

Jordan River Commission Governing Board Meeting

October 2, 2025 | 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, Vice Chair, Draper
Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities
Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary
Cory Fralick, West Jordan (Alternate)
Mayor Dustin Gettel, Midvale
Gina Grandpre, Saratoga Springs (Alternate)
Lisa Hartman, Salt Lake County Mayor's Office (Alternate)
Sharen Hauri, South Salt Lake (Alternate)
Colby Hill, South Jordan (Alternate)
Bruce Holyoak, Murray (Alternate)
Heidi Hoven, National Audubon Society
Michael Horrocks, Wasatch Rowing Foundation
Brad Knoles, Rocky Mountain Power
Liz Larsen, Utah's Hogle Zoo
Chloe Leaver, Utah Governor's Office (Alternate)
John Mackey, Utah Division of Water Quality
Councilmember Tawnee McCay, Riverton
Betty Naylor, Gardner Heritage Farms
Councilmember Brad Parry, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation
Scott Peters, Jordan River Foundation (Alternate)
Shazelle Terry, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (Alternate)
Councilmember William Whetstone, West Valley City

Commission Staff

Jens Ammon, Jordan River Restoration Coordinator
Ren Griffeth, Administrative, Grant & Research Specialist
Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator
Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Lily Bosworth, Jacobs Construction
Councilmember Tish Buroker, Riverton (Alternate)
Benn Buys, Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration (UFAIR) District
Jon Glenn, Chair, Event Advisory Committee
Mike Guymon, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities (Alternate)

Cindy Kindred, Mighty Penguin – Get to the River Festival Consultant
Wendelin Knobloch, Midvale (Alternate)
Renn Lambert, LimnoTech
Wayne Niederhauser, State Homeless Coordinator
Sarah Nielson, Utah Office of Homeless Services
Marian Rice, University of Utah, Chair, Technical Advisory Committee
Matt Schulz, Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center
Sandy Wingert, Utah Division of Water Quality (Alternate)

Meeting Minutes

Bryn Johnson, Vice Chair, chaired the meeting and called the Governing Board meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

1. Governing Board Welcome, Roll Call & Introductions

At the start of the meeting, attendees were asked to mark their attendance using an online form rather than conducting verbal introductions.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Presentations & Discussion

a. State Homeless Services Updates

Wayne Neiderhauser, State Homeless Coordinator, provided an update on the recently proposed Homeless Services Campus near the Jordan River Parkway in Salt Lake City, and reviewed the current status of homelessness in Utah, including Utah Homeless Services programs, upcoming legislative initiatives, and local government cooperation and coordination of solutions.

Wayne began the discussion with an overview of the need for additional shelter space, noting that at least 1,300 beds are required, with 900 needed in Salt Lake County alone. He highlighted that existing shelters are full and there isn't enough space available. The Point-in-Time count showed an unprecedented 19% increase in homelessness over the year before, indicating a growing problem. Salt Lake City has hired a new police chief and increased enforcement efforts. Wayne reported that these efforts primarily result in moving unsheltered individuals around, rather than resolving their homelessness.

The search for a suitable property for a new shelter has been ongoing, with many available locations being on landfills or wetlands. A property on 2200 West in Salt Lake City was identified, consisting of 16 acres, with potential for future expansion. The location is near I-215, surrounded by warehouses and small farms, with very few residents. Safety concerns were raised by some nearby residents, which Wayne's team also shares. He discussed the concept of the large, campus-style shelter they are planning, drawing inspiration from a successful example in San Antonio, where treatment and other services are located on-site. This approach is seen as economically viable with a large number of people on-site, allowing for mental health treatment and other resources to be provided in conjunction with shelter.

The current system includes Homeless Resource Centers (HRCs) like the Gale Miller and Geraldine facilities, which provide about 700 beds. The new campus would centralize services while HRCs could potentially transition to addressing subpopulations, such as seniors or family-specific needs. The centralized campus would offer a low-barrier shelter with intensive engagement to help individuals find pathways to stability. He also acknowledged concerns about mosquitoes and transportation associated with this new site. A shuttle system already exists between resource centers, and a shuttle at the new campus would transport people to and from public transit, enabling them to access work and other services.

Legislative authorization for the property was secured in the 2025 State General Session. The property is under contract for purchase, with completion expected in March. Discussions are taking place around using available

funds and seeking additional appropriations. A safety and security plan is in place, with a \$4 million budget for public safety and over \$1 million for security on campus.

Betty Naylor asked a question regarding food availability.

Wayne replied that HRCs currently provide three meals a day. The new campus will also offer three meals a day, which will be prepared centrally and distributed to resource centers and the new shelter.

Dustin Gettel, as Mayor of a shelter city, expressed gratitude for the progress, acknowledging the many years of effort and the challenges involved.

Wayne expressed appreciation for the comment and highlighted the cost-effectiveness of a permanent, year-round facility compared to temporary winter shelters.

Michael Horrocks asked a clarifying question about the new facility location.

Wayne clarified that the property is at 2200 West, 2500 North, which is in Salt Lake City due to a recent annexation.

Michael also asked a question about a homeless services development north of Indiana Avenue.

Wayne identified this property as The Other Side Village. This project, in partnership with Salt Lake City, involves building tiny homes on a reclaimed landfill. Approximately 20 tiny homes are currently up, with an eventual goal of 400, plus on-site services. He also clarified that this is considered housing rather than shelter, as the idea is to move people into long-term housing quickly.

Scott Peters asked Wayne to speak to the operating costs of HRCs.

Wayne replied that operating HRCs costs \$53 per day per individual. This includes 24/7 staffing, case managers, lights, and building maintenance, totaling \$9-10 million per facility annually. Much of the food and clothing is donated, and medical services are often free to the clients of HRCs. The new campus is estimated to cost \$66 per bed per day due to increased services. These costs were contrasted with the higher costs of incarceration (\$136 per day in county jail), a mental health crisis center (\$900 per day), hospital stays (\$400 per day), and emergency room visits.

Tim Brown noted that much of the daily operating costs of these facilities come from paying staff, and that these facilities typically operate with minimal staff and resources. He asked about the plans for Davis and Utah counties.

Wayne replied that legislation was passed recently that requires both counties to have a winter response plan. Weber and Washington counties already have shelters. Utah County has a facility that accommodates 100-150 people per night during the winter season. Davis County recently started providing shelter on Code Blue nights when temperatures drop. Both counties are working towards more permanent shelter facilities, with Davis County aiming for 40-50 beds within 2-3 years. It was emphasized that homelessness starts in every city, but only a few are actively addressing it. The difference between winter responses (beds open every day and night from Oct 15-Apr 30) and Code Blue shelters (beds open only on specific cold nights) was explained.

Brad Parry asked whether specific tribal identity is documented when people enter shelters. He also asked about volunteer opportunities at the new shelter. He noted that the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation is interested in volunteering and providing services to members of their tribe who are in need.

Wayne replied that general demographic information is collected, but not on specific tribal membership. He would be very interested in partnering and noted that they will need volunteers, especially those with skilled backgrounds like social work. He noted that he will be in contact with Brad.

Tish Buroker asked about what works well and what could be improved at the existing Pamela Atkinson center.

Wayne replied that safety was a key issue. The Shelter Cities Mitigation Fund, created in 2017, provides funding to cities with shelters. This fund has helped cities like Midvale and South Salt Lake develop police units with licensed social workers who understand mental illness and addiction, proving to be a best practice in proactively reducing unsheltered homelessness. The need for other cities to have their own shelters and crisis-trained police groups was emphasized. He noted that concerns were raised about the new 1300-bed facility diluting existing mitigation funds, which are based on beds and people served. An additional \$4 million in the budget is being considered to address this.

Soren Simonsen noted the decentralized government structure of the Wasatch Front, compared to San Antonio's more centralized approach. San Antonio, with nearly 75% of its regional population within one city, has more local government levers to address homelessness. The Wasatch Front, with Salt Lake City representing less than 10% of the regional population, requires more cooperation across multiple communities and counties. He asked what efforts are being made to facilitate regional cooperation.

Wayne replied that efforts to bring together the Wasatch Front on a regional level are underway, including winter plans and potentially centralizing Continuums of Care (COCs) to improve coordination and focus on prevention and housing solutions beyond immediate shelter needs. He noted that additional cooperation is needed.

Soren suggested exploring rapid solutions for the interim period before the new campus is fully operational. He asked about options such as establishing areas that allow sanctioned camping.

Wayne highlighted the success of micro-shelters, which are heated and cooled units costing \$12,000 each, in Salt Lake City. These provide personal space, have low public safety impact, and lead to more stable outcomes for individuals. The plan is to expand these micro-shelters, aiming for at least 300 units by winter.

b. Emergency Service & Response Updates

Matt Schulz, a GIS specialist with the Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center (SLVECC), provided an update on the ongoing challenges and efforts to address emergency service and response requests around the Jordan River Parkway.

Matt presented on the importance of signage along the Jordan River Trail (JRT) for public safety. Existing signs are helpful for identifying locations, allowing dispatchers to assign addresses and direct emergency responders. Cell phone triangulation also assists, but underlying location information from signs is crucial for accuracy.

More frequent JRT signs, especially sub-mile markers like those in Salt Lake City, were recommended. Naming the east and west sides of the trail could also aid in location identification. Matt noted that consultants and contractors should be asked to provide GPS locations of signs as GIS data.

Brynn Johnson asked Matt Schulz about using "What Three Words" as a location tool.

Matt confirmed it is in their system and is a great tool, but the use of this app still benefits from a physical reference, like a sign.

Brynn asked if it would be helpful to promote its use to trail users.

Matt replied that this would be helpful.

c. Public Safety Discussion

Attendees participated in an open discussion about increasing public safety concerns, such as the proliferation of electric and other motorized mobility vehicles and devices on the JRT, the Commission's role in regional cooperation, and coordinating approaches and best practices for public safety.

Soren Simonsen opened the discussion, emphasizing the importance of public safety on the trails, particularly with the proliferation of mobility devices (e-bikes, scooters, etc.). A recent hit-and-run e-bike incident in South Jordan, resulting in serious injury and hospitalization, was cited. He suggested considering measures like speed limit signs and additional signage about rules of the road, especially around blind corners and under bridges where visibility is poor.

Dustin Gettel, an avid user of the JRT, acknowledged the long-standing issues and the increase in faster vehicles. He questioned the enforceability of speed limits, noting the rapid transition between cities on the trail and the lack of funding for police enforcement. He emphasized the need for a standardized approach and agreement across all cities for any signage or enforcement.

Michael Horrocks suggested placing speed bumps as a possible solution for blind corners.

Soren raised concerns about their impact on people with mobility impairments.

Tish Buroker mentioned that Riverton residents would like to see additional markers, such as quarter-mile markers, and educational resources.

Dustin suggested inexpensive pavement markings as a possible alternative to costly signs and lighting.

Cory Fralick noted that West Jordan will be implementing signs that say the speed limit is 10 miles per hour when pedestrians are present, since many bikers enjoy going faster when the trail is empty.

Soren noted that a uniform trail sign system for the entire Jordan River already exists, but only a portion has been implemented. He suggested that staff could work on recommendations for spacing, common language, and best practices, including trail etiquette. He suggested potentially carving out funding from the Jordan River Recreation Area Program Fund in the next budget cycle to support these efforts in a more coordinated way.

Bruce Holyoak expressed concerns about enforcing rules for motorized vehicles on the pathway, citing past difficulties with enforcing "walk your bike" rules on boardwalks. He emphasized the need to protect pedestrians and decide what is allowed on the trail.

Tim Brown suggested a different approach to speed bumps that involves a series of posts that require users to negotiate around them, preventing high-speed travel.

Soren asked if Laura Briefer had any information to share about speed limit signs and other measures utilized in Salt Lake City, noting that this issue is outside of her normal jurisdiction.

Laura Briefer replied that she is not aware of the specifics, but is happy to take the question to her team and relay that information back.

Soren proposed that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which includes expertise in trails and parks, work on recommendations for sign standards, pavement markings, speed limits, and policies for electric motorized vehicles. These recommendations would not be binding but would provide common goals and best practices for all jurisdictions working on projects along the Parkway.

Bryn Johnson suggested the inclusion of a trail etiquette section to encourage users to indicate their approach to pedestrians.

d. Get to the River Festival Summary and Highlights

Cindy Kindred of Mighty Penguin Consulting provided a summary of the 2025 Get to the River Festival, which wraps up this week. The Festival had 22 sponsors, with Marathon Petroleum as the presenting sponsor, contributing \$15,000 and an additional \$2,000 through employee voting. Marathon also provided \$5,000 for branded water bottles that were distributed at events. Gold sponsors, contributing \$5,000 to \$15,000, included

Chevron, Enbridge Gas, Larry H. Miller Real Estate, KRCL, Salt Lake County's ZAP Tier II grant, Swire Coca-Cola, and Thanksgiving Point.

Silver sponsors included the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, Rio Tinto Kennecott, Rocky Mountain Power, Utah's Hogle Zoo, and Zions Bank. Festival supporters included IC Group, the Langdon Group, the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation, the Utah Division of War Quality, the Utah Division of Water Resources, and Utah Transit Authority.

The Festival raised \$84,900 in cash, doubling the funds raised over the last three years. In-kind donations totaled over \$7,500, with IC Group helping with printing posters, passports, stickers, and postcards. Thanksgiving Point donated space for the Celebration & Recognition event, and KRCL provided 100 advertisement spots to share with partners for promotion, as well as a spot on their RadioACTIVE program.

Soren Simonsen noted that many sponsors are also partners and members of the Commission, and their additional support for the Festival indicates how meaningful it is. All contributors have a vested interest in the River, whether through water quality initiatives, land management, environmental programs, or education. Many organizations also organize extensive volunteer activities, with Marathon, Chevron, and Larry H. Miller bringing out hundreds of volunteers annually. The community and sponsors' support, including physical efforts, is greatly appreciated.

The Festival included 32 days of events, with a total of 57 events involving Commission partners. Outstanding Friends who were recognized included Mayor Dirk Burton of West Jordan, Lon Richardson Jr. from the Jordan River Foundation, Murray City and Murray School District, Seven Canyons Trust, and Laura Hanson, the first employee of the Commission.

Tish Buroker clarified that Riverton City has had an educational event for over 10 years, not a cleanup, with entities from 10 different organizations participating.

Soren requested feedback from those involved in organizing, participating, hosting, or attending events regarding whether the Festival should continue in its present form or undergo changes for next year. Comments can be shared during the meeting or by reaching out to staff members. He thanked Cindy and Anna Habben for their significant contributions to organizing and managing the Festival.

4. Commission Business

a. **[Action Item] Adopt August 7, 2025, Governing Board Meeting Minutes**

Dustin Gettel moved to adopt the August 7, 2025, meeting minutes. Michael Horrocks seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by the Board members present.

b. **Outline and Discussion of Governing Board and Watershed Council Meeting Schedule for 2026**

Soren discussed the Governing Board and Watershed Council meeting schedule for 2026. A recommendation from the Executive Committee proposed alternating monthly meetings for the Governing Board and Watershed Council, rather than combining them. This would provide a full two-hour meeting for each, increasing the frequency of meetings but allowing for more in-depth discussion, especially for Watershed Council topics. January and July would be exceptions due to holidays. This approach aims to maintain momentum for the Watershed Council and its engagement in local activities and representation to the State Watersheds Council and legislature.

Heidi Hoven, Vice Chair of the Watershed Council, noted her support for this schedule to facilitate better discussion and engagement.

The proposal received general support from attendees, and Soren stated that he would send out an email with the proposed schedule.

c. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Thursday, December 4, 2025, 10:00 AM – Governing Board & Watershed Council Meeting

5. Staff Reports

a. Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager

Rachel Lyn highlighted efforts between June and September. A recent photo and film project involved six days of filming and photo shoots, resulting in five short reels nearing completion and two short films also being finalized. These visuals will be used on the new website and for marketing.

News stories from the past few months included extensive coverage of the Get to the River Festival, and Rachel thanked Mighty Penguin for their marketing support. Harmful algal blooms, originating in Utah Lake and moving into the Jordan River, were also discussed, with monitoring ongoing and low levels of harmful bacteria detected at 1700 South. Another news item covered more water being moved to the Great Salt Lake for testing purposes, to see if adding more water to the River in the fall could alleviate water quality concerns. Safety on the trail was also a topic, along with increased education on e-bikes.

For education and outreach, an education intern was hired over the summer. She had been facilitating brainstorming sessions with partners and educators, which will continue as the Commission works to develop an educational curriculum around stormwater and water quality. The team participated in the Utah Science Teacher Association poster session and plans to attend the Utah Society of Environmental Educators event. A career fair at Hogle Zoo allowed interaction with about 500 middle and high school students, educating them about environmental science careers. Various paddles, including the Lake-to-Lake series and a series during the Festival, were held, along with partner paddles. A media tour with the Great Salt Lake Collaborative was a highlight for outreach.

Communication efforts, including social media followers and newsletter subscribers, continue to grow. The website is undergoing a final content review and is expected to launch this fall, integrating new videos and photos. A developer was hired for the My Jordan River mobile app, with the discovery phase starting soon and project completion expected in the spring. Upcoming events this fall include several conferences for tabling, presenting, and networking. Work is also underway on the annual report for 2025. A new project exploring the creation of a youth coalition, similar to a Technical Advisory Committee but made up of high school students, is generating interest.

b. Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator

Caroline Johnston, the new Event and Volunteer Coordinator, presented on behalf of Shelby Strickler, who previously held the position as a seasonal employee. Vegetation projects included thistle removals, with 92 volunteers contributing 184 hours across six events. Eight canoe cleanups involved 105 volunteers who removed approximately 6,800 pounds of trash. Five trail cleanups, including one with Chevron, saw 242 volunteers remove over 2,600 pounds of trash. Second Saturday events from May to August involved around 20 volunteers per event, gathering 150-250 pounds of trash each time.

Festival events included the Pedal the Parkway series, with three events and 44 participants, partnering with organizations like Bike Utah and Utah's Hogle Zoo. Five Walk and Talk events had 154 participants in total, partnering with various cities and organizations. Looking ahead, October has five more canoe cleanups, six trash cleanups, three planting events, and one invasive plant removal event scheduled.

c. Jens Ammon, Jordan River Restoration Coordinator

Jens Ammon reported that, after the completion of Puncturevine Bounty events, a final total of 2840 pounds of puncturevine were removed, with over \$7,000 paid out to participating organizations, which ultimately goes back into the community to fund other important work.

With funding from the Salt Lake County Transportation Choice grant, 10.6 miles of the Jordan River were treated by Utah Conservation Corps Crews (UCC) to improve navigability of the water trail. There are twelve sites for phragmites control along the River, which include herbicide treatment in the summer and mowing in the winter. Russian olive and tamarisk control is also underway with UCC crews. UCC crews will also be visiting puncturevine and thistle sites that volunteers were unable to get to. Jens summarized several projects that are currently supported by grants from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL), which include Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) and Jordan River Restoration Zone fund recipients.

Volunteers and UCC crews will also be helping to plant about 9,000 plants from the Utah Pollinator Habitat Program along the River. Additionally, 300 Fremont cottonwoods and 300 peachleaf willows will be planted in Midvale, Taylorsville, and Draper.

6. Director's Report

Soren Simonsen welcomed Caroline Johnston, who recently joined the Commission as full-time staff, and thanked Shelby Strickler, who recently left for an opportunity in Spain, for her outstanding work. He also thanked Rachel Lyn and interns Amelia Miller, Sage Leeman, and Francis Schneider for their work over the past few months, especially during the busy Festival season. Francis's internship was funded by the Jordan River Foundation, which has also provided additional funding for developing relationships with school districts and education partners. Soren also acknowledged Jens Ammon for his restoration work and Ren Griffeth for her administrative and grant support, and thanked them for their assistance during the Festival.

Legislative initiatives include a partnership with the National Audubon Society to develop a resolution supporting the preservation and conservation of areas around the South Shore of the Great Salt Lake, which is fed by the Jordan River. The Salt Lake County Council recently unanimously passed a similar resolution. Recent state funding of \$200 million for habitat preservation and restoration highlights growing interest in the interconnectedness of these systems, with the health of the Great Salt Lake dependent on efforts around the River.

Soren concluded by mentioning upcoming opportunities, including the Utah Lake Symposium on the 30th and 31st of this month, and the annual Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium in November, which is free of charge. Both events offer networking opportunities and a chance to be inspired by ongoing work.

7. Adjourn

Tim Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Dustin Gettel seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/1022121.html>.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Ren Griffeth and Soren Simonsen, Secretary.

Adopted December 4, 2025.