

The West View

westviewmedia.org

Community news focused on west Salt Lake City

Fall 2016

EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF THE JORDAN RIVER

By Ray Wheeler

Many Salt Lake City residents may not even notice our valley's only river as they zoom across its many bridges in their cars. Due to continuous dredging of its channel and building up of its stream banks the river has sunk out of sight below the surface of the city. However, this small, muddy stream is a defining feature of our valley and of Salt Lake City's west side neighborhoods. Its slender ribbon of green is for the most part, well hidden and little traveled.

On a brilliant May morning the stretch of river between 900 and 1300 South is teeming with plant and animal life. It's been a cool, wet spring. The water level has been unusually high since mid-March. Drenching rains

and high water have caused an explosion of plant growth. Already some bank grasses are taller than I am, with full, heavy seed heads. The largest trees on either bank meet overhead to form a canopy-covered tunnel. The bow of my kayak cuts silently across the liquid mirror that is the tunnel floor. On its sliding surface the floor holds a stationary image of the arched ceiling, adding to the vault above a matching vault below, providing an illusion of grand height to an intimate passageway.

Cutting under an especially large tree branch, I notice a rock squirrel racing along it, its body and tail undulating smoothly. The grace of this casual athleti-

JORDAN RIVER PAGE 2



"Tree-tunnel-running" on the Jordan River at 1150 South in Salt Lake City.

PHOTO BY RAY WHEELER

Salt Lake Regional Athletic Complex: worth the cost?

By Annie Dayton

Salt Lake City residents may be aware of the new Salt Lake Regional Athletic Complex that opened this past April in Rose Park but many may not fully understand exactly what it is. Some may be confused as to whether it is a park, recreation center, or just some open green space. Does it serve some need of the local community and is it even open to the public?

The Regional Athletic Complex (RAC) is a 140-acre, 16-field sports venue, meant to host tournaments for soccer, rugby, lacrosse, football, quidditch (that's a thing outside of

Harry Potter - who knew!?) and ultimate frisbee. It is located right off the freeway, nestled between I-215 and the Jordan River and north of Northwest Middle School.

Although there is no shortage of these types of facilities throughout the country, including five more that will be built in the mountain west and an existing facility already in West Jordan, the RAC hopes to win the hearts (and bids) of tournament organizers with its premier location, spectacular service and amenities, and world-class fields and grass. While many sports

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Eventual championship team "Homeless" from BYU (gray uniforms) gets the ball during a "scrum," or scrum against the tough and experienced Matari Lions (red and white uniforms) from Oahu, Hawaii during Pioneer Rugby Leagues tournament at the Salt Lake Athletic Complex on the Jordan River.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL EVANS

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To strengthen community identity, increase civic involvement, and foster social justice for the diverse community members in west Salt Lake City.

ABOUT US

The West View is a product of West View Media, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) community news organization that offers an authentic look into Salt Lake City's west side through stories written by community members.

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WEST VIEW MEDIA
community news

JORDAN RIVER continued from PAGE 1



LEFT: Cotton floats on the Jordan River on Salt Lake City's west side.



RIGHT: Old-growth wild iris forest on the bank of the Jordan River on Salt Lake City's west side.

PHOTOS BY RAY WHEELER

cism is arresting. Running at breakneck speed, never hesitating at intersections, it climbs higher and higher in the canopy until, perhaps 30 feet above the river surface, it performs a lateral trampoline bounce to the bobbing end of a branch reaching out from the opposite bank. I smile with admiration at such agility, imagining the squirrel is equally pleased with itself. Clearly the sky-bridge is a regular squirrel highway. In this many-layered world, one creature's vaulted roof is another's floor, just as the water-floor supporting my kayak is also a ceiling for those leviathans of the deep, the common carp.

There is strong wind. Occasionally I can hear distant traffic roar, a car alarm, a train horn, but the wind masks these sounds. Every surface of the tunnel is alive with wind-stir. I follow the curving riverbank on my left, keeping the edge of the boat just inches off shore, steering with my offshore paddle blade. I'm moving upstream at the pace of a slow pedestrian, but the onrushing river current offers the sensation of speed.

As I pass a solid wall of pinkish-white wild rose blossoms, its outermost bouquets almost sweep my face. Further along a small grove of wild yellow irises borders a large eddy pool. At a height of three to four feet above water level their

sword-blade stalks and drooping flowers tower overhead like old-growth forest monarchs.

A flotilla of fuzzy yellow mallard ducklings skitters across the polished surface, tweeting urgently but softly, before disappearing into a thicket of branches. The mother duck zigzags ahead, feigning a broken wing to draw me away from the chicks.

Beaver gnaw-sign is everywhere. On my evening paddles I often see a fearsomely large male beaver that used to play mind games with our 95-pound Rottweiler. It has lived in the neighborhood for decades and has grown to record size. I spot him nosing upstream. His tail hits the water with a crack like a rifle shot, followed by a melodious plunk as his raised body plunges under water.

At a certain log where I often find them lounging, a pair of box turtles slides diagonally into the water, plunking loudly from view like two dropped stones. A baby muskrat surfaces near my boat and angles off into the submerged doorway to its riverbank home.

Just ahead a female cormorant breaks suddenly, like a Loch Ness monster from the deep. Its glossy body seems unnaturally large because it is so close. At the sight of my fast-closing boat, it immediately whips its wet, dripping wings and lumbers, pterodactyl-

like into flight.

Passing the face of a sawn-off Crack Willow trunk, I catch a branch, pulling the boat to a stop and holding my position to watch a steady stream of small white stars filling the river's dark surface. It is a flotilla of just-released cottonwood seeds. The little stars swing around the stump into an eddy pool just as my kayak would, where they make a couple of turns before exiting downstream. I study this real-time map of river's surface currents with interest.

All of this continuous movement – the star stream, the wind-waves, the tossing branches and leaves, the animals and birds, my own quick-turning boat – is an improvisational ballet of overwhelming complexity, synchronicity, and beauty. "If there is magic on this planet," Loren Eiseley wrote "it is contained in water." That's why in 2010 my wife and I bought a house on the west bank of the Jordan River at 1000 South. We paddle, walk or bike daily on the river and Jordan River Parkway trail. For many years we walked our dog multiple times daily through the 65 acres of city parkland surrounding our house. We can carry a kayak from our garage door to river's edge in less than a minute. The river corridor itself – not just our 50 x 100 foot house lot – is our home.

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Group fosters stewardship of Jordan River

By Jamaica Trinnaman

I feel lucky sitting down with Gilberto Rejon Magana and Van Hoover of the Jordan River Community Initiative. Lucky to learn about such a creative, multifaceted nonprofit in my neighborhood, and lucky to hear the stories about kids stepping into a canoe, and stepping out with a greater understanding of their own purpose.

The way Gilberto talks about me, a girl who explored in the backyard creek from sun up to sun down on long summer days. "I am Mayan Indian," he says, "and in my culture a river is many things. It is fish, it is recreation, but it's more than that ... it is peace. It is water and water is life." For this reason, Gilberto, Executive Director and Soccer Coach for Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families, found that caring for the river and using the river to engage local youth came naturally.

Almost eleven years ago Gilberto's young son offered Gilberto's services as a soccer coach to a group of troublesome

kids at Mountainview Elementary school. When he found out about the offer, Gilberto, knowing his son had acted out of concern, decided he would dig in and do what he could. Little did he know what struggles and successes lie ahead, or that he had just stumbled upon one of the greatest passions of his life.

Each year as Gilberto's group of kids increased in size, so did its purpose and place in the community. In 2015, Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families became an official non-profit, but it was over a year earlier that the group adopted the stretch along the Jordan River from 1100 South to 1700 South in an effort to branch out and care for their community. As Gilberto explains, Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families offers kids more than soccer, it offers them a place to grow based on what he calls the "The Three Pillars: Responsibility, Respect and Self Discipline."

It was in late 2013 that Gilberto and fellow Westside Leadership Institute graduate Van Hoover were given a challenge by former Sorenson Unity Center Director Chris

Peterson to create a community driven project around the improvement of the Jordan River. Together they created the Jordan River Community Initiative. As a project under the HCFY&F, the new organization would have the undercurrent of youth involvement, but reach broader into the community for support.

Van, who had commuted by bike along the Jordan River from Midvale to Salt Lake City for years, had formed an attachment to the waterway and found himself eager to participate in the project. Van's love of the wildlife along the river is apparent when he speaks about the creatures he encounters on his rides. "There is this spot where a bald eagle comes every year. Somewhere in late January, BOOM, it's there, in the same tree." He smiles thinking about it. "One issue we struggle with is the perception people have of the river. Yes, it's a post-industrial river, but it's also an incredible place to spend time."

Last spring the Jordan River Community Initiative rolled out the first installment of their Art Sign project, an exciting

community effort where local artists and kids created paintings together to replace older signs along the river – signs that had for years only served as blank canvases for graffiti, giving the river a neglected feel. Van felt that creating original artwork that rotated year after year would demonstrate that there is ongoing investment in the space.

Thanks to the support of Salt Lake City's Open Space Lands Program and a grant from the Jordan River Commission, Van and his team were able to put their idea into action. Kids from a variety of programs including Gilberto's group from Hartland Community, YouthCity, Utah Association for the Deaf, and Splore joined forces with local artists, led by Justin Johnson of Justified Ink. Together they created five gorgeous paintings that celebrate the river and its wildlife. The project will move forward in spring of 2017 with a second round of paintings.

Gilberto, a long time west side resident, admits the Jordan River has a colorful past, and not every stretch of the river has a reputation for being clean

or even safe. He addresses this issue at times by engaging his kids in conversation about community and accountability, taking them to a spot piled with trash and belongings and asking "How do you think that got here?"

Van speaks to a central purpose of their organization when he says that it is important to foster "a community value of stewardship, because the river doesn't take care of itself." A true statement for a river that may have at one point flowed free and pure, but has long since been altered and used to serve the city.

I love what Sarah Williams, a photo contributor for the Jordan River Community Initiative Facebook page, says about the river. "The river seems to reflect all the different colors of our city. In parts urban, or industrial, while in others meandering and serene. It is a complicated beauty."

For updates on projects, activities and cleanups, check out the *Jordan River Community Initiative group on Facebook*.

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Jordan River Community Initiative was featured at the annual Get Into the River celebration supported by the Jordan River Commission and many other partners like SPLORE, who provided canoe rides for community members. The newly painted art signs were displayed at the festival in May.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GET INTO THE RIVER ORGANIZERS

River Encounters

Jordan River Parkway, a Utah treasure

By Rebecca Burton

When most people think of Utah's outdoor beauty, their mind wanders east to the Wasatch Range or south to the state's great national parks. Most people don't think to simply turn around and look right behind them—right in their own backyard. If they did, they would find one of the state's most beautiful treasures.

The Jordan River Parkway is a spectacular 50-mile park notable not only for its length, but for the fact that it is easily accessible to the majority of Utah's citizens. Extending from Utah Lake to the Great Salt Lake, it is within miles of hundreds of thousands of homes, from Saratoga Springs to North Salt Lake.

If you have even an hour to wander the trail, you're sure to pass through shady groves, preserved wetlands, manicured

fields, and windswept vistas. You'll hear birdsong and rustling leaves to drown out nearby traffic. You'll see panoramic views of the mountains and acres of verdant farmland. All along the way, the Jordan River will be your murky, yet powerful, companion.

Personally, I love the parkway so much because it preserves nature in our midst. On an evening run, I often see flitting monarchs, swarms of swallows and curious deer. I love it because I can bike from my parents' home in Sandy to my sister's home in Rose Park and enjoy uninterrupted beauty and peace the entire way.

The Jordan River Parkway is a mix of manmade and natural beauty with bridges and bluffs, pavilions and pelicans, miles of trails and groves of trees. It

is a gift from the cities along its path. I'm so grateful for the local government workers who clear the trails of snow in winter and trim wild grass in the summer. They create an amazing amenity for adventurers who don't have the time or means to ski, hike, mountain bike or otherwise enjoy the bountiful nature for which we're known.

Instead, the parkway is the everyman's playground—a place for families to gather, athletes to train, children to skate, and couples to wander. If New York has Central Park as an oasis for its city dwellers, we're lucky to have a sanctuary that is equally accessible and beautiful—and much, much larger. If you visit this marvelous treasure, chances are you will leave feeling refreshed.

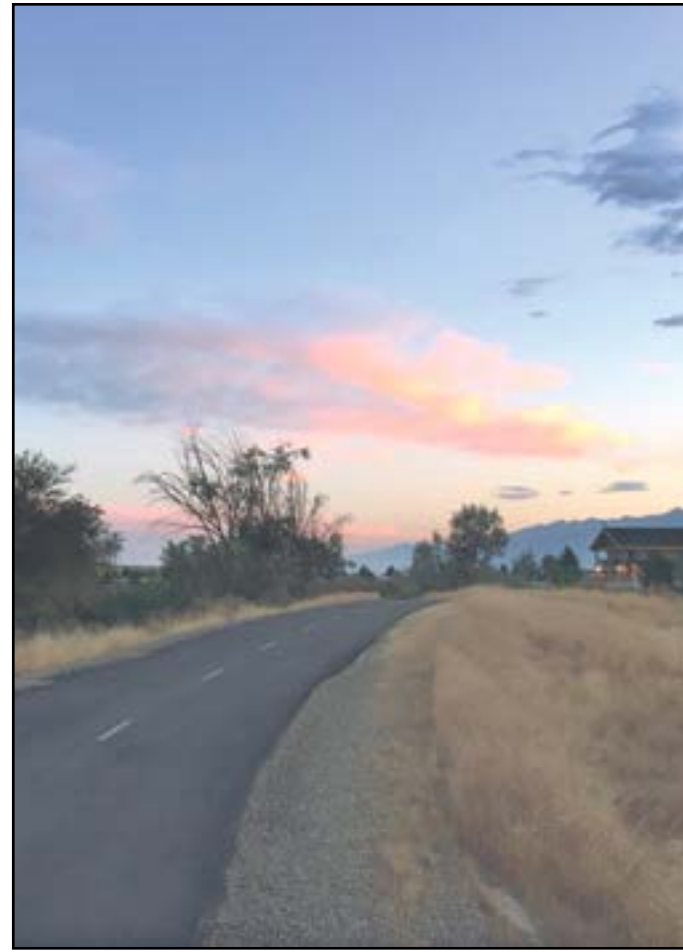


PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FIFE-JEPPERSON

Big city girl falls in love with nature

By Meher Ayesha

After falling in love with city skylines in Shanghai, Istanbul and San Francisco, I believed I would remain loyal to my love of the transformation of land from man's vision, to a plan on paper, to a creation with brick. I'm reminded of Woody Harrison's class lecture in Indecent Proposal, where he says, "Even a common ordinary brick wants to be something more than it is..." That's exactly what I feel when I see cities – ambition. Man's, the brick's and everything in the universe that made it happen.

For the past year or so, I have been suffering a heartbreak liv-

ing in Salt Lake City and missing mega-cities. I did not understand how to enjoy and make peace with the reality of living in the smaller, non-cosmopolitan city that adopted me.

Friends rant about going camping, hiking, skiing and other outdoorsy things that are completely foreign to me. How do you introduce nature to a soul who is uninitiated to the ways of cherishing it? Well, little by little. That's how.

So I made a pact with myself to start bicycling on an inner-city trail I kept seeing as I drove by. I set my alarm at the ungodly

hour of 5:30 a.m. and explored the trail for an hour at an embarrassing snail's speed.

What struck me at first, was how well nestled some parts of the river were. Then how beautiful dawn's reflection looked on it. Then the mountains and the river together. Then I discovered a heady formula: Sunrise + Mountains + Greenery + River = Serenity.

The Jordan River taught me how to fall in love and stay in love with nature. Because, on the days I visited the river, it gave me reflection, which I forgot how to seek in mega-cities.



Meher Ayesha stops for a rest at 1800 North on the Parkway trail.

PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FIFE-JEPPERSON

River Encounters

People on the Parkway

By THOMAS MOTTER

"Wills, the Mighty Wonder Dog" and I bicycle the Jordan River Parkway every day, weather permitting. My trusty sidekick rides in a basket on the back of my bike. We meet many people on the Parkway during our daily rides. Recently, we happened upon Bicycle Patrolman and Salt Lake City Police Officer, Cody Orgill and his partner. The two were posting public notices at strategic points along the Jordan River Parkway trail warning people of the recent algae bloom in the river that had posed a potential health

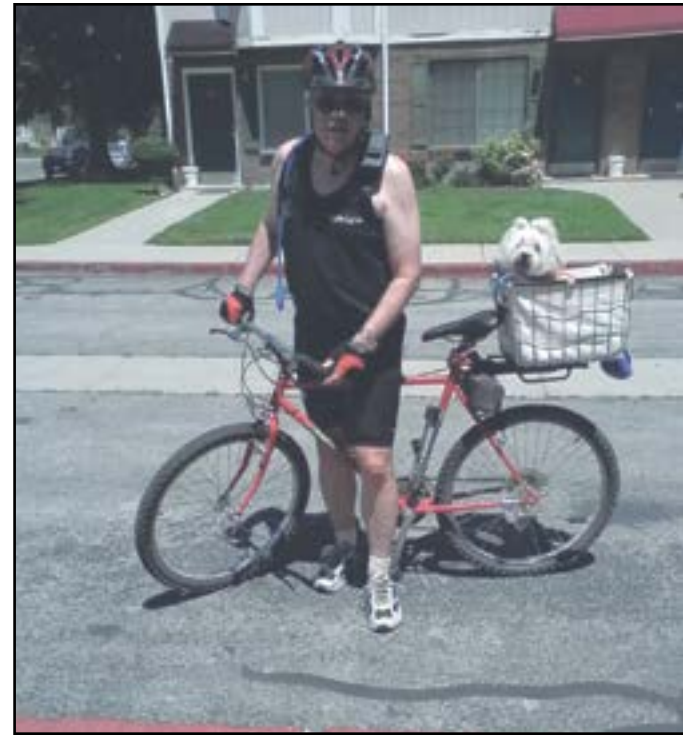
threat especially to their canine partners.

Many of the folks who use the Parkway, jog or bike with a furry friend. On especially hot days, which were in abundance this past summer, pets are inclined to jump in and cool off as well as slake their thirst in the river's cool pools and eddies. In order to avoid the threat to man and beast alike, Officer Orgill explained that the leadership of the bicycle patrol force had decided to expand their patrol area to include the parkway.

On another day, we encountered a senior husband and wife team biking along

the parkway. The two had stopped for a drink and rest. After initiating a conversation, they informed me that they had relocated from Sausalito, California to retire. When asked why they had decided to move to the Wasatch Front, they replied that they enjoyed outdoor activities and being in such close proximity to pristine wilderness. They bike along the river on a regular basis in order to maintain the cardio-vascular fitness level necessary to ski "The Greatest Snow On Earth" during the Winter Season.

We are always excited to see who we meet on our next ride.



Wills and Tom out on a bicycle ride.

COURTESY OF THOMAS MOTTER

Finding faith in myself on the Jordan River



Meher Ayesha stops for a rest at 1800 North on the Parkway trail.

PHOTO BY SARAH WILLIMAS

By Sarah Williams

I didn't know we had white owls in Utah until one crossed my path on the Jordan River Parkway. The first time I saw it, it was dark out, probably too dark to be on this stretch of the river alone, but I had my bike, and I always felt safer on

my bike than on foot. Summer was brand new, and I could not be kept inside. The bird flew from a high branch on the west shore of the river, right in front of me to some hidden place in the east I couldn't find for all my looking. It's wings wide and so silent it was like it wasn't even there, a white

shadow, a photo negative of the night. The summer was full of promise and I took it as a good and beautiful omen.

I had recently lost my religious faith, and taken up a new and fresh faith in myself. Leaving my old world shattered, I stood at a new door I was just beginning to open

with fear and joy. It was going to be beautiful, I knew it. The owl meant good things. The river was part of my new faith because it was part of me. The smell of the river, thick in the summer night permeated my skin so deeply that even after a shower, I would still be able to smell it on my pillow. In sum-

mer I am the river.

The second time I saw the white owl, I was pedaling down the same stretch of river in the darkness, the last strains of summer evaporating in cool autumn foreshadowings. She flew in front of me in silence. Again, she was a promise, a good omen, but this time it was different. Through the summer, I had opened the door to my new life, and found that parts of my old life were more damaging and painful than I thought. Moving past them meant I first had to open closed places inside myself. There I found a sort of Pandora's Box of shocks and I was knocked to my knees. It had hurt so deeply that I had come to the river night after night to heal. It was over, though. I'd found my new place and exorcised the old. The white owl stretched her wings wide in front of me like Noah's dove with the olive leaf. The worst was over. I was free. I rode on in the darkness with the river towards home.

Homegrown football little league serves Glendale for 2nd year

By Moana Uluave-Hafoka

Salt Lake City's west side has arguably produced some of the most outstanding athletes in the state. And yet, many of these athletes have to travel miles to access facilities to match their talent. Consequently, many must trade their neighborhood identity for more known programs that offer far greater athletic and educational opportunities.

One such program has been football. For decades now, East and West little leagues have gained and groomed multiple generations of high school, college and even NFL players from the west side. If such athletes were coming out of the west side, and more specifically, the Glendale neighborhood, then why shouldn't they have a team of their own? Some of that answer is due to socioeconomic challenges many players and their parents face.

Football offers lessons in both investment and risk. Many specifically Pacific Islander parents see their children's football success as a way out of socioeconomic challenges. This is both a myth and a fact. Pacific Islanders are 28 percent more likely to play football professionally than any other ethnic group.

And so, for decades many Pacific Islander parents in Salt Lake City have held to that myth, invested years of their limited resources and time so that their sons could play little league, high school, college and then the NFL (as seen in Football We Trust). For years now, the community has gotten accustomed to outsourcing their talent and travelling to other neighborhoods to play. There has never been a little league team in the neighborhood and not many have questioned that status quo.

Last year, a group of con-

cerned parents recognized the gap and decided to fill it. Hence, the birth of the Glendale Griffins little league football program. Roxanne Langi, Executive Vice President stated, "there is no way my kids would be playing football before high school [without this league]. . . the league is low cost and close to home so boys can walk to practice." She and other dedicated parent volunteers also suggest that the team fosters a positive neighborhood identity where the community steps in when parents can't meet the costs.

However, the formation of the Griffins league has not been completely well-received in the neighborhood. Some have chosen to continue driving their children to long standing little league teams. And yet, this a good thing. It's a great thing. Choices foster competition – competition not just on the field but in the



From left to right: Glendale Griffin 9-year-olds Fehoko Satini and Isi Fehoko play with a football after a Saturday game in Jordan Park in September.

PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FIFE-JEPPERSON

costs that parents make in terms of time and money. This fall will be the Griffins' second year. They have four teams. That's four more teams that didn't exist in years past; four more opportunities for kids to play football in their own backyard; and four more times the chance of putting Glendale on the map.

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RAC continued from PAGE 1

venues are located in suburbs that can accommodate the acreage needed for such as facility, the RAC is located in Salt Lake City proper, five minutes from the airport and conveniently close to downtown hotels and restaurants.

Several tournaments have already taken place at the RAC this past summer including the World Rugby Super Series, Real Salt Lake State Cup, La Roca Cup, and the North American Rugby Invitational 7s. These events are free and open to the public, allowing locals to catch a glimpse of some sports that they otherwise might not have an opportunity to have any exposure to at such a skilled level.

However, while events are free to attend for spectators, the fields are not free for players. The facility has a strict "pay to play" policy and while local youth can reserve a field for a discounted \$45/hour during the week, they must also provide proof of resident status, certificate of insurance, and a W-9. This is not the type of venue for kids to play a pick up soccer game, but rather, a premier space for them to experience tournament level play, on the best grass the city can grow.

The actual construction of the

fields is state-of-the-art, similar to the sand-based fields used at Rio Tinto Stadium that allows better water drainage so soil compaction and puddling on the field does not occur. Play is limited to 25 hours a week so that the turf can recover and maintain its high level of quality for all the tournaments. While normal grass level is usually three inches, the length at the RAC is 1.5 inches. Many people who visit mistakenly believe that the fields are artificial turf because they look so flawless.

All this did not come without a price. Although the operation is currently 100% funded by field fees, the initial cost to construct was \$23 million dollars, with Salt Lake City residents voting for a \$15.3 million dollar bond back in 2003 and a \$7.5 million dollar match coming from Real Salt Lake. Four full-time city employees run the facility with seven seasonal employees. In addition, Salt Lake City's Mosquito Abatement comes out daily for treatment due to its close proximity to the Jordan River.

Beyond the dollar cost to construct and run the facility, there is an environmental cost as well. 13 acres of wetlands were lost during construction, with only two acres rebuilt. The RAC

currently uses Salt Lake City's culinary water for its extensive irrigation, placing an increased burden on an area with already strained water usage.

Despite the hefty price, Lisa Schmidt, the Program Manager of the Regional Athletic Complex contests that the facility is a strong economic driver for Salt Lake City, bringing in millions of dollars of spending from out-of-town attendees at Salt Lake City hotels, restaurants, and shops. They have already secured funding to construct a shade structure that should be done by 2017 and are currently working on road realignment. She hopes that they will be able to expand, developing an additional 65 acres north of the existing fields, adding more trees, a new restroom, stadium seating, as well as additional full-time staff.

As to the immediate benefit for west-side residents, perhaps they will want to check it out themselves. To find out what events are occurring at the RAC, you can follow them on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/slcregionalathleticcomplex/> or call them at 801-972-7879.

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Ti Kinikini (seated), Lala and Faith, staff from the U of U Office of Equity & Diversity begin the Pioneer Rugby League Youth Clinic held in July at the Salt Lake Athletic Regional Complex. The clinic was sponsored by the U of U's Pacific Islander Student Association.

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Championship team "Homeless" from BYU recovers the ball from tough second-place team "Matari Lions" from Oahu, Hawaii during the Pioneer Rugby 7 Tournament at the Salt Lake Athletic Regional Complex next to the Jordan River.

ALL PHOTOS BY MICHAEL EVANS

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Interlocal commission gets things done along the Jordan River



Jordan River Commission Executive Director Laura Hanson has local roots as a West High graduate who later earned a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies and a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Utah. PHOTO COURTESY OF JRC

By Dorothy Owen and Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

The 50-mile Jordan River passes through fifteen cities and three counties along the Wasatch Front. Historically, there has been a lack of coordination among these different municipalities. That was until the Jordan River Commission was formed in 2010.

The Jordan River Commission is a public entity created to help implement the Blueprint Jordan River, a regional plan outlining a future vision of the entire Jordan River corridor.

The Blueprint Jordan River was the result of a year-long planning effort in 2008 involving nearly 3,000 public workshop participants. In these workshops, people from all along the Wasatch Front identified a vision of the river as a 7,300-acre nature corridor with trails, open space, wildlife viewing and recreation opportunities. Many other ideas and goals, such as stormwater management, environmental education, and rehabilitation of former industrial areas into "river centers" with recreation and dining, were identified. The final Blueprint plan received a resolution of

support from the majority of local governments adjacent to the river.

Currently 25 governmental entities have signed an interlocal cooperation agreement as members of the Jordan River Commission (JRC). These members represent 14 cities, three counties, two state agencies and six special service districts, including the Utah Transit Authority, the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, and several water treatment facilities.

In a most unusual organizational framework, the JRC's Governing Board has more members than members of the commission itself. The Governing Board has 36 voting members of which two-thirds are government entities and one-third are non-governmental or community partners. The community members have a variety of perspectives including recreation, environment, education, business, land ownership, utilities/infrastructure, and fundraising/development.

The JRC's purpose is to "enhance, preserve, protect, and responsibly develop the river corridor." The commission and its small staff raise public awareness, promote

coordination among numerous stakeholders and assist in the implementation of projects identified in the Blueprint in accordance with a strategic plan.

The Jordan River Commission is a successful model of how interlocal government entities can work with each other and the greater community to achieve large public goals.

They developed a corridor-wide invasive vegetation management calendar and treatment schedule, and a GIS inventory of all remaining open space along the river. They developed best practices for riverfront communities including a model ordinance, checklist and available resources. They co-host the annual Get Into the River Festival which happens every spring in different municipalities along the river. They also fund various projects. For example, they gave \$205,639 toward future completion of the gap in the Jordan River Parkway trail between 200 South and North Temple, \$81,000 toward puncturevine management over a three-year period, and \$15,000 toward Salt Lake County's annual Watershed Symposium.

JRC PAGE 13

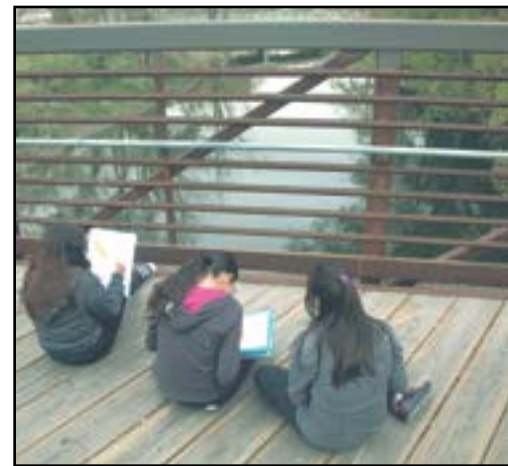
ReAwakened Beauty project engages middle school students, artists & ecologists in river restoration

By Center for Documentary Arts and Expression staff

Between October 27, 2015 and May 19, 2016, a dedicated group of Northwest Middle School 7th graders and two of their teachers participated in a unique, after-school program titled, ReAwakened Beauty: The Past, Present, and Future of the Jordan River. Created by the Center for Documentary Expression and Art (CDEA), this place-based-learning program brought artists and ecologists

into the school to guide students to explore the river through photography and writing and introduce them to native trees and shrubs. Northwest students joyously photographed the change of seasons along the river, followed beaver tracks, planted and labeled ten native species, and pondered the river's mysteries and future potential. The ReAwakened Beauty program at Northwest is part of a three-year (2014-17) environmental restoration and community education project being carried out

by CDEA and its partners: River Restoration and the Jordan River Commission. Funded primarily by the Utah Division of Water Quality's Willard Bay Mitigation Fund, the full program—titled the Lower Jordan River Education Outreach, Riparian Enhancement, and River Clean Up—aims to enhance the condition of the lowest downstream section of the Jordan River as it enters the Great Salt Lake and to get communities and schools involved with the long-term stewardship of this important area.



Students were taught to use journaling as a tool for studying the river.



Students, teachers and artists-in-residence explore the riparian fringe of the river near Northwest Middle School.



Students gather at the base of a classic native 100-year-old Fremont Cottonwood tree along the Jordan River Parkway Trail near Northwest Middle School.

PHOTOS BY KENT MILES FOR CDEA

OUR DISAPPEARING RIBBON OF NATURE

by Ray Wheeler

Humanity's relationship with "nature" – the web of non-human life forms with which we coexist and are interdependent – has always been paradoxical. For much of our history we have worshiped nature even as we have also destroyed it.

In our mountainous Salt Lake Valley, since the arrival of Mormon pioneers a century and a half ago, we have largely obliterated native plant communities and eliminated many species of wildlife. All seven streams flowing from the Wasatch Mountains to the Jordan River have been submerged into an underground network of pipes. Today one of the last remaining spaces available for native communities of animals and plants in our valley is the ribbon of green along the winding path of the Jordan River.

Since Mormon pioneer days, the human perception of our valley's only river has reflected our paradoxical relationship with nature. For the first settlers the river was a vital lifeline, providing water for drinking and cleaning, for power, for transport and for agriculture.

But when the same river flooded farms, homes or towns, presented a barrier to travel, bred mosquitoes or otherwise obstructed the spread of civilization, we naturally regarded it as a nuisance or a threat. Many saw it merely as a conveyor belt to nowhere, a convenient repository for every kind of human waste.

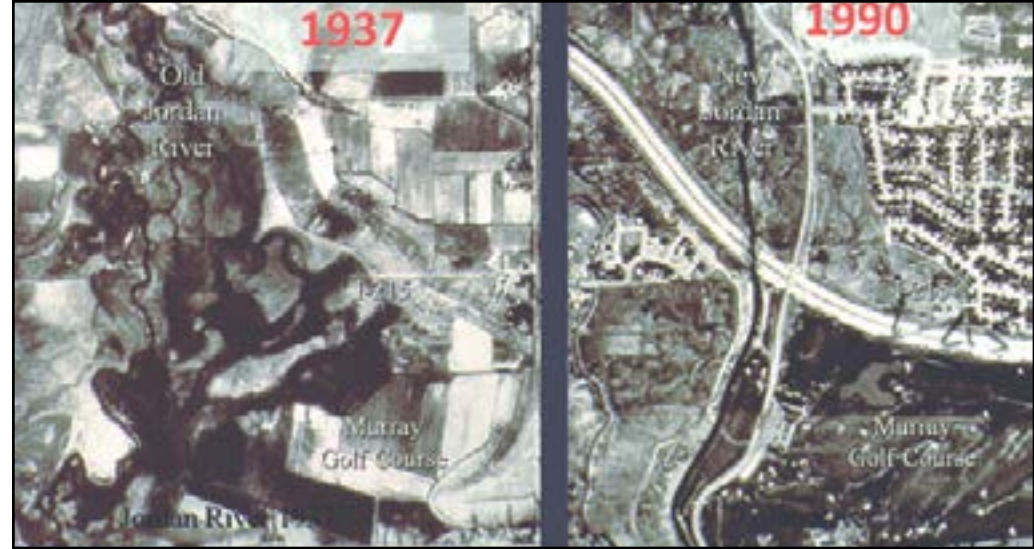
The original, pre-settlement river was slow and sinuous, with

a flood plain up to a half-mile wide in places. Its low, gently sloped banks, regularly topped by floodwater, were lined not with trees but with coyote willow, shrubs, bulrushes and grass. It had large systems of marshy wetland ponds within its flood plain, especially on Salt Lake City's west side as the river approached its mouth in the Great Salt Lake.

The river provided water, food and shelter for deer, elk, cougar, wolves, coyotes, foxes, and many other animals including at least 200 species of locally breeding birds, and hundreds of thousands of migratory birds traveling along two overlapping transcontinental migratory bird flyways that follow the north-south path of the river. A 2002 study by Utah Partners in Flight confirms that riparian corridors are the most important bird habitat in the state.

By 1883 the industrious Mormon settlers had built an approximately 170-mile network of canals to distribute the flow of a 50-mile long river across much of a 500-square-mile valley floor. By mid 20th century most of the land along the river, outside of cities, was farmland. At this time, Valley residents still fished and swam safely in the river.

However like all urban rivers across the world, with the development of our modern industrial infrastructure the river gradually became a staging area and dumping ground for every conceivable form of urban-industrial waste: smoke-belching power plants, pollution-seeping factories, raw human sewage (until the first sewer plants were finally built on the river in the 1950s), trash dumps, junkyards, offal from



Comparative photos of the Jordan River in 1937 (left) and 1990 (right). Extensive wetlands the river channel is arrow-straight, roads and buildings crowd to river's edge. PHOTO BY AERIAL PHOTO

meat-packing plants, industrial chemical wastes, fertilizers and other pollutants flushed off city streets and landscapes, and eventually, refuse from the ever-present homeless people who camp up and down the river.

In addition to our valley's vast canal system, we built out a still larger storm sewer system to drain storm water from virtually every street in the valley. This "storm water" drains into the river, essentially serving as both garbage collector and sewer main for the entire valley.

In 1910, flood control engineers built a diversion dam at 2100 South to redirect floodwater into a "surplus canal" away from the original river channel, which passes within 1.7 miles of Temple Square and the heart of downtown Salt Lake City. Despite this heroic flood control measure, Salt Lake County flood control crews still continuously dredge the original channel to control

flood risk from sediment, which they pile up in riverbank levees or berms.

The river has also been straightened, shortening its length and speeding its flow. To prevent erosion on the outside of river bends, its now steep banks have been hardened with "rip rap" rock walls, car bodies, concrete blocks and other debris, to ensure that homes and commercial centers can be built right to water's edge with minimal flood risk or flood insurance cost.

As industrial blight and pollution increased during the second half of the 20th century, some communities and residents along the river turned away from it. It developed a notoriously bad reputation. In the 1970s its water was tested and declared unsafe in places for drinking or swimming. Many parents warned their children not to go near it. Its water was muddy and dangerous to human health. It stank. Its banks

were stripped almost completely of native plants, which were gradually replaced with weedy non-native plants of little value to wildlife. In some places, its wetlands and marshes were buried under trash and fill. Its channel was dredged, bermed, straightened, its banks raised, steepened and fortified. A 1971 report titled "Jordan River Parkway, an Alternative" done by Urban Technology Assoc. noted that when kids fell into the river they sometimes drowned because the banks were too steep to climb. Gradually it sank below its rising banks until it all but disappeared from the public consciousness. Many homeowners with back yards bordering the river turned away from it, building fences that block it from view and shuttering the windows facing the river.

However, beginning in the 1950s a positive change in public consciousness also began to take hold. After nearly a century

of ever-intensifying abuse, city, county and state governments began the epic job of recovering the river from its status as a waste dump and sewage canal with the construction of water treatment plants along the river beginning in the 1950s. Thanks to major environmental protection laws enacted in the 1960s and 1970s, especially the Clean Water Act and National Environmental Protection Act, the Jordan river corridor is today a somewhat cleaner river, though the water is still quite polluted and mostly unsafe for swimming, let alone drinking.

During the latter part of the 20th century valley residents and city planners began to see the recreational value of the river corridor. The fast-growing cities and counties along the river's path began to build parks along its banks. Golf courses and sports parks were constructed along the river. Duck hunting reserves and wildlife preserves proliferated across the vast wetlands at its mouth.

As part of a "Model Cities" program, during the 1960s and 1970s, urban planners conceived the ambitious idea of a "Provo Jordan River Parkway" bike and pedestrian trail running up to 150 miles along the path of the Provo River through Provo Canyon and across the city of Provo to Utah Lake, then up its eastern shoreline and continuing northward along the entire length of the Jordan River.

With the construction next year of a recently-funded \$6 million bike and pedestrian bridge spanning the railroad yard between North Temple and 200 South, the Jordan River Parkway trail will be continuous all the way from Utah Lake almost to the shoreline of the Great Salt Lake, providing an extremely efficient and safe north-south bike commuting pathway across the Salt Lake Valley.

These visionary efforts to improve the river corridor eventually led real estate developers to a revelation. Because of flood risk, pollution and their unsavory reputation the river bottoms had remained undeveloped farm-

land, mostly zoned agricultural and priced at bottom dollar for a major urban area. But if water pollution could be reduced – if the river could be made not to smell – then residential subdivisions, office parks and strip malls might be built within its previously undeveloped flood plain, and developers could pull off one buy-low, rezone-and-sell-high subdivision and commercial center bonanza after another. Hopefully flood risk was now so well contained as to be minimal. And if flooding did occur, there would always be FEMA and the nation's heroic taxpayers to bail out the new commercial or residential property owners.

In 1996 one of Utah's largest reconstruction firms succeeded in forcing South Jordan City to discard a plan to develop a park system along the river and instead to rezone the farmland it had bought for commercial use – a story well told by Utahan Paul Swenson in a meticulously accurate, true-to-life novel, *Slapped*. Overnight the developer realized a \$17 million profit just from the rezone, and immediately flipped the property to another developer without building a single structure on the site.

The deal sent an electric thrill up the spine of the real estate development industry. Since 1996, nearly two dozen massive "mixed use" (commercial/dense residential) or "transit-oriented development centers" (TOD's) surrounding light rail stations along the I-15/Frontrunner transit corridor have been constructed, are in progress, or planned for the river corridor. Most of these "mixed use" centers, jammed full of apartment and condo blocks as well as strip malls and towering office buildings, spill down into the river flood plain almost to the river's edge. They range from 50 acres up to 700 acres in size. The largest of them are whole new cities within cities. For example, according to an EPA report, the just-completed "Bingham Junction" TOD on the former Sharon Steel mill Superfund site in Midvale will house an estimated 7,000 residents, not



A Murray riverbank scene reminiscent of the prehistoric Jordan River. PHOTO BY RAY WHEELER

including those shopping and working on the site, and will contain approximately 300 new buildings.

We have radically altered our idyllic mountain valley. In the mobile, high-tech world of the 21st century, American lifestyle is changing, even in Utah. Especially in University towns like ours, the educated young professionals who staff and manage industry-leading, market-dominating technology companies tend to be backcountry skiers, river runners, mountain, racing and touring bikers, climbers, and backpackers. They prefer "natural open space" (a formal zoning designation in our city) for outdoor recreation. As its once abundant riparian habitat has been gobbled up by commercial, residential and industrial development, city dwellers have begun to understand both the lifestyle amenities and the economic value of preserving that narrow ribbon of brown water and green foliage that threads its way across the west side of our city.

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The 120-acre River Park Corporate Center consists of 22 four to five story buildings, containing 1.7 million square feet of office space. PHOTO BY GOOGLE EARTH



Jordan River Parkway trail near Jordan Park in Glendale. PHOTO BY ANNE-MARIE BERNSHAW

Beautifying the river



By **Gilberto Rejon Jr.**

My name is Gilberto Rejon Jr. and I am 13 years old. I describe myself as a soccer coach and an "uncle" to many. When I was in elementary school, my dad, Gilberto Rejon Sr., started the Hartland Soccer Club to help keep kids out of gangs and in school. Now I'm in eighth grade at Salt Lake Center for Science Education (SLCSE), and I help my dad run the program.

Last spring, he got me involved with a river signage art project with the Jordan River Community Initiative because he loves the river and wants it to be looking the way it's supposed to – beautiful. To support that, we got many of the SLCSE soccer players to join us on the project. My dad told them to look at the project as a field trip.

The students from SLCSE and some artists got together to create some art with spray paint. We went on a river trip with them to get a kind of picture of what to paint. The goal was to get the participants to learn more about the river and share what they already knew. Many of the students had been down the river before, but not with artists. There were some funny moments going down the river, like when the artists and some students started racing and ended up crashing into a tree, and each other.

This project was important to me. I got involved for the fun of it and to help the environment. I personally want to see the river looking beautiful and we also want it to be memorable for people who come from other places to ride their bikes on the trail. This project has changed me, because I see how people can just throw trash in the river and not care. Now, sometimes my dad and I go bike riding and bring along trash bags just to try to keep the trails and river clean.

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Juan Gilberto Rejon Magana directs volunteers cleaning up the Peace Labyrinth art feature along the Jordan River near 1700 South. The Hartland Community 4 Youth & Families group has adopted that spot through SLC's Parks and Public Lands program. PHOTO COURTESY OF HC4YF



One of the art signs created by Jordan River Community Initiative at 1700 S. PHOTO COURTESY OF JRCI

Bringing together University and west side resources for reciprocal learning, action, and benefit... a community coming together.



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JRC continued from PAGE 8



JRC Executive Director Laura Hanson (left) speaks to dignitaries, volunteers and community members at a ribbon cutting ceremony at the 2014 Get Into the River event. PHOTO COURTESY OF JRC

Specific projects are funded by either grants or private donations. Basic administrative funding for the JRC (mostly staffing) comes from annual fees charged to its members based upon a formula with equal weights for an entity's population, geographic area, and linear river frontage.

How to Get Involved?

The Jordan River Commission meets at 9 a.m. on the first Thursday of every month, usually at Taylorsville City Hall. Time is set aside at the end of each meeting for public comment. Members of the public can also request to be on the agenda. Staff will accept such requests by phone, mail or email at any

time and the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Agendas are closed a week prior to the meeting. For more information and a comprehensive look at the Jordan River Commission, visit their website at www.jordan-rivercommission.com.
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Who makes up the Jordan River Commission? 25 Government Members:

- 3 counties: Davis, Salt Lake and Utah
- 4 cities: Bluffdale, Cottonwood Heights, Draper, Midvale, North Salt Lake, Riverton, Sandy, Salt Lake City, Saratoga Springs, South Jordan, South Salt Lake, Taylorsville, West Jordan, and West Valley City. (Murray City is the only major governmental entity along the river corridor not included on the Commission.)
- 2 state agencies: Utah Dept. of Environmental Quality, Utah Dept. of Natural Resources
- 6 special service districts: Utah Transit Authority, and others (see website)

Who makes up the JRC's governing board?

- 4 county members – Utah County, Davis County, and two from Salt Lake County, the mayor and a council member
- 13 city representatives
- 4 state government representatives from the Governor's Office, the State Legislature, the Utah Division of Water Quality, and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands.
- 6 special service districts: UTA, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, South Davis and Central Valley Water Treatment Facilities, Worker's Compensation Fund, and the Utah State Fair Park.
- 7 community partners: Jordan River Foundation, the Wasatch Rowing Foundation, Tracy Aviary, Chevron Oil Company, Rocky Mountain Power, Zions Bank, and one Community at-large member – Simon Sorenson. Two vacancies exist.

Staff Support:

- Executive Director Laura Hanson, AICP (lahanson@utah.gov)
- Brian Tonetti, Program & Policy Planner (bttonetti@utah.gov)
- Michaela Boothe, Executive Assistant (miboothe@utah.gov)
- Technical Assistance Committee - 42 members listed on website



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
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Utah Development Academy: not your average soccer club



Utah Development Academy's under-15 boys team, coached by Tyler Stockstill, practices at West High where most of them started high school this fall. PHOTO BY LUKE GARROTT

By Luke Garrott

On 600 West, among all the apartment construction in the west Downtown-Gateway area, "Futsal 801" pops out of the warehouse drab. The murals of international soccer stars Messi and Ronaldinho colorfully announce the indoor soccer facility for Utah Development Academy (UDA).

While UDA is a serious soccer club with 22 competitive teams, its mission isn't the typical "winning at any cost" philosophy of many youth soccer clubs in the U.S.

Founded in 2012 by Tyler Stockstill, UDA declares its mission as "inspiring diverse youth to achieve their potential through education and sport." Tyler's wife and the club's Health and Education Coordinator, Libby Stockstill says Tyler's vision was born out of his connection with Latino players while coaching for east side clubs in Salt Lake City.

Wanting to provide a different experience for west side youth, Tyler focuses on quality, accessibility, affordability, and meeting west side kids' needs. UDA set an early goal of improving players' grades, graduating high school, and getting them to think about higher education.

Libby emphasizes how important it is for them to reach middle schoolers. "Currently we're trying to expand middle-school sports, because at that age boys and girls need a lot of support." Gang life calls some students, and traumatic events like the violent death of a family member are not uncommon. UDA was created to help kids with life both on and off-field.

Edgar Mesquita, age 14, from Rose Park, says soccer is the best part of his day. "With soccer I have fun. I can be free, instead of being in the streets. It keeps me entertained." He thinks UDA is special because of "the bond they create between the players and coaches." Mesquita estimates that 20 of his friends play for UDA teams.

"Chino" Fernández, age 14, also from Rose Park and a freshman at West High speaks to the benefits of soccer in his life. "It helps take

things off my mind," he said. A midfield playmaker, "Chino" cites Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal and James Rodríguez of Colombia as his on-field role models.

UDA provides off-the-field mentors as well. Students from the Bennion Center for community service at the University of Utah offer homework assistance sessions, which are twice a week for some teams. Volunteers in UDA's academic assistance program also teach an ACT preparation class and take trips to college campuses so that players see higher education as a real possibility.

Where most clubs run on a pattern of competitive selection and frequent turnover, for UDA "the main goal is retention." Citing the benefits of extended relationships over time, Libby remembers with teary pride the club's very first team, all of whom recently graduated high school after sticking together for four years.

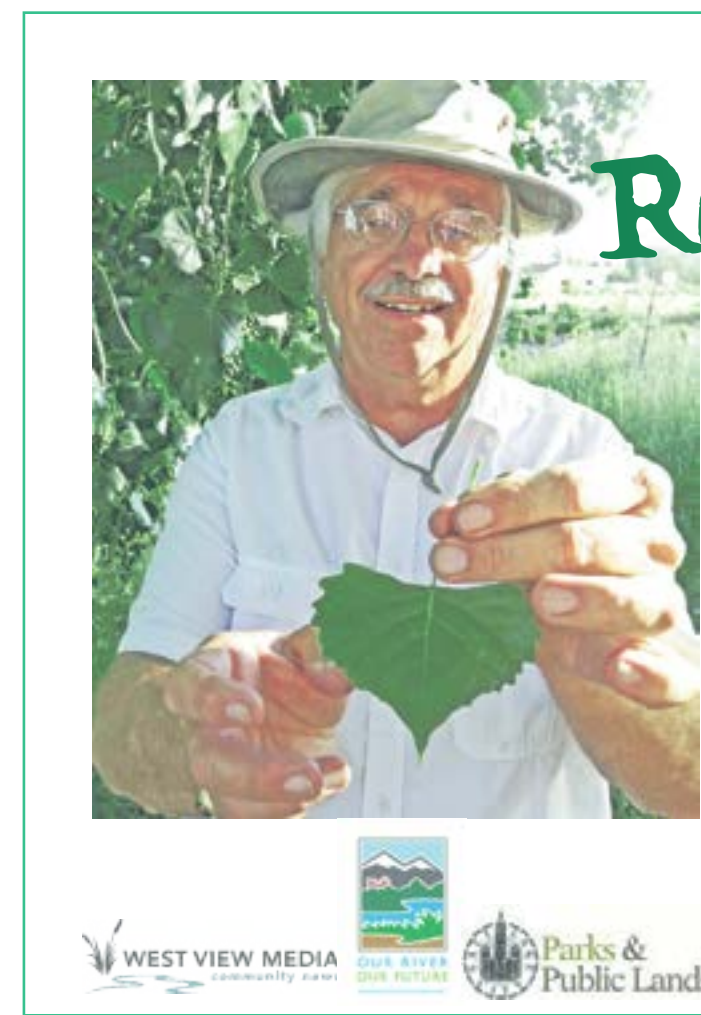
Libby, a Spanish speaker, says it requires "personal and cultural sensitivity" to understand kids' life challenges at home. "We try to make sure that every child who joins the team is important as a kid."

Health education is also a main part of UDA's mission. In partnership with Molina Healthcare, the club's jersey sponsor, club families are offered nutrition and wellness workshops. Per the club's purpose, the "whole kid" is the focus.

Where many other clubs are out to field the strongest teams regardless of other considerations, UDA gives a place to any child who is willing to work towards athletic and scholastic goals. While the annual player fees for other clubs can reach \$3000, UDA keeps their fees to \$350 for income-qualifying families, and \$1100 for others.

Highland High graduate Bewar Yousif, recently signed on as assistant coach to Tyler Stockstill and Competition Director at UDA. At his former club, goals for inclusivity were made but never achieved. He thinks UDA's success comes from "giving the kids attention. They help them with their grades, they go to their graduation."

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Rediscover the River

Please join West View Media, The Jordan River Commission, Center for Documentary Arts and Expression and SLC Parks and Public Lands in Celebration of the Jordan River!

OCTOBER 15, Noon – 3 PM
1800 North Redwood Rd.
(Parking lot just north of Northwest Middle School)

Light Service Project: Noon – 1:30 PM
• Weed-pulling, trash pick-up, native plant seeding

Celebration: 1:30 – 3:00 PM
• Nature walks with ecologist Ty Harrison
• Boat-building and leaf-people art activities
• School-aged kids, enter a writing/photography contest to win a guided canoe trip on the Jordan River for you, your family and a favorite teacher (later in the spring).
• Free food, drink and music!



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Volunteer "neighborhood naturalists" and Open Space Lands Program Manager Lewis Kogan take an inventory of wildlife during a "bioblitz" at the Fife Wetlands Preserve near 900 S. 1100 W. PHOTO BY DAN POTTS

Citizen scientists help take inventory of wildlife

By Dan Potts

In less than two hours on a Saturday in May a small group of citizen scientists fanned out across a 7 1/2-acre wetlands preserve in west Salt Lake City and made 210 observations of 44 different wildlife species. The day could not have been more beautiful, as these nature-curious volunteers combed the new Fred and Ila Rose Fife Wetland Preserve on 900 South and the Jordan River looking for plant and animal life to photograph with their cell phone and tablet cameras. They were helping to launch Salt Lake City Open Space Lands pilot SLC Neighborhood Naturalists program by participating in a "bioblitz," where volunteers find and identify as many species as possible in a given place during a given time, and have fun connecting with nature in the process. The Fife Wetlands Preserve was largely created with funding from Chevron as mitigation for their 2010 oil spill in Red Butte Creek, and also

from SLC's Capital Improvement Fund. The Salt Lake County Fish and Game Association, a longtime wildlife-oriented nonprofit that I am involved with, drafted the original plan for the preserve's general layout. Early on, it was displayed at Poplar Grove's Groove in the Grove community festival to allow west side residents to give input to the city about what was then called the Oxbow Wetlands project. Several years later it is amazing how similar the project reflects what came out of that grassroots effort. Creation of a large off-channel pond, and efforts to restore native vegetation have largely been successful, however the implementation of future best practices and some introductions of other native plants and animals will be necessary for the site to reach its full potential of attracting and retaining diverse, non-habituated wildlife. These bioblitzes should help. One of the most significant efforts for any long-term restoration project like The Fife

Wetlands Preserve is monitoring the ecological changes over time. In partnership with The Natural History Museum of Utah, the city is utilizing volunteers to help accomplish this lofty monitoring goal by organizing ongoing bioblitz events at various natural open space sites around the city. SLC Neighborhood Naturalist volunteers attempt to create baseline inventories of biodiversity at these sites by taking photos and uploading them to a website through an app called iNaturalist, a social network created for people all over the world who make observations of living organisms. The observations are stored on the website, and can be confirmed by other iNaturalist users. Land managers can then share that information with the public and can use the inventory as a guide for future nature restoration projects. To help get a more complete inventory of shy, migratory birds (like the snowy egret, local kingfisher, and a lesser goldfinch I was able to photograph at the preserve before



This snowy egret was spotted at the Fife Wetlands Preserve in May. PHOTO BY DAN POTTS

the eager group of bioblitz volunteers arrived), individuals and local naturalists who visit the site more routinely could add to the collection of observations using the iNaturalist app on their own time. To find out how you can participate in future SLC Neighborhood Naturalists bioblitz events, visit <http://nhmu.utah.edu/slc-neighborhood-naturalists>, and to learn more about wildlife species at the Fife Wetlands Preserve and along the Jordan River Corridor, visit <http://www.inaturalist.org/guides/3247> and <http://jordanrivercommission.com/plants-animals-and-water/>.

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'Nature in the City' plan would restore the river.

By Ray Wheeler

One possible future for the Jordan River corridor across Salt Lake City is an ambitious plan to create a linked series of nature parks along the river all the way across the city. This "Nature in the City Riparian and Community Restoration Plan" has been endorsed by 17 local and regional environmental groups, the Glendale Community Council, Poplar Grove, and several former and current Salt Lake City councilmembers.

"The central idea of this plan is to think of river as one entity, and to challenge ourselves to find every possible way to enhance its ecological health and biological diversity as well as its recreational, spiritual and economic value for all of us who live near it," says botanist and riparian restoration ecologist Ty Harrison, one of the plan's principal designers. "How creative are we?"

The plan identifies 17 target land parcels along the river, ranging from four to 160 acres in size, which could potentially be restored with native plants, wetlands, native fish, water quality control facilities. The goal is to establish a continuous habitat and travel corridor for wildlife and humans along the river.

Most of the land identified for possible conversion to nature parks is within existing city or state parks, city-owned golf courses or other public open space, such as part of the Utah State Fair Park or a portion of the Jordan River OHV Park near the I-215 bridge over the river. In addition to removing non-native plant species and restoring native plant communities, the plan would:

- **Re-grade stream banks** and replant them with native



Caption??? PHOTO BY RAY WHEELER

species wherever possible to reduce soil erosion;

- **Create new wetlands ponds and bioswales** to provide wildlife habitat especially for migratory birds traveling along two overlapping transcontinental bird flyways that follow the Jordan River from Utah Lake to the abundant wetlands of the Great Salt Lake shorelines.

- **Improve water quality** by removing pollution and sediment in wetlands, bioswales and sediment trap devices installed at stream confluences and major storm water outfalls.

- **"Daylight" tributary streams** (bring City Creek and water from Red Butte, Emigration and Parley's creeks up out of underground pipes as they approach the river, and restore native plant communities and fisheries along these stream courses.

- **Provide nature education opportunities** on the city's west side, including two nature education buildings, one a potential west side campus for Tracy Aviary proposed for the former Par 3 golf course property in Rose Park, plus a wildlife education center for hunters and fishermen. In addition, each of the proposed nature parks would serve as a hands-on, outdoor

classroom where school kids, college students and residents can learn how to restore native plant communities and wildlife by doing restoration work under the supervision of experts.

- **Develop spaces for urban agriculture** at a variety of scales, from 2 to 10-acre urban farms down through community gardens, eco-gardens, permaculture gardens, or food forests (self-sustaining natural orchards open to the public and managed by volunteers).

- **Expand the off-street bike commuter trail system** to improve air quality by completing a missing link in the north-south Jordan Parkway bike trail, while providing additional east-west connector trails connecting downtown to the river at about 200 South, and by extending the "9 Line" trail all the way from Redwood Road east to the Wasatch Foothills and the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

- **Create new community centers** to serve as gateways to the river. For example: at the century-old Fisher Mansion, an architectural classic on the east bank of the Jordan river at 200 South – now city-owned and in need of about \$3.5 million restoration funding.

Explore the Jordan River by bike and boat during October!

West side residents are invited to learn more about the "Nature in the City" plan by touring the river corridor with expert guides in a series of four FREE bike and float trips down the river:

October 8 and 15
9:00 a.m. to noon:
 12-mile bike trip across the city on the Jordan River Parkway Trail, with multiple stops to explore open space and parks. Participants should bring their own bikes and biking gear. The October 15 trip will end at 1800 N. at the Rediscover the River event.

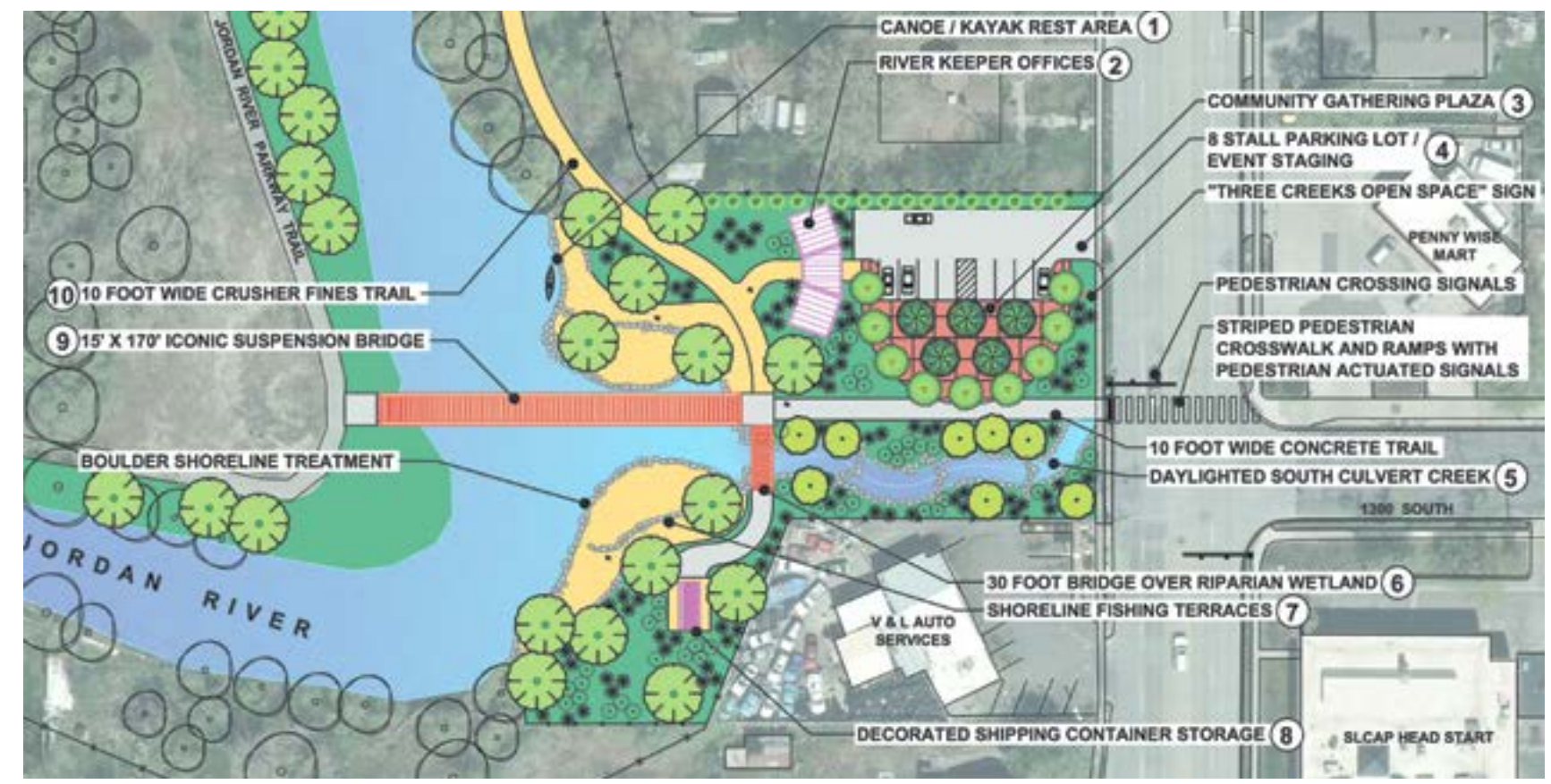
October 22 and 29
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.:
 "multimodal" bike and boat trip beginning on bikes at the Seven Peaks public boat ramp on 1200 W. 1700 S. We'll bike south on the Parkway Trail to visit the Redwood Nature Park and the New Roots Urban Farm, then return back to the 1700 S. boat ramp, where we'll get in canoes to paddle downstream to Fisher Mansion at 200 S., with stops for exploration and discussion along the way. (Shuttle provided.)

To register for these trips and learn more details, RSVP and email questions to Ray at wheeler.ray@gmail.com.

- **Provide other social and recreational amenities** away from the river along the city-edge of larger properties, such as repurposed golf courses, the State Fair Park, or the Jordan River OHV Park on the north edge of the city. Such features might include, where appropriate, community fisheries, dog parks, children's play parks, hiking trails, perimeter bicycle or mountain bike trails, wildlife observation stations, and other traditional features of city parks.
- **Enhance property values, tax revenue, and economic opportunity.** Land value increases substantially

along any protected urban greenway, often repaying cities and counties for the cost of purchasing and restoring land. "This plan has many benefits," says Bill Watters, whose family has lived near the Jordan River for 60 years. "The best reason to restore nature in our city is for its beauty, peace and vitality. The next best reason is that a riparian greenway will stimulate our economy by attracting disruptive companies drawn to University towns like ours which have great outdoor recreation opportunities."

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One of three options for restoration and improvements at the Three Creeks Confluence on 900 West 1300 South.

IMAGE COURTESY OF SALT LAKE CITY ENGINEERING

Project coming to 'daylight' three creeks entering Jordan River

By Kyle LaMalfa

Imagine being able to walk or ride a bike from your house, along a stream, to any of the seven canyons of the Wasatch mountains. Imagine narrow, natural corridors, where fish swim in the stream with birds chirping in the trees, stretching from the Jordan River to the top of the Wasatch canyons. This is the vision of the Seven Canyons Trust: that one of Utah's greatest assets, the Wasatch Front Mountains, would be connected to the Jordan River along urban trails and restored creeks, as it was 100 years ago.

This vision of a fully connected trail system was pioneered in a formal way by former Salt Lake City planning director, Stephen Goldsmith, under the stewardship of the Seven Canyons Trust. Mr. Goldsmith and the Trust anticipate that a project of this scale, includ-

ing participation from private parties, cities, counties and the State of Utah, could take 100 years to complete.

Glendale is where the work begins. When I was a city council member, I caught the vision and convinced the other six members to begin funding the Three Creeks Project. Red Butte, Emigration, and Parley's Creeks – three of the seven creeks of the Wasatch mountains – come together at the corner of 900 West and 1300 South near the Jordan River in Glendale.

Community leaders support the project too. Poplar Grove Vice-Chair Dennis Faris says, "I'm totally in favor. Way cool. Just build it already." As member of Salt Lake City's Parks, Natural Areas and Urban Trails board, Dennis has been watching the project come to life on paper for years.

Currently, the confluence is

paved over with a dead-end segment of the 1300 South right-of-way, and the open space land to either side is impacted by invasive species, garbage, and encroachments from private property. The Three Creeks Project would have all three creeks brought to the surface and the nearby river area cleaned up, restored and improved to support fishing, boating and relaxing.

"Buried under the asphalt, all the water that drains out of the Wasatch from Grandeur Peak to Black Mountain flows into the river here, but you'd never know it by the current appearance of the space," said Lewis Kogan, the Open Space Lands Manager of Salt Lake City.

Sean Crossland, the new chair of the Glendale Community Council, adds that "The Glendale Community Council has shown much interest

and support in conservation-minded improvement projects for the Jordan River trail." He adds that, "Three Creeks will provide a highly visible and engaging access point to the Jordan River, cut the distance from the Sorenson Center, and hopefully increase multi-use of the river."

The Three Creeks Project will take many years to complete. This year, the Salt Lake City Council added additional funding to the project to begin construction on the basic elements of the infrastructure.

"With funding from the federal government, the SLC Council and several city agencies, a design strategy to heal, repair and transform a parking lot into a neighborhood park is near," said Stephen Goldsmith of the Seven Canyons Trust.

Over the summer three public open houses were held to gather feedback about what

the community preferences were for the confluence. Out of 102 votes, the top four responses to the question of "How Will You Use This Site?" included environmental education (18), bird watching (16), meditation/relaxing (16), and biking (12).

The city is looking for more input from residents and community members to inform the design, which is expected to be finalized in late September. To fill out the online survey, click here: https://usu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3P2z2GbCYIMxinz.

For photos, plans, and ongoing information about the project, check out these websites: <http://www.sevencanyonstrust.org/> <http://www.slcgov.com/open-space/three-creeks-confluence-project>

EMAIL: wvm.editors@gmail.com

communitycouncil GET INVOLVED in your Community Council!

Community councils are neighborhood-based organizations developed to help community members directly advocate for change in their communities. Their job is to provide various city departments with input and recommendations generated directly from the community. These councils consist of local residents, service providers, property and business owners. Meetings are open to the public. To find out which community council area you live in, go to: www.slcgov.com/commcouncils.

Fairpark Community Council
 Fourth Thursdays: October 27, 6:30 p.m., Northwest Multipurpose Center: 1300 W. 300 N. (No meetings in Nov. or Dec.)
 Chair: Bryce Garner, 801-885-1352 brycegarner@gmail.com
 Website: <http://fairparkcommunity.org>, Facebook: Fairpark Community Council

Glendale Community Council
 Third Wednesdays: October 19, November 16, 7 p.m., Glendale Library: 1375 S. Concord St. (1240 W.) (No meeting in Dec.)
 Chair: Sean Crossland, 385-202-6445 gccchair@gmail.com
 Facebook: Glendale Community Council Facebook Closed Group: Jordan Meadows Community Council

Poplar Grove Community Council
 Fourth Wednesdays: October 26, 7:00 p.m., Pioneer Precinct: 1040 West 700 South (No meetings Nov. or Dec.)
 Chair: Marti Woolford 385-743-9767 poplargrovecouncil@gmail.com
 On Facebook as PoplarGroveCouncil

Rose Park Community Council
 First Wednesdays: October 5, November 2, December 7 6:30 p.m., Day Riverside Library: 1575 W. 1000 N.
 Chair: Blake Perez 801-702-2522 blakeperez@hotmail.com
 Facebook: Rose Park Community Council

Westpointe Community Council
 Third Wednesdays: October 19, November 16, 6:30 pm Day-Riverside Library: 1575 W. 1000 N. (No meetings Dec.)
 Chair: Erin Youngberg 801-815-0130 erin@westpointecc.org
 Facebook: Westpointe Community YouTube Channel: Westpointe Community Council

Frequently Asked Questions about Voting

By Liesa Manuel

I am a US citizen who will be at least 18 by November 8, but I am not registered to vote. How can I vote in this election?

Voting is one of the most important contributions that you can make to your community. Try to complete new-to- county registration online slco.org/clerk/elections/current-election-information, or in person by November 1, or by October 10 for mail-in registration. (Most libraries and post offices have mail-in registration forms.) It is possible to register provisionally on election day, but proof of identity and address must be verifiable.

Why should I vote? There are so many candidates that I have never heard of.

True, there are a lot of candi-

dates and they are not always easy to research, but keep three things in mind: 1) You can go to www.vote.utah.gov to view your sample ballot by typing in your address, 2) you would not invalidate a ballot if you were to skip any part of it – this is not a recommendation, just a fact, and 3) the easiest way to research the majority of candidates is to take advantage of the lieutenant governors postcard offer to receive a voter guide in your mailbox—call 801-538-1041, if you missed it. You would still need to check your sample ballot for local school board and county races. You can look up the research those candidates online, in your daily newspaper or attend a local Meet the Candidates night.

Nobody knows anything about those judges! Why do I have to vote for them?

Utah judges serve six-year

terms and face retention elections every even numbered year. There is no party affiliation, and no competitive campaigning for judicial positions in Utah. Voters are simply asked to vote on whether a judge should stay in his/her position. (Very few judges ever fail a retention election.) This is all for very good reason, but it means that the average person has little awareness of judicial performance even if he recognizes a couple of names from news articles.

Remember, you could skip any section and still have the rest of your ballot count, but second, you do have resources to inform yourself: judges.utah.gov provides a survey conducted by the Judicial Conduct Commission. Click "Judge Reports" and select Salt Lake County from the drop down, then "View Complete List." This information is also part



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of the voter guide sent out by the lieutenant governor's office. Call 801-538- 1041 if you didn't get the postcard.

If I am a felon, can I vote?

Actually, in the state of Utah, only currently incarcerated felons are barred from voting.

Voting may be a way to feel like a member of society again because it is something that a responsible citizen does.

I don't know whether I am registered. I did vote a long time ago, but maybe that was before I moved.

So easy to check: go to slco.org/clerk/elections or call 385-GOT-VOTE or 385-468- 8683.

I don't vote because it is inconvenient to go to the polling place, and also it keeps changing.

Most voting is done by mail. Visit the Salt Lake County Clerk's website to make sure that you are registered slco.org/clerk/elections/current-election-information or call 385-468-8683. You can still vote in person if you bring ID, just use the same resources to find the polling location.

The West View

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West side Wildlife **If you build it, what will come?**



Dan Potts

WEST VIEW MEDIA

The first wildlife article I wrote for The West View was titled: "If You Build It, They Will Come." That editorial, published in the Summer 2012 Issue, promoted the creation of wildlife habitat.

I, along with many other nature proponents in Salt Lake City were disappointed that the city had developed 140 acres on the north Jordan River for the construction of the controversial Regional Sports Complex, rather than the wildlife preserve and nature center that were originally proposed. This was at a time when other cities along the Jordan River were moving ahead with their own large nature restoration projects.

Since then, mitigation funding for the Chevron oil spill into Red Butte Creek has provided several opportunities for Utah's capital city to restore wildlife habitat. One of those projects here on the west side is a small 7.5 acre parcel on the Jordan River at 900 South. Following my recommendation, this wetland preserve was recently named after longtime west side residents Fred and Ila Rose Fife.

The earth-moving portion of that project is now complete,

resulting in a large, shallow pond, and the area has been replanted with numerous native plants.

The most common questions I hear about the Fife Wetlands Preserve are: "Has the project resulted in more wildlife?" and "Now that we built it, what new wildlife will come?"

To answer these questions it is important to define what wildlife is not. It does not take an expert to understand that most people do not consider house mice, Norway rats, raccoons, English house sparrows, European starlings, Eurasian collared doves, or any other common, non-native, urban non-migratory species to be wildlife. Rather they are often considered to be pests.

What many do not understand, however, is that even some of our native wildlife species can no longer be considered wild. Classic examples include mallard ducks and Canadian geese, many of which no longer migrate, live year round here in Salt Lake City's ice free waterways, and are routinely fed by people. They have so adapted to our urban lifestyle that they have lost many of their protective instincts, becoming almost domesticated. Experts refer to this type of behavior as "habituation." A great example of habituation here in our west side neighborhoods is the recent influx of rock squirrels that are quickly becoming pests, especially for neighbors with fruit trees.

The non-habituated wildlife species featured in my previous columns include amphibians, fish, reptiles, mammals, and

migratory birds. From the beginning, the Fife Preserve has been home for several wildlife species including tiger salamanders, fat-head minnows, and wandering garter snakes. More recently we have seen new arrivals including snowy egrets, common mergansers, muskrats, red-winged blackbirds, and even a rare sage thrasher (see photo).

In the future, the preserve should expect to attract new fish like speckled dace, chorus frogs, valley garter snakes, mammals like long-legged bats and meadow voles, and of course a large and growing list of migratory, neotropical birds like black-crowned night-herons, cinnamon teal, American kestrels, purple martins, marsh wrens, yellow-breasted chats, and spotted towhees, just to name a few. Many of these animals are unique, beautiful, and really fun to watch.

I find that there are three things that most citizens do not understand about wildlife restoration.

First, good wildlife habitats are naturally messy and diverse, and should NOT be managed as "people parks" with their traditional Kentucky bluegrass and shade trees. Some people think that wildlife prefer the tidy, orderliness of the city's parks. Those parks, however, are designed and managed for people, not wildlife. Artificial watering and mowing at restoration sites should not be continued indefinitely, because there are no sprinklers or lawn mowers in the wild.

Second, people do not realize that restoration projects like the Fife Wetlands Preserve often




Rare sage thrasher visits the Fife Preserve.

take decades to reach their full wildlife potential. Therefore, the public needs to be patient.

Third, to realize the best results from our restoration efforts requires the use of "best practices," such as the complete exclusion of both dogs and bicycles. This is essential to minimize disruption to wildlife in such a small preserve. People walking dogs or riding

bikes have many other more appropriate, designated areas to use.

Over the years, I have showcased many truly wild species in my column, and appreciate the many compliments received for my efforts. It will take many years to feature all of the "true" wildlife here along the Jordan River in The West View, but if "We build it; they will come!"



POPLAR GROVE
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