

## **WATER USE IN UTAH 2009**

### **History**

The League of Women Voters undertook a study of the waters of Utah in 2009. Members were concerned about the state's water future in view of the high probability of water scarcity and population growth. We believe that current per capita water use is unsustainable but also believe it is unnecessary and even extravagant. We believe people can and will change their ways with education, careful planning, and wise laws. Our member support both behavioral and technological changes as ways to reduce water use and protect the environment. We also wish to be strong advocates in all levels of government for the environment for its own sake and because it is essential to our wellbeing. In 2009 the League questions the state's reliance on the concept of water as private property as it did in the League water study of 1981. We recommend a rethinking of this historic water law. We find this and other of the 1981 study are as relevant today as they were then. As in 1981 All interested parties in Utah must revisit and revise existing water laws and institutions in order to create a system that will work for the future

### **The League's position with respect to water use –**

Utah water policies should be structured to address human needs while protecting the integrity of water tables, lakes, streams, wetlands and their attendant wildlife. Instream flows and conservation pools should be established for the state's natural waters.

Environmental safeguards must recognize the interrelationships among water, air, land resources and wildlife.

Stringent controls must ensure protection of surface supplies and recharge areas for principal aquifers and the overall integrity of the surface and ground water in our water basins.

The public must understand the limits of our water resources and the costs to the environment and the economy of our current and projected water use.

Water conservation should preferentially result in enhancement of the natural environment rather than be directed only to growth and economic development. Sustainable economic development should be conditioned on the availability of water for projected use.