

January 14, 2025

# Public Meeting - Sand Hollow Groundwater Management Plan

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## Division of Water Rights



Teresa Wilhelmsen | State Engineer  
Jim Reese | Assistant State Engineer  
Michael Freeman | Regional Engineer

# *Groundwater Management Plans*



# *Groundwater Management Plans*

- Legislation enacted in 2006
- Established Section 73-5-15 of Utah Code
- Tool to help the State Engineer distribute groundwater

# Section 73-5-15

(2)(a) The state engineer may regulate groundwater withdrawals within a specific groundwater basin by adopting a groundwater management plan in accordance with this section for any groundwater basin or aquifer or combination of hydrologically connected groundwater basins or aquifers.

# Section 73-5-15

(2)(c) The state engineer shall adopt a groundwater management plan for a groundwater basin if more than one-third of the water right owners in the groundwater basin request that the state engineer adopt a groundwater management plan.

# Map of Proposed Basin Area

Boundaries:

North - Virgin River

East - Hurricane Fault

South & NW - Extent of  
Navajo & Kayenta



# Section 73-5-15

(1) As used in this section:

(a) “Critical management area” means a groundwater basin in which the groundwater withdrawals consistently exceed the safe yield.

(b) “Safe yield” means the amount of groundwater that can be withdrawn from a groundwater basin over a period of time without exceeding the long-term recharge of the basin or unreasonably affecting the basin’s physical and chemical integrity.

# Section 73-5-15

(2)(b) The objectives of a groundwater management plan are to:

- (i) limit groundwater withdrawals to safe yield;
- (ii) protect physical integrity of the aquifer; and
- (iii) protect water quality



# Safe Yield

- Recharge is a starting point
- May be less than recharge to protect physical integrity of the aquifer and water quality
- Recharge is verified from a water budget
  - $\text{Inflows (recharge)} = \text{Outflows (discharge)} + \text{Change in storage}$
- Preliminary Estimate: 2,000 to 8,000 acre-ft/yr

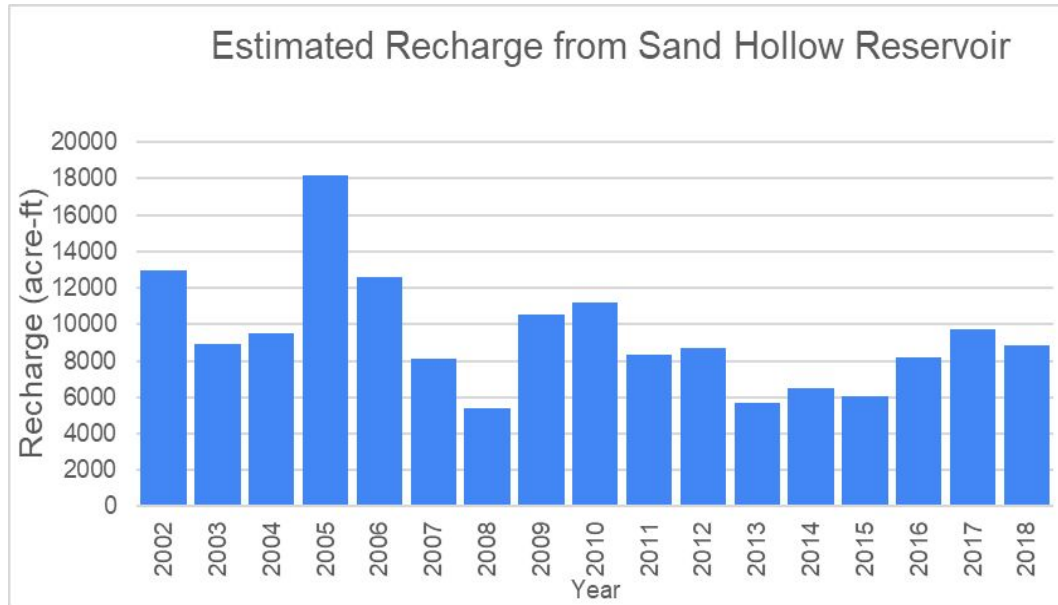
# Section 73-5-15

(3)(b) The state engineer shall base the provisions of a groundwater management plan on the principles of prior appropriation

(4)(c) but may consider voluntary arrangements

# Section 73-5-15

(12)(a) ...recharge and recovery projects permitted under Chapter 3b, Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Act, are exempted from this section



# *Implementing A Groundwater Management Plan*

- Requires significant scientific research and reporting
- Requires meetings and notices
- Open to comments and suggestions
- Respect all existing Water Rights and uses
- Subject to judicial review



GWMP Website: <https://waterrights.utah.gov/groundwater/ManagementReports/SandHollow/>

# Next Steps

## **Division of Water Rights:**

1. Additional USGS monitoring
2. Refine safe yield
3. Determine additional measurement needs
4. Provide transparent ASR project accounting
5. Review public comments
6. Hold additional meetings

## **Water Users:**

1. Submit comments
2. Participate in small local committee
3. Meter
4. Participate in the process



# Questions/Comments

**Please send us your comments by Apr 14**

**Email:**

waterrights@utah.gov

Subject: Public Comment Sand Hollow  
GWMP

Division of Water Rights  
1594 West North Temple Suite 220  
PO Box 146300  
Salt Lake City UT 84114-6300



Groundwater Management  
Plan Webpage