

## THE LOOK AHEAD

# Hogle Zoo's Brew events, a new film festival in Salt Lake City and sheepdog trials at Soldier Hollow

Journalists from across The Tribune newsroom offer a look at events and happenings of interest for the week of May 19-25:

## THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

**Beer and animals, May 22** » Utah's Hogle Zoo is holding its first Zoo Brew event of the season on Wednesday, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., at the 2000 E. Sunnyside Ave. Salt Lake City. Beer lovers (yes, the event is for people 21 and older) can sip a cold one while viewing animals after hours in the new 3-acre Wild Utah exhibit. Individual tickets to Zoo Brew are \$21.95, or you can skip the line for drink

tickets and purchase admission plus two drink tickets for \$37.95. For information and tickets, go to [hoglezoo.org](http://hoglezoo.org).

**A new film festival for Utah, May 23-26** »

The first Caudron International Film Festival is launching Thursday through next Sunday, May 26, in the auditorium of the Salt Lake City Library's main branch, 210 E. 400 South, Salt Lake City. The event promises to feature "unorthodox film narratives, rogue documentaries,

avant-garde cinema, video mashups, abstract video art, genre-bending storytelling," according to the event's website. Thursday's feature screening starts at 7 p.m.; More films are scheduled for 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Before each feature or short-film program, there will be a "pre-screening selection" of experimental media art playing on the screen while people get seated. Admission is free.

**Watch the sheepdogs work, May 24-27** »

The Soldier Hollow Classic Sheepdog Championship & Festival, in its 20th year, is one of

the most fascinating competitions you'll ever see. It's a contest in which sheepdogs can best navigate a flock of sheep to move up and down a hillside and ultimately into a corral, with only minimal commands from the dog's human. The event, held Friday through Memorial Day at the Soldier Hollow Nordic Center, 2002 Soldier Hollow Lane in Midway, also includes activities for kids, sponsor booths, food and drink vendors, and a Bohemian beer garden. Events run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. all four days. Tickets are available at [UtahOlympicLegacy.org](http://UtahOlympicLegacy.org).

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## Utah's water system poses a unique but avoidable risk — if we understand it

What an E. Coli outbreak can tell us about our state's secondary water systems.

Last July, there was an E. coli outbreak in Utah.

I don't know about you, but E. coli is one of those things that I tend to gaze over when it's mentioned in the news. The rhythms of the story are so familiar by now. There's some lettuce or some restaurant at the center of an outbreak, some people get sick, the health authorities intervene, and things go back to normal. It's just...predictable.

But last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report about the Utah outbreak in their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report — a roundup of interesting, but bad health things happening in the U.S. Much of what we learned about COVID outbreaks came in the MMWR, for example.

This report fell outside of the usual story on E. coli. Instead of ending in a neatly tied-up bow, this report points to some ongoing risks that I think a lot of Utahns will



ANDY LARSEN

want to know about.

In particular: Utah's unique water supply system provides a bit of a danger. Let me explain.

### What happened in Utah

Last summer, between July 22-27, six kids in Lehi tested positive for E. coli. That's unusual, obviously, so they tested the E. coli strains the children had, and found they were exactly the same. In other words, their disease was coming from the same source.

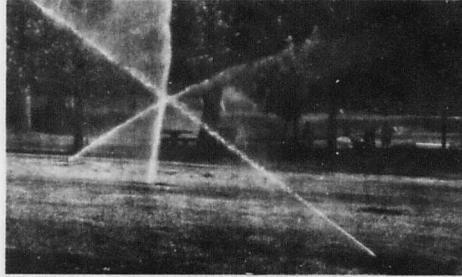
But as Utah Department of Health experts interviewed the kids' parents, there wasn't much in common among the kids. They hadn't eaten at the same restaurant, nor even eaten the same meals. The only thing in common that they had was they had all played outside in the water recently. But of course they had. They're kids.

Still, that's what health officials had to go on. So they tested water samples from where the kids had played — backyards and parks in particular. At five of those sites, they found E. coli. Then, they tested two of Lehi's water reservoirs and found E. coli at one of them.

The Utah County Health Department issued a news release about the outbreak on Aug. 4; Lehi sent out a release on Aug. 19 affirming E. coli had been found. Officials also mailed a notice to residents on Aug. 28. On Aug. 31, the final case of the outbreak was detected.

In all, 13 kids were diagnosed with E. coli infection. The children were between 1 and 15 years old. The average age was 4. Five of them had played with hose water from Lehi, five with inflatable lawn water toys and water tables. Two remembered drinking the water from the hose, one just ran through sprinklers.

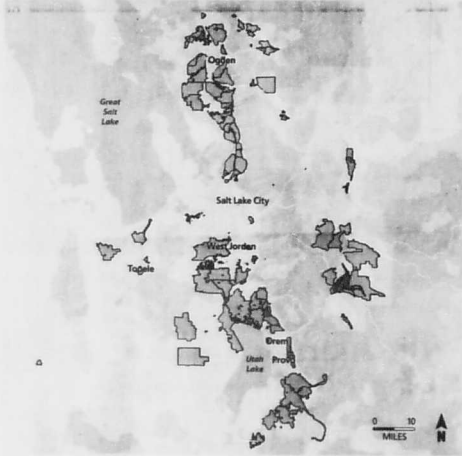
Seven of them were hospitalized, and two of them had "hemolytic uremic syndrome," which results in smaller blood vessels in children, a change in color in skin tone, and, frequently, kidney failure. It's something that happens relatively often in kids, especially, who are infected with E. coli.



Sprinklers run at Reservoir Park in the middle of the afternoon heat during peak evaporation times on Monday afternoon, July 19, 2021, near the University of Utah campus.

### Municipalities with secondary water systems

Among the cities with secondary water are West Jordan, South Jordan, Riverton, Herriman, Bountiful, Alpine, Lehi, Pleasant Grove, American Fork, Springville, Spanish Fork, Payson, Grantsville, Stansbury Park, Midway, Bountiful, Farmington, Kayville, Syracuse, Clinton, Roy, North Ogden, and many more.



Source: Utah Department of Natural Resources

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTOPHER HERRINGTON | The Salt Lake Tribune

But that's not all. While there were 13 confirmed cases, experts estimate that there are 26.1 undiagnosed cases of E. coli infection in people for every one diagnosed. So we can estimate that there were about 340 people, likely mostly children, who got sick last summer due to E. coli in Lehi.

### Secondary water systems

So what allowed this to happen? Well, Lehi, like a lot of Utah cities, has a two-pronged water system. Within homes, the "primary"

drinking water system is used — the water that gets sent through treatment plans to make safe for human consumption. And for outdoors, "secondary" water is used. That's, as the CDC calls it, "untreated, pressurized, municipal irrigation water" — water that flows down from the mountains, hangs out in reservoirs, and then gets sent to backyards. It's clear that the E. coli traveled through this latter system.

I spent most of my adolescence in Riverton, which has this two-pronged system. I'll be honest, I thought this was a pretty ubiquitous set-up, at least in the suburbs.

But it turns out that these secondary water systems in which the water is untreated but still delivered to homes are extremely uncommon outside of Utah. It's common for farms and the like nationwide, but the fact that Utah municipalities are sending untreated water to residential suburb homes, even to be used in the outdoors, was a surprise to many at the CDC. It just doesn't happen in most other places.

While it's unusual outside of Utah, I have to say — most of the time, secondary water seems to me to be a pretty sensible system, at least in my opinion. Because most water used in residential areas is outside, keeping lawns green, not treating that water saves a lot of money, time, and effort for cities. It saves tens of millions in water treatment costs. And it makes sense for these suburbs that were so recently mostly agricultural to simply convert those irrigation systems to lawn-watering systems.

### What should we do?

But every once in a while, an outbreak like this is going to happen as a result. UDOH officials couldn't pinpoint how many of these had happened before, but indicated that this mechanism would explain multiple untraceable past outbreaks in Utah.

E. coli outbreaks usually happen due to, well, poop. To figure out where the E. coli came from, UDOH tested the backyards, parks, and reservoirs in Lehi for traces of different kinds of feces — avian, ruminant (cows, sheep, deer, etc.), and human.

Could you perhaps separate the excrement contaminated by E. coli away from the water sources? Unfortunately, the places that tested positive for E. coli mostly tested negative for feces — with one exception. They all tested positive for bird poop.

That's the most difficult one to avoid, of course. Birds, nonstop, are flying over all manner of things and pooping in or on them. If a bird poops up an E. coli infection, well, it's easy to imagine how that can spread across hundreds of kids in a community just as soon as it makes a deposit in the water supply.

The CDC, then, made some recommendations to municipalities with secondary water. One logical one: covering secondary water reservoirs to make it more difficult for bird waste to end up in them.

Their biggest focus, though, was just about making sure the public knows that secondary water is not wholly safe for consumption, and especially kids, are involved. They recommended more prominent labeling of secondary water systems at public sites, distributing conspicuous signage for homeowners to use in their yards, and color coding signage.

In 2022, the Utah Legislature passed a law requiring that all secondary water systems be metered by 2030. I wonder if a similar law could pass next session to implement some of these recommendations.

I think doing so would be especially important given Utah's population growth. We're adding tens of thousands of residents per year from out of state — and especially to Lehi! The vast majority of them will not have encountered secondary water systems before.

That doesn't mean that we should get rid of secondary water in communities. But it does mean a good of public information campaign is in order to avoid hundreds of kids getting sick on a regular basis in their own backyards.

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### The Salt Lake Tribune

Established April 15, 1871. Published daily and Sunday by The Salt Lake Tribune, 90 S. 400 West, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111. Periodicals postage paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Tribune at the above address.

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