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River Restoration Amendments
2026 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH
Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore
House Sponsor: Cheryl K. Acton

Cosponsor:
Stephanie Pitcher



LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses provisions related to Jordan River improvement projects.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- modifies how the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (division) expends money related to a Jordan River improvement project, including:
 - allowing the division to expend money for an activity along the entire length of the Jordan River; and
 - requiring the division to consult with the Jordan River Commission before expending money for an improvement project;
- creates a matching grant program for a county, municipality, or the Jordan River Commission to fund improvement projects that increase access to a recreational activity on the Jordan River;
- appropriates funding for the matching grant program; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

This bill appropriates \$2,000,000 in operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2027, all of which is from the General Fund.

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

26 **65A-2-8**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapters 223, 357

27

28 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

29 Section 1. Section **65A-2-8** is amended to read:

30 **65A-2-8 . Jordan River improvement projects -- Grants.**

31 [~~(1) As used in this section:~~]

32 [~~(a) "Commission" means the Jordan River Commission created by interlocal agreement.]~~

33 [~~(b) "Zone" means the Jordan River Recreation Area, the area 250 yards on each side of~~
34 ~~the Jordan River from the edge of the river between SR-201 and 5400 South.]~~

35 [~~(2) The division, subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances and~~
36 ~~Subsections (3) through (5), may:~~]

37 [~~(a) expend money for the following purposes:~~]

38 [~~(i) enhancing safety, recreation, and conservation in the zone;]~~

39 [~~(ii) capital improvements within the zone, including:~~]

40 [~~(A) lighting along the Jordan River and within the zone;]~~

41 [~~(B) completing construction of a paved pathway on both sides of the Jordan~~
42 ~~River within the zone;]~~

43 [~~(C) building a boat launch, picnic pavilion, bench, restroom, or other amenity~~
44 ~~within the zone; and]~~

45 [~~(D) supporting Tracy Aviary, a nature area, bike or boat rental concessionaire, or~~
46 ~~other partnerships to enhance recreation in the zone;]~~

47 [~~(iii) funding programs to clean the zone, remove invasive species, and restore~~
48 ~~riparian habitat;]~~

49 [~~(iv) hiring or contracting for personnel to perform tasks as directed by the~~
50 ~~commission;]~~

51 [~~(v) partnering or contracting with an urban ranger or conservation corp operated by a~~
52 ~~state institution of higher education or similar service-oriented organizations or~~
53 ~~programs;]~~

54 [~~(A) to provide trail, river, and parkway maintenance, invasive species removal~~
55 ~~and revegetation, emergency care, and environmental education for the area~~
56 ~~250 yards on each side of the Jordan River from the edge of the river for the~~
57 ~~entire length of the river; and]~~

58 [~~(B) to report to the appropriate public official all health, safety, or law~~
59 ~~enforcement concerns that the organization encounters, as directed by the~~

- 94 (C) emergency care; and
- 95 (D) environmental education; and
- 96 (ii) to report to the appropriate public official a health, safety, or law enforcement
- 97 concern along the Jordan River; and
- 98 (e) partnering or contracting with local law enforcement or a certified peace officer to
- 99 provide patrol, security, and law enforcement along the Jordan River.
- 100 (3) Before expending money for an activity described in Subsection (2), the division shall
- 101 consult with the commission.
- 102 (4) The commission shall work with the Department of Transportation, created in Section
- 103 72-1-201, to:
- 104 (a) have the Department of Transportation post~~[by no later than July 1, 2025]~~, as
- 105 funding allows, consistent and attractive signs where a highway that is designated as
- 106 a state highway under Title 72, Chapter 4, Designation of State Highways Act, but is
- 107 not a freeway crosses the Jordan River; and
- 108 (b) advise in the development of methods to provide access from a state highway to the
- 109 trails along the Jordan River where the trail can be safely accessed.
- 110 (5)(a) The ~~[programs]~~ activities described in this section may only be implemented as
- 111 appropriations from the Legislature allow.
- 112 (b)(i) Money appropriated to ~~[programs]~~ an activity in this section is managed by the
- 113 division in accordance with this section and may include the division ~~[dispensing~~
- 114 ~~money through]~~issuing grants.
- 115 (ii) The division shall:
- 116 (A) ~~[before December 31, 2022,]~~issue a five-year grant to a zoo, aviary, nature
- 117 center, or other educational program located ~~[within the zone]~~ along the Jordan
- 118 River; and
- 119 (B) renew the grant described in Subsection (5)(b)(ii)(A) every five years.
- 120 (iii) The division may issue a matching grant to a county, municipality, or the
- 121 commission for an improvement project that increases recreational access on the
- 122 Jordan River, if the county, municipality, or commission:
- 123 (A) provides at least an equal amount of matching funds; and
- 124 (B) certifies that the county, municipality, or commission will spend the grant
- 125 funds on an improvement project that increases recreational access or improves
- 126 public safety along the Jordan River.
- 127 (c) Money that the Legislature appropriates to ~~[programs]~~ an activity or program

128 described in this section is nonlapsing in accordance with Section 63J-1-602.2.

129 Section 2. **FY 2027 Appropriations.**

130 The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1,
131 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for
132 fiscal year 2027.

133 Subsection 2(a). **Operating and Capital Budgets**

134 Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, the
135 Legislature appropriates the following sums of money from the funds or accounts indicated for
136 the use and support of the government of the state of Utah.

137 ITEM 1 To Department of Natural Resources - Forestry, Fire, and State Lands

138 From General Fund, One-time 2,000,000

139 Schedule of Programs:

140 Project Management 2,000,000

141 The Legislature intends that the Division of
142 Forestry, Fire, and State Lands use the funds under this
143 item for Jordan River recreational access grants
144 described in Subsection 65A-2-8(5)(b)(iii).

145 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

147 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.