

Water Line

Fall 2005

Sand Hollow Reservoir
Photo: Doug Wilson

Growth and change provide impetus for resourceful planning

Growth forecast

George Will is quoted as saying “the future has a way of arriving unannounced.” However, the population growth in the State of Utah and the County of Washington is far from “unannounced.” We have been receiving nudges for years that whisper “they are coming; you must prepare.”

It is my experience that, over the past 40 years, population growth has been underestimated by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB). The GOPB is now projecting that Utah’s population will increase from 2.2 million in 2000 to nearly 5.4 million in 2050, an increase of 139%. Could this figure also be an underestimation?

With what we know today from studying growth patterns, Washington County will expand from a current population of approximately 130,000 to at least 300,000 in the next 15 years. This statistic is not a nudge; it is a glaring message to persuade us to act now to ensure that we have water for future generations of southern Utahns.

In March of 1852, the territorial legislature created the County of Washington.

It has taken this County approximately 150 years to reach today’s population of 130,000.

“All of us drink from wells we did not dig.”
(Ed Alter, State Treasurer and Chair of the Water Delivery Financing Task Force)

There is a delicate balance between population growth and the required infrastructure to meet needs. We do not want to overbuild, but even more crucial, we cannot afford to under build. It is the responsibility of the District to consider steps to be taken to:

- update or completely rebuild aging infrastructure; and
- decide what new infrastructure is needed and when it would have to be brought on line.

In conjunction with local municipalities, these issues are being carefully examined. Before commitments are made to build or

Manager’s Message

Ron Thompson, General Manager



to refurbish, I encourage each resident to conserve water wisely. Aggressive conservation on the part of all will allow us to place needed projects a little further out into the future. Projects such as the Lake Powell Pipeline will still be critical, but conservation would allow the construction to be pushed down the road a bit. Without a commitment to conserve on the part of all of us, the Lake Powell Pipeline will have to be operational by 2017.

Regional Water Supply Agreement benefits all

It has been well over one year since “pooling” talks and meetings have taken priority between the District and the municipalities. Relying on input from the cities as to their current and future water needs, a Regional Water Supply Agreement has been drawn up that will focus on meeting these needs. St. George City has approved the Agreement and it is expected that other cities will soon follow suit.

This Agreement will prove beneficial for various reasons:

- The formerly used “take-or-pay” contracts between the District and the

cities did not allow for conservation to be aggressively pursued. The cities paid for water whether it was used or not. Cities will now pay for water actually used.

• As water supplies wane, the cities would have to invest in building their own expensive capital projects. They can now move into pooling with the District and thereby avoid redundant capital facilities expenditures.

• An impact fee imposed at the time a new development is platted would help cover the capital costs of water development. Thus, part of the burden of paying for water would fall on future residents and not completely on the shoulders of current residents.

Welcome to Dr. James Ence

On behalf of the District and its Board of Trustees, I am happy to welcome Dr. James Ence as the newest member of our Board. Dr. Ence brings with him a wealth of knowledge about Washington County and a sense of dedication and service to the community.

Jim is a graduate of Dixie High School. He received his Bachelors degree in chemistry from Southern Utah State College in 1974 and his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Pacific in 1977. He graduated with honors. He is a recipient of the Oral Surgery Award and is a member of the American Dental Association.

In addition to his intellectual acumen, he donates hours of service to various dental and community organizations. He has served on the Board of the New Santa Clara Canal Company for 15 years. Eight of those years were spent as President of the Company during which the Santa Clara pipeline was constructed. This pipeline project required hundreds of hours in meetings between landowners, contractors, engineers, the New Santa Clara Canal Company and the District before it was actually completed and dedicated in 2004. Many of these hours fell on Jim’s shoulders. **We look forward to a long and productive relationship with Jim as a member of the District’s Board.**



James N. Ence D.D.S.

Dedication draws crowd to celebrate completion of water project

By Steve Meisner and Ann Jensen



Overview of Diversion Dam and Fish Screens

On Saturday, November 16th, local, state and federal leaders gathered to dedicate the Washington Fields Diversion and Fish Screen structure.

The St. George Washington Fields Canal Company was formed in 1850 and the pioneers labored for years before finding the best location on which to build the Washington Fields Diversion. The diversion dam has been upgraded and raised. This work sets in motion the process for piping the Washington Fields canal. The fish screens remove debris from the canal and send trapped fish back into the river. These screens have been responsible for saving thousands of endangered fish.

Morgan Jensen, Chair of the Washington County Water Conservancy District Board of Trustees, said "if the pioneers were here with us today, they would be truly amazed at this structure."

This state of the art structure is a result of years of planning and cooperation between the Water District, the St. George Washington Canal Company and the Virgin River Resource Management & Recovery Program. It balances the water rights of the Canal Company with the need to protect endangered species. It is a perfect example of a "win-win" project.

Ron Thompson, General Manager of the Washington County Water Conservancy

District, thanked all those involved in the project. He said that our state is blessed with great leaders. Water projects in Washington County would not occur if not for the hard work of our delegation in general and Senator Orrin Hatch in particular. Senator Hatch has always shown a special love for and a commitment to the people of southern Utah.



Senator Orrin Hatch

Senator Hatch, keynote speaker, pointed out that this project is a good example of what can be accomplished when local, state and federal agencies work together. He complimented all those involved on their great foresight and vision.

St. George City Mayor, Dan McArthur, gave the dedicatory invocation praying that "we may be a visionary people committed to proceeding in a spirit of cooperation and a continued attitude of 'just doing it.'"



Ron Thompson, District General Manager



Tamarisk fire destroys pioneer home and cottonwood tree behind Pineview Estates in Washington Fields. Photo by John Murdock

Fire Management Plan nears completion

By Corey Cram

The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands is in the process of completing a Fire Management Plan for the Lower Virgin River. The plan focuses on fire management in the wildland-urban interface in the Virgin River corridor from Bloomington through Washington Fields to the Washington Fields Diversion.

Fires in March 2002 near Pineview Estates threatened homes and property. This plan prioritizes areas of concern and provides recommendations for fuels reduction and vegetation management. The biggest reason for the wildfire threat is the invasion of tamarisk in the river floodplain and surrounding areas.

Generally, the plan recommends:

- Removal of tamarisk; and
- Revegetation with Coyote Willow or Cottonwood planted further away from the stream channel.

Landowners are encouraged to be proactive in managing their property to minimize fire risk. Tamarisk can be effectively removed through a variety of means. If a landowner adheres to the following procedures, state and/or federal permits should not be required:

- Remove a tamarisk bush using only hand tools;
- Apply an appropriate herbicide; and
- Closely follow the recommendations of the Fire Management Plan.

For additional information contact Corey Cram, WCWCD Watershed Coordinator, at 673-3617 or Ron Wilson, Southwest Area Manager, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands at 435-586-4408.

STAFF LEAKS

Brett Cahoon, Operations and Maintenance Crew

by Ann Jensen

Brett Cahoon, a member of the Society of Primitive Technology, says that “primitive life skills serve to bring out our inner resources for dealing with challenging situations.”

Each September, Brett tries to attend the Primitive Skills Conference held in Rexburg, Idaho. He is especially interested in making stone tools, tools of bone and bows and arrows. He would like to become skilled in the identification of edible foods found in the wild and those foods used for medicinal purposes. One of his goals is to set up a primitive skills group in Utah, Arizona and Nevada.

His job at the District complements his love of the outdoors as at least 95% of his work day is spent in the field. Brett started working for the District as part of its Operations and Maintenance Crew in August of 1998.

Brett’s main responsibility is overseeing the HDPE pipe program. This includes fusing and welding pipe and fittings for the District’s water systems. Brett also oversees the maintenance of the fusing equipment. Local communities often call upon Brett to fuse their pipes and repair leaks on their HDPE lines. Brett will be heavily involved in the construction of the Crystal Creek pipeline project which will include 12 miles of 36” HDPE pipe.

Brett also works in all of the maintenance areas of the District. His daily work load is quite varied ranging anywhere from hydrau-

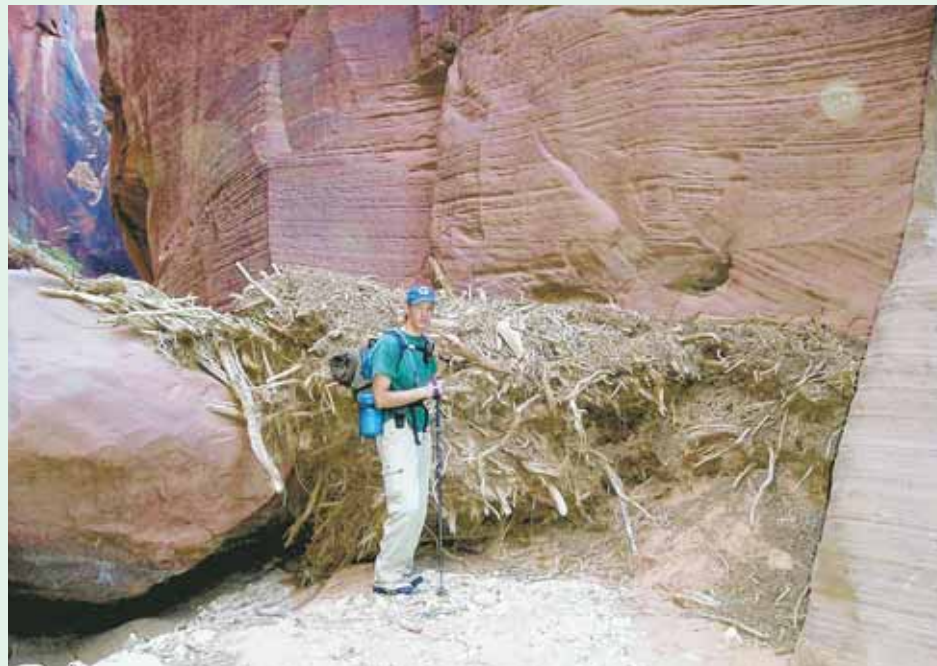
lics to housekeeping. Everyday is a new day bringing with it diverse challenges. Brett’s versatility has made him a valuable asset to the District.

Brett has deep ties to Utah’s Dixie. He was raised in Hurricane and graduated from Hurricane High School in 1992. He is currently studying for an Associates of Science degree at Dixie State College. He hopes to eventually earn a degree in Geology.

In addition to his primitive skills interests, Brett has worked with the Boy Scouts as a scout master and varsity coach. He once took 18 boys on a 67-mile backpacking trip in New Mexico.



He enjoys backpacking in Kolob, Zion National Park, the Pine Valley Mountain area and Buckskin Gulch. He loves to go four-wheeling with his wife, Helana. Brett and Helana are expecting their first child in June 2006.



Brett backpacking at Buckskin Gulch

Tamarisk removal efforts continue

By Ann Jensen



Tamarisk infestation along the Virgin River

This past summer, four Saturdays have found dedicated hunters engaged in tamarisk removal. The Dedicated Hunter Program was established in 1995. It provides sportsmen with various opportunities to involve themselves with conservation projects. Upon completion of program requirements, these hunters are then allowed to hunt in an area of their choice. The hunters have worked in conjunction with the Division of Wildlife Resources and the Virgin River Program on this removal project.

Removal efforts have occurred in an area just off Washington Dam Road by the Dee Atkin bridge. Approximately two to four acres have been cleared of this water-guzzling plant. Efforts are continuing on the part of municipalities, agencies, and the Water District with regard to tamarisk removal.

PIPE DREAMS

by Ann Jensen

“Let’s begin” urged Ed Alter, State Treasurer and Chair of the Water Delivery Financing Task Force. On Wednesday, November 16th, the Lake Powell Partner Network convened at the Dixie Center to begin collaborating on the Lake Powell Pipeline Project. The Partner Network consists of the State of Utah and the water districts of Washington, Kane and Iron Counties. This summit was coordinated by Vanguard Media Group out of Salt Lake City. Vanguard is the marketing and public relations consultant for the Lake Powell Pipeline Project.

This meeting was arranged to allow participants to talk about the needs of their individual counties, ask questions about the project, and discuss opportunities provided by and possible barriers to the Lake Powell Pipeline.

Presentors addressed the following points of interest:

- **Water needs of the West in general and Utah in particular;**
- **Specific needs of Washington, Kane and Iron Counties; and**
- **Financing recommendations from the Water Delivery Financing Task Force.**

Larry Anderson, Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources, pointed out that “the growth is here.” In his closing comments, he summarized the salient points that each participant should take away from the summit:

- You must decide as a community if this is a project that is important to your community;
- You must make a strong commitment to water conservation. Each city will need to have a strong conservation plan;
- If you know of other water development options, share this with the project partners; and
- Talk to your legislators whether you support the project or not.

When asked about the timeline for the project, Ron Thompson said he hopes that it is “online and pumping by 2020.”

Conservation Corner

FREE Landscaping Workshops January – March 2006

By Julie Breckenridge

These workshops are held at the Tonaquint Nature Center - (1851 Dixie Drive).
Space is limited so please call 673-3617 to reserve your spot.



**Landscape design 1 –
laying out the plan**
Thursday, January 19 - 6-8 p.m.

Find out why Xeriscape is a natural choice in our arid climate as you learn the basics. Learn the steps involved in designing or renovating your landscape. Information and tips are presented for the do-it-yourself types as well as for the homeowner who wants to be more informed and prepared when talking to landscape contractors. Tips on how to hire a contractor will be provided. This hands-on class will provide the opportunity to ask questions and get ideas specific to your property. It is recommended that you bring a rough sketch of your property along with you.

Total tree care
Saturday, January 21 - 10-11 a.m.

Protect your investment. St. George City arborist, Debra Scarborough, will teach pruning and how to properly care for your trees, shrubs and roses.

**Landscape design 2 –
develop your plant palette**
Thursday, January 26 - 6-8 p.m.

Design your landscape with color, texture and variety throughout all the seasons. Learn how to choose plants that will complement one another within your landscape and that will guide the eye to a focal point. Learn which plants will work best in the different microclimates of your yard. You've drawn your plan, now select the plants. The first hour will be instructional; the last hour will be dedicated to helping students in their design.

**Efficient irrigation –
designing lawn irrigation,
turf varieties and care**
Thursday, February 9 - 6-8 p.m.

In the first hour, the basics of an irrigation system design will be presented. You will learn:

- to talk the lingo;
- recognize potential irrigation problem areas;
- how to read an irrigation plan;
- the common errors made in landscape design; and
- what you can do to protect your investment.

Turf varieties will be demonstrated during the second hour. You will discover what is best suited to your needs and learn how to maintain a lush lawn without a high water bill.

**Color my world –
painting with perennials in
a weather-wise landscape**
Saturday, February 11 - 10-11 a.m.

Add more color to your landscape this year with perennials. Instruction will be given on the varieties that work well in our area. Learn how to plant and care for them in such a way as to ensure a higher success rate and vivid coloring.

**Efficient irrigation 2 –
understanding drips**
Thursday, February 16 - 6-8 p.m.

Learn about the design, installation, maintenance and scheduling of water-efficient drip systems.

**Patio pavers and
concrete finishes**
Saturday, March 25 - 10-11 a.m.

Discover the variety of pathways (or patios) available for your landscape. Learn the "how to's" for these hardscapes.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES of the Washington County Water Conservancy District

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Local Reservoir Capacities and Levels

Reservoir	Capacity	November 2004	November 2005	Percent of Full
Quail Creek	40,000 af	18,217 af	32,322 af	81%
Sand Hollow	50,000 af	11,385 af	42,764 af	86%
Gunlock	10,884 af	10,884 af	10,884 af	100%
Kolob	5,585 af	2,758 af	5,585 af	100%



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