

Jordan River Commission Governing Board Meeting

June 4, 2026 | 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 Don Shelton, Chair, South Jordan
Grant Crowell, Bluffdale (Alternate)
Councilmember Bryn Johnson, Draper
Councilmember Emily Lockhart, Lehi
Todd Munger, Lehi (Alternate)
Wendelin Knobloch, Midvale (Alternate)
Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek
Bruce Holyoak, Murray (Alternate)
Ali Avery, North Salt Lake (Alternate)
Mayor Tish Buroker, Riverton (Alternate)
Rachel Otto, Salt Lake City (Alternate)
David Jellen, Saratoga Springs (Alternate)
Councilmember Ray deWolfe, South Salt Lake
Sharen Hauri, South Salt Lake (Alternate)
Cory Fralick, West Jordan (Alternate)
Commissioner John Crofts, Davis County
Lisa Hartman, Salt Lake County (Alternate)
Commissioner Skyler Beltran, Utah County
Derek Shumway, Utah County (Alternate)
Victor Hollenbach, Utah Governor's Office (Alternate)
Senator Lincoln Filmore, Utah Legislature
Sandy Wingert, Utah Division of Water Quality (Alternate)
Emma Whitaker, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands (Alternate)
Shazelle Terry, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Luke Peterson, Utah Lake Authority
Betty Naylor, Gardener Heritage Farm
Craig Thaxton, Jordan River Foundation
Scott Peters, Jordan River Foundation (Alternate)
Heidi Hoven, National Audubon Society
Brad Knoles, Rocky Mountain Power
Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities
Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary
Liz Larsen, Utah's Hogle Zoo

Commission Staff

Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager
Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator

Jens Ammon, Jordan River Restoration Coordinator
Frances Schneider, Education Program Intern
Audrey Zietz, Communications Intern
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Commission Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Allan Wolfrum, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
Andrea Nelson, Office of Congressman Burgess Owens
Ann Lindsey
Bill Hooper
Carly Payne, Utah Division of Water Resources
Emily Andrea, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
India Nielsen, Chair, Jordan River Commission Event Advisory Committee
Keith Hambrecht, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
Wade Tuft, Utah Lake Water User Association/Jordan River Valley Water Conservancy District
Sharon Roper

Meeting Minutes

Chair Shelton, called the Governing Board meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

1. Governing Board Welcome, Roll Call & Introductions

a. Welcome of Jordan River Commission Governing Board Members, and other meeting participants

Chair Shelton welcomed Governing Board members and other meeting participants, and asked them to use the link provided to indicate meeting attendance.

b. Introduction of New Governing Board Members & Representatives (00:03:06 on audio recording)

Chair Shelton introduced new members of the Governing Board, including Councilmember Robert Taylor from Saratoga Springs and Councilmember Tom Huynh from West Valley City. Additionally, Sharen Hauri, with South Salt Lake, introduced herself as a recent official alternate on the board.

2. Public Comment (00:04:17 on audio recording)

Bill Hooper introduced himself as a member of the public and expressed concern about public safety on the trail. He is troubled by the lack of regulation and enforcement regarding electric and motorized bicycles and motorcycles, and even traditional bicycles.

Sharon Roper introduced herself, echoing similar concerns about the necessity for regulating motorized vehicles using the trail.

Ann Lindsey introduced herself as a South Jordan resident who frequently bikes the Jordan River trail, and highlighted that while the trail is an excellent community resource, enforcing its laws proves challenging. She shared her frustration regarding how law enforcement frequently relies on public discretion to follow regulations.

Soren Simonsen shared that he received multiple written public comments about e-bikes and public safety concerns. He was also asked to share a written comment from Niki Murray(?) sent in both an email and text messages with photos, noting concerns regarding the low water levels in the Jordan River near South Jordan at the Jordan River Migratory Bird Reserve. She asked that more water be dedicated to the Jordan River and wetlands. Soren noted that the photos might indicate the area of concern may be part of impounded wetlands connected with the Willow Creek tributary, and is often without water after spring runoff, since Willow Creek is an ephemeral creek.

3. Presentations & Discussion

a. Department of Natural Resources Partnerships & Programs Updates (00:14:22 on audio recording)

Emma Whitaker, Keith Hambrecht and Jens Ammon, all staff members from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands, shared informational presentations and led a discussion regarding several programs and partnerships of the Division.

Emma Whitaker, Lands Operations Manager, provided an overview of the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands, noting that the Department of Natural Resources includes nine distinct divisions. She outlined the Division's Fiscal Year 2027 budget, discussed its various partner organizations, and summarized the Sovereign Lands Program.

Jens Ammon, Jordan River Restoration Coordinator, discussed the \$250,000 in ongoing annual legislative funding. He noted that \$50,000 from that fund currently covers a portion of his position with the Jordan River Commission. The remaining funds are allocated to Jordan River weed management and restoration projects, which operate on cycles of up to three years. He explained the distribution of project funding between the Commission and partner entities, and announced that four new projects will join the nine existing ones for Fiscal Year 2027.

Keith Hambrecht, State Lands Restoration Program Manager, reviewed the funding and operations of the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands Restoration Program. He explained that funding is currently split equally, with 50% allocated to internal projects and 50% awarded to partners for their respective initiatives. He also discussed the complex challenges posed by vegetation along the Jordan River, noting that their management scope is narrowly focused specifically on the riverbanks. He outlined the current obstacles being faced and the steps being taken to improve efficiency and overcome these barriers.

Chair Shelton asked about enforcing regulations against illegal camping around the river. Emma explained in response that while they are actively addressing the issue, their main priority remains educating the community on compliance and recreation rules.

Chair Shelton also inquired about the possibility of completely eliminating invasive species from the Jordan River in the future. Keith Hambrecht noted that total eradication is realistically unachievable, explaining that the primary goal is to enhance the revegetation of native species along the river. This will increase native seed pressure to naturally outcompete the invasive species.

b. Jordan River Parkway Design & Public Safety Guidelines Draft Review & Discussion (01:03:08 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen shared an overview of a draft design and public safety guidelines document for the Jordan River Parkway, developed by the Technical Advisory Committee and Commission Staff, and solicited feedback from the Governing Board over the next month.

Chair Shelton asked members of the Board to review this initial draft and provide their feedback to Soren or any of the Jordan River Commission staff members before the end of the month.

c. State & Federal Legislative Updates (01:32:26 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen provided a brief update of legislative activities at the state and federal levels. He expressed gratitude towards Senator Filmore for SB130, which establishes a new fund dedicated to river access that will get more people on and into the Jordan River. Soren also highlighted the recent Interim Committee meetings of the Utah Legislature, and shared copies of several presentations from different water agencies, and encouraged Governing Board members to review these and follow up with questions and feedback.

4. Commission Business

a. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, Fees Schedule & Legislative Appropriation Recommendations (01:34:25 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen provided a copy of the final adopted budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Chair Shelton encouraged Governing Board members to review this written report.

b. Meeting Minutes

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

c. Annual Fraud Risk Prevention Assessment (01:35:04 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen indicated that he recently met with Travis Kartchner, CPA, the Commission Treasurer to review and complete the Annual Fraud Risk Prevention Report. A copy of the report was provided for Governing Board members to review. .

d. Event Advisory Committee Update (01:36:18 on audio recording)

India Nielsen, Event Advisory Committee Chair, introduced herself as the new Committee Chair, and provided a brief update of recent Committee activity and business. This included a review of the recent City Nature Challenge, and Golden Spoke Ride cycling event in April and May, and the ongoing planning for the Get to the River Festival in September. She also mentioned the Committee is working to fill several vacancies, and may have some recommendations for appointment at a future Governing Board meeting.

e. Ex-Officio Partner Organization Board & Watershed Council Reappointments (01:38:17 on audio recording)

Chair Shelton asked members of the Board to review partner organizations whose terms are expiring, and consider reappointing their Ex-Officio Representatives to the Governing Board and Jordan River Watershed Council for two-year terms. The organizations and individuals for consideration include:

- Amanda Covington, representative from the Larry H. Miller Company
- Heidi Hoven, PhD, representative from the National Audubon Society
- Councilmember Brad Perry, Vice Chair, representative from the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation
- Brad Knoles, representative from Rocky Mountain Power
- Laura Briefer, representative from the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities
- Michael Mills, representative from the Utah Reclamation, Mitigation & Conservation Commission
- Larry Mullenax, representative from the Utah Fairpark Authority

Scott Peters moved to reappoint all partner organizations and their respective representatives as Ex-Officio Governing Board members. Betty Naylor seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

f. Commission Treasurer Reappointment (01:40:37 on audio recording)

Chair Shelton asked members of the Board to consider reappointing Travis Kartchner, CPA, as Commission Treasurer for another two-year term.

Tish Buroker moved to reappoint Travis Kartchner as Commission Treasurer. John Crofts seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

g. Commission Staff Reports (01:42:42 on audio recording)

Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager, presented an overview of recent and ongoing projects, initiatives and other updates. She highlighted education program advancements, ongoing curriculum reviews with educators, status updates on the website redesign, and finalized mockups for the MyJordanRiver mobile app. Promotional strategies for national days of service are also being developed to engage businesses, schools, faith groups, and civic organizations. Rachel also introduced Audrey Zietz as the new Communications Intern.

Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator, provided an overview of recent events and volunteer activities. She highlighted that coordinating dumpsters through the Jordan River Foundation and local cities, placed at the end of canoe cleanups in the river, has significantly increased trash collection capacity. She outlined the diverse number of partner organizations and private groups that have recently collaborated with the Commission on events and volunteer efforts. Caroline also reviewed the recent City Nature Challenge and the Golden Spoke Ride cycling event participation and outcomes.

h. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Soren briefly noted that he would reach out to confirm a date for the Jordan River Watershed Council meeting in July.

5. Director's Report

a. Commission Staffing (2:01:25 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen briefly noted some recent Commission staffing changes. Former intern Amelia Miller has accepted the position of Administrative, Finance, and Grant Specialist, and will start the next week. He also announced the addition of Harley McCall, who will be joining the Commission through an Americorps Service Fellow program in partnership with the Jordan River Foundation, to support outreach initiatives such as the Love Your Watershed stormwater program and Jordan River Friends, withing the business community.

b. Upcoming Events & Activities (2:04:00 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen provided a brief overview of upcoming Day of Service opportunities, specifically the America 250 commemorations, and 25th anniversary of the September 11 Day of Service, over the next three months, and Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, and Earth Day service opportunities in 2027. Commission staff will share more details of the Love Your Watershed program at a future meeting, and will provide details of media outreach later in June.

c. Grants & Funding

This item was postponed due to time constraints.

d. News & Media (02:04:19 on audio recording)

Soren Simonsen announced that the Commission Staff is planning upcoming media events and extended an invitation to Governing Board members. As part of the Get to The River Festival Kick Off, mayors throughout the Jordan River Watershed will be asked to engage their communities in a the Commission's Love Your Watershed initiative, a watershed-wide stormwater pollution prevention program.

Soren Simonsen noted that the meeting agenda includes a link to a survey for Governing Board members to provide their input on a preferred date for the Jordan River Watershed Council meeting in July.

6. Adjourn

Wendelin Knobloch moved to adjourn the meeting. Betty Naylor seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 PM.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/1085711.html>

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

Meeting minutes adopted August 6, 2026.