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Several years ago, members of the mountain biking community began discussions about the future of Lions Park in Moab where major hiking/biking trails intersected. The group grew into a large committee with varied interests, and LAEP Extension was invited by project leaders to create a plan used in applying for grants, project promotion and the public approval process for the 5-acre parcel of land.

USU Extension assisted with programming and analysis, gathered data from stakeholders and agencies and developed a set of design concepts for the project. These concepts were presented to the group, input was gathered, and a consensus was reached on a design to move the project forward.

The plan provided by LAEP Extension was used by the National Park Service to secure over $100,000 in funding that was used to hire Psomas, an architectural firm, to produce final plans.

In the fall of 2014, 21 student volunteers prepared Coyote Willow cuttings from the banks of the Logan River, then installed the cuttings in a three-quarter mile stretch of the Big Sandy River in Eden Valley, Wyoming. This work was the first phase of a habitat restoration plan prepared by JUB Engineers from Kaysville, Utah, who brought the project to the attention of the LAEP Department. The project provided a unique opportunity for LAEP students to make a link between habitat restoration planning and the actual field work required to complete the plan.

“Our client, USU Housing, was so pleased with the students’ work, they asked to build an on-going collaborative relationship with the department.”

- David Evans, Professional Practice Assistant Professor/Extension

Miles of paved and unpaved trails have been built, including a $9 million paved trail along the river that was completed in 2014. It serves over 1 million visitors annually, and is still a gathering place for Moab City and a home for the Lions Club. Lions Park is now designated by the National Park Service as a transit hub for shuttle services into Arches National Park.

The Community Design Studio is an important part of Extension Landscape Architecture. The CDS was created through an Extension grant to provide planning and design support to communities throughout Utah and to create a key service-learning experience for LAEP students. Much like a professional office, the students prepare a scope of services and a schedule and cost recovery fee proposal for CDS clients that adds a sense of obligation and seriousness to the work. Project designs and graphic images provide communication and fundraising tools that can lead to private consulting and the next phase of project development. In the 2015-16 academic year, over 50 students signed up to work on a CDS team. The cost recovery fees collected helped to fund the student chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Community Design Studio Projects Completed for Cache Valley Communities in the Last Year:

- A master plan for the USU Center for Civic Engagement and Service Learning
- A 40-acre park for North Logan City at the mouth of Green Canyon
- Master plan options for the USU Student Living Center
- The Cache Valley Transit District Bus Driver Training Facility in North Logan
- A historic memorial park and parking lot in downtown Smithfield
- The St. Thomas Aquinas Meditation Garden
- The Lewiston Senior Living Center
- The Logan Willow Park Zoo