

Jordan River Commission Event Advisory Committee

June 13, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location

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

Meeting Participants

Event Advisory Committee Members

Jon Glenn, Chair
Ali Avery, North Salt Lake City
Marissa Beckstrom, Tracy Aviary
Councilmember Tish Buroker, Riverton City
Kyle Fuchshuber, Salt Lake City Sustainability
Angelo Calacino, Salt Lake County
Todd Munger, Lehi City Sustainability, Jordan River Foundation

Commission Staff

Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Secretary
Rachel Turk, Communications & Outreach Manager
Julie Williams, Event & Volunteer Manager

Visitors and Guests

Cindy Kindred, Senior Consultant at Mighty Penguin

Meeting Minutes

Jon Glenn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Chair conducted a roll call of Committee members and Commission staff, and introduction of visitors.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Committee Business

Event Web Sites Updates: Rachel Turk provided an update on the progress of the website. She reported that the two event websites, Get to the River Festival and Golden Spoke event, which were hosted on different platforms, are being integrated into the Jordan River Commission website. She reported that they have been performing overall updates and reorganization of the rest of the website, which will be launching at the end of the month. She invited attendees to look at those updates and give some feedback from the perspective of a new user, to see where information we might be missing. She mentioned that she would send out information to solicit feedback.

Jon Glenn asked if these updates are live right now. Rachel replied that some updates are live, but there is also a development site (a non-public test site) that she will send out to people for review.

Commission Staffing & Budget Updates: Soren Simonsen reported that the Jordan River Commission budget was adopted last week during the Governing Board meeting. He reports that there were several positive aspects to this budget, including an additional staff member. He described the new staff member's role as primarily focused on administrative support, financial management, public meeting management, and assisting with strategic initiatives to help support the ongoing implementation of the Blueprint Jordan River.

Soren also mentioned that there were funds appropriated in the next fiscal year's budget for several different events, including \$5,000 budgeted for the Get to the River Festival, and \$2,000 for the Golden Spoke event. The budget will also add \$1,000 toward the City Nature Challenge event.

4. Commission Events

City Nature Challenge – Friday, April 26 - Monday, April 29, 2024

a) Staff Summary of the 2024 Event: Rachel Turk described the City Nature Challenge, which started a little over a decade ago between two California natural history museums in Los Angeles and San Francisco. It has grown to become an annual, global community-based event using the iNaturalist mobile app that anybody can use to collect observations and identify wildlife and vegetation. These two schools put together a competition to see which school could make the most observations.

During that time, anybody who uses the iNaturalist mobile app to make observations contributes to the total of the observations made. Rachel mentioned that several cities are a part of the local challenge, which is largely headed up by the Museum of Natural History of Utah. The Jordan River Commission tries to put on events where they get people out to make observations.

She mentioned that the Jordan River Commission focuses on educating people about the native species that live along the Jordan River. They provide small games for kids and families that show pictures and teach about what plants, insects, birds, and larger species live along the river.

Marissa Beckstrom added that there was a large turnout even though the weather was very wet and cold, so she feels encouraged to do more for future events.

b) Planning for the 2025 Event: Rachel Turk mentioned that with the addition of Julie to the staff, they hope to have an activity each day of the challenge highlighting different sections of the river, hopefully by next year.

Soren Simonsen added that the Governing Board has provided past guidance to make the presence of the Commission more substantial around the City Nature Challenge. It was adopted in 2018 or 2019 as one of the Commission's signature springtime events. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted much of that, so one of the aspects of Julie's focus will be to lead the Commission to have a greater presence in organizing and managing the City Nature Challenge event, especially focusing on things happening around the Jordan River. With Julie's participation and some funding, Soren is hopeful the Commission will be able to do more with this event.

Golden Spoke – Saturday, May 11, 2024

a) Summary of the 2024 Event: Soren Simonsen reported that there were about 300 participants in the Golden Spoke event. There was also a good crowd of people at the end-of-ride celebration event. He described that this year's event included two 50-mile rides, one started in Ogden and one in Provo, which met at the Tracy Aviary Nature Center at Pia Okwai. This facility has been through a recent major expansion that opened this spring.

Many people who participated in the event weren't familiar with the Aviary, and the Commission staff heard great comments about what an incredible resource it is. He expressed gratitude for the Aviary's support of the event. There were 16 partners this year, including Healthy West Valley, which organized a short family ride that began and returned to the nature center.

Soren reported that the Ogden ride had to be cut slightly shorter because there was major flooding on the Ogden River Parkway that flooded some of the trail. There were also a couple of detours along the Jordan River Trail in sections that were flooded or had construction activity. He mentioned that the feedback that was heard from riders at the start points, midpoints, and the end just seemed very positive.

b) Planning for the 2025 Event: Soren Simonsen reported that the planning committee laid the groundwork for next year's event in a recent meeting. All partners are interested in continuing. Right now, the Commission is tentatively planning to do a full century ride (a 100-mile ride) as part of next year's event. They intend to stage the end-of-ride event at the Provo River Delta Project.

This project will open this fall and will highlight a significant restoration undertaking that's been happening for nearly a decade. Soren noted that it will provide a chance to interact with the Utah Lake Authority, which is also building a lot of trail infrastructure around Utah Lake. Although much of that is still in the planning stages and won't be available for next year's event, they hope to incorporate it in the future. He expressed excitement for the Provo River Delta Project because it bodes well for some work being done around the Jordan River.

The last time a full century ride happened was in 2019, which may have been the most attended Golden Spoke event to date. It was also tied in with the Golden Spike 150 celebration in downtown Ogden as part of the end-of-ride event that year. Soren reports that they are hoping to kind of capitalize on that century ride to raise additional awareness and interest in the event. They are laying the groundwork for next year's event and will have more to report in the October and December Event Advisory Committee meetings.

Jon Glenn asked if the century ride would start in Ogden. Soren replied they are anticipating that it will start in Ogden.

Jon asked if there could be a sort of relay race where folks ride the shorter sections and combine sections as a team. Soren replied that it could be brought up with the planning committee.

Get to the River Festival – September 2024

a) Fundraising & Budget Updates: Cindy Kindred reported that they have raised about \$58,500 so far, about a \$20,000 shortfall, but they still have requests out. She is confident that they can get to about \$70,080, which is about 25% more than was raised last year. In case the goal isn't met, they have looked at the budget and identified ways that they can reduce costs. She summarized a variety of ideas that had previously been brought up and asked for feedback.

Soren Simonsen added that they would like to keep as much of the mini-grant funding as possible. He also noted that the total fundraising is now closer to \$60,500, thanks to the Division of Water Quality pledge just received.

Cindy Kindred, Soren Simonsen, and other committee members discussed the various leads and connections that they will follow up on to establish partnerships and increase funding for the Festival.

b) Event Planning & Coordination Updates: Cindy Kindred, Soren Simonsen, and other committee members discussed ideas for potential Get to the River Festival kick-off and close-out event dates and locations.

Rachel Turk mentioned that there's a lot of talk about Great Salt Lake and the connection between Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake, and that's the Jordan River, so maybe capitalizing on people's focus on those things could be beneficial.

Various committee members agreed with this sentiment and discussed potential ways to highlight this theme of “connections.” They discussed potential keynote speakers that would fit within this theme.

Soren also asked for ideas of individuals or entities to recognize as special supporters of restoring the Jordan River Corridor. He also shared other events that they are working on in addition to the kickoff event and the celebration recognition event. One is the paddle series on Friday afternoons, which have been fun and usually well-attended. Additionally, a Commission field trip typically takes place in September for the Board, committees, the public, and anybody interested. He asked for thoughts about possible field trip locations.

The Committee members discussed potential ideas for the Commission field trip.

5. Other Events

Roundtable Discussion

Soren Simonsen asked if there are any events held by other organizations that the Commission can help to amplify.

Angelo Calacino recommended bringing attention to the county kicking off its Jordan River Regional Park master planning process. He stated that they are going to try to tie that into Salt Lake City's Emerald Ribbon Master Plan as well, which includes their portion of the Jordan River. He also mentioned that they are hoping to partner with the Jordan River Commission for a canoe and kayak tour of the Jordan River.

Soren Simonsen replied that they would be happy to help with that. He also mentioned that many of the docks that were built years ago are still functioning well, even with the high water flows seen this year.

Kyle Fuchshuber mentioned that KRCL is doing a day in the park on September 7th at International Peace Gardens to celebrate 45 years of broadcasting, which may be of interest.

Cindy Kindred stated that she would reach out to them about partnering.

The remaining agenda items were postponed due to time constraints.

6. Communications, Engagement & Outreach

- a) Recent Media Coverage
- b) Upcoming Media Opportunities
- c) Other

7. Upcoming Committee Meeting

- a) Thursday, August 8, 2024

8. Adjourn

Angelo Calacino moved to adjourn the meeting. Ali Avery seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/918927.html>.

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