

Jordan River Commission Technical Advisory Committee

April 18, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location

This is a virtual meeting conducted via Zoom, with an anchor location at the Jordan River Commission office.

Meeting Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Members

Chris Cline, *Past Chair*

Ali Avery, *Long Range Planner, North Salt Lake City*

Angelo Calacino, *Park Development Project Manager, Salt Lake County*

Cody Lutz, *Planner, Salt Lake County*

Dan Potts, *Aquatic Ecologist, Salt Lake Fish and Game Foundation*

Eric McCulley, *Project Coordinator, Utah Reclamation Mitigation Conservation Commission*

Gina Grandpre, *Senior Planner, Saratoga Springs City*

Isaac Gomez, *Engineer, South Salt Lake City*

Kiani Ellingson, *Water Quality Advisor, Kennecott/Rio Tinto*

Laura Haskell, *Jordan River Basin Area Specialist, Division of Water Resources*

Matt Ryan, *Community Planner, Wasatch Front Regional Council*

Michele Rehbein, *Education Specialist, Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District*

Rose Smith, *Stream Ecologist, Sageland Collaborative*

Sandy Wingert, *Environmental Scientist, Utah Division of Water Quality*

Todd Munger, *Sustainability Director, Lehi City; Jordan River Foundation*

Tom Beesley, *Flood Control Engineer, Riverton City*

Tori Bird, *Conservation Action Coordinator, Utah's Hogle Zoo*

Travis Christensen, *Engineer/Project Manager, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District*

Commission Staff

Rachel Turk, *Communications & Outreach Manager*

Soren Simonsen, *Executive Director/Secretary*

Visitors and Guests

Laura Vernon, *Great Salt Lake Basin Planner, Division of Water Resources*

Tim Davis, *Deputy Great Salt Lake Commissioner*

Samuel Taylor, *Lead Water Quality Restoration Planner, Division of Water Quality*

Bryce Philbrick, *Parks Field Supervisor, Murray City*

Meeting Minutes

Chris Cline, Past Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Introduction and roll call of Technical Advisory Committee members and other meeting participants.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Committee Business

Committee Officer Nominations & Appointments:

There are no nominations for Vice Chair at this time.

Annual Open & Public Meetings Act Training:

Participants viewed the State Auditor Training Video at <https://youtu.be/QNVBuXB7vkM> and Utah Open & Public Meetings Act at <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title52/Chapter4/52-4.html>.

Commission Strategic Planning Update:

Postponed due to limited time.

Web Site Updates:

Postponed due to limited time.

Highlights from the March Committee Field Trip:

Not discussed.

4. Presentations & Discussion- Water Work Group

Great Salt Lake Strategic Plan:

Tim Davis, Deputy Great Salt Lake Commissioner, shared an overview of the recently developed Great Salt Lake Strategic Plan, released in January. He highlighted its connections with the Jordan River Watershed and opportunities for coordination with its ongoing implementation. He reported that better coordination is the first objective of this plan. Other objectives include utilizing the best available science, maintaining a healthy lake elevation of 4,198-4205 ft above sea level, and protecting air and water quality.

Chris Cline asked about the purview of Tim's office and how this Strategic Plan would fit in with other strategic plans that different state agencies have.

Tim replied that his office is working on a visual graphic to show how the different agencies fit together. He reported that, statutorily, the Commissioner's Office has authority over other agencies when it comes to Great Salt Lake. Their Plan encompasses the state's other strategic plans.

Chris asked what the authority of the Commissioner's Office is.

Tim replied that the Commissioner is essentially a "czar" over the other state agencies that do work related to Great Salt Lake. It is not an advisory entity; it has the authority to govern other agencies' activities.

Eric McCulley noted that he had heard about a study to release water from Utah Lake to Great Salt Lake. He asked if Tim could provide a summary of what that could entail.

Tim replied that this study is much more about Utah Lake than Great Salt Lake and is still in the planning stages. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Chris asked how much the lake is predicted to rise with this year's snowmelt.

Tim replied the current estimate is that it may rise 0.9 ft. He added that lake elevation peaks, on average, around May 1st. This is also when irrigation normally starts, but he is hoping that the snowpack will extend that timeframe.

Rose Smith asked if the Plan's target elevation range reflected this peak level normally seen around May, or if it reflects the low point of the year.

Tim replied that it reflects the low point, and their goal is never to see it below 4,198 ft.

Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan:

Laura Vernon filled in for Jake Serago. Laura is the Great Salt Lake Basin Planner with the Division of Water Resources. She shared an update on the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan and the current modeling work for the Jordan River and Great Salt Lake watersheds. The Division is developing its Action Plan to guide the study, as well as how they evaluate and make decisions over the next two years. Water modeling and analysis will be a critical foundation for this work.

Eric McCulley mentioned that he has heard of water being sold for increasing sums and asked if the developed models will incorporate financial information about potential future water transfers. He also asked whether instream flow specialists are part of the conversation.

Laura replied that changes in water pricing would be outside of the scope of this project at this time. She reported that there is a Great Salt Lake Wetlands technical group, but additional groups are welcome to participate.

Chris asked if the impacts and effects of agricultural water use will be considered in these models. She noted that water used for agriculture also sustains certain ecological systems.

Laura replied that she has seen how reducing agricultural water use has caused unintended problems in other areas, such as the Salton Sea. She noted that there are benefits to this water use and that her team would like to find ways for different water uses to continue in more sustainable ways. She also mentioned that results from a recent gap analysis can be found on the project website (<https://water.utah.gov/gsl-basin-integrated-plan/>).

Chris asked if the models would look at the most effective input points in the water system, such as whether it is more effective to add water higher up in the system or closer to Great Salt Lake.

Laura replied that this has been considered. The list of water users they have compiled so far reflects water users that would have a bigger impact.

Soren Simonsen asked if the models consider the ecological services provided by the lake.

Laura replied that the initial modeling tools do not have this piece, but it could be added on later. She noted that separate from the Plan, her office is working on a functional flow project with Utah State University students. This project looks at the amount of water needed in streams and rivers for their proper ecological functioning.

Chris noted that other groups also have separate projects looking at ecological function.

Laura noted that she will talk to Jake about ways for these different models to communicate with each other.

2024 General Legislative Session Updates:

Soren shared a brief update and highlights from the recently concluded General Session of the Utah Legislature. He reported that it was a record-setting year in terms of both the number of bills filed and the number passed.

5. Commission Staff Report

Director's Report:

Soren Simonsen reported that a new Event & Volunteer manager, Julie Williams, had started the onboarding process and would be working full-time shortly. He also described the two upcoming field trips.

6. Upcoming Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 10:00 AM – Commission field trip from Jordan Narrows Park in Bluffdale to Thanksgiving Point in Lehi, to see and discuss cooperative weed management and water resources.

Thursday, May 16, 2024, at 2:00 PM – Committee field trip to see the new GREENBike bike share station, and expanded connections with the Parleys Trail in South Salt Lake and Cross Towne Trail in West Valley City.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/907511.html>.

Meeting minutes prepared by Ren Griffeth, Jordan River Commission Administrative, Grant & Research Specialist, and Soren Simonsen, Commission Secretary.

Meeting Minutes approved 10/17/2024.