

# Provo River Restoration Project

## Winter 2001 Update



The Fall 2000 portion of the Provo River Restoration Project is mostly complete. Public access to this approximately one-mile section between Highway 40 and River Road in Midway, Utah is re-opened, but will close again between **March 19 and May 25, 2001** to finish remaining items. These include: creating wetlands, ponds and two side-channels in the open field area of the project, laying top soil, revegetating the area with approximately 60,000 plants, and placing a restroom, fencing and road base on the driveway and parking for a new angler access site. There will be only minor work in the main river channel during the spring. Work completed last fall includes: recontouring the main river channel, placing river structures, constructing cut-off channels, extending the prior year's side channel to reconnect to this year's restored river, filling and finish grading the old channel, and using spoils from the excavated channel to also fill a cut in an adjoining hillside. A new driveway and parking lot were excavated and raised to provide an improved angler access site along this river portion.

By Memorial Day, 2001, three new or improved public access sites will be completed and open along the middle Provo River. The first is located just below Jordanelle Dam at the end of old Highway 40; the second is along the first restored reach of the Middle Provo, off of old Highway 40 at the Cottonwood Canyon/white bridge access point; and, the third is at the bottom of the Fall 2000 project reach, accessed north-west of River Road in Midway. (See map on reverse side).

### *2001 Project News*

The news for this year's project is that it will start earlier, cover a longer reach of river and begin approximately one and a half miles downstream of where last year's project left off. Public access to this river reach will be closed during restoration.

- ✓ **The 2001 project will begin July 16, 2001 and be under construction until approximately December 15, 2001.** We intend to begin earlier this year because a) there is a longer river segment to restore this year, b) we want to finish construction prior to the peak, and hopefully before the start of, brown trout spawning, c) starting earlier helps avoid late-season bad weather and holidays, which in the past conflicted with maintaining a full crew during critical work periods, and d) heavy spring runoff typically subsides by this start date.
- ✓ The 2001 project reach begins approximately 1.5 miles south of where River Road crosses the Provo River and ends approximately 1.25 miles north of Midway Lane, which encompasses a longer reach than was undertaken either of the past two years. We are starting 1.5 miles downstream from where we left off last year because all necessary land is not yet acquired in the reach immediately downstream of the 2000 project, whereas all necessary land is acquired in the described 2001 project area.
- ✓ We anticipate closing public access to the 2001 project reach from July 16 to December 15, 2001, unless otherwise notified.

### *Brown Trout*

Some brown trout in the Provo River are occasionally covered with whitish, patchy spots. This phenomenon, most often seen during late fall and winter, is due primarily to stress associated with spawning. Fish often develop abrasions on their skin when they defend their spawning territory or dig nests, known as redds, in the stream gravels. These lesions are prime avenues for infection by bacteria naturally found in the river. The white patches are actually a secondary infection by the fungus, *Saprolegnia*. The bacterial infection can also affect some internal organs.

This problem is not new to the Provo River. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' records going back many years describe the same affliction. Nor is the problem unique to the river. Fungal infections induced by natural stressors also occur in fish populations found in other aquatic systems. Unfortunately, there isn't much managers can do except wait for the infection to run its course. The important point to keep in mind is that while some trout mortality can be expected, long-term effects on the trout population is minimal. Managers are confident the Provo will continue to produce excellent brown trout fishing for many years to come. For more information, contact Charlie Thompson, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Central Region Aquatics Manager at (801) 489-5678.

### *Upcoming...*

We will provide more details on the 2001 Project, such as a map of the design and more definite closure dates in May. Other information to look for later this spring includes a report of ongoing monitoring studies, such as of fish, birds, frogs, vegetation and macro invertebrates (insects). In addition, we hope to have a web site available this year, which will contain all the above information and more. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call Diane Simmons at (801) 524-3146.

