FY2026 REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Issued by the Utah Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
For Great Salt Lake Research Projects

1.0 STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Utah Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands ("Division") requests proposals for research projects that will improve management of Great Salt Lake ("GSL"). Research projects will provide lake managers with a better understanding of the complexities of GSL in order to best inform management decisions. Research project deliverables will be publicly accessible for use and dissemination.

The Great Salt Lake Technical Team, through its Research and Grants Subcommittee, has identified nine general "hot topics" that research proposals might address, either individually or in combination. Proposals are solicited for one- and two-year research projects that address an aspect of one or more of the "hot topics" listed below. Research proposals that do not adhere to any "hot topics," but pose a significant enhancement of GSL knowledge and/or management need will also be evaluated.

1. **Extremes of salinity matrix**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. The effects of very low and/or high salinity on key species (brine flies, brine shrimp, corixids, some vegetation), especially with respect to life cycle phases
    b. Other
2. **Microbialites**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Spatial and elevation distribution throughout lake
    b. Recovery rates and conditions after prolonged exposure to air or salinity extremes
    c. Relationship to brine flies: when and where are microbialites most key to brine fly life cycles
    d. Other
3. **Water budget and management** –To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Baseline historic natural and return inflows to the lake
    b. Quantity, chemistry, location and mode of groundwater flow to GSL. What is the role of groundwater in sustaining wetlands and microbialites, and GSL water levels, and GSL brine chemistry balance?
    c. Quantity and timing of water needed to support healthy, functioning wetlands of different types
    d. Elevation and gaging measurements for Bear River Bay and Willard Spur
    e. Relationships between vegetation and water budget
    f. Other
4. **Brine flies**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Population and health
    b. Spatial distribution, success rates of maturation, microbialite health, correlation with bird populations, and/or correlations with environmental parameters like salinity and temperature, especially with respect to life cycle stage

    c. Effective monitoring techniques through ground truthing various methods
    d. Other
5. **Salt balance**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Salt loss from the lake due to erosion of playa salt and aerosols from lake
    b. Other
6. **Phragmites and wetland vegetation**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Spatial extent and temporal distribution of phragmites in GSL wetlands
    b. Reestablishment of native vegetation at treated sites through both active and passive reestablishment
    c. Changes in water availability in response to phragmites treatment
    d. Bird responses to managed areas
    e. Effectiveness of novel techniques (e.g., drone imagery and data collection, tasked satellite imagery, computer learning algorithms) applied to GSL vegetation modeling
    f. Other
7. **Lake bathymetry**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Temporal and physical scales and variation of sediment distribution, thickness (salt layers vs. other) and control factors for the variation
    b. Sub-lake floor expressions of key features such as flooding vs. exposure surfaces, microbialite and other mounds
    c. Location of major fault systems, their slip history, and potential impact of future slip events
    d. Subbottom expression and distribution of fluid flow, seeps, gases, etc.
    e. Other
8. **Microbiome inventory and database**–To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Baseline microbial taxonomy biodiversity in lake and wetlands
    b. Impacts of salinity extremes and low water levels on microbial communities
    c. Impacts on food web
    d. Other
9. **Dust characterization–**To inform/improve management, we need to understand:
    a. Surface crust dynamics, dust-associated contaminants, and dust hot spots
    b. Remote sensing to estimate and monitor crust and hot spot development, and identify areas to monitor mitigation effectiveness
    c. Other
10. **Other**
    a. Other areas not included that could inform/improve management of Great Salt Lake

Note that these Hot Topics, while more detailed than in the past, are neither exhaustive nor designed to limit excellent research. We encourage applicants to finetune research questions to address known knowledge and management needs. The successful applicant must indicate the relevance and importance of the work to GSL, demonstrate how it will benefit the overall understanding of GSL, and connect the work to improved

management of GSL. Additionally, successful research proposals should advance the goals and objectives of the GSL Comprehensive Management Plan and GSL Commissioner's Strategic Plan.

Of FFSL's FY2026 grant funds, a portion will be used for one-year projects, and the remaining funds will be reserved for the Year 1 expenses for two-year projects. Projects that are granted funding for two years will receive funding allotted across the two years as described in their allotment calendars (see Section 6.4) or as agreed on with FFSL. Expenditures eligible for funding under this proposal include labor, supplies, travel, materials and equipment.

All deliverables are due by June 30, 2026. If the project is a two-year project, an interim report is due by June 30th, 2026; with the final deliverable due no later than June 30, 2027.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Division, as part of its statutory responsibilities, recognizes the need to understand the complex aspects of Great Salt Lake in order to manage the lake and protect its resources. The authority for this Request for Grant Applications comes from Utah Code 65A-10-8 that outlines the management responsibilities of the Division for GSL. Available funding under this Request for Grant Applications comes from the Utah State Legislature to the Division.

3.0 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

This request is directed to Federal, State, Tribal and local governments, communities, businesses, universities, colleges and non-profit organizations.

Applicants may apply for up to $125,000 for a one-year project, or up to $200,000 for a two year project, allocated over two years (FY 2026 and FY 2027). During this application and grant cycle, it is anticipated that up to $500,000 will be awarded for FY2026, and up to $250,000 of FY 2027 funding for 2-year projects. FFSL may not award all of the available funding for FY26 or FY27 based on the applications received. Agencies, organizations, or businesses must have the ability to ensure fiscal accountability.

4.0 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Funds may be used for a range of approaches to the "hot topics" including: to conduct pilot projects; applied research; synthesize new or existing information; develop methods to address a research questions; apply existing knowledge to a specific problem; define and study an aspect of a specific research question; connect new or existing research to management enhancements; or define future research needs.

5.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Those submitting proposals must examine all contract documents, noting particularly all stipulations that in any way affect work output. Failure to fully understand the amount and nature of the work required to fulfill all terms of the contract documents will not be considered as a basis for extra compensation after a contract has been awarded.

5.2 If discrepancies, omissions, or ambiguities are found in contract documents, the Division will be notified at once. The Division will send written corrections or explanations. The Division will not be responsible for any oral instructions.

5.3 Proposals that substantially add to, subtract from, or otherwise change the provisions of this request will be considered void.

5.4 Proposals must certify that all entities responsible for authorizing activities have agreed that their proposal should be submitted as written.

5.5 Proposals must certify that funds awarded to the proposing entity by the Division through any contract issued pursuant to this Request for Grant Applications will not be used to supplant funds that it may have at its disposal from other sources.

5.6 Due to the fact that the source of grant monies are public funds, submitted proposals become the property of the Division and will become public records following the award of the grants. Content of unsuccessful proposals may be protected to the extent allowed by law at the request of the submitter. The request should be part of the proposal on the basis of proprietary ideas, processes, equipment, copyrights, etc. Information on the cover sheet will not be protected information.

5.7 Research reports will be available to the public through the Division and will be published online.

5.8 When submitting invoices for payment, grant recipients will provide the Division with detailed accounting information. Personnel costs should detail the charges per individual staff member working on the project. Copies of invoices and receipts from the purchase of materials and supplies for the project should be submitted. Travel costs should be detailed (e.g. mileage reimbursement and cost per mile, vehicle rental charge, etc).

5.9 The overhead for each project budget shall not exceed 10%.

5.10 In addition to the project deliverable, researchers will be required to present research findings at a Great Salt Lake Technical Team Meeting and provide a 1–2 page project summary.

6.0 PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

To be considered, project proposals must include the following components:

6.1 COVER SHEET

Use attached form.

6.2 PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please limit to eight (8) pages single sided, singled spaced, 12-point type document not including resumes (see list of appendices, below). The narrative should provide:

A. Information about the principal investigator and project team members.

B. Name and nature of the sponsoring institution, including relevant financial information such as overhead rate or 501(c)3 status.

C. Declaration of close associations of research team members with staff of the Division, members of the GSL Technical Team, or members of the Utah State Legislature.

D. Plan of work including goals, objectives and methods of the research project. This section should include a discussion of how the requested funding and approach will be adequate to accomplish the goals and objectives of the research project.

E. Discussion of the importance of the project to understanding a significant research issue, and to management of GSL for the public interest. For two-year proposals, include justification for why the project needs to be structured as a two-year project instead of one.

F. Discussion of how the project addresses an aspect of at least one of the "hot topics" or subtopics listed in 1.0 Statement of Intent. Note that the project does not have to include the exact wording of the Hot Topic subtopics to be considered as pertaining to the topic; these are guidelines for outlining what kinds of research would be valuable, but any project that will move lake management forward will be considered.

G. Discussion concerning related work done or in progress by principal investigator and members of the project team.

6.3 COLLABORATION/PROJECT PARTNERS

Please restrict to a summary section of two (2) pages single sided, singled spaced, 12-point type document not including letters of commitment (see list of appendices, below).

A. Identify partners and their contributions to the proposed project.

B. Letters of commitment describing the specific commitment (provided by the project partner and included as an appendix).

C. Potential for future leverage associated with the research project.

6.4 PROJECT BUDGET AND SCHEDULE

Project proposals must present a budget table in a format similar to that of the example below. The budget table should include expenses expected to be covered with grant funds, plus any state and local match sources.

A. Total Projected Costs by Category. Categories are: personnel, equipment, supplies, travel, administration, other.

B. Identification of matching funds or contributed resources, whether cash or in-kind services. If in-kind, state the category: personnel, equipment, supplies, travel, administration, other.

C. For two-year project proposals, the budget table must clearly show how the requested funds would be used across Year 1 (FY 2026) and Year 2 (FY 2027) of the project, and include

total yearly costs as well as total overall costs. Note that funding allocation across years cannot be adjusted once a proposal has been granted funding.

6.5 APPENDICES

A. Resumes of key project team members.

B. Letters of support from community leaders, community groups, agencies, etc.

C. Letters of commitment from declared partners.

SAMPLE BUDGET TABLE

For one-year projects

BUDGET CATEGORY	UNIT COST ($)	NO. OF UNITS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	MATCHING FUNDS (CASH OR IN-KIND)	TOTAL
Personnel					
Equipment					
Materials/Supplies					
Travel					
Administrative Overhead					
Other (List)					
TOTAL PROJECT COST					

For two-year projects

Year 1 (FY 2026)	BUDGET CATEGORY	UNIT COST ($)	NO. OF UNITS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	MATCHING FUNDS (CASH OR IN-KIND)	TOTAL
	Personnel					
	Equipment					
	Materials/Supplies					
	Travel					

	Administrative Overhead					
	Other (List)					
	TOTAL PROJECT COST YEAR 1					
Year 2 (FY 2027)	**BUDGET CATEGORY**	**UNIT COST** ($)	**NO. OF UNITS**	**GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED**	**MATCHING FUNDS** (CASH OR IN-KIND)	**TOTAL**
	Personnel					
	Equipment					
	Materials/Supplies					
	Travel					
	Administrative Overhead					
	Other (List)					
	TOTAL PROJECT COST YEAR 2					
	TOTAL PROJECT COST					

SAMPLE ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF WORK

For one-year projects

ENTITIES	ACTIVITY/ OUTPUT	QTY	MONTHS 1-3			MONTHS 4-6			MONTHS 7-9			MONTHS 10-12		
PI Jane Doe and student John Buck	Literature Search	1			■									
Masters students and undergrads	Field Work	2					■	■	■					
All	Analysis and Report	2								■	■	■		

For two-year projects

ENTITIES	ACTIVITY /OUTPUT	QTY	MONTHS 1-3			MONTHS 4-6			MONTHS 7-9			MONTHS 10-12			MONTHS 13-15			MONTHS 16-18			MONTHS 19-21			MONTHS 22-24		
PI Jane Doe	Literature Search	1			■																					
Masters and undergrads	Field Work	2					■	■	■				■	■	■				■	■	■					
All	Analysis and Report	2								■	■	■										■	■	■	■	

7.0 RANKING CRITERIA

The Division will follow guidelines developed by members of the GSL Technical Team to review and evaluate proposals. A Research and Grants Subcommittee made up of GSL Technical Team members will evaluate proposals. The evaluation process will be based on how project elements contribute to the stated goals, the qualifications of the proposal and the information asked for in this Request for Grant Application. Proposals will be evaluated based on following criteria:

RANKING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Potential to inform or improve GSL management: does the project address a gap in current understanding about the lake, and would results from the research inform/improve lake management?	35%
Strategic alignment: Is the research aligned with implementation of the Strategic Plan in consultation with the Commissioner's Office?	10%
Urgency of the research: Is it important that this research be conducted this year rather than in the future? (e.g. needed to establish baselines)	10%
Clarity: Are the research concerns/objectives and outcomes articulated clearly? For two-year proposals, does the project design justify the increased timeline?	10%
Specific work plan elements: Are the following present and well-crafted? - milestones - reasonable and rational budget - reasonable work plan and scope of work - quality of presentation - completeness of proposal - funding allocation calendar (for 2-yr proposals)	20%
Qualifications and past performance of investigators: Do the investigators' qualifications and experience imply that they will be able to competently handle the proposed project?	5%
Collaboration/partnerships: Does the project leverage partnerships/collaboration, matching funds, or have potential for current or future partnerships/collaborations?	10%

8.0 PROPOSAL APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All proposals must be electronic and received attached to an email as a PDF document. Each proposal must be received no later than **Friday, April 4, 2025 at 5:00 PM**. Absolutely no exceptions will be made for proposals not received by the appointed time. **Proposals shall be submitted to Angela Gong at the email address below.** Questions regarding the Request for Grant Applications should also be addressed to Angela Gong.

Angela Gong
Great Salt Lake Program Manager
Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands
agong@utah.gov
(385) 226-3333

9.0 CONTRACT DURATION

The contract period will extend from the date of contract approval by the Division until June 30, 2026 for one-year projects, or June 30, 2027 for two-year projects.

10.0 FUNDING NOTIFICATION AND GRANT AWARD

Proposals selected for funding will be notified within 30 days of the submission deadline. This initial notification should not be construed as an official grant award. The Division is responsible for follow-up with the appropriate documentation to award the grant. Successful candidates are encouraged to consult with the awarding agency before incurring any expenses, as pre-award costs are not usually allowed.

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COVER SHEET

PROJECT TITLE			
LEAD PROJECT SPONSOR			
PROJECT CONTACT	NAME		
	MAILING ADDRESS		
	PHONE NUMBER		
	EMAIL		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION /ABSTRACT			
DURATION OF PROPOSED PROJECT	☐ One year ☐ Two years		
PROJECT FUNDING	AMOUNT REQUESTED	MATCHING FUNDS	TOTAL PROJECT COST
	$	$	$