## **America's Great Outdoors:**

A Promise for Future Generations

City of West Jordan: Jordan River "Big Bend" Habitat Restoration Project





### **Background**

The restoration project was originally proposed to the U.S. Fish amd Wildlife Service by the City of West Jordan in 1997. Seed money for the restoration is being provided through the Sharon Steel Natural Resource Damage Assessment Fund to restore migratory birds and their supporting habitat that were injured by contaminant releases from site operations. Settlement funds have been supporting restoration on the Jordan River since 1991. The Big Bend project is the final and most ambitious restoration effort to be supported with settlement funding.

#### **Jordan River Trail**

The restoration project is adjacent to the soon to be completed section of the Jordan River Trail (JRT) in the City of West Jordan. The regional trail is 45 miles long connecting two counties along the Wasatch Front providing recreation access to over one million people. When complete the JRT will be a major intermodal network connected with mass-transit hubs and east-west connector trails, providing opportunities for alternative transportation and recreation.

In 2010, the JRT was nominated by the Utah Governor's Office to the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)'s "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative (AGO). This was one of two projects selected in Utah with the goal of connecting American's to the outdoors.

For more information, please contact: City of West Jordan Chuck Tarver (801) 569-5062 charlest@wjordan.com

Big Bend Habitat Restoration Project

The Big Bend Habitat Restoration Project is located in the City of West Jordan, Utah, north of 90th South, adjacent to the Jordan River Trail. The goal of the project is to restore 70 acres of habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife by constructing a new meandering channel and wetlands that will reconnect the floodplain with the river. When completed, the project will provide one mile of restored river channel, wetland habitat, riparian habitat, and upland habitat, and urban fisheries.

Restoration of the Jordan River channel and floodplain will significantly reduce sediment and organic matter currently being eroded into the river. This will protect surface and drinking water quality, and provide a retention basin during high runoff and floods. The project will also increase recreation opportunities for the public. Amenities such as boardwalks and interpretive signage on the adjacent Jordan River Trail will allow people to see and learn about the wildlife, culture and history of the area. Once completed, the Big Bend Restoration will become one of the "gems" of the Jordan River Parkway trail system.

Aerial view of restored habitat on the Jordan River near 10600 South, south of the Big Bend Project Area. Side-channel wetlands surrounded by

native vegetation provide habitat for migratory birds, and provide open space and opportunities for wildlife viewing.

## Partners - Connecting People with Nature

The restoration project lead is the City of West Jordan with assistance from diverse partners including: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, and the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.



The Jordan River Trail will run along the west side of the project area, providing trail users with a natural open-space and opportunities to view wildlife. Photo: Jim Olsen, www.utahhikes.net

The City is actively seeking partners and funding to implement the project including the construction of the new meander channel and additional trail amenities such as viewing platforms, boardwalks, interpetive signage, and possibly an urban fishery feature.

Produced by the National Park Service.









# West Jordan: Jordan River "Big Bend" Restoration Map





Wetlands on the site provide wildlife habitat and viewing opportunities, improve water quality, and can provide a flood retention basin that protects downstream properties.

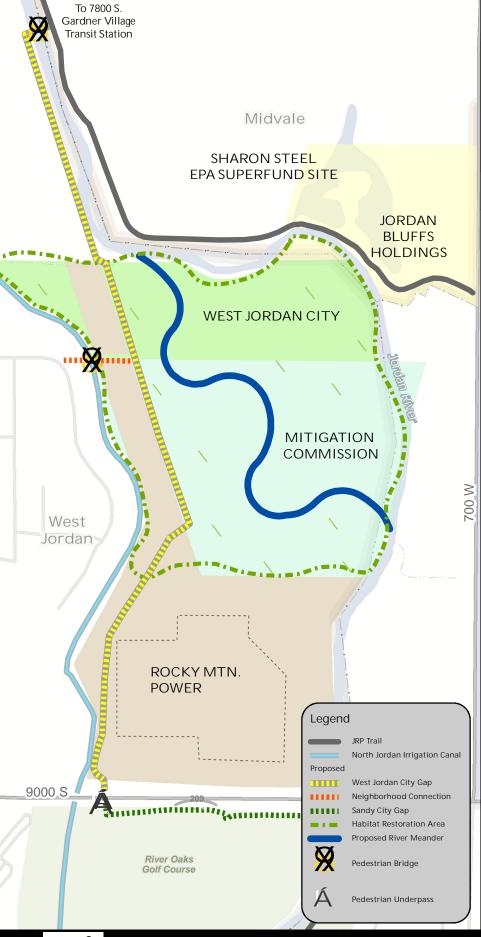
Features such as boardwalks, viewing platforms, and signage will connect people with nature along the Jordan River Trail.



Urban fisheries can help to focus recreation, minimizing human impacts on the remainder of the site while still providing recreation opportunities.

Trail alignments are shown in approximate locations and do not represent actual ROWs. Ownership labels are shown for descriptive purposes only and may be shortened from acutal legal descriptions. Produced by National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

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National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

#### Sharon Steel Natural Resource Damage Assessment Fund (NRDA

In 1991, a \$2.3M damage settlement was awarded to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) in compensation for injuries to Federally-protected trust resources caused by contamination of the Jordan River Corridor. Federal law, which safeguards these trust resources on behalf of the public, protects migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, and their supporting ecosystems. Sharon Steel NRDA funds will be used to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of these natural resources (trust resources) injured by contaminants from the site.

#### **USACE funds Jordan River Meander Project**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes West Jordan, UT -Section 206 - Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration. This is a \$5M project to restore and remeander the Jordan River in the Big Bend area.

This project fits with the USFWS restoration plan by restoring river and floodplain hydrology.

USACE works on draft environmental assessment from 2000 - 2011.

#### West Jordan awarded NPS - RTCA assistance

The National Park Service's - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program awards the City of West Jordan technical assistance for two years to complete an action plan for the area between 7800 S - 9000 S. This assistance includes developing a stakeholder group and facilitating meetings with individual entities and a trail committee to increase communication with a goal of completing the trail gap.

#### **USACE Completes Draft Environmental Assessment and FONSI**

A draft Detailed Project Report and Environmental Assessment completed. A Finding of No Significant Impact reported.

#### Blueprint Jordan River

Envision Utah completes visioning plan for the Jordan River corridor, with extensive public input and community involvement. The trail was listed as first "Big Idea" in the plan, with trails seen as the most important recreational activity by survey respondents.

#### UTA Completes Gardner Village TRAX station

UTA completes critical public transit connection at the north end of the project area.

#### JRPT in "America's Great Outdoors" Report

The U.S. Department of the Interior includes completing four gaps in the Jordan River Parkway Trail totaling 3.5 miles (including the West Jordan trail gap) in the "America's Great Outdoors" 50-State Report. The NPS RTCA program begins coordinating the initiative.

## 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

#### West Jordan Submits Restoration Proposal

**USFWS Restoration Concept Plan** 

Jordan River Corridor and requests

projects that meet the criteria of the

Sharon Steel NRDA Fund.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

plan outlines restoration potential for the

proposals from cities to sponsor restoration

West Jordan submits restoration plan for the area between 7800 S - 9000 S. This proposal is accepted by the USFWS and the URMCC in 1997. This proposal estimates a project cost of \$2.2M and emphasizes habitat restoration and federally protected trust resources. This project will provide public access via a soft surface trail and anticipates the Jordan River Parkway Trail located on the east side of the river.

#### U.S. FWS accepts West Jordan's Restoration Plan

West Jordan's proposal is accepted by the USFWS and some of the settlement monies are awarded. The following are some of the partners selected:

USFWS, Trust for Public Lands (TPL), UT Reclamation, Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC), and UT State Parks

Using a portion of USFWS Sharon Steel NRDA Funds, TPL buys a portion of the Fur Breeders property and conveys it to West Jordan with a Conservation Easement.

URMCC buys remaining property for conservation purposes and signs MOU with West Jordan.

#### Jordan River Master Plan

Comprehensive master plan for the Jordan River corridor completed by Salt Lake County. Highlights of the plan for the area between 7800 S - 9000 S include:

- Underpass under 9000 S
- Trail along North Jordan irrigation canal
- Bridge across Jordan River

#### West Jordan updates planning documents

West Jordan begins updating their Comprehensive General Plan and completes their Parks, Recreation, Trails, & Open Space Handbook. The plans follow the Jordan River Master Plan and the Blueprint Jordan River trail guidelines.

#### USACE funds updated draft EA for meander project

Following a seven year funding gap, USACE funding reinstated in 2010 and 2011 by Congress for the West Jordan, UT - Section 206 - Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration. Field Studies including a bird survey and cultural survey were completed. The Utah State Historical Preservation Office issued a cultural concurrence letter. Following the draft EA updates, the USACE project remained unfunded by congress for federal fiscal year 2012.

# **Prior Planning for Project Area**

The timeline illustrates prior planning efforts. These plans illustrate the complex nature of the project area. Currently less than \$750k of the Sharon Steel Natural Resource Damage Assessment Fund (NRDA) monies are left and available for restoration. The USACE project remains unfunded and no further involvement is anticipated. The City of West Jordan, USFWS, and URMCC, with NPS planning assistance will develop a project partnership to address restoration for the area between 7800 S and 9000 S.

Timeline for Project area: