

Jordan River Commission Event Advisory Committee

Thursday, April 9, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location

The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom, with an anchor location at the Jordan River Commission office.

Meeting Attendees

Event Advisory Committee Members

India Nielsen, Chair, Parkway user & nearby resident
Kyle Fuchshuber, Vice Chair, Salt Lake City Sustainability
Ali Avery, North Salt Lake Planning
Lauren Brady, Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation
Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek City Council
Jon Glenn, Parkway user

Commission Staff

Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Commission Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Anna Habben, Mighty Penguin – Get to the River Festival Consultant

Meeting Minutes

India Nielsen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting proceeded with a roll call of Event Advisory Committee members.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Committee Business

- a. Meeting Minutes from February 12, 2026 ([00:03:09 on audio recording](#))

Ali Avery moved to adopt the February 12, 2026 meeting minutes. Lauren Brady seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

Voting was unanimously in favor of the motion by Committee members present.

- b. Committee Vacancies ([00:10:18 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen reported that the appointments of Hillary Whittaker and Will Freund are pending Governing Board approval, which he intends to facilitate at the June meeting. Should these appointments proceed, the Committee will continue to have vacancies, prompting a search for candidates with experience in education or community engagement. Soren emphasized the value of increased educator representation and noted that outreach to Tracy Aviary and the Hogle Zoo regarding potential staff interest is ongoing. Additionally, he proposed inviting Jordan River Commission Governing Board members to serve on the committee. Per the Commission Bylaws, the Committee is composed of 7 to 11 members.

4. Commission Events

a) 2026 City Nature Challenge ([00:15:40 on audio recording](#))

Rachel Lyn and Soren Simonsen provided an update on the 2026 City Nature Challenge and related Earth Day initiatives. Soren outlined upcoming Earth Day activities, including a clean-up kit assembly day with the Department of Environmental Quality, two scheduled canoe clean-ups, and a clean-up event hosted by the Larry H. Miller Company. He also noted that bridge reconstruction in Salt Lake City is currently underway, resulting in temporary river navigation closures.

Rachel reported on additional Commission Earth Day efforts. Upcoming engagements include the University of Utah's Eco Fest and tabling at the Alta Earth Day event, alongside the development of Earth Day-focused educational curricula.

Rachel detailed four planned City Nature Challenge events designed to introduce the public to the iNaturalist application and facilitate "bioblitz" activities. A bioblitz is a group gathering to document observations of local plants and animals. These events are being executed in partnership with various community and municipal organizations. Soren explained further that the scientific community validates these iNaturalist contributions, providing accurate data. Rachel noted that public participation via iNaturalist is encouraged throughout the Challenge period, even if not attending specific events. Soren added that this event has a Commission budget of \$1,000, and staff is exploring yard signs to increase public outreach and awareness.

b) 2026 Golden Spoke Ride ([00:32:25 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen provided an update on the 9th annual Golden Spoke Bike Ride event scheduled for May 16, 2026. This event, which originated upon the completion of the Jordan River Parkway trail in 2018, continues as an annual celebration. The ride will feature two 50-mile starting locations in Provo and Roy, converging with an end of ride celebration at the Tracy Aviary Nature Center at Pia Okwai in South Salt Lake.

Soren reviewed the planned routes, rest stops and shorter "alternate" starts, and rider amenities. Currently, approximately 250 individuals are registered, with a registration cap of 600 attendees for the concluding event. The end of ride event permit limits participants to 500. Soren indicated volunteers are being recruited to augment event staff support. Interested volunteers are encouraged to contact Caroline Johnston. He also acknowledged the various partners and community organizations contributing to the planning efforts. Additional information is available at goldenspoke.net, and a follow up report will be presented at the next meeting.

c) 2026 Get to the River Festival ([00:45:28 on audio recording](#))

Anna Habben provided a fundraising update, reporting total contributions of approximately \$107,000, consisting of \$102,000 in cash and \$5,000 in in-kind advertising sponsorships. Anna noted that discussions regarding financial support are ongoing with Mountain America Credit Union and Zions Bank. Anna shared that Hogle Zoo intends to support the Festival as a gold sponsor through in-kind support of the Celebration & recognition Event at their facility. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation will become a second Presenting Sponsor, in addition to Marathon. Soren noted that Enbridge is supporting the Festival with a \$10,000 sponsorship, and an additional \$2,000 contribution to the Commission to support its public safety initiative, for a total of \$12,000. Soren also noted that funding is also being requested from Wells Fargo and

Northrop Grumman, not as Festival sponsors, but to support the 9/11 Day of Service community engagement during the Festival.

Soren gave an update on the Jordan River Friends Celebration & Recognition Event, which is planned toward the end of the month. Soren noted that Hogle Zoo has offered their outdoor dining hall as a venue, and the planning team is working out details to share at the next meeting. Soren requested that the Committee might help identify honorees for recognition at the event, including an outstanding elected official, education individual or organization, and volunteer individual or organization.

d) Upcoming 2026 Commemoration & Day of Service Opportunities ([01:21:50 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen reviewed the recent discussions regarding the 9/11 Day of Remembrance and Earth Day. He shared feedback from the Governing Board, which suggested aligning upcoming service opportunities with the Independence Day/America 250 commemoration. He proposed integrating these service initiatives with the Get to the River Festival and the 9/11 Day of Remembrance. He highlighted the importance of fostering volunteerism and a communal spirit. Soren provided a brief overview of the event budget for the Commission, adopted at the recent Governing Board meeting.

e) 2027 Volunteer Appreciation Event

This item was postponed due to time constraints.

5. Other Commission Supported Events & Activities

a) Upcoming Symposia & Workshops ([01:25:08 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen reviewed the budget approved to support upcoming symposia and education programs. He noted that these events support the watershed health initiatives of the Jordan River Commission, and confirmed that the Commission intends to maintain an annual budget for financial participation and support of these events, which are also opportunities for tabling and outreach.

6. Communications, Engagement, & Outreach

a) Recent Media Opportunities, Engagement & Coverage

This item was postponed due to the interest of time.

b) Upcoming Media Opportunities ([01:26:26 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen briefly informed the Committee about the upcoming media interviews with Salt Lake Tribune and KSL, as part of the Commission Small Grant partnership with the Great Salt Lake Collaborative.

7. Commission Project & Program Updates

a) Commission Website Update ([01:28:16 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen noted an email sent by Rachel Lyn that detailed information about the Jordan River Commission's website update project. Rachel shared a link to the development website and feedback form for the Committee to review and share feedback

8. Adjourn

Kyle Fuchshuber moved to adjourn. Silvia Catten seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 AM.

A meeting recording, minutes, and other information will be available following the meeting at <https://www.utah.gov/pmnp/sitemap/notice/1071399.html>

Meeting minutes prepared by Amelia Miller, and Soren Simonsen, Commission Secretary.

Adopted June 11, 2026.