

DISCUSSION GUIDE

FYI: An Historical Sidebar:

Utah Mormon pioneers, almost immediately upon arrival in Utah in 1847, built a dam on City Creek and allocated the water for agriculture. It was immediately clear that water was scarce and that their survival depended upon irrigation. Other canals and dams soon followed at the mouths of other Utah canyons. As individuals and water associations built canals and dams to deliver the water in the West, rights to the water were allocated and put to use. The U.S. soon recognized that water rights in the west that had been allocated to individuals or entities should remain as already allocated (OLRGC, 2012; UDWRe, 2013).

1. Opponents of property tax water funding argue that users should pay the full cost of the water they use through a water fee, and that it is unfair that many of the largest water users, such as government buildings, churches and other non-profits, are exempt from property taxes. The Legislative Audit states property taxes provide a more stable revenue source than user fees. The concern is if people use less water and therefore pay less, water providers may not have adequate funding.

1a. How do you think water should be funded?

1b. Should some institutions have water rates subsidized by taxpayers? Why or why not?

2a. Do you believe the advantages of pursuing the Bear River Diversion outweigh the probable disadvantages of the high cost and the adverse environmental effects, including new sources of pollution caused by drought?

2b. Can these adverse effects be mitigated at a reasonable cost?

3. Would you be willing to collect rainwater for your home's landscape needs? Would you be willing to substitute xeric plantings for high-water-demand sod and plantings? How else can water needs be met in significant drought years?

4. Since outdoor water usage exceeds indoor usage, do you think property owners should be limited in the percent of high-water landscaping (such as most sod) they install?