

2025 Forest Service Vault Toilet Pumping

MEMO

To: Executive/Budget/Audit Committee
Chair: Jeff Silvestrini, Co-Chair: Erin Mendenhall, Treasurer and Secretary: Christopher F. Robinson

CC: Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Public Utilities

From: Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Mia McNeil, Community Engagement Coordinator
Ben Kilbourne, Director of Operations

Subject: Forest Service Vault Toilet Pumping and CWC Support

Date: May 23, 2025

Vault toilet pumping on Forest Service land has become a national issue this winter, and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is not an exception. The Salt Lake Ranger District's pumping needs have been largely taken care of by swiping a purchasing card to pay a cost-effective (\$375 per toilet) vendor that is not a contractor with the Forest Service. However, with new restrictions on the use of their purchasing card, they are unable to continue paying this vendor and are working on a Forest-wide contract to cover pumping needs. This contract has not yet been awarded, and there is a possibility that the contract will not be awarded until after some of the toilets are due for pumping. It is also remotely possible that the contract will not be awarded at all. If it *is awarded*, the Forest Service will pay between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per toilet, which will further constrain their resources and their ability to do other important work. If it *is not awarded*, the Forest Service will have no other option and no ability to pump the toilets without the use of their purchasing card. Either way, their resources will be further constrained, and there is a possibility of a true emergency situation in which toilets are full and not able to be pumped.

Within the tri-canyons area, the Forest Service has an arrangement with Cottonwood Canyons Foundation to help take care of the Millcreek Canyon vault toilets, but there is no such arrangement for the 11 vault toilets in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, each of which need to be pumped 1-2 times per year. The Forest Service is seeking other partners who could help fund toilet pumping and pay their preferred vendor, Mountain Ridge Pumping (who does not want to work under contract). This is an opportunity for the CWC to step in and assist.

The annual cost of pumping all the vault toilets in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons at \$375 per pump would be about \$6,400 with Mountain Ridge Pumping, though if the Forest Service contract is awarded, the cost to the CWC and any partners would be significantly less, and would reflect the level of pumping needed between now and the awarding of the contract (perhaps between \$0 and \$3,000). At minimum, the Forest Service is requesting support to cover any potential pumping needs until a contract is awarded. They have specified that this is not currently a *true emergency* because they believe a Forest-wide contract will be awarded, and this is more of an insurance policy and/or a cost-savings, depending on if/when the contract is awarded.



If the Board is amenable, the CWC could pay Mountain Ridge Pumping for the Forest Service with a combination of its own funds and potential additional contributions from the Town of Brighton and/or Salt Lake City as our existing funding partners for Forest Service restroom needs. The CWC's attorney has advised that, under the circumstances, the CWC could budget \$5,000, or another amount as decided by the Board via the upcoming budget approval process, to make these payments on a short-term (one year or less) basis without a contract until the situation has stabilized. In the meantime, the CWC could continue to explore ways to help the Forest Service to continue using Mountain Ridge Pumping within the tri-canyons long-term, even after a Forest-wide contract is awarded, which would be a significant cost savings to the Forest Service. In the short term, staff would like the Board to consider budgeting additional money toward the restroom contract this fiscal year to mitigate any emergency situation that should arise in the Cottonwood Canyons as a result of their current inability to pay anyone to pump.