

## New wetlands center taking shape

Tom Busselberg

KAYSVILLE — By fall, some Davis County students could be learning about nature in myriad forms in a “personal and up close” facility here. That’s thanks to construction of Wetlands Discovery Point, a building and related facilities going up near I-15 as part of the Utah Botanical Center campus. As explained by UBC director David Anderson, it’s intended as a “year-round, indoor and outdoor classroom.” “This will provide a significantly increased opportunity to teach kids who make field trips here,” he said. That number, now kept at about 4,000, could mushroom to 8,000 to 10,000 a year. “We’re maxed out. We can’t accommodate more,” he said. For example, the classroom at the nearby Utah House was not originally intended to serve that purpose.

“It’s (UBC) about in the middle of the county,” making it easier for students from all of Davis County, as well as adjacent counties, to visit, Anderson continued.

“Our curriculum meets the state science curriculum,” he said, and will provide a hands-on, close-up look, in an environmentally friendly building and surrounding area.

“We can teach about storm water, water quality, fishing, wildlife, birds and ecology, all right here. Everyone acknowledges the value of an on-site experience. Kids will remember these experiences,” Anderson said.

“This will let them experience a little of natural wildlife, and also learn more about the (Great Salt) Lake,” he said.

Other topics that will be emphasized are wise water use, insects, air quality and horticulture.

There will be boardwalk walkways extending from the center out into the ponds which lie next to the facility.

“As this area becomes more and more urbanized, it becomes more and more important to have such a place,” said Anderson.

“We want to make this building as exemplary as possible,” he said. That includes working with the U.S. Green Building Council to certify the building’s “greenness.”

It is one of two such buildings under construction in the state. The other is in Park City.

“Platinum status,” or the highest possible, is being sought, Anderson said. The nearby Utah House was built to incorporate many ecologically sound and energy-saving measures.

The Wetlands Center will incorporate passive solar energy in a non-mechanical design, he said.

Eventually, solar panels are planned that could be positioned to gain the most energy based on the sun’s position, gaining 30-40 percent more efficiency, Anderson explained.

"Kids can be underneath (the towers) so they can at least see that, immediately see what is going on" in terms of solar energy to generate electricity, he said.

A deck area from the building will project over the pond, while the south wall will be constructed entirely of glass. A trombe wall, meanwhile, made of concrete, is designed to capture the sun's energy.

The sun will directly warm water while a bio-filtration sewage treatment system will process all waste on site. There will be waterless urinals, among a variety of energy-efficient systems being used.

Ground-source heating and cooling is also planned, including radiant floor transfer of heating and cooling. Utah native plant landscaping will also be used.

The Legislature has appropriated \$950,000 while private donations are paying the remainder of the estimated \$1.5 million building cost.

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