

# **Scoping Notice**

# Nebo Regional Water Project Environmental Assessment

The Central Utah Water Conservancy District (District), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the U.S. Department of the Interior – Central Utah Project Completion Act Office (Interior), and the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (Mitigation Commission), as Joint Lead Agencies (JLAs), are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 United States Code (USC) §§ 4321, *et seq.*, and applicable regulations, for the proposed Nebo Regional Water Project (Proposed Project).

The Proposed Project is located in southern Utah County generally between Spanish Fork Canyon and the city of Genola, Utah, and in eastern Juab County. The JLAs have been coordinating with the Strawberry High Line Canal Company, Strawberry Water Users Association, East Juab Water Conservancy District, Utah County, and cities in southern Utah County to help identify the proposed actions, needs, and purposes summarized in this scoping notice. The JLAs share common interests and goals with these agencies and are proposing the Nebo Regional Water Project to provide a secure and resilient water supply that meets the demands for continued agricultural use and growing municipal and industrial (M&I) uses.

The Proposed Project (also referred to as the Proposed Action in this scoping notice) includes enclosing the Strawberry High Line Canal with a buried pipeline, establishing a public trail over this pipeline, modifications to the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline, construction of the South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant, construction of a Diamond Fork Recovery Pump Station, construction of interconnect pipelines, changes to operations and water use, potential changes to the Strawberry Water Users Association's infrastructure, and changes to administrative responsibilities.











# Background

## Strawberry Valley Project Background

The Strawberry Valley Project (SVP) was authorized under the Reclamation Act of 1902 as an irrigation project to establish a trans-basin diversion from the Strawberry River into the Utah Lake drainage. The SVP has provided irrigation water to farmland and areas of southern Utah County for more than 100 years.

The original SVP infrastructure includes the original Strawberry Dam and Reservoir (this was intentionally breached in 1985 after Strawberry Reservoir was enlarged by the Central Utah Project [CUP] Soldier Creek Dam in 1974), Strawberry Tunnel (now a CUP–Bonneville Unit facility maintained by the District), Spanish Fork River Diversion, Power Canal, Spanish Fork and Payson Hydroelectric Powerplants, Mapleton-Springville Lateral (this was piped in 2005 and is now the Mapleton-Springville Pipeline and is a CUP–Bonneville Unit facility), and the Strawberry High Line Canal. Reclamation began construction of the SVP in 1906 and concluded construction in 1922.

The Strawberry High Line Canal Company was incorporated in 1916 with the purpose of distributing its portion of SVP water. The Strawberry High Line Canal Company entered into an agreement with Reclamation to operate and maintain the Strawberry High Line Canal, along with its associated ditches, laterals, and other water works. A 1921 Contract between Reclamation and the Strawberry High Line Canal Company assigned return flows (water that returns to surface waters or groundwater after use) from the Strawberry High Line Canal to the Strawberry High Line Canal Company.

The Strawberry Water Users Association was incorporated in 1922, and it entered into contracts with Reclamation beginning in 1926 to distribute SVP water to the headgates of the various canal companies, repay the United States for SVP construction costs, and to assume the operation, maintenance, and replacement of SVP facilities (except for the Strawberry High Line Canal and the Mapleton-Springville Pipeline).

## **Central Utah Project Bonneville Unit**

Congress authorized construction of the Central Utah Project in 1956 through the Colorado River Storage Project Act. The Bonneville Unit is part of the CUP. It collects water from the south slopes of the Uinta Mountains and delivers it for temporary storage to the enlarged Strawberry Reservoir, which is now a part of the Bonneville Unit. The capacity of the original reservoir (constructed as part of the SVP) was approximately 270,000 acre-feet. With the construction of











Soldier Creek Dam in 1974, the increased capacity of the enlarged Strawberry Reservoir is 1,106,500 acre-feet. In addition to the enlarged reservoir, the Bonneville Unit also includes the Diamond Fork System, which is a series of pipelines and tunnels that convey water from Strawberry Reservoir to the Spanish Fork River for use by the SVP contract holders. The Diamond Fork System also connects to the Utah Lake Drainage Basin Water Delivery System, which delivers Bonneville Unit water to southern Utah County and Salt Lake County, as well as instream flow water to Hobble Creek and the Provo River.

## 1991 Agreement and 1991 Contract Water

When Strawberry Reservoir was enlarged and became a Bonneville Unit facility, the United States, the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, and the Strawberry Water Users Association came to an arrangement to ensure that the obligation to deliver water to SVP water users could continue while allowing the Bonneville Unit to function as intended. In July 1991, the parties entered into a *Contract Among the United States, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, and Strawberry Water Users Association Relating to the Operation and Maintenance of the Enlarged Strawberry Reservoir and Related Facilities Jointly Used (1991 Agreement).* 

For this EA, the water stored in Strawberry Reservoir and delivered to SVP contract holders under the terms of the 1991 Agreement will be referred to as "1991 Contract Water."

## Strawberry Valley Project and Miscellaneous Purposes Act Conversion Environmental Assessment

In August 2024, Reclamation, in cooperation with the Strawberry Water Users Association and SVP contract holders, completed the Strawberry Valley Project Miscellaneous Purposes Act Conversion Environmental Assessment, which analyzed the use of 1991 Contract Water for miscellaneous purposes, including M&I uses. Reclamation, the Strawberry Water Users Association, and the SVP contract holders are currently negotiating a Miscellaneous Purposes Act Contract to effectuate the conversion. *Miscellaneous use* is defined as "the use of contract water from any project irrigation system for other purposes than irrigation," including various M&I uses such as outdoor watering for landscaping and indoor uses such as drinking, cooking, washing, bathing, and industrial purposes. As currently contemplated, the Miscellaneous Purposes Act Contract would allow the converted water to be used only during the irrigation season and in the current SVP service area.











# **Existing Water Facilities**

The existing facilities below are described generally from upstream to downstream and are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The existing facilities shown in Figure 2 are also representative of what would be considered the No Action Alternative for the Proposed Project. NEPA requires an analysis of the No Action Alternative to serve as a baseline to compare the effects of the action alternatives for the Proposed Action described in the next section of this scoping notice.

### **Strawberry Reservoir**

As discussed on page 2, Strawberry Reservoir stores water for trans-basin water delivery to the Bonneville Basin and for deliveries to the Strawberry River in the Uinta Basin. It is located in Wasatch County in the Colorado River Basin and is a popular spot for recreational activities. The reservoir is fed by many natural creeks and streams as well as the 37-mile Strawberry Aqueduct and Collection System, which is part of the Bonneville Unit. The original Strawberry Reservoir and Tunnel were completed in 1915. Water conveyance associated with this tunnel was largely replaced by the Diamond Fork System, which was completed in 2004. Soldier Creek Dam was completed in 1974, and the enlarged Strawberry Reservoir was filled in 1985.

### **Diamond Fork System**

The Diamond Fork System conveys water stored in Strawberry Reservoir to the Spanish Fork River and to the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline (part of the Utah Lake Drainage Basin Water Delivery System [ULS]). The Diamond Fork System delivers Bonneville Unit water to the ULS and 1991 Contract Water to the Spanish Fork River via release to Diamond Fork Creek. The Diamond Fork System provides instream flows to Sixth Water and Diamond Fork Creeks to meet Central Utah Project Completion Act (CUPCA) requirements.











### Utah Lake Drainage Basin Water Delivery System

The Utah Lake Drainage Basin Water Delivery System (ULS) is a pressurized pipeline system that delivers Strawberry Reservoir water to southern Utah County, Hobble Creek, the Provo River, and Salt Lake County (through a connection to the Alpine Aqueduct Reach 1 and the Provo River Aqueduct). The Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline, Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline, and Mapleton-Springville Pipeline are part of the ULS.

#### **Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline**

The Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline is a 96-inch pipeline that starts near the confluence of Diamond Fork Creek and the Spanish Fork River and extends west to the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon.

#### **Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline**

The Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline is a 60-inch pipeline that generally conveys water from Spanish Fork, where it connects to the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline, and ends near Santaquin, Utah. Construction on the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline is currently ongoing.

#### **Mapleton-Springville Pipeline**

The Mapleton-Springville Pipeline was completed in 2005 and replaced the Mapleton-Springville Lateral. It delivers raw water from the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline to the Mapleton and Springville Irrigation Districts. It also delivers Bonneville Unit water to Utah Lake via Hobble Creek to assist with spawning and recovery of the threatened June sucker.









Figure 1. Existing Project-related CUP Bonneville Unit Infrastructure





























#### **Strawberry Power Canal**

The Strawberry Power Canal (Power Canal) conveys water diverted from the Spanish Fork River, including a majority of the 1991 Contract Water, at the Spanish Fork River Diversion (also called the Main Dam), which is located about 2 miles from the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon. This canal is currently operated and maintained by the Strawberry Water Users Association and is used for power generation and for delivering water to contract holders. Construction began on the Power Canal in 1907 and it was completed in 1908.

#### **Strawberry Water Users Association Power Generation Facilities**

The Strawberry Water Users Association operates and maintains the Upper Spanish Fork (began operations in 1909), Lower Spanish Fork (began operations in 1937), and Payson Hydroelectric Powerplants (began operations in 1941). The Upper Spanish Fork Hydroelectric Powerplant was originally built to provide power generation to support the construction of the Strawberry Tunnel. Currently, the power generated is used to offset the Strawberry Water Users Association's operation costs. Figure 3 shows the facilities maintained by the Strawberry Water Users Association (except for the Payson Hydroelectric Powerplant).

### **Strawberry High Line Canal**

The Strawberry High Line Canal delivers approximately 57% of the 1991 Contract Water that is being delivered out of Strawberry Reservoir for irrigation uses. Construction of the Strawberry High Line Canal began in 1914 and was completed in 1916. The Strawberry High Line Canal begins at the forebay structure at the end of the Power Canal, approximately 3 miles from the Spanish Fork River Diversion (Figure 3). It is about 17.5 miles long and runs along the southeast foothills of Utah County before heading west through the south end of Utah Valley. It ends near the Goshen Gap about 1 mile northwest of Santaquin in southeastern Utah County. It has many turnouts to smaller ditches and laterals. Water in the Strawberry High Line Canal flows at about 250 cubic feet per second. More than 9 miles of the canal have an earthen bottom and earthen banks. Approximately 8 miles are concrete-lined box culverts, tunnels, or siphons. The Strawberry High Line Canal Company is responsible for the canal's operation, maintenance, and replacement including its ditches, laterals, and other appurtenances.











Figure 3. Existing Strawberry Valley Project Facilities













# **Proposed Action**

The *Existing Water Facilities* section above describes infrastructure and operations to be analyzed under the No Action Alternative, which is required by NEPA and serves as a baseline to compare the effects of the action alternatives. In addition to the No Action Alternative, two action alternatives are being considered for the Proposed Action: Alternative A and Alternative B. Different options being considered for Alternatives A and B are also noted below where applicable.

The primary difference between Alternative A and Alternative B involves the conveyance of finished water. With Alternative A, a segment of the ULS Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would be disinfected and converted to a finished water pipeline, and the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline would be a raw water pipeline. With Alternative B, the ULS Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would be maintained as a raw water pipeline, and both a raw water pipeline and a finished water pipeline would be installed in the Strawberry High Line Canal right-of-way.

## Alternative A (see Figure 4)

The following points outline actions to be considered under Alternative A.

- Strawberry High Line Canal
  - The existing Strawberry High Line Canal would be enclosed with a welded steel pipeline. This proposed pipeline would be called the Strawberry High Line Pipeline. It would consist of:
    - An up to 72-inch raw water pipeline that connects to the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline and the proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant
    - An up to 72-inch raw water pipeline from the proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant site to Goshen, Utah
  - The proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline would be located in the existing canal right-of-way, with the exception of three areas specified below in which the JLAs will consider options that could remove curves in the Strawberry High Line Pipeline alignment (see Figure 5):
    - In Salem, Utah, northeast of the proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant
    - In Salem between 50 East and 300 East
    - Across or around P Mountain (also called Little Mountain) in Payson, Utah











- Two options are being considered for Reach 1 of the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline connection to the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline (see Figure 6):
  - Option 1 alignment uses Powerhouse Road
  - Option 2 alignment uses the Mapleton-Springville Lateral alignment and connects to the Power Canal right-of-way
- The Strawberry High Line Canal Company's 1991 Contract Water would be delivered from Strawberry Reservoir through the Diamond Fork System and the ULS Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline into the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline. This water would no longer be conveyed by the Spanish Fork River or the Power Canal. The 1991 Contract Water in the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline would be pressurized and cleaner because it would not be transported and intermix with the Spanish Fork River water.
- The proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline could carry ULS raw water and/or 1991 Contract Water.
- The District would construct a proposed finished water pipeline in the Strawberry High Line Canal right-of-way between the Strawberry High Line Canal and Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline junction and the hill northwest of Santaquin near 6400 West (see Figure 4, line segment M).
- Modify or relocate the existing raw water turnouts from the Strawberry High Line Canal to turnouts from the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline.

#### Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline Improvements

- The existing ULS Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would be reconfigured to have two proposed connections near 100 North 400 East in Salem (see Figure 7).
  - A proposed 60-inch interconnect raw water welded steel pipeline would be installed between the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline, the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline, and the proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant to provide raw water to the treatment plant and allow raw water from the ULS to be delivered in the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline (7,600 linear feet) (see Figure 7, line segment B-1).
  - An up to 60-inch finished water welded steel pipeline would be installed between the proposed treatment plant and the Spanish Fork Santaquin











Pipeline using the same 1700 East alignment as the raw water interconnect pipeline (see Figure 7, line segment B-2).

- Between the South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant and Santaquin, the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would be flushed, disinfected, tested, and converted to a finished water pipeline (see Figure 4, line segment F).
- The Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline raw water turnouts between the proposed treatment plant and Santaquin would be (1) disconnected and reconnected to the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline, (2) vacated and relocated to the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline, or (3) converted to finished water turnouts.
- Finished water turnouts would be built on the finished water segment of the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline (see Figure 4, line segment F) or converted from the existing raw water turnouts.
- The ULS Santaquin Reach of the Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline south of the Strawberry High Line Canal junction would continue to be a raw water pipeline. Raw water would be provided from an interconnection with the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline (see Figure 4, line segment D).











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13



NEBO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Figure 5. Strawberry High Line Pipeline Straighten Locations













Figure 6. Strawberry High Line Pipeline Reach 1 Options

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Figure 7. Alternative A Interconnect Area



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#### Alternative B (see Figure 8)

The following points outline actions to be considered under Alternative B.

- Strawberry High Line Canal
  - Same improvements as Alternative A except for items listed below.
  - Alternative B would include two pipelines in the right-of-way (see Figure 8, line segment D):
    - 48-to-36-inch raw water welded steel pipeline
    - 78-to-36-inch finished water welded steel pipeline
  - A District finished water interconnect welded steel pipeline (up to 78-inch diameter) would be installed between the proposed treatment plant and the District finished water pipeline in the Strawberry High Line right-of-way (see Figure 9, line segment B-2).
  - The existing raw water turnouts from the Strawberry High Line Canal would be modified or relocated to turnouts from the proposed raw water Strawberry High Line Pipeline.
  - Finished water turnouts would be built on the District finished water pipeline.
- Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline
  - The Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would convey both Bonneville Unit water and an additional portion of 1991 Contract Water.
  - The Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline would have two interconnects to the raw water Strawberry High Line Pipeline in Payson and Santaquin (see Figure 8).











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18



NEBO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Figure 9. Alternative B Interconnect Area



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### **Common Proposed Actions for Both Alternatives**

- Construction of the Proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant (see Figures 7 and 9)
  - The District would construct a water treatment plant near 800 South 1700 East in Salem. This would be a District-owned facility on District property. The total site acreage would be about 188 acres. Phase 1 of the treatment plant would have a capacity of up to 50 million gallons per day (mgd), and a later phase or phases would expand the plant up to a total capacity of 100 mgd.
  - The treatment plant would treat raw water from the Spanish Fork Canyon Pipeline conveyed through the ULS and Strawberry High Line Pipeline systems. The treatment plant would provide finished water to southern Utah County and eastern Juab County.
- Construction of the Diamond Fork Recovery Pump Station and Pipeline (see Figures 4 and 8)
  - A pump station would be installed to recapture Bonneville Unit water that is released into Diamond Fork and Sixth Water Creeks to meet instream flow requirements specified in the CUPCA. A 36-inch welded steel pipeline would also be installed to connect the pump station to the Diamond Fork Pipeline (1,020 linear feet). The pump station would be located northeast of U.S. Highway 6 (US-6) just upstream of Diamond Fork Creek's confluence with the Spanish Fork River.

#### • Construction of a Multi-use Trail

• Utah County would fund the construction of and maintain a multi-use trail on the federally owned right-of-way on top of the proposed Strawberry High Line Pipeline once it is installed.

#### • Changes to Operations and Water Uses

- The timing change of use for the 1991 Contract Water would allow that water to be used any time of year for M&I use after it is treated. Currently, the 1991 Contract Water can be used for agricultural and M&I uses, but only during irrigation season.
- Bonneville Unit water contracted to the South Utah Valley Municipal Water
  Association would be allowed to be treated for indoor use at the proposed South











Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant, and the timing of Bonneville Unit water would be changed to allow year-round use.

- Recaptured Bonneville Unit water from the Diamond Fork pump station could be used for other Bonneville Unit project purposes.
- The Strawberry High Line Canal return flows specifically laid out in the 1921 Contract between Reclamation and the Strawberry High Line Canal Company would be reassigned by the Secretary of the Interior for use by the District for Bonneville Unit project purposes.
- The delivery of Bonneville Unit water to eastern Juab County in the Utah Lake drainage basin would be analyzed. The District is planning to develop future nonfederal infrastructure to convey finished water to the expanded service area.
- Water conserved by enclosing the Strawberry High Line Canal would be used by the District, within the Bonneville Unit service area as stated in the bullet item above, for Bonneville Unit project purposes in accordance with Section 207 of the Central Utah Project Completion Act (Public Law 102-575).

#### • Strawberry High Line Pipeline Administrative and Contractual Changes

- The Strawberry High Line Pipeline (from the forebay structure to the end of the main canal approximately 23 miles ending in Genola) would be reassigned from the SVP (administered by Reclamation) to the Bonneville Unit of the CUP (administered by Interior) through an amendment to the 2004 Supplement to the 1988 Definite Plan Report for the Bonneville Unit (2004 Definite Plan Report). As a feature of the Bonneville Unit, the District would assume operation, maintenance, and replacement responsibility for the Strawberry High Line Pipeline.
- With the Proposed Action, the JLAs would consider whether to transfer the title for the Strawberry High Line Canal laterals from Reclamation to the Strawberry High Line Canal Company.











# • Amendment to the 2004 Definite Plan Report and Supplementation of Existing Environmental Documents

 With the Proposed Action, the JLAs would amend the 2004 Definite Plan Report to be consistent with the outcome of this current NEPA analysis. The Proposed Action approved through this NEPA process would also supplement parts of the 2004 ULS Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and relevant Diamond Fork NEPA documents.

# Potential Strawberry Water Users Association Infrastructure, Administration, and Contractual Changes

The JLAs have been in discussions with the Strawberry Water Users Association concerning potential changes to their infrastructure, contracts, and administration of their organization. These potential changes will be analyzed in this NEPA process, but at this time no decision has been made to pursue the changes at the completion of this EA. The potential changes are included in this scoping notice because they are being considered for inclusion in this EA, and the JLAs want interested parties to be aware of and have the opportunity to provide comments on these changes if desired.

- Strawberry Water Users Association Infrastructure Options (see Figure 3)
  - With the Proposed Action, the JLAs, in coordination with the Strawberry Water Users Association, would consider whether to modify Strawberry Water Users Association infrastructure, decommission parts or all of the infrastructure, or make no changes. This infrastructure includes the Power Canal (including settlement ponds and the forebay), Spanish Fork River Diversion, and hydropower facilities.

#### • Strawberry Water Users Association Administrative and Contractual Changes

• With the Proposed Action, the JLAs, in coordination with the Strawberry Water Users Association, would consider whether to reassign those features of the SVP operated and maintained by the Strawberry Water Users Association to the Bonneville Unit of the CUP. The District would assume operation, maintenance, and replacement responsibility for the reassigned features. Strawberry Water Users Association contracts, responsibilities, oversight, management, assets, and debts would be reassigned to the District in perpetuity.











• The JLAs would consider whether to transfer title of hydropower and associated facilities to the Strawberry Water Users Association.

## **Potential Timing of Construction**

Assuming completion of environmental compliance and other legal requirements, the improvements listed above for either Alternative A or Alternative B could begin as early as 2027 and are anticipated to be completed by 2032. The JLAs anticipate that completing the Strawberry High Line Pipeline conversion (enclosing the existing canal and constructing the proposed pipeline), installing the proposed interconnect pipelines, and constructing the first phase of the proposed South Utah Valley Regional Water Treatment Plant would likely occur between 2027 and 2031, and both the treatment plant and the proposed pipelines would be operational in 2032.

## **Project Needs**

The Proposed Action is needed because of safety risks due to aging infrastructure, operational inefficiencies, and water loss in the Strawberry High Line Canal, and the lack of an integrated, redundant water supply system that can meet the needs of current and anticipated population levels and increasing M&I water demand in southern Utah County and eastern Juab County. Each of these needs is summarized below.

- Safety Risks due to the Aging Infrastructure of the Strawberry High Line Canal
  - The aging infrastructure of the existing Strawberry High Line Canal is a potential public safety risk. The canal was completed in 1916. This approximately 100-year-old canal crosses numerous geologic hazard areas and is vulnerable to failure caused by landslides, debris flows, and earthquakes. Since the canal's construction, residential areas have developed below the canal. If a breach were to occur, flooding and property damage would be likely downslope of the canal. Although public use of the canal and maintenance road is not authorized, trespassing occurs and presents additional safety risk.
- Strawberry High Line Canal Operational Inefficiencies
  - The existing canal frequently has issues with water quality due to sediment loads from the Spanish Fork River that require extra effort and cost to mitigate and remove. The Pole Creek and Bald Mountain Fires burned over 90,000 acres in 2018, significantly impacting the watershed and reducing water quality in the Spanish Fork River.











- The open canal often collects debris and sediment from adjacent properties and stormwater runoff.
- The contract holders with the Strawberry High Line Canal Company and the Strawberry Water Users Association have an increased demand for cleaner and pressurized irrigation water.
- Water Loss in the Strawberry High Line Canal
  - The Strawberry High Line Canal (not including the laterals) is a mix of earthen and concrete-lined channel. The Strawberry High Line Canal Company estimates that 16% of the canal's water per year is lost due to evaporation or seepage in the canal.
- Lack of an Integrated, Redundant Water Delivery System to Meet the Anticipated Population Growth and Increasing M&I Water Demand in Southern Utah County and Eastern Juab County
  - There is a continued need to deliver affordable agricultural water to Strawberry High Line Canal Company and Strawberry Water Users Association contract holders as long as the farmers continue to irrigate.
  - The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah forecasts that southern Utah County will grow by almost 400,000 residents by 2065 and that Juab County will grow by about 19,000 residents. The District completed the Plan Formulation Project (PFP) in 2024. The PFP considered regional water supply needed through 2065 and determined that there would be increasing demand for both indoor and outdoor M&I water with the forecasted increases in population. As Utah and Juab Counties continue to be developed, agricultural land is being converted to commercial, industrial, and residential land uses, and this conversion is creating a greater demand for finished M&I water in southern Utah County and eastern Juab County.
  - Currently, the ULS Spanish Fork Santaquin Pipeline, which conveys ULS contract water and up to 10,200 acre-feet of 1991 Contract Water on a space-available basis, is restricted by the conditions of the 2004 ULS EIS and contracts to deliver only raw water for outdoor M&I or agricultural uses during the irrigation season from April to October in southern Utah County. As more land is converted from agricultural use to municipal or residential uses, there will be a greater demand for more M&I water that can be used indoors year-round. Fast-











growing areas in southern Utah County and eastern Juab County do not have adequate water sources to support forecasted development and M&I water needs. Most areas currently have sufficient quantity, but not all of the available water is the correct quality for the needed future demands.

- Because the existing Strawberry High Line Canal conveyance system is separate from the ULS conveyance system, strategic water planning and operation for both systems is limited.
- The Strawberry High Line Canal Company currently distributes about 56% of the SVP water supply, and the Strawberry High Line Canal's water supply relies on one intake location diverted from the Spanish Fork River into the Power Canal. Without an integrated network between the SVP and ULS infrastructure, there is a lack of redundancy for distributing raw water. There is a need for a resilient and sustainable system because the demand for finished M&I water is increasing, water supply sources are becoming more variable because of changing weather and climate conditions, and water quality in the Spanish Fork River is being increasingly threatened by wildfires and other sources of contamination.

# **Project Purposes**

The purposes of the Proposed Action are to improve safety, operational efficiency, and water conservation and to provide a water delivery system that can meet current and anticipated future water demands in southern Utah County and eastern Juab County. These purposes address the needs listed and summarized above.

- Improve public safety by reducing flooding risk and other risks associated with the aging, open-channel Strawberry High Line Canal.
- Maximize the beneficial use of the limited water supply through water conservation by eliminating seepage and evaporation losses in the Strawberry High Line Canal.
- Improve operational efficiency and water quality by enclosing and pressurizing the Strawberry High Line Canal.
- Provide an integrated, efficient, redundant, and flexible water delivery system that meets current and future demands for agricultural use while also facilitating the transition to future demand requirements for indoor and outdoor M&I use in southern Utah County and eastern Juab County.











# **Anticipated Resources**

The EA will evaluate the expected social, economic, and environmental effects of implementing either of the two action alternatives introduced above and the No Action Alternative. Each of the action alternatives will be compared against the No Action Alternative.

The EA will evaluate the expected impacts and benefits to the resources listed below. The level of review of the identified resources for the EA will be commensurate with the anticipated effects on each resource from the Proposed Action and will be governed by the statutory or regulatory requirements protecting those resources.

- Access and transportation
- Air quality and noise
- Aquatic resources and fisheries
- Biological and wildlife resources (including specialstatus species and threatened and endangered species)
- Community resources
- Cultural resources
- Farmland
- Floodplains
- Geology and soils
- Groundwater
- Hazardous materials
- Health and safety
- Hydrology and system operations

- Indian Trust Assets
- Land use
- Recreation
- Visual resources
- Water quality
- Water rights
- Waters of the U.S., wetlands, and riparian areas

The analyses and evaluations conducted during the NEPA process will identify the potential for effects and potential design features to be included in the Proposed Action to address effects. The JLAs welcome comments during the scoping period regarding resources that should be analyzed in the EA. The environmental impact analysis will not begin until the purpose and need, range of alternatives, and impact categories are finalized based on the public comments on this scoping document. The JLAs may revise the identification of impacts as a result of considering public comments. The studies to identify the impacts, as well as the analyses of impacts from the retained alternatives, will be presented in the EA.











# **Scoping Information**

The JLAs are seeking comment and input from the public and agencies. Although the JLAs welcome any type of comment, the most useful comments would be related to either of the Proposed Project action alternatives, including the stated options; the No Action Alternative; and the resources that will be evaluated during the NEPA process. Comments on the Nebo Regional Water Project must be submitted by June 27, 2025. Comments may be submitted by email, by postal mail, or on the project website. A geographic information systems (GIS) map is also available on the project website for recording comments.

Contact information:

- Website: <u>nebowaterproject.cuwcd.gov</u>
- Email: <u>connect@nebowaterproject.cuwcd.gov</u>
- Postal mail:

Nebo Regional Water Project c/o HDR 2825 E. Cottonwood Parkway, Suite 200 Salt Lake City, UT 84121-7077

• Phone number: 385-999-2212

Two public scoping open houses will be held at the following dates and locations:

- June 10, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Payson City Center, 439 W. Utah Avenue, Payson
- June 12, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Juab High School, 802 North 650 East, Nephi







