

East Canyon Creek Restoration at Swaner Nature Preserve

by Brendan Waterman

In 2004 Swaner Nature Preserve began implementation of a stream restoration project on East Canyon Creek in the Upper Weber River Watershed. This reach of stream is currently out of equilibrium and exhibits high width to depth ratios, accelerated rates of streambank erosion, poor aquatic life habitat, and a lack of healthy riparian vegetation. A conservation plan was developed to address these issues. This conservation plan focuses on restoration through various bio-engineering techniques.

To help stabilize eroding stream banks, approximately 1600' feet of brush revetments have been installed. The revetment structures have been constructed using recycled Christmas trees collected from homes in the Park City area. Brush revetments help to stabilize streambanks by reducing the shear stress exhibited on the banks, collecting sediment which will serve as a base for new vegetation, and eventually narrowing the stream channel.

In addition to the installation of brush revetments, approximately 3000 willow cuttings have been planted along the banks of East Canyon Creek within the Preserve. The dormant cuttings have been harvested from other areas of the Preserve and planted using a water jet stinger. The willow cuttings serve multiple purposes within the restoration plan. The dense root systems of willows help to stabilize streambanks, while the plants help to provide shading for the stream. This shading helps to improve fish habitat by keeping water temperatures cool during the summer months thereby reducing thermal pollution in the stream.

During the first few years of this project it has become apparent that wildland/urban interface issues need to be addressed to ensure a successful restoration of East Canyon Creek. There are multiple housing developments and a heavily used trail system adjacent to the restoration area. The Preserve is in the process of re-routing trails around the restoration area, installing permanent fencing to reduce the trampling of vegetation, and installing informational signs about the project to help encourage behavior change among trail users on the Preserve.

Swaner Nature Preserve has begun implementation of weed management plan this fall. Throughout the summer, Swaner has been treating infested areas with both mechanical removal of weeds and herbicide application. A revegetation plan has been developed to reseed approximately 70 acres with a native seed mix following removal of noxious weed species.

This project has been funded with EPA section 319 funds and private donations to Swaner Nature Preserve. A volunteer workforce has been an essential component of the project, assisting on all levels of implementation.

WEBER RIVER WATERSHED NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2007

NEWSLETTERS OF INTEREST

The latest issue of the **Utah Watershed Review**, the official publication of the Nonpoint Source Task Force, is available at: http://ag.utah.gov/conservation/nps_UtahWatershedReview.html.

This issue highlights mercury levels found in fish and water fowl that require the State to issue fish consumption advisories. The State is continuing to collect and process samples to determine the extent of the problem. The only mercury advisory in our watershed is for brown trout from the Weber River near Morgan. Adults should limit intake of these fish to two 8 ounce servings per month. (An advisory is also still in effect for Silver Creek because of high arsenic levels.) Calendar items for the next newsletter should be sent by November 23 to Jack Wilber, editor, at jackwilbur@utah.gov.

The Lake Effect, a newsletter of the Great Salt Lake Resources Conservation and Development Council is available by email from Jeff Williams, RC&D Coordinator, (jeff.williams@ut.usda.gov). The current newsletter announced funding of two grant proposals for the area including the Weber River Watershed. Proposals were approved for bio-control collection equipment and supplies and a native willow and cottonwood restoration project.

PERSONNEL NEWS

Interviews for applicants for the position of coordinator for the Lower Weber River Watershed are in process. It's expected that we'll have a new coordinator in place very soon.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has closed their office in Heber. Brendan Waterman, Upper Watershed Coordinator, will continue to work in Heber. His email is the same; phone number is 435-659-1448. Barbara Carey will move to the Forest Service office in Heber. Her cell phone number is 435-640-0181. (Travis Thomason, Jason Roper and Nathan Fikkert in the Coalville office will continue to service Summit County.)

RAPID WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

The Rapid Watershed Assessment for the Upper Weber River is available at www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov. Click on "Rapid Watershed Assessments" on the left side of the page. Maps showing the location of various resources are available.

Weber River Watershed Protection Coalition

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