January 28, 2020

From: Kathleen V. Nielson Confluence Park Grant Writer (435) 229-8310 kvnielson@gmail.com

To: La Verkin City Council Members

To: Hurricane City Council Members

To: Toquerville City Council Members

I am speaking to the city council to tell you about some of the major work that is planned for Confluence Park through the next few years. As the Park is a great asset to each of the cities represented on the Confluence Park Board, we, as a park committee, feel it is in everyone’s best interest to be informed early in the process of changes that are being planned.

We are all aware that the growing population in our area (both residential and visitor) seek outdoor experiences. Those who live in the areas near Confluence Park are fortunate to be located near an incredible 344-acre “natural” park filled with geologic wonders, historical significance, and opportunities to recreate outdoors in a serene landscape. We know that you will be happy to see what is planned to further enhance the Confluence Park experience.

#1 Bridge from La Verkin to Hurricane

We are planning to construct a bridge across the Virgin River about 1/3 mile east of the confluence with La Verkin Creek and Ash Creek. For those who have knowledge of the Park, it will be placed east of the picnic area where the rope swing hangs over the river. For those unfamiliar, the location will be east of the confluence with La Verkin Creek and Ash Creek and after the main trail from La Verkin Creek Trailhead turns east and heads toward the power station. The exact location has yet to be determined.

The bridge will accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic. It will be wide enough for a small maintenance vehicle to cross for work purposes and for emergencies should any arise. Equestrian users will still be using the river crossing, and as you know, 4-wheeler and other such motorized vehicles will not be allowed to use the bridge or trails in the park as it now stands. We are excited about this project and invite you to help as you can to make this happen.

We are applying for $150,000 from the Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (no federal funds involved) and $100,000 from the Recreational Trails Grant for Utah (does have some federal funds attached to it). We will apply the UORG funds to the bridge cost (this will be an ordered product brought in by truck), and the RTP grant will apply to the abutments and trail construction approaches to the bridge. All received funding requires a 100% match that can be accumulated through cash, in-kind services, and/or materials.

We hope that each city directly involved with this project will join Washington County in helping make this bridge a reality. We encourage you to look ahead and see what can be available in your budgets as well as cost matching with in-kind services related to the project.

#2 Historic Power Station on the Virgin River

Washington County is taking steps to breathe some new life into the old power station that sits along the Virgin River in Confluence Park. Way short of operation, the building will be cleaned out and cleaned up with a new roof and exterior repairs. This is all going to be analyzed and dealt with in small doses. Ultimately, we hope to preserve it into an interpretive center for the park and the history of water and power to the area. Considered historic in both structure and function, it will be a great asset to the park and a true destination experience for all park users.

We hope to begin this process in the coming months, and we want everyone interested to know that we welcome volunteers as individuals or groups to sign up to help. This would be a community experience of reviving a presence that was part of the history of this beautiful location, and of an education in many aspects of history. Watch for future information in how this will all be taking place.

#3 Cultivated fields along Ash Creek and LaVerkin Creek

 We are putting together plans for bringing water to the fields along Ash Creek and LaVerkin Creek. It won’t be tomorrow, but it is coming. The fields will be green again and new trees will be planted in many locations including the burn scar from last fall. We offer a great thanks to Ash Creek Special Services District who is helping out with planning and more.

Sincerely,

Kathleen V. Nielson