

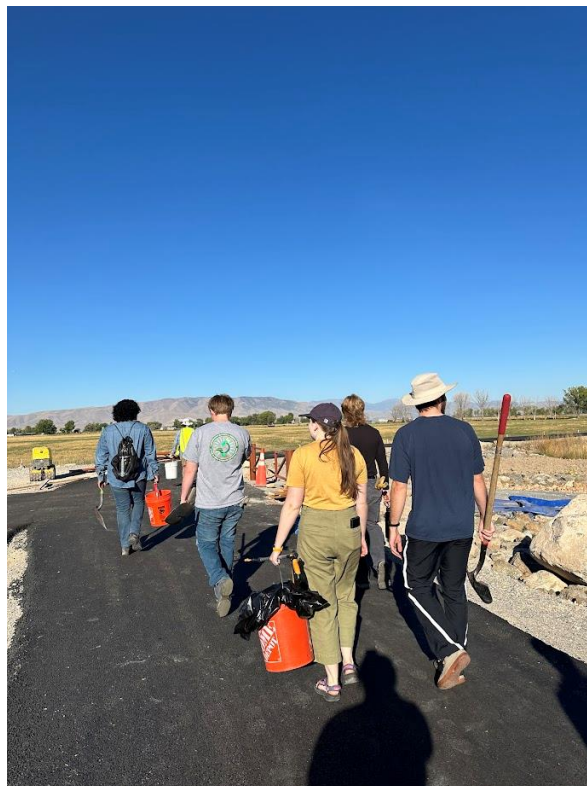
My Participation in the Provo River Clean-Up with the Utah Valley University College of Science

On Friday, September 27, 2024, at 9 am several students from Utah Valley University (UVU) and members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, jointly participated with the UVU College of Science and UVU Sustainability Committee to clean parts of the Provo River. The students from UVU were Ismael Cabadas, Thomas Mogensen, and his wife, Nicholas Robinson, Glory Ellison, Ana Caballero Ferreyro, and Janessa-Michelle Purcell. The goal of the students was to promote and apply the Student Engaged Learning model (SEL), which encourages students and part-time students to solve problems while working together in groups with mentors who will assist the students when required. Therefore, during the event, students from UVU were mentored by Paula Trater, the leader of this initiative, and through her mentoring, students were able to learn why this event would help the local community and the history of the Provo River while contributing to this project.



UVU students, UIMF Club Members, and other Volunteers taking a group photo before starting

The purpose of the Provo River clean-up project is to remove the invasive Tamarisk and Russian Olives that surround the Provo River and remove trash and debris. Also, we learned from Paula the history of the development and movement of the Provo River throughout the development of the local area and the current goal of establishing the Provo Delta to help the local ecosystem. Once everybody for the project arrived, people were split into two different groups, one for the removal of the invasive plants, and the other for the clean-up of trash and debris surrounding the river. From there, we trekked on the trail past the previous points where different groups from earlier in the day had already cleaned and removed the invasive plants. During that trek, Ms. Trater explained that groups had already shown up to help with the project and that future groups would arrive later, so the project was more than a one-group effort.



*UVU Students, UIMF Club Members, and Volunteers walking past previous cleared areas
toward our working area*

Before the group started, Ms. Trater gave everybody seeds to spread around in empty patches of dirt that had been cleared by the previous groups to encourage the growth of local plants. Afterward, we started to clean and remove the invasive plants, and I went with a couple of fellow students and started to remove the invasive plants by using shovels to dig them out. During that time, Ms. Trater walked around helping students, talked about the history of the local plants, and classified several of the local fauna. Near the end of the hour-and-a-half shift, I worked with a couple of students, who were removing debris from past landscaping projects with our shovel due to the threat that the debris has to the local animals.



Other UVU students and I are removing the invasive plants

Lastly, by utilizing the SEL model, students including myself were able to learn about the history of urban development that interfered with the local ecosystem and the conflict over the local ecosystem with invasive plants, and that the plants were brought in by people either knowingly or unknowingly. Hence, by helping the community by participating in this project, we are contributing to the success of our SEL model since the model is what is helping to encourage these types of activities, and the model helps students understand the local community and the problems the local community faces. Also, I enjoyed and was very interested in this project since I live nearby and cycle through the area, hence I have a strong connection to the area. Therefore, this project taught me about the problems I never knew were occurring in the area, and then by talking to Ms. Trater, I learned about the organizations and the methods I can utilize to make this area better.

-Ismael Cabadas, Utah Valley University student