

Protecting SLC Trees with Tree Rings

So far in 2018, Urban Forestry has planted 681 trees. These trees are planted in City Parks, Natural areas, and in park strips throughout residential neighborhoods and the city. Urban Forestry Arborists plant a variety of tree species ranging in size and character. Each tree has an important maintenance need in common – a protective tree ring.

A tree ring is a mulched circle that extends 2-3' from the base of the trunk. Creating a designated protection area around the tree prevents damage to the trunk from landscape equipment like lawn mowers, and especially weed-trimmers. Additionally, adding mulch helps protect the tree roots from excessive dryness, extreme temperatures, and soil compaction. As you visit Salt Lake City Parks, you may notice that not all the trees have a protection ring. This is because many of them have slowly vanished as grass has moved in over time. However, the disintegration of these tree rings, even for mature trees, can significantly impact the tree's health.

Over the past year, Parks staff have been working diligently to bring the tree rings back up to standard. However, with more than 85,000 public trees in the City, including 22,000 planted in parks and natural lands, this process will take time. To date, the Salt Lake City Cemetery staff have created protective tree rings for roughly 500 trees, the Regional Athletic Complex staff have protected 200 trees, and general City Parks staff have created more than 200 rings. Each maintenance group in Salt Lake City will continue creating new protective rings each day to support the health of our Urban Forest.



Photo shows an example of a proper tree ring



Photo shows an example of an overgrown tree ring

Visit **www.slcparks.com** OR
www.slc.gov/parks
for regular project updates.

Note: SLC recently updated its URL. SLCgov.com is no longer active.

Columbus Ct. Fire

On July 25th 2018, a fire broke out in a neighborhood above the Salt Lake City Capitol burning approximately 50 acres of Open Space Land. After the fire, Kevin Bajenburch of the National Weather Service, cautioned residents that there could be a significant risk of flooding as a result of the fire, particularly to the basements of surrounding homes. Johanna Stangland, one of our amazing Natural Lands Supervisors, coordinated an effort with Tom Simons (SLC Fire Emergency Management Coordinator), Kevin Barjenbruch (National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist), and a Columbus Ct. resident to help respond to the impacts of the Columbus Court Fire.

Kelly Brown, Salt Lake City Public Utilities, Storm-water Manager, and Johanna Stangland met on-site to discuss sandbag placement and to determine other measures that could be taken to mitigate the flood risk. Four pallets of sandbags were delivered to Columbus Court residents for placement. With the help of family and friends, and under the direction of Salt Lake City staff, the sandbags were strategically placed throughout the neighborhood around window wells and at basement doorways. Additionally, residents worked with SLC 911 Dispatch to set up a flood warning system for the area. There was no report of flooding after the recent rains.

After this initial flood mitigation response, Johanna continues to work on long-term rehabilitation plans. So far she has contacted the Division of Natural Resources, Wasatch Area Fire Management Office and Wasatch Area Wild-land Urban Interface Coordinator. They have provided some links to literature on post-fire erosion control and rehabilitation treatments. She is reaching out to the Idaho Bureau of Land Management, whose primary work is wildfire land rehabilitation, in the hopes of getting some help. Lastly she is researching effective treatments and best practices for re-vegetation.

People living in the urban-wild-land interface are encouraged to follow guidelines for ignition resistant landscapes and buildings and to provide fuel buffers between homes and fire-prone natural lands. The Fire Department can offer specific suggestions. Salt Lake City Trails and Natural Lands program recommends creating a defensible space around your home, planting only fire-wise vegetation in landscaping your property, and avoiding ladder fuels (progressively tall vegetation) that could allow the fire to move into taller trees.

Johanna is an incredibly accomplished, talented, and dedicated employee. We are lucky to have her.



Photo showing the aftermath of the Columbus Ct. Fire (September 2018)

Hillside Washout at Memory Grove Park



Photo showing a mostly cleaned Canyon Rd. in Memory Grove Park (09/2018)

On Sunday, August 18, 2018, in the early morning before sunrise, a large irrigation pipe broke on a hill on the west side of Memory Grove Park. This happened at approximately 3 AM and Salt Lake City staff were unable to turn the pipe off until 5:30 AM. Throughout the two-and-a-half hours, before the water was turned off, water eroded the hillside creating a 20' deep 10' wide hole. The water flow displaced a significant amount of dirt turned to mud that washed down the hill covering the entryway to Canyon Road and blocking the gate into Memory Grove Park. Salt Lake City Public Utilities staff arrived first with four vacuum trucks used to remove dirt from the storm drain lines and the street. Salt Lake City Parks employees blocked off the damaged hillside and cleared remaining dirt and debris from the area. Overall, three City agencies including the Public Utilities Department, Parks Division, and Streets Division worked together to ensure the site was safe and usable by the next day.

It is not uncommon for water lines to occasionally break, however the size of the line, location of the break and time of day and year of this event caused significant financial impact. The cost billed to Public Lands related to cleanup totaled more than \$12,000 for labor and equipment. These costs are unpredictable and can significantly impact the Divisions budget.

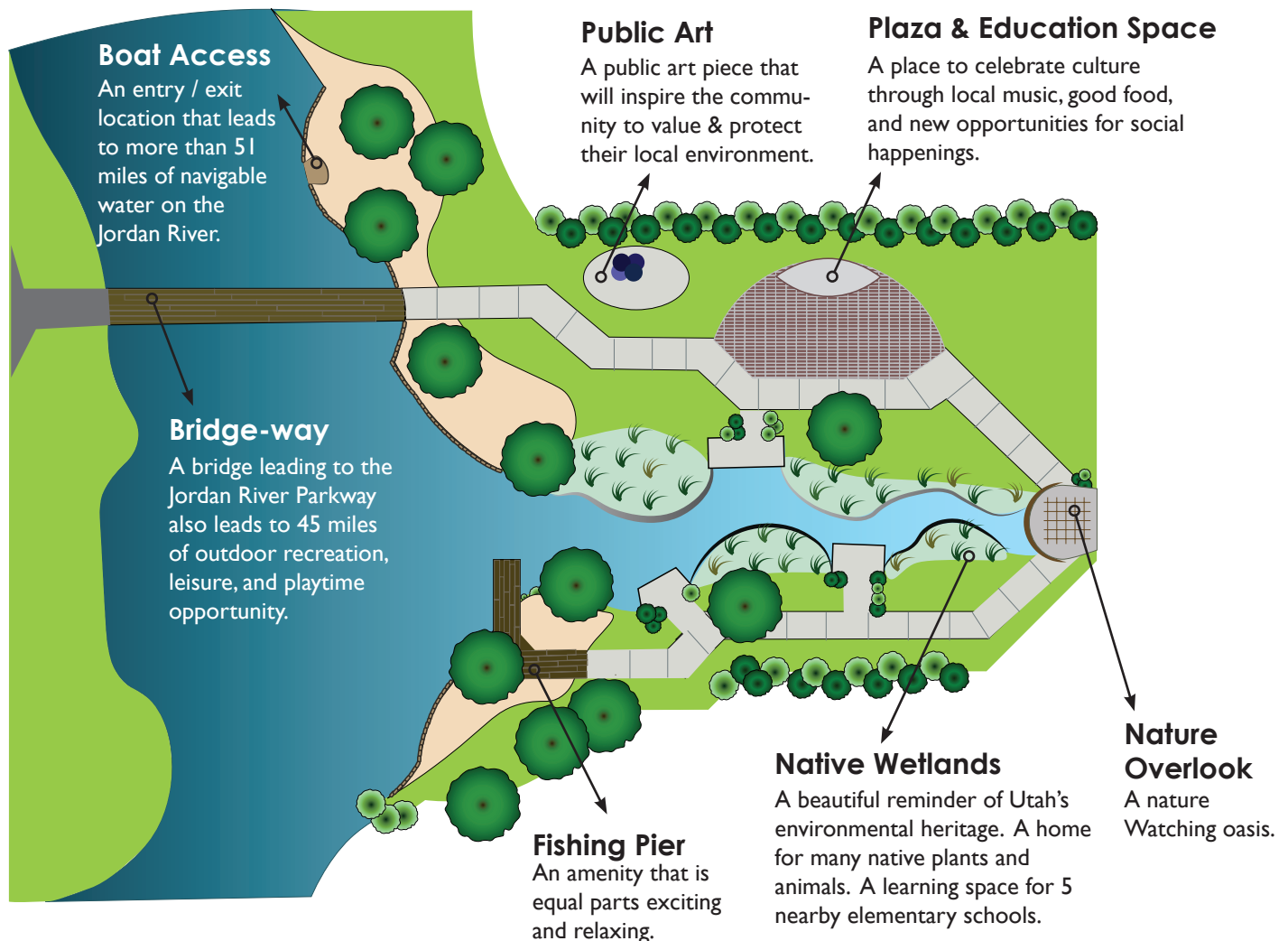
Parks staff have worked hard to clean the area and roadway, however the hillside has been significantly damaged and requires additional repairs. Based on a recent estimate, the hillside repair could cost in excess of \$50,000. Parks and Public Lands has submitted a funding request to City Council, to cover the costs of hillside restoration, water fees, and cleanup. To prevent this from happening in the future, Parks staff will install a master valve to reduce the chances of significant damage if a pipe breaks again.

Three Creeks Confluence Park

After several years of planning the design of Three Creeks Confluence project, it is nearing completion. Parks and Public Lands staff have been working throughout 2018 to overcome several land use restrictions and to secure necessary funding to move the project forward. Recently the Salt Lake City Council recommended an additional \$1.1 million dollars in Park Impact fees to be allocated for the project. These additional resources will provide full funding for the project and allow the City to construct the Three Creeks Confluence Park as envisioned by community stakeholders and Glendale residents who participated in the 2016-17 planning efforts. It is anticipated that the final construction documents will be completed by November 2018 and the project is estimated to break ground by the summer 2019. Parks and Public Lands staff is now working with several community partners to help develop a five year programming plan which will help activate this new park space and provide the residents of Salt Lake City with a unique amenity along the Jordan River. We look forward to celebrating with the community at a grand opening in late 2019.

Three Creeks Confluence

The site where three major tributaries, Red Butte Creek, Emigration Creek, and Parleys Creek, join with the Jordan River.



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