

Jordan River Commission Governing Board Meeting

August 8, 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

Cities

Councilmember Mackey Smith, Bluffdale
Councilmember Bryn Johnson, Draper
Councilmember Emily Lockhart, Lehi
Todd Munger, Lehi, (Alternate)
Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek
Bruce Holyoak, Murray, (Alternate)
David Jellen, Saratoga Springs, (Alternate)
Councilmember Don Shelton, South Jordan
Colby Hill, South Jordan, (Alternate)
Councilmember Ray deWolfe, South Salt Lake
Sharen Hauri, South Salt Lake, (Alternate)
Mayor Kristie Overson, Taylorsville
Councilmember Cindy Wood, West Valley City

Counties

Lisa Hartman, Salt Lake County, (Alternate)

State

Ajla Hadzialijagic, Utah Governor's Office, (Alternate)
Senator Lincoln Fillmore, Utah Legislature
Ben Stireman, Utah DNR, Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
Nathan Lee, Utah Department of Transportation

Special Districts

Shazelle Terry, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Benn Buys, Utah Fairpark Area Investment & Restoration District

Ex-Officio Board Members

Scott Peters, Jordan River Foundation, (Alternate)
Heidi Hoven, National Audubon Society
Councilmember Bradley Parry, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation
Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary

Liz Larsen, Utah's Hogle Zoo
Michael Horrocks, Wasatch Rowing Foundation

Commission Staff

Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Secretary
Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager
Caroline Johnston, Volunteer & Event Coordinator
Jens Ammon, Restoration Coordinator
Amelia Miller, Administrative, Finance & Grant Specialist
Audrey Zietz, Communications Intern
Frances Schneider, Education Intern

Visitors and Guests

Jon Glenn, Event Advisory Committee
Rachel Ellingson, Office of Congresswoman Maloy
Emily Andrea, Forestry, Fire & Statelands
Keith Hambrecht, Forestry, Fire & Statelands
Eric Kraan
Anna Habben, Consultant, Get to the River Festival
Liz Hamilton, Utah Department of Agriculture & Food
Eric McCulley, McCulley Watershed Consulting Services
Magnus Nichols
Marisa Weinberg, Great Salt Lake Sentinel Landscape
Michael Miller
Ann Lindsey

Meeting Minutes

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

1. Welcome & Introductions ([00:01:09 on the audio recording](#))

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

Cindy Wood, new Councilmember representing West Valley City, introduced herself to the board. She indicated that her alternate is Lars Nordfelt who could not attend the meeting.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Commission Business

a. Event Advisory Committee Updates ([00:05:20 on audio recording](#))

Jon Glenn, Past Chair, provided a brief Committee update, and gave an introduction to Get to the River Festival Preview. He indicated that the next upcoming Committee meeting is to be held on August 13th.

1) Get to the River Festival Preview ([00:09:28 on audio recording](#))

Anna Habben, Client Manager with Mighty Penguin Consulting, a contractor assisting with Festival planning, management and fundraising, shared an overview of the Get to the River Festival happening throughout the month of September. She also briefly discussed the various sponsors participating in this year's festival.

Soren Simonsen highlighted that the Jordan River Foundation and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have served as key partners and significant contributors to the commission's volunteer efforts and the Get to the River Festival.

Anna Habben reviewed the Festival budget, noting that funding is set to increase via the Commission's Mini Grant program. She mentioned that additional seasonal Commission staff are being brought on to help manage the high volume of programming. Furthermore, she requested that committee members tentatively save the date for the Festival Kick Off, scheduled for August 27th at 10:00 AM at the Little Cottonwood Confluence Nature Trail, where the Commission plans to feature the Love Your Watershed Initiative.

Soren Simonsen also highlighted the commission's objective to advance the Love Your Watershed initiative and ensure that Mayors are informed about these efforts.

Anna Habben provided an overview of the upcoming Festival schedule, outlining the planned events and discussing potential opportunities for Board members to get involved. Additionally, she announced that the annual Jordan River Friends Celebration and Recognition event is scheduled to take place at Utah's Hogle Zoo on September 24th.

Liz Larsen expressed that the Zoo is eagerly looking forward to hosting the recognition event.

Soren Simonsen extended his gratitude to Anna Habben and Mighty Penguin Consulting for their contributions to the Get to the River Festival. Furthermore, he recognized the dedicated efforts of the Commission Staff in preparing for the Festival as well.

2) **[Action Item]** Event Advisory Committee Appointments ([00:33:10 on audio recording](#))

The board reviewed the proposed three-year appointments of Eric Kraan, Hillary Whittaker, and Will Freund to the Event Advisory Committee. While Eric Kraan was present, Soren Simonsen noted that Hillary Whittaker and Will Freund were unable to attend. Currently, Hillary Whittaker works as an assistant attorney general in the Utah Attorney General's Office, and Will Freund is a photographer and educator at the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium. Introducing himself to the board members, Eric Kraan shared that he has been a Utah resident for 26 years, is a former competitive speed skater, and is highly enthusiastic about the chance to serve.

Ben Stireman moved to appoint Eric Kraan, Hillary Whittaker, and Will Freund to the Event Advisory Committee. Scott Peters seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

b. Technical Advisory Committee Update ([00:43:30 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen delivered an update on the Committee, as the Committee leaders could not attend today's session, and introduced two current projects. During his review of the Technical Advisory Committee's June session, Soren Simonsen noted that attendees received an educational presentation regarding PFAS. The preceding gathering in May consisted of an outdoor excursion. He announced that the upcoming committee session will feature a field visit to Lehi, open to all interested participants. This excursion is planned as a biking tour; while the commission can supply a small quantity of bicycles, individuals planning to join are urged to bring their own personal bikes if they can do so.

Liz Hamilton, Pollinator Habitat Program Manager with the Utah Department of Agriculture & Food, shared an overview and update of the Utah Pollinator Habitat Program, which extensively supplies native Utah plants for habitat restoration on public lands and private properties across the Jordan River Watershed. (additional program information is at <https://ag.utah.gov/conservation/utah-pollinator-habitat-program>)

Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager of the Jordan River Commission, shared a program update and upcoming activities related to the Commission's Love Your Watershed stormwater and water quality initiative. She indicated that the commission's goal is to encourage the public to become proud and protective of their watershed and pass along the message. (additional program information is at LoveYourWatershed.org)

Lisa Hartman suggested that integrating the Love Your Watershed Program with the storm water coalitions would create a valuable connection.

c. [ACTION ITEM] Meeting Minutes Review & Adoption ([01:31:50 on audio recording](#))

The Board considered adopting Governing Board meeting minutes for the recent meetings held on February 5, 2026, April 2, 2026, and June 4, 2026.

Bryn Johnson moved to adopt the February 5, 2026, April 2, 2026, and June 4, 2026 Governing Board meeting minutes. Bruce Holyoak seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

d. Executive Director's Report ([01:34:00 on audio recording](#))

Soren Simonsen noted that the Fiscal Year 2026 4th Quarter Financial Report is not yet completed, but he will send that out promptly when it is done.

Don Shelton noted that a member of the public arrived after the public comment window had closed but requested to speak. He subsequently granted the floor to Ann Lindsey for her remarks.

Ann Lindsey, a resident of Bluffdale, expressed concerns regarding the enforcement of laws restricting motorized vehicles along the Bluffdale portion of the Jordan River Parkway.

Soren Simonsen indicated that an update on public enforcement guidelines is expected during the October Governing Board meeting. He also outlined his objective to convene relevant law enforcement agencies for a joint training session focused on the trail's rules and regulations.

e. Upcoming Commission Meeting Schedule ([01:45:00 on audio recording](#))

Don Shelton briefly reviewed upcoming meetings and events including the Utah Pollinator Habitat Program greenhouse tours at the State Prison on September 1 and 2 at 9:00 AM, a Jordan River Watershed Council meeting on September 3 at 10:00 AM, followed by a 6:00 PM reception and 7:00 PM screening of the documentary The Lake at Saratoga Springs City Hall, a Jordan River Parkway bicycle tour in Lehi on September 17 at 2:00 PM for the Commission and Watershed Council, the Jordan River Friends Celebration & Recognition Event on September 24 at Utah's Hogle Zoo, and a Governing Board meeting on October 1 at 10:00 AM.

4. Presentations & Discussion

~ 11:20 AM

a. Utah BUILD Coordinating Council Update ([01:47:00 on audio recording](#))

Ajla Hadzialijagic, Budget & Policy Analyst with the Utah Governor's Office of Planning & Budget, provided a brief overview and update of the Utah BUILD Coordinating Council initiative that has been carried out over the past year, directed by and involving several Commission partner agencies and organizations. (see attached information in meeting packet, with additional information at <https://governor.utah.gov/build> and <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6360b8850174346ad386070bd36e517>)

b. Commission Roundtable Discussion

Item 4b was skipped due to time constraints.

5. Adjourn

Byn Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Michael Horrocks seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

A meeting recording, presentation, handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/1097957.html>

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