State of Utah. 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Zebra (*Dreissena bugensis*) and Quagga (*Dreissena polymorpha*) mussel:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts to control Zebra and Quagga mussels in lakes throughout the State of Utah. 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Water Rights Ombudsman:**

...that Utah Association of Conservation Districts support efforts to establish a new Water Rights Ombudsman office, or expand the current property rights ombudsman office as an effort to support individuals, farmers and ranchers needing assistance in obtaining information on water rights or defending their water rights in court. 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

**Water Banking:**

... a groundwater management plan may include a voluntary water banking arrangement in consultation with the state engineer, with special considerations of the safe yield and groundwater rights. The Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD) supports the lawful use of voluntary water banking where "Water Banking" is defined as the managing of water rights by a local district created in Section 17B-1-202 to facilitate and coordinate the voluntary use, lease, or sale of water by water right holders and water users. Further, the UACD supports continued development of law that will promote conservation of water and the wise use under established water rights. 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021

### **Support for Rural Water Protection:**

...that UACD supports policy that clearly states that water rights are attached to their source and should not be moved outside the drainage that supplies water to a perfected right.

...that UACD supports policy that ensures water is available to maintain the historic agricultural lifestyle and industries of Utah. 2014, 2017, 2020

### **Recreational use of public water on private property:**

...the Utah Association of Conservation Districts supports H.B. 141 and opposes any legislation that would alter the ability for private land owners to conduct agricultural purposes on their land, including the inclusion of livestock; and UACD supports the protection of the water quality. 2014, 2017, 2020

### **Tamarisk and woody invasive species removal and re-vegetation in riparian and other areas:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support research, monitoring and removal of woody invasives and re-vegetation where necessary by encouraging UPCD, WRI, and other programs such as GIP, in funding tamarisk and other invasive species removal and re-vegetation projects, especially those projects with active and coordinated monitoring efforts designed to evaluate success and inform future management practices, providing technical assistance and direction to private land owners seeking to do this work encouraging the Utah Dept. of Agriculture and Food to prohibit the sale of Russian olive, tamarisk, Siberian elm, tree of heaven and other invasive tree species in the state.

...that the Russian olive, Tamarisk, Siberian Elm and Tree of Heaven be included on the County lists of noxious plants. 2017, 2020

### **Transferring of Water Rights:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts is opposed to any future water right transfers to leave their association service area.

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts support water right values according to their class and value.

### **Support of the Sanpete County Narrows Project:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts along with interested conservation districts, not only support Sanpete County in their pursuit of the Narrows Project but also support the critical need for water storage facilities throughout the State of Utah.

### **Support for on-going funding for Water Optimization:**

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts along with the 38 Conservation District support the need for on-going funding from the Utah Legislature for Agricultural Water Optimization Program.

## **STRENGTHENING DISTRICTS/EDUCATION**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED REGARDING...

### **Regain Involvement in the Envirothon:**

... that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts will meet with the Utah Envirothon Steering Committee and the USU Envirothon team to determine a path forward. 2022

### **UACD support of education programs:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD) supports conservation education programs. 1966, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020

### **Support of Agriculture Protection Area Law:**

...that the Utah Association of Conservation Districts encourage any legislation to support and strengthen the Agriculture Protection Area law and work with other organizations and legislators to maintain the integrity and strength of the 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, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022

### **CD Support Services:**

...that the Conservation Districts are committed to support UACD's efforts which include but are not limited to:

- providing supervisor training and education
- representation at the state and federal level
- information and education outreach
- youth education and outreach
- reporting and legal requirements
- and any other services requested by the CDs 2011, 2014, 2017 amended 2020

### **USDA funding for conservation:**

...Conservation Districts are encouraged to become engaged in leading their local work groups and to also become involved in reviewing of NRCS projects. 2011, 2014, 2017 amended 2020

### **Notifying Local Conservation Districts of Research, Testing, or Surveying Taking Place within the District:**

...that local CDs require any entities coming to do any type of research, testing or surveying of any natural resource within the local District to contact the local CD Board and inform them of the type of research, test, or survey being performed, the date, the time, and the place that the research, test, or survey will be done;

...that by notifying the local CD Board of the research, test, or survey being done on any natural resource, will allow the CD Board to work in coordination with the entity to contribute to the district's goals and plans. 2016, 2019, 2021

### **Conservation Districts as Coordinating Agencies for Federal, State and Local Planning:**

...that local Conservation Districts work with their federal, state and local partners to coordinate conservation efforts and projects,

...that all federal, state and local entities are informed of the importance of inviting local Conservation Districts to participate in these discussions,

...that UACD educate, work and network, in coordination with Conservation Districts, at the state, regional (Southwest Region), and national (NACD) levels to help implement this process for all Conservation Districts. 2016, 2019, 2022

### **Direct Funding to Conservation Districts:**

...that Conservation Districts should be funded directly by the state legislature which increases local control and effectiveness of conservation districts. 2018, 2021