

# Managing Wildland Urban Interface and Wildfire Risk

Fire Chief Dan Petersen

Unified Fire Authority

Wildland Division Chief Widdison

Unified Fire Authority



## The National Strategy

The Final Phase in the Development of the  
*National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy*



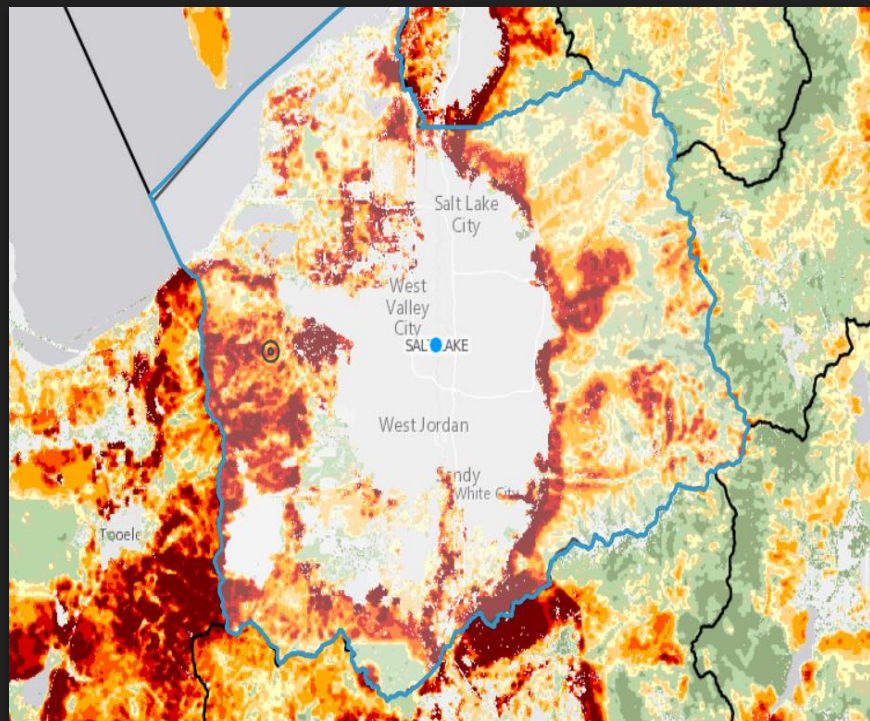
April 2014

Salt Lake County Comprehensive Emergency  
Management Plan – October 2020

Wildfire/Urban Interface Annex

DRAFT: January 2021

# Wildland Urban Interface Wildfire Risk



## U.S. Drought Monitor Utah

**March 2, 2021**  
(Released Thursday, Mar. 4, 2021)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	0.00	100.00	100.00	97.16	90.20	57.20
<b>Last Week</b> 02-23-2021	0.00	100.00	100.00	98.13	90.20	57.20
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 12-01-2020	0.00	100.00	100.00	95.07	90.11	68.56
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 12-29-2020	0.00	100.00	100.00	97.38	90.11	68.56
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-29-2020	0.00	100.00	99.62	93.20	87.26	12.80
<b>One Year Ago</b> 03-03-2020	21.43	78.57	58.62	1.33	0.00	0.00

### Intensity

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

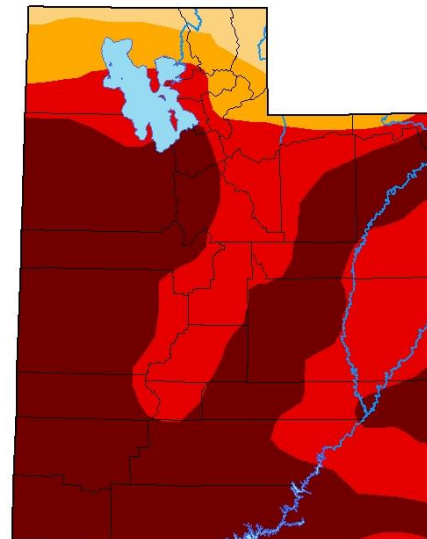
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

### Author:

Brian Fuchs  
National Drought Mitigation Center



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



# Working Together for Effective Wildfire Management

Unified Fire Authority works with local communities and municipalities, county, state and federal partners to address challenges

- Fuels Management
- Values at Risk Management
- Human-caused Ignitions
- Effective and Efficient Wildfire Response



Fire Marshal Brad Larson

Unified Fire Authority



# Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement

- Status of new builds in the Urban Interface
- Application of existing Fire Code
- Insurance Service Office (ISO) Rating Improvement
- Additional ordinances and measures that could be considered

Operations Chief Dustin Dern

Unified Fire Authority

# Preparedness and Response

- Training, Qualifications and Preplanning
- Apparatus, Equipment and Capabilities
- Interagency Response and Coordination



WUI Coordinator Dax Reid  
Fire Warden Robert Sanders

State of Utah  
Forestry, Fire and State Lands

# Wasatch Front WUI Fire Risk Example in Emigration



# Current SL County Fuel Reduction Projects

- Ongoing annual seasonal residential chipping events in Emigration, Parley's Canyon, Lamb's Canyon, Mt. Aire, Millcreek Canyon, Olympus Cove, Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon, Hi-country Estates and Camp Williams
- This is annual maintenance and landowners contribute greatly with 185 homes in these areas reporting in-kind hours equaling \$42,000
- UFA and FFSL were the largest funding sources in this effort with UFA contributing \$160,000 via Participation Commitment (PC) and Contracted FFSL funding of \$38,000 and FFSL contribution of \$10,000 (Total = \$240,000 combined)

# Additional Potential Projects and Needs

- 20 signed CWPPs in SLCO as of 2020 and adding 6 more in 2021
- Project work consistently happens in the same 10 communities but not the rest - Magna, White City, Granite, SLC, Bluffdale
- All 26 communities need collaborative attention in the WUI, in shared spaces, at community boundaries, and across agencies and stakeholders
- Difficult to sustain: WUI expansion is #1 residential growth point nationally. Regional average is 43% of homes are in the WUI
- Hazardous fuel mitigation projects need to be landscape level and include multiple strategies to achieve goals - Thinning, Rx Fire, Shaded Fuel Breaks, Improving Existing Fuel Breaks, Vegetation Regime Changes, Grazing, Utilities' Mitigation Efforts, etc.

# Solutions - Community Wildfire Planning Center Analysis by Molly Mowery - California, Colorado, Montana and Washington

- WUI Code - International or NFPA?
- Fire risk reduction priorities and criteria managed at the County and City level
- Promote learning opportunities about the WUI to engage people
- Integrate the role of land use planning expertise with WUI topics
- Land use planning - Identify Risks and Opportunities
- Land use - Identify trends, uncertainties and barriers to change
- Advance WUI planning policies and regulations



District Ranger Bekee Hotze  
Zone FMO Matt Armantrout

Forest Service  
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

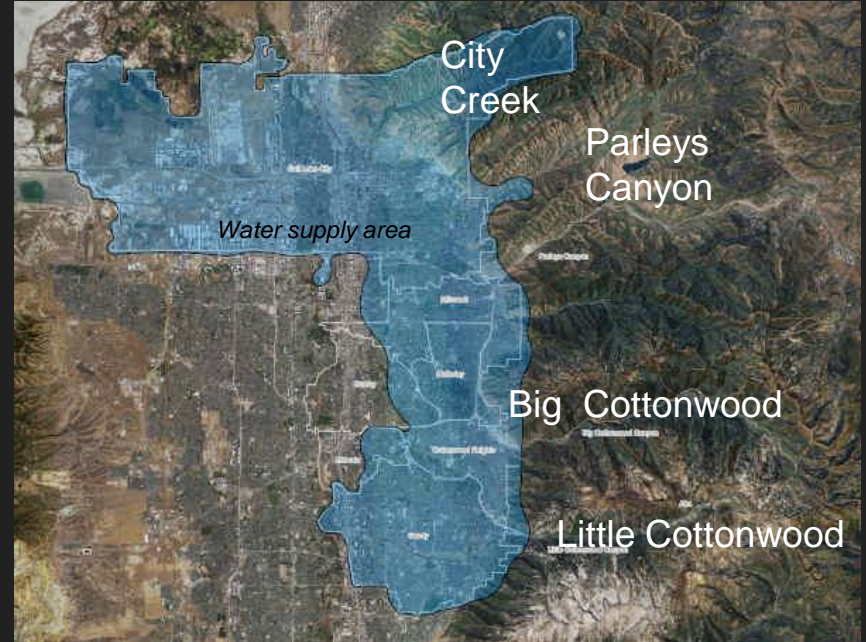
Patrick Nelson

Salt Lake City Public Utilities

# SLC Department of Public Utilities

*360,000 people drink this water daily.*

- **Wildfire is a risk to water supply:**
  - Colorado fires - water supply/treatment issues
  - Central Utah Project- Dollar Ridge impacts
  - 60% water supply from Central Wasatch in Salt Lake County
- **SLC Wildfire Risk Reduction efforts:**
  - Lambs Canyon pilot projects
  - Shared Stewardship
  - Updating 1999 Watershed Management Plan with heavy emphasis on fuels reduction
  - Budget funding for WUI and wildland fuels reduction projects starting July 2022
  - Partnering with UFA, US Forest Service, Utah Division of Forestry Fire State Lands and private property owner on reduction projects.



Emergency Manager Clint Mecham

Salt Lake County Emergency Management

# Emergency Management Coordination and Support

## ❖ Prevention

- Development and coordination of plans

## ❖ Preparation

- Public Information and warning systems
- Training and exercising existing plans

## ❖ Mitigation

- Individual/Family/Business education (96 hr. Kits. FIREWISE)
- Collection, storage and access to Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) data

## ❖ Response

- Support of tactical commanders in the field
- Ordering and coordination of resources

## ❖ Recovery

- Re-establishment of affected infrastructure
- Disaster Assistance Centers (DAC's)



# How Can Salt Lake County Help?

- Finalize and adopt the Wildfire and Urban Interface Annex
- Continue to support efforts in high risk wildfire urban interface areas
- Promote community engagement in Firewise
- Support access to funding opportunities
- Continued work on FCOZ and compatibility with mitigation efforts

Note: Salt Lake County Mayors Office has been exceptional in engaging in this area and involving the UFA in their planning process

# Questions for the Panel?

- **Unified Fire Authority**
  - Chief Dan Petersen
  - Wildland Division Chief Anthony Widdison
  - Operations Chief Dustin Dern
  - Fire Marshal Brad Larsen
- **State of Utah - Forestry, Fire and State Lands**
  - WUI Coordinator Dax Reid
  - Fire Warden Robert Sanders
- **US Forest Service**
  - District Ranger Bekee Hotze
  - Zone FMO Matt Armantrout
- **Salt Lake City Public Utilities**
  - Patrick Nelson
- **Salt Lake County Emergency Management**
  - Emergency Manager Clint Mecham