



## UWRL Newsletter: October 2025 WaterbLog



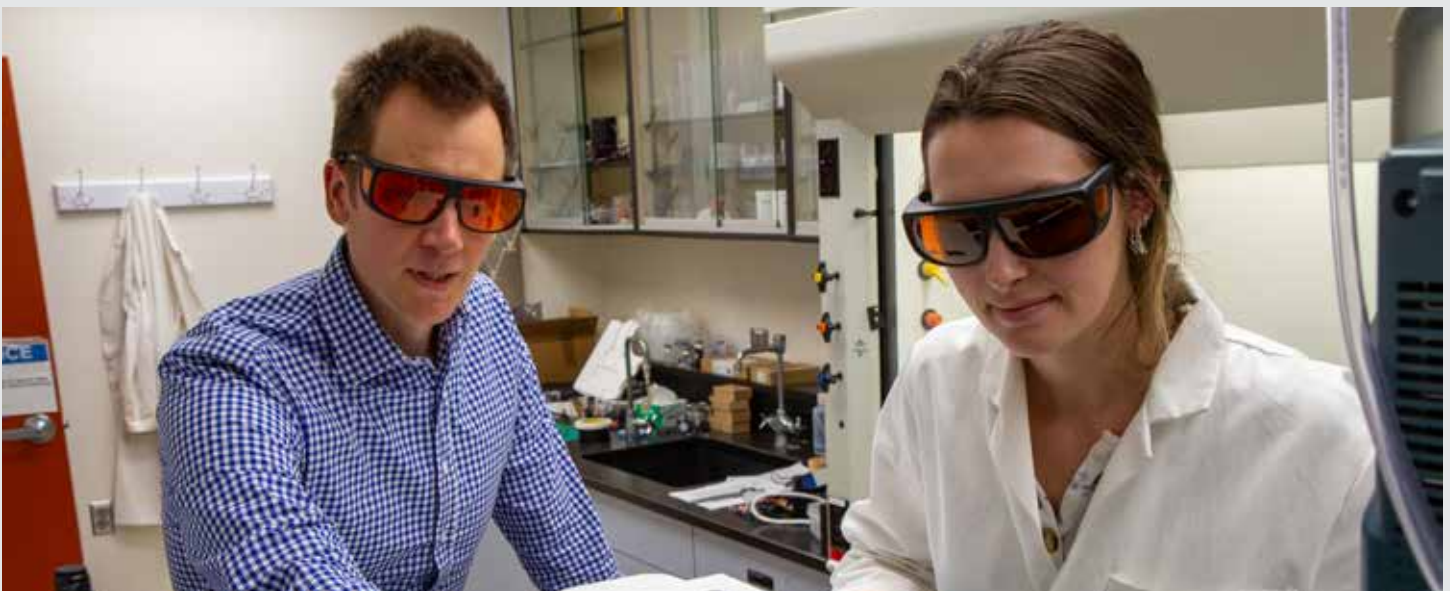
### Message from the Director: Bethany Neilson

As the new director of the Utah Water Research Laboratory, I am excited to share the remarkable breadth of research and achievements that continue to position our laboratory at the forefront of water and environmental research.

In this fall newsletter, we highlight important environmental research, from developing sustainable alternatives to toxic plastic additives, as evidenced by Dr. Kyle Moor's NSF CAREER grant to minimize plastic pollution, to exploring natural

compounds from turmeric and rhubarb that could help fight antibiotic-resistant bacteria in wastewater, a critical area of study led by Dr. Liyuan Hou. These projects exemplify our commitment to finding nature-based solutions to modern environmental problems. Additionally, our collaborative work with the Utah Division of Water Rights on surface water movement and measurement across the Great Salt Lake ecosystem demonstrates our dedication to addressing regional water challenges through rigorous scientific investigation.

This year, the UWRL is celebrating 60 years of water and environmental research as well as student community and education. We commend the achievements of our faculty, staff, and students and look forward to the future we all work together to create.



### NSF CAREER grant supports study on sustainable plastic additives

UWRL assistant professor Kyle Moor received a CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation to research sustainable alternatives to toxic plastic additives and minimize plastic pollution.

[Read Utah State Today Article](#)



## Chemicals from turmeric and rhubarb could fight antibiotic resistance

UWRL assistant professor Liyuan Hou is studying antibiotic-resistant bacteria in wastewater. Her work on the potential of natural compounds to mitigate these bacteria was highlighted by research publisher Frontiers.

[Read Frontiers Article](#)



## Joint study details surface water movement across Great Salt Lake

UWRL researchers worked with the Utah Division of Water Rights to better understand surface water movement and measurement near Great Salt Lake. This study builds off a gap analysis released by the same team in 2024. [Read the press release here.](#)

[Read Utah State Today Article](#)

## Awards & Achievements



### AWWA Eva Nieminski Graduate Scholarship

Junjie Tang was awarded the AWWA Eva Nieminski Graduate Scholarship from the American Water Works Association Intermountain Section (AWWA). The scholarship will support Tang's PhD research in quantifying micro- and nanoplastics.



### Lynn Thatcher Award

Judy Sims, coordinator of the Utah On-Site Wastewater Treatment Training Program, received the Lynn Thatcher Award from the Utah Environmental Health Association. The award is given to honor someone outside the association who has made significant contributions in the field of environmental health.



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