



Mineral extractors working on Great Salt Lake collectively hold over 600,000 acre-feet of water rights. The state is currently working with these companies to encourage innovative processes for new mineral development.

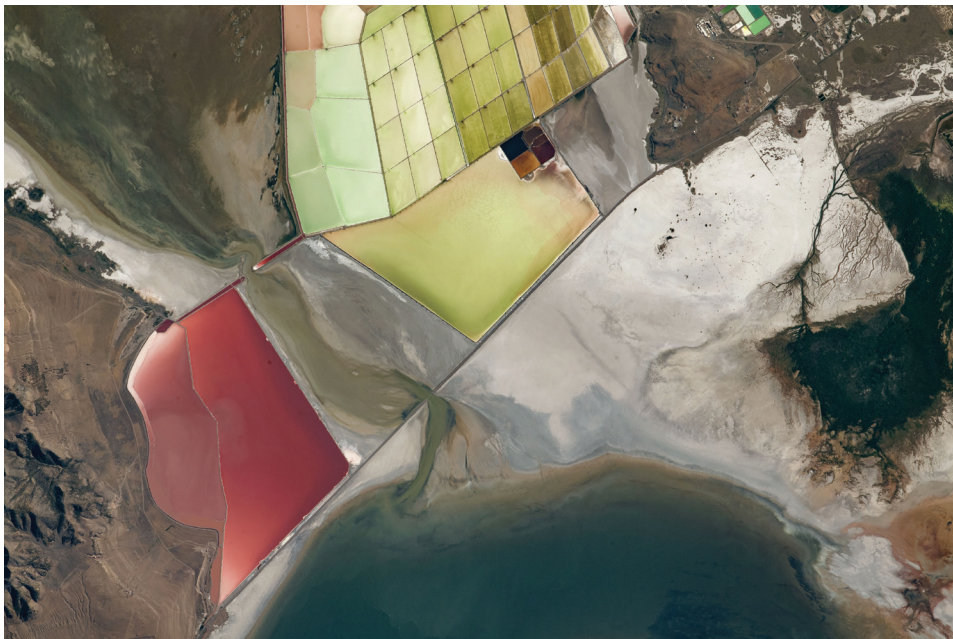
Summary

In 2020, mineral extraction companies working on Great Salt Lake depleted a total of 182,000 acre-feet of water. These companies rely upon the evaporation of lake brines in their extractive processes. However, brines have become harder to reach due to low water levels. The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL) is currently working with industry to encourage technologies that are not reliant on evaporation and those that reduce water depletions.

Key Facts and Insights

- **Economic Contribution** – A study was conducted in 2010 by the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council that reported approximately \$1.13 billion in economic output from the Great Salt Lake mineral industry.*
- **Critical Minerals** – Three critical minerals of the state, Potash, Lithium, and Magnesium, are currently found in Great Salt Lake in marketable quantities and currently in production.

Evaporation Ponds on Great Salt Lake



Source: Aerial Image from Earth Science and Remote Sensing Unit, Johnson Space Center, 2022.

Expert Assessment Scorecard Results

	Low	High
Benefits		
Water brought to the lake	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Air quality improvements	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Biological health	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Costs, Challenges, and Adaptations		
Financial cost	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Agriculture changes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Extractive industry changes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Cultural shift	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Feasibility		
Speed of implementation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Legal/regulatory feasibility	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Source: Great Salt Lake Strike Team

Policy Options and Tradeoffs

Eliminating mineral production on GSL has economic consequences and threatens a key source of three of the state’s critical minerals. However, Great Salt Lake cannot sustain continued water diversions and depletions at the rate seen in previous decades. The state is encouraging innovation and sustainability in the development of Lithium on the lake.

* Great Salt Lake Advisory Council. (2012). Economic Significance of the Great Salt Lake to the State of Utah. Retrieved from: <http://deq.utah.gov>.