

Lincoln Fillmore proposes the following substitute bill:

River Restoration Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore

House Sponsor: Cheryl K. Acton

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 counties and municipalities 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:

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

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

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

65A-2-8 . 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~~

- 63 river; and]
- 64 [(b) purchase, lease, sell, or dispose of property or an easement within the zone to
- 65 achieve the goals in Subsection (2)(a).]
- 66 [(3)(a) Before engaging in any activity described in Subsections (2)(a)(i) through
- 67 (2)(a)(iii) or Subsection (2)(b), the division shall receive the approval of:]
- 68 [(i) the commission;]
- 69 [(ii) any relevant governmental entity that owns or is responsible for the maintenance
- 70 of real property within the zone, including Salt Lake County Flood Control; and]
- 71 [(iii) the relevant municipality within the zone.]
- 72 [(b) Before engaging in any activity described in Subsections (2)(a)(iv) through (2)(a)(vi),
- 73 the division shall:]
- 74 [(i) receive the approval of the commission; and]
- 75 [(ii) consult with:]
- 76 [(A) any relevant governmental entity that owns or is responsible for the
- 77 maintenance of real property within the zone; and]
- 78 [(B) the relevant municipality within the zone.]
- 79 (1) As used in this section, "commission" means the Jordan River Commission created by
- 80 interlocal agreement.
- 81 (2) Subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws and Subsections (3) through (5), the
- 82 division may expend money for:
- 83 (a) enhancing safety, recreation, and conservation along the Jordan River;
- 84 (b) a capital improvement project that increases access to a recreational activity on the
- 85 Jordan River;
- 86 (c) a partnership to increase access to a recreational activity on the Jordan River,
- 87 including a bike or boat rental concessionaire, an animal preserve or sanctuary, or
- 88 other partnership;
- 89 (d) hiring or contracting personnel:
- 90 (i) to provide, for the benefit of the Jordan River:
- 91 (A) trail, river, and parkway maintenance;
- 92 (B) invasive species removal and revegetation;
- 93 (C) emergency care; and
- 94 (D) environmental education; and
- 95 (ii) to report to the appropriate public official a health, safety, or law enforcement
- 96 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 2. **FY 2027 Appropriations.**

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

131 fiscal year 2027.

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

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

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

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

138 Schedule of Programs:

139 Project Management 2,000,000

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

144 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

146 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.