

EMIGRATION CANYON COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2007



ECC Council Members

Chairman

Joe Smolka
tab5k@yahoo.com

Co-Chair/Newsletter

Jessica Hook
jessmhook82@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Nils Abramson
nilsnlisa@earthlink.net

Secretary

Lynne Gutke
lynne@mailfdt.com

FireWise Chair/Newsletter

Kathy Christensen
kchriste@xmission.com

ECC Logo

Joanne Butler
ejbutler9@yahoo.com

Elections

Rick Raile
ctcinc89@qwest.net

Legal Advisor-HB40

Fred Silvester
fred@underzc.com

Canyon Development

Kris Hohenshelt
jhohenshe@jcenney.com

Trails & Mass Transit

Howard Ingle
howard.ingle.slcc.edu

Health Dept. Liason

Gary Bowen
gbowen@utah.gov

ECC Member

Mae Taylor-Ohlin
maetohlin@msn.com

Message From the Chairman

Three major projects going on have made this a wild summer in the canyon.

Fire station and the fire that was started by the crew working there.

The concrete crew was cutting some re bar and sent sparks into the grass. They had a safety officer there and he emptied two fire extinguishers on the fire . When that didn't work, the 14-person crew grabbed shovels and they still couldn't contain it. Salt lake City Fire fought the fire not the Unified Fire. I thought was odd. Salt lake County has a first response agreement with Salt Lake City and that's why the city fought it.

Bike lanes

This project was a bit of a surprise to the community council in the past we have heard about the projects and had some input . We are glad to have safer bike lanes in the canyon.

Tree trimming by the power company

For many people the recent outage was short- for some it was up to three days. I have seen more trimming since the big wind than they were doing before. The crews have also chipped a lot of branches for people as they have worked near their homes.

Next summer we should see less construction, but will have a few days when crews repave part of the canyon. We are still trying to find out how much they will pave.

Joe Smolka

Logo Contest

Think you have what it takes to design the new logo for the Emigration Canyon Community Council? If chosen, your logo will appear on the ECCC website and correspondence. Submit your entries in PDF format to Jessica Hook (jessmhook82@hotmail.com).

Granite School District Division Proposal

In the 2006 and 2007 legislative sessions bills were passed allowing cities of 65,000 or more residents to create their own school districts following a vote of the residents in their jurisdictions. This process allows for smaller cities and unincorporated areas to join together in order to fulfill the population requirement needed to form a district. There has been a proposal to divide the Granite School District along the Jordan River. This proposal would see the formation of two new school districts, one serving the municipalities of Holladay, South Salt Lake, Millcreek and East Millcreek areas, as well as portions of Murray City. The other would service the cities and townships of West Valley, Taylorsville, Kearns and Magna.

The Granite District is the second-largest school district in the state with a total enrollment of around 70,000 students. The east side of the district makes up 25 percent of the total enrollment and 46 percent of the district's total taxable value while the western side makes up 75 percent of student enrollment and 54 percent of the total taxable value. Taxable value per student is a fairly accurate measure of the relationship between a school district's prosperity and its revenues and expenditures. It is also a good indicator of a district's fiscal sustainability.

Should the division occur, the current taxable value per student of \$291,884 will rise in the new eastern district to \$557,562 and fall in the remaining western district to \$205,074, below the state average of \$276,666. As far as budgets are concerned, the eastern district is expected to be financially feasible and, as eastern enrollment is expected to remain fairly constant through 2020, no new school facilities will need to be built. Overall, property taxes will be lower in the eastern district than had the Granite School District remained intact. In the western district, however, the tax base is currently insufficient to support district operations at the currently mandated statutory limits. If the Granite divides, the western district will be forced to bond to provide for the building of necessary new facilities, contributing to an overall tax increase of around \$243 per \$100,000 assessed valuation.

This possibility of dividing the Granite School District will come before the Salt Lake County Council before the end of July for a vote to determine whether the proposal will be placed on the November ballot. This is an important issue and we at Salt Lake County encourage you to learn more about how it will affect your family and to let your elected officials know your desires on the proposal. We are happy to take questions and you can reach us by calling Stacey Adams at 468-3351.

Using Goats for Fire Mitigation

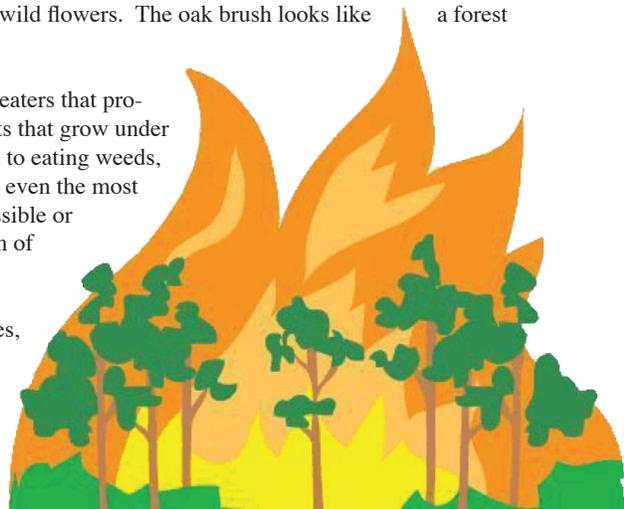
Emigration Oaks has been using goats on private and common property for the last three years. There are questions in people's minds when they see dirt where grass and weeds used to be. Have the goats been left too long in the area? Will the goats kill the small trees and bushes? How long will it be before the grass grows back or the leaves come back on the trees?

I am not an expert about goats but I am certainly a fan. I am the Firewise Chairman for Emigration Canyon so I try to keep informed about fire mitigation techniques including goats. I was first invited to a class about goats given by Utah State Forestry Fire and State Lands three years ago. Two farmers who raise goats told about what they do and what can be expected when goats are used for fire mitigation and weed control.

We often expect goats to mow an area when in fact what they do is eat everything they can reach including toxic weeds that would kill other animals. They eat enough that all the vegetation within their reach is gone so that it is more like a controlled burn than being mowed. This is disturbing to our sense of what is ecologically acceptable. We think they have over grazed and hurt the area where they have been. As I have observed and noticed the come back of areas grazed by the goats, I see a difference in the qualities of the regrowth from the original area. I look at grassy areas and notice that they actually have less weeds and are greener than areas not grazed. The grasses have been fertilized by the goats and they are more healthy. The shrubs come back is slower and the new growth lower than before. There are more visible wild flowers. The oak brush looks like a forest instead of a tangle of bushes after grazing and trimming.

"Goats have been called the only environmentally friendly, solar-powered, self-propelled weed-eaters that produce no fossil-fuels, noise pollution or fire hazards... Goats eat the 'hot-fuel' – the spindly plants that grow under trees and allow fire to spread quickly. Unlike other grazing animals, goats are naturally adapted to eating weeds, brush, thistles and invasive plants; evolving their own mechanisms for digesting and processing even the most noxious of weeds. Intensive grazing has been proven to efficiently handle areas that are inaccessible or difficult to manage with mowers, areas where burns are inadvisable, and areas where application of herbicides is not appropriate.

"Grazing animals provide a necessary and essential impact on native flora as many native grasses, forbs and shrubs have evolved alongside grazing animals, so that grazing became an essential process whereby plants developed certain biological mechanism that allowed plant and animal to derive mutually exclusive benefits from grazing impact. Even today many of our native plants require a certain degree of scarification and or disturbance in order to remain



viable.” See www.livingsystemslandmanagement.com.

Brush management requires short grazing periods with high goat densities. We want lower branches denuded so that the fuel load is decreased. What Emigration Oaks has done is use a combination of goats and cutting to keep the fuel load low and in the event of a fire prevent a crown fire.

This year we have especially targeted the west side of Emigration Oaks so that a fire traveling up the canyon can be stopped. We grazed much of our western flank and also signed a contract with the property owners to our west to graze this area including the crest of the hill since this is the best area for a fire brake.

Wildlands firemen tell me that they can control a fire in an area where there has been mitigation but where there are high fuel loads it is very difficult to stop a fire once it gets going. They say 99% of fires can be stopped if they can get to the fire quickly enough but with high winds and high amounts of fuel a fire can get away from them quickly. Then it can be impossible to stop until wind conditions slow or fuel loads are depleted or the fire comes to an area of aspen or maples (which have a higher water content), bare earth or water or drops to the ground because of previous mitigation or natural barrier.

Oak brush dries out in summer and stores carbohydrates in its roots. This allows it to comeback in the event of a fire although the above ground part of the tree is dead. It also allows it to comeback after pruning manually or with the goats. Therefore control of the oak brush is on going and areas must be periodically maintained. It is not a one time job, but requires routine maintenance every two or three years.

The goats also can escape their enclosures especially if a dog or other predator gets inside or is harassing them. The electric fence usually protects them but it sometimes has a weak point. Goats on the loose can find something we would rather they not eat just as the deer and moose do. It can be a problem to round them up again since the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Kathy Christensen
Firewise Chairman



Salt Lake Unified Fire gives Homeowners' Checklist: How To Make Your Yard Fire Safe

- Create a Defensible Space of 100 feet around your home.
- Create a “LEAN, CLEAN and GREEN ZONE” by removing all flammable vegetation within 30 feet immediately surrounding your home
- Then create a “REDUCED FUEL ZONE” in the remaining 70 feet or to your property line.

A. Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants. The amount of space will depend on how steep your property is and the size of your plants.

B. Large trees do not have to be removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed.

- Remove lower tree branches at least six feet from the ground
- Landscape with fire resistant plants
- Maintain all plants with regular water, and keep dead braches, leaves and needles removed.
- When clearing vegetation, use care when operating equipment such as lawnmowers. One small spark may start a fire; a string trimmer is much safer.
- Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles
- Locate LPG tanks (butane and propane) at least 30 feet from any structure and maintain 10 feet of clearance
- Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and other debris from your yard

Criminal Activity in the Canyon

Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office August 2007 Report for Emigration Canyon Criminal Activity.

Theft/Larceny: 1
Vehicle Burglary: 5
Domestic Violence: 2
Suspicious Circumstances: 5
Vandalism: 2



Emigration Improvement District Update

Three construction projects in the canyon in the same summer! If we live through this, we can do most anything. It has been difficult for all with dust, an overabundance of not always well timed traffic control lights, rough roads, etc. 95% of the residents have handled this very well and we appreciate your patience. Salt Lake County is responsible for the first two projects below and the District is doing the third.

1) The SL County bike lane project came as a big surprise to canyon community leadership. Without warning, Skyview Construction showed up and began work from about 4500 Emigration down to about 3700, roughly .8 miles. Their project included expanding surfaces by up to three feet on each side of the road, installing several drains from one side of the road over to the creekside of the road and new guard rails. This was the most difficult project on road users. It was spread out over the whole length of the project for nearly the whole time. Good news - the project is completed except for some minor tuning.

2) The SL Unified Fire Department construction of a new fire station at 3400 Emigration Canyon is for most a much anticipated improvement for the canyon. Construction is well under way, but is not expected to be complete until next spring or summer. The new project manager, Bob Fraley of Ascent Construction told me today that they are trying to complete all of the Pioneer For Road disruption today and will install curbing along the west side of the road so that fall and winter driving should be safe and convenient for us. Late August saw an unfortunate wildfire which began from sparks from a grinder on the project. The water in the District lines was used to a large degree to help put this fire out and saved several homes in the area from a definite threat. Thank goodness for the new hydrants and water reservoir.

3) Lastly the main canyon 3.3 mile pipeline installation with hydrants within roughly 250 feet of each property and service laterals to all existing homes and lots that are deemed buildable is about 85% complete. 124 of about 220 property owners have paid their application fees and signed up for connections or have made standby commitments. Applications are still being accepted. The main line is installed from Skycrest Circle all the way up past the turnoff to Little Mountain and side roads. Service laterals are installed up to the north side road at about 5600 Emigration Canyon, and the asphalt patching is following closer behind now: by the end of the week we should be patching above the 5600 address.

Several people have called about dust control. We are sorry it has been such a mess. Counterpoint Construction has been trying to run the water truck over all unpaved trenches at least three times a day and sometimes more. The biggest problems have been the weekends. This will all end soon. We expect to have the main line in by October 1, with some work on the Little Mountain stretch, the north side road and Freeze Creek remaining. Most of these should also be finished up if not by October 1, then shortly thereafter. We will be sending a letter to all those in the main canyon service area in the next week or so to obtain information regarding connection criteria and intentions on timing.

Regarding the paving of the road, the resulting patching that has occurred has not been as high quality as we had anticipated. Staker Paving is doing their best with a difficult situation. Their work looks good at first, but with so much heavy equipment running over it, it tends to get degraded. Neil Stack has said that the County will do an overlay of the canyon road above Emigration Place in the summer of 2008. If they were to do it sooner, settling might cause a poor job in the long run. We support Neil in that decision. We think it makes good sense, even though we will have to put up with it for the next 9 months.

Thank you again and please try to be patient for a few more weeks and we will be happy in the long run.

More information: www.emigrationcanyon.org or call Fred Smolka at 582-6176.