

Michael J Peterson, Cottonwood Heights Mayor  
Scott Bracken, Council Member, District 2  
Cottonwood Heights City Council  
Planning Commission  
Parks, Trails, and Open Space Committee  
Planning Team  
2277 E Bengal Blvd  
Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121

21 September 2021

To Michael J Peterson, Scott Bracken, the Cottonwood Heights City Council, the CH Planning Commission, the PTO Committee Members, and the CH Planning Team:

A proposed Little Cottonwood Creek (LCC) Trail is included in the Cottonwood Heights Parks, Trails, & Open Space Master Plan booklet. After reading about the proposed LCC trail and after having lived next to LCC for the last 22 years, I feel that I have some information that needs to be shared.

Little Cottonwood Creek is not similar to Big Cottonwood Creek in the feasibility of adding an adjacent walking trail. It winds through privately owned property. This is actually acknowledged in the booklet on page thirty-two: "This proposed trail extends for over 6 miles through multiple jurisdictions, mostly along privately owned property." This creek is not easily accessible without crossing private property. Big Cottonwood Creek runs through wide-open areas. In our neighborhood, LCC is bordered on both sides by private property. When we first moved into our home, we could walk directly into the creek down a very slight incline at the edge of the creek. Salt Lake County has made several "improvements" (such as removing weirs) on LCC which have resulted in extensive damage to private property along the route. The very slight incline leading to the portion of the creek in our neighborhood is now a nearly-7 foot straight drop.

Spring runoff is a dangerous period of time along LCC. Everyone living in the area knows to warn their children and anyone else to stay away from the creek until it slows down. The rapidly running, cold water picks up anything in its path and hurtles it along. We have watched tree branches, lawn furniture, and even large tree trunks rush by. We can hear the large boulders from our own and our neighbors' rock walls rumbling along the bottom. In 2010, we watched as friends lost over 30 feet of their property due to the rushing creek jumping its banks.



"The swollen Cottonwood Creek laps at the foundation of a home that is being threatened by high runoff water from the creek Monday, June 7, 2010. The previous evening crews worked through the night to shore up the ground, just to the right of the home, with giant boulders. The creek jumped its banks and swept a portion of the homes yard away near 8900 South and 3100 East in Salt Lake County. The home's yard originally extended out to the tree that is in the middle of the creek."



We have had to reinforce our property multiple times while living along LLC as the level of the creek bed has dropped several feet over the years. We have built a rock wall with extremely large boulders, repaired the rock wall with more large boulders to replace the ones swept away, and finally built a concrete wall to resemble large boulders (which is even now being undermined).

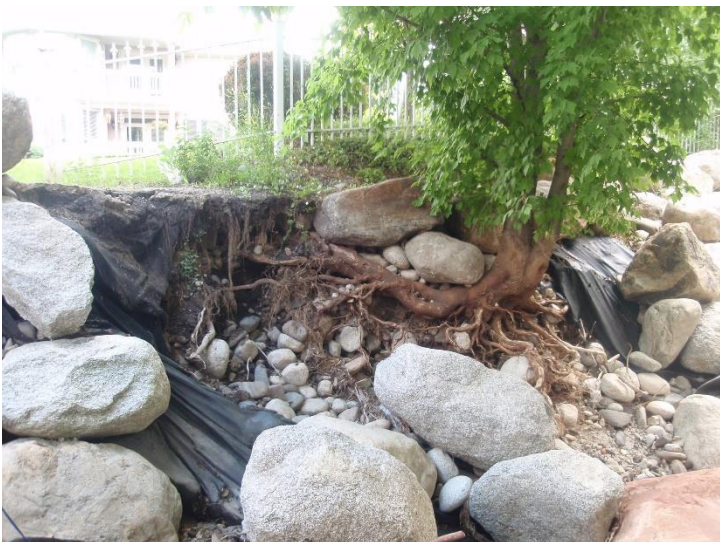


June 2010-Our Property



June 2010  
Our 5'9" son  
for depth  
reference

June 9, 2010  
runoff  
Taken same location (notice same pine trees)



July 2010  
Damage to rock wall after runoff

The cost to repair damage just to our section of the creek has been in the tens of thousands of dollars. Multiply that times the length of the creek within city boundaries and then double to fix the opposite bank, as well, and that financial obligation to Cottonwood Heights City each year becomes exorbitant.

Beyond the initial cost of purchasing private property along the creek (if owners are even willing to sell), creating the trail, and then damage repair every summer, is the most important aspect of this proposed trail: the safety of its users. With limited public access to the creek, we are able to warn our families and neighbors each spring of the dangers of the high runoff, yet every year someone dies or is injured in Little Cottonwood Creek. Who will be watching out for the adults, teenagers, and children walking, running, and biking along this trail twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week? How high will the number of injuries and/or deaths skyrocket when the area is opened to the public? Page twenty-three in the booklet assures us that “Parks, open spaces, trails, crossings, and recreational facilities are safe and inviting”. Who will be liable? Property owners along the creek or the City?

I would surmise that the individual who submitted this proposed route and compared the ease of implementation to that of the BCC Trail has a) never lived along LLC, b) never actually seen a spring runoff, and c) never actually walked along the entire proposed route. Examining all the factors involved in this proposed trail points to obvious answers to the questions put forth in the Implementation section of the booklet on page fifty-one:

“Are the projected annual management and maintenance costs acceptable and reasonable?”

“Are there any environmental liabilities or hazards associated with the property?”

I would be more than happy to answer any questions, participate in any discussions, or share more photos of runoff and damage relative to the proposed trail along Little Cottonwood Creek.

Respectfully,

Lisa M Groneman

Cottonwood Heights Resident and Property Owner

■ Lorita Way

Cottonwood Heights, UT 84093

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