

West Weber Wetland Strategy

Please note: This wetland strategy will be part of the final draft of West Weber Project Area Plan & Budget, which will be posted on May 10, 2024. Any additions or changes to this strategy will be included in the final draft of the project area plan & budget.

The Port views the wetlands in the Weber County Project Area as of utmost importance. The Port is dedicated to protecting these areas and to not providing any resources or supporting any efforts that would lead to their destruction. To this end, it is important for the Port to have an established wetland policy and a Project Area Plan in place to ensure their protection. When used in this Plan, the terms “wetland” and “wetlands” have the meaning defined in the [Port’s Wetland Policy](#).

Environmental Considerations

Located in the lowlands of the Salt Lake Valley near the Great Salt Lake, the Weber County Project Area is situated within the Weber River Watershed, which is bordered on its north and east by the Bear River Basin, on its south by the Jordan River Basin, and on its west by the Great Salt Lake. “Typically, [Weber River] flows through extensive agricultural areas in the lowest portions of the watershed, then into Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area on the eastern marshes of Great Salt Lake via the natural stream channel.” ([Weber River Watershed Plan, 2014](#))

Several wetlands and other features have been identified throughout the Weber County Project Area via wetland delineation and characterization efforts conducted throughout the years. With a record-breaking snowpack from the previous winter and approximately one and half consecutive years with above-normal precipitation, current conditions are particularly wet. During a site visit of the Weber County Project area completed on February 11, 2024, standing water was observed in open fields, irrigation ditches, and drainage canals throughout the project area. It is important to note that standing water does not necessarily constitute a wetland. Wetlands are characterized by three indicators: presence of water, [hydrophytes](#), and [hydric soils](#).





Photo was taken at the intersection of 8300W and 700 N, facing east.

The Weber County Project Area is bounded by the Harold Crane Waterfowl Management Area to the north and the Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area to the south. These waterfowl management areas house thousands of acres of suitable nesting habitat for a plethora of migratory birds as well as critical habitat for other native plant and animal species.

The Utah Division of Wildlife maintains a [database of Utah's rare plant and animal species](#). The following animals have been identified as “species of greatest conservation need” within a two-mile radius of the Weber County Project Area:

- American White Pelican
- Bald Eagle
- Caspian Tern
- Kit Fox
- Northern Leopard Frog
- Peregrine Falcon
- Snowy Plover
- White-faced Ibis
- Winged Floater

More information about each of these species and their corresponding habitats can be found in the [Utah Species Field Guide](#).

Purpose

The purpose of this wetland strategy is to provide a framework for obligatory processes and procedures meant to protect the wetlands in the West Weber Project Area. Per our [statute](#),



Inland Port funds cannot be spent on developer costs associated with development and construction. The Port will not support development or construction that would result in the destruction of wetlands. The Port has, and will, coordinate with landowners that own property with identified, existing or potential wetlands and ensure they are completing required due diligence. As is indicated in the [wetlands maps](#) from the [National Wetlands Inventory](#) (NWI), this project area has extensive historical wetlands throughout the area. The Port does not have regulatory authority over the land use of this project area but can decide how to direct its funds and will not direct funds in a manner that promotes or finances the destruction of wetlands. The Port wants to ensure that development never takes precedent over the ecologically sensitive lands in this area.

Procedure

As a first requirement, the Port will coordinate with landowners in the project area to ensure that an updated wetland delineation study along with a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) is completed on lands where there are historically identified wetlands characterized and listed in the [National Wetlands Inventory](#). In cases where there are historically identified wetlands, the Port will only work with landowners that have delineated wetlands in accordance with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that those wetlands are protected and will not be made available for development. No UIPA resources will be made available to develop lands with historical wetlands until an updated wetland delineation study, conducted within the past 5 years, has been completed in addition to a Phase 1 ESA.

Secondly, if an updated wetland characterization determines there is existing wetlands on a property then the Port will not allow for any expenditure from any part of the Project Area Plan and Budget that benefits a landowner that has existing wetlands, until there is an agreement in place between the Port and the respective landowner(s) which will ensure the protection of the wetlands. Additionally, the Port will actively work with landowners, Weber County, and the State of Utah, to create additional conservation easements that will protect existing wetlands as well as set-back areas for buffer zones around wetlands, ecologically sensitive areas, and lands owned and managed by the State for wildlife preservation. Until appropriate buffer zones around these features within the project area have been defined, tax differential and other Port financial tools, such as Authority Infrastructure Bank (AIB) loans, will not be provided by the Port to landowners and tenants occupying land with these features present.

Per UIPA's [wetland policy](#), upon approval of UIPA's Board, tax differential funds designated towards wetland mitigation may be used for water purchases, land easements for natural buffer zones, wetland characterization beyond what is federally required or required herein, and/or wetland mitigation methods identified by the EPA and the Army Corps (restoration, establishment, enhancement, or preservation). For the West Weber Project Area, the Port is designating 3% of the project area tax differential towards wetland mitigation as described above.



National Wetlands Inventory

The following figures on pages 5-6 display the [National Wetlands Inventory](#) (NWI) data for the West Weber Project area, which includes the extent, approximate location and type of wetlands and surface water habitats that were characterized in the area based on data from 2014. The NWI is not meant to be the final determination of existing wetlands. Wetlands or other mapped features in the NWI may have changed since the date of the imagery and/or field work used for characterization. Updated qualified wetland delineation studies, consistent with the Port's wetland policy's definition of wetlands, shall be the final determination for existing wetlands.





