

JORDAN RIVER COMMISSION



2020

ANNUAL REPORT

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LETTER FROM GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December, 2020

Who would have guessed a year ago what 2020 would become?

Even among so much upheaval – from a global pandemic, earthquakes, wildfires and a record Northern Utah drought, to mass demonstrations and protests around racial justice, mask-wearing and election results – there is much for the Jordan River Commission to acknowledge and celebrate.

Among the most significant milestones this year was the 10-year anniversary of the Jordan River Commission. Launched officially in August 2010, what might have been a momentous commemoration passed with not much fanfare.

We had other celebrations planned, such as grand opening of Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center and other commemorative events for the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, all of which were put on hold during "shelter at home" orders across the Wasatch Front in response to the pandemic.

We look forward to when we can gather and celebrate again, even if it's pushed back a bit longer. In the meantime, many of our

planned activities pivoted, and as we look back on the year it's remarkable what we've accomplished.

The Governing Board was eventually able to conduct a safe and socially-distanced field trip to the Jordan River Nature Center in September, as a low-key activity for a very different sort of Get to the River Festival. Much of the Festival was grassroots and virtual, but we still found meaningful ways for people to "get to the river" for socially distanced paddling, wildlife-spotting, and cycling activities. We found events like the re-imagined and self-directed Golden Spoke Ride and City Nature Challenge brought more participants than ever.

Many new trails and trailheads were completed this past year, with new amenities and expanded connections to the Parkway. Major work on the Jordan River Water Trail infrastructure is underway, thanks to outdoor recreation investments by Salt Lake County, several municipalities, with generous matching grants by the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation.

We also found new ways to engage with volunteers in safe and socially distanced ways. This included a new round of planting

1,000 “tall pot” trees, and growth of our “Puncturevine Bounty” program. One amazing and ambitious group of volunteers in Lehi removed nearly 3,000 pounds (yes, one-and-a-half tons) of the pesky, thorny plants in a single day. And new grassroots initiatives such as the #LoveYourWatershed #FirstFridays activities are engaging individuals and communities to improve water quality and ecosystem health across the entire Jordan River watershed.

We welcomed new Governing Board ex-officio partner organizations that include Utah’s Hogle Zoo and the Hutchings Museum & Institute. These organizations have expanded wonderful and impactful new wildlife conservation and education programs across the entire Jordan River Parkway.

Our most ambitious project of the year, the 2020 strategic planning update of the Blueprint Jordan River, resulted in over 8,000 individual responses to an online public survey, while hundreds of subject matter experts and focus group participants, helped define and refine ambitious goals. This efforts is led by Envision Utah with the support of an outstanding consulting team. The updated Blueprint will be released in the coming months to guide our collective efforts for the next decade and beyond.

The Commission was surprised and honored to be recognized by the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation with its prestigious Stewardship Award at the Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit in Provo in August, roughly coinciding with our 10-year anniversary.

This award is really a reflection of the passion of volunteers, communities and community leaders behind the ongoing improvement of the Jordan River Parkway over the past decade.

One final and very notable change has been the rapid rise in use of Jordan River Parkway this past year – by foot, by bike, by adaptive equipment, and by boat. It’s not a surprise that amid so much turmoil, the Jordan River and its surrounding environment are a haven for recreation and refuge. And this simply underscores how important our continued work is to conserve, restore and improve the Jordan River Parkway.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to all our partners.



Councilmember Tish Buroker
2020 Governing Board Chair



Soren Simonsen
Executive Director

THE COMMISSION

2019 GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS

Chair: Councilmember Tish Buroker, Riverton
Vice Chair: Councilmember Ray deWolfe, South Salt Lake
Past Chair: Mayor Ron Bigelow, West Valley City
Treasurer: Ken Leetham, City Manager, North Salt Lake

Cities

Councilmember Wendy Aston, Bluffdale
 Councilmember Christine Mikell, Cottonwood Heights
 Councilmember Fred Lowry, Draper
 Councilmember Paul Hancock, Lehi
 Councilmember Dustin Gettel, Midvale
 Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek
 Mayor Blair Camp, Murray
 Councilmember Stan Porter, North Salt Lake
 Councilmember Tish Buroker, Riverton
 Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Salt Lake City
 Councilmember Cyndi Sharkey, Sandy
 Councilmember Stephen Willden, Saratoga Springs
 Mayor Dawn Ramsay, South Jordan
 Councilmember Ray deWolfe, South Salt Lake
 Mayor Kristie Overson, Taylorsville
 Mayor Dirk Burton, West Jordan
 Mayor Ron Bigelow, West Valley City

Counties

Commissioner Randy Elliot, Davis County
 Mayor Jenny Wilson, Salt Lake County
 Councilmember Aimee Winder Newton, Salt Lake County

State

Erica Gaddis, Director, Utah Division of Water Quality
 Jamie Phillips-Barnes, Program Administrator, Utah
 Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands
 Evan Curtis, Governor's Office of Management & Budget
 Representative Cheryl Acton, Utah Legislature

Special Districts

Phil Heck, Director, Central Valley Water Reclamation
 Facility
 Bart Forsyth, General Manager, Jordan Valley Water
 Conservancy District
 Dal Wayment, South Davis Sewer District
 Lee Rawlings, South Valley Water Reclamation Facility
 John Hays, Facility Manager, South Valley Sewer District
 Laura Hanson, Planning Director, Utah Transit Authority

Ex-Officio

Denise Winslow, At-Large Community Member
 Daniela Larsen, Hutchings Museum & Institute
 Scott Peters, Jordan River Foundation
 Jeff Barrett, Rocky Mountain Power
 Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary
 Eric Ellis, Utah Lake Commission
 Larry Mullenax, Utah State Fairpark
 Steve Burns, Utah's Hogle Zoo
 Michael Horrocks, Wasatch Rowing Foundation
 Jill Christensen, WCF Insurance
 Steven Earley, Zions Bank

COMMISSION STAFF

Soren Simonsen, Executive Director
 Aimee Horman, Outreach & Education Manager
 Moriah Jackson Ivory, Project & Program Manager
 Jasmine Garcia, Intern
 Meadow Wilkinson, Intern

2020 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OFFICERS

CHAIR: Eric McCulley, River Restoration
VICE CHAIR: Chris Cline, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

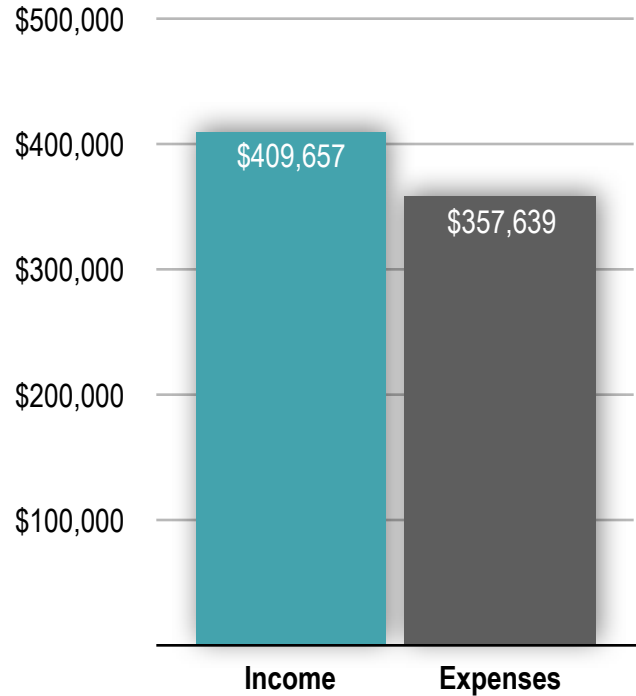




2020 FISCAL YEAR SUMMARY

Income

Interlocal Member Contributions	\$185,889
Ex-Officio Partner Contributions	\$25,950
Interest Income	\$78
Grant Revenue	\$117,704
Donations Received	\$8,375
Miscellaneous Income	\$1,309
Prior Year Net Income (carryover)	\$70,352
Total Income	\$409,657



Expenses

Publications & Memberships	\$1,355	Professional Services	\$2,600
Outreach	\$2,948	Insurance	\$475
Mileage & Auto	\$4,301	Office Space & Storage Rental	\$12,955
Supplies & Public Notices	\$315	Season & Contract Services	\$3,059
Postage & Mail	\$253	Grant Expenses	\$82,430
Purchase of Donated Trees	\$8,375	Education Programs	\$1,500
Food & Meals	\$1,299	JRC Small Grant Awards	\$26,500
Event Contributions	\$2,213	Staff Wages & Benefits	\$211,415
Printing	\$241	Total Expenses	\$357,639
Phone, Computer & Internet	\$5,704		
		Net Operating Income (Loss)	\$52,018



SelectHealth Tall Pot Planting



Canoe Cleanup



Hogle Zoo Milkweed Planting

West Valley Rotary Club &
American Preparatory Academy Volunteer Group

Hogle Zoo Understory Shrub Planting

GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

Awarded :

Jordan River Assistance Fund Small Grants
Wasatch Adaptive Sports
Tree Utah
Tracy Aviary
Hutchings Museum
Wasatch Rowing Foundation

Received :

Jordan River Foundation – Tall Pot Tree Planting
Jordan River Foundation – Get to the River Festival
Legislative Appropriation – Jordan River Recreation Area
Wasatch Front Regional Council – Blueprint Jordan River
2020 Strategic Update

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Stewardship Award - Governor's Office of Outdoor Recreation

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Jordan River Parkway Inventory

During the summer of 2020, commission staff and two interns collected data to develop a comprehensive inventory of the Jordan River Parkway. The GIS data collection apps Survey123 and QuickCapture were used to identify pavement issues, safety concerns, trailside amenities, and design aspects of the parkway. The findings were compiled in a report. Our interns are continuing work to developing design standards for the parkway based on this information.

Weed Management

Because funding was limited this year, this year's weed management efforts were focused on volunteer thistle pulls (data on next page) and our Puncturevine Bounty Program, through which qualifying participants could receive \$2.00 per pound of puncturevine pulled. Between seven different volunteer groups, 3,925 pounds of puncture was pulled, which is nearly three times more than last year!

Tall Pots Tree Planting

In 2020, we commenced our second round of "Tall Pot" native tree plantings. We had 500 Fremont Cottonwoods and 500 Peachleaf Willow trees propagated from cuttings taken from trees along the Jordan River and Utah Lake. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we focused on utilizing smaller volunteer groups (with masks and social distancing) for planting. As of December 2020, 158 trees were planted. The remaining trees will be planted before mid-April, 2021.

#LoveYourWatershed

In September 2020, Millcreek City and the Commission joined together to launch the #LoveYourWatershed initiative, which emphasizes the importance of keeping gutters and storm drains clean of leaves, litter, sediment, and chemicals, which all too often get washed into the river. Each Friday in September, we hosted volunteer cleanup events to help tackle this problem. We are continuing to develop this program with the involvement of students and faculty at the U of U, and through encouraging citizens to clean their gutters on the first Friday of every month and post about their experiences on social media with the hashtags #LoveYourWatershed, #FirstFridays, and #LeavesAndLitter.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

City Nature Challenge

The City Nature Challenge is an annual international effort encouraging people to find and document plants and wildlife in cities around the globe using iNaturalist. From April 24-27, 2020, partner organizations from 8 counties (Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, Utah, Wasatch, Weber) came together as one project area called The Wasatch. 2020 proved to be a record-breaking year of participation in Utah, with more people, observations of nature, and species identified than ever before!

Get to the River Festival

2020's Get to the River Festival included:

- SoJo Story Walks
- West Valley City Jordan River BioBlitz
- Drop-in Nature Activities at Tracy Aviary's Jordan River Nature Center
- Murray City Cultural Arts Chalk Arts Festival
- North Salt Lake Bikes and Boats
- SoJo Virtual Race Series
- Saratoga Springs Virtual Scavenger Hunt
- Let's Go Birding Together with the Jordan River Nature Center
- Seven Creeks Walk Series
- Keep Glendale Beautiful Canoe Cleanup
- HC4YF Paddle
- Sunday Paddles
- Hogle Zoo Legacy Nature Preserve paddle
- Golden Spoke Bike Ride

Golden Spoke

The Golden Spoke included 170 miles of connected trails from Provo to Ogden and featured connecting trails east and west of the main route.

Due to Covid-19, the 2020 Golden Spoke Bike Ride turned virtual! 500 riders registered and rode the route during their own time throughout the month of September. They received a Golden Spoke buff to commemorate the event.

VOLUNTEER IMPACT



Masks, social-distancing, and small groups required!



236 volunteers



816 volunteer hours



27 canoes-full of trash collected from the river



1,500 pounds of trash collected trailside



1,500 pounds of thistle pulled



198 trees & shrubs planted



Canada Thistle



Canoe Cleanup



Trail Cleanup



Mountain Springs Community Church Volunteer Group

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

ZIONS BANK®



Hutchings Museum & Institute


Jordan River Foundation

Tracy Aviary


Wasatch Rowing Foundation


Utah's Hogle Zoo

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