



USU Water Quality Extension, iUTAH, Partners Unveil Logan River Sign

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Brian Greene, coordinator for USU Water Quality Extension's Utah Water Watch program, discusses a new interpretive Logan River sign, funded by iUTAH, at Logan Canyon's Stokes Nature Center.



Utah Water Watch coordinator Brian Greene, right, instructs Stokes Nature Center executive director Ru Mahoney in the use of a water quality monitoring instrument at the Logan River.

As the nation's second-driest state, Utah has a high stake in maintaining high water quality for its nearly 3 million residents, not to mention its breathtaking natural resources and wildlife.

"Sustaining Utah's water resources in this time of rapid urbanization and a changing climate is more than just a scientific challenge — it's a societal challenge," says Mark Brunson, professor in Utah State University's Department of Environment and Society and iUTAH Education, Outreach, Diversity Director. "Maintaining health streams and safeguarding our water supply is critical for every Utahn."

Brunson and his students teamed with USU Water Quality Extension and its Utah Water Watch program, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality and Stokes Nature Center to bring this message to Utahns and visitors frequenting Logan Canyon's popular Logan River Trail. The partners formally unveil a new Logan River interpretive sign Saturday, Oct. 11, at noon, along the river just outside Stokes Nature Center.

iUtah — which stands for "innovative Urban Transitions and Aridregion Hydrology — is an interdisciplinary research project, funded by the National Science Foundation, dedicated to preserving Utah's water sources. The statewide project funded the interpretive sign.

"The new sign is among a number of interpretive tools USU Water Quality Extension, with our partners, has installed or has plans to install in venues throughout the state," says Nancy Mesner, program coordinator for USU Water Quality Extension and associate professor in USU's Department of Watershed Sciences.

Mesner oversees Utah Water Watch, a citizen science Extension program that recruits and trains Utahns to help monitor water quality at lakes, rivers and streams throughout the state.

"Through Utah Water Watch and our other outreach activities and through our interpretive signage, we engage people directly and encourage them to pay closer attention to our water resources," Mesner says. "By participating in these efforts, they get a sense of how science works and develop a stronger sense of stewardship and understanding — that's huge."

Brian Greene, volunteer coordinator for Utah Water Watch, has trained hundreds of volunteers, ranging in age from elementary school children to senior citizens, to participate in the monitoring program.

“We have teachers, doctors, plumbers, students, retirees — all different kinds of people,” Greene says. “But what they have in common is a love of the outdoors and a desire to protect Utah’s natural resources.”

Just this year, volunteers have submitted more than 500 reports on the state’s rivers and streams.

“Our volunteers measure such parameters as water temperature, dissolved oxygen and total dissolved solids,” he says. “This is real scientific data and information that’s urgently needed to determine whether or not our water resources are providing a healthy habitat for wildlife and suitable water supplies for our citizens.”

Data collected by volunteers helps the Utah Department of Environmental Quality monitor Utah’s 89,000 miles of streams and 2,050 lakes.

“This information is critical for our watershed managers and scientists — they don’t have the personnel to cover the entire state,” Greene says. “Our volunteers truly make a difference and we could use a lot more.”

Utah Water Watch currently has about 300 volunteers; Greene notes a number of other states have thousands of volunteers in similar programs.

“It’s a great opportunity for families and individuals to get involved in meaningful citizen science,” he says. “We provide the training and the equipment.”

The Oct. 11 sign unveiling takes place during a “*Taking Learning Outdoors*” training workshop for K-12 teachers led by the Utah Museum of Natural History, another iUTAH partner, at Stokes Nature Center.

For more information about Utah Water Watch, visit the group’s [website](#).

Related links:

- “[Volunteers Monitor Water Quality Across Utah](#),” Good4Utah KTVX News
- “[Outdoor Outreach: USU Undergrad Shares Love of Nature with Public](#),” *Utah State Today*
- “[Watershed Window: Water Quality Extension Unveils Interactive Project](#),” *Utah State Today*
- [USU Water Quality Extension](#)
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