

Jordan River Commission Governing Board Meeting

October 3, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location

Education Center at Conservation Garden Park
Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
8275 South 1300 West, West Jordan, UT 84088

And remotely via Zoom.

Meeting Attendees

Governing Board Members

Councilmember Bryn Johnson, Draper City
Wendelin Knobloch, Midvale City
Councilmember Sylvia Catten, Millcreek City
Bruce Holyoak, Murray City
Councilmember Ted Knowlton, North Salt Lake
Councilmember Marci Houseman, Sandy City
Gina Grandpre, Saratoga Springs City
Colby Hill, South Jordan City
Sharen Hauri, South Salt Lake City
Mayor Kristie Overson, Taylorsville City
Cory Fralick, West Jordan City
Mayor Karen Lang, West Valley City
Suzanne Harrison, Salt Lake County
Jodi Goldberg, Division of Water Quality
Ben Stireman, Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands
Nathan Lee, Utah Department of Transportation
Shazelle Terry, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Sam Braegger, Utah Lake Authority
Russell Fox, Utah Transit Authority
Betty Naylor, Gardner Heritage Farms
Heidi Hoven, National Audubon Society
Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities
Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary
Eric McCulley, Utah Reclamation, Mitigation, & Conservation Committee
Larry Mullenax, Utah State Fairpark Corporation
Liz Larsen, Utah's Hogle Zoo

Commission Staff

Soren Simonsen, Executive Director
Rachel Turk, Communications & Outreach Manager,
Julie Williams, Event & Volunteer Manager
Ren Griffith, Administration, Grant, & Research Specialist

Gillian Chapman, Intern
Caroline Johnston, Intern

Visitors and Guests

Ali Avery, North Salt Lake
Kathryn Calderon, Salt Lake County
Doug Lund, Utah's Hogle Zoo
Carly Payne, Division of Water Resources
Anna Habben, Mighty Penguin
Christopher Marcinkoski, PORT
Derek Anderson, Office of Senator Mike Lee
Dustin Wiberg, Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation
Isaac Higham, Salt Lake County Council Staff
Jon Glenn, Jordan River Commission Event Advisory Committee
Keith Lawrence, Division of Wildlife Resources
Walt Gilmore, Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation
Anastasia Lyons Osorio, PORT

Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Sylvia Catten, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Identification of Governing Board members and other meeting participants in person and online.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Presentations & Discussion

Utah Lake Authority Introduction & Overview: Sam Braegger introduced himself and provided a brief history of the Utah Lake Authority, which was created approximately two years ago. They are tasked with coordinating the management of Utah Lake and ensuring collaboration between a variety of stakeholders, including federal, state, and local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and others. They aim to take care of Utah Lake for current and future generations in a sustainable way. The Utah Lake Authority is funded directly by ongoing appropriations from the Utah State Legislature. Uniquely, they also have the authority to issue bonds.

Sam stated that shoreline restoration is one of their main projects. He reported that the management of Utah Lake has seen a 70-80% reduction in phragmites infestations over the years. Their biologists are placing up to 25,000 plants in the ground this year. They project being able to place up to 40,000 plants in the ground next year. The Authority is also working to develop a trail system around the entire shoreline, as the existing trails are broken up. They have

been heavily involved with the Wakara Way Conservation Project, which works to protect wetlands and establish trail access. There are now 28 public access points at Utah Lake.

Sam stated that the Authority is not a regulatory body but works very closely with partners such as the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, the Division of Water Quality, the Division of Wildlife Resources, and others to support their planning and initiatives. He stated that they encourage their staff to work closely with staff at other agencies. More information about the Utah Lake Authority can be found at utahlake.gov.

The Utah Lake Authority is hosting a free 2-day symposium October 21-22 at UVU to discuss the work that has been done at the lake and what still needs to be accomplished. All are invited to attend, and free breakfast and lunch will be provided. [Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/utah-lake-symposium-2024-tickets-999443300817>]

Betty Naylor stated that she agreed with much of their planning but asked if the canals from Utah Lake that feed farmlands have been considered.

Sam Braegger stated that the Utah Lake Authority statute clearly dictates that they cannot do anything that would interfere with water rights. He reported that this is because of the importance of maintaining those downstream uses. He stated that they are holding discussions to set up a water level working group and that they are looking to work with various partners and improve water quality.

Salt Lake County Jordan River Regional Park Master Plan: Dustin Wiberg, Christopher Marcinkoski, and Anastasia Lyons Osorio shared an update and overview of the recently launched Salt Lake County Jordan River Regional Park Master Plan (<http://www.centraljordanreconnect.com>), which encompasses portions of Murray, Taylorsville, Millcreek, West Valley City, and South Salt Lake around the Jordan River, between 5400 South and Highway 201.

Christopher stated that work began on this project in 06/2024. Their priorities include improving riverine and ecological function, recreation planning, active transportation planning, and economic development. The project planning schedule spans 14 months, and they are working on growing their public engagement and outreach capacities. They hope to complete their project planning document by August 2025.

Christopher stated that public engagement is very important to this project. He reports that they will hold public meetings in each of the five communities that the park will touch. Their team will also utilize social media and a variety of other advertising means to ensure that there is high public awareness of and engagement in the process. They would like the finished project to resonate with the desires of citizens and provide them with a sense of ownership over the park. The plan has four phases, and public engagement is an important aspect of each phase.

Sylvia Catten mentioned that a few people had previously asked for a copy of the presentation and stated that this information would be sent out.

2024 Get to the River Festival Review & Highlights: Anna Habben provided a summary of the 2024 Get to the River Festival. She reports that they were able to raise \$73,500 in total sponsorship revenue, a \$12,500 increase from last year. There were 20 sponsors this year, compared to 12 last year. Marathon Petroleum was the returning presenting sponsor for the festival. The funding they procured was able to increase promotional visibility, hire temporary

staff for event support, and provide additional seed money or mini-grants to support partner events. They were also able to get events on a variety of community calendars.

Anna reported that there were 33 days of events and 54 total events that took place with the assistance of 30 community partners throughout 14 cities and 3 counties. Final numbers are still being tallied, but she reports that there were thousands of participants. She mentioned that her team had been very impressed by the number of state agencies and local governments that support this festival and expressed her gratitude for their support.

4. Commission Business

Meeting Minutes from recent Governing Board meetings: Soren Simonsen stated that the Jordan River Commission's new staff member was assisting with catching up on meeting minutes. He suggested that it may be best to postpone their adoption to allow Board members more time to review the materials.

Betty Naylor moved to defer the adoption of the meeting minutes until the next meeting, which was seconded by Tim Brown.

There was no further discussion on the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members present.

FY 2025 Budget Amendment #1: Soren provided a summary of the proposed FY 2025 Budget Amendment #1. Income has increased from the additional member contribution from the Utah Lake Authority and increased grant revenue. This includes grant funding that will be used to update the Jordan River website and create a mobile app version. They intend to expand the website to include the entire Jordan River watershed and provide additional educational opportunities.

The budget amendment proposes to transfer an additional amount from the Fund Balance and spend the combined additional funds on computer and software expenses, additional personnel, and grant expenses.

Sam Braegger moved to adopt the FY 2025 Budget Amendment #1, which was seconded by Wendelin Knobloch.

There was no further discussion on the motion.

The budget amendment was unanimously approved by the Board Members present.

Re-appointment of Ex-Officio Partner Organizations: Sylvia Catten reported that representatives for the following entities were up for re-appointment to the Governing Board: National Audubon Society/Audubon Rockies, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, Rocky Mountain Power, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities, Utah Reclamation, Mitigation & Conservation Commission, Utah State Fairpark Corporation. She noted that, if re-appointed, they will each serve an additional 2-year term.

Tim Brown moved to re-appoint the listed Ex-Officio Partner Organizations, which was seconded by Nathan Lee.

There was no further discussion on the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board Members present.

Upcoming Meetings:

November 7, 10:00 AM: Tentative Commission & Watershed Council Field Trip – Jordan Basin Water Reclamation Facility, South Jordan Recycled Water Reuse Pilot Program (<https://www.sjc.utah.gov/529/Pure-SoJo>). This is a follow-up field trip that can be scheduled if there is interest due to the September field trip conflicting with the Utah Leagues of Cities & Towns Conference.

November 20-21: Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium (<https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/watershed/get-involved/watershed-symposium>)

December 5, 10:00 AM: Jordan River Commission Governing Board and Jordan River Watershed Council meeting

5. Commission Staff Reports

Julie Williams, Event & Volunteer Manager: Julie provided a summary of volunteer projects and events from June through September of 2024. There were 1,200 pollinator habitat plants put in the ground at the Galena Soo'nkahni Preserve, 109 volunteers who removed tamarisk sprouts at JRMBR, and 130 volunteers who removed thistle at four events for a total of 816 volunteer hours donated. For the Puncturevine Bounty program, 236 volunteers removed over 2,482 lbs of puncturevine across 13 events, totaling \$5780.50 in bounty to be paid. 90 volunteers participated in 6 canoe cleanups over the summer. 75 volunteers participated in two trail clean-up events and removed 258 lbs of litter. Second Saturday events were successful in removing over 2,300 lbs of trash across 4 events.

Rachel Turk, Communications & Outreach Manager: Rachel announced that the .gov website domain migration has been finalized. Attendees were invited to visit the website and see how the pages for events and volunteers have been restructured. She expressed appreciation for the Governing Board approving the budget amendment and providing additional funding for website upgrades. This will allow the Jordan River Commission to build the website they envision as a useful resource for a variety of demographics, and to almost function as an additional staff member.

She noted that the Commission has partnered with additional organizations for paddling events and increasing public awareness. She offered for Commission staff to assist any entities who are interested in setting up a paddling event and noted that they are working to increase paddling safety awareness along the river.

Ren Griffeth, Administration, Grant & Research Specialist: Ren introduced herself and expressed excitement about joining the Jordan River Commission team. She has experience with operations management and the coordination of research study sites. She reported that she is transitioning her career to focus on research that will help improve environmental and human health, which aligns strongly with the Jordan River Commission's work.

*Items 5b and 5c were postponed due to presenter time constraints and can be found at the end of the recording.

6. Director's Report

Soren Simonsen noted that impacts from the activities of unhoused individuals can be seen across the Jordan River Corridor. He also mentioned that there have been discussions about converting the Oxbow Jail to a large 1,200 to 1,500-bed congregate homeless shelter. He reports that this is concerning because the property is close to the Jordan River and is also in an area that already experiences issues. He also noted that South Salt Lake is a small city that is unlikely to have the resources to shoulder this burden.

*The Director's report was postponed due to presenter time constraints and can be found at the end of the recording.

7. Adjourn

Tim Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Wendelin Knobloch seconded the motion. This was unanimously approved by the Board Members present.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Catten at 11:19.

The Governing Board adjourned and reconvened as the Jordan River Watershed Council.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmnn/sitemap/notice/943633.html>.

Meeting minutes prepared by Ren Griffeth, Jordan River Commission's Administrative, Grant & Research Specialist.

Meeting Minutes Adopted December 5, 2024.