



## DEPARTMENT of **PUBLIC LANDS**

### **Public Lands Division Updates** **Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry & Trails Advisory Board** **Thursday, Nov 6<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Parks Division**

**Liberty Park** - The Liberty Park Greenhouse is experiencing break-ins and vandalism. Public Lands staff replace broken glass panels as soon as possible and are working with Salt Lake City Police Department to enhance patrols and other security measures to address the issue.

**Cottonwood Park** - Ahead of the Mayor's Bike to Business Day, Public Lands crews removed more than 3,000 pounds of abandoned belongings and trash from Cottonwood Park. The park continues to experience significant misuse, and the pavilions have become a focal point for criminal activity. We are working with the State to address maintenance and safety concerns on the adjacent vacant property, which has fallen into disrepair. In addition, Park Ranger patrols have been increased, and we are evaluating options to temporarily close the pavilions, such as through rolling overhead doors or similar mechanisms, to help reset and stabilize the park.

**Wildfire Safety** - Wildfire Safety at the PL Building: staff have effectively built and will create a maintenance schedule for a fire break along our southern border at the Public Lands Office. With the Tiny Homes Village's permission, and after two recent human-caused grass fires that needed emergency response, Public Lands staff have had heavy equipment out on the southern fence line (Tiny Homes property) building an approximately 20-foot fire break. Ongoing conversations will include the property owner's care of each side of the fence to control fire outbreaks.

**RAC** - Due to recent rainfall, both the Public Lands equipment yard as well as the RAC parking lots and some playing fields were flooded. Costs associated with this flooding, which significantly impacted tournament play at the RAC and equipment yard access at the PL building, are being tracked.

**Employee Safety** - With a very powerful and tragic reminder of traffic vs. pedestrian safety happening near the Public Lands offices in the month of October, our teams will be reviewing and improving, where needed, their operational safety plans regarding work in or near traffic zones.

**Rosewood Park Field Conditions Update** - The multi-use fields at Rosewood Park are currently in good condition, though an ongoing gopher issue continues to impact certain areas. While some sprinkler heads still require adjustment, maintenance crews have addressed safety concerns by filling in low spots throughout the fields. The baseball field is undergoing renovation in preparation for use by the Salt Lake City School District in the spring, with construction efforts actively underway. Additionally, a new softball field is being constructed just east of the baseball field, with completion also targeted for next spring. The project is operating under a tight timeline, and progress is being made at an accelerated pace to meet the

established deadline. Seasonal irrigation blowout is scheduled in the near future, and fertilizer will be applied next week to promote healthy turf growth for the upcoming year.

**Pavilion Winter Closures:** Due to vandalism, misuse (fires, large groups, excessive trash), and drug and alcohol abuse, three parks will have their pavilions temporarily fenced off: Cottonwood, Jordan, and the Rice Pavilion in Liberty Park. Due to lower temperatures, Parks is seeing a number of warming fires in regular parks, along urban trails, and on Natural Lands. All-Pro Security is helping with extended sweeps and addressing fires when they encounter them, but it is a large and widespread problem.

## **Planning & Design**

### **ALLEN PARK**

Construction for the water/fire line in Allen Park is anticipated to begin in mid-to-late November. A contractor has been selected through a formal bidding process, and we are in the final stages of procurement. Due to the nature of Allen Park, Public Lands has determined it is in the best interest of the project and for public safety to close the park during construction. We anticipate construction lasting 3-4 months. Our communications team is preparing materials and a strategy to let the public know of the upcoming construction and park closure.

Public Lands has engaged Utah artist Daniel Fairbanks to perform restoration/stabilization work on three historic art elements in Allen Park. The work should be completed by mid-November. Daniel is working on the concrete headless deer, the Emigration Creek stone and concrete light pillar with mosaics, and the stone arch in front of the Allen home. We are grateful to have someone of Daniel's caliber working in Allen Park. Daniel grew up in Sugarhouse.

### **MILLER BIRD REFUGE**

The 100% design review meeting for Miller Bird Refuge was on 10/22/25. The scope of work was defined by the City Council in October of 2023 and includes modifications to: make the park more accessible; protect and repair the historic WPA-era stone retaining walls; and stabilize eroding crib walls that serve to hold up the trail in multiple locations. The consultant is working on permitting, while Public Lands simultaneously prepares to go out to bid once permits are in place. We anticipate construction in early 2026 and will coordinate with Salt Lake County Flood Control on timing for creek work.

## **Trails & Natural Lands Update**

### **Wasatch Hollow Preserve Conditions:**

The pond in the wetland on the Wasatch Hollow Preserve is fed by a spring and groundwater and may fluctuate depending on precipitation levels throughout the year. We have no control over adjusting these levels.

### **Park Ranger Program:**

Angela Bowman started this week as our second Park Ranger Supervisor. She is a former Law Enforcement Ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore and served for over a decade in the



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military prior, gaining valuable supervisory experience. Angela and Owen, our current Supervisor, will split the team in half so that our 18 Ranger team can receive more coaching and oversight of operations and conduct.

### **Urban Forestry:**

On Friday, October 10th, Tony Gliot, Urban Forestry Division Director, will be participating in the American Planning Association (Utah Chapter) fall conference as a presenter and panelist. The session is titled 'Trees are Infrastructure Too.' The Forester will speak about the differences between trees and other civil infrastructure, the challenges to maintain urban forest infrastructure, and the questions that Planning professionals need to be asking if our Cities are to maximize the benefits of urban trees.

New Urban Forestry Employee Mina Brown, Forest Area Service Coordinator



### **SLC Foothills Wildfire Mitigation – Use of Specialized Equipment**

Rocky Mountain Power is actively working on a transmission and distribution line project to reduce wildfire risk along the wildland-urban interface in the Salt Lake City foothills. As part of this initiative to improve safety, reliability, and long-term resilience, 1884 Line Co. has been contracted to carry out the work.

At 1884 Line Co., we recognize the ecological, recreational, and cultural importance of the Salt Lake City foothills. This area is not only a cherished part of our community but also a vital habitat for local wildlife. To protect this landscape while delivering wildfire-hardened infrastructure, we are utilizing highly specialized equipment designed to minimize environmental impact. These include:

- **Utility Helicopters** – These helicopters are specifically designed for utility work and will be used to transport poles to and from steep terrain. By eliminating the need for large access roads typically required for pole trailers, we significantly reduce ground disturbance and preserve native vegetation.
- **Spider Excavators** – Engineered for steep and rugged environments, these machines “crawl” like spiders across slopes and utilizes a technique called “drive and crush.” This method protects root systems and minimizes soil disruption, allowing vegetation to naturally regenerate the following season. Spider excavators are rare and in high demand across North America due to their unique capabilities and low environmental footprint.

By using this equipment, 1884 Line Co. can access remote pole locations that previously required invasive access routes or the use of pack animals. This approach helps maintain the integrity of the natural landscape and supports long-term ecosystem health.

Due to the limited availability of this specialized equipment, it is essential that construction proceeds on schedule to ensure continued access and minimize delays.