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# Facebook announces plan to restore more water than it uses; 2 projects in Utah County benefit

By Staff | Aug 20, 2021



Facebook announced Thursday it is setting an ambitious goal to be water positive by 2030. That means Facebook would restore more water than it consumes globally, as well as here in Utah County.

*“The climate crisis demands urgent action from all of us. At Facebook, we’ve invested in renewable energy and committed to reaching net zero emissions across our value chain in 2030,”* said Facebook representative Melanie Roe. *“We’re also working to connect people with authoritative climate information.”*

Facebook has become a prominent business partner in the Utah County community. It first broke ground in 2018 on its 970,000-square-foot data center in Eagle Mountain.

In February, Facebook announced it will continue to build another 900,000 square feet to its data center, *“keeping construction crews busy for years,”* the announcement said.

At the time, some residents showed concern about the amount of water the huge data center would be using, particularly in heavy drought situations like now.

In announcing the water rejuvenation plans, Facebook said it has also taken on two special water rejuvenation projects locally. The two water restoration projects are replenishing 451.8 million gallons per year, according to the company.

The two Facebook projects include:

**Provo River Olmstead Power Station:** Facebook is restoring an estimated 415.8 million gallons per year in the Provo River. The Olmstead reach of the Provo River is chronically dewatered in the dry summer months. Facebook has partnered with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District to ensure that 528.3 million gallons of water remain in the river during the summer months. This will improve habitat for imperiled species and provide the community with recreational access for fishing, hiking and kayaking.

This project started in the summer of 2020.

**Eagle Mountain Water Reuse:** Facebook is restoring an estimated

Eagle Mountain Water Reuse. Facebook is restoring an estimated 36 million gallons per year in the Cedar Valley Watershed.

Facebook has partnered with Eagle Mountain to improve water resiliency of the community water supply.

*“We have constructed a system that will allow the City of Eagle Mountain to reuse our treated operational process wastewater to irrigate landscaping at City parks,”* Roe said. *“The reuse of water will help reduce pumping from local groundwater and surface water sources and improve the long-term water sustainability in the community.”*

*“Over the last decade, we’ve invested in new ways to make our data centers more water and energy efficient with a focus on sustainable solutions,”* Roe added. *“As of 2020, our entire global footprint of offices and data centers have been supported by 100% renewable energy and we reached net zero emissions. We did this in large part by investing in the development of new clean energy generation in the places where we use the most electricity.”*

In addition, Facebook’s focus on renewable energy has provided hundreds of billions of gallons of water savings since wind and solar energy use less water than fossil fuels, the company said.

*“We’ve already been taking a similar approach with water and have invested in water restoration projects that will replenish more than 850 million gallons of water per year,”* Roe said. *“In regions experiencing high levels of water stress, these projects have already restored about 595 million gallons of water in 2020. These water restoration projects offer significant benefits both to local communities and their surrounding ecosystems, particularly in water stressed regions.”*

These efforts range from sustaining aquatic habitats by supplying fresh water to river systems during dry seasons and providing drinking water to Navajo Nation families, to modernizing agricultural irrigation infrastructure to reduce the amount of water being extracted from at-risk sources.

*“For our current water restoration work under way in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Utah, Oregon, and California, we partnered with trusted, local environmental non-profits and utility providers to identify projects that would have the greatest impact,”* Roe said. *“In the coming years we plan to expand this work internationally, including in Ireland, Singapore, India, UK, and Mexico.”*

*“Becoming water positive by 2030 is a long-term goal, but like our goal to make our entire value chain net zero in 2030, it’s one we’re confident we can achieve based on the enormous advances made over the last decade,”* Roe added.