

# Utah's Water Future

## Local Perspectives on Water Issues

Highlights from the 2014 iUTAH Household Survey

### NIBLEY CITY HIGHLIGHTS

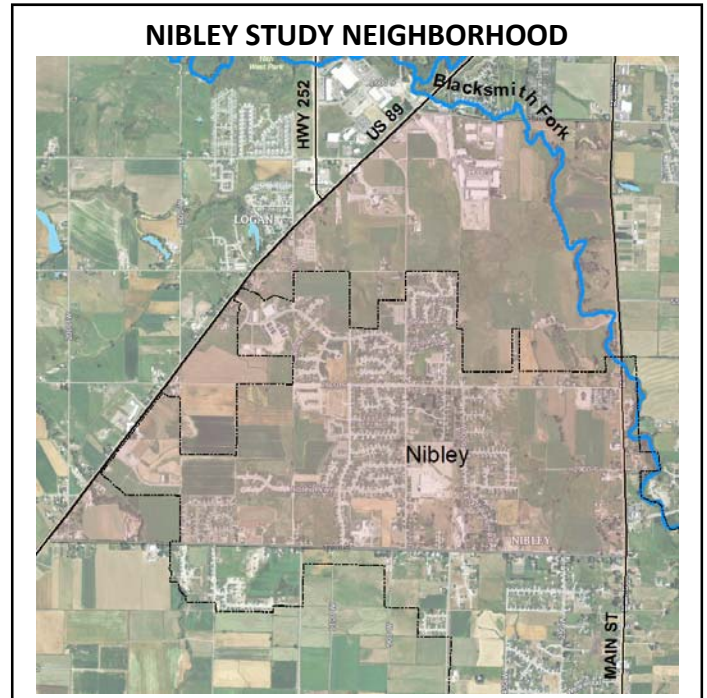


### Background:

In July, 2014, researchers from Utah State University and the University of Utah conducted a survey about water issues of residents in one neighborhood in Nibley City (the area north of 3200 South in pink on map to the right).

We received responses from 69% of the Nibley households selected to participate (116 total respondents).

Characteristics of survey respondents were quite similar to the city as a whole based on Census information, with the survey somewhat under-representing those in the 18-35 age group and those with household incomes over \$75,000.



### Household Water & Lawns

#### **People know how much they spend, but not how much they use**

- Most residents (73%) reported a high degree of familiarity with how much they spend on water each month, but far fewer (24%) were familiar with the volume of water they use

#### **Lawns watered by household residents**

- Nibley respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they water their own lawns (99%).

#### **Few water during the day**

- Most residents (98%) report watering their lawn mainly in the morning, evening, or at night.

#### **Weather plays a key factor in watering decisions...**

- Nearly all of households (85%) said they try to adjust their lawn watering behaviors to the weather

#### **...but property value, time, and conservation are also considerations.**

- Three quarters indicated they water to try to prevent brown spots on their lawn (76%) and to maintain property value (76%).
- Majorities said conserving water (71%), keeping a regular schedule (70%), and minimizing time spent watering (55%) were important considerations.
- Only 21% indicated they consider keeping neighbors happy in their watering decisions.

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## Water Conservation

### Many residents think that they can do more to conserve water...

- Over half (56%) of Nibley respondents felt they could do more to reduce their indoor water use, while
- Just under one-third (29%) thought they could do more to reduce outdoor water use.
- A significant group (37%) was interested in installing a more efficient irrigation system, and a quarter (24%) were interested in using more low water-use plants.

### ...but only a small percentage report have actually decreased their water use

- A minority of Nibley respondents reported that they decreased either indoor (13%) or outdoor (14%) water use over the last five years.

### People most willing to conserve if it:

- Ensures future supply for their home (73%),
- Reduces their water bills (67%),
- Ensures future supply for farms (62%), and
- Improves fish & wildlife habitat (57%)

### People least willing to conserve if savings are used to increase development in this area (23%).



## Secondary Water Systems

**Few respondents in this study area said they have access to secondary water.**

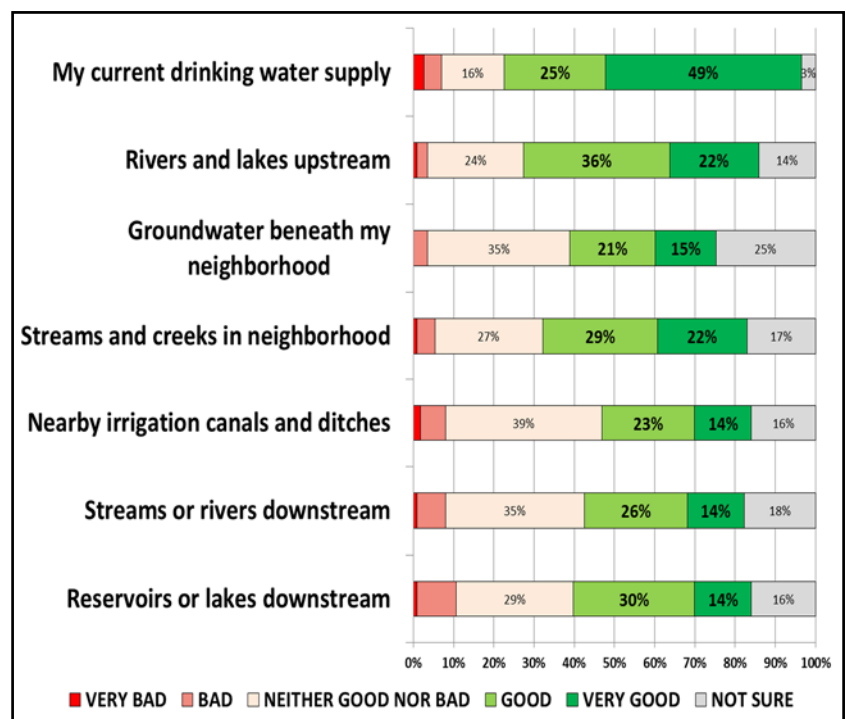
**When asked if they support city efforts to develop secondary systems:**

- About 2 in 5 (42%) supported a policy to require new housing to install secondary irrigation systems—while 9% were opposed to this approach.
- Less than a third (28%) supported efforts to retrofit secondary water into existing neighborhoods, compared to 17% who opposed this policy.

## Water Quality

### Local water quality is generally seen as good.

- Three-quarters (74%) of Nibley respondents said their drinking water quality was “good” or “very good”, while just 7% rated it as “bad” or “very bad”
- Over half rated water in rivers and lakes upstream (58%) and streams and creeks in their neighborhood (51%) as “good”, while under half (37-44%) indicated they felt downstream waters or irrigation water were of “good” quality
- Waters most often rated as “bad” quality (by just 8-11%) were downstream rivers and reservoirs



## Concerns about Water and Other Issues

### **Not many residents believed current water supplies are adequate.**

- Only 36% thought there is enough water to meet current needs in this city.

### **There was more concern about future water supplies.**

- Only 18% were confident in Nibley's future supply, and 31% of Nibley respondents were concerned about the city's future water supply.

### **Farm water use was not a big concern.**

- While 44% of respondents believed that residential lawns use too much water,
- Only 7% felt that agriculture was currently using too much water.

### **Water related issues take a back seat to growth concerns, except for cost.**

- Traffic congestion and the high cost of water were of greatest concern (both cited by 76%) of residents, followed by air pollution (71%) and loss of open space (66%) (see chart).
- Water shortages (59%) and population growth (55%) were a concern by over half of respondents, while
- Just under half were concerned about deteriorating water infrastructure (49%) or poor water quality (47%).
- Climate change (43%) and flooding (35%) were of lesser concern.

## How Should Nibley Respond to Short-Term Shortages?

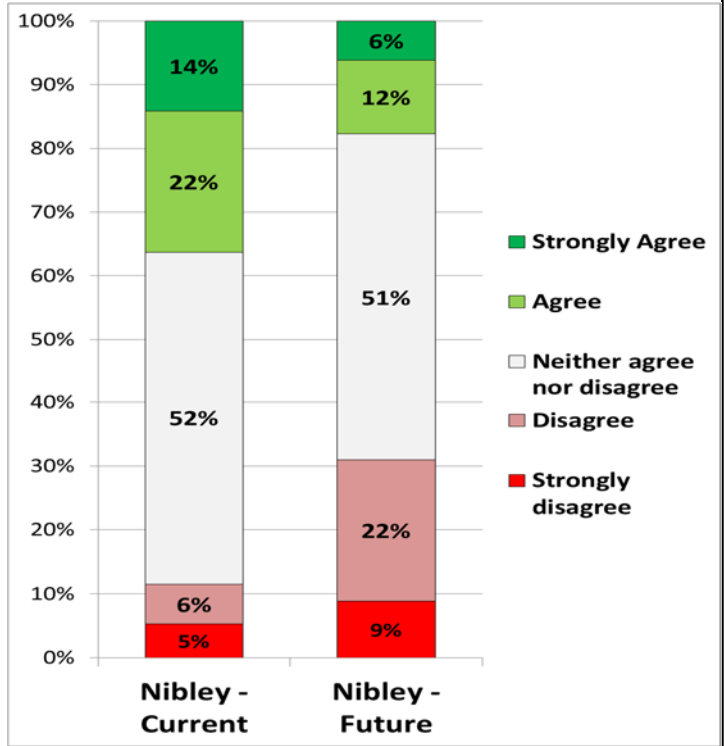
### **Voluntary approaches most popular**

- Nibley respondents indicated a very high level of support for educational efforts (85%) and voluntary water restrictions (81%).

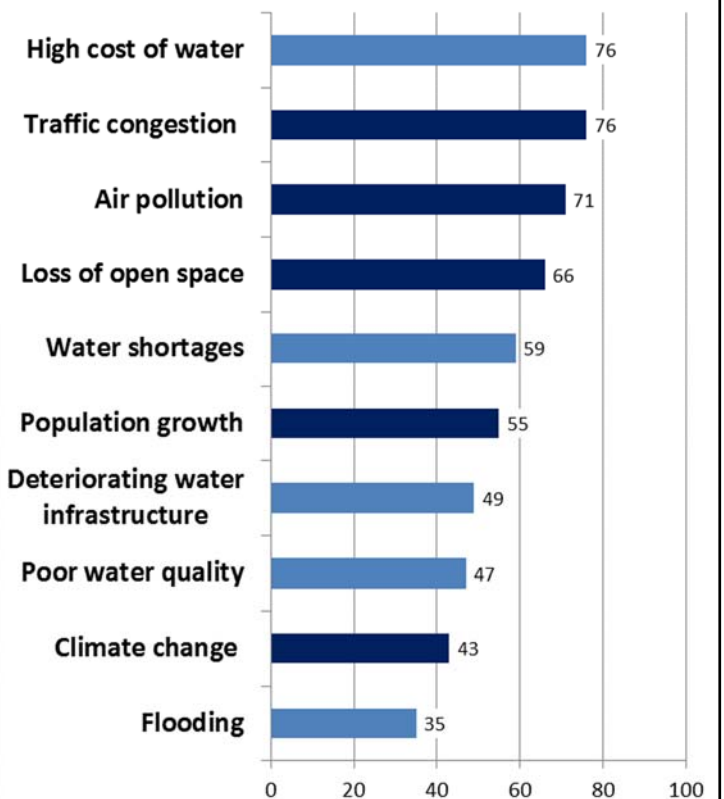
### **Majority support mandatory limits**

- Most respondents supported watering restrictions in parks, golf courses, and public properties (75%) or mandatory restrictions on watering lawns (66%)

### **There is enough water to meet the needs of all the people and businesses in Nibley City**



### **Percent of Respondents Concerned or Very Concerned about Key Issues**





## Support for Long Term Nibley City Water Policy

### Most supported having development pay for itself

The most popular policies were

- Reusing treated wastewater for residential irrigation (63% support), and
- Limiting future housing development unless water supplies are secured (61%).

### A majority supported building storage and managing storm-water

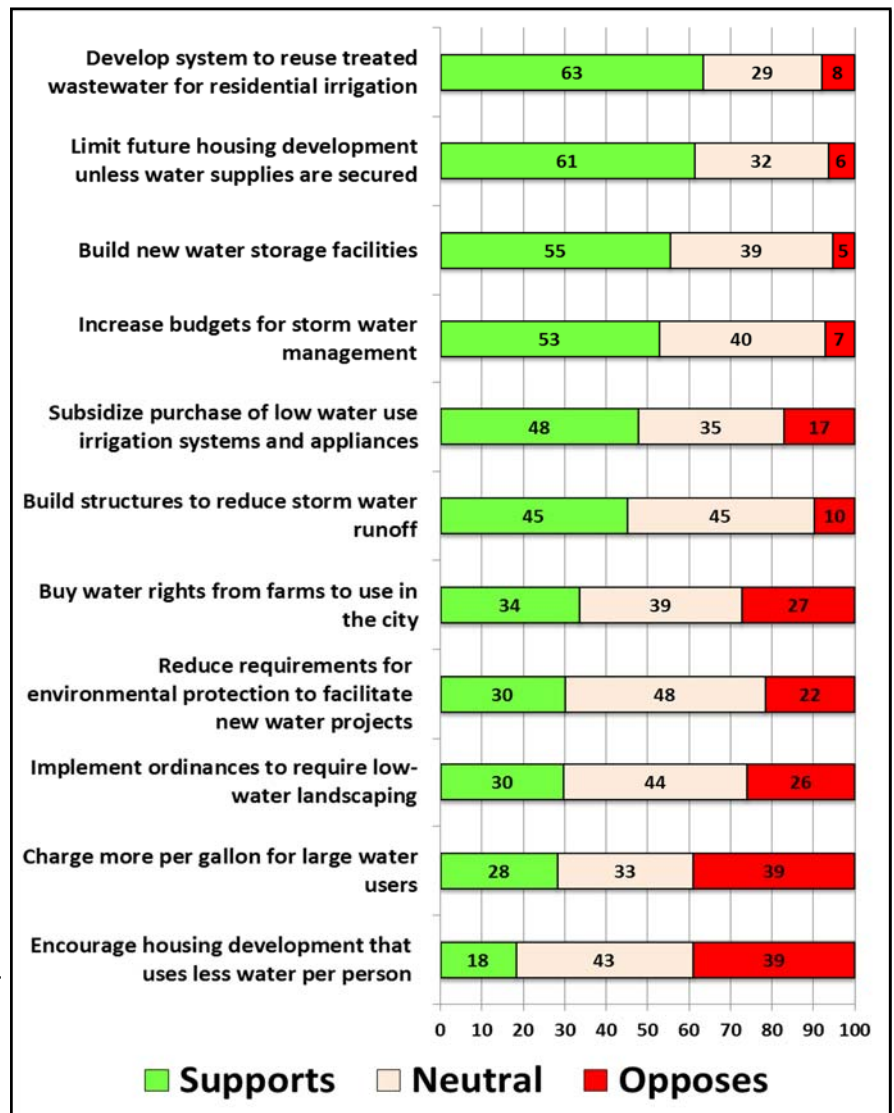
- Over half supported local funding to build new water storage (55%) and increasing budgets for city stormwater management (53%)

### There was modest support for incentivizing conservation

- Roughly half (48%) supported subsidizing the purchase of low water use irrigation systems and appliances

There was less support for city policies to

- Buy water rights from farms for urban uses (34%),
- Implement ordinances to require low-water landscaping (30%),
- Reduce requirements for environmental protection to facilitate new water projects (30%),
- Charge more per gallon for large water users (28%), or
- Encourage housing types that use less water per person (18%)



## Support for State Water Goals & Policies

### Residents said state should ensure supply while protecting water quality and agriculture

- Nearly all supported state goals of ensuring a supply of drinking water (96%) and protecting water quality (91%)
- Strong majorities support ensuring water supplies for agriculture (83%) and protecting wetlands and wildlife habitat (64%)
- There is moderate support for a state goal of saving taxpayer money (55%)

### There is support for wide range of state policies

- The highest support was for the use of state funds to replace aging city water infrastructure (59%) and building new reservoirs or storage (59%)
- Nearly half supported investments in new water conservation research (50%), allowing people with water rights to sell water saved from conservation (49%) and using state funds to pay for efficiency improvements in agricultural irrigation (48%)
- Few support transfer of water from farms to urban uses (24%)

If you would like more information about the survey results, full reports are posted on our website:

[www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey](http://www.iutahepscor.org/hhsurvey)