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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Greetings!

This packet is intended to educate Bear Lake adjacent landowners and beach users on federal, state and municipal jurisdictions' rules, policies and programs that impact activities below the ordinary high water mark.

WHO OWNS THE LAKE BED?

The bed of Utah's portion of Bear Lake became state (sovereign) land on the date of Utah's statehood in 1896 and is managed by the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Land (FFSL). Sovereign lands are those that lie below the ordinary high water mark of Utah's navigable rivers and lakes; the ordinary high water mark of Bear Lake is generally recognized to be at 5,923.65 feet above sea level. These lands and resources are held in trust for the use and enjoyment of the public. To ensure Utah's multiple use policy, the FFSL strives to assure public access to navigable waters for commerce, navigation, fishing, swimming, and recreational boating, while also working to preserve these lands in their natural state.

BEAR LAKE COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

In June 2009, FFSL approved the Bear Lake Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The primary purpose of the Bear Lake CMP is to produce a document that will guide FFSL, along with other local, state and federal partners, in managing, allocating, and appropriately using Bear Lake's sovereign land resources. The CMP clearly sets forth defined management goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for guiding and directing future resource management actions, activities, and recreation uses at Bear Lake. The CMP can be viewed online at http://www.ffsl.utah.gov/sovlands/bearlake/press_quality_bearlake_cmp_whole.pdf

SOVEREIGN LAND USE PERMITS at BEAR LAKE

There is a misconception that residents adjacent to the lake own to the water's edge. This is apparent in land management activities that often including mowing, recreational development and other property encroachment below the ordinary high water mark. These are considered trespass violations according to Utah Code 65A-3-1. Please contact FFSL if you have any development or enhancements below the ordinary high water mark. The reverse side has more information regarding our use permits and contact information.

BOUNDARY SETTLEMENTS at BEAR LAKE

FFSL has been working on boundary settlements around Bear Lake for the last decade and is willing to work with any landowners who are interested in establishing the boundary between their upland private property and state sovereign lands. If you are interested in addressing the boundary issue, you can contact us to discuss FFSL's plans and schedule for boundary settlements. Otherwise, FFSL will be contacting you at some point in the future as it addresses boundary settlements for different areas of the lake. While ownership boundaries may change as a result of boundary settlements, only local government has the authority to establish zoning, taxation and other processes. FFSL does not have that authority. All questions regarding boundary settlements should be directed to:

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