

How will this project affect you?

A key goal of the project is to determine if the adopted conservation practices had a measurable impact on water quality in the Little Bear River. If you received cost share funding in the past to implement conservation practices in the Little Bear watershed, you may be contacted by project personnel for a follow up survey interview.

Participating in this survey research is entirely up to you, but we hope that you will give us some of your time. Your thoughts and experiences with the implementation of these conservation practices will be invaluable to the success of this project.

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Project Partners:

Utah State University-

*Colleges of Engineering, Natural Resources,
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and Social Sciences*

Utah Water Research Laboratory

USU Water Initiative

Utah Division of Water Quality

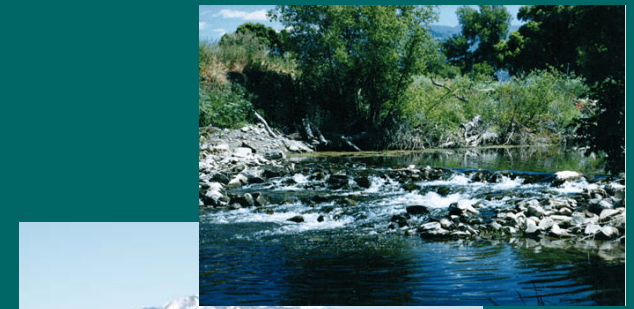
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Little Bear Watershed Conservation Effects Assessment Project





The Key Question: Were Conservation Practices Effective in Improving Water Quality in the Little Bear River

The 2002 Farm Bill provides funds to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation practices and programs. In 2004, Utah State University researchers received one of just four grants nationwide to critically evaluate the impacts of conservation practices implemented on the Little Bear watershed.

This project represents an opportunity to look back at the work done during the Little Bear Project and evaluate what worked or didn't work, and how we can improve these efforts in the future.



The Little Bear Project

In the late 1980's, the Little Bear River was identified as having significant water quality impairment. During the 1990's, state and federal cost share programs were used to help landowners adopt a number of recommended conservation practices.

During the course of the project, more than 100 farmers voluntarily implemented conservation practices that were designed to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff to the river from dairies, rangeland and pastures.

These practices included:

- Installation of animal waste management systems on at least 45 farms;
- Stream banks vegetation that reduced erosion on more than 5 miles of the river and tributaries;
- a major dumpsite on McMurdie Hollow was cleaned up;
- Improved vegetation and grazing management reduced erosion from 7500 acres of rangeland.

This project will answer several key questions:

Monitoring results suggest that water quality has improved in the Little Bear River.

We will study:

- *How much of this improvement is due to conservation practices that have been implemented?*
- *How have other factors affected water quality, such as the drought, land use changes, etc.?*

We will look specifically at the conservation practices that were implemented during the Little Bear Project, and ask:

- *Were the practices as effective as we thought they would be?*
- *Were practices relatively straight forward to implement?*
- *Did they require other changes on farm operations that were unrealistic?*
- *Were they easy to maintain over time?*

Linking land use practices and water quality can be complicated. We will evaluate and compare different approaches to water quality monitoring to determine:

- *Which techniques are best at measuring long term changes over a large river system?*

Finally, we will share our findings with the citizens of the Little Bear watershed and with agencies and farmers across the nation.