

What's in Utah's Air?

11/11/2026



Dr. Janice Brahney

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At the next USU Research Landscapes, Dr. Janice Brahney will present What's In Utah's Air? The discussion will explore her research discoveries about the air we breathe every day.

Dr. Brahney is an award-winning faculty researcher in the S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Agriculture & Natural Resources at Utah State University. Her current research efforts focus on atmospheric composition and its effects on people and ecosystems. For the past eight years, Dr. Brahney has conducted an atmospheric deposition study at 30 locations across the Midwest and West. Four of these sites are in Utah, including one focused on the Great Salt Lake. Her studies have revealed what substances are in the air, including toxins, nutrients, heavy metals, caffeine, and microplastics.

Air quality conversations usually focus on particles smaller than 10 microns because of the risk of human intake through breathing and other natural processes. Dr. Brahney's work shows that the 10-micron cut-off may not tell the full story. Some larger airborne particles still have significant negative effects on human health by affecting the water supply, animal intake, plants, and other parts of the environment.

At the Great Salt Lake in particular, dust emitted from the exposed lakebed can contain a combination

of materials naturally present in the lake as well as pollutants associated with human activity in the basin. These particles affect the atmosphere and may have consequences for the health of people and the ecosystem. They may also affect snowpack, mountain watersheds, and other environmental systems.

The event will be held on Wednesday, November 11, from 4-5:30 p.m. at O.C. Tanner headquarters, located at 1930 S State Street in Salt Lake City. It is free and open to the public, and includes a live Q&A with the presenter and time for networking with other attendees.

Those interested in attending can RSVP below.

[RSVP](#)

USU Research Landscapes is hosted by the Utah State University Office of Research and sponsored by O.C. Tanner.