

Adam R. Eastman, 2006: Brigham Young University, “From Cadillac to Chevy: Environmental Concern, Compromise and the Central Utah Project Completion Act”

This passage from a master’s thesis describes the effects of the Central Utah Project Completion Act of 1992. The Completion Act was a large compromise bill that addressed many people’s environmental concerns with the CUP and made it more financially realistic.

“The Central Utah Project Completion Act brought significant changes to the CUP. It deleted several economically questionable irrigation projects in the original plan and removed some of its last phases. The Completion Act required additional environmental repair efforts overseen by a third party. Many of those efforts not only made up for damage caused by the CUP, but also sought to make up for the environmental harms of hundred years of water diversions in Utah. The Completion Act also compensated the Northern Ute Tribe for their water rights lost to water development.

“In many ways, the Completion Act resolved twenty-five years of complaints from environmental advocates. Groups from the 1960s to the 1980s had all raised the same concerns.

“The Completion Act also added new requirements that led to more ongoing changes to the CUP... The Central Utah Water Conservancy District (which had been placed in charge of the project) altered its plans, sometimes reluctantly, in response to continued environmental concerns. Their new Utah Lake System includes significant measures to protect the endangered June Sucker fish. The Uintah Basin Replacement Project restores thirteen lakes in the High Uintah Wilderness Area, something wilderness advocates have wanted since 1964.”