

Lynn de Freitas, Executive Director
FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake, USA

Personal statement:

I'm interested in serving on the board of the International Society of Salt Lake Research to represent a voice for nonprofit organizations. In the past, ISSLR has focused on research about saline lakes, but given that many of these lakes worldwide are in danger of disappearing, more work needs to be done to enlist managers and the public to help preserve these ecosystems. As I shared in my presentation last November at the 15th International Conference of Salt Lake Research (Antalya, Turkey), nonprofit organizations serve an important function in helping to build public awareness about research and ongoing issues of these systems, and to help protect them.



I have been the Executive Director of a nonprofit organization, FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake, since 2002 and have developed skills that I believe I can use to forward the goals of ISSLR in sustaining research and in helping to preserve saline lakes around the world. Like many saline lake ecosystems, Great Salt Lake is being rapidly desiccated due to water development in its watershed. The long-term goal of FRIENDS is to achieve comprehensive watershed-based restoration and protection for the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, I believe I can help communicate the important work ISSLR is doing on behalf of these very same challenges that global saline systems are confronting by assisting with the implementation of tools and programs that will extend the reach of that awareness worldwide.

My experience working with federal, state, local entities and stakeholders on developing policies that address the unique role and characteristics of the Great Salt Lake ecosystem to ensure its long-term sustainability is insightful. I'm actively involved with community outreach opportunities to raise awareness and appreciation of the Lake's economic, ecological and cultural values, and how the public has a responsibility to preserve and protect them.

Prior to my affiliation with FRIENDS, I was a Library Media Coordinator for 18 years in both public and private schools in Salt Lake City. I have a B.S. in Biology from Montclair State College, New Jersey, and an M. Ed in Educational Systems and Learning Resources from the University of Utah.

“The future of many saline lakes will be decided over the next several decades as the direct economic value of fresh water inflows are weighed against the less easily measured ecosystem goods and services provided by these unique ecosystems. “

-Robert Jellison, Former Secretary-Treasurer of ISSLR

Saline lakes worldwide grapple with climate change and the inherent challenges that come with their unique locations. The global community understands how things are no longer the way they used to be. We've learned from other saline ecosystems within the region and around the world that the desiccation of these systems comes at a price. There are tremendous costs environmentally and economically that include alarming impacts to human health, as well as impacts to millions of migratory birds that rely on these system for

resting, staging and nesting. As such, we need to find no-regrets solutions that can be implemented now.

Accomplishments and positions:

Since 1996, FRIENDS has hosted a biennial *Great Salt Lake Issues Forum*. The purpose of the biennial forum is to encourage constructive dialogue about the future of the Lake's ecosystem and its resources, and to illuminate the complexities involved in research, management, and planning for the Lake. The program brings people from the region and hemisphere to share and discuss significant research and insights that will help all the participants improve the management of their ecosystems. Program participants in the forum have included representatives from the Aral Sea, Owens Lake, Mono Lake, Salton Sea, Laguna Mar Chiquita, and the Dead Sea.

FRIENDS hosted the 2008 10th International Society of Salt Lake Research meeting held jointly with our FRIENDS biennial Issues Forum. As Conference Chair and member of the Local Organizing Committee, I had the honor of developing the program this meeting titled *Saline Lakes Around the World: Unique Systems with Unique Values*. The meeting, attended by over 250 scientists and managers from 17 countries, provided a timely and stimulating opportunity for global, regional, and local people interested in saline lakes, the science, management and conservation of these complex ecosystems to come together to learn about the important and ongoing work on their behalf. This meeting was also the most financially successful ISSLR meeting ever held. As an ISSLR Board member I hope to be able to help convene similar successful international conferences.

Relevant accomplishments and activities:

- In November 2024, representing the voice of a nonprofit organization working for Great Salt Lake, I presented at the 15th International Conference on Salt Lake Research in Antalya, Turkiye. That opportunity reinforced my enthusiasm about supporting the important work of ISSLR.
- In 2023, I began serving on the Steering Committee of the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan to prepare an Action Plan by 2026 that will ensure a resilient water supply for Great Salt Lake and water users throughout the basin. Because the Lake is a rich source for artistic inspiration, since 2014, FRIENDS has recognized that powerful expression through our Alfred Lambourne Arts Program awarding annual prizes in literary, sound, movement, and visual arts.
- Over the past 20 years, FRIENDS has taken more than 35,000 4th grade students to the Lake through its Lakeside Learning Field Trip program.

Technical Review Committee for the Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) overseeing Kennecott Utah Copper's environmental compliance.

Advisor to the CERCLA process for US Magnesium's EPA Superfund cleanup project which will reduce contamination of Great Salt Lake.

In 2020, I served on the working group on the Governor's Steering Committee to develop recommendations *to address declining water levels of the Great Salt Lake*.

In 2013, I served as a member of Governor Herbert's Water Strategy Advisory Team to develop the *July 2017 Recommended State Water Strategy*.

Additionally, I was instrumental in FRIENDS achieving the following awards:

In 1997, FRIENDS received the Utah Chapter of the Wildlife Society's annual Conservation Achievement Award for its efforts to bring Great Salt Lake and its many values into public focus.

FRIENDS was recognized as a 2023 Informed Decision Maker by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute/David Eccles School of Business/ University of Utah.

Calvin K. Sudweeks Award for outstanding contributions in the water quality field in the State of Utah by the Utah Water Quality Board 2009

Utah Environmental Educator Volunteer of the Year Award from the Utah Society for Environmental Education 2002

I believe all of the activities and accomplishments will help me serve on the ISSLR Board and be a strong and active contributor to forward the goals of the Society.