



## City Council Staff Report

**Subject: Bonanza Flat Conservation Easement Update**

**Author: Heinrich Deters**

**Department: Trails & Open Space**

**Date: October 5, 2023**

**Type of Item: Informational**

### Recommendation

Review and discuss an update from the Trails & Open Space Team and Utah Open Lands (UOL) on the Bonanza Flat Conservation Easement and the Adaptive Management Plan (BFAMS). Specifically, the conservation easement calls for a review and update (if needed) of the BFAMS at least every 5 years, and we are currently 3 years into that timeframe. UOL will provide an update on management actions implemented thus far on the property and project-specific questions associated with the following.

- Recreational Trails: Review and provide direction on the final phase of the multi-use trail and the 'Wow connection' to Wasatch State Parks;
- Parking Management: Review and discuss existing conditions and management direction, including implementation of no parking at the 'Y' intersection and permit and fee parking management as requested by the Council; and
- Church of Dirt: Provide direction on the management of the 'Church of Dirt' due to impacts associated with its informal use.

### Background

In June 2017, Park City Municipal acquired the 1,350-acre Bonanza Flat Open Space. Over the next few years, the City secured an additional 200 acres of open space, bringing the total acreage to 1,550. After almost three years of planning and public processes, the Park City Council adopted the [Bonanza Flat Conservation Easement](#) and [Adaptive Management Plan](#) (BFAMS) on January 9, 2020.

In 2019, Park City entered into a [Development Agreement](#) required by Wasatch County to construct two view areas and two trailheads in previously disturbed areas and relocate the Bloods Lake and Lackawaxen Lake trails.

In 2022, Park City and Wasatch County entered into a [Law Enforcement Interlocal Agreement](#), which allows, amongst many other aspects, the ability of the Trails & Open Space Rangers to provide civil parking enforcement within the Bonanza Flat Conservation Area.

[On November 10, 2022](#), UOL provided the Council with a comprehensive history of the property purchase and public planning process efforts associated with the Conservation Easement and the Adaptive Management Plan.

[On June 15, 2023](#), UOL provided an overview of the BFAMS to the City Council and received comments associated with parking management and review of the recreational trails. [minutes \(page 4\)](#).

### Analysis

The Team has gone to great lengths to capture usage data related to the property. The data encompasses trail utilization, trailhead counts, user demographics, and the amounts of time individuals spend visiting or recreating in the area. This information is crucial to understanding the context of how the property is managed and is currently being utilized.

For example, highlights of the data capture efforts include:

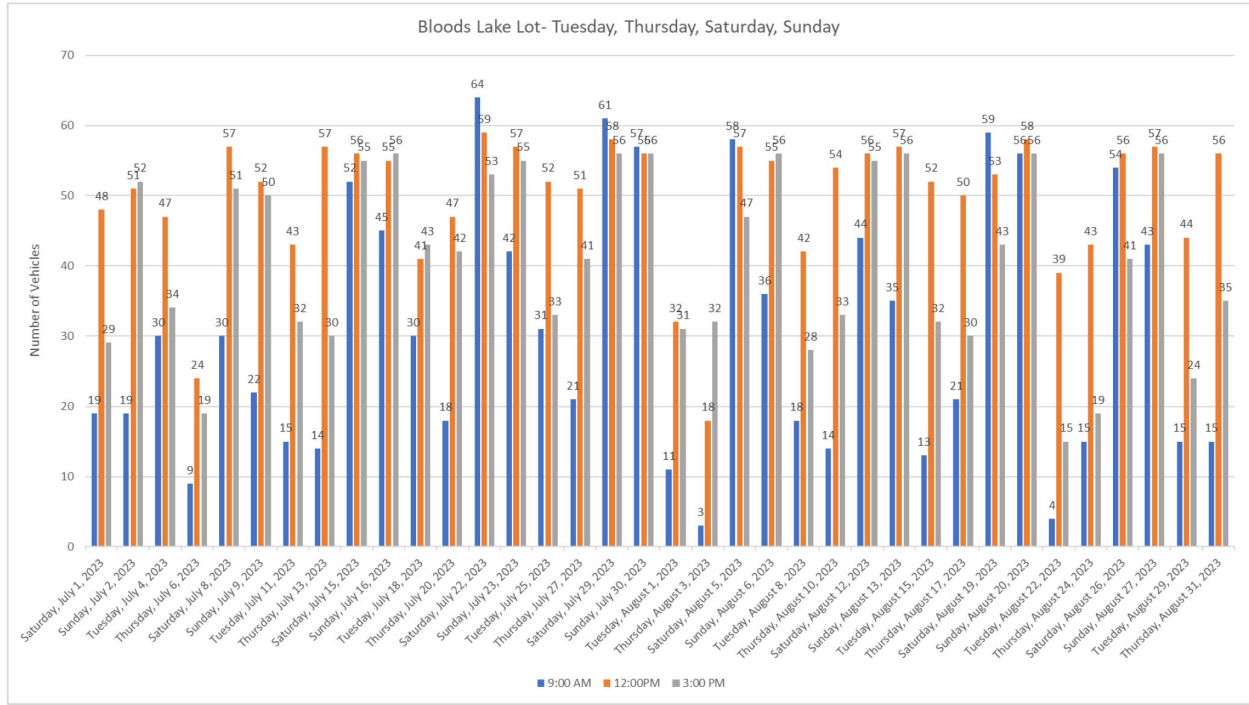
- An overall decrease in visitation in 2023;
- Similar to 2022, more than half of the visitor's length of stay is under 30 minutes;
- Weekends (Saturdays) represent the greatest use and subsequent impacts;
- Bloods Lake Trail and Trailhead are at capacity;
- With the exception of many Saturdays, Bonanza Flat Trailhead has capacity; and
- Park City Trails and Open Space are very popular

### Visitor Data

**Top 10 Viewer Origins 2022-23**

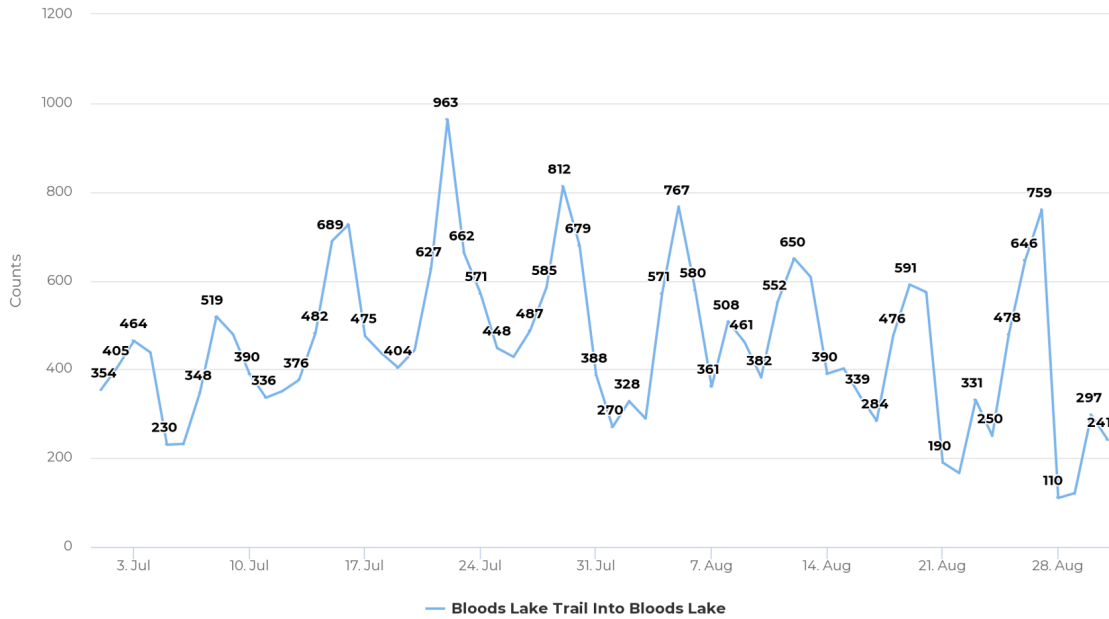
July 1st - Sept 19th 2022			July 1st - Sept 17th 2023			# Change	% Change
Area	Viewers	% of Total	Area	Viewers	% of Total		
Salt Lake City	63140	23.6%	Salt Lake City	63018	25.4%	-122	1.7%
Park City	16486	6.2%	Park City	17380	7.0%	894	0.8%
CA	16168	6.1%	Sandy	16466	6.6%	298	0.6%
Sandy	16150	6.0%	CA	11907	4.8%	-4243	-1.3%
West Jordan	9705	3.6%	West Jordan	7924	3.2%	-1781	-0.4%
TX	9092	3.4%	TX	7549	3.0%	-1543	-0.4%
FL	6976	2.6%	FL	5897	2.4%	-1079	-0.2%
AZ	5311	2.0%	West Valley City	5327	2.1%	16	0.2%
Heber City	5232	2.0%	South Jordan	5136	2.1%	-96	0.1%
Draper	4977	1.9%	AZ	4186	1.7%	-791	-0.2%
<b>Total Viewers</b>			<b>Total Viewers</b>			<b># Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
	267092			248394		-18698	-0.073

## Bloods Lake Trail & Trailhead Data

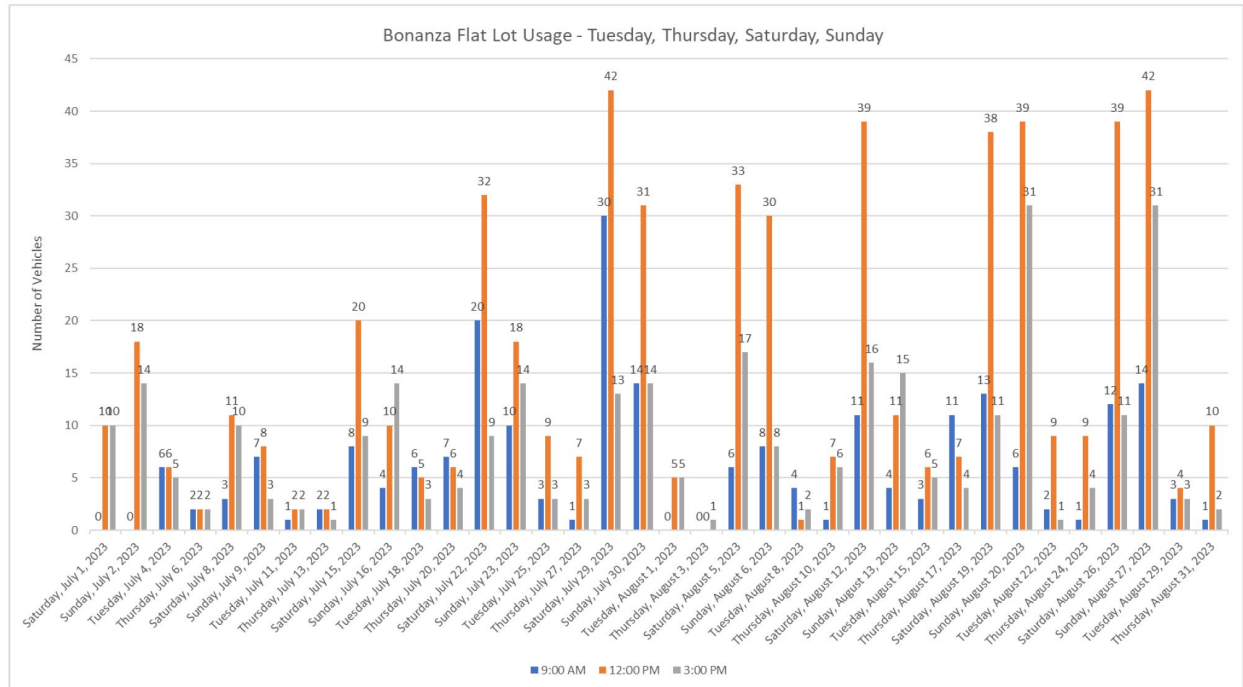


## Bloods Lake Trail

July 1, 2023 12:00 AM - August 31, 2023 3:01 PM



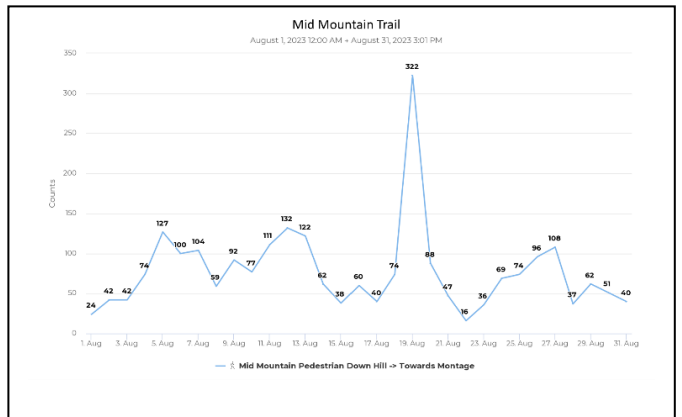
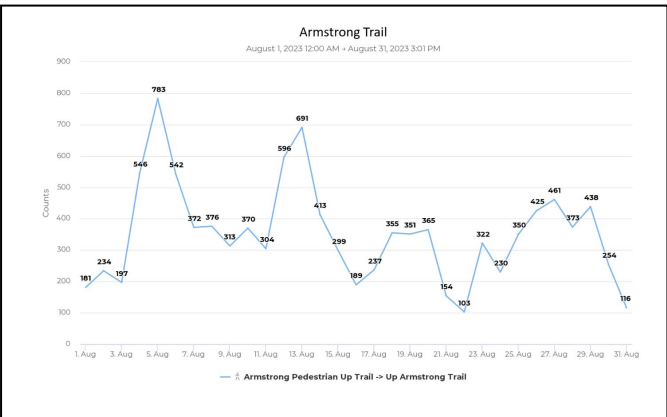
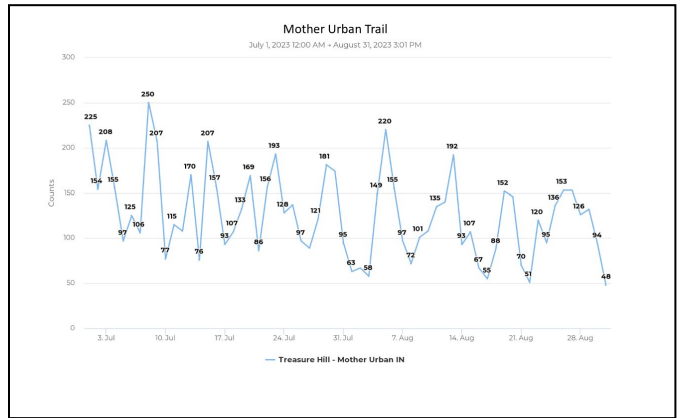
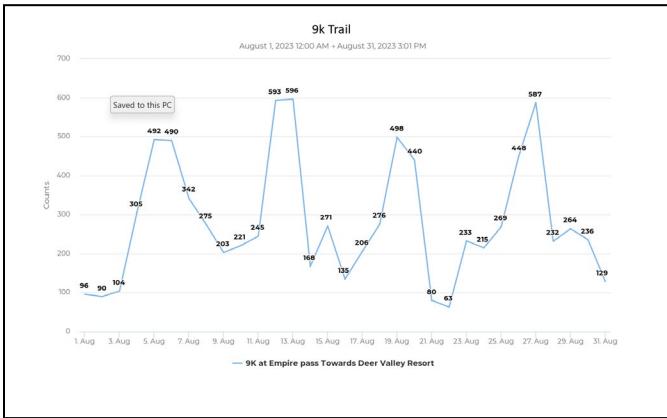
## Bonanza Flat Trailhead Data



## Visitation- Length of Stay

Minutes	2022	2023
15 - 29	58.0%	55.0%
30 - 44	20.6%	18.1%
45 - 59	6.5%	8.4%
60 - 74	3.6%	3.8%
75 - 89	2.8%	4.2%
90 - 104	1.4%	2.9%
105 - 119	1.0%	2.9%
120 - 134	2.3%	1.9%
135 - 149	0.5%	0.4%
>150	3.4%	2.4%

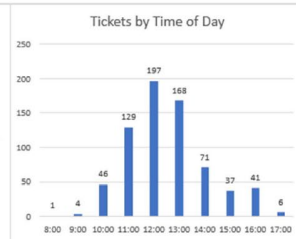
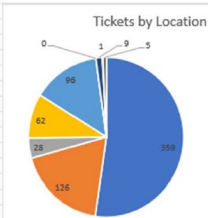
# Comparative Trail Counts



# Trailhead Parking Citations

## Ticket Overview 2022-23

Total	(Since July 2022)	700	
Location	Bloods Lake	359	51%
	Bonanza Flat	126	18%
	Empire Pass	28	4%
	Twisted Branch	62	9%
	Guardman Pass	96	14%
	Treasure Hill	0	0%
	Round Valley	9	1%
	Iron Mountain	1	0%
	Other	5	1%
Greater Bonanza Flat Conservation Area		609	87%
Warnings		206	29%
Valids		494	71%
8:00		1	
9:00		4	
10:00		46	
11:00		129	
12:00		197	
13:00		168	
14:00		71	
15:00		37	
16:00		41	
17:00		6	



**Parking Access & Trailheads:** The [BFAMS](#), detailed on page 36, lays out a specific strategy for addressing access, parking, and trailheads as follows:

1. **Maximum Parking Capacity:** The plan establishes a maximum parking capacity of 175 spaces distributed across five approved locations, including:
  - Empire Pass Trailhead (\*15 spaces);
  - Bonanza Flat Trailhead (\*50 spaces);
  - Bloods Lake Trailhead (\*60 spaces); and
  - Guardsman Pass Drop-Off/Scenic Overlook (\*7 spaces).
2. **Parking Enforcement:** Enforcement of parking regulations, particularly along roadways with public safety issues, was proactively increased and supported by additional budget requests.
3. **Coordinated Approach:** A coordinated approach will be adopted to address issues, such as curbing on-street parking, camping, campfires, motorized vehicle use, and other related matters.
4. **Strategic Location Selection:** The choice of trailhead locations has been made in conjunction with established, anticipated, and desired usage patterns, access goals, and standards.
5. **Exterior Vault Restrooms:** Exterior vault-style restrooms will be constructed, ensuring clear visibility for vehicles exiting the Empire Pass Trailhead onto Guardsman Pass Road.
6. **Educational Signage:** Informative signage will be posted at trailheads, providing trail maps, regulations, and guidance on sustainable practices.

*\*Approximate spaces due to parking behavior, trailers or oversized vehicles*

Desired Outcomes:

The ultimate goal is to achieve long-term, manageable trailheads and parking facilities that align with sustainability principles. Management involves effective waste management practices and an educational initiative to promote sustainable behaviors among trail users.

**Recreational Trails:** Concerning recreational trails, as outlined in the [BFAMS](#) starting on page 19, the primary objectives are to provide guidance and establish evaluation criteria for each distinct management area. This comprehensive plan incorporates construction parameters and conceptual maps for the initial development of both summer and winter trails.

The location of public trails and nearby private property continues to be an area of occasional friction. Collectively, we aim to ensure that the development and management of recreational trails align with environmentally responsible practices and the preservation of natural ecosystems while providing safe and enjoyable experiences for trail users. We are also aware of the potential impacts to adjacent private property owners.

The Wow Connection and Phase III of the multi-use trail, for example, are two crucial future trail connections. In 2022, the Council established a protocol to ensure community engagement for both the multi-use and Wow connection trails, given the

concerns of a few private property owners. The process was confirmed at the June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, UOL and the Team invited interested members of the Brighton Estates community to review the proposed trail alignments, with the intent to return to the Council on October 5<sup>th</sup> in an open and public meeting and obtain direction.

**Events & Special Uses:** The "Church of Dirt," referenced on page 74 within the special event or use section of the [BFAMS](#), has been a source of growing concerns for several years, and recently led to increased management. The ultimate authority for allowing the use lies with the City Council. The Team and UOL have several concerns about the increased usage and how it complies with BFAMS's parameters regarding participant numbers and facility adequacy.

Gleaned from a variety of sources (Ranger and PD observations, reviews of reservations, community complaints and reports, web searches, etc.), the key concerns encompass:

1. **Safety:** Particularly parking, access, and blocking the road;
2. **Varied Participant Numbers:** The number of participants can fluctuate significantly, posing logistical challenges with groups larger than twenty. When this occurs, we will often receive complaints for additional enforcement;
3. **Waste Management:** Concerns about proper waste disposal generated from events and inappropriate infrastructure and planning (tents, catering, amplified music);
4. **Scheduling Conflicts:** Double booking and compounding impacts on weekends;
5. **Perceived 'Privatization':** Worries about the perception of exclusivity or restricted access to the area, and the use of ropes and barricades without authorization; and
6. **User:** Acknowledgment of the non-local use demographic.

In Conclusion, UOL and the Team, as dedicated stewards of the Bonanza Flat Conservation Area and the Adaptive Management Plan will continue to use the resources we have to protect and support the conservation values. In terms of near-term issues for City Council consideration, we seek guidance on the following:

- Future Recreational Trails: Implementing the final phase of the multi-use trail and the 'Wow connection' to Wasatch State Parks.
  - Given past sensitivity and requests for additional public engagement, we have followed the process set forth by the Council and are requesting direction in a public meeting.
- Parking Management: Based on data presented, public input associated with the implementation of no parking at the 'Y' intersection and information provided on permit and fee parking.
- Church of Dirt: Direction on the management of the 'Church of Dirt' starting in 2024.
  - Summer and Fall represent the primary season of use; thus providing direction in advance of 2024 provides ample notification.