

Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 6:18 PM
Subject: Riparian Restoration Project Updates

Greetings,

You're receiving this email because you have either participated in a public meeting or requested information related to Salt Lake City's Open Space Restoration Projects. The following is an update on the four restoration projects associated with Red Butte Mitigation Funds through the Utah Division of Water Quality in response to the 2010 oil spill in Red Butte Creek. The funds were designated specifically for restoration and enhancement projects that provide improved ecological, recreational, natural, cultural and historic benefits to the community.

900 South Oxbow

Update: The restoration and enhancement work is expected to occur between June and August, 2014; the Oxbow site will be closed to public use during this period, but the 9-Line and Jordan River Trails will remain passable. Salt Lake County conducted some flood control activities at the site in March and April.

Background: A major restoration and enhancement project, on the 900 South "Oxbow" along the Jordan River, will be underway this summer. The project will improve conditions for water quality, wildlife species (macro-invertebrates, fish, and birds) and their critical habitat, and the public experience along the Jordan River Parkway and 9-Line Trails. The public has played an integral role in the conceptual designs for this project. Public input has focused on protecting wildlife and restoring wildlife habitat, while simultaneously retaining passive recreational trail features that showcase the restoration area.

Construction work includes: (1) grading and drainage to accommodate a naturally-functioning wetland in the center of the Oxbow, (2) weed control and restoration of native wetland, riparian, and upland vegetation, (3) re-grading of certain bank areas to widen the floodplain-level river bench, and (4) construction of a wildlife viewing platform, outdoor classroom area, and crushed-rock trail skirting the south and west edges of the Oxbow. Trail location and design will minimize impact to restored wildlife habitat while maintaining connectivity of the Jordan River Parkway and 9-Line Trails, enhancing the trail-user experience, and providing ADA access to the Oxbow. The project area will be monitored and native vegetation maintained over the coming years to ensure successful restoration.

Jordan River Trailside

Update: The Jordan River Trailside Restoration Project is almost complete. Plantings are underway at the trailhead and three soil stabilization restoration area along the Jordan River Parkway Trail between 1800 North and 2500 North. The specific purpose of the project is to restore areas of degraded riparian habitat to support a healthy, self-sustaining ecosystem with natural function and a predominance of native species.

Background: Project work supports a publicly-reviewed restoration plan, and consists of three components: (1) stabilization of actively-eroding river banks using soil lifts, removal of non-native trees, and riparian re-vegetation techniques, and (2) trailhead improvements and native landscaping at trailhead and in soil stabilization areas along the trail. The project area will be monitored and native vegetation maintained over the coming years to ensure successful restoration.

Liberty Lake

Update: Construction of this project will take place May-June and be complete by July. Access to the lake edge will be limited during construction but will not impede access to Liberty Park.

Background: This summer Salt Lake City Parks and Public Lands is implementing an enhancement project at Liberty Lake. The purpose of the project is to improve habitat for wildlife by planting native species and improving the vegetative cover on the Lake edges and existing islands and will also include the installation of two floating vegetated habitat islands.

The public has played an integral role in the conceptual designs for this project. Public input has focused on improving wildlife habitat and enhancing the lake environment. Project work includes (1) grading and planting of native wetland species and trees, (2) selective vegetation removal, and (3) installation of floating islands. The wetland plants will be protected from over grazing for at least one year after the project is complete to allow plants to establish. The project area will be monitored and native vegetation maintained over the coming years to ensure successful restoration.

Miller Park Bird Refuge

Update: Work associated with the restoration will begin this summer following bird nesting season and peak flows associated with spring runoff. The park will be closed during the restoration work from July through November.

As previously reported, the bids for construction costs came in below budget. Based on this, the City had been moving forward with the development of a community supported lower trail alternative that would be an estimated additional cost of \$25,000 to design and \$ \$175,000 to build. However, recent necessary changes to the project's scope and schedule may affect the City's ability to construct the lower trail at this time.

Background: The riparian restoration in the Miller Park Bird Refuge is an opportunity to bring a section of degraded riparian habitat back to a healthy ecosystem with natural function and a predominance of native plant and wildlife species and optimal conditions for improved public access to wildlife watching and passive recreation. Restoring the critical habitat zones and improving water quality will implement best management practices identified in the 2010 Riparian Corridor Study.

This is part of a publicly-reviewed restoration plan including the following major elements: (1) the establishment of native trees, shrubs and plants, (2) invasive species control, (3) streambed restoration and water velocity reduction, (4) stream bank stabilization, and (5) limited trail and signage improvements.

Native vegetation establishment including trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses are key for habitat, soil stability and water quality. The project prioritized the removal of three nonnative tree species including, Siberian elms, Tree-of-heaven and Black locust. This work will have many long term benefits to community and the environment. In the short-term this will bring change and an initial reduction in canopy cover which will allow the native plant establishment. To mitigate for the visual impact of reducing the canopy following the removal of the three target species, the native trees specified for planting are larger size. After the restoration project is implemented, the Open Space Program will monitor and maintain the native vegetation and ensure the project investment and goals are achieved over the coming years.

Additional Information

For additional and on-going information visit slcparks.com under current items of interest.

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