

Parks, Natural Lands, Urban Forestry, & Trails NEWSLETTER



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TRAILS AND NATURAL LANDS

LEWIS KOGAN

The Trails & Natural Lands Program has recently added two full-time Senior Groundskeeper positions to its maintenance team. This represents a doubling of full-time maintenance staff, and will significantly improve our ability to provide skilled oversight of field crews. The new positions will also help our program manage a larger number of complex projects, volunteer events, and provide much needed support to our two T&NL district supervisors.

The Trails & Natural Lands Program is proud to present SLC's RiverFest on Saturday, September 23rd. The festival will celebrate the Jordan River Parkway with educational and recreational activities, games, music, giveaways, and great prizes for the third-annual Rubber Ducky Derby. The RiverFest will be held from 3-7pm at the west side of the Utah State Fairpark. Please join us!

Vandalism and illegal dumping continues to plague many open space sites. Recently, vandalism to irrigation systems at Hidden Hollow and the Fife Wetland Preserve completely shut down watering at those locations for nearly a week of extreme temperatures. Our crews have also been responding to near-daily reports of dumping on various City properties. Some occurrences are so substantial that our dump trucks have to be deployed. Responding to vandalism requires a large portion of our staff-time that would otherwise be used for vegetation maintenance and upkeep of trails and amenities.

URBAN FORESTRY

TONY GLIOT

As the summer tree removal season begins to wind down, the Urban Forestry Program is looking forward to the autumn tree planting season. We will be taking delivery of more than 400 new trees in early October. The Urban Forestry Program's Service Coordinators, Arborist Crews, and planting contractor will be working in consort to get all of these new trees planted by the end of November. The Urban Forestry Program has also secured an additional 600 trees to be planted next spring, and will be working to develop and launch a 'Tree Planting Voucher Program' that will enable City residents to have park strip trees planted by local landscapers (resulting in shorter wait times and more personalized species selection for residents willing to take a more involved role in public property reforestation).

The Urban Forestry Program is also excited to report that we have hired a new Forestry Area Service Coordinator. This addition to our staff will result in more prompt and thorough response to resident requests, and greater capacity to engage in public outreach and project development.

On another positive note, the City Council intends to revisit the Urban Forestry Code updates in October. These code updates, which were first presented to the Council in May of 2016, have been developed to clarify and strengthen the City's expectations with regarding to preserving its beneficial urban forest infrastructure.

REGIONAL ATHLETIC COMPLEX

CHRIS LAUGHLIN

In August 2017, Chris Laughlin, Program Manager of the Regional Athletic Complex, attended the 2017 Connect Sports conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference brought together regional and national tournament organizers and Athletic Facility Managers across the country to network and place bids to host tournament events. Oftentimes, if a complex is successful in bidding on a tournaments there is a 1-2 year commitment and has potential to become an annual event in the City. Next year the Connect Sports Conference will be hosted in Salt Lake City and will enable Salt Lake City to highlight the RAC as one of the nation's Premier Athletic Complexes.

The RAC is more than half way through the 2017 season and the field turf is beginning to thin. Some of the fields have damaged areas, specifically around the goal mouths and center field. Maintenance staff will be resting the damaged fields to allow time for the turf to fill in and restore the damage. We will be implementing a 6-8 week rotational resting period that may present some scheduling challenges but will noticeably improve the quality and condition of the fields.

PLANNING

NANCY MONTEITH

Parks, trails and natural lands are a key element of City planning and our quality of life. Salt Lake City is completing a Needs Assessment to guide the growth and development of the Public Lands network over the next twenty years. To do that, we have evaluated our current systems, analyzed demographic trends, and solicited resident input.

We have completed a statistically valid survey to better understand the wants and needs of residents. From this survey, we learned that 42 % of residents visit parks at least weekly and 72% at least monthly. Nearly 30% of residents use trails at least weekly. Residents are willing to pay more in order to see more funding allocated for increased maintenance and safety measures for our existing parks. 57% of residents think it is very important to live within walking distance to a park. Our regional parks like Liberty and Sugar House attract significantly more residents than do smaller neighborhood parks. Residents visit these parks primarily to experience the atmosphere, opportunities for exercise and community events.

This survey will guide our recommendations on how to grow the parks and natural lands in Salt Lake City over the next 20 years. A full report will be available at the end of 2017

CEMETERY

MARK SMITH

The Cemetery has performed 39 burials throughout August. In addition to general office and maintenance work, the clerical and maintenance staff are kept busy with the increase in visitors during summer months. Many visitors request burial location maps to help identify the prominent and interesting individuals who are buried within the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

This summer the cemetery maintenance staff has been challenged in combating the extremely high temperatures. The heat can be dangerous and create extreme working conditions for staff members. It also presents challenges in maintaining green grass throughout the cemetery.

Mark Smith, City Sexton, is working with a contractor to replace two of the gates on 11th avenue. The gate farthest east and the gate farthest west will be replaced with new gates. This project is expected to be complete by the end of September.

Remember, Cemeteries are for the living so come and visit often!

PARKS SOUTH DISTRICTS AND GREENHOUSE

TROY BAKER

Many of our maintenance crews have been busy removing trash and debris left behind from homeless camps. Operation Rio Grande has resulted in an increase of homelessness in Parks. Many of our maintenance staff have reported finding personal belongings hidden throughout park flower beds and shrubs. Many of these items are left behind after a homeless camp is moved or cleaned up. Parks Managers have been working with the Salt Lake Valley Health Dept. and the Salt Lake City Police Dept. to develop plans to ensure the parks are kept clean and safe for use.

A new electrician, Austin Cleverly, was recently hired to help support Parks and Public Lands. Our division has gone several months without the support of a certified electrician. The Property Maintenance program is excited to welcome him to their team.

The pour-in-place surfacing in several playgrounds throughout the City (Fairmont, Modesto, Sherwood, Inglewood, Jordan, Post Street and Liberty) will be removed and soft fall wood fiber will be installed.

PARKS NORTH DISTRICTS

KYLE SHIELDS

District 1 maintenance crews have been working on Park landscaping and sprinkler systems. The construction on 5th west islands is underway and the new parking lot will be finished by October. Maintenance crews have begun seeding the islands. Up until this point seeding was not an option due to the homeless camps that were set up in the area. The Pioneer Farmer's Market is scheduled every weekend and has helped activate the Park over weekends.

In District 2, Eric Loertscher was hired as the new Irrigation Technician. Previously, Eric worked part-time assisting our irrigation and plumbing staff members.

The City's Graffiti team continues to receive the highest number of service requests in the City. The Graffiti team consists of seven full-time employees and the service requests they complete account for 18.1 percent of the City's overall submissions on SLC mobile.

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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