

River Restoration Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore

House Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**Committee Note:**

The Legislative Water Development Commission recommended this bill.

Legislative Vote: 7 voting for 0 voting against 7 absent

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 counties and municipalities to fund improvement projects that increase access to a recreational activity on the Jordan River;

- directs funding from the Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account to the matching grant program; and

- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

51-9-902 (Effective 05/06/26) (Superseded 07/01/26), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 498

51-9-902 (Effective 07/01/26), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 285

31 **65A-2-8 (Effective 05/06/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapters 223, 357

32

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

34 Section 1. Section **51-9-902** is amended to read:

35 **51-9-902 (Effective 05/06/26) (Superseded 07/01/26). Outdoor Adventure**
36 **Infrastructure Restricted Account.**

- 37 (1) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Outdoor
38 Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account."
- 39 (2) The account shall consist of:
- 40 (a) money deposited into the account under Subsection 59-12-103(15); and
- 41 (b) interest and earnings on money in the account.
- 42 (3) Subject to appropriation from the Legislature, money from the account shall be used for:
- 43 (a) new construction of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 44 (b) upgrades of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 45 (c) the replacement of or structural improvements to outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 46 (d) the acquisition of land, a right-of-way, or easement used in relationship to outdoor
47 recreation infrastructure;
- 48 (e) providing access from state highways, as defined in Section 72-1-102, to outdoor
49 recreation infrastructure;
- 50 (f) the costs associated with bringing new construction or upgrades of outdoor
51 recreation infrastructure into environmental compliance;
- 52 (g) strategic planning related to the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- 53 (h) facilitating avalanche safety forecasting to protect the public in relation to outdoor
54 recreation infrastructure; or
- 55 (i) clean up or security relating to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- 56 (4) For each fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the Division of Finance
57 shall, subject to appropriation by the Legislature, distribute money from the Outdoor
58 Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account as follows:
- 59 (a) at least 15% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of State Parks -
60 Capital, to be expended using the department's existing prioritization process for
61 capital projects in state parks described in Subsection (3);
- 62 (b) at least 22% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor
63 Recreation - Capital, to be expended for competitive Recreation Restoration
64 Infrastructure grants or Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure grants for outdoor

recreation capital projects and related maintenance expenses, where maintenance expenses do not exceed 15% of the appropriation;

- (c) at least 53% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor Recreation - Capital, to be expended for larger outdoor recreation infrastructure projects described in Subsection (3) as recommended to the Legislature by the Outdoor Adventure Commission; ~~and~~
- (d) at least ~~[10%]~~ 8% to the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity - Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District, created in Section 11-70-201, to be expended for the development and operation of the district~~[-]~~ ; and
- (e) at least 2% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, created in Section 65A-1-4, to be expended for Jordan River recreational access grants described in Subsection 65A-2-8(5)(b)(iii).

- (5) If the Legislature appropriates money to the Department of Transportation from the account, the Transportation Commission, created in Section 72-1-301, shall prioritize projects and determine funding levels in accordance with Subsection 72-1-303(1)(a) based on recommendations of the Department of Transportation.

Section 2. Section **51-9-902** is amended to read:

51-9-902 (Effective 07/01/26). Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account.

- (1) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account."
- (2) The account shall consist of:
 - (a) money deposited into the account under Subsection 59-12-103(4)(h); and
 - (b) interest and earnings on money in the account.
- (3) Subject to appropriation from the Legislature, money from the account shall be used for:
 - (a) new construction of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
 - (b) upgrades of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
 - (c) the replacement of or structural improvements to outdoor recreation infrastructure;
 - (d) the acquisition of land, a right-of-way, or easement used in relationship to outdoor recreation infrastructure;
 - (e) providing access from state highways, as defined in Section 72-1-102, to outdoor recreation infrastructure;
 - (f) the costs associated with bringing new construction or upgrades of outdoor recreation infrastructure into environmental compliance;

- (g) strategic planning related to the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure;
- (h) facilitating avalanche safety forecasting to protect the public in relation to outdoor recreation infrastructure; or
- (i) clean up or security relating to outdoor recreation infrastructure.
- (4) For each fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the Division of Finance shall, subject to appropriation by the Legislature, distribute money from the Outdoor Adventure Infrastructure Restricted Account as follows:
- (a) at least 15% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of State Parks - Capital, to be expended using the department's existing prioritization process for capital projects in state parks described in Subsection (3);
- (b) at least 22% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor Recreation - Capital, to be expended for competitive Recreation Restoration Infrastructure grants or Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure grants for outdoor recreation capital projects and related maintenance expenses, where maintenance expenses do not exceed 15% of the appropriation;
- (c) at least 53% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Outdoor Recreation - Capital, to be expended for larger outdoor recreation infrastructure projects described in Subsection (3) as recommended to the Legislature by the Outdoor Adventure Commission;~~[-and]~~
- (d) at least ~~[10%]~~ 8% to the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity - Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District created in Section 11-70-201 for the development and operation of the district[-] ; and
- (e) at least 2% to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, created in Section 65A-1-4, to be expended for Jordan River recreational access grants described in Subsection 65A-2-8(5)(b)(iii).
- (5) If the Legislature appropriates money to the Department of Transportation from the account, the Transportation Commission, created in Section 72-1-301, shall prioritize projects and determine funding levels in accordance with Subsection 72-1-303(1)(a) based on recommendations of the Department of Transportation.
- Section 3. Section **65A-2-8** is amended to read:
- 65A-2-8 (Effective 05/06/26). Jordan River improvement projects -- Grants.**
- ~~[(1) As used in this section:]~~
- ~~[(a) "Commission" means the Jordan River Commission created by interlocal agreement.]~~
- ~~[(b) "Zone" means the Jordan River Recreation Area, the area 250 yards on each side of~~

the Jordan River from the edge of the river between SR-201 and 5400 South.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[(B) to report to the appropriate public official all health, safety, or law enforcement concerns that the organization encounters, as directed by the commission; and]

[(vi) partnering or contracting with local law enforcement or a certified peace officer to provide patrol, security, and law enforcement for the area 250 yards on each side of the Jordan River from the edge of the river for the entire length of the river; and]

[(b) purchase, lease, sell, or dispose of property or an easement within the zone to achieve the goals in Subsection (2)(a).]

[(3)(a) Before engaging in any activity described in Subsections (2)(a)(i) through

(2)(a)(iii) or Subsection (2)(b), the division shall receive the approval of:]

[~~(i) the commission;~~]

[~~(ii) any relevant governmental entity that owns or is responsible for the maintenance of real property within the zone, including Salt Lake County Flood Control; and]~~

[~~(iii) the relevant municipality within the zone.~~]

[~~(b) Before engaging in any activity described in Subsections (2)(a)(iv) through (2)(a)(vi), the division shall:~~]

[~~(i) receive the approval of the commission; and]~~

[~~(ii) consult with:~~]

[~~(A) any relevant governmental entity that owns or is responsible for the maintenance of real property within the zone; and]~~

[~~(B) the relevant municipality within the zone.~~]

(1) As used in this section, "commission" means the Jordan River Commission created by interlocal agreement.

(2) Subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws and Subsections (3) through (5), the division may expend money for:

(a) enhancing safety, recreation, and conservation along the Jordan River;

(b) a capital improvement project that increases access to a recreational activity on the Jordan River;

(c) a partnership to increase access to a recreational activity on the Jordan River, including a bike or boat rental concessionaire, an animal preserve or sanctuary, or other partnership;

(d) hiring or contracting personnel:

(i) to provide, for the benefit of the Jordan River:

(A) trail, river, and parkway maintenance;

(B) invasive species removal and revegetation;

(C) emergency care; and

(D) environmental education; and

(ii) to report to the appropriate public official a health, safety, or law enforcement concern along the Jordan River; and

(e) partnering or contracting with local law enforcement or a certified peace officer to provide patrol, security, and law enforcement along the Jordan River.

(3) Before expending money for an activity described in Subsection (2), the division shall consult with the commission.

- (4) The commission shall work with the Department of Transportation, created in Section 72-1-201, to:
- (a) have the Department of Transportation post~~[by no later than July 1, 2025]~~, as funding allows, consistent and attractive signs where a highway that is designated as a state highway under Title 72, Chapter 4, Designation of State Highways Act, but is not a freeway crosses the Jordan River; and
 - (b) advise in the development of methods to provide access from a state highway to the trails along the Jordan River where the trail can be safely accessed.
- (5)(a) The ~~[programs]~~ activities described in this section may only be implemented as appropriations from the Legislature allow.
- (b)(i) Money appropriated to ~~[programs]~~ an activity in this section is managed by the division in accordance with this section and may include the division ~~[dispensing money through]~~ issuing grants.
 - (ii) The division shall:
 - (A) ~~[before December 31, 2022,]~~ issue a five-year grant to a zoo, aviary, nature center, or other educational program located ~~[within the zone]~~ along the Jordan River; and
 - (B) renew the grant described in Subsection (5)(b)(ii)(A) every five years.
 - (iii) The division may issue a matching grant to a county or municipality for an improvement project that increases recreational access on the Jordan River, if the county or municipality:
 - (A) provides an equal amount of matching funds; and
 - (B) certifies that the county or municipality will spend the grant funds on an improvement project that increases recreational access or improves public safety along the Jordan River.
 - (c) Money that the Legislature appropriates to ~~[programs]~~ an activity or program described in this section is nonlapsing in accordance with Section 63J-1-602.2.
- Section 4. Effective Date.**
- (1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), this bill takes effect May 6, 2026.
 - (2) The actions affecting Section 51-9-902 (Effective 07/01/26) take effect on July 1, 2026.