

# GROWING WATER SMART IN SOUTHWESTERN UTAH



Photo Credit: Aaron Fortin

Community Workshop | January 8-10, 2024

Hunter Alumni Center, Southern Utah University  
Cedar City, Utah

## Participating Communities:

Hurricane City

Ivins City

La Verkin City

Santa Clara City

St. George City

Toquerville City

Washington City

Washington County

## Funding Organizations:

Utah State University Extension Water Initiative Grant Program

Utah State University's Center for Water Efficient Landscaping

Washington County Water Conservancy District

Utah Division of Water Resources

# HIGH-LEVEL WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

## DAY ONE: Monday, January 8

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- 11:30 PM Workshop Check-In Opens
- 12:00 PM Lunch Served
- 1:00 PM Welcome and Introductions
- 1:30 PM Presentations | Planning for Water Resiliency in the Virgin River Basin
- 2:30 PM Opening Peer-to-Peer Exchange | Why Are We Here?
- 3:15 PM Break
- 3:30 PM Presentation | Integrating Land and Water for Healthy Communities
- 4:15 PM Team Work Session #1 | Setting a Workshop Intention
- 5:30 PM Social Hour, Banquet Dinner, and Team Photos
- 7:00 PM End of Day One

## DAY TWO: Tuesday, January 9

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- 6:30 AM Breakfast Starts (complimentary at hotels)
- 8:30 AM Welcome and Reflections on Day One
- 8:45 AM Team Work Session #2 | How Are We Growing?
- 10:00 AM Break
- 10:15 AM Panel | Needed Conversations for Integrated Land and Water Planning
- 11:15 AM Team Work Session #3 | How Can We Grow Water Smart?
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM Team Work Session #3 Continued
- 2:15 PM Midpoint Peer-to-Peer Exchange | Idea Sharing Between Teams
- 3:00 PM Break
- 3:15 PM Presentation | Shared Vision and Mutual Cooperation
- 4:00 PM Team Work Session #4 | Making the Case for Water Smart Change
- 5:30 PM Social Hour, Dinner, and Trivia Contest

## DAY THREE: Wednesday, January 10

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- 6:30 AM Breakfast Starts (complimentary at hotels)
- 8:30 AM Welcome and Reflections on Day Two
- 8:50 AM Presentations | Resources for Getting to Action
- 9:50 AM Team Work Session #5 | Creating a Team Action Plan
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM Team Work Session #5 | Continued
- 2:15 PM Closing Peer-to-Peer Exchange | Team Reports
- 2:50 PM Workshop Closing Remarks
- 3:00 PM End of Workshop

# DAY ONE

## Monday - January 8, 2024

### 11:30 AM CHECK-IN AND LUNCH

### 1:00 PM WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Utah State University's Center for Water Efficient Landscaping will welcome teams and provide a workshop overview.

- **Welcome Video by Utah Governor Spencer Cox**

### 1:30 PM PRESENTATIONS | PLANNING FOR WATER RESILIENCY IN THE VIRGIN RIVER BASIN

Throughout the United States West, planning for resilient and sustainable water supplies occurs across multiple disciplines and professions, government scales, and public-private collaborations. The speakers will share insights on the context in Southwestern Utah and how the State of Utah and regional partners are responding to projected future water supply challenges in light of regional growth and increasing climate uncertainty.

- **Candice Hasenyager**, Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources
- **Zach Renstrom**, General Manager of Washington County Water Conservancy District

### 2:30 PM OPENING PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE | WHY ARE WE HERE?

To introduce the different community teams to each other, we will break into mixed, color-coded discussion groups to share how communities are currently managing land and water resources and what you hope to get out of participating in this workshop.

### 3:15 PM BREAK

### 3:30 PM PRESENTATION | INTEGRATING LAND AND WATER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Local communities can play a role in regional ground and surface water management by integrating water conservation, efficiency, reuse, and nature-based approaches into their development plans and policies. This session provides an overview of tools and strategies to help communities achieve water resilience and introduces subject matter and technical experts available throughout the workshop.

- **Joanna Endter-Wada**, Professor, Department of Environment & Society and Faculty Member of the Center for Water Efficient Landscaping, Utah State University
- **Kelly Kopp**, Director of the Center for Water Efficient Landscaping and Professor in the Department of Plants, Soils and Climate, Utah State University

### 4:15 PM TEAM WORK SESSION #1 | SETTING A WORKSHOP INTENTION

In this session, team members will introduce themselves and discuss their individual and team intentions for this workshop. Discussion questions include:

- What questions do you have about linking water and land use in your community?

- What are the top opportunities or concerns you hope to discuss?
- What will make you feel like this workshop was a valuable use of your time?

**5:30 PM SOCIAL HOUR, BANQUET DINNER, and TEAM PHOTOS**

**7:00 PM END OF DAY ONE**

## DAY TWO

### Tuesday - January 9, 2024

**6:30 AM BREAKFAST** (Complimentary at Hotels)

**8:30 AM WELCOME AND REFLECTIONS ON DAY ONE**

**8:45 AM TEAM WORK SESSION #2 | HOW ARE WE GROWING?**

This work session provides your team the opportunity to explore growth trends and land use changes/transitions occurring in your community/region and their implications for water resources. You will evaluate how existing land use policies and tools are being used to protect existing water sources, encourage water efficiency in existing and new uses, and promote sustainable water resource management. Teams will address:

- What are our growth, development, and land use change trends?
- What problems do we face at the intersection of land change and water resources?
- Which of our plans address land use and how can we integrate water considerations?
- How does our land use code address water and how well does it accomplish its goals?
- What water-related issues are not addressed in our land use code or policy?
- What opportunities exist to manage land for water resiliency and watershed health?

**10:00 AM BREAK**

**10:15 AM PANEL DISCUSSION | NEEDED CONVERSATIONS FOR INTEGRATED LAND AND WATER PLANNING**

As one of the fastest growing regions in the country, southwestern Utah must grow and develop in water smart ways to accommodate new residents even as water supplies become more variable and scarcer. Panel members will discuss the conversations and collaborations between the Washington County Water Conservancy District, the Southern Utah Home Builders Association, and GWC Capital, developers of Desert Color, that are leading to a paradigm shift in how development occurs in the region. Workshop participants will have a chance to ask questions and contribute to the discussion.

- **Ryan Coates**, Business Services Manager, Desert Color
- **Stacy Young**, Government Affairs Director, Southern Utah Home Builders Association
- **Karry Rathje**, Communications Director, Washington County Water Conservancy District

**11:15 AM TEAM WORK SESSION #3 | HOW CAN WE GROW WATER SMART?**

In this session, your team will focus more specifically on water conditions and challenges in your community and build consensus around the need for action and goals for managing your water resources in light of high growth trends and land-use change. Teams will address:

- What are our current water conditions and water supply/demand trends?
- What challenges do we face related to drought and other sources of water insecurity?
- What efforts are we undertaking to protect and sustain our existing water resources?
- What water conservation and efficiency programs and policies are we implementing?
- Why do we want or need to become water smart?
- What are the best opportunities and strategies that will help us become more water smart and what goals/outcomes/strategies does the team want to pursue?

**12:00 PM LUNCH**

**1:00 PM TEAM WORK SESSION #3 | CONTINUED**

**2:15 PM MIDPOINT PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE | IDEA SHARING BETWEEN TEAMS**

We will break out into the same mixed, color-coded discussion groups from Day 1 in the Great Hall to share ideas on key takeaways so far, issues that are emerging in your different teams, and directions your teams are headed for your action planning.

**3:00 PM BREAK**

**3:15 PM PRESENTATION | SHARED VISION AND MUTUAL COOPERATION**

A case study will be presented of human cooperation in responding to drought in the Bear River Basin through understanding hydrologic interdependencies. The case study has important lessons for building shared vision and community support for collective action strategies needed to grow water smart.

– **Joanna Endter-Wada**, Department of Environment and Society, Utah State University

**4:00 PM TEAM WORK SESSION #4 | MAKING THE CASE FOR WATER SMART CHANGE**

In this session, your team will create a collaboration and communication strategy to support your proposed water smart change. Teams will discuss:

- Why do we need to make the proposed water smart change?
- How is water smart change connected to community values?
- How does water smart change align with other community initiatives?
- Who do we need to collaborate with internally and externally to support this change?
- What is our communication strategy for supporting water smart change?

**5:30 PM SOCIAL HOUR, DINNER, and TRIVIA CONTEST**

Be ready for a fun time tonight with Master of Ceremonies Karry Rathje.

# DAY THREE

## Wednesday - January 10, 2024

**6:30 AM**    **BREAKFAST** (Complimentary at Hotels)

**8:30 AM**    **WELCOME AND REFLECTIONS ON DAY TWO**

**8:50 AM**    **PRESENTATIONS | RESOURCES FOR GETTING TO ACTION**

Presentations will focus on a wide range of resources available to help communities with water-smart growth planning, policies and practices.

- **Rick Webster**, Planner and Project Specialist, along with **Rachel Shilton**, River Basin Planning Manager and **Hailey Kirlin**, Environmental Scientist II, Utah Division of Water Resources
- **Doug Bennett**, Water Conservation Manager, Washington County Water Conservancy District
- **Kelly Kopp**, Director, Center for Water Efficient Landscaping at Utah State University

**9:50 AM**    **TEAM WORK SESSION #5 | CREATING A TEAM ACTION PLAN**

This is it. You attended the workshop, learned some new concepts, and are excited about what your community may be able to do. So how do you convert this excitement into sustained momentum and impactful results for Growing Water Smart? This work session will pull all your conversations together to help you define your immediate (after you return to your regular workdays), short term (3-6 month), and long-term (1 year+) goals.

**12:00 PM**    **LUNCH**

**1:00 PM**    **TEAM WORK SESSION #5 | CONTINUED**

**2:15 PM**    **CLOSING PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGE | TEAM REPORTS**

Each team will report a brief description of their goals and action plan.

**2:50 PM**    **WORKSHOP CLOSING REMARKS**

**3:00 PM**    **END OF WORKSHOP**



Photo Credit: Aaron Fortin