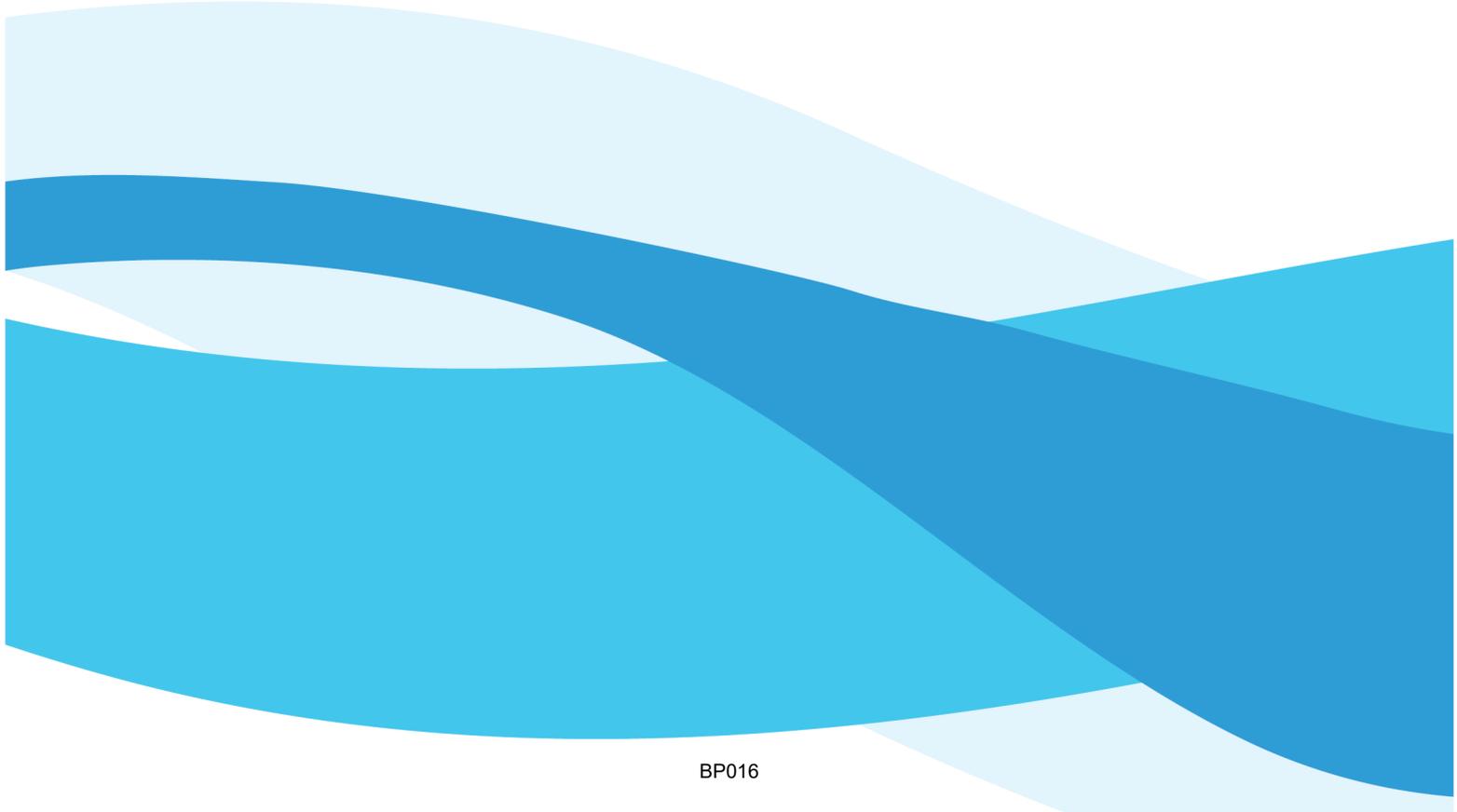


Tab 3

Environmental Committee report





Consider approval of Utah State University water audits program for 2026

Background:

Water checks are conducted from mid-May through August for Salt Lake City and Sandy City residents and CII (commercial, industrial, and institutional) entities. Both member cities indicate continued support for the program. The Water Audit Program is a voluntary program. When a resident or business requests a water audit, Utah State arranges for a Water Check employee to conduct the water check.

Metro Water entered into a contract with Utah State University (USU) for water audits on January 13, 2021 that allows for up to five (5) twelve (12) month extensions. The contract year begins February 1 and ends January 31. At that time, the annual contract amount was not to exceed \$80,000.

In January 2022, the board approved increasing the water check budget from \$80,000 to \$116,000 to address the record number of requests received in 2021. The increase allowed for USU to hire a scheduler and two more water checkers which increased the total teams from two to three teams. In 2023, 2024 and 2025 the board supported maintaining the budget at \$116,000.

In 2024, Metro Water entered into an MOU with SLCPU which allows USU to hire an additional team of water checkers to help Salt Lake City perform water checks at City and other facilities. Metro Water will pay USU for the services performed for this additional audit team. Metro water will then seek reimbursement from Salt Lake City for services up to \$22,000.

The last two years have been under budget due scheduling changes and decreasing requests for water checks. Expenses incurred by Metro Water in 2025 were \$65,195.26. The table summarizes the current contract period.

Contract Year (Feb 1 – Jan 31)	Not to Exceed Contract Amount	Expenses Incurred	Water Checks Completed (Residential/CII)
2021	\$80,000	\$80,000	217/27
2022 (1 st extension)	\$116,000	\$116,000	654/17
2023 (2 nd extension)	\$116,000	\$115,989.43	231/22
2024 (3 rd extension)	\$116,000	\$79,000	266/19
2025 (4 th extension)	\$116,000	\$65,195.26	221/14
2026 (5 th extension)	\$105,611		

Committee Activity:

The Environmental Committee met on December 9, 2025 and discussed the 2026 budget for the water audit program. The committee recommends approval by the full board of an amount not to exceed \$105,611 for total compensation for services performed in 2026.

Recommendation:

Approval of an amount not to exceed \$105,611 for total compensation for water audit services performed in 2026.



Attachments:

- 2026 Proposed Water Check budget
- 2026 Scope of Work

Last Update: January 15, 2026

2026 PROPOSED WATER CHECK BUDGET

Item	Amount	Benefits	Total
Program Administrator/Manager (Kelly Kopp)	\$22,000	\$10,450	\$32,450
Water Checker (1 @ \$18/hr x 30 hrs/wk x 12 wks)	\$6480	\$501	\$6981
Water Checkers (4 @ \$16/hr x 40 hrs/wk x 12 wks)	\$30,720	\$2375	\$33,095
Scheduler (1 @ \$20/hr x 15 hrs/wk x 12 wks)	\$3600	\$1710	\$5310
Travel	\$6000		\$6000
Supplies, App & Database Management	\$8000		\$8000
Subtotal			\$91,836
Overhead Costs (Required by USU)	15.3% of total cost		\$13,775
Total			\$105,611

Budget Justification

Program administrator and scheduler salaries are benefited at a rate of 47.5%, as per USU requirement for Fiscal Year 27.

Water Check intern wages are benefited at a rate of 7.73%, as per USU requirement.

Overhead costs represent the infrastructure costs assessed by USU for relevant facilities and equipment use. For internal budgeting purposes, and to meet federal requirements, these costs must be separated from other program fees in accordance with USU policy.

The proposed budget includes the cost of two teams of interns/employees to perform the outdoor water audits plus one additional intern/employee to “float” between teams and assist during larger Checks. Based on previous experience, we estimate that a single team of interns will be able to complete as many as 240 audits over the course of the growing season, depending on the size of the properties evaluated.

Should MWDSLS determine that more audits performed in the service area are desirable, an additional team may be added with the associated increases in costs. The cost per team is estimated at \$15,360 per season (assuming \$16/hour per person).

Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy 2026 Water Check Program Scope of Work

Overview

This proposal outlines the continuation of the Water Check Program in the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy (MWDSL) service area for 2026.

Introduction

Utah's water supplies continue to be stressed by population growth and recurring drought. As a result, landscape irrigation remains a central focus of MWDSL's conservation strategy. The District's Water Check Program—landscape irrigation system evaluations paired with customized irrigation schedules—has proven to be an effective conservation tool. Program analyses indicate that each participating household saves an average of 64,000 gallons of water annually, along with associated financial savings.

A Water Check evaluates irrigation system efficiency by measuring distribution uniformity and identifying maintenance and operational issues that limit performance. Based on these findings, program staff create a customized irrigation schedule and provide educational materials. These materials are reviewed with participants onsite to ensure understanding and address any questions.

Beginning in 2026, irrigation schedules and educational materials will continue to be delivered via email. For participants without email access (increasingly rare), materials will be provided onsite, mailed, or hand-delivered in conjunction with nearby program activities. The onsite review will still occur at the time of the Water Check.

Program Outcomes

The Water Check Program is designed to deliver three key outcomes:

1. Sustained reductions in water consumption.
2. Enhanced public relations, education, and awareness of water conservation.
3. Targeted outreach to water users with the greatest potential to conserve.

The third outcome is supported by the WaterMaps® program, administered by Dr. Joanna Endter-Wada, which identifies neighborhoods in Salt Lake City with high outdoor water use. This enables the Water Check Program to prioritize customers and areas with the highest capacity for water conservation. These analyses are updated periodically, and in 2026 we will continue to focus on these high-priority households and neighborhoods.

The Water Check Program will remain a free service underwritten by MWDSL and available to all residential and commercial–industrial–institutional (CII) users within the service area. The program will also continue to analyze existing Water Check data, including prioritizing irrigation system flaws based on their impact on efficiency.

In addition, the program will continue evaluating the following questions:

1. Do Water Checks encourage end users to reduce water use compared to their historical patterns?
2. Do Water Check participants conserve more water than similar users who do not receive Water Checks?
3. Are water savings from Water Checks sustained over time, and for how long?
4. Do users requesting Water Checks exhibit the same water use patterns as the general population?

Water Check employees/interns will also continue to conduct landscape and irrigation assessments at city properties and within the Salt Lake City School District. To support this expanded effort, the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities (SLCDPU) will provide additional staffing support as needed.

Employee Training

Water Check employees/interns undergo an introductory training period of 3–5 days at a location featuring diverse landscapes and irrigation methods. This training includes:

- Detailed instruction on ornamental plant–soil systems and common landscape problems,
- Thorough instruction on irrigation systems, components, and common issues,
- In-depth study of irrigation scheduling based on climate and weather data,
- Completion of several supervised “sample” Water Checks, and
- Ongoing spot checks and procedural confirmation throughout the season.

Training on the Tablet-Based Application

Staff will also receive detailed instruction on:

- Data entry using iPads,
- Report generation for program participants, and
- Uploading daily data to the program database via wireless connection.

Water Check Procedures

Each Water Check will include:

- Fieldwork conducted by trained, two-person teams to ensure data quality and safety,
 - Measurement of turfgrass, shrub/tree, hardscape, and permeable surface areas,
 - Identification of landscape and irrigation system characteristics and flaws,
 - Catch cup testing to determine irrigation distribution uniformity,
 - Evaluation of soil texture and plant rooting depth, and
 - Instruction for program participants on how to program their irrigation controllers.
-

Program Impacts

In cooperation with the district's member cities, billing data may be requested for each participant receiving a Water Check. Landscaped areas measured during the Water Check may then be used to convert billing data from volume units to depth units, allowing the following analyses:

- **Estimate water needs:** Compare participant water use to estimated requirements based on local climate and measured evapotranspiration (ET).
 - **Determine historical outdoor water use:** Compare current water use to individual baseline use, as permitted by available billing data.
 - **Compare program participants with nonparticipants:** Identify a matched control group (property type, location, value, and size) and compare actual water use normalized by estimated irrigated area.
-

Reporting

In 2026, MWDSLS and its member cities will receive monthly reports by email. These reports will include:

- Participant names, addresses, and contact information,
- Date the request for participation was submitted, and
- Date the Water Check was conducted.



Environmental Mission Statement – Review of Objectives

Background:

In 2018 the Environmental Committee developed an objectives summary that represented the spectrum of responsibility assigned to the Environmental Committee. These objectives correlate with Metro Water's overall vision statement. The board finalized the following Environmental Mission Statement in February 2018.

Environmental Mission Statement

Actively promote the long term, sustainable development and wise use of water, energy and other resources under the stewardship of the Metropolitan Water District through conserving water and energy, protecting water quality and the watershed and assuring regulatory and environmental compliance. All actions will take into consideration the relevant goals and activities of the member cities, associated districts, and the state.

On an annual basis, Metro Water will provide an update on efforts to support the objectives of the Environmental Mission Statement. Overall, Metro Water continues to be very active in supporting these objectives. The following is an explanation of these efforts in 2025.

Water and Energy Conservation:

Support water conservation and best management practices for energy and water conservation

- 1) Support our member cities' implementation of effective water conservation measures
 - a) Participate in the Utah State University water audits program
 - Metro Water continued to support the Utah State University (USU) Water Audits program during 2025.
 - The annual contract amount for 2025 water checks and analysis is \$116,000.
 - b) Support member cities' conservation programs
 - Support of member cities' conservation programs was through the USU Water Audits program and participation Utah Water Ways.
 - c) Participation in Utah Water Ways
 - Metro Water is a member of Utah Water Ways (UWW). Eric Sorensen is the Metro Water representative on UWW's Slow the Flow Committee.
 - The current annual cost for Metro Water to participate in the UWW as a funding member is \$36,400.
 - d) Implement Metro Water's water conservation plan
 - Metro Water's Water Conservation Plan was adopted in December 2005 and the plan was updated in December 2010. Recommended updates to the plan were considered in 2015 but have not been finalized. Metro Water is not required to have a water conservation plan unless it is applying for grant funds that would require a conservation plan. In 2024, Metro Water applied for and received a loan from the Department of Water Resources. To be eligible, Metro Water updated its conservation plan which was approved, after a public hearing, by Resolution 1931 in February 2024.
 - e) Provide annual Utah Lake System reporting



- Since 2000, Metro Water has tracked per capita water use which documents conservation performance by Metro Water and its member cities. This information is used to track Metro Water's progress in meeting the ULS conservation goals of a 12.5% water use reduction by 2020 and a 25% water use reduction by 2050. Additionally, Metro Water's progress is tracked relative to the State's regional conservation goal of 187 gallons per capita per day by 2030. When every region reaches its goal, a 16% water use reduction will be realized. Metro Water's 2024 gallons per capita per day use was 183 which is below the state conservation goal. Metro Water completed its annual conservation report and submitted it to Central Utah Water Conservancy District in March.
- 2) Implement effective supply-side conservation measures
 - Bowen Collins & Associates completed a comprehensive water supply and demand study in June 2025 using data from the most recent supply and demand studies completed by Salt Lake City and Sandy City. The study includes recommendations for optimizing use of the water supply.
 - 3) Plan and participate in Aquifer Storage and Recovery efforts
 - Consistent with the Metro Water's Fiscal and Budget policy, when revenue is available, contributions are made to the Managed Aquifer Recharge ("MAR") Reserve fund.
 - The Managed Aquifer Recharge Design and Construction capacity improvement project is in progress. Metro Water's 2021 Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) Implementation Plan includes a six-phase approach to storing up to 8,790 ac-ft of water annually in the ground. Metro Water successfully obtained funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to construct portions of the first two project phases (pilot and Phase 1) which include surface infiltration basins and an aquifer injection well. Construction work was completed in November 2025. Long-term pilot testing is being conducted on the new facilities to determine feasibility of the program according to state rules.
 - 4) Adopt best management practices for energy and water conservation at all Metro Water lands, properties, and facilities
 - a) Implement Metro Water's Energy Management Plan
 - Consistent with recommendations from the Emergency Management Plan, Metro Water created an Energy Management Team. The team includes staff from Engineering, Maintenance, IA&E, and Operations. The team meets quarterly to evaluate and consider the development of renewable energy sources, such as solar, either as independent capital improvement projects, or in conjunction with the implementation of other capital improvement projects.
 - b) Evaluate other energy and water conservation BMPs
 - Metro Water will continue to improve energy conservation through proactive operational/maintenance changes and through replacing failing equipment with energy efficient options.
 - Metro Water is eligible to receive funding from Rocky Mountain Power for proactive projects that improve energy conservation.
 - 5) Promote public education regarding water conservation
 - a) Participate in public outreach through events such as Water Week
 - Water Week activities were held on May 8, 2025. Tours of the LCWTP continue yearly for smaller groups including educational groups from Elementary to College age.



- Tours of Metro Water facilities were provided to Councilmember Alejandro Puy of Salt Lake City, the Sandy City council, and Congressman Mike Kennedy.

Water Quality Protection

Support Metro Water's vision to provide clean drinking water to our customers

- 1) Monitor and respond to harmful algal blooms in source water reservoirs
 - Metro Water's Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) and Cyanotoxin Response Plan, last updated in February 2024, continues to direct efforts to prevent HABs through source protection endeavors, to monitor for HABs through a cooperative effort with the Provo River Watershed Council and to respond to reports of HABs when they occur.
- 2) Monitor and respond to aquatic invasive species such as quagga mussel
 - Metro Water continues to monitor aquatic invasive species, especially quagga mussels. As a part of this effort, Metro Water provides funding for the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program through the PRWC.
- 3) Monitor and respond to the introduction of new water supplies in Metro Water conveyance and distribution systems
 - Metro Water has coordinated quarterly meetings with Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District and Salt Lake City Public Utilities to discuss potential water quality issues or concerns with deliveries through the Jordan Aqueduct facilities to 21st South. The most recent meeting was held on November 14, 2025.
- 4) Monitor and respond to introduction of PFASs (perfluoroalkyl substances)
 - In October 2019, Metro Water began conducting quarterly testing for PFASs (perfluoroalkyl substances) in Little Cottonwood Creek. Metro Water conducted PFAS monitoring in 2021 and 2022 as part of a project led by the Division of Drinking Water. Metro Water currently conducts quarterly testing for PFAS substances in treated water in anticipation of EPAs National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for six PFASs substances. To date there have been no detections of regulated PFASs substances in the treated water.

Watershed Planning and Protection Program

Support Metro Water's value to be long-term stewards of water, infrastructure, and the environment

- 1) Implement and maintain Metro Water's source water protection plans
 - Metro Water maintains source water protection plans for the following water sources: Provo River, Little Cottonwood Creek, Southeast Mountain Streams, Battle Creek, and Grove Creek.
 - Metro Water has coordinated efforts with Central Utah Water Conservancy District and Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District on the Provo River source water protection plan. Every six years the source water protection plans are reviewed. These plans are currently being updated and will be submitted to the Division of Drinking Water for approval prior to December 31, 2025.
- 2) Participate in watershed planning programs and efforts to protect the watershed
 - a) Support Provo River Watershed Council



- Metro Water is a member of the Provo River Watershed Council (PRWC). Eric Sorensen is Metro Water's representative on this council.
 - The current annual cost for Metro Water to participate in the PRWC as a funding member is \$110,000.
- b) Support Central Wasatch Commission (formerly Mountain Accord) efforts
- Metro Water continues to support the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) efforts. The projects the commission supports can be found at <https://cwc.utah.gov>
 - In 2022, Annalee was elected as an ex-officio board member of the CWC and represents Metro Water on the board. The annual contribution is \$15,000.
- c) Monitor and respond to legislative threats to watershed protection
- Metro Water staff continues to monitor potential legislation that relates to protection of drinking water sources. Staff and Metro Water's lobbyist track these bills and attend meetings as needed.
 - Metro Water has representation at the Utah Water Task Force (UWTF) monthly meeting. UWTF has provided input on water banking, watershed councils, watershed protection, water conservation, water rights, and other water-related legislation.
- d) Monitor and respond to developments in the watershed
- Metro Water monitors development in the watershed areas through participation in the Provo River Watershed Council. The council contracts with Barr Engineering to review development in unincorporated Wasatch County and conduct routine observations of storm water collection systems for the purpose of protecting surface water quality. The council also coordinates with the Utah Division of Water Quality to monitor storm water concerns in the area.
- e) Consider monitoring other watershed areas that have a potential impact on Metro Water source water supplies
- Provo River Watershed Council utilizes SWCA Environmental Consultants to provide engineering services for Provo River Watershed Water Quality Analysis. SWCA updated the interactive Provo River Watershed website in June 2025 ([PRWC Experience Builder](#)). This report provides recommendations for additional monitoring and other activities needed to protect water supplies.
- f) Consider and understand the implications of climate change to Metro Water and its customers
- Metro Water engaged Bowen Collins & Associates to complete a comprehensive water supply and demand study, which included an analysis of climate change implications. This study was completed in June 2025 and was based on similar efforts completed by Salt Lake City and Sandy City.

Regulatory Compliance

Recommend practices and programs that ensure regulatory compliance with the Division of Drinking Water and EPA

- 1) Monitor and respond to changes in water quality regulatory compliance requirements that may impact water treatment processes as well as practices of the Metro Water's certified lab
 - a) Metro Water completed Sanitary Survey



- The IPS rule (Improvement Priority System) is an approach to evaluating and rating water systems. Ratings are in accordance with the Rule R309-400 – Water System Rating Criteria. The three possible ratings are: Approved, Correction Action (system deficiencies are in the process of being corrected), and Not Approved (significant deficiencies exist).
- Metro Water’s water system was evaluated on June 20, 2023. A copy of the survey is available if board members are interested. The current rating is “Approved” and we received a 0 point score, the best score available. The next survey will be conducted in 2026.

Environmental Compliance

Recommend action to the Board regarding environmental compliance

- 1) Participate in NEPA compliance reviews as needed
 - Metro Water has participated in two UDOT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. The Parley’s Interchange EIS (near Terminal Reservoir) has been completed. Metro Water provided comments in coordination with Salt Lake City and Sandy on the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS.
 - In July 12, 2023, UDOT released the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS Record of Decision for transportation improvements. UDOT selected Gondola Alternative B with phased implementation of components of the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative. Staff provided comments throughout the EIS process.
 - Staff provided comments on the Wasatch Front Regional Council draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan. The 2026 draft plan is being reviewed by staff.
 - Metro Water, along with the Provo River Watershed Council, is monitoring the EIS for a proposed by bypass road through the Heber Valley. A Draft EIS will be published for review in January 2026.

Committee Activity: The committee reviewed the mission objectives during the December 9, 2025 committee meeting. This is a reporting item.

Last Update: January 15, 2026