

**UTAH RECLAMATION MITIGATION
AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**UTAH LAKE WETLAND PRESERVE
COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Recommended By: _____ Date: _____
Richard Mingo, NEPA Coordinator
Mitigation Commission

_____ Date: _____
W. Russ Findlay, Program Coordinator
CUPCA Office

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
Michael Mills, Executive Director
Mitigation Commission

_____ Date: _____
Reed R. Murray, Program Director
CUPCA Office

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Utah Lake Wetland Preserve Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

DECISION

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (“Mitigation Commission”) has prepared the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) and Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Utah Lake Wetland Preserve (ULWP) in conjunction with the Department of the Interior Central Utah Project Completion Act (CUPCA) Office as Joint Lead Agencies.

Upon review of the analysis presented in the EA and after careful consideration of public comment and coordination with other interested parties, we have determined that Alternative B (the proposed plan) in the CMP and associated EA (the project) would not significantly affect the quality of the natural or human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required for the project.

The proposed plan is defined as Alternative B (The Proposed Plan)—Restoration, Habitat, and Recreational Access Alternative, as analyzed in the EA. The proposed plan, represents a balance between resource protection and restoration to improve wildlife habitat and emphasizing opportunities for nonmotorized, wildlife-dependent recreation. The overarching management focus of this alternative is enhancing ecosystem processes. Alternative B uses the broadest array of management tools to achieve goals and objectives.

This determination by the Joint Lead Agencies is made in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality’s NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500–1508), the Department of the Interior’s regulations for implementation of NEPA, and the Mitigation Commission’s regulations for implementation of NEPA (43 CFR 10010).

BACKGROUND

The ULWP was created when Congress passed the CUPCA in 1992. The [Central Utah Project](#) (CUP) is a water development project authorized as a participating project under the Colorado River Storage Project Act that is intended to deliver Colorado River Basin water to the Wasatch Front. In CUPCA, Congress determined that the wetlands and associated wildlife values of Utah Lake’s southern shore deserved protection and enhancement and could help replace values lost due to construction of the CUP and other prior Reclamation projects in Utah.

CUPCA defined the project area and boundary for the ULWP, created the Mitigation Commission, and authorized the Mitigation Commission to cooperate with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Mitigation Commission began acquiring private lands on a willing-seller basis for the ULWP in 1996. It entered into a series of interim management agreements with the UDWR to manage the federally owned properties, in accordance with the substantive requirements of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (NWRSA; 16 US Code 668 et seq.).

Congress was sensitive to existing uses in the area and charged the Mitigation Commission to ensure that the ULWP be managed to protect migratory birds,¹ wildlife habitat, and wetland values in a manner compatible with the surrounding farmlands, orchards, and agricultural production (CUPCA 306(c)(3)). Following this direction, the Mitigation Commission and UDWR have been working to acquire land and water rights in the Benjamin Slough and Goshen Bay area. To date, 7,465 acres - 2,052 acres in the Benjamin Unit and 5,413 acres in the Goshen Unit have been acquired. The Mitigation Commission has also acquired a total of 299 acres contiguous to the ULWP boundary (129 acres near the Benjamin Unit, 170 acres near the Goshen Unit) that were acquired as remainders from willing-seller purchases in the ULWP boundary proper. The 299 acres are considered as part of the ULWP, and the CMP and EA plus this FONSI apply to those remainder properties as well. The Mitigation Commission also acquired 104 acres on two parcels outside the ULWP near Mona Springs (Figure 1). The Mona Springs parcels are not in or contiguous to the ULWP boundary and would not be subject to the ULWP CMP. The UDWR has a separate management plan (operating agreement) in place for these properties. All land and water interests have been and continue to be acquired from willing sellers.

Current management actions consist of maintaining property boundary fences, installing signs to identify property boundaries, removing unwanted debris and structures on new acquisitions, and controlling noxious weeds, mosquitoes, and nuisance wildlife species. UDWR has identified mule deer and sandhill crane populations can increase to the level where depredation on adjacent croplands may require population reductions through issuance of depredation permits when necessary. All management activities are performed by UDWR personnel, except for mosquito control, which is under the jurisdiction of Utah County. The Mitigation Commission intends to transfer its acquired properties in the ULWP and at Mona Springs to the UDWR in the near future. Management goals, objectives, and actions identified in the proposed CMP are those the UDWR will adhere to for the management of ULWP lands. The CMP accomplishes the goals of CUPCA and complies with the NWRSA and other pertinent legislation. The ULWP CMP has been jointly prepared by the Mitigation Commission, UDWR, and the CUPCA Office. It is intended to survive the transfer of properties and to guide ongoing UDWR ownership and management.

PURPOSE AND NEED

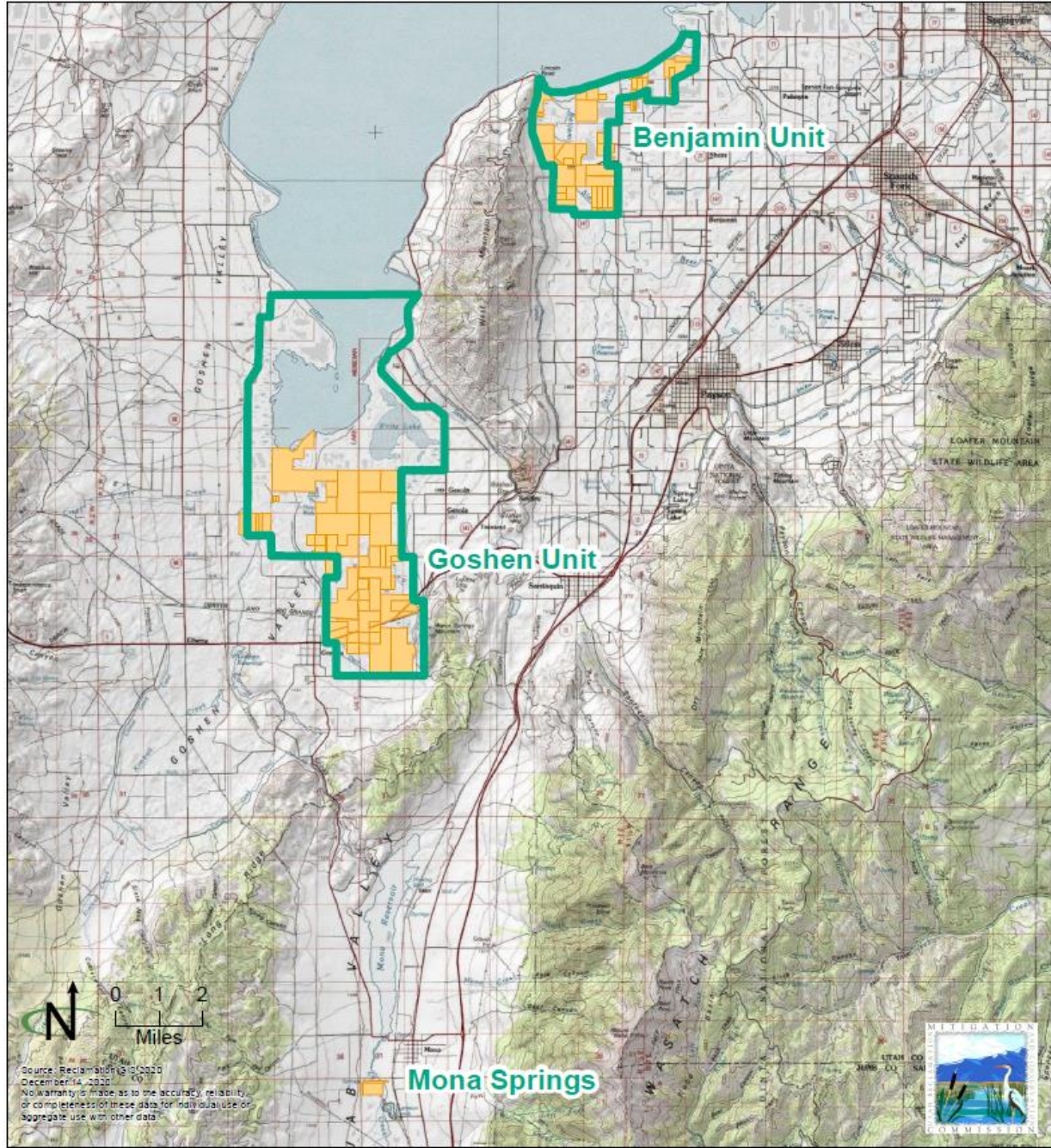
The need for the CMP and associated EA is to satisfy CUPCA Section 306(c)(2), which requires the United States to enter into an agreement under which the UDWR will manage the ULWP pursuant to a plan that meets the substantive requirements of the NWRSA, as amended. The plan must be developed in consultation with the UDWR and the Secretary of the Interior. The need for transferring federal lands acquired in accordance with CUPCA Section 306(c)(1) to the UDWR is to fulfill CUPCA objectives in Section 301(k). Development of the CMP and transfer of lands needs to be carried out in a planned manner with public involvement.

The purpose of the CMP and associated EA is to guide the management of acquired lands in the ULWP, by describing the goals, objectives, and management actions for establishing and administering the ULWP. While the ULWP is not a National Wildlife Refuge, the ULWP's mission and usage priorities are modeled after the National Wildlife Refuge System. The CMP would not apply to private lands or other federally managed lands within the ULWP boundary. Management of private lands within the ULWP boundary would revert to the local government master plan, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands within the ULWP boundary would be managed under the BLM's Pony Express Resource Management Plan (RMP; BLM 1990²). The CMP would ensure compliance with state regulations and provide the UDWR with a 15-year



¹ All bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

² BLM. 1990. Pony Express Resource Management Plan. Salt Lake Field Office, Salt Lake City, Utah

Figure 1. Utah Lake Wetland Preserve



Project Overview

-  ULWP boundary
-  Mitigation Commission*



*Lands acquired pursuant to CUPCA, Section 306

management plan for the conservation of plant resources, upland and aquatic wildlife, including migratory birds and their related habitats, and public access for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation. The CMP would also establish the nature and types of vegetation management actions, restoration activities, potential locations for administrative sites, and compatible wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities.

THE SELECTED ACTION

Alternative B (The Proposed Plan)—Restoration, Habitat, and Recreational Access Alternative, is selected for implementation. It includes the following:

Acquired land and water rights, including those associated with the Mona Springs parcels, would be transferred out of federal ownership to the State of Utah. Additional water rights would be pursued to support wetland habitat management projects. The Benjamin Slough and Goshen Bay units would be managed under a CMP that meets the substantive requirements of NWRSA and is consistent with the requirements of CUPCA. The CMP would establish and implement a monitoring and adaptive management framework. The UDWR would advance stewardship goals through coordinated collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to achieve management plan objectives. The Mona Springs parcels would not be managed under the CMP, as a separate management plan (operating agreement) has been developed for these properties.

A full suite of vegetation management tools, including chemical treatment, prescribed burning, targeted grazing, and manual treatments would be available and given equal preference to improve wetland and upland habitat, including vegetation to enhance pollinator species. Re-established vegetation could include both native and nonnative species. Wetland habitats would be restored through active restoration projects such as channel realignments of Benjamin Slough and the creation of additional ponds, backwater areas, side channels, and bypass canals to keep high water flows from impacting nesting species. Upland habitat management would include options for establishing vegetation that would provide enhanced conditions for cultivating food sources, nesting areas, brood-rearing, and over-winter survival of upland wildlife species that inhabit the ULWP. Wildlife would be managed using new structural features, such as nest boxes. The value of wetland habitats for waterfowl would be increased. Nuisance wildlife would be managed to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

Management would support wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with habitat and wildlife values by emphasizing recreation infrastructure and access improvements. The UDWR would allocate management resources toward the development of recreation and visitor use facilities and infrastructure. These would accommodate wildlife-dependent recreation and visitor use demand, Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible parking and walk-in access infrastructure. Improvements could include trailheads, trails, interpretive signage, boardwalks, and viewing platforms. Education and outreach would emphasize wildlife-dependent recreation, including that for groups and special events. New interpretive signage would be added at access points when new recreation infrastructure is built at key recreation destinations.

The UDWR and the Mitigation Commission would develop new partnerships to help fund the management and implementation of the CMP. Management would focus on formalizing partnerships with stakeholders, including nonprofit wildlife organizations and outdoor recreation and education groups. This would achieve habitat restoration and vegetation management success, while providing expanded opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, including supporting visitation by larger groups.

Alternative B (the Proposed Plan) also includes the following actions:

- Land and water right acquisition in the ULWP would continue on a willing-seller basis in accordance with CUPCA.
- The UDWR would collaborate with other agencies and stakeholders to implement vegetation management projects that benefit the preserve. Vegetation management projects would target invasive species. Tools available for upland vegetation management include prescribed fire, targeted grazing, haying, native seeding, implementing chemical, mechanical, and manual treatments.
- Cultural resources would be protected in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- The ULWP would be available for wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with habitat and wildlife values and closed to motorized access, except for administrative use.
- Per existing laws and policies, education and outreach would be used as needed to maintain public health and safety and meet noticing requirements. The UDWR would implement seasonal or permanent closures to protect wildlife and public health and safety. Education and outreach would improve public understanding of the preserve.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

The finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is based on the analysis presented in Chapter 4 of the Final EA. The resources evaluated and summary of impacts are outlined below.

The CMP does not violate federal, state, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The Joint Lead Agencies have analyzed the public comments, alternatives, and environmental effects in detail and finds that the CMP meets the purpose and need described in Chapter 1 of the EA with no significant impacts to the natural or human environment.

Vegetation, Wetlands, and Invasive Species

The CMP would provide a comprehensive framework for managing vegetation consistent with other habitat management goals and objectives. An enhanced focus on vegetation restoration under the proposed plan would expand the amount and type of vegetation available for pollinators, wildlife habitat, and wetland conditions.

Allowing the use of both native and nonnative species may improve the likelihood of successful vegetation restoration by providing a diversity of options. The use of nonnative species, however, may decrease the potential habitat value. This could negatively impact such factors as insect numbers, leading to reduced food availability and habitat quality for invertebrate feeders. The UDWR would apply best available science and applied knowledge of the site to determine when and where to use nonnative species.

Wetland habitat would be enhanced through acquiring additional water rights and implementing restoration projects. This could increase the availability of surface water during the summer and fall and help to restore the historical condition of wetlands that have been heavily affected by irrigation demands. Longer seasonal water availability may also help reduce the fuel loading that occurs when vegetation dries out in the summer and fall.

Development and improvements such as trails, viewing platforms, and bypass canals would remove vegetation and increase pathways and opportunity for invasive species spread; however, the impacts would

likely be largely offset by invasive species management and the added value to overall wildlife habitat and visitor engagement. Improved access areas may also help minimize any effects on vegetation from visitors going off the trails.

Formalizing partnerships with stakeholders, including nonprofit wildlife organizations and outdoor recreation groups, to achieve greater habitat restoration and vegetation management success may move plant communities toward desired conditions at a faster rate, as those organizations could leverage additional funding and staffing to implement treatment projects.

Wildlife, including Migratory Birds

The CMP would expand and enhance migratory bird and wildlife habitat in the ULWP. This would occur via additional land and water rights acquisitions, wetland and upland restoration, wildlife monitoring and management, and active pursuit of partnerships and funding. These improvements would increase food resources, nesting areas, brood-rearing and over-winter survival of upland species, and overall knowledge about species on the ULWP.

Over the long term, the CMP would restore ecological function and habitat; however, it would also have short- and mid-term impacts on avian and wildlife species in this habitat. Vegetation and wetland restoration could temporarily disturb, displace, or harm wildlife species through habitat realignment, noise, vibrations, and human presence. However, it would be unlikely that restoration would occur across the project area and at the same time. Therefore, wildlife may be displaced from an area undergoing restoration but could move to other undisturbed areas. Some less mobile or burrowing species may be more susceptible to negative impacts. Scheduling restoration activities outside of the peak breeding and nesting season would mitigate impacts on birds to the greatest extent possible.

Proposed recreation infrastructure and access improvements could create short- to long-term localized surface disturbances, which could temporarily disturb, displace, or harm wildlife. Where new trails are established, wildlife may experience localized disturbance impacts from increased recreation. Increased visitation to the ULWP would thereby increase the potential for human-related impacts on migratory bird and wildlife habitat and human-wildlife interactions. Increased visitation may also lead to other long-term impacts, including erosion and social trail creation, which could degrade wildlife habitat through fragmentation and noxious weed spread. These impacts would be mitigated with seasonal closures or use limitations to minimize disturbances and ongoing human-wildlife conflict assessments and by taking precautions to protect wildlife.

Actions outside of the project area would continue to have effects on fish habitat in the preserve; however, wetland restoration projects and the acquisition of additional water rights would increase and improve fish habitat. Mosquito abatement would continue; however, alternative treatments may be pursued that mitigate impacts on nontarget species.

Special Status Species

Protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) do not extend to federally listed plants on private property unless there is a federal nexus. The transfer of federal property to the UDWR would therefore limit the protections afforded by the ESA to federally listed plants, such as Ute ladies'-tresses; however, since Ute ladies'-tresses occur in wetland habitats, any surface disturbance in federally jurisdictional wetlands would be subject to evaluation for Clean Water Act permitting. This would qualify as a federal nexus, and protections afforded by the ESA would be invoked.

Impacts on special status wildlife species would be the same as those identified in *Wildlife, including Migratory Birds*.

Soil Resources

The CMP would provide monitoring and adaptive management objectives to minimize soil erosion and compaction over time. For example, the CMP prescribes adaptive management, which would include coordinating with soil scientists or partners, such as the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, to help manage soils. This would address the constraints of saline and moist soils in the Benjamin and Goshen Units.

Infrastructure improvements for wetland restoration and recreation, would compact, displace, and mix soils, all of which could result in soil loss. Some of these impacts would be temporary, and others permanent. Best management practices and adaptive management would be implemented to minimize permanent soil loss.

When establishing new water conveyance systems, the potential for erosion may be reduced in areas previously inundated by water. Water patterns that differ from natural conditions could also affect the drainage characteristics of soils; for example, a poorly drained soil could transition to a somewhat poorly drained soil. This would influence the ability of soils to leach salt and could negatively impact salt-dependent vegetation growth, especially if salts are excessively leached from soils. Conversely, salts could accumulate in new areas where native plants are less tolerant of saline conditions.

Over the life of the CMP, designated areas for recreation would prevent future soil compaction and erosion by concentrating public use and avoiding public use outside of these areas. Soils near trails would be at the most risk for erosion by recreationists.

Cultural Resources

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the transfer of lands out of federal ownership is defined as an adverse action, unless there are adequate and legally enforceable restrictions or conditions to ensure long-term preservation of the property's historic significance. The adverse action associated with transferring lands out of federal ownership could be negated because the State of Utah has legally enforceable statutes similar to those at the federal level. Furthermore, Utah Code 98404 regarding cultural resources would be adhered to before ground disturbance begins. With the state statute protection in place and proposed deed restrictions, no impacts on cultural resources are anticipated.

The CMP includes the development of habitat management projects and recreation infrastructure development, as well as other ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to negatively impact cultural resources. In all cases the UDWR and the Mitigation Commission would work closely with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify any potential impacts on cultural resources. If cultural resources were discovered during ground-disturbing activities under the proposed plan, the SHPO would be consulted and appropriate measures would be taken to mitigate any impacts.

Management actions under the CMP include the goal to preserve, protect, and promote an understanding of cultural resources in the plan area through the development of cultural and historic interpretation materials. The CMP aims to develop interpretive materials or signage in the plan area, which would facilitate the understanding of cultural resources and the laws in place that protect these resources. Increased visitation and interpretation may have the potential to increase looting or vandalism of cultural resources. Deferring to the SHPO for the appropriate interpretation of cultural resources is of paramount importance to avoid these types of adverse impacts.

Access, Recreation, and Visitor Services

The CMP emphasizes increasing opportunities for nonmotorized, wildlife-dependent recreation that is compatible with habitat and wildlife values by prioritizing recreation infrastructure and access improvements in the preserve. The UDWR would allocate management resources toward the development of recreation and visitor use facilities and infrastructure, such as ADA-accessible parking, public walk-in access points, trailheads, trails, interpretive signage, boardwalks, and viewing platforms. These management actions would improve the overall quality of visitor experiences by allowing for more recreational and educational opportunities and by increasing access for recreation and education. For example, wildlife photography/viewing blinds and a wildlife viewing trail system would enhance the visitor experience, while minimizing the disturbance to nesting birds and other wildlife in the ULWP.

New interpretive signage would be added at access points, when new recreation infrastructure is built, and at key recreation destinations. This signage would increase education and may foster environmental stewardship and appreciation among visitors. Parking improvements would support visitors in larger groups or those attending special events while minimizing damage to resources through overflow parking on undeveloped roadsides.

Opportunities for waterfowl and pheasant hunting would continue, and the UDWR would evaluate the potential for a sandhill crane hunt based on determinations by the wildlife section and wildlife board. This would increase hunting opportunities and may increase visitation, especially during the fall and spring hunting seasons. Monitoring hunting activities during high use periods, increasing law enforcement and staffing, maintaining parking areas, gates, and other infrastructure, and posting hunting rules and information at access points would also increase visitor safety by providing safe and legal access to hunting. Also, managing popular fishing locations would mitigate the vegetation destruction, littering, and vandalism in the ULWP.

Land Use

Acquired land and water rights, including those associated with the Mona Springs parcels, would be transferred out of federal ownership to the State of Utah. Approximately 7,465 total acres—2,052 acres of the Benjamin Unit, 5,413 acres of the Goshen Unit, and 104 acres in Mona Springs—would be subject to this land transfer; however, because Mona Springs is not within the ULWP boundary, the parcels would not be managed under this CMP. This is because a separate management plan (operating agreement) has been developed for these properties; therefore, impacts on these parcels as a result of the land transfer are not analyzed in this plan.

The need for transferring federal lands acquired in accordance with CUPCA (Sec. 306(c)(1)) to the UDWR is to fulfill CUPCA objectives in Section 301(k). Transferred lands within the ULWP boundary (7,465 acres) would continue to be managed according to UDWR policies and programs and to be compatible with CUPCA (306(c)(3)) and the NWRSA. Since the proposed plan is essentially an administrative action, there generally would not be any impacts on the environment from the transfer of properties to the UDWR. Management goals, objectives, and actions would be administered according to the CMP.

The UDWR would pursue additional water rights to support wetlands and habitat management projects. This would enhance vegetation, wildlife, and wetland habitat in the ULWP and beyond. Land uses on adjacent properties would not be impacted by the land transfer. There is a potential for agriculture and grazing development on private lands next to the preserve, but these uses would not impact land status on the ULWP.

INDIAN TRUST ASSETS

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for federally recognized Indian tribes or individuals. Assets can be real property, physical assets, or intangible property rights, such as lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The Joint Lead Agency's policy is to recognize and fulfill its legal obligations to identify, protect, and conserve the trust resources of federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal members and to consult with tribes on a government-to-government basis whenever plans or actions affect tribal trust resources, trust assets, or tribal safety. Under this policy, the federal government is committed to carrying out its activities in a manner that avoids adverse impacts to ITAs when possible and to mitigate or compensate for such impacts when it cannot. No ITAs have been identified that may be adversely affected by the CMP.

As a matter of law, the CUPCA Office, on behalf of the Joint Lead Agencies, consults with all tribal governments, associated native communities, native organizations, and tribal individuals whose interests might be directly and substantially affected by activities overseen by the agency. The CUPCA Office notified several tribes of the proposed action in writing in February 2021. The CUPCA Office also notified tribes of the availability of the draft plan and EA in January 2022. Letters were sent to the Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians, Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Tribe Business Committee, Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation of Wyoming, Navajo National Tribal Council, Hopi Tribe of Arizona, Zuni Tribe of the Zuni Reservation, Northwestern Band of Shoshoni Nation of Utah, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians of the Kaibab Indian Reservation, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians of the Moapa River Indian Reservation, Paiute Indian Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho, Northern Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, Wind River Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs, Uintah and Ouray Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Hall Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Southern Paiute Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribes either provided no response or responded stating that no traditional cultural properties would be affected. The Ute Tribe Business Committee submitted a letter requesting further information on water rights used for the ULWP. The CUPCA Office provided the requested information to the Ute Tribe Business Committee and their consultant. The information on water rights and shares has been added to the CMP and EA. The Joint Lead Agencies conclude that the project will not have adverse effects on ITAs including water rights, and the plan can proceed without further consultation.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on information contained in the EA and supporting documentation, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is made on this action. This action would also not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA, for the following reasons:

1. Vegetation, wetlands, and invasive species; wildlife, including migratory birds; special status species; soil resources; cultural resources; access, recreation, and visitor services; and land use were all assessed for potential impacts and the CMP was not determined to result in an adverse impact at a level that would be considered significant. This is thoroughly documented in Chapter 4 of the EA. Other resources were considered but not brought forward for detailed analysis either because the resource does not exist in the ULWP or Mona Springs parcels or because the resource would not have the potential to be impacted.

2. Public health and safety would be minimally affected by the CMP.
3. The CMP includes the development of habitat management projects and recreation infrastructure development, as well as other ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to negatively impact cultural resources. In all cases the UDWR and the Mitigation Commission would work closely with the Utah SHPO to identify and mitigate potential impacts on cultural resources. Wetland habitat would be enhanced through acquiring additional water rights and implementing restoration projects. This could increase the availability of surface water during the summer and fall and help to restore the historical condition of wetlands that have been heavily affected by irrigation demands.
4. None of the identified environmental effects are considered highly controversial.
5. None of the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. The CMP would set no precedent or decision in principle about other actions which could pose significant environmental effects.
7. This EA enables the Mitigation Commission and the UDWR to examine the multi-faceted action in the CMP in the absence of future site or project-specific proposals. Future site or project-specific proposals would undergo subsequent tiered NEPA reviews.
8. The Mitigation Commission has consulted with SHPO in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. No adverse impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.
9. The Joint Lead Agencies coordinated with the FWS during the scoping phase of this action. There is no evidence indicating the presence of ESA-listed species in the plan area; as a result, this action will have no effect on these species.
10. This action would not threaten any violations of applicable laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment, including Executive Orders 13186 (Migratory Bird Treaty Act) and 13112 (Invasive Species).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As part of an early information gathering phase of the project, the Mitigation Commission held two workshops with potentially interested federal, state, and local government agencies, including the BLM, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the CUPCA Office, the FWS, the UDWR, and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. The purpose of the workshops was to share details of the proposed CMP with the agencies and solicit early input on planning issues.

For public scoping, the Mitigation Commission and DOI CUPCA Office developed an interactive virtual public meeting website³ to share information, solicit input to prepare the draft EA, and provide a forum to answer relevant questions. This website was used in lieu of in-person public meetings, which were not possible because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations for social distancing and avoiding public gatherings. The 30-day public scoping period for the EA was initiated with the publication of the virtual public meeting website on February 19, 2021, and concluded on March 22, 2021. Concurrent with the virtual public meeting website, the Mitigation Commission distributed postcards announcing the public comment period to 708 property

³ Internet website: <https://www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/utah-lake-wetland-preserve-management-plan-ea>

owners in the ULWP and within a half-mile buffer of the ULWP boundary. A legal advertisement was published in the *Provo Daily Herald* on February 22, 2021.

The draft EA was posted on the virtual public meeting website and on the Mitigation Commission website.⁴ Notification of the availability of the draft EA was distributed electronically and via postcard to agencies, organizations, and individuals on the Mitigation Commission mailing list. The Public Draft EA comment period extended from January 14, 2022 to February 22, 2022. During the Public Draft EA comment period, the interactive virtual public meeting website was used to share information, solicit input on the draft EA, and provide a forum to answer relevant questions. Aside from comments received from the Ute Tribe described above under *Indian Trust Assets*, the Mitigation Commission did not receive any substantive comments on the draft CMP or EA.

CONCLUSION

The CMP best meets the purpose and need for the action and will not have a significant effect on the human environment. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts, threatened or endangered species, or other unique characteristics of the area. Based on the analysis presented in the EA, it has been determined that the CMP would not result in any significant impacts and an EIS is not required for this project.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This action may be implemented at any time upon the signing of this document by the Joint Lead Agencies.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please direct questions on the EA or FONSI to mmills@usbr.gov or Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission; Attn: ULWP; 230 South 500 East, #230, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102.

⁴ Internet website: https://www.mitigationcommission.gov/wetlands/wetlands_ulwp.html