

# Ashley Valley Watershed Project - FAQs

- **What is the Ashley Valley Watershed Project?**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), with assistance of Uintah County and Ashley Central Irrigation Company as the project sponsors, is proposing improvements within the Ashley Valley Watershed including:

1. The construction of two large debris/detention basins for the Coal Mine and Yellow Hills sub basins to provide storage for debris and stormwater during large storm and flash flood events to protect residents, homes, properties, roadways, buildings, and businesses.
2. Piping 9.6 miles of the Ashley Central Canal including the pressurization of 6.3 miles of the canal.
3. The construction of three miles of recreation trails for bike and pedestrian use, giving access to educational, recreational, and business facilities nearby.

Improvements under consideration will address flood protection, watershed protection, agricultural water management, and public recreation development. An evaluation of potential alternatives and associated environmental impacts is required and will be documented in the form of an Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA).

- **Who is in charge of the Ashley Valley Watershed Project, and who makes the final decision?**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the lead federal agency on the project and will make the final decision at the end of the Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA).

Uintah County and the Ashley Central Irrigation Company are the local projects sponsors that applied for the grant funding to complete the project.

- **How did this project get started?**

The Ashley Central Canal Company had concerns over the significant quantities of irrigation water that was being lost through seepage in their canal, as well as liability concerns with the open canal being so close to residential areas. As they began to consider potential funding sources, they found that the NRCS funding that was available could also be used for flood control and public recreation. The concept of a partnership between the county and the canal company was considered. The county had flood control needs and recreational needs identified in the corresponding master plans that could also be addressed with the NRCS funding. This concept was approved by the county commission with the county being the sponsor on the funding application.

- **How is this project being funded?**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program. This program helps units of federal, state, local and tribal governments protect and restore watersheds. The program provides financial and technical assistance for erosion and sediment control, watershed protection, flood prevention, water quality improvement, water management, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, recreation, and hydropower.

Additionally, the Bureau of Reclamation through their Water and Energy Efficiency Grants program is providing additional funding on a specific section of the Ashley Central Canal from approximately 500 South to 500 West.

- **What are the benefits of this project?**

1. Increased water conservation through an improved canal system
2. Better safety within the canal right-of-way
3. Improved water quality in Ashley Creek, the Green River, and the Colorado River
4. Increased protection of residents, homes, properties, roadways, buildings, businesses, and other infrastructure that are at risk during large storm events
5. Separation of stormwater and irrigation water
6. Increased recreational opportunities through the construction of trails

- **What is the project schedule?**

**Summer - Winter 2019:** Resource Evaluation & Preparation of Draft Environmental Assessment

**Summer 2020:** Agency Review & Comment Period

**Spring 2021:** Decision Document

**Fall 2021:** Begin Project Construction (pending environmental approval)

- **What is a Plan-EA?**

The Plan Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA) is an environmental study required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The purpose of the environmental process is to study the potential impacts of the proposed project alternatives on the community and environment. Impacts that will be studied include, but are not limited to, wetlands, wildlife habitat, farmlands, water quality, historic resources, structures and the local economy and communities.

- **Do you study environmental impacts?**

Yes. The purpose of the environmental process is to study the potential impacts of the proposed project alternatives on the community and environment. Impacts that will be studied include, but are not limited to, wetlands, wildlife habitat, farmlands, water quality, historic resources, structures and the local economy and communities.

- **What is going to happen to the fish in the canal?**

The Ashley Central Canal hasn't been stocked with fish since 2013.

- **Who owns the water rights in the Ashley Central Canal?**

Ashley Central Canal Company Shareholders.

- **Can I still provide comments and input on this project?**

Yes. We are at the beginning phases of the environmental study and public comment is encouraged and welcomed throughout the entire Plan-EA. Members of the public can send comments, concerns, or questions by email to [email@ashleywatershed.com](mailto:email@ashleywatershed.com) or by mail to the study team at the address below.

ATTN: Ashley Valley Watershed Team

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