The Nature Conservancy

Utah

2025 Chapter Update

Gift and Estate Planning

Create Your Conservation Legacy

What does tomorrow hold for the world we love? We are grateful for the thousands of forward-thinking individuals who have made a gift for the future by including The Nature Conservancy in their estate plans. Each year, more than 20% of the total funds raised come from gifts like these. They truly make a difference for our world. You can make a lasting impact for nature by including The Nature Conservancy as a beneficiary in your will or estate plan.

To create your own legacy for nature, contact Eden Bennett, at 801.531.0999 or eden.bennett@tnc.org.

On the Cover: TNC Utah staff members Mike Kolendrianos, Chris Brown and Andrea Nelson at the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve.

Utah Board of Trustees

Christopher Robinson, Chair
Ellen Rossi, Vice Chair
Jim Clark
David Cumming
John D'Arcy
Tim Dee
Steve Denkers
Jeff Edison
Don Garner
Mary Garner
George Handley
Hank Hemingway
Stephen Irish
Linda Leckman
Kathryn Lindquist
Nalini Nadkarni
Jonathan Nielsen
Miguel Rovira
Jennifer Speers
Kevin Steiner
Katy Welkie
Rachel Whipple

Great Salt Lake at Sunset © Mary Anne Karren

Dear friends,

Every season, I'm reminded that our mission—conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends—is both urgent and enduring. In Utah, the challenges before us—water scarcity, biodiversity loss and a changing climate—are real and pressing. And at the same time, I know our conservation work is cumulative, built slowly but steadily through decades of deep commitment. Our actions today stand on the foundation of what came before and create a future for those who follow. What the future holds for nature and people is up to us, here and now... today.

In this 2025 Chapter Update, you'll read about TNC's constant commitment through the actions of the people who carry our mission forward every day. At the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve, which now encompasses about 5,000 acres, preserve manager Mike Kolendrianos blends more than a century of family ties to Davis County with a decade of hands-on stewardship. His work and the restoration projects we have completed this year are helping wetlands remain a refuge for wildlife even as development and invasive species press in.

In Moab, preserve manager Michael Hague is facing the realities of flood, fire, and invasive plants at TNC's Scott & Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve on the Colorado River. Daily, Michael works to restore native habitat and ensure the preserve continues to protect wildlife and connect the community of Moab to nature.

You'll also read about how our chapter is evolving. Under the conservation leadership of Danna Baxley and Kelley Hart, we're investing in specialized teams that can tackle challenges at the scale they demand—whether that's the Colorado River, Great Salt Lake, or the vast Sagebrush Sea. And through programs like NATURE, we're learning from and working alongside young Indigenous leaders who are teaching us their knowledge and traditions informed by thousands of years of respectful stewardship of nature. What ties these stories together is the dedication of staff and partners who make conservation tangible. Their work is a reminder that conserving Utah's lands and waters is not abstract—it's lived every day, on the ground, in collaboration, and with heart.

Finally, I wanted to share the news that with the change of seasons, the Utah office of The Nature Conservancy is making a change of address. As of November 1, 2025, our office will be located at 48 West Market St., Suite 300, Salt Lake City, 84101. We are incredibly excited about our new office space and look forward to welcoming you there once we are settled.

I end this letter with a note of deep sadness in memory of our dear colleague and friend, Kara Butterfield, who passed away earlier this summer. For over 25 years, Kara deftly guided us through innumerable conservation transactions resulting in thousands of acres of protected land in Utah. Kara's dedication to TNC's mission was unsurpassed and we miss her very much.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to The Nature Conservancy. Your support is what sustains our critical conservation work, season after season, for the benefit of Utah and beyond.

With gratitude,

Elizabeth Kitchens

Elizabeth Kitchens
Utah State Director

reat Salt Lake Shorelands
reserve © Stuart Ruckman

Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve
© Stuart Ruckman

A Century of Roots: Stewardship at the Shorelands Preserve

Davis County is one of the fastest-growing areas in Utah. Where farms once stretched toward the horizon, subdivisions now rise. That shift changes more than the view—it alters how water moves through the landscape. Fields that once delivered tailwater to wetlands now send little or none, leaving parts of the marshes drier and more vulnerable.

Protecting the balance in this rapidly changing place falls to Mike Kolendrianos, preserve manager at TNC's Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve. Mike has spent more than a decade stewarding these 5,000 acres of critical habitat. His ties run even deeper: in 1913, his grandfather immigrated from Greece and began farming nearby. "I grew up duck hunting in these marshes," Mike recalls. That personal connection fuels his dedication to ensuring the preserve remains a refuge for wildlife.

Updates: Peregrine Ponds and Visitor Center Ponds

This past year brought two major improvements to the preserve: the Peregrine Ponds and the Visitor Center Ponds. Both projects were designed to enhance wetland habitat and provide more stable conditions for birds and other wildlife that depend on Great Salt Lake.

At the Peregrine Ponds, water management upgrades created new wetland areas that quickly came alive. "What excites me is seeing our projects have an immediate benefit," Mike says. "Once we add water, birds respond almost instantly. And species we haven't seen here in decades are returning." These ponds, located a few miles west of the visitor center, are not easily accessed by the public but serve as vital habitat.

Closer to the visitor center, new pond construction improves both habitat and the visitor experience. Families and school groups now have greater opportunities to observe waterfowl and shorebirds up close.

The Role of Uplands

One unique feature of the Shorelands Preserve is its mix of wetlands and uplands. About two-thirds of the property is upland habitat—drier areas of grasses and greasewood adjacent to marshes. That combination is essential. Many bird species that feed and raise young in wetlands also use uplands for nesting or cover.

"Wetlands are only as healthy as the uplands around them," Mike explains. "That's what sets our preserve apart. It's a complete ecosystem."

As development continues to expand in Davis County, maintaining that balance is more important than ever. Through active management, the preserve ensures wetlands and uplands continue to function together as they should.

Battling Phragmites and Other Invasives

Ongoing work to control phragmites—a tall, aggressive invasive grass—is another critical part of stewardship. Left unchecked, phragmites can form dense stands 10–12 feet tall, choking out native plants and consuming water that would otherwise reach Great Salt Lake.

Mike and Chris Brown, TNC's Utah stewardship director, have pushed phragmites back significantly over the past decade. Working with partners, they've combined herbicide treatments with targeted cattle grazing. "Our cattle are like mercenaries," Mike says with a grin. "They graze down the phragmites during the summer. In one area we've opened up more than two square miles of habitat that wildlife is now using again." By reducing infestations, TNC and its partners ensure more water reaches the lake and wetland habitat remains viable for wildlife.

Why Stewardship Matters

For Mike, stewardship is about not just reacting to today's challenges but also ensuring stability for the long term. The

preserve provides a dependable refuge for birds in a landscape that is increasingly unpredictable. Fluctuating lake levels, urban sprawl, and climate change all put pressure on the system, but the preserve's managed wetlands and uplands offer reliable habitat that migratory species can count on.

Each spring, Mike and Chris watch eagerly for the return of sandhill cranes, ibises, and other migratory birds. The joy of seeing them arrive, year after year, underscores why the work matters.

A Century in the Making

From his grandfather's arrival in 1913 to his own decade of stewardship, Mike embodies the idea that conservation is both personal and generational. Projects like the Peregrine Ponds, Visitor Center Ponds, and ongoing invasive species work are not isolated efforts—they are part of a larger story of resilience.

"I've seen these marshes change," Mike says, "but I've also seen how quickly wildlife responds when we restore water and habitat. That's what keeps me going—the knowledge that our work is making a difference."

Resilience in a Changing Desert: Matheson Wetlands Preserve

Michael Hague on flood-smart access, healthier wetlands, and why this place matters

On his first visit to the Scott & Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve, Michael Hague looked up and froze. An indigo bunting—electric blue and singing its heart out—perched in full spring light. It was a "lifer," the word birders use for the first time they ever see a species.

Today, Michael is Matheson's preserve manager. He brings a background in environmental science and years of fieldwork focused on birds, including many seasons on Santa Cruz Island, near the California coast, that led to four years as The Nature Conservancy's preserve coordinator there. He also managed Utah Valley University's field station at Capitol Reef National Park.

If you visited the Matheson Preserve in the past and parked off Kane Creek Blvd, you saw how close Mill Creek ran to the parking area. In 2022, a major flash flood scoured the channel and undercut where the bridge ended, leaving it hanging in midair. Three more significant floods in 2024 widened the gap between the bridge and the bank to roughly 15 feet. Floods also exposed buried utilities and forced power pole moves. This left Michael and other TNC staff with the task of rethinking how people safely reach the preserve.

The solution is a safer, more resilient entrance from 400 North, a spot that visitors already use. Relocating the entrance lets the creek keep doing what desert streams do—shift, braid, rebuild—without putting people or infrastructure in harm's way. The city will repurpose the old bridge in its bike path network, saving removal costs and keeping a community asset in service.

A year ago, you would have seen dense stands of Russian olive and tamarisk crowding much of the preserve—monocultures

Left: Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve © Stuart Ruckman; Above: Michael Hague at the Matheson Wetlands Preserve, Moab. © Alec Lyons

that choked out native plants and added fire risk for nearby neighborhoods. Large areas of those thickets are now gone, thanks to Michael and crews from the Utah Conservation Corps as well as a new TNC tractor that helps consolidate cut material into burn piles. The work is ongoing, but the transformation is already clear: light reaches the ground again, native saltgrass is spreading, and wildlife can move more freely through the wetlands.

Matheson protects the last intact cottonwood–willow gallery forest between the Colorado–Utah border and Lake Powell. But the system has changed. Historically, Colorado River flows high enough to push water into the preserve arrived every two to three years. With warmer winters, reduced snowpack, and altered runoff timing, those peaks now come far less often. Springs along the east side still deliver water, but more of it is now diverted for culinary and irrigation uses, and groundwater is pulled in many directions across the valley with less making it to the preserve.

Less frequent flooding shifts plant communities and makes it harder for willow and cottonwood regeneration to keep pace. It also tilts the field toward tough competitors like tamarisk, Russian olive, kochia, and Russian knapweed. The work at Matheson is a long game: keep wetlands wet, defend and expand the native mosaic, and be honest about the desert hydrology we have now—not the one we remember. Water remains Michael's top priority as he works to maintain and restore habitat at the preserve. He's building partnerships and exploring new sources to keep the wetlands wet.

The central pond doubles as a razorback sucker nursery—one piece of a basin-wide effort to recover declining Colorado River native fish. Each spring, biologists from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources time a brief connection to the river to allow rice-sized larvae in while excluding invasive fish. The pond is then isolated and supplemented with spring water to maintain quality and depth, giving the young fish a safe place to grow. For visitors, the nursery offers a tangible story: science, timing, patience, and shared stewardship at work.

Ask Michael what keeps him motivated and he doesn't talk about equipment or grants first. He talks about birds. Spring migrants—the Say's Phoebe among the earliest—announce the season's turn. A Cooper's hawk nest fledged five young this summer. In winter, the shallows fill with life—waterfowl like teal and mallards, joined by stilts and herons—reminding visitors how alive the wetlands remain through the seasons. Beyond birds, there are signs of beaver, the occasional black bear or mountain lion, and leopard frogs gathering by the hundreds around the pond. And there are moments that catch him off guard: an otter's head rising from the water to look back with the same curious attention you're giving it.

Which brings us back to that indigo bunting. Lifers are rare, and when one lands in front of you, it's a reminder that places like Matheson still deliver surprise and possibility. That feeling is why many of us first fell in love with nature. It's why Michael did—and why he's working to keep that spark alive for the next person who visits the preserve and looks up.

Matheson Wetlands Preserve
© Alec Lyons

Connecting Indigenous Knowledge with Western Science on the Colorado Plateau

For millennia, Indigenous Peoples have relied on and nurtured the land for their sustenance, medicines, traditions and cultural practices. They suffered a heart-wrenching disconnection from the land when European settlers and disease wiped out many of their ancestors. The NATURE program (Native American Tribes Upholding Restoration and Education) is working with young Indigenous college students to help build a cadre of new leaders for the future.

The Nature Conservancy and Utah State University–Blanding launched this 8-week paid internship in 2021 at TNC's Canyonlands Research Center at Dugout Ranch. Students help design their own curricula based on their individual goals.

The students meet with scientists, ranchers, land managers, and Indigenous scholars, and share their own cultural traditions. Their time is divided between classroom lessons and field work—including visits to places that are new experiences for most of them. Each student is assigned a mentor and develops an original research project.

"The goal of the program is to get students comfortable with people working in the fields of both Indigenous knowledge and Western science," says Kristen Redd, Canyonlands Research Center program manager. "We want to create a network of people that our students can reach out to for counsel and mentorship. We also encourage students to bring their Indigenous knowledge into their careers."

Many of the students have a science background, but their majors have ranged from botany and health science to building management and even one writing major. They also come from a wide range of Tribes.

Bridging Cultures

For NATURE Fellow Jaiden Willeto, Navajo (Diné), it's important to bridge the cultures and values of Indigenous knowledge and those of Western science—to bring Indigenous knowledge more into the forefront so it becomes a pillar of Western science.

Willeto explains, "Indigenous culture sees a balance

Photos © James Q Martin

among all living things. Indigenous culture is thousands of years old, and we have much to learn from that ancient knowledge. But much of it has been lost since settlement and colonialization of the country. It's important to preserve and pass on what remains."

Willeto also believes students feel a renewed sense of pride from participating in the program. "NATURE participants take away a feeling that the knowledge passed to them by their community and their Elders is just as important as what they learn in school…that it isn't 'less than'."

Curiosity drove some students to the program. Jalen Panana, a Navajo (Diné), grew up on the Navajo Nation and was intrigued by the idea of exploring the Colorado Plateau, where he lived for most of his life.

His project was studying the impact of drought from both a scientific and cultural perspective. He was especially taken by what he learned about the integration of Indigenous knowledge and Western science. He discovered innovative practices that could be incorporated into Diné farming such as hydroponic growing techniques and the use of traditional Indigenous plants (e.g. native tea, corn, beans and squash). Jalen was excited to talk about this with his stepdad – a well-known pow wow singer and dancer as well as Diné medicine man. He learned that the common English name for the plant used in a popular Navajo dish (Chiilchin) is sumac.

"It was an exhilarating experience. When you keep an open mind and gather as much insight from the teachers and mentors, you can learn so much. We all really grew a lot."

Rebekah Caneca Garrow, a young Mohawk woman, says that the students learned from both the teachers and mentors as well as their fellow cohorts.

"We get to exchange stories and cultural practices about our Tribes, which I feel is very important because a big issue that we're facing in modern Western society is the Indigenous narrative keeps being rewritten. So, it's very important getting to hear these narratives that you don't typically get to hear in Western societies."

Gaining Knowledge, Building Confidence

The students are pushed into new areas of knowledge as well as confronting some very new experiences. For some, this was the first extended stay away from home and family.

Arian Sage, a Navajo (Diné), said that was a bit daunting at the start: "A lot of us were worried that we weren't going to get along or that traveling might be difficult. But being here, all of us can say it's a lot easier and it's not an environment where being different is bad. It's a place where you can be yourself." That is an important step in forging the kind of confidence that builds leaders. "I think being here, learning from all these different people and having the fellow students with me is really helping me grow."

Danna Baxley
Photo © Jim Breitinger

Evolving Together: Utah's Next Chapter in Conservation

Desert soil doesn't form overnight. Years of wind, water, and organic matter create layer after layer, each one enriching the next. Over time, those layers create the foundation that allows native plants to take hold, survive and thrive.

Effective conservation is not so different. The Nature Conservancy in Utah has a rich foundation of incredible conservation—41 years of careful relationship-building, scientific innovation and an enduring commitment to place. Now, the chapter is moving through a period of growth—one that is both a continuation of long-held strengths and a fresh response to new realities and urgent challenges.

At the organizational level, TNC is sharpening its focus globally and across the western U.S., channeling resources into locations and strategies that can deliver the greatest impact for both climate and biodiversity. In Utah, that same focus is shaping priorities around water, land, and communities. "Within Utah and the larger Conservancy, our model is evolving from one where individuals often carried multiple workstreams across multiple strategies to one that's more focused," says Danna Baxley, who recently joined TNC's Utah team as Water and Agriculture Strategy Director. "We're investing in specialists with the depth and focus to take on complex challenges like western water scarcity."

From Place-Based to Strategy-Based

For decades, TNC's approach in Utah has been rooted in place-based conservation: staff working locally to protect land, restore habitat, and support communities. That work created trust and credibility that remain essential today. Now, the chapter is complementing that legacy with a strategy-based approach—creating focused teams dedicated to the state's most urgent priorities: Great Salt Lake, Colorado River Basin, Sagebrush Sea, Western Forests, and Climate & Renewable Energy.

The credibility earned through years of local engagement is the bedrock that makes today's specialized strategies possible. Utah's defining conservation challenges require sustained attention and strategic deployment of resources.

Scaling Up and Reaching Across Borders

One of the most significant reasons for these shifts is the pressing need to create impacts at scale. Utah's conservation challenges don't stop at state lines—and

neither do the solutions. The Utah chapter is part of multi-state collaborations at TNC, pooling expertise and resources across the Rockies and beyond.

"More than ever, we're coordinating across geographies—working together on challenges that resonate far beyond a single state," says Kelley Hart, Utah's Director of Land Strategies. "We're pursuing scalable strategies that will have an impact across the entire region."

Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration (LTPBR) in streams is one example where TNC's work is now informing approaches in seven different states through a coordinated team of TNC staff. Similarly, the chapter's growing expertise in water is directly tied to our increased focus on developing solutions to help the Colorado River Basin—an interconnected system on which millions of people and countless species depend.

Leadership and Focus

The transition is also shaped by new leadership. Since becoming Utah's State Director in January 2024, Elizabeth Kitchens has deepened capacity in key areas and guided a chapter reorganization that enables creativity and promotes innovation.

For example, the chapter has made a renewed investment in staffing expertise and projects to improve the quality and quantity of our water resources—bringing in specialists like Ellie Oakley, a water expert focused exclusively on the Colorado River, and Alix Pfennigwerth, a riparian restoration expert. Working with numerous partners as well as staff across other TNC chapters, these specialists are tackling one of the most complex issues in the arid West: water scarcity.

The team's reorganization included bifurcating the former Utah conservation director role into two positions—Baxley on water and agriculture, and Hart on land protection and stewardship—creating space for deeper focus and complementary skills. Hart brings a background in environmental law and conservation-related planning; Baxley's background is in applied science and rural community engagement. As Kitchens sees it, "together, Kelley and Danna bring a wealth of experience that accelerates innovation, leverages TNC's opportunities for impact at scale, and strengthens the whole team. As thought partners, their combined thinking and energy is what we need to be adaptive and nimble to increase the pace and scale of our conservation programs."

Strong Roots

The chapter's new focus is about rising to the dual challenges we are facing in the form of biodiversity loss and climate change with a revitalized combination of strategies, talent and partnerships. This evolution is feasible because the chapter's roots run deep in a multi-layered foundation built by decades of work—trust earned in communities, partnerships forged across sectors, and landscapes protected for people and nature.

Like desert soil, those foundational layers now support new growth. The chapter's renewed focus, deepened capacity, and cross-border collaborations are all possible because of what came before. "It's an exciting time for TNC in Utah—we're maintaining our strong foundation while we renew our deep commitment to conserve Utah's landscapes and communities for decades to come. I'm incredibly grateful to the Utah staff, trustees and donors for their continued dedication to TNC's mission,"
says Kitchens.

Kelley Hart © Gallery Photography

Building Confidence in Conservation Easements

This spring, TNC's Utah Chapter partnered with Bear River Land Conservancy and Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to host two workshops on conservation easements—one in Pocatello, Idaho and another in Logan, Utah. Around three dozen practitioners who regularly work with private landowners took part, including staff from USDA-NRCS, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, local land trusts and other NGOs like Trout Unlimited and Pheasants Forever.

The goal was simple: help participants better understand how to talk about easements and guide landowners who may be interested. Conservation easements can be complicated, and sometimes people think they're regulatory in nature. The workshops clarified that easements are voluntary flexible agreements that permanently conserve a property's natural values while keeping it in private ownership.

Participants worked through topics like how easement value is calculated, the roles of funders and holders and where tax and legal questions belong—with the landowner's accountant or attorney, not the land trust. They also talked about how different funding sources can line up, from federal programs through NRCS to state agricultural conservation funds. A longtime land trust professional, brought in by TNC to lead the sessions, walked through case examples drawn from projects in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho.

Why does this matter for TNC's broader work? Conservation easements are one of our most proven tools for large landscape protection. We protect working agricultural lands, riparian corridors, wetlands and meadows that connect priority landscapes. Protecting intact private lands at meaningful scale helps maintain habitat connectivity and sustains rural livelihoods while reducing pressures from development.

Participants left with more clarity about when and how to use easements, how to discuss them with landowners and what resources exist to help move from interest to action. These "train-the-trainer" sessions ripple outward—every practitioner who can demystify easements for a ranching family or farm owner helps open the door to voluntary conservation across the Bear River watershed and beyond.

These workshops reflect how TNC works: collaborative, practical and focused on durable impact. Thanks to our partners and everyone who showed up to learn and share, more landowners will have a trusted path to keep their lands whole and thriving.

Where People and Nature Meet

As Community Engagement Manager for the Utah Chapter, Andrea Nelson leads our outreach and education work—creating opportunities for people to connect directly with nature and conservation across the state. From urban events to hands-on restoration, her work helps build understanding, curiosity and care for Utah's remarkable landscapes.

One highlight from the past year was Wuda Ogwa, the site of the Bear River Massacre, where the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation is leading an inspiring land and water restoration effort. TNC is honored to support their work by helping bring additional volunteers. In November 2024, 700 volunteers planted more than 15,000 native trees and plants to help revive the site's ecology—a powerful example of partnership and healing through restoration. We're proud to continue supporting this effort in 2025.

Andrea also represented TNC at the Intermountain Sustainability Summit in Ogden, where she joined a panel on Nurturing Nature Connections alongside local partners in design, public lands and recreation. The conversation explored tangible ways to deepen people's engagement with the natural world—from volunteerism and urban green spaces to building ecological literacy in everyday life.

TNC's education outreach extended further through Nature at Extremes: Great Salt Lake, a new *Nature Lab* module that builds on curriculum from our hands-on *Wings and Water Wetlands Education Program. Nature Lab* is TNC's online education platform and is available for free to teachers around the world. The video from this module is an outstanding resource for people of all ages to learn more about Great Salt Lake and can be viewed at nature.org/utah.

The Utah chapter's outreach is growing, with staff across the state helping connect people to nature in their own communities. In southern and southeastern Utah, Dylan Thomas in St. George and Michael Hague in Moab are broadening our presence by representing TNC at local events.

Whether they are helping restore sacred ground, teaching about Great Salt Lake, or empowering communities to find their own connection to nature, Andrea and her colleagues are weaving conservation more deeply into daily life across Utah. "A lot of what I do is take things people already know—places they love, species they recognize—and build on that," Andrea says. "It's about meeting them where they are and helping them see how nature and conservation connects to their everyday lives."

Science, Partnership, and Place

In southwestern Utah, TNC's work stretches from redrock country to cottonwood-lined rivers. Across this landscape, which is dominated by public lands, we are partnering with land management agencies and communities to protect native species and improve how vast ecosystems are managed for the long term.

At the heart of this work is Elaine York, the Utah Chapter's West Desert Regional Director. Elaine has spent 29 years with the Conservancy, guiding partnerships that span western Utah—from the Idaho border to Arizona—and still, she says, she "loves the work as much as when I started."

Elaine is deeply engaged in two three-year collaborations, which are among the largest landscape projects TNC has ever undertaken in the state. Working with the U.S. Forest Service's Dixie National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management's Cedar City Field Office, TNC scientists—Dr. Louis Provencher, Dr. Kevin Badik and Sarah Byer—are updating maps, models, and ecological metrics across roughly 1,000,000 acres of forest and rangeland. "This Landscape Conservation Forecasting is a really important way we can share TNC tools and science to help agencies manage for better ecological outcomes," says Elaine.

TNC is also playing a pivotal role on the Santa Clara River—part of the Colorado River Basin-supporting a five-year water lease with the Shivwits Band of Paiutes. TNC has provided substantial funding to ensure critical flows to the river which benefit many species—including the Virgin spinedace, a rare desert fish that would likely be listed as endangered without this agreement. When financial support for the project declined, TNC's investment kept the lease alive, sustaining both the fish and a vital partnership with the Shivwits Band.

Also in southern Utah, just outside of Zion National Park, TNC continues hands-on stewardship at our Sheep Bridge Nature Preserve, implementing projects funded by the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation. Current work, led by TNC land steward Dylan Thomas, includes new fencing and signage, removal of invasive plants along the riparian corridor, and improvements such as an ADA-accessible parking area to welcome more visitors.

For Elaine, these projects capture both the science and spirit of conservation in Utah: "I'm passionate about our natural world," she says. "I still feel like I'm living the dream—to have a job with The Nature Conservancy where I get to work on partnership projects that make a difference in the health of a river, a shrubland and a forest."

Elaine York © Scott Dwire

Left to Right: David, Tim and their father Thomas D. Dee II circa 1980. Photo courtesy of the Dee family.

Generations of Stewardship: The Dee Family's Legacy of Giving

In northern Utah, the name Dee is woven into the fabric of community life. For more than a century, the Dee family has shaped education, health care, and conservation across the region—steadily investing in the people and places that make Utah thrive. Today, brothers Tim and David Dee, co-chairs of the Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation, continue that legacy with a deep commitment to The Nature Conservancy's mission.

Their grandparents, Lawrence and Janet Dee, founded the family's charitable foundation in 1971 to strengthen the Ogden area through support for education, health, and the arts. Their father, Thomas D. Dee II, carried that vision forward. Now Tim and David are building on that foundation with a spirit that reaches well beyond their hometown—one that also includes the next generation. Their children are now serving as directors and advisors of the foundation, continuing a family tradition of philanthropy and civic engagement that spans four generations.

Reflecting on that legacy, Tim Dee notes that his family has always believed community and conservation are inseparable: "Our family has always believed that when you care for your community, you care for everything connected to it. The Nature Conservancy has shown again and again that conserving land and water isn't just about protecting nature—it's about sustaining the communities that depend on it."

The Dee Foundation has supported projects across Utah that safeguard water, restore habitat, and connect people to the natural world. From the wetlands of Great Salt Lake to the Colorado River corridors in southern Utah, their philanthropy reflects a belief in long-term stewardship and collaboration.

For David Dee, that practical, unifying approach is what continues to inspire their giving: "TNC takes a practical, science-based approach, but it also brings people together. That combination—of results and relationships—is why we've been proud to support this work and why we see such value in continuing it."

The brothers also point to the leadership of Dave Livermore, who retired in 2024 after 43 years with TNC. Livermore's partnership with the Dee Foundation helped launch several cornerstone projects for the Utah chapter and deepened the foundation's engagement in statewide conservation.

As the Utah chapter marks its 41st year, the Dees see their philanthropy as both a continuation and an invitation. "Generosity is something you learn by example," says Tim. "We hope others will see how lasting the impact can be when you invest in conservation."

For The Nature Conservancy in Utah, that spirit of continuity—the passing of stewardship from one generation to the next—is what ensures that the lands and waters we love will endure for all who follow.

Thank You

We'd like to share our deepest gratitude to the following individuals and organizations who are members of The Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places Society in FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

With a generous gift of $10,000 or more, we recognize these individuals and organizations for investing in the health of our natural world – from right here in Utah to the far reaches of the globe. Thank you for being a powerful voice for nature and for your commitment to preserve nature's awe-inspiring wonder today and for generations to come.

Individuals

Fred Adler & Anne Collopy
Abigail & Robert Antablin
Kirk & Georgia Baddley
Eric & Cyndi Baughman
Teresa Beck
David & Carly Beesley
Winston Brundige
Jan Ellen Burton & John Burton
Kristine Crandall
David & Allison Cumming
John & Flora D'Arcy
Juliann D'Amore & Alan Davis
Thomas D. Dee III & Candace Dee
Janet & David Deisley
Jeff & Leslie Edison
Ryan & Christie Frisby
Don & Mary Garner
Phyllis G. Grauke
Arlene Hamburg
Hank & Pat Hemingway
Elizabeth & Eric Jacobsen
Dr. and Mrs. Harold Lamb III
R. Kent Landmark
Linda Leckman
Jason & Erin Linder
Hank & Diane Louis
Kathie & Mark Miller
Jeff & Katie Nelson
Tom & Jody Neuman
Maunsel & Ann Pearce
David & Shari Quinney
Christopher & Rochelle Robinson
Ellen E. & Christopher T. Rossi
Kenneth Sassen
Paul Shaphren
Dennis Shaw & Marilyn White
Mathieu Shrontz
Harris & Amanda Simmons
Kevin & Alice Steiner
Bill & Katie Stevens
Mark & Susan Stutzman
David O. Tanner
Dan Thomas
Betsy Thornton
Tomilee Tilley
Ron & Pati Trowbridge
Katy Welkie & Audrey Bramwell
Gregory Witt

Organizations

Backcountry
Beagle Charitable Foundation
Bur Oak Foundation
Chevron
David Kelby Johnson Memorial Foundation
Emma Eccles Jones Foundation
Florence J. Gillmor Foundation
George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation
Harris H. & Amanda P. Simmons Foundation
Janet Q. Lawson Foundation
Lawrence T. & Janet T. Dee Foundation
Marriner S. Eccles Foundation
O.C. Tanner Company
Palladium Foundation
Paul T. Walton Jr. Charitable Foundation
Play Forever Foundation
Rattie Family Foundation
R.E. Bamberger and J.E. Bamberger Memorial Foundation
Richard K. and Shirley S. Hemingway Foundation
SC Johnson Giving, Inc.
JoAnne L. Shrontz Family Foundation
Sorenson Legacy Foundation
Swartz Foundation
Swire Coca-Cola USA
Tanner Charitable Trust
The Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation
The Steiner Foundation, Inc.
The Stephen G. and Susan E. Denkers Family Foundation
Willard L. Eccles Charitable Foundation
Zions Bancorporation Foundation

We'd like to recognize the following individuals who joined the Legacy Club in FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). These individuals have made a planned gift to The Nature Conservancy, which is a commitment to help protect lands and waters for future generations.

Anonymous
Jason Firth
Jennifer James
Nancy & Richard Nielsen
Wayne Peterson & Cindy Gilmore
Pamela Quayle & Gary Wellin
David Scheer
Nancy M. Shaw
Carole S. Straughn
Rachel & Peter Taylor
Melinda Tomeo

The Nature Conservancy Utah Chapter
48 West Market Street, Ste. 300
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
nature.org/utah

Follow us on LinkedIn, @The Nature Conservancy in Utah
Donate: support.nature.org/utah

Utah

2025 Chapter Update

We've Moved!

Our new address is:

The Nature Conservancy
Utah Chapter
48 West Market St., Suite 300
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

Most of TNC Utah's staff at our Sheep Bridge Nature Preserve, September 2025. Photo © Elaine Minahan