

1407 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84140
(801) 220-2000

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AUG 22 1994

Department of Water Resources



August 15, 1994

Dear Water User:

Re: Update of Bear Lake - Bear River System Operation for 1994

This letter is to provide you with an update concerning the current status of active storage at Bear Lake and our forecast for the remainder of the 1994 irrigation season.

As of August 14, 1994, Bear Lake elevation was 5908.10 feet, which is a decrease of 3.52 feet since the 1994 peak elevation of 5911.62 feet on May 13. Currently there is only 371,000 acre feet of remaining active storage which is equal to only 26% of full active capacity. The current rate of release from storage in the lake is 1030 cfs. At this rate of release and with the additional loss through evaporation, the lake level is dropping at a rate of 1.2 feet per month.

Utah Power has recently inspected the channel in Bear Lake that was dredged adjacent to the Lifton Pumping Station during 1992. The dredged channel has completely filled in with sediment, and the current water depth at the shallowest point is only 1.25 feet. As a result, we are experiencing added sediment content in the water being released through the pumps at Lifton. As you can appreciate, given these circumstances, Utah Power is extremely concerned that the current rate of release from storage cannot be sustained to the end of the 1994 irrigation season.

It has come to our attention that a considerable amount of cropland is being irrigated solely for the purpose of improving soil moisture conditions after the crops have been harvested. Under the current extreme drought and extremely low Bear Lake levels, the Bear River system simply cannot tolerate diversion of water for soil moisture improvement as a beneficial use.

While Utah Power is not responsible for the practices of certain water users, we are deeply concerned that such use could have a significant impact on the lake and the river in the months and years to come. Ultimately, the state engineers of the states of Utah and Idaho will decide what practices can no longer be tolerated within the Bear River system. However, until that occurs, we can only encourage all of the users of the system to be extremely careful in their use of this valuable resource. Therefore, you are strongly advised to refrain from using Bear Lake storage water for the purpose of improving soil moisture conditions after crops have been harvested given the present circumstances in the system. The continued call for water deliveries beyond the time needed for actual crop production will diminish water supplies available for growing crops for all water users for the remainder of 1994 and 1995 if the current drought continues.

Please let us know immediately when water is no longer needed for growing crops so that the release from storage can be reduced accordingly.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carly B. Burton". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Carly B. Burton
Hydrological Supervisor

cc: Robert B. Morgan, Utah State Engineer
Robert Fotheringham, Logan Area Engineer
Terry Gnehm, Lower Bear River Commissioner
R. Keith Higginsen, Director, Idaho Dept. of Water Resources
Ernest Carlson, Idaho Falls Dist. Office
Pete Peterson, Idaho District 11 Commissioner
Jack Barnett, Bear River Compact Commission
Gordon W. Fassett, Wyoming State Engineer