

Jordan River Commission Event Advisory Committee

Thursday, June 11, 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
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
Todd Munger, Jordan River Foundation

Commission Staff

Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Secretary
Amelia Miller, Administrative, Finance, & Grant Specialist

Visitors and Guests

Anna Habben, Mighty Penguin – Get to the River Festival Contractor
Cindy Kindred, Mighty Penguin – Get to the River Festival Contractor

Meeting Minutes

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

1. Welcome & Introductions (00:02:40 on audio recording)

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

Soren Simonsen introduced and welcomed Amelia Miller as the new Administrative, Finance & Grant Specialist with the Jordan River Commission.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Committee Business

- a) Adopt Meeting Minutes for April 9, 2026 (00:03:50 on audio recording)

Ali Avery moved to adopt the April 9, 2026 meeting minutes. Todd Munger seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

b) Consider Adjusting Event Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule (00:09:25 on audio recording)

A proposal was made by committee members to shift the meeting time from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on the second Thursday to accommodate some new conflicts with the schedules of the Committee leadership. The proposal would continue Committee meetings on the even numbered months.

Ali Avery moved to adjust the Event Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Silvia Catten seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

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

4. Commission Events

a) 2026 City Nature Challenge : April 24 - 27; April 28 - May 10 (00:16:00 on audio recording)

Caroline Johnston provided the Committee with a report summarizing the 2026 City Nature Challenge, including key participation statistics and an overview of the community partners who collaborated with the Commission on these events.

Soren Simonsen also gave a brief financial report of the 2026 City Nature Challenge. The Natural History Museum donated yard signs to promote the event, and the Commission used it's \$1,000 budget for a contribution toward the Tracy Aviary's Party for the Planet. The Commission also had promotional items from last year that were shared to support the event this year.

b) 2026 Golden Spoke Ride : May 16, 2026 (00:25:48 on audio recording)

Caroline Johnston presented a review of the 2026 Golden Spoke Ride event. Her report highlighted event statistics, registration and tracking, a new route alignment this year highlight the West Davis Highway Trail, and acknowledging the participating cities and community partners. Additionally, she discussed the end of ride event at Tracy Aviary's Nature Center at Pia Okwai in South Salt Lake.

Soren Simonsen noted that a final financial report for the 2026 Golden Spoke Bike Ride event is being finalized to include all of the in-kind and other financial support and expenses, and will be presented in detail at a future Committee meeting.

c) Upcoming Day of Service Opportunities

Item 4c was postponed due to time constraints.

d) 2026 Get to the River Festival : September 2026 (00:36:43 on audio recording)

Cindy Kindred provided an update on the fundraising efforts for the Get to the River Festival. To date, a total of \$125,650 has been secured through financial sponsorships in cash, as well as a few key in-kind contributions. She noted that this figure could grow if further donations come in from some remaining prospects. Additionally, Cindy shared specific insights regarding the various sponsors, detailing their respective contributions and their strategic goals for participating in the Festival.

Soren Simonsen reported that while direct Festival sponsorship was declined by Wells Fargo and Northrop Grumman, both businesses are exploring financial support for conservation and restoration initiatives, particularly connected with volunteer activities, and business and community outreach for the 9/11 Day of Service.

Anna Habben provided an update regarding the general planning for the 2026 Get to the River Festival. 29 events have been confirmed so far throughout September, with expectations that this will grow as the Festival organizers finalize details for their events and activities.

Anna reported that Utah's Hogle Zoo will host this year's Jordan River Friends Celebration & Recognition Event, being scheduled for the evening of Thursday, September 24. The theme for the Festival and this event will be "Love Your Watershed." The event will have a relaxed atmosphere previous years. Zoo admission will be included for participants throughout the day of the event, and participants will be encouraged to invite family and friends to participate.

Soren asked members of the Committee to provide any nominations of organizations or individuals to recognize at the Celebration & Recognition Event. The Commission typically recognized an outstanding elected official, educator or education organization, and volunteer or volunteer organization.

Anna provided an overview of the seed and mini grants that the Commission offers to its planning partners in support of the Get to the River Festival. This year's grant budget is the largest ever.

Soren requested the Committee's feedback on how to allocate any leftover mini and seed grant funds if the full budget is not utilized by partners. He suggested directing these remaining funds toward additional promotion of the Festival, and the Committee was supportive.

Soren briefly outlined the timeline for media events surrounding the Get to the River Festival. The kickoff media event is tentatively scheduled for either Monday, August 24, or Thursday, August 27, in the morning. Mayors from across the Jordan River Watershed are being invited to participate in a "Mayor's Love Your Watershed Challenge" as part of the Festival and promotion.

Soren provided an update on the Movie Night, hosted by the Commission, the Event Advisory Committee and Jordan River Friends. Film options identified by staff include "The Lake" documentary from the Sundance Film Festival, "Secrets of the Great Salt Lake" feature that has been prepared for the Antelope Island Visitor Center opening later in the summer, and a collection of short documentaries by the "American Rivers Films" site. The Committee discussed these options, and recommended "The Lake" as its preferred option. Commission staff will work to confirm the details and share those at the next meeting.

5. Other Commission Supported Events & Activities

- a) "Dyeing to Save Great Salt Lake" phragmites dyeing workshop : Utah Fibershed & Utah Sierra Club

Item 5a was not discussed due to time constraints.

- b) Recent & Upcoming Symposia & Education Workshops

Item 5b was not discussed due to time constraints.

- c) Others?

There were not other items discussed.

6. Communications, Engagement, & Outreach

- a) Recent Media Opportunities, Engagement & Coverage

Item 6a was not discussed due to time constraints.

- b) Upcoming Media Opportunities

Item 6b was not discussed due to time constraints.

7. Commission Project & Program Updates

a) Commission Website Update

Item 7a was postponed due to time constraints.

b) Education Partnership Program Update

Item 7b was postponed due to time constraints.

c) Legislative Updates

Item 7c was not discussed due to time constraints.

d) Commission Staffing Updates

Item 7d was not discussed due to time constraints.

8. Adjourn

Silvia Catten moved to adjourn. Ali Avery 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/pmn/sitemap/notice/1087769.html>

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

Meeting Minutes adopted August 13, 2026.