



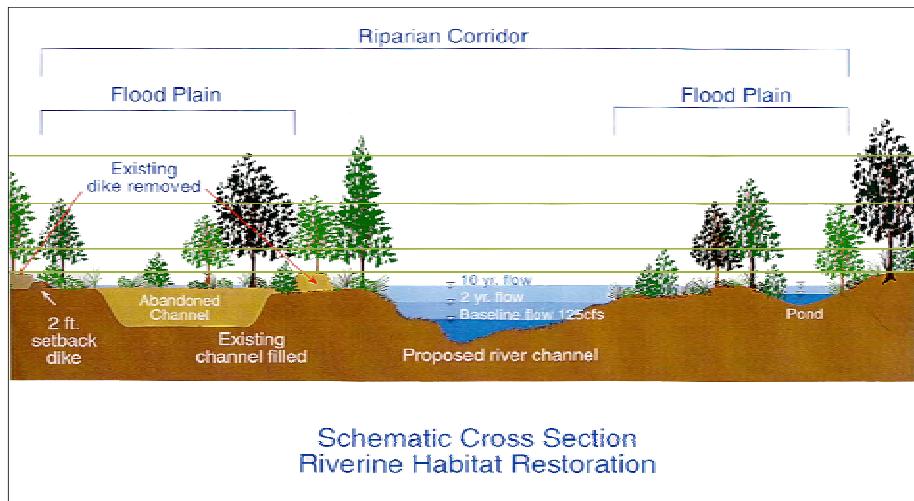
Provo River Restoration Project



Project Description

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, a federal agency, is responsible for implementing the Provo River Restoration Project (PRRP) along the middle Provo River, from Jordanelle Dam to Deer Creek Reservoir, in Wasatch County, Utah. Its goal is to realign the river to a more natural pattern, regain vegetative and wildlife resources once supported by the river, and provide a protected 800 to 2,200-foot-wide public corridor along the restored river. The project's purpose is to advance the sequence of natural succession, providing additional habitat diversity instream and in the surrounding forest in order to make up for fish, wildlife and related recreational losses caused by federal water reclamation projects in Utah, particularly the Central Utah Project (CUP).

PRRP construction began in 1999. Realignment of the main river channel is now complete. Remaining miscellaneous construction activities are expected to be finished in 2008. The project included setting back existing levees to create a flood plain, creating a multiple-thread meandering river channel connected to remnants of historic secondary channels, and excavating wetland ponds and small side channels. Areas disturbed by construction are being revegetated with native, local plant materials. Anticipated long-term outcomes include: an increased diversity in the vegetation, a five-fold increase in the trout population and doubling of the riparian bird population, and the addition of two miles of main river channel and nine miles of small side-channel habitats and wetlands.



Project Background

PRRP requirements come from mitigation commitments resulting primarily from CUP construction. Meeting these mitigation commitments was necessary, whether achieved through implementing the PRRP, or otherwise. Examples of these commitments and the projects that made them necessary are:

Jordanelle Reservoir, which inundated four miles of Provo River and association wetlands. To offset its impacts, providing angler access, acquiring and restoring riparian woodlands, and providing a 125 cfs minimum flow year round from Jordanelle Dam were conditions for its construction.

Strawberry Aqueduct and Collection System, which dewatered many miles of streams on the south slope of the Uinta mountains and significantly reduced trout populations. As a result, the federal government was required to restore fish habitat and provide angler access elsewhere.

Provo River Project, which dammed and then channelized, straightened, and diked the middle Provo River in the 1950's and 60's. Consequently, many of the river's abundant resources were lost, such as riparian forest, emergent wetland, backwater and deep fishing holes - prime fish and wildlife habitat.

Funding

Provo River Restoration Project authority comes from the Central Utah Project Completion Act of 1992. Funds are provided through annual appropriations from Congress. Approximate project cost is \$45 million: \$35 million for land acquisition and \$10 million for construction. This amount represents about 1½% of the cost of building the CUP.

Project Timeline

Prior to 1996: PRRP was being planned among government agencies, outdoor and environmental groups, local officials and the general public.

1996: A draft Environmental Impact Statement was published for which two public meetings were held in Salt Lake City and Heber City.

1997: The Final Environmental Impact Statement for the PRRP was issued in December 1997.

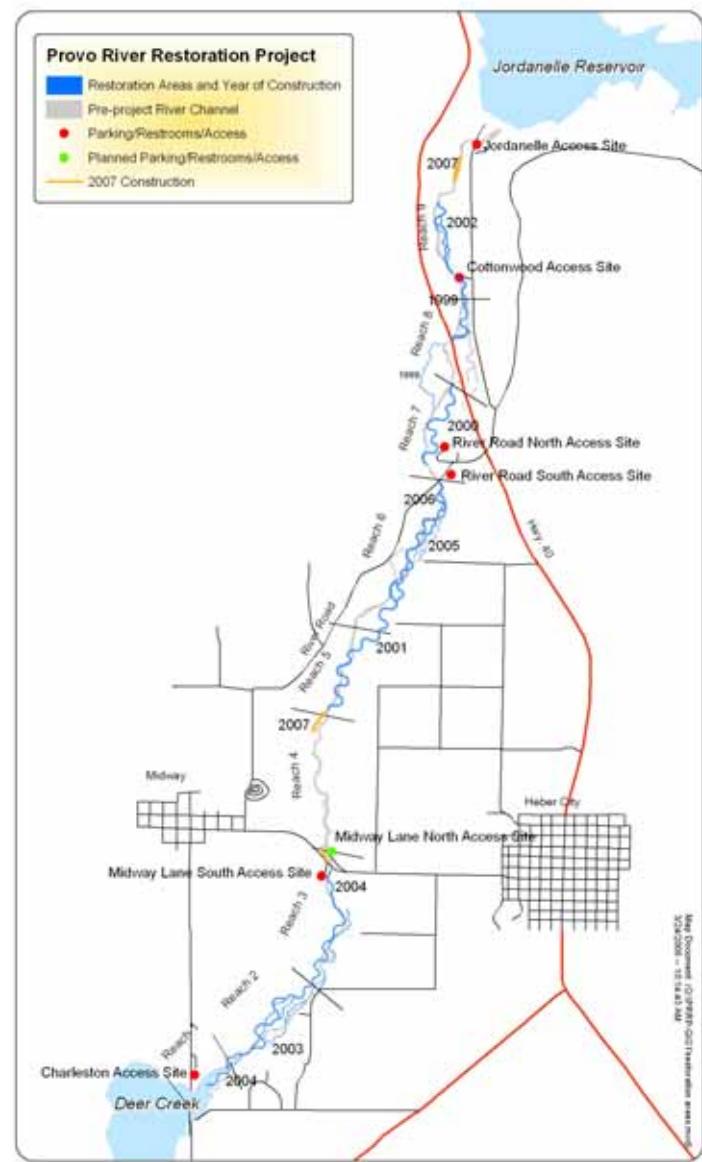
1998: The Mitigation Commission signed a Record of Decision on February 23, 1998. Department of the Interior issued its Record of Decision on April 1, 1998. The Riverine Habitat Restoration Alternative (the Proposed Action) was selected.

1999: Construction of a "pilot project" upstream of the new Highway 40 river crossing was completed in 1999. The pilot project reconstructed about 3/4 mile of main Provo River channel, 2 miles of secondary channel, and numerous wetland features.

2000: River restoration between Highway 40 and River Road in Midway was completed.

2001-02: Work began on a 2-mile reach, which was completed in early 2002. Crews also reconstructed about 0.9 miles of river upstream of the pilot project in 2002.

2003-04: Work began on the river from Midway Lane down to the Heber Valley Railroad crossing. This reach was completed late in 2004. Also in 2004, about 0.5 miles of river downstream of the Heber Valley Railroad trestle were restored.



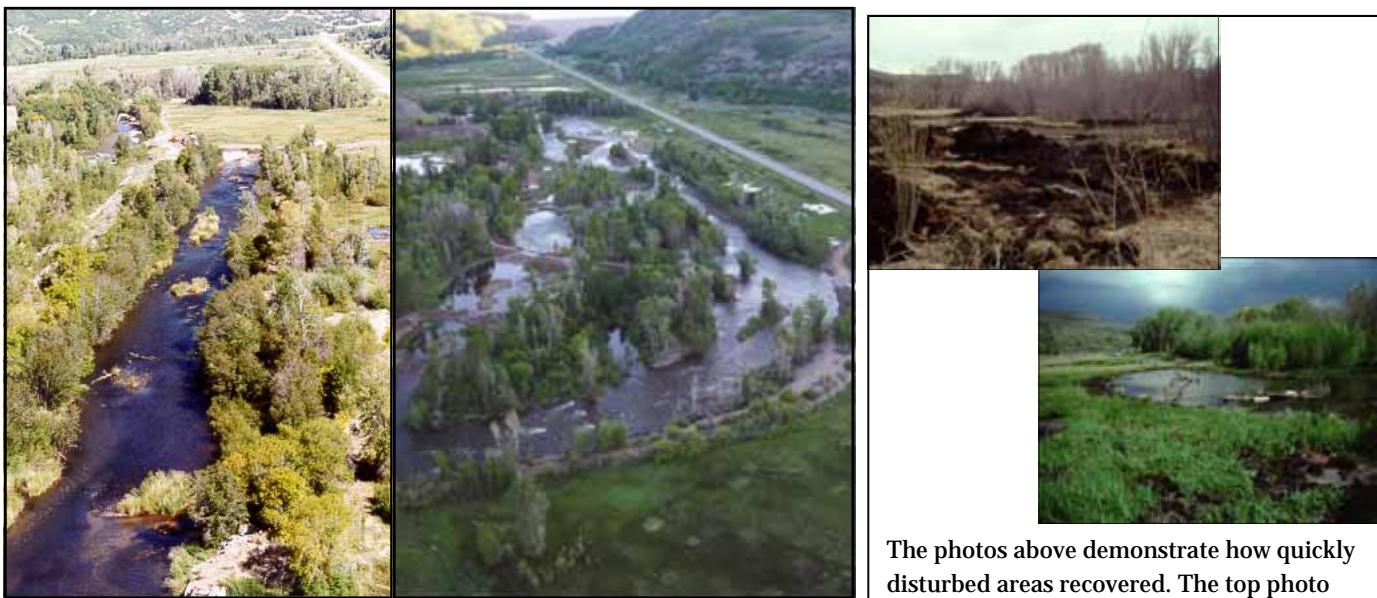
2005-06: Restoration began on an approximate 2-mile segment just downstream of River Road. This section was completed in the summer of 2006. Accessible fishing piers were also built in 2006 at a few of the public river access sites (see map).

2007-08: A drop structure just downstream of Jordanelle Dam was reconstructed in the spring of 2007; another is being reconstructed in the fall. All remaining miscellaneous construction aspects of the project are expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

Ongoing: Biological and Physical studies along the restored corridor will be ongoing. These entail: monitoring native and game fish populations; monitoring macroinvertebrate (stoneflies, mayflies, midges, etc.) populations; conducting bird, including Bald Eagles, and bird habitat studies and surveys; surveying for spotted frogs, which are on Utah's Sensitive Species List; learning physical requirements for establishing native riparian and wetland plants and monitoring revegetated areas; studying the geological setting, monitoring hydrological conditions and conducting flow and river mechanics studies.



The aerial photos above were taken of the river reach reconstructed in 2000. The photo on the left was taken during spring high flows in 2001. The photo on the right was taken during spring high flows in 2003.



Above are aerial photos of the “pilot project” initiated on April 1, 1999. The picture on the left was taken before construction; the picture on the right was taken during high flows in the spring of 2000.

The photos above demonstrate how quickly disturbed areas recovered. The top photo was taken during construction. Within weeks native wetland plants were colonizing the area.

Land Acquisition and Public Access

When the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation built Jordanelle Dam they were required to acquire 135 acres of private property along the middle Provo River to help provide a public access corridor downstream of the Dam. Approximately 490 additional acres of private property were needed to meet PRRP's habitat restoration and public access obligations. Private land acquisitions necessary to provide contiguous public ownership of the corridor are about 98% complete.

The public may access the corridor from seven points identified in the PRRP Environmental Impact Statement. Public access sites include fenced parking lots, trash receptacles, restrooms and informational or educational displays. In addition, a few of the sites provide accessible fishing piers or platforms.

The access points were selected to provide anglers and the public the best possible experience and to direct river access, while minimizing impacts to wildlife and habitat being restored by the Project. Being a "good neighbor" to adjacent private landowners is also a long-standing project priority and commitment, which requires restricting parking and access to and from the river corridor to designated areas.

Six of the access points have been constructed. Construction of the last site (Midway Lane-North) will occur between the fall of 2007 and 2008. Access sites are named according to their location: Jordanelle Access Site, Cottonwood Canyon/White Bridge Access Site, River Road-North Access Site, River Road-South Access Site, Midway Lane-North Access Site, Midway Lane-South Access Site and Charleston Access site.

Corridor Management

The Mitigation Commission will develop a corridor management operating agreement with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and possibly other entities. The operating agreement(s) will reiterate mitigation objectives and requirements for management and public access. Operating agreements will also specify management costs and will commit funding sources to support ongoing project development, operation, maintenance and management.

**For maps and more information about the Provo River Restoration Project, or the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, visit our website at:
www.mitigationcommission.gov.**

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