

Provo River Restoration Project

2006 Construction Season Q & A

What is the Provo River Restoration Project?

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, a federal agency, is responsible for implementing the Provo River Restoration Project (PRRP). Its purpose is to restore the river pattern and ecological function of the middle Provo River (from Jordanelle Dam to Deer Creek Reservoir) to make up for fish, wildlife and recreational angling losses caused by federal water reclamation projects in Utah, particularly the Central Utah Project. The project began construction in 1999 and consists of creating a multiple-thread, meandering river channel; reconnecting the river to existing remnants of historic secondary channels; and constructing small side channels to recreate aquatic features. Existing levees are set back to create a flood plain. Streamside vegetation is planted and fostered to provide environments for healthy fisheries and riparian communities. The project will provide a protected 800 to 2,200-foot-wide corridor along the entire reach of the restored middle Provo River. For more information, visit our website at: www.mitigationcommission.gov

Where and when will work take place this year?

This year's (2006) projects are the last pieces of in-channel construction we have planned for the Provo River Restoration Project and will not involve changing the path of the river. First, we will be removing a drop structure downstream of Jordanelle Dam (see map on reverse side) and gradually adjusting the change in stream bed elevation both upstream and downstream of that point; hence the construction design is not very involved (see map to right).

We will begin this work **July 17, 2006** and expect to be working in or near the river channel for approximately four weeks – less if possible. Because we will be directly in the main channel, the river will run off-color downstream while crews are working. To try to minimize the negative perception this will have on anglers, we will shift to a four-day, 10 to 12 hours per day work week for this time period. Essentially, no river channel work will occur on Friday through Sunday during this approximate 4-week period. Of note to those wishing to fish during working hours: it will take several hours for the discolored water to move downstream each day once work has begun. Cloudy water should not appear at the Charleston area, for example, for about 4 or more hours after work begins near the dam.



Why are you starting river work in mid-July?

We regret any impact the project timing may have on those wishing to fish during this short period of time. The steps described above are being taken to minimize this impact. After much consideration of when we should start this work, the best time came down to mid-July for the following reasons: we have to do the work after the season's high flows have subsided; a full crew of workers will be available mid-July enabling us to get the work done in the least amount of time possible; we couldn't do the work in the fall because it might impact brown trout egg incubation following spawning. We appreciate the patience, understanding and support the angling and environmental communities have provided for the Provo River Restoration Project over the past seven years, and ask for your indulgence for this last piece of river construction left to do.

Why are you taking out this drop structure?

The drop structure is actually a sill placed across the river channel many years ago to back water up so that it could be diverted out of the river for irrigation. Through a change in point of diversion of the water right, the Jordanelle Wetlands Mitigation Area receives its water supply from a pipeline that has its point of diversion near the base of Jordanelle Dam. After many years of channel erosion downstream of the sill, and sediment deposition upstream of the sill, continuity of the aquatic environment has been disrupted. Fish passage, particularly in the upstream direction, is impaired and sediment transport functions are also disrupted by the high sill placed across the river channel at that point. While many of the long-time diversions along the Provo River still exist, the large drops and sills that disrupt river continuity have been removed as part of the PRRP.

What other work will you be doing this year?

In 2006, we will work to finish an extensive list of projects. In addition to installing new fence and posting signs along much of the Provo River Restoration Project property boundary, all access sites and parking lots will be re-graded and repairs will be made to post and rail fences surrounding the lots. In Reaches 2 and 3 (see map on reverse side), work highlights include constructing about 1,000 feet of accessible trail from the Midway South access site to a fishing platform to be located near the edge of the river, and constructing an information kiosk with educational display at the Midway South and Charleston access sites. Other miscellaneous finish items include: a small berm and road need to be finished along the sewer lagoon property and a security fence installed; we'll finish small wetlands on recently-acquired parcels near Casperville; we'll rip and revegetate Casper Road; finish/grade/revegetate our equipment staging area near the radio tower; rip, finish and reseed the road from a USGS gage upstream to the railroad; spread top soil and seed in a few scattered areas; and continue to install cottonwood pole cuttings and willow wattles with volunteer groups.

In Reaches 4, 5 and 6 we will construct the Midway Lane North access site and an accessible fishing platform; finish the east-side setback berm at its downstream end to tie into recently-acquired property near the never-channelized segment; rework the west-side setback berm at south end - it is one of the few areas in need of additional revegetation work and weed control; repair a small irrigation ditch and put in a headgate; replace Island Ditch Diversion north of Midway Lane; finish and/or reconnect several small diversion headworks; and finish the river restoration we began last year downstream of River Road, which will continue into May (we still need to complete a side channel in that reach and complete revegetation of disturbed areas).

What will remain to be done?

Over the next year and beyond, the Mitigation Commission will work with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to develop an agreement for long-term stewardship of the Provo River Restoration Project; continue to acquire contiguous public ownership of the middle Provo River corridor (it is not yet all in the public domain; we are about 97% complete); and continue to monitor physical and biological responses to restoration work.

For more maps and information about the Provo River Restoration Project, or the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, visit our website at: www.mitigationcommission.gov, or contact Diane Simmons at (801) 524-3146.

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- Restoration Areas and Year of Construction
- Pre-project River Channel
- Parking/Restrooms/Access
- Planned Parking/Restrooms/Access
- Summer 2006 Construction

