

Nibley City Mayor's Report

18 March 2024 – 31 March 2024

Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss! Thank you for reading this report. Please be sure to check the official public notifications on Nibley's website (www.nibleycity.com) and the Utah Public Notice website (www.utah.gov/pmn/) for more information.

Here are the highlights from the past two weeks and topics in this report:

- **Nibley Active Transportation Plan with Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee**
- **Northern Utah Water Users Association**
- **Northern Utah Flood Risk Project Kickoff**
- **Neighboring Communities and Indoor Recreation Facilities**
- **Legislative Update with the Cache Mayors' Association**
- **Cache Chamber of Commerce**
- **Tree Giveaway**

Nibley Active Transportation Plan Meeting with Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee

I have previously mentioned that Nibley City is writing its first-ever, standalone Active Transportation Plan. Nibley staff and I met with the Cache Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to get their input on our plan, and I wrote about that meeting in the April newsletter. You can check the newsletter mailed with your utility bill or on the link below for more information. I also encourage you to have a look at the online survey and especially the interactive map on Nibley's website (<https://nibleycity.com/nibleys-on-the-move/>) to help us understand the good and the bad about active transportation in Nibley.

<https://nibleycity.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NibleyNewsApril2024Extended-1.pdf>

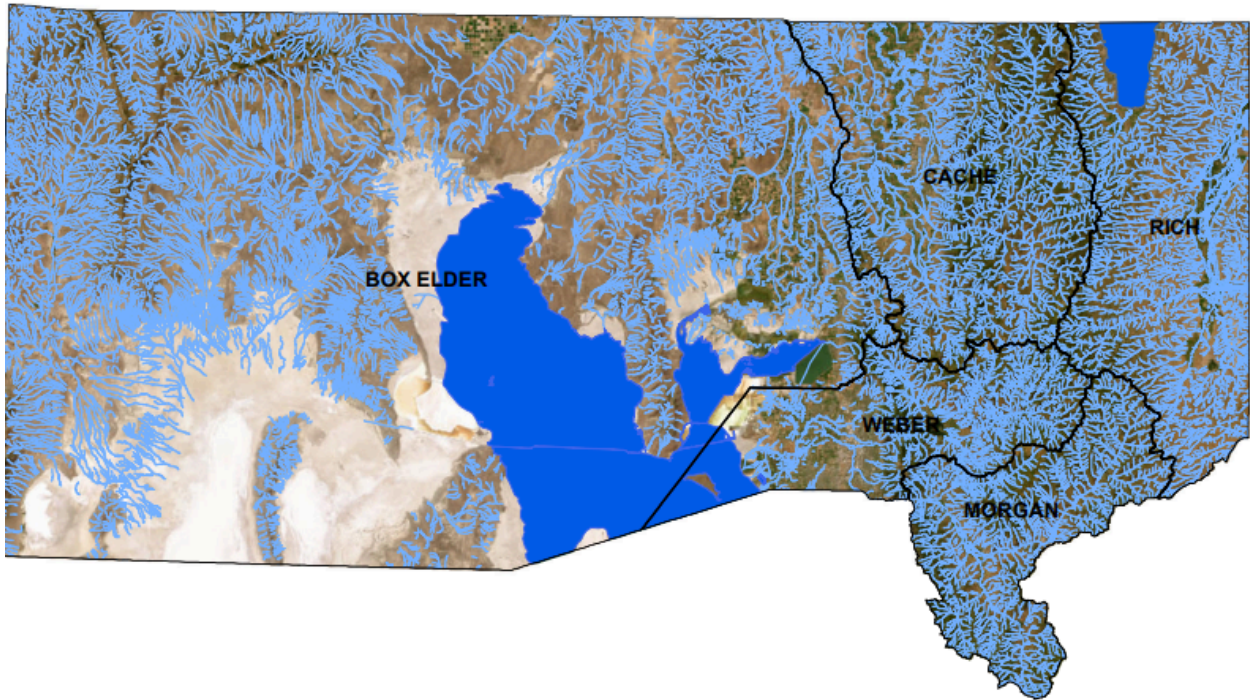
Northern Utah Water Users Association

City staff and I attended most of a two-day event hosted by the Northern Utah Water Users Association. This brought together stakeholders from agriculture, industry, wildlife resources, municipalities, and energy production to learn about water demands in northern Utah. Of course, concern about low levels of the Great Salt Lake was a big part of the discussion, along with the role that the Bear River has on the Great Salt Lake. I'm going to share a few fun facts about the Bear River that I learned in this conference. At about 350 miles in length, it is the longest river in the US that does not eventually flow to an ocean. The Bear River crosses state boundaries seven times as it flows through three different states, and it supplies more than half of the inflow to the Great Salt Lake. The Bear River has been connected and reconnected to Bear Lake many times over the eons. The latest connection was established in 1911 by a

man-made dam that diverted most of the Bear River into Bear Lake to function as water storage for irrigation. We can be assured of two things about water in northern Utah: either we don't have enough, or we have too much (next topic).

Northern Utah Flood Risk Project Kickoff

City staff and I attended a meeting held by the Utah Division of Emergency Management to learn about a flood risk project starting in northern Utah. This project will assess flood risks of approximately 8,000 to 10,000 stream miles (the blue lines on the map below). The project's goal is to identify flood risks to help municipalities and landowners make informed decisions about land uses and potential development in the vicinity of streams and rivers.



Neighboring Communities and Indoor Recreation Facilities

Chad Wright, Nibley Recreation Director, organized a meeting with recreation staff and elected officials from Wellsville, Hyrum, and Nibley. The point of the meeting was to update the other cities about Nibley's feasibility study on indoor recreation space, and as we make progress with that study, invite the other cities to participate as well. As mentioned in previous status reports, I believe the hard part of the indoor recreation space question will be finding the right scale. The facility that Nibley can afford to build might not solve the problem, and there is an economy of scale in building recreation space with other cities. We also made sure the other cities knew about the application for RAPZ tax to fund a county-wide feasibility study. During our meeting,

Wellsville and Hyrum expressed interest in working with Nibley. The next step is to make progress with our feasibility study and then bring other cities in when the time is right.

Legislative Update with the Cache Mayors' Association

The Cache Mayors' Association, an informal group that meets about once a month to talk about common issues in our cities, heard a summary of this year's legislative session from five of the six state representatives whose districts include parts of Cache County. Even if I occasionally complain about the Utah Legislature getting involved in decisions that have traditionally been left to municipalities, I appreciate the efforts of our local representatives. I believe that they have our best interests in mind, they cooperate with one another for the benefit of Northern Utah, and they work hard on our behalf. On a positive note, I thought this year the legislature wasn't as interested as last in meddling with our municipal processes, especially land-use issues. On other topics, our legislators expressed a fear of overloading the legislative process that is confined to a 45-day session. The legislature passed 591 bills this year, a record number. I think Governor Cox is on the right track when he said at the water conference mentioned earlier in this report that some issues that legislation intends to fix could be just as easily handled with a phone call.

Whenever I have a chance, I thank the legislature for the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act that requires transparency in municipal governance. That state code requires that anytime a quorum (typically a majority) of an authoritative body, including our planning commission and city council, is assembled and discussing city policy, then it is a public meeting. That public meeting must be announced to our citizens with an invitation extended for them to attend that meeting. After thanking the legislature for that law, I always ask them why they don't expect the same transparency of themselves. Meetings of political parties are exempted from the Open and Public Meetings Act, and political-party caucuses that happen every other day at the legislature are closed to the public. The legislators explained that they need to discuss issues with like-minded people while out of the public's view. To me, a quorum is a quorum. It has the ability to make decisions for the entire body—even if they have to go back on the floor to officially vote on that decision. It doesn't matter whether the like-minded people belong to the same political party or not, and I thought political caucuses should not be exempt. Regardless, it was not a contentious discussion, and I would score it high on the Dignity Index (www.dignityindex.us).

Cache Chamber of Commerce

Several Cache County mayors, including me, attended a Cache Chamber of Commerce meeting where we were invited to report what's going on in our communities. I talked about how Nibley was moving from a bedroom community towards a more complete city with economic development, recreation spaces, connectivity for vehicles and active transportation, and additional housing with a variety of forms while trying to maintain open space and a connection

to nature. Of course, change is hard. Local governance is where we work to find the balance between individual property rights and the rights of the community. We use our best efforts with open-space subdivisions and the transfer of development rights, along with nature parks, trails, and recreational fields to mitigate the impacts of change.

Tree Giveaway

My bride, Becky, and I are again giving away bare-root trees and shrubs this year to celebrate Arbor Day and Nibley's status as a Tree City. The giveaway is on April 22, from 5:30 to 6:30 at the Nibley City Offices. If you want to research the varieties for this year, they are red osier dogwood, peach leaf willow, buffaloberry, elderberry, chokecherry, and golden currant. The last three produce berries that you can harvest to make tasty syrups and jams. Please check Nibley's April Newsletter for more information.

If you are not receiving these reports via email, and if you would like to do so, please let me know and I will add you to the list. Whether it's with good news or to express a concern, please call, text, or write anytime.

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As always, my appreciation to volunteer Leslie Maughan for proofreading and reviewing these reports for clarity before you see them.