

## **St. George Rivers Confluence Archaeology and Nature Park Proposal**

Prepared by Greg Woodall

The parcel of land bound by the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers, on the north-east-and south, and Interstate 15 on the west, is proposed as an Archaeology and Nature-themed City Park. This parcel is immediately south of, and adjacent to the existing City of St. George Crosby Family Confluence Park. The City's paved trail system follows the parcel edge, and gives access to the parcel over existing bridges across the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers. Recent volunteer archaeological investigations on the parcel have revealed extensive important prehistoric remains, including pithouses, storage rooms, and petroglyphs, as well as the possible location where Brigham Young stood when the settlement of St. George was being laid out.

It is proposed that St. George City acquire the parcel and establish interpretative trails that tell the story of prehistoric and historic use of this part of the city. Additionally, given the great views and adjacent riparian habitat, displays would give information on the surrounding landscapes and landmarks, as well as the Virgin and Santa Clara rivers.

To fully tell the story, replica historic and prehistoric structures would be constructed, including shade roofs that might have been used at the old settlement of "Lick Skillet"/"Never Sweat"/"Tonoquints." Two replica pueblos consisting of storage and living rooms would be built, like those at the Lost City Museum in Overton, Nevada. Additionally, interpretative signs would have written descriptions and smart-phone QR codes that would have digital images of artifacts and more comprehensive information. Information signs and digital media could provide a wealth of information about the natural and cultural history of St. George and the rivers confluence.

The benefits of such a City Park are manifold, including educational opportunities for school and scout groups, information value for residents and visitors, enhancement of the City's trail system, and opportunities for Heritage tourism thru the nearby Utah Welcome Center, Dixie Center, Public Lands Information Center, and hotels.

### **Action Points**

- Provide information to City officials regarding the Archaeology and Nature Park idea.
- Work on purchase partnerships between the City, the landowner, outside organizations (e.g., the Trust for Public Lands has a program to help cities acquire land for public parks), and other funding sources.
- Develop interpretative opportunities and information in partnership with St. George Parks and Recreation, the Virgin River Program, the Southern Paiute Tribe, the Universities, Dixie Applied Technology College, and St. George schools.
- Build support for Heritage Tourism with the Utah Office of Tourism, the Utah Welcome Center located at the Dixie Center, the St. George Chamber of Commerce, and others.