Both national and local headlines are filled with phrases such as, “protect our natural resources,” “cherish your mother,” “conservation equals,” and “save our cosmos.” These catchy phrases motivate a collective national confidence, but what do they really mean by environment, resources, or pollution? For anyone who’s attempted to characterize and monitor the natural world, the answer to these questions is much more complicated than the college textbooks led us to believe. In a biology class when the teacher handed out a prayer and diagram of a dissected frog? Remember what the frog really looked like once your lab partner fumbled and you bravely yielded the scalpel? We’re in the natural resources community are often faced with similar dilemmas. We need to determine if our environment is polluted, if our streams are functioning properly, but there is no formula to follow, no easy solutions. Earth is dynamic, complicated, beautiful. As a result, the best approach to characterization is often the simplest - document what you see and monitor change over time. With persistence, we will acquire the better understanding of how our watershed is functioning and collectively identify opportunities for enhancement. In the vein of characterization, and in support of the County’s Water Quality Stewardship Plan (WaQSP), the Flood Control & Water Quality Division has worked with local experts and consultants over the past few years to establish an assessment protocol we refer to as the Stream Function Index (SFI). The SFI is a rapid assessment monitoring tool that was designed to assess the status of streams based on water quality, land use, geomorphology, habitat, and other conditions. The SFI is a streamlined approach that allows assessment of many streams in a short period of time. The County has assessed over 426 stream miles that have been assessed, 108 miles have been reassessed, 168 miles have not been reassessed, and 50 miles have never been assessed. This assessment methodology helps to give each of our streams a score. With focused efforts, we hope to see improvements in the SFI scores with each update of the WaQSP. Our college textbooks led us to believe that the natural resources community are often faced with similar dilemmas, but with the complex jurisdictional mix of the Jordan River region, the question of whether our streams are functioning properly, but there is no formula to follow, no easy solutions. Earth is dynamic, complicated, beautiful. As a result, the best approach to characterization is often the simplest - document what you see and monitor change over time. With persistence, we will acquire a better understanding of how our watershed is functioning and collectively identify opportunities for enhancement. In the vein of characterization, and in support of the County’s Water Quality Stewardship Plan (WaQSP), the Flood Control & Water Quality Division has worked with local experts and consultants over the past few years to establish an assessment protocol we refer to as the Stream Function Index (SFI). The SFI is a rapid assessment monitoring tool that was designed to assess the status of streams based on water quality, land use, geomorphology, habitat, and other conditions. The SFI is a streamlined approach that allows assessment of many streams in a short period of time. The County has assessed over 426 stream miles that have been assessed, 108 miles have been reassessed, 168 miles have not been reassessed, and 50 miles have never been assessed. This assessment methodology helps to give each of our streams a score. With focused efforts, we hope to see improvements in the SFI scores with each update of the WaQSP.

What? FREE, two-day event. Multifaceted review of the current state of our watershed. Featuring panel discussions, presentations, field trips, informational tables by numerous non-profit and government agencies, a keynote address by Mayor Peter Corroon. Who? Designed to bring together the general public, local water quality/watershed experts, environmental activists, teachers, students, and those working in watershed professions. Register! Participants must register before October 20, 2008. Contact: Marion Hubbard, 801-468-7714 or Mhubbard@slc.co or via email at Mbuegger@envisionutah.org; 801-303-1453.

Background
The Blueprint is a visionary planning effort that explores future uses and conditions along the Jordan River. The primary goal of the project is to raise awareness of the River as a regional amenity and natural resource. Additionally, the Blueprint seeks to build a constituency for the River by encouraging public buy-in to raise the level of investment in, and stewardship of, the River. It is the hope of many involved in this process that one day the River will maintain a healthy, thriving ecosystem, that supports sustainable economic opportunities such as: wildlife viewing, cycling, and non-motor boating. Natural resource and social capital improvements may provide the backbone for a multi-billion dollar development in our Region for years to come. 

The views expressed in this periodical are those of the authors, not necessarily those of Salt Lake County, the Salt Lake County Mayor, the Division of Flood Control and Water Quality, or any other entity.
Fertilizing in the Fall? Now’s the Time!

Don’t leave lawn care until spring!

Fall is the best time of year to fertilize your lawn and control weeds. Fall fertilizing is bee safe as it allows for the nutrients to be absorbed by the grass before winter sets in. Ideally, you should fertilize in the fall, 2 to 4 weeks before the first frost. The best time to fertilize is when your lawn is healthy and has the ability to absorb nutrients efficiently.

Now’s the Time!

By Lorna Vogt: Salt Lake County Open Space Coordinator

Acquisition of Rose Canyon Ranch

By Lorna Vogt: Salt Lake County Open Space Coordinator

The City of Salt Lake County has recently purchased the Rose Canyon Ranch in an effort to protect and preserve this unique natural resource for future generations. Located in the Oquirrh Mountains, the ranch features over 5,000 acres of pristine land that is now protected under the management of the Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation Division.

The acquisition of Rose Canyon Ranch is the result of a comprehensive plan for the Wasatch Mountain Range; the whole of the Salt Lake County; the Wasatch Range; and the Oquirrh Mountains. This plan was developed by the County as a way to ensure the protection of the area’s natural beauty and resources.

The City of Salt Lake County, through the Wasatch Front Conservation District and the Wasatch Front Regional Council, has been working to establish stakeholder buy-in and support for the WAQSP since 1996. The WAQSP is a comprehensive plan for the Wasatch Front region that was developed to address water quality issues in the area.

Fertilization and Environmental Stewardship

Green Design: A New Approach

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification system provides a comprehensive framework for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings. LEED recognizes buildings that meet certain performance standards in areas such as energy conservation, water efficiency, and indoor environmental quality.

LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by requiring the reporting of key performance measures, including energy, water, and materials. The LEED rating system encourages businesses and organizations to take a broader view of sustainability and to consider the impact of their operations on the environment.

More than 125,000 buildings worldwide have been certified as LEED-certified, including hospitals, schools, offices, and retail spaces. LEED-certified buildings use less energy and water, produce less waste, and provide healthier and more productive environments for building occupants.

Fall Landscaping Tips

Use biodegradable pesticides/herbicides.

Never use the gutter or storm drain system for disposal of household or garden waste.

Store pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals outdoors or in a shed or storage cabinet.

Clean leaves, sediment and trash out of gutters and dispose of in garden or trash.

Control erosion on your property by planting groundcover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas.

Collect lawn and garden clippings, pruning waste and tree trimmings. Chip if necessary and compost.

Mow with sharp blades set at 2 ½ to 3 inches and leave clippings on the lawn.