December 2021

Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission

FINAL FY2021 ANNUAL REPORT
About the Mitigation Commission

The Mitigation Commission comprises a five-member Commission and ten staff. Commission members are Utah residents. The President of the United States appoints all members from nominations: one from the U.S. Senate; one from the U.S. House of Representatives; one from the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (the entity primarily responsible for constructing the Central Utah Project, for which mitigation must be completed); and two from the Governor of Utah – one from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and one recommended by Utah environmental organizations. Except for the District representative, all members are to have training or experience in wildlife or environmental conservation matters. The Commission is responsible for appointing an Executive Director, who in turn is responsible for hiring staff.

Commissioners
Brad Barber, Chair (Utah Environmental Organizations)
Gene Shawcroft (Central Utah Water Conservancy District)
Robert L. Morgan (U.S. Senate)

At publication, the U.S. House of Representatives and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources nominations are pending appointment.

Staff
Mark Holden, Executive Director
Michael Mills, Deputy Executive Director
Kim Embley, Administrative Assistant
Melissa Stamp, Project Coordinator
Richard Mingo, Planning Coordinator
Channa Vyfvinkel, Financial Officer
Mata Lolofie, Accounting Technician
Diane Simmons, Public Information Officer
Paula Trater, Biological Technician
Isabelle Simmons, Resource Specialist

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah at the following address:
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Phone: 801-524-3146 | Fax: 801-524-3148 | Email: urmcc@usbr.gov

Restored Middle Provo River in the heart of Heber Valley, Utah. Photo by Darren S Olsen
Introduction

Welcome to the Final FY2021 Annual Report of the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (Mitigation Commission). The Mitigation Commission was authorized in 1992 through the Central Utah Project Completion Act (CUPCA; Titles II through VI of Public Law 102-575). The Mitigation Commission’s primary responsibility is to plan, coordinate and fund programs to mitigate for adverse effects of the Bonneville Unit of the Central Utah Project and to conserve fish, wildlife and related recreation resources in Utah.

This report highlights our fiscal year 2021 accomplishments and describes the effectiveness of our actions toward meeting CUPCA requirements. It also identifies planned future actions and potential revisions to our Mitigation and Conservation Plan. The current Plan covers the five-year period of FY2021 through FY2025.

The Mitigation Commission’s program relies on partnerships with the larger natural resource community. The Mitigation Commission forms partnerships with natural resource agencies, State and local governments, Indian tribes, universities and non-profit organizations, to carry out its many projects in a coordinated and cooperative manner. Therefore, throughout this report, the term “we” is intended to include the many partners essential to Mitigation Commission projects. Please refer to the back page of this report for a listing of our prior and current partners.

From FY1994 through FY2021, the Mitigation Commission enacted 321 funding agreements with partners in order to carry out its work. During this 27-year period, the Mitigation Commission expended more than $300 million planning and implementing projects on the ground to fulfill fish and wildlife mitigation requirements and other conservation objectives of CUPCA.

Response to Comments on the Draft FY2021 Annual Report

The draft FY2021 Annual Report was available for review and public comment from November 1 to December 3, 2021. Four comments were received. One commenter acknowledged the “amazing accomplishments” over the years. One commenter requested a change of his email contact address for future communications. One requested clarification on the amount of total funding for the Mitigation Commission, which was corrected on Page 12. One commenter suggested we update the position title of a recently promoted agency staff member, which was done.
LOWER PROVO RIVER - UTAH LAKE WATERSHED

FY2021 Actions and Effectiveness

Provo River Delta Restoration Project near Utah Lake

- Constructed delta pond and channel features totaling more than 30 acres and nearly 3 miles.
- Funded mosquito monitoring and weed control. Completed the fourth year of a bird monitoring and movement study; 177 distinct species have been documented.
- With input from stakeholder agencies, completed 90% level engineering designs for project features to enhance recreation, protect against flooding, and maintain water levels in the existing river channel for habitat and recreation.
- Continued to negotiate agreements with State and local agencies for planning and long-term management of delta project features. Initiated development of a Habitat Management Plan that will facilitate eventual transfer of the property to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.
- Hosted 18 site tours for the general public and various agency and interest groups. Engaged Utah Conservation Corps, Provo High School, and community volunteers in project stewardship.


- Despite record drought conditions, successfully worked with the June Sucker Flow Workgroup to provide summertime instream flows that ensure the lower Provo River has enough water to keep temperature and oxygen levels healthy for fish and supportive of outdoor recreation.
- As part of an agreement with Trout Unlimited and other partners, contributed funding to offset power losses and keep instream flows in over a mile stretch of Provo River above the Olmsted power plant. Worked with numerous partners to identify long-term solutions to provide water for instream flows in this reach of Provo River.

June Sucker Recovery

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the final downlisting rule to reclassify the June sucker as “threatened” in January 2021. The rule became official in February 2021, making June sucker the fourth fish species to achieve this milestone in the history of the Endangered Species Act.
- Downlisting of the June sucker is a credit to progress of the JSRIP and support the Commission has provided through hatchery construction, habitat restoration, and acquisition of water for instream flows.
Utah Lake Wetland Preserve

- Continued development of a comprehensive management plan for the Utah Lake Wetland Preserve. The plan and associated NEPA compliance will also address transfer of Commission-acquired lands in the Preserve from the Commission to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The draft plan and NEPA compliance document are expected to be released for public review and input in the first quarter of FY2022.
- Continued on-the-ground management actions through an agreement with UDWR, including Phragmites control and managing public use for hunting upland game and waterfowl, and other public uses.

Planned Activities

- Complete construction of Provo River Delta Restoration Project pond and channel features in preparation for diverting the Provo River in early FY2023. Continue the bird monitoring and movement survey through and after project construction. Continue hosting project area Site Tours and community-involved site stewardship.
- Acquire additional water rights for instream flows on the Lower Provo River.
- Work with partners on a long term solution for instream flow needs in the Murdock to Olmsted reach of the Provo River.
- Continue participation in the June Sucker Recovery Implementation Program.
- Complete Utah Lake Wetland Preserve comprehensive plan and NEPA compliance and begin implementing the selected alternative. Continue management of the Preserve, in accordance with selected alternative.

Native flowers bloom at the Provo Delta property as a new housing subdivision emerges on neighboring property that used to be farmland. URMCC’s investments in conservation lands become increasingly precious in the face of Utah’s rapid population growth.
FY2021 Actions and Effectiveness

Provo River Restoration Project (PRRP)

• Continued PRRP management activities including weed control, fence and access point maintenance, and addressing trespass issues.
• Repaired pond banks in PRRP reach 5 to allow continued delivery of irrigation water to water users.
• Relocated 155 feet of Spring Creek in PRRP reach 3 to prevent continued eastward migration of the channel, which threatened the project property fenceline.
• Conducted bank stabilization work in PRRP reach 4 upstream of the Legacy Bridge to prevent continued erosion of this reach’s western bank.
• Hosted nine field trips for high school students to visit the PRRP and learn about topics related to nature and natural resource management.
• Became a ‘Participating Agency’ with Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and others on planned ‘Heber Valley Corridor EIS’ to examine transportation needs in Heber Valley.
• Participated monthly in Wasatch County Public Lands Committee meetings.
• Participated with Heber City and others as they develop a stormwater management plan.

Planned Activities

• Identify and secure land boundaries to facilitate management needs. Determine future ownership and management of the PRRP. While including a public input process, develop a long-term PRRP management plan.
• Continue public outreach to communicate project purposes and benefits.
• Continue involvement with UDOT regarding Heber Valley Corridor EIS, and with Heber City regarding stormwater planning.
DIAMOND FORK WATERSHED

FY2021 Actions and Effectiveness

Instream Flows

- Supported preparation of a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Diamond Fork System Environmental Update Project. The EA proposes to reduce minimum instream flows on Sixth Water and Diamond Fork Creeks. This change is in accordance with recommendations from a recent Commission-funded instream flow study; the reduced minimum flows are expected to better support and sustain functional fluvial, geomorphic, and ecological processes in the watershed.

Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Restoration

- Provided funding for ongoing water quality monitoring and flow measurement in Sixth Water Creek and Diamond Fork River.
- Provided planning assistance for a project that involved installing post-assisted log structures (PALS) to create pools and improve aquatic habitat in a reach of Diamond Fork River.
- Funded a Ute Ladies'-tresses (a threatened plant) survey. Survey information will help inform future aquatic and riparian habitat enhancement project designs, methods, and locations.

Diamond Fork Mitigation Area Maintenance

- Funded Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for weed control, fence maintenance and irrigation system operation at the 172-acre Diamond Fork Mitigation Area.
- Replaced a 1.5 mile-long section of fence separating the Mitigation Area from a neighboring private property to the south, needed due to 2018 Pole Creek fire damage. The new fence is expected to reduce trespass grazing issues.

Planned Activities

- Complete NEPA compliance to address: 1) recommended changes to minimum instream flow commitments in Sixth Water and Diamond Fork; 2) changes to recommended operation and maintenance schedules and procedures; and, 3) evaluation of options to treat or re-route sulfur springs causing damage to the Upper Diamond Fork Flow Control Structure.
- Implement additional habitat improvement measures to offset impacts from the 2018 Pole Creek fire.
- Continue management and maintenance of Diamond Fork Mitigation Area.
- Continue public and agency outreach regarding instream flows, habitat enhancement projects, and related actions.
FY2021 Actions and Effectiveness

Response to wildfires was a common theme for many projects in the Strawberry/Duchesne Watershed.

Strawberry River Wildlife Management Area

In 2018, the Dollar Ridge Fire burned almost 70,000 acres in the watershed including most of the 23,000 acres owned and administered by the Mitigation Commission and partners. In 2021 our focus was still on restoration activities in the watershed.

- Worked cooperatively to implement $16 million in Emergency Watershed Protection Projects, with infrastructure (roads, bridges) protection as the primary focus.
- Funded weed control and stewardship of approximately 11,400 acres of Mitigation Commission land in and near the Strawberry River Wildlife Management Area. This has helped control weed invasion following the 2018 fire.
- Provided funding for and serve as a Lead Federal Agency in preparing a multidisciplinary Watershed Assessment and Long-Term Restoration Plan. Plan and NEPA compliance completion is expected in 2022. Up-to-date aerial photography and LIDAR data collected by the Mitigation Commission through the Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center is informing recovery planning.

Lower Duchesne River Wetland Mitigation Project (LDWP)

- The North River Fire and East Myton Fire started on March 29, 2021 covering an area of approximately 2,700 acres and affecting a large portion of the LDWP. The Ute Tribe is continuing to monitor vegetation recovery.
- The LDWP is substantially complete. Wetland, riparian and supporting uplands provide habitat used by a vast array of wildlife. The project provides compatible outdoor recreation and employment opportunities for Ute Indian Tribe members, and protects resources culturally important to the Ute Tribe.
- Provided funding and continued to work closely with the Ute Tribe for operation and maintenance of the LDWP.

Duchesne River Area Canal Rehabilitation (DRACR) Project Mitigation

- The same fire that affected the LDWP also burned through a large portion of the DRACR project area.
- Designs and hydraulic modeling of river floodplain connections were accomplished as part of restoration planning efforts.
Wildlife Conservation and Management

- Provided funding used to deploy GPS and VHS tracking collars for sage-grouse, which provide data on habitat utilization and movement and will aid in sage-grouse conservation. Sage-grouse populations in Strawberry Valley are recovering.
- Other critical wildlife habitat and migration corridors are being protected through prior acquisitions and habitat improvement.

Public Access and Stream Habitat Enhancements

- Continued management of acquired public access (51 miles) and facilities on the West Fork, North Fork and main stem of the Duchesne River, the middle and lower Strawberry River, Currant Creek and Rock Creek, which have benefitted from stream and recreation opportunity enhancements.
- Participated as a member of the Interagency Biological Assessment Team (IBAT) to ensure continuous stream flows are maintained and to enhance stream habitat and recreation opportunities on these waters.

Planned Activities

- Coordinate to plan and implement habitat and river restoration measures on CUP mitigation properties impacted by the Dollar Ridge fire, based on the assessment and plan expected to be complete in 2022.
- Cooperate in assisting Wasatch County in reclaiming portions of road and protecting private property impacted by debris flows and flood events that occurred since the fire.
- Work with the Ute Tribe to complete and implement its long-term operation and management plan for the LDWP. Provide support to the Ute Tribe for their continued maintenance and management, including water delivery and mosquito and weed control.
- Develop a plan for fulfilling DRACR mitigation commitments and initiate a NEPA process to evaluate alternatives. Identify and implement measures to minimize impacts to endangered and rare plants from uncontrolled recreation use on mitigation property.
- Consider opportunities to acquire critical wildlife habitat. Work with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to implement habitat improvements on CUP wildlife mitigation properties and to transition ownership of the properties to UDWR.
- Monitor and participate in third-party planning actions (i.e., oil and gas development and utility transmission corridors) to ensure habitat values on mitigation properties are protected.
- Continue supporting sage-grouse conservation efforts, sensitive and rare plant conservation initiatives, and the Interagency Biological Assessment Team (IBAT).
GREAT SALT LAKE/JORDAN RIVER & STATEWIDE WATERSHEDS

FY2021 Actions and Effectiveness

Jordan River Wetlands Management
• Transferred “Big Bend” property lands to West Jordan City with deed restrictions that provide long-term protection and management of the properties for ecological purposes.
• Continued management of properties adjacent to 10600 South and 12300 South. This management includes weed control and general operation and maintenance activities.
• Partnered with local entities and Brighton High School to hold field trips and class activities at the 10600 South site. Students visited the site to do art projects, write poetry, and planted trees to aid in bank stabilization.
• Supported the Center for Documentary Expression and Art (CDEA) in submitting a grant application to fund construction of an outdoor classroom facility at the 10600 South property.

Great Salt Lake Wetlands Management
• Completed transfer of approximately 1,297 acres of Mitigation Commission-owned property within the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) with deed restrictions that provide long-term protection and management of the properties for ecological purposes. As mitigation for impacts of the West Davis Corridor, UDOT will acquire and transfer to TNC the remaining private inholdings within the GSL Shorelands Preserve.
• Worked closely with the National Audubon Society to support their acquisition through donation of a 413-acre parcel of property adjacent to the South Shore Ecological Reserve. This has been a long sought-after acquisition not only for the property’s habitat values, but also to protect and manage water delivery to much of the South Shore Reserve, including those properties owned by the Mitigation Commission.

Statewide
• Continued support to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to perform genetic analyses of suspected remnant Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout populations to establish conservation priorities. Bluehead sucker broodstock development continued at the State Fish Hatchery in Springville, Utah.
• In late September 2021, the Mitigation Commission received a $10 million appropriation for fire remediation to be used in Mitigation Commission watersheds affected by wildfire since 2018.
Planned Activities

Jordan River
- Continue management and O&M of acquired Jordan River properties.
- Work with the Jordan River Commission, South Jordan City, Draper City, and other entities as appropriate to determine a suitable entity to take on ownership of the properties.
- Work with the Jordan River Commission and CDEA to utilize these properties to communicate importance of open space and wildlife habitat in urban settings.

Great Salt Lake
- Provide funding to assist in maintenance of water conveyance features located on the 413-acre National Audubon Society parcel.
- Coordinate on Salt Lake County Mosquito Abatement District plans to implement new mosquito control methods on lands in and around the South Shore Reserve.
- Monitor and coordinate as West Davis Corridor construction begins and UDOT implements mitigation commitments tied to the project.
- Provide financial assistance for on-going management of the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve and the South Shore Reserve.

Statewide
- Continue funding native cutthroat trout conservation actions as directed by the appropriate conservation strategy. Continue supporting conservation actions for native aquatic species as per Conservation Agreements as funding allows.
- In FY2022, the Commission will prioritize and allocate the $10 million wildfire remediation funding within watersheds affected by wildfire since 2018.
MITIGATION COMMISSION
OFFICE UPDATE

FY2021 presented many unique challenges to the Commission staff, as well as the rest of the country and world, as measures to address the Covid-19 pandemic have been implemented. Extensive use of telework capabilities enabled the Commission staff to continue its ongoing mission to accomplish the mitigation and conservation projects authorized in the CUP Completion Act.

Mitigation Commission staff and Commissioners have been fortunate for the past 27 years to have the support and participation of numerous partners from all levels of government, from universities, and non-profit organizations. The Mitigation Commission approved more than 321 funding agreements with more than 60 partners in its first 27 years. The back cover of this report lists partners with which we have signed agreements. The total number of partners providing us support over the last 27 years is even greater.

Through FY2021, the Mitigation Commission expended over $300 million dollars in Utah on fish and wildlife mitigation and conservation actions, including related recreational improvements. Details are included in the financial summary on the following page.

While we are proud of the agency’s accomplishments, and we salute the many partners and supporters that have helped us achieve them, our work is far from over. CUPCA legislation authorized over $171 million (1991 dollars) of mitigation and conservation work for us to complete. With indexing, over $80 million of that authorization remains. Our ability to mobilize that funding for its intended purpose to the benefit of Utah’s residents and natural resources will depend on future appropriations from Congress.

Provo River Delta project area photo by Dave Lee
ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL DATA  
As of September 30, 2021

## FUNDING

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<th>Annual Title IV WAPA/CUWCD</th>
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## EXPENDITURE

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### End of Year Balance of Title IV Account

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*Value of known future interest payments based on distribution from investments in effect as of September 30 of that year.*
OUR PARTNERS

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Upper Colorado Regional Office
U.S. Department of Agriculture
    APHIS-Division of Wildlife Services
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. National Park Service
Ute Indian Tribe
Utah Department of Transportation
Utah Department of Natural Resources
    Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
    Utah Division of Parks and Recreation
    Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands
Utah Division of Water Rights
Utah Geological Survey
Utah Division of Water Quality
Utah Governor’s Office of Management and Budget
Utah Natural Heritage Program
Central Utah Water Conservancy District
Charleston Water Conservancy District
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District
Fort Field Irrigation Company
Island Ditch Irrigation Company
Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Moon Lake Water Users Association
Duchesne County
Salt Lake County
Tooele County
Uintah County
Utah County
Wasatch County
Mountainland Association of Governments
Heber City Power and Light
Provo City
Salt Lake City
Sandy City
South Jordan City
Springville City
West Jordan City
Envision Utah
Great Basin Bird Observatory
Great Salt Lake Chapter,
    National Audubon Society
National Audubon Society
River Management Society
The Nature Conservancy in Utah
Trout Unlimited
Trust for Public Lands
Utah Lake Commission
Utah Open Lands
Arizona State University
Brigham Young University
Idaho State University
Montana State University
University of Nevada-Reno
University of Utah
Utah State University
Utah State University, Utah Conservation Corps
Utah State University Botanical Center