

# Auto Tour Route 2026 Project Guide

The normal Auto Tour Route will remain closed throughout the spring and summer of 2026 starting on Saturday, April 4. This is due to a planned maintenance-related project. The normal Auto Tour Route will reopen prior to the start of Utah waterfowl hunt season.

## What does the project entail:

Starting in June 2025 and continuing through late 2026, the Refuge will be replacing old water control infrastructure. This project will be completed in two phases. Throughout the tenure of this project, wetland units throughout the Refuge will be dried, with all water removed, to make the construction process easier. As new control structures are completed, water will be dispersed accordingly to prepare for migration. This year, the Refuge is focusing on replacing seven water control structures throughout Units 1, 2, and 3 along the normal Auto Tour Route. Last year, seven structures were replaced in the southwest portion of the Refuge within Units four and five.

## Why is this project taking place:

Currently, the majority of the water control structures throughout the Refuge consist of “stoplog” technology. Essentially, in order to manipulate and manage the flow of water, two people are required to manually lift numerous large, heavy boards together while also standing high above the control structure. At times, a backhoe or other equipment is needed to move boards due to ice or high pressures exerted on the boards from high flows. This management method is considered outdated and has many safety-related concerns. Therefore, in order to streamline the water management process for the future, the new water control structures that are being retrofitted during the construction project will have mechanical radial arm gates installed making water management much more efficient and safer for Refuge staff. This will, in turn, allow for the process of managing water to be more effective and help to maintain critical habitat for the Refuge’s migratory bird species.