Watershed Description:

The Middle Bear River watershed includes all of the waterways within the Cache Valley, starting from the Idaho-Utah border and extending to the south boundary of Cache County. The Middle Bear River watershed encompasses the drainage areas of several major tributaries of the Bear River, which flow from the east into the shallow waters of Cutler Reservoir.

The Middle Bear River watershed has a drainage area of 888 square miles. The annual average flow into the Bear River increases from 1,095 cubic feet per second to 1,519 cubic feet per second as it enters Cutler Reservoir. The Logan, Blacksmith Fork, and Little Bear rivers are primarily responsible for this increase as all three converge and enter the reservoir.

Cache County’s population is approximately 100,000. Cache Valley is expected to see the highest rate of growth of all municipal areas in the Bear River Basin. With increased population, large emphasis has been placed on wastewater treatment and stormwater management.
Project Description:

Water Quality implementation projects have been occurring in the Middle Bear River watershed since the early 1990s with great success. With the cooperation of local watershed groups, landowners, and various governmental agencies, several water quality projects have been implemented ranging from stream bank restoration to sprinkler irrigation systems. Several educational campaigns have also been initiated to help raise public awareness of water quality issues throughout the valley. These education campaigns include youth educational field days, storm water education, and pharmaceutical disposal programs.

The Middle Bear River watershed has a large number of dairy producers. Recently, efforts have helped many producers comply with state water quality standards. Various agencies have helped dairy producers implement best management practices to help contain water rich in nutrients and organic matter on their property. Many producers have also developed nutrient management plans. These plans identify when and where to apply manure. Containment practices and nutrient management plans help prevent excess nutrients from entering local water bodies.

Related Projects

Irrigation systems
Range and pasture planning
Soil testing and training
Bear River Celebration & Free Fishing Day
4th grade Natural Resources Field Days
Stream restoration
Animal feeding operation inventory
Animal feeding operation improvements
Wildlife habitat improvements
Upland improvements
Water quality outreach and education

Partners

North Cache Conservation District
Blacksmith Fork Conservation District
EPA
Utah Division of Water Quality
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Utah Association of Conservation Districts
Local Landowners
Local Irrigation Companies
Utah Watershed Coordinating Council
Cutler Reservoir Advisory Committee
Utah State University Extension

Funding

EPA 319 funding
Utah State Nonpoint source funds
NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
NRCS Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP)
Local Landowners

To learn how you can participate or lend your support to Utah community water quality projects, please contact your local conservation district or county agent.