



Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry, & Trails NEWSLETTER

JULY 2017 - ISSUE 1

PARKS NORTH DISTRICTS KYLE SHIELDS

The summer heat is here and our maintenance crews are working hard to manage the sprinkler irrigation issues throughout the City. During a heat wave the flaws in our irrigation systems become noticeable by yellowing of the grass. Jordan River Park is an example of a system that ceased to function efficiently, requiring manual operation to water the grass. We are thankful to have received funds in June to replace the aged system. Parks began installation of new parts and systems in July and hopes to complete the project mid-summer.

Islands and medians maintained by the Parks Department often experience irrigation issues as well, primarily due to broken water meters, power loss, or controller failures that result in no water flow. As soon as a problem is recognized or reported, staff work to repair the issues as quickly as possible to prevent backlogs and protect the vegetation. Summer maintenance crews work hard to check each island/median to ensure it is being watered on schedule. However, if you notice an island or park area is not receiving water, please do not hesitate to contact the Parks office.

Many of our landscapes are planned and planted in an effort to reduce water consumption. Unpermitted plantings alter our ability to irrigate according to the needs of each landscape. Please do not plant trees or plants on City Park properties without the permission of Parks and Public Lands. Donations of plants and trees are graciously considered by staff and the Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry and Trails board. Please contact us if you'd like to donate.

PARKS SOUTH DISTRICTS AND GREENHOUSE TROY BAKER

We are excited to see the pickleball courts at Fairmont opened up for play on July 11, 2017. Along with the pickleball courts opening, the new fenced off leash dog area is open and the pond reconstruction project has begun. Pond construction includes dredging to deepen the water for fishing and improving the edges to make it more accessible. In early Fall please look for an announcement regarding a Fairmont Park event where we can celebrate all these improvements to the park.

Liberty and Jordan greenhouses have finished planting flowers for the season and will return its focus on weeding all of the planted flower beds. The greenhouse staff plants flowers for Jordan and Liberty Park, Washington Square, Main Street, and more throughout the City. The property maintenance crews have been working on lifted sidewalk repairs, fencing repairs, playground inspections as well as other general maintenance projects.

Homelessness in the parks often impacts the job duties of our maintenance staff and takes a significant amount of time to clean these heavily used areas. Our biggest challenges are cleaning up the waste left behind by people living in our parks, fixing disabled irrigation heads, and clearing the restrooms where many people spend the evenings and days sleeping so we can clean them daily. Parks receives regular complaints from visitors who want to use the restrooms and find them locked for long periods of time. In these cases Parks staff often seek the assistance of Salt Lake City Police Department to clear areas inhabited by people living the parks so regular use and maintenance can be performed.

CEMETERY MARK SMITH

In July, the Cemetery crew performed 31 burials. The office staff keeps busy doing the paperwork for the opening and closing of the graves as well as looking up grave locations for people who have lost their loved ones. Each month the office staff help many individuals plan their visit to the cemetery in search of family members or famous people who are buried within the cemetery. They also assist in marking areas of interest on individualized maps, so visitors can find the graves they are in search of. This also keeps our maintenance staff busy preparing for and performing the burials. In addition to burials, our staff is always busy mowing and trimming the grounds as well as doing work order requests that our office staff have received. One challenge the Cemetery faces is dealing with unusually hot temperatures and maintaining green grass throughout the Cemetery.

The administrative staff have also been busy working on the Cemetery Master Plan that is in the final drafting stages.

TRAILS AND NATURAL LANDS

LEWIS KOGAN

The Trails & Natural Lands Program recently completed its first-ever Kids In Nature summer camp program, which ran for three consecutive weeks in June. The free mid-day camps engaged 60 SLC-area kids, ages 6-12, in nature exploration, discovery, and learning activities at three different natural areas. The camps are operated on a shoestring budget, and the enthusiasm expressed by participants and their parents suggests that these programs could be substantially expanded in future years.

For the past five years, the Trails & Natural Lands Program has been working to improve the condition of natural vegetation in open space through seasonal weed control and annual seeding and planting of native shrubs and trees. Detailed vegetation monitoring has not occurred in most locations, but qualitative observations strongly indicate that these efforts have not been successful except in areas where irrigation systems exist and provide supplementary watering. This dependence on irrigation has substantial cost implications, which suggests that successful restoration of desirable vegetation, even drought-tolerant vegetation, will likely require more capital investment and more maintenance than has been understood.

URBAN FORESTRY

TONY GLIOT

Salt Lake City has in excess of 85,000 public property trees. The Urban Forestry Program is tasked with maintenance and servicing these trees and takes public requests for tree planting, removal, and pruning.

Recognizing that prompt response to service requests is a top priority for residents, the city's team of professional arborists works hard to address all resident requests while still proactively maintaining the urban forest infrastructure that provides so much benefit to Salt Lake City. It's a challenging task.

Unfortunately, there are significant back logs in our service areas.

- 224 Tree Removals (12 weeks)
- 88 Stump Removals (12 weeks)
- 229 Service Requests (3 weeks)
- 858 Trees to Requested to be Pruned (16 weeks)
- 1000+ Tree Planting requests (1 to 1 ½ years)

Service backlogs such as these inhibit proactive tree maintenance. Tree maintenance includes pruning and removal of living and deadwood to maintain the trees structural integrity. This can prevent broken limbs, falling branches and falling trees. This is especially important when trees are under pressure from high winds or a severe storm.

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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REGIONAL ATHLETIC COMPLEX

CHRIS LAUGHLIN

The Regional Athletic Complex (RAC) will be constructing a much needed maintenance building on-site this fall and winter. RAC maintenance crews are thrilled as the building will allow safe storage and access to all maintenance equipment, tools, and materials.

Hiring will be a main priority throughout the summer. Recently, three seasonal groundskeepers either accepted new job offers or moved, which resulted in reduced maintenance capabilities. New seasonal employees is key to ensuring proper maintenance in the future. Our current maintenance crews are working hard to line and paint fields for upcoming events as well as keeping up with all general maintenance and operational duties.

PLANNING

NANCY MONTEITH

Project Highlight: Fairmont Park – Nancy Monteith

New improvements have come to Fairmont Park. Over the last several years Parks and Public Lands has been working closely with the Sugar House community to improve the Park and several new amenities have recently been completed, with more projects in progress. Parks and Public Lands just completed construction of six new pickleball courts at the south end near the I-80 corridor. Just to the east of pickleball on the southern boundary of the park is the new off-leash dog area. In 2015 a new all ages playground was installed and two new sand based soccer fields were completed.

Design and planning is underway for improvements to the Fairmont Pond. Funding for the project was awarded through a constituent capital improvement project (CIP) application. The primary goal of the project is to naturalize the banks of the pond with riparian plantings to reduce flooding of the area. The native plantings create wetland soil and a "stream-side forest" of plants and leaf litter that can soak up the water like a sponge and slows the waters reentry into the creek channel.

In addition, the Department of Wildlife resources received funding to develop an urban fishery at the pond. DWR is dredging the pond to deepen the water so it will remain cool enough to maintain a healthy fish population. They will also be responsible for the annual stocking of fish. Construction on the pond is in process with completion anticipated in the spring of 2018.

PPL has submitted a CIP application to the Mayor's office and Council requesting the use of Impact Fee funding of a multi-use trail, pedestrian lighting along main pathways; field lighting for the central soccer field, pickleball courts, volleyball court and basketball court. The Mayor has forwarded this request to City Council for deliberation which will occur in the fall of 2017.

