

# City Creek Canyon



2009 Shaded Fuel Break  
April 6, 2009 Open House

# Open House Schedule

- ▶ Presentation 20 – 30 min.
- ▶ Panel Questions & Answers 20 – 30 min.
- ▶ Dispersed Q & A until 8:30PM
- ▶ Comment Forms 6PM – 9PM

# Upcoming Events

## ▶ Woad Runner Weed Pulls

- Month of May
- Groups & Individuals welcome
- Sign up 801-483-6884

## ▶ National Trails Day

- Bonneville Shoreline Trail 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Trail work, weed pull & guided naturalist walks
- Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup>
- Partnership based event!

# City Creek Canyon

- ▶ Land & water rights purchased for the sole purpose of providing drinking water to SLC
- ▶ Watershed is primary management consideration
- ▶ Closed to public use 1952 – 1966 due to water quality issues

# City Creek Shaded Fuel Break

- North/west side of road
- Edge of road, in 100'
- Trees will be limbed up to 15-20'
- Smaller 'dog hair' trees will be removed
- Most major trees will remain
- Bridge fuels eliminated
- 4-6 weeks to completion
- Best time to cut is spring or fall
- Wood will be chipped or removed, depending on microhabitat
- GIS calculation of 67 acres total thinned
- Maintains riparian quality, keeping fuel moisture levels up
- Minimal ground disturbance



# What it's Not...

- ▶ Clear cutting
- ▶ Taking all the shade away
- ▶ Removing all the understory
- ▶ A systematic, blanket 100 ft.

# Background

## ▶ Decades of Fire Suppression

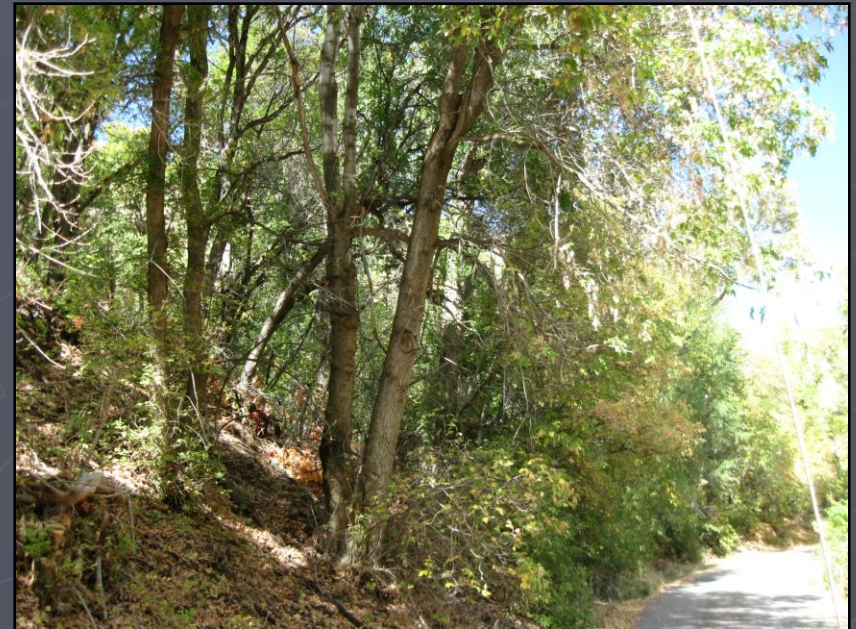
- Fire is a natural part of the landscape
- SLC is surrounded by wilderness and open space
- Without fire, fuels build enhancing the size of future fires
- Previous fires in City Creek typically in lower portion of canyon

## ▶ Historical road maintenance by SLC Watershed

- Both sides of the road
- Hand crews with chainsaws & brush hogs
- Recently: 2007 Picnic Areas clearing

## ▶ 1999 Watershed Management Plan

- Calls for long term fuels management planning



# Background (Contd.)

## ▶ 2007 Fuels Assessment

- Identified need for fuel reduction in City Creek Canyon
- Conducted by US Forest Service Fire Ecologists
- Research determined 83% of fires human caused
- Identified need address safety of ingress/egress of narrow canyon road

## ▶ 2008 Sawyer Training

- Removed 60 trees from canyon
- USFS chainsaw certification

## ▶ 2008 August Site Visit

- UT Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands
- Bureau of Land Management
- Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
- Recommendation: Shaded Fuel Break





# Goals of Proposed Plan-

1. Enhance safety of road in City Creek Canyon
2. Mitigate origination of wildfire from road to protect watershed

## Recommendation: Shaded Fuel Break

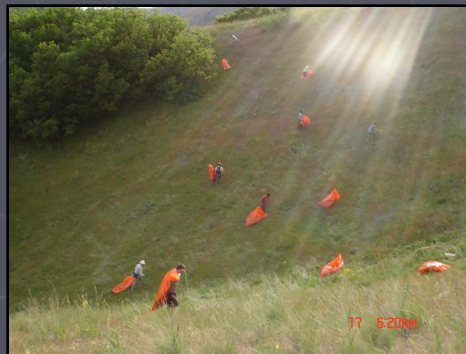


# Local Examples of Fuel Breaks

- ▶ Red Butte Canyon – 15 feet  
(not shaded – completely removed canopy)
- ▶ Millcreek Canyon - Porter Fork 6-10 feet  
(not shaded – mostly removed canopy)
- ▶ Emigration Canyon communities
- ▶ Davis County Firebreak Road - 30 ft on each side  
(complete vegetative removal in oakbrush)

# Possible Impacts

- ▶ Recreation experience may be hindered during 4-6 weeks (depending)
- ▶ City Creek will not look the same
- ▶ Invasive weeds may spread throughout break, requiring more labor to fight
- ▶ Sensitive Species in varying locations

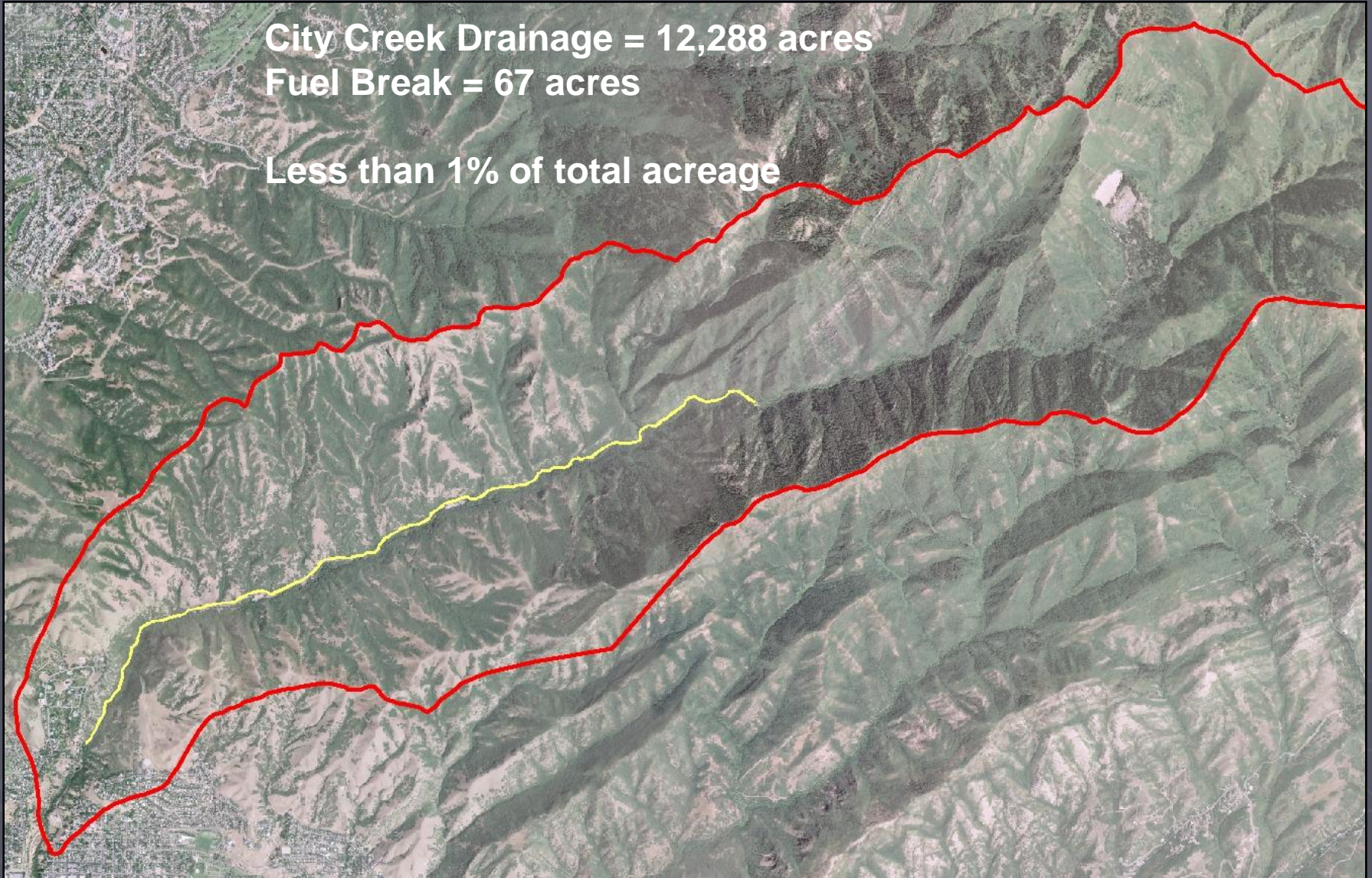


# City Creek Canyon Fuel Break Acreage

City Creek Drainage = 12,288 acres

Fuel Break = 67 acres

Less than 1% of total acreage



Red line = watershed boundary    Yellow = Shaded fuel break

# Possible Benefits

- ▶ Enhances habitat for various wildlife species
- ▶ Enhances public safety
- ▶ Opens visibility - reduces user conflicts resulting from speed
- ▶ Create "islands of safety" at picnic areas
- ▶ Provide public firefighter safe access, egress and defensible space



# Proposed Implementation

- ▶ Contract with SL County's Unified Fire Authority
- ▶ Estimated 4 to 6 weeks completion
- ▶ Thinning facilitated by chainsaws, chippers and large work crews
- ▶ SLC Public Utilities budget item for 2009/2010
- ▶ State of Utah \$15,000 Grant
- ▶ City Creek will be divided into three segments with different control measures in each: Memory Grove, Lower Canyon, Upper Canyon.
- ▶ Public outreach & input

# Project Outreach & Press

- ▶ Aug 2008 City Weekly Article (post City Creek Fire 2008)
- ▶ Sep 2008 Greater Avenues Community Council Presentation
- ▶ Jan 2009 SLC Public Utilities Annual Report (Full Page w/photo)
- ▶ Feb 2009 Presentation to SLC Community Council Chairs  
Notice posted @ Mouth of City Creek Canyon  
Notice posted on SLC DPU Website
- ▶ Mar 2009 Press release to Community Council Chairs  
Greater Avenues Community Council newsletter  
Public Utilities Advisory Council Meeting Presentation  
Press Release – 138 email addresses 4 languages
- ▶ Apr 2009 Greater Avenues Community Council Presentation  
Salt Lake Tribune article  
Deseret News article  
Open House seeking public input (tonight)

# Example: Thinning at Emigration Oaks





# Example: Pineview Fuels Break



# Long Term Considerations

- ▶ Further fuel reduction planning needed beyond break
- ▶ Fuel break will require maintenance
- ▶ Funding needs to be consistent
- ▶ Fuel Breaks do not eliminate fires
- ▶ Surrounding homeowners need to create defensible space via “Living with Fire” concepts

# Other Options -

## ▶ Do nothing

- Problem will only get worse
- When fire occurs, will be more intense
- Fires will cause far more damage to:
  - ▶ recreation opportunity
  - ▶ watershed values
- Fire danger will increase over time due to global climate change & invasive species, fire frequency will increase



## ▶ Prescribed Fire

- Assists spread of existing invasive weeds
- Degrades air quality for valley residents

# Questions?

