

Watershed Symposium
Salt Lake Community College – Miller Campus
9750 South 300 West
October 28, 2007
9:20 AM – 10:00 AM

Topic: Water Quality Stewardship

I am pleased to welcome everyone to the 2008 Salt Lake Countywide Watershed Symposium.

It's been a momentous year for the County and we are very encouraged by the opportunities and partnerships developing to improve water quality and promote water quality stewardship countywide.

I hope that this event acts as a catalyst for more understanding, better partnerships, and enhanced **stewardship**.

Nearly four years ago, I entered the Mayor's Office with a number of goals and ideas on ways to improve Salt Lake County.

I learned of the broad support our citizenry has for our local governmental programs...from economic growth and social services, to cultural arts, public health and recreation.

All our programs and services rely on a healthy ecosystem.

For that reason, ecosystem stewardship is a priority. Salt Lake County Government is committed to protect, restore and preserve land, water and air in our valley.

We are committed to revitalization and preservation of streams, rivers and their corridors.

Ecosystems are inter-related.

It's impossible to isolate a fish from a stream or a building from a forest. Therefore, our approach to ecosystem stewardship has been multi-faceted. For example, under my administration, Salt Lake County is:

- A signatory for the National Climate Registry.
- Conducting a Solar Study for major solar installations- \$40,000 in 2007, \$100,000 in 2008
- Partnering with cities to restore several miles of the Jordan River—Part of our Lake to Lake vision
- Participating with the Stormwater Coalition – a group comprised of 14 municipalities and Salt Lake County
- Working with Salt Lake City on an anti-idling/trip reduction program – launched in September
- Promoting biodiesel in the County fleet (20/80 split with mixing on site)
- Promoting LEED Developments
 - LEED Certified library, LEED Silver Library, LEED Certified Health Building, LEED Silver Salt Palace Expansion.

- In progress, two LEED Gold Recreation facilities
- Developing several LEED Gold Libraries
- Establishing a pharmaceutical recycling program
- Promoting internal asphalt recycling
- Working with residents and municipalities to identify funding for stream enhancements

All of these efforts work in concert to reduce our collective carbon footprint and make Salt Lake County more sustainable.

However, none of these efforts can operate independently from the others. In particular, water is the key to ecosystem health and stewardship. From protecting our drinking water sources to assuring healthy stream corridors, water supports all biological function and is truly “the stuff of life.”

I have said for years now that we all drink the same water, breathe the same air and live on the same land—it’s in our best interest to be the best stewards we can for ourselves **and** our posterity.

As I’ve learned about water concerns and opportunities in Salt Lake County, I’m often reminded of a quote by Mark Twain, “The solution to our water problems is more rain.”

With a mere 7.5 inches of rain at the airport annually, water is not abundant in Salt Lake County.

Therefore, we see the value of this essential resource and are seeking to take care of the water that we have.

I'm sure each of us had a different reason for attending this symposium.

Perhaps you're an expert who's here to give a presentation and you're sitting in on some discussions. Maybe you're a high school student in an AP Biology class. You may run a wastewater treatment facility or kayak in your spare time.

Regardless of background and experience, you're likely here for the same reason I am.....to share ideas, learn about water quality, further understand watershed health, discuss improvement opportunities, and ultimately become better **stewards**.

I thank you for being here. The quality of our water and health of our watershed rests on everyone's shoulders. Your participation today in at least some degree, make our efforts a success.

Although there is a lot of work still before us, I'm happy to say that ecosystem stewardship, and in particular water quality stewardship, is gaining momentum.

Those who work closely with me know that I believe in **planning** (and implementation) **not politics**.

As mayor I'm unconcerned about who gets credit; I just want things to get done.

All of our actions are small steps to reduce our energy usage, improve our environment, and enhance the overall health and well-being of our citizens.

With planning in mind, in 2006 the County embarked on an update of the Area-Wide Water Quality Management Plan (originally published in 1978).

After three years of data collection and analysis, 125 stakeholder meetings, 51 official comments, incorporation of 200 individual suggestions, and many unofficial discussions, a final Water Quality Stewardship Plan (WaQSP) was published last August.

The WaQSP is an impressive document with abundant information, photos, and graphs and is getting a great deal of support.

However, this plan is only as good as the projects and policies that result from it.

Our goal is to assure implementation of the recommendations.

At the same time, we clearly understand that true stewardship requires more than the County. It requires dramatic intergovernmental cooperation

between our state, local and federal government agencies.

But most importantly, it requires the engagement and active participation of our citizens.

Whether it is fertilizing your yard in the fall, picking up after your dog, or actively participating in discussions about stream corridors and associated land use decisions, we need to make water a priority in our personal, professional and political lives.

The greatest lessons of the WaQSP have been:

- 1) Recognition of the great number of individuals, agencies, and organizations that are working to improve water quality in Salt Lake County,
- 2) Recognition that an anticipated population increase of 42% by the year 2030, can threaten improved water quality unless we take positive preventative measures, and
- 3) Recognition that successful stewardship requires collaboration, is in our best interest and is everyone's responsibility

With an excellent plan in place, we're ready to get to work improving our water quality.

We've already received funding from the EPA for a large-scale restoration project along the Jordan River.

Additionally, we've received funding from the State Division of Water Quality to develop a countywide

water quality model, install five new stream gage stations, develop a wetland complex for stormwater treatment, and conduct further restoration of the Jordan River.

We're encouraged by the momentum that surrounds WaQSP implementation and look forward to working with all of you on improving our water quality and quality of life.

I believe Salt Lake County has come a long way in the past three years.

I am proud to be part of this progress providing open, honest, efficient and ethical local government that is fiscally responsible...respects our citizens, cares for the environment, provides public safety, encourages economic development, strives to improve the our overall quality of life and recognizes the value of its employees.

This is an exciting time to live and work in Salt Lake County. From promoting LEED developments and renewable energy to facilitating the development of our Countywide Water Quality Stewardship Plan (WaQSP), we have sought partnerships with all stewards in the County to promote quality of life and ecosystem integrity.

In the spirit of partnership, I'd like to again welcome you to the 2008 Salt Lake Countywide Watershed Symposium and thank you for being here.

I'd also like to thank the experts that will present information over the course of this two-day event, the volunteers who will assist with our field trips, and Salt Lake Community College.

The quality of our watershed does indeed have an enormous impact on the quality of life for Salt Lake County residents.

That's why the County is committed to working toward revitalizing, protecting, preserving, and enhancing both the water quality of our streams and the overall health of our watershed. That's why we are facilitating this discussion, and that's why we are so happy that you have chosen to attend.

True stewardship requires input, cooperation and coordination at many levels and between many organizations. With your help, the annual Watershed Symposium will forge a path toward long-term water quality and watershed stewardship in the County.

So, thank you for attending and **welcome.**