

Draft Motion

I move that the City Council request the Administration to:

1. Accept the attached Parley's Historic Nature Park Working Group's findings and recommendations including:
 - a. Develop a master plan/management plan for the park, including a timeline for implementation, subject to Council approval.
 - b. Appoint a park advisory board to provide stewardship for the park.
 - c. Provide financial resources for implementation of the master plan/management plan including strong enforcement within the park.
 - d. Recognize that the park has multiple, legitimate users.
 - e. Develop and strengthen partnership with the County with respect to maintenance and management of the park.
2. Accept the proposal from Utah Open Lands to perform a baseline assessment, including documentation of the current ecological conditions, to be completed without delay;
3. As part of the working group's recommendations, develop an interim management plan to be put in place within 30 days, in coordination with the City Council subcommittee, that should include but not be limited to identification of environmentally sensitive areas that are to be closed to access on a long-term basis, nesting areas or other sensitive wildlife areas that are to be closed on a seasonal basis, while leaving other areas open for off-leash, BMX and other specific uses. This plan would have timelines for the achievement of specific goals;
4. Begin the process of developing a master plan / management plan, subject to Council approval. The plan should include but not be limited to:
 - a. Closing access to environmentally sensitive areas off main trails;
 - b. Protection and management of stream beds;
 - c. Identification of boundaries for a recognized BMX area;
 - d. Closing access to and preservation of wetlands
 - e. Planning for main "junction" areas likely to be heavily trafficked and other issues relating to the varying intensities of uses around the park;
 - f. Enforcement of closed areas and other park rules;
 - g. Remediation and cleanup of asphalt pieces, tar, and other debris, as identified in the plan;
 - h. Addressing ADA accessibility issues and identifying options;
 - i. Identification of areas that could be best protected by boardwalks;
 - j. Identification of necessary financial resources to address the goal of the master plan/management plan.
 - k. Evaluating opportunities to work with other government agencies including Salt Lake County, UDOT, and other federal agencies to:
 - i. remediate environmental issues caused by previous actions of those entities
 - ii. find collaboration with enforcement
 - iii. find joint opportunities to provide financial resources
 - l. Identification of potential additional parking areas;
 - m. Evaluation of how to manage special circumstances such as drought conditions;
5. Explore opportunities to establish an additional entrance to Parley's Historic Nature Park at the northeast corner of Tanner Park that could be combined with additional sections in the western area of the park by streambed, designated as an on-leash area and, with proper engineering, an ADA access area.

Further, I move that the Council establish the bulk of Parley's Historic Nature Park as an off leash area, with the limitations stated in this motion, as well as with the understanding that

modifications will be made based upon the findings of the short-term interim management plan, and upon the long-term findings of the master plan/management plan. The trail and abutting areas from the entrance just east of Tanner Park from the trail head to the bridge shall be designated as an on-leash area until an alternate on-leash entrance can be established.

Further, I move that the effective implementation be continually evaluated, monitored, and updated in collaboration with all users to ensure compliance with the intent of this motion.

Further, I move that the Council express its commitment to identify additional areas within the City that can be designated or acquired as off-leash areas according to the evaluation criteria in the present City resolution.

Parley's Historic Nature Park

Charge of the Committee

The Salt Lake City Council members received a large volume of emails, phone calls, and correspondence regarding whether or not Parley's Historic Nature Park should be an on-leash or off-leash area for dogs. The issue is complicated, with many factors to consider such as environmental issues, history of the park, volunteer participation in a trial off-leash period, multi-uses, and the need for off-leash areas for dogs, etc.

While the City Council has responsibility to make the final decision on the policies for Parley's Historic Nature Park, the Council Members felt they would like to receive input from a group of community members who are willing to research possible options and the pros and cons of each of these options. While it may not be possible for a group, representing all interested parties, to come to a single conclusion, the analysis and sentiments of a broad-based group on an acceptable range of alternatives would be appreciated by the City Council Members.

The City Council appointed community members to this ad hoc group whom they felt would be willing to listen to all sides of the Parley's Historic Nature Park issues and seek out recommendations that would best serve the greater Salt Lake community.

As a part of the committee's work, the City Council was also interested in understanding conditions that would need to be met in order for there to be successful implementation of each alternative presented by the committee.

The City Council retained two facilitators, Mary DeLaMare-Schaefer and Patricia Comarell, to help establish a process by which committee members could explore possible outcomes and determine the areas where there was consensus.

This Committee was comprised of individuals from a variety of backgrounds including open space proponents, off-leash dog advocates, environmental and wildlife backgrounds County parks, BMX rider group, community members involved in the creation of Parley's Historic Nature Park in the mid-1970s, and various neighborhoods. The members were:

Nancy von Allmen
Terry Becker
Julie Bryan
Angelo Calacino
Emanuel "Manny" Floor
Bruce Hamilton
Ty Harrison

Emil Kmet
Kirk Huffaker
D. J. Loertscher
Rita Lund
Kate Mahoney
Lynne Olson
Lisa Schmidt

Committee Recommendations

What We Agreed On

1. We want to protect, restore, and enhance the park.
2. We want to protect the natural areas of the park (e.g., riparian corridor).
3. We feel there needs to be a rational master plan for the park.
4. We want to work together and have different groups involved.
5. We feel that there must be increased and effective enforcement.
6. We want to work with the County and City to take more responsibility and be more proactive about protecting, restoring, and enhancing the nature park.
7. We feel the park should be used by multiple user groups.
8. The park should remain as open space.
9. The area is a valuable resource for the City – therefore we all want the best for the area so the area is not diminished.
10. A management plan is needed to tie together what ought to happen with how to make it happen.

Recommendations Which Have Consensus

1. **Appoint a park advisory board to provide stewardship for the park.** There should be a group appointed by the Council that will be tasked with protecting, restoring, and enhancing the park.
 - a. Members should come from the various user groups as determined by the Council, including (but not limited to): dog owners, nature park enthusiasts, city staff (e.g., parks, graffiti), BMX users, joggers/hikers, utility company representatives, historic representatives, birders, and others who may wish to be involved.
 - b. **Their responsibility would be to:**
 - 1) Adopt an interim management plan within 90 days. This is a more specific plan to implement the Master Plan and address operations for the park.
 - 2) Develop a master plan for the park which includes the long range vision
 - a) How do we want to use this resource?
 - b) What do we want to happen?
 - c) What are our goals and objectives?
 - d) Plan for the use of the resource in general terms

- 3) Monitor the day-to-day operations in the park and make recommendations to the City.
- 4) Establish partnerships with other organizations, such as:
 - a) Salt Lake County
 - b) Utah Rivers Council
 - c) Utah Open Lands
 - d) A wetlands engineer
 - e) Utah Division of State History.
 - f) FIDOs
 - g) BMX riders
 - h) Audubon
 - i) Tree Utah and the Utah Department of Forestry
 - j) Trails groups, e.g., PRATT
 - k) Community councils
- 5) Encourage user groups to participate in maintaining the park so they feel ownership.
- 6) Determine criteria by which the park's health can be determined, e.g., environmentally, usage, impacts, etc. This criteria will help to determine how the plans are working, and should be quantifiable. This will give a consistent scorecard or logging of use as a foundation for the management plan
- 7) Annual assessment of PHNP marking any improvements or problems within PHNP, as monitored by the criteria determined by the Board

2. Develop a Management Plan for the park. To accomplish this, the Committee makes the following recommendations.

- a. With the City's assistance, accumulate information upon which to base the master and management plans decisions. The information needed from the City is as follows:
 - 1) A professional, impartial inventory of the park to provide a documented baseline (e.g. natural areas, habitat, historical elements and features)
 - 2) A plan to ensure erosion control on the hillsides, designate areas to be restored (e.g., cellar and aqueduct), streambanks, erosion repair, plantings/ revegetation, weed control, seasonal closures in certain areas
 - 3) What areas (based on scientific data) should be considered for seasonal closures to protect habitat
 - 4) Assessment of wildlife and habitat
 - 5) Signage, both interpretive signs and rules about maintenance and care of the park, including BMX warning and jump information.
 - 6) Park hours

- 7) Fencing / barriers, especially at the entrance and down along the main road after the first turn. Fencing that also can help with erosion control
 - 8) Consider dog impacts to neighbors of the park, whether they be on- or off-leash
 - 9) At the entrance of the park, install a hand rail along the slope (It is difficult to keep footing in the winter.)
 - 10) Stream bank stabilization
 - 11) An assessment as to whether liabilities exist and how they can be mitigated
 - 12) Bring in trail planners to evaluate the trails and to eliminate cross-cutting (affects erosion too)
 - 13) Check to see ADA requirements are being met
 - b. An outline of how the park rules will be enforced.
- 3. Develop and strengthen partnership with the County.** Because the County owns Tanner Park and Tanner Park is so closely aligned with the Parley's Historic Nature Park, the City, County, and PHNP advisory committee should work together.
- a. Salt Lake City leaders should work with Salt Lake County and other cities in the region to develop an open space plan which would include other "Off-Leash" areas, both within the County and in the vicinity of PHNP.
 - b. Salt Lake City should proceed with plans to develop other off-leash areas within the City and investigate additional ways that off-leash areas could exist, e.g., trails around golf courses.
 - c. Provide matching funds for development, maintenance, and enforcement
 - d. Reach an agreement on maintenance responsibilities
- 4. Recognize BMX riders as legitimate users of this park**
- a. Identify a contact for the group
 - b. Appoint a leader for the jumps
- 5. Provide financial resources needed to:**
- a. implement the master and management plans
 - b. properly repair and maintain the park
 - c. provide strong enforcement of the rules for the park
 - d. locate and develop additional off-leash parks
- 6. Provide strong enforcement within the park**
- a. Define and clarify the rules for the park, and who is responsible for enforcing which rule
 - b. Encourage peer pressure to enforce the rules
 - c. Enhance the Animal Services and Parks Departments' services to this park
- 7. Develop a timeline for implementation.** So the users of the park will not lose heart that these recommendations will be implemented and so everyone knows what to expect, a reasonable timeline should be established

Options for City Council Consideration

The Committee members had strong consensus on the recommendations listed above. They believe that all recommendations need to be instituted regardless of the final Council action on the options listed below. It is clear that financial resources and enforcement are major issues – and that a master plan and a management plan are required.

The Committee identified three options for the Council and the Committee members were strongly divided on each of them. There was no consensus on any one.

In all three options, it is assumed that the above recommendations and BMX use will be included.

Here are the three options:

1. Dogs off-leash, the park shared by all users all the time.

Those who support off-leash use of the park feel the “test year” has been a success based on their hard work as volunteers in the Park. The lack of alternate dog park areas has placed great strain on this and other dog areas. Those who favor this option believe there can be better management as to the number of dogs in the area and that there should be some limited or seasonally protected areas. They, too, support the historic nature park and feel that dogs off-leash is a compatible use.

Those who oppose this option believe that the trial period was not successful and damage to the Park has been extensive. They believe the trial period should be terminated and all dogs should be on-leash immediately until a master plan is completed and implemented. They believe that in the future there may be off-leash opportunities for part of the Park.

2. Segregate or split uses into segments of the park, or set times when certain uses are allowed in the various areas.

This middle ground position to be based on a master plan and management plan to be completed immediately and was favored by a few Committee members. They felt it was a rational approach.

Dog owners took the position that this would limit off-leash use to which they were assured by virtue of the trial period and by virtue of agreements with the City.

Others felt that any dog off-leash use was “too much.”

3. Dogs on-leash in all areas, all the time.

Those favoring this position ask that off-leash be stopped immediately while the master plan and management plan area completed. They believe the Park should be a nature and historic Park and that all off-leash operation does not make this possible.

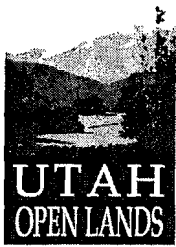
They believe that the master plan should consider dog owners uses on some basis.

They also believe that this position will help restore, protect, and enhance the area.

Dog owners oppose this position and hold the limited other available off-leash areas are a big factor in their position and that Parley's is a perfect area for them. They again take the position that their hard volunteer work enhanced the Park and the Park should be off-leash.

Comment

The Committee members believe that this land is a special place and that any final allowed uses must be based on what is good for the land area and for the entire community. As you might expect, the Committee members are passionate about their positions. Until there is an agreed upon master plan and management plan – and the funds to implement the plans – no consensus is likely.



June 8, 2007

Søren Simonsen
District 7 Council Member, Salt Lake City Council
451 S. State St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Dear Mr. Simonsen:

Utah Open Lands has been working for several years on issues related to the open land of Parley's Historic Nature Park. We have recently been approached by different parties who are interested in finding resolution to Parley's Historic Nature Park management issues. We are writing to express our interest in pursuing baseline assessment research to document ecological conditions of the Park. We would also like to request funding necessary for the completion of this baseline documentation.

In response to recent inquiries, Utah Open Lands has outlined the basic cost requirements for completing baseline assessment research. The baseline assessment will cost approximately \$5,000 for Parley's Nature Park. In the interest of securing the needed funding, as well as providing information for multiple partners, we are seeking funding from as many potential beneficiaries of this information as possible. We request formal support for an effort that will include the identification and documentation of the current ecological conditions and unique features of the Park, as well as collaboration with stakeholders.

As is the case with many open spaces throughout Salt Lake City, contention often derives from a lack of comprehensive information supported by data about the effects of current and potential land uses. Recent events regarding interventions of Salt Lake County Flood Control in Parley's Creek in the Park have highlighted the need for a comprehensive management strategy including fundamental ecological information. In the future, the Pratt Trail will route bicyclists and others into the Park, changing the level and types of use, and also changing the conditions of the natural area. Use of the Park by off-leash dogs is yet another issue with ramifications for the natural conditions of the park. Information about the current ecological conditions of the Park will be necessary for choosing the best possible management options for current conditions and future changes.

The interest of Utah Open Lands in this project is to preserve the conservation values of the land. We will pursue information objectively. We recognize that issues surrounding the Park are contentious, however, and so we request support and partnership from all interested parties, including groups that may have unresolved differences regarding their desires for Parley's Historic Nature Park. Our objective will be to accurately identify current ecological conditions through review of existing data and through additional study in the Park. We will also identify areas that require further study.

Those items requiring baseline assessment in Parley's Historic Nature Park include: identifying the extent, sources, and magnitude of sedimentation caused by streambank disturbance; surveying current stream communities including an evaluation of the status of Bonneville cutthroat trout in the stream in the park; surveying stream habitat in the park; surveying and mapping plant communities along the stream and away from the stream in the park; evaluating natural springs and delineating associated wetlands; quantifying amounts of dog and human foot traffic; and identifying ecological problems and opportunities for restoration with and without the continued presence of off-leash dogs. This type of information will provide a basis for discussion leading to effective management decisions, in part because the information will present realities of the ecological problems and opportunities in the Nature Park. We expect that a baseline assessment with information to substantially enhance meaningful dialogue and decisions regarding Parley's Nature Park could be accomplished within 2 to 4 months, depending on the level of detail desired and the amount of funding to support field work.

June 8, 2007

Again, we express our desire to work on the ecological conservation issues of Parley's Historic Nature Park, and our willingness to move forward with conservation documentation. Utah Open Lands may eventually be interested in working with Salt Lake City to create a conservation easement for the property, but only if stakeholders can find common ground allowing them to facilitate preservation of the conservation values of the Park in perpetuity. We firmly believe that careful evaluation of historic and current conditions will contribute invaluable to the preservation and effective stewardship of the beautiful, shared land that comprises the Park.

Sincerely,



Arthur Morris, PhD
Ecologist/ Conservation Stewardship Director



Wendy Fisher
Executive Director

This letter was sent to:

Rocky Anderson, Mayor, Salt Lake City

Juan Arce-Larreta, Co-Chair, Parleys Rails, Trails, and Tunnels Coalition

Peter Corroon, Mayor, Salt Lake County

Mark Crockett, District 4 Council Member, Salt Lake County Council

Rod Fisher, Community Relations Director, Rocky Mountain Power

Jordan Gates, Environmental Advisor to the Mayor, Salt Lake City

Walt Gilmore, Landscape Architect Parks Development Project Manager, Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation

Rick Graham, Director, Salt Lake City Department of Public Services

Ty Harrison, Restoration Ecologist Emeritus Professor, Dept. Biology, Westminster College

Kirk Huffacker, Assistant Director, Utah Heritage Foundation

Steve Jensen, Program Manager Water Resources Planning and Restoration

Rita Lund, Director, Millcreek F.I.D.O.S.

Aimee McConkie, President, Canyon Rim Citizens Association

Ann Ober, Environmental Policy Coordinator, Salt Lake County

Val Pope, Parks Division Manager, Salt Lake City Department of Public Services

Lisa Schmidt, Executive Director, Save Our Canyons

Søren Simonsen, District 7 Council Member, Salt Lake City Council

Neil Stack, Division Director, Salt Lake County Engineering & Flood Control Division Director

Loma Vogt, Open Space Manager, Salt Lake County

Nancy Von Allmen

Jenny Wilson, Member at Large, Salt Lake County Council