

PROVO RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

2004 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 related recreational losses caused by federal water reclamation projects in Utah, particularly the Central Utah Project. PRRP, which began construction in 1999, 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.

What is going on this year?

Part of this year's work entails restoring the river from Deer Creek Reservoir to the Heber Valley Railroad trestle (Reach 1), and includes constructing a public access area along this reach (see map below). In addition, work remaining from last year's project, which covered the river from the Heber Valley railroad trestle upstream to Midway Lane, needs to be completed. This includes further river realignment in the most upstream portion of the project area, and extending Spring Creek (which is shown on last year's project map – [click here to view](#)). Extensive infrastructure issues associated with work in these reaches also need to be addressed, such as relocating a Heber Valley Light and Power pole to provide additional span width for the restored river, removing Winterton Bridge, and constructing a small storm water retention facility.

We will also make improvements to public access areas this year. We will be constructing accessible fishing platforms at the access point immediately south of Midway Lane and at the Cottonwood Canyon/White Bridge access point. We will also be mounting permanent information and educational displays at the access areas.

How much of the Provo River Restoration Project has been completed?

The most recent reconstruction covers the river from Deer Creek Reservoir to Midway Lane in Midway. This area's reconstruction is expected to be completed by the end of 2004. The river immediately upstream, above Midway Lane, will not be reconstructed as it was not historically channelized along with the rest of the middle Provo. Upstream of this "natural" section, restoration of approximately 2 river miles was completed in 2002. The river upstream of this restored section to the River Road crossing, has not yet been worked on. The river from River Road upstream to the Highway 40 crossing was reconstructed in 2000. From the Highway 40 crossing upstream to the "white bridge" or Cottonwood Canyon Access site, the river was reconstructed as a Pilot project, the first section restored, in 1999. Immediately upstream of this section, extending about a mile from white bridge, river restoration was completed in 2002. [[Click here to view map of the middle Provo River restored reaches](#)]

In addition to river reconstruction and revegetation, five public access points providing fenced parking and accessible restrooms have been constructed along the restored river reaches. An additional public access area will be constructed this year along with the work planned for Reach 1. Public access points are shown on the accompanying map.

What remains to be done?

After this year, only one reach of the middle Provo River (Reach 6) remains to be reconstructed. Also, the "natural" section of river does not require realignment, however some instream structure improvements may be added to this reach, as well as to a small stretch of river immediately downstream of Jordanelle Dam. Finally, the last public access point, referred to as Midway Lane North, which will be located immediately north of the Midway Lane river crossing, needs to be constructed.

After all this work is completed, revegetation and ongoing monitoring of the river, fish, wildlife and wetlands will continue for several years.

Wetlands vegetation monitoring

The primary goal of the monitoring program is to document progress of wetland development at sites created, enhanced, converted or temporarily impacted as a result of restoration project activities. The following data are collected at each monitoring site: relative cover of wetland vegetation; numbers of different species; dominant species; relative cover of weeds; soil stability; site hydrology; overall assessment of wetland sustainability; percentage of site dominated by wetland vegetation; and wildlife use. Efforts are proceeding successfully to date, with 40 of the 66 monitoring sites already dominated by wetland vegetation.

Sediment monitoring and Geomorphic monitoring

River and sediment monitoring are also being conducted. Preliminary results of sediment monitoring in the middle Provo River show that Reaches 7, 8 and 9 (from the River Road crossing upstream to Jordanelle Dam) appear to be limited in gravel-size sediments. Indications are this is because Jordanelle Dam is cutting off gravel that would normally flow into the river. Currently, fine particles are abundant due to recent construction, but those fines are moving out rapidly, particularly with this last Spring's runoff. We may explore methods of adding gravel size particles to the river below the dam (in Reach 9).

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.

