



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

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Public Comment Sought for Sediment Release from Tibble Fork Dam

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is seeking over \$145,000 in penalties and reimbursement from the North Utah County Water Conservancy District (NUCWCD) for releasing metal-laden sediment from Tibble Fork Dam into the American Fork River on Aug. 22, 2016.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement signed today, the water district has agreed to the following terms:

- \$52,500 civil penalty.
- \$92,633.55 for reimbursement to DWQ, mostly to recover sampling and monitoring costs that DWQ incurred from August 23 through Sept. 5, 2016.

The District also agreed to monitor the river until it returns to pre-release conditions.

The public has a chance to comment on this agreement during a 30-day period that runs from March 31 to May 1, 2017.

The settlement addressed requirements outlined in the Notice of Violation and Compliance Order issued to NUCWCD on Sept. 28, 2016, for discharging pollutants that killed numerous fish, degrading water quality beyond state standards and failing to notify DEQ. The penalty is set under state statute and determined based on the impact on public health and the environment.

Last August over 5,000 cubic yards of sediment were released into the North Fork of the American Fork River and caused a significant negative impact on water quality in the American Fork River from the dam site approximately 8 miles down to the mouth of American Fork Canyon. The large volume of sediment killed an estimated 5,200 trout in a 2-mile section of the river above the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork of the American River. DEQ was not officially notified of the incident until a third party reported it on Aug. 23, 2016.

“We want to ensure that the water quality of the American Fork River is restored and that residual sediments from the release don’t degrade the river or threaten public health or aquatic life in the future,” said Walt Baker, water quality director. “Most importantly, we want to make sure that this kind of incident doesn’t happen again.”

Comments can be sent to Kevin Okleberry at kokleberry@utah.gov or P.O. Box 144870, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4870. DWQ must receive comments before 5 p.m. on May 1.

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard and improve Utah's air, land and water through balanced regulation. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)), or call 1-800-458-0145.