

Colorado River Authority Advisory Councils

The Colorado River Authority of Utah (Authority) Advisory Councils present Utahns with a unique opportunity to engage and participate in critical discussions related to the Colorado River. These councils will serve as sources of citizen advice and information for the leadership of the Authority. Councils are comprised of stakeholders, engaged citizens, area experts, and other Utahns who care deeply about the Colorado River. They may gather information, provide study and analysis, local perspectives, as well as provide a deliberative forum for diverse points of view. Councils may give opinion and present options on topics related to the work of the Authority.



The concept of greater input and diversity of thought is so fundamental that the Authority has codified the advisory councils within applied state statute. The Authority is seeking a broad range of opinions, backgrounds and concerns for the composition of these councils. While they will not represent the Authority, their voice will be valuable in understanding interests and as Authority leadership makes policy consistent with UCA 63M-14-209 and the 12/2/21 Authority Board approved rule (**text included below*).

CHIEF OBJECTIVES

- 1) Provide a broad range of stakeholders and interested citizens a venue to share opinions, raise concerns, and recommend possible solutions to Colorado River challenges.
- 2) Ensure the River Commissioner and the Authority Board understand various points of view and have access to up-to-date information and a full suite of options as they address the critical issues facing the Colorado River.

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE

After consultation with Authority staff and various stakeholders, a geographic model has emerged as the council structure that we believe offers the most logical and effective means of organization. Here are some of the reasons behind this recommendation:

- 1) A geographic model enables issues to be localized, where participants in the councils have personal interest and knowledge about local issues of interest.
- 2) A geographic model makes it easier for participants to travel to and attend council meetings when they are held in their region.
- 3) A geographic model allows for customization within each geographic based council. Each geographic council can decide how to specifically structure itself.
- 4) Most similar advisory organizations in other states are geographically based.

GEOGRAPHIC MODEL

We propose each Authority council be based on geographic regions comprised of the 17 counties mentioned in the founding statute, UCA 63M-14-209. All the issues and challenges relevant to that specific council region would be within the purview of each council, although councils would not be limited in what they choose to discuss. Interested individuals may submit a statement of interest to the Authority for participation in the councils. Councils would most likely be in the 5–9 member range and it is envisioned that councils will meet every other month.

Based on Board member input, the geographic-based recommended councils could follow one of the following models:

3 Council Model

North (Salt Lake, Summit, Daggett, Utah, Wasatch, Duchesne, Uintah)
Central (Juab, Sanpete, Carbon, Emery, Wayne, Grand)
Southern (Washington, Garfield, Kane, San Juan)

4 Council Model

Wasatch (Salt Lake, Utah, Wasatch)
Basin (Daggett, Uintah, Duchesne, Summit)
Central/San Rafael (Juab, Sanpete, Carbon, Emery, Grand)
Southern (San Juan, Wayne, Garfield, Kane, Washington)

5 Council Model

Northwest (Salt Lake, Utah, Juab, Sanpete)
Northeast (Summit, Daggett, Wasatch, Duchesne, Uintah)
Central (Carbon, Emery)
Southwest (Washington, Garfield, Kane)
Southeast (Grand, Wayne, San Juan)

COUNCIL PROTOCOLS

While we aim to provide maximum flexibility to each individual council, here are several consistent practices we believe should be accepted across the board by all councils:

- 1) Clear expectations articulated upfront - advisory councils are not policymakers and are designed to provide helpful information and options to Authority Board
- 2) Civil and Respectful Forum - Rules of decorum will be distributed and members of advisory councils will be expected to engage in good-faith with an eye towards reaching consensus and positive outcomes
- 3) Use of a standard “Options and Alternatives” template document for each council to structure feedback and provide for consistent communication with the Authority Board.

Preliminary Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

Meanwhile, we suggest the following procedural/operational decisions be left up to the discretion of each group:

- 1) Specific topics or areas of focus
- 2) Meeting format (in person or virtual)
- 3) Meeting locations
- 4) Member size
- 5) Other protocols

We believe that allowing for flexibility while maintaining some common practices will result in greater stakeholder buy-in, foster more informed and engaged discussions, and make participation in the councils more desirable and meaningful.

TRIBAL CONSIDERATIONS

Native American tribes are sovereign entities. As such, an entirely different process will be followed to engage with the Utah tribes within the Colorado River system. Outreach and discussions with interested tribes will be handled consistent with their status as sovereign governments. The legislative changes currently being contemplated under SB160 will further enable and empower the Authority to engage with tribes in an appropriate government-to-government fashion.

PROPOSED TIMELINE (Subject to change):

2/14 – Share geographic proposal and maps with Board members

2/17 – Board members discuss geographic options at Authority Board meeting

2/21-4/15 – Continued outreach and Advisory Council plan refinement

4/18 – Share final Advisory Council proposal with Board

4/21 - Presentation of final Advisory Council proposal and request adoption of Advisory Council plan

4/22-5/13 - Notice of advisory councils and solicitation for member application

5/16-5/20 - Membership applications reviewed and members appointed to councils

5/23 – Meeting notices and invitations sent to advisory council members

6/1-6/17 - First meetings scheduled for advisory councils

GOALS OF ADVISORY COUNCILS

- Provide an effective channel through which supplementary voices can be heard, thus building trust between the Authority, stakeholders and the public.
- A means for the Authority to consider varied points of view, perspectives and data on more focused, specific topics and issues important to the Authority.
- A public forum for thoughtful discussions, external data, opinion, suggestions and recommendations.
- Engage stakeholders in dialogue on time-sensitive, critical topics relevant to the Colorado River.
- Keep current and informed on related issues, projects and concerns.

***LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND BOARD APPROVED RULE**

UCA 63M-14-209 authorizes the Colorado River Authority of Utah (Authority) to create advisory councils to provide “**data, information, and input... relevant to the mission and objectives of the authority.**”

On December 2, 2021, the Board adopted the following Advisory Council rule:

Advisory Council Rule--General

This rule is established under the authority of the Colorado River Authority of Utah Act, Section 63M-14-209, to provide the general standards and procedures for the operation of the Colorado River Authority of Utah (“Authority”) Advisory Councils.

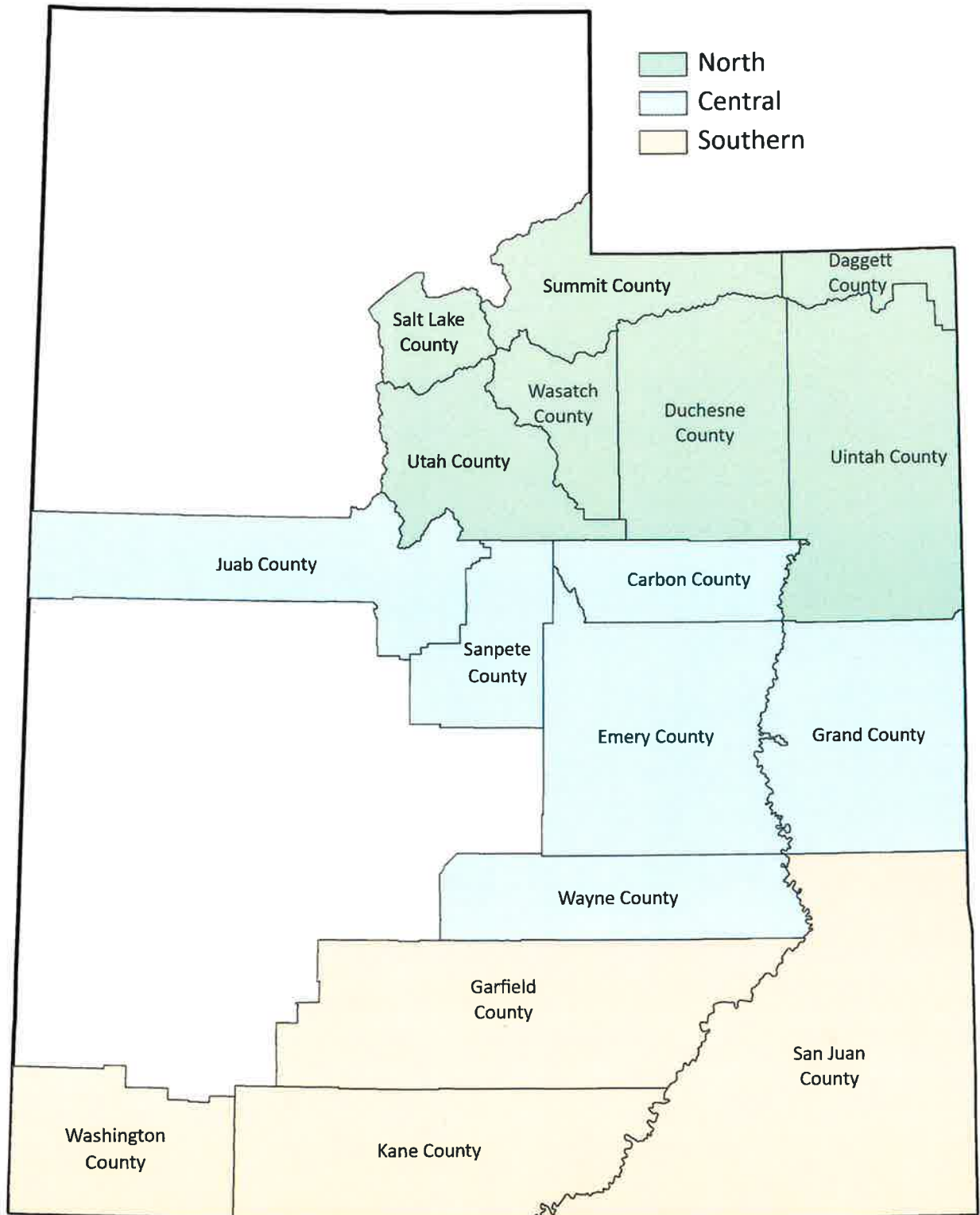
Advisory Council Membership.

- (1) *There is created one or more Advisory Councils that shall consist of members representing a variety of Colorado River interests in the state of Utah.*
- (2) *Advisory Councils will serve as a forum for civic engagement on the use, development, conservation, and protection of Utah’s Colorado River entitlement.*
- (3) *Advisory Council Members may serve by appointment or by application.*
 - (a) *Each Advisory Council shall be governed by co-chairs, one selected by its membership and one selected by the Authority Board. The co-chairs will conduct meetings and present council recommendations to the Authority Board.*
 - (b) *Authority staff shall provide administrative support to all Advisory Councils.*

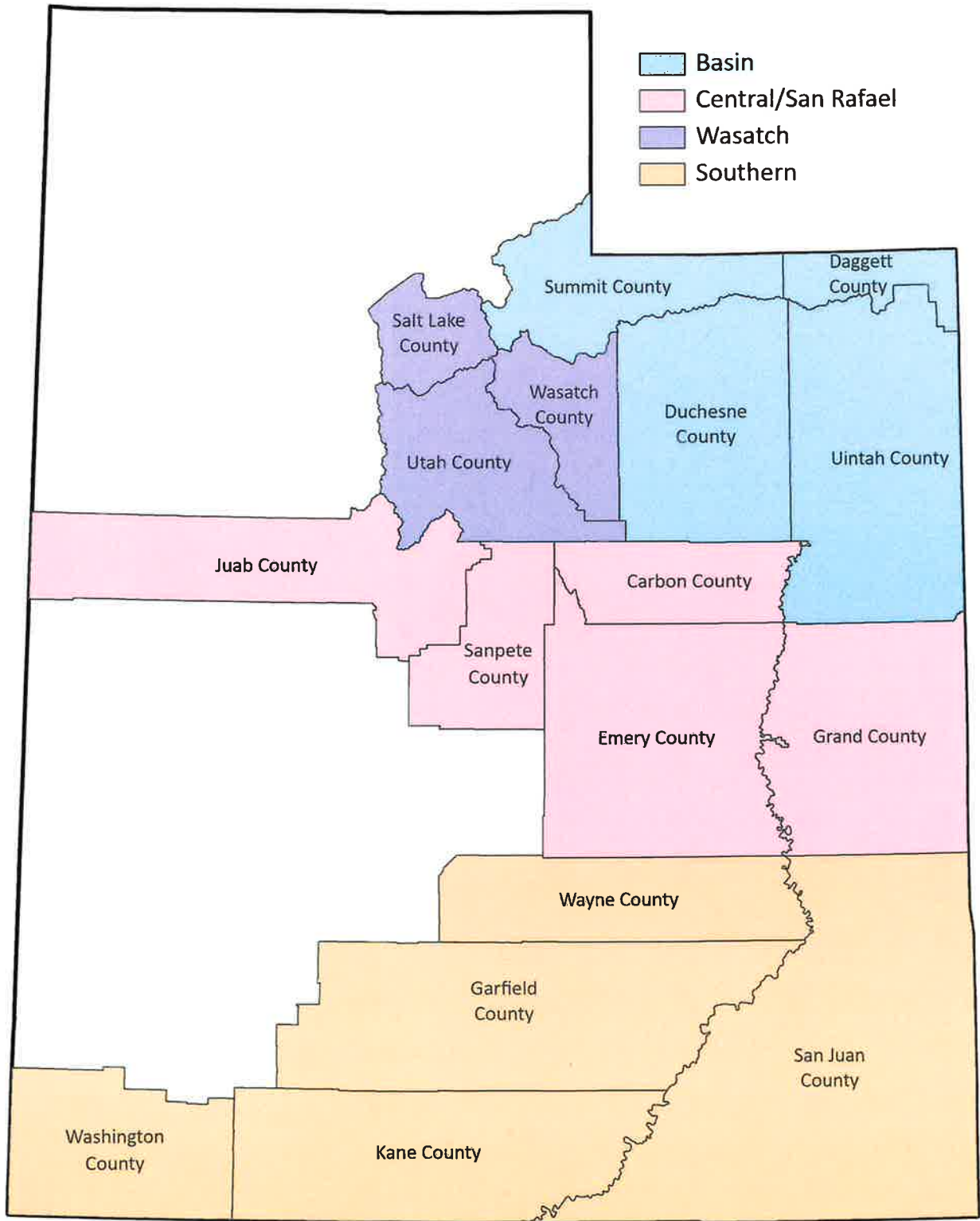
Advisory Council Meetings.

- (1) *Advisory Councils shall meet on dates and times as jointly determined by the co-chairs.*
- (2) *Each Advisory Council shall:*
 - (a) *hear broad input, including recommendations, data and information regarding all matters affecting Utah’s Colorado River system water; and*
 - (b) *make recommendations to the Authority Board in an advisory capacity.*

3 Council Model



4 Council Model



5 Council Model

