



# JUST ADD WATER

**STUDY GUIDE**



**Created by Jaimi Butler  
and Sharah Meservy**



**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

**PUBLIC ART  
CHALLENGE**

# THE PLAYWRIGHTS

JUST ADD WATER is the first play Matthew Ivan Bennett and Elaine Jarvik have written together. Matt approached Elaine (who had a long career as a journalist before she became a playwright) about collaborating.



**Matt at Great Salt Lake  
(north arm)**

“I jumped at the chance,” Elaine says, “both because I admire him immensely and because my interest in the lake’s fate had been piqued by news reports and by my work on EB & FLO, my Great Salt Lake play for grades K-3.”

“I initially imagined we'd both write a bunch of short pieces and then combine them somehow.” Matt explains. “That's sort of what happened, but Elaine had the idea of sending a personified lake on a hero's journey.”

Read more from [Matt](#), from [Elaine](#), or about [their collaboration](#).



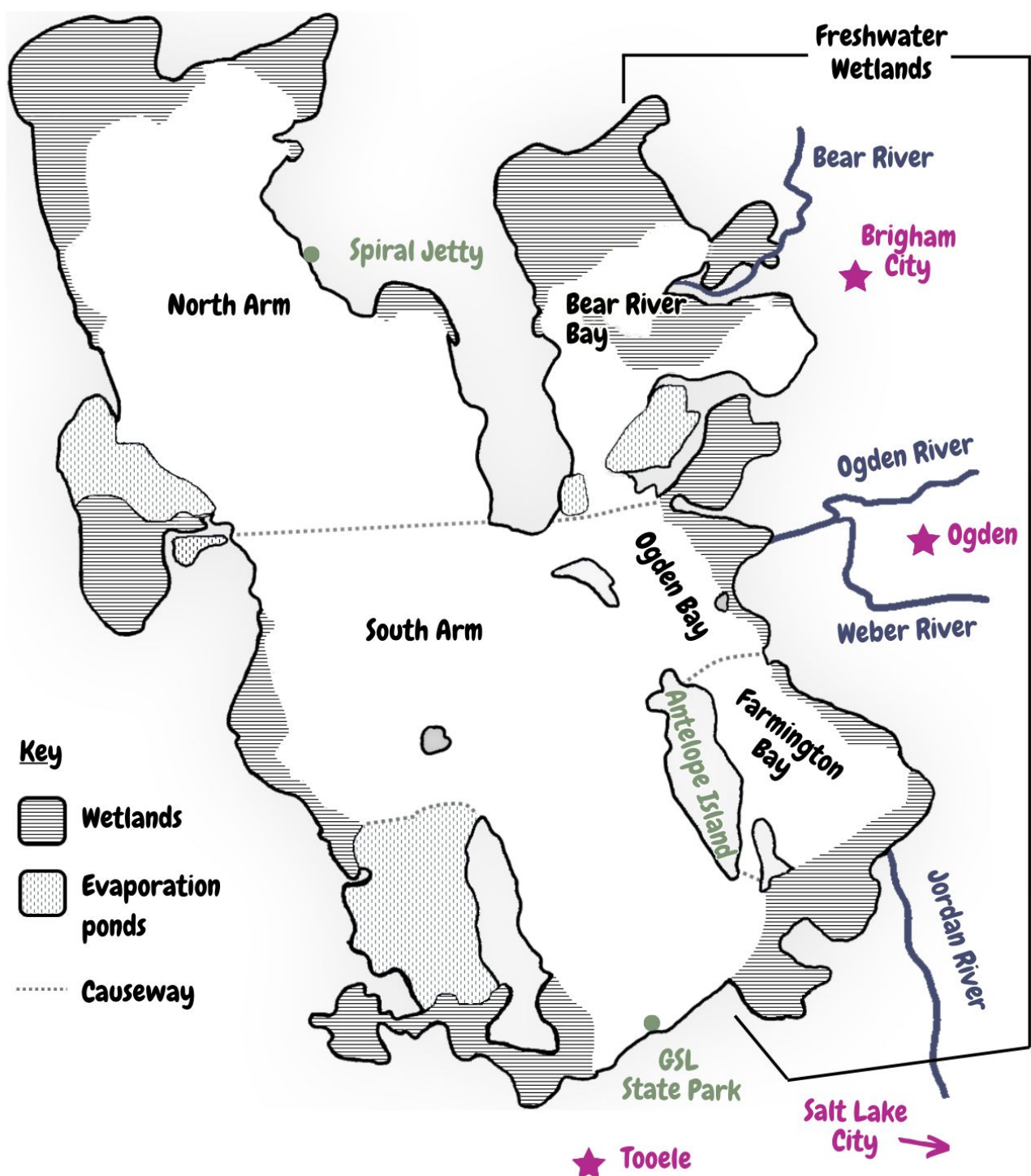
**Elaine with her son at Great Salt Lake (south arm)**

# IT REALLY IS A GREAT LAKE

Great Salt Lake is not just one of the most diverse and important ecosystems of the world, it's also a beautiful place to visit!

[Great Salt Lake State Park](#) is a short drive from Salt Lake City. Walk along the beach, go paddleboarding, or take a boat tour.

Located in Davis County and accessible by a causeway, [Antelope Island State Park](#) is teeming with wildlife and offers beautiful views of the lake. In addition to other events throughout the year, the park hosts an annual Spider Fest to celebrate the orb-weaver spider.



[Great Salt Lake Shorelands Reserve](#) in Layton is a birdwatcher's paradise! Download the [audio tour](#) before you visit and make your phone your personal tour guide.

[Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge](#) in Brigham City is a great place for photography, wildlife watching, birding, hiking, or cycling.

Visit the iconic [Spiral Jetty](#) in Box Elder County. Check out a backpack put together by [Utah Museum of Fine Arts](#) from the museum, the Salt Lake City Public Library or Logan Library.



Photo by Cheri Alguire

## CURRENT GSL DATA

Explore [Great Salt Lake Hydro Mapper](#) to find information about current conditions, water levels, land use, wetlands, recreation and more.

# HOW TO HELP

*If we just remember that this is a relationship, that relationships don't get "solved." You just have to care more than you did yesterday and tomorrow more than today.*

We encourage everyone to **nurture a connection** with Great Salt Lake. Go visit it, learn about it, and talk to people about it. Even small things like posting photos on social media help to show people that the lake is more than just a stink.

**Write a letter** to a legislator advocating for Great Salt Lake. [Helpful resource here](#)

Join us in **making art** about Great Salt Lake. Write, compose, perform, draw, sculpt, dance or create! Art is a powerful catalyst for social change. Need more inspiration? [Check out these events!](#)



Great Salt Lake from Frary Peak  
Painting by Miguel Pabon

[2024 Alfred Lambourne Arts Program finalist](#)

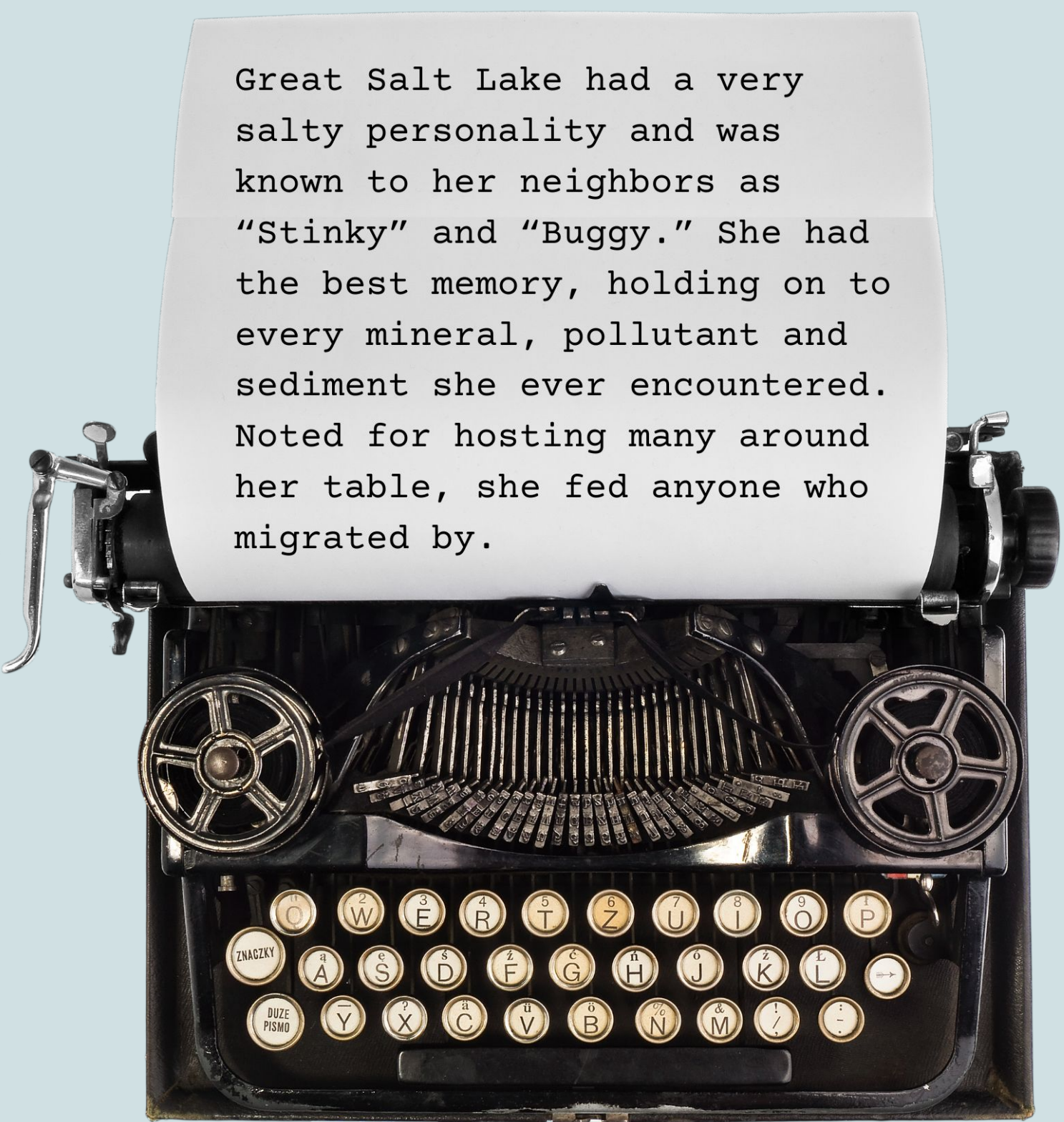
# OBITUARY FOR GREAT SALT LAKE

By Bonnie K. Baxter, Ph.D. and Jaimi Butler

Originally published in Catalyst Magazine Nov 2020

Two scientists who had been studying Great Salt Lake for many years realized it was dying in front of their faces. They wrote an article personifying the lake and mourning its death. It's a quick, entertaining, but still educational read.

[Read the full obituary here.](#)



Great Salt Lake had a very salty personality and was known to her neighbors as "Stinky" and "Buggy." She had the best memory, holding on to every mineral, pollutant and sediment she ever encountered. Noted for hosting many around her table, she fed anyone who migrated by.

# TEST YOUR BIRD IQ

These are all the birds mentioned in JUST ADD WATER. Can you match their names to their pictures?

**avocet**

**blackbird**

**crane**

**egret**

**grebe**

**gull**

**hawk**

**heron**

**hummingbird**

**ibis**

**owl**

**pelican**

**stilt**

**tern**

**tundra swan**

**Wilson's Phalarope**



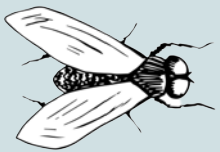
Photos from [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)

# GLOSSARY

**adaptive management** Using ongoing research and data to make decisions about how we take care of our natural resources

**Bear River development** A plan to build a series of dams to divert the water for cities to use

**Boa Ogoi** A Shoshone name for Bear River



**Brine fly** A small and harmless fly often found near shorelines

**brine shrimp** A very small (~1cm) crustacean



**cyst** A dormant brine shrimp egg

**diverting water** Stopping or redirecting naturally flowing water for human use

**free radicals** Unstable molecules which are harmful when they build up in cells. Exposure to pollution and toxic chemicals increases free radical production.

**Gunnison Island** An area that was once an island where pelicans could nest safely away from predators. Lower water levels mean that it's now accessible to predators.



**Ho-opah** A Shoshone name for Weber River

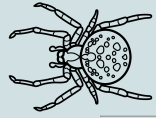
**microbialites** Underwater mounds formed by microorganisms

**mitigation** actions to reduce the harmful impacts of a disaster

**nematode** A type of worm

**oolitic sand** Unusual sand formed in GSL. The grains are tiny spheres made up of layers of calcium carbonate.

**orb weaver** A type of spider

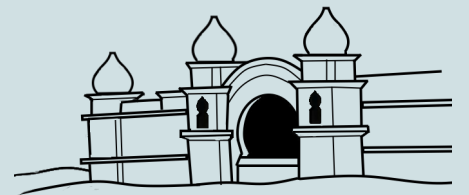


**Pa'ri-bi-na** A Shoshone name for Antelope Island

**Pia-Okwai** A Shoshone name for Jordan River

**rabbit brush** A yellow flowering shrub that grows wild in Utah

**Saltair** A resort on Great Salt Lake that was especially popular in the 1920s



**Spiral Jetty** a land art sculpture created by Robert Smithson on GSL's northeastern shore

**tar seeps** places where crude oil bubbles up through the dry lake bed

**Titch-e-pah** A Shoshone name for Great Salt Lake

**xeriscaping** Landscape design that uses minimal water