

KCPW on or about June 19, 2007
SLC says Water Hoarding Claims Are Ridiculous

That's absolutely ridiculous. Salt Lake City has planned for our future and uh we do continuous studies, uh we've done since uh the 1920's uh have looked to the needs of uh the citizens of Salt Lake and the area that we serve in terms of our water needs we have planned for those needs, um.

The amount of water that we have is barely going to get us through as we our current plan takes us out to what 2050. And duh there's ah with a strong conservation program and a development of few more sources we will have just the amount of water uh that we need to meet those. So, uh, what we have done is actually plan for our future. And, uh we have you know enough for our future, but we don't have excess.

And we have certainly not been hoarding water.

I think more importantly is you really need to look at the numbers that Evan Johnson and Jim Garside quote, they are saying basically Salt Lake City somehow has 2.57 million acre-feet of water.

Let me put that in perspective for you. Um, that's equivalent to 8 Jordanelle Reservoirs full of water. And their alleging that all that water is going to waste every year and those allegations are just ridiculous.

If there were that much water going through the Salt Lake Valley to waste every year. Why would there have been the Central Utah Project? Why would all these other large water projects been developed, if there was that much water?

That fact is that those numbers are exaggerated and quite honestly some of them just fabrications on their part.

Julie Rose: "You know, that they're misunderstanding the public record in some way? Maybe calculating incorrectly.

Jeff Niermeyer: "Right."

Julie Rose: "Now Salt Lake City does have claim to ah water in Utah Lake isn't that right?"

Jeff Niermeyer: "Yes, we have one of some of the earliest rights in Utah Lake and again that water is used to exchange for water that we then provide uh to irrigation systems that we then get uh mountain stream water out of Big and Little Cottonwoods and Parley's Creek."

Julie Rose: "Now would there be a way for Salt Lake City to free up some of that Utah Lake water's that Utah County growth could be accommodated for?"

Jeff Niermeyer: "First of all Salt Lake City has very little Utah Lake water compared to the total

volume of Utah Lake water.

And, no, there's no way that we can duh, because Salt Lake City water rights that we use to meet the demands of our citizens today. Starting, uh in the 1920's, to the 1930's are relying on those same Utah Water Rights so if we give those up to Utah County, then we give up the creek rights and our citizens go without water today. Houses that are built, shopping malls that are built will not have water today, if those ths rights go away.

Julie Rose: "Well, one of the things that uh Mr. Johnson and Mr. Garsides are arguing is as well as a number of Utah Legislators and Mayors from Utah County even the Utah County Commission. They've all written letters asking that the State uh look into Area 57 which is a specific."

Jeff Niermeyer: "Well, lets start that's a very interesting point, because in 1935 Salt Lake City sued um in the very case that their talking about was in 1935 um request by Salt Lake City that, that same area be adjudicated and so their actually supporting the very case that Salt Lake City made back in 1935 that the water rights in these areas are over-appropriated and that they needed to be adjudicated."

Julie Rose: "And that adjudication has not happened yet? Isn't that right?"

Jeff Niermeyer: "No, were supportive of having that adjudication happen. You know, what they're asking for is exactly the same thing Salt Lake City asked for back in 1935."

Julie Rose: "So, do you think then that its just a matter of people wanting to make money?"

Jeff Niermeyer: "Absolutely, I think that you have two individuals that they're livelihood is speculating in water and that they're um trying to create this illusion that Salt Lake City has all this water using numbers **that are so far out of the realm of reality** and then trying to just say that if we could just get this water we could move it to Utah County. Well, that water just doesn't exist to the level that they're saying it does."