

Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Public Scoping Meeting



Utah State Office
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Ashley Valley Watershed Plan Study Team are interested in your comments and suggestions regarding the proposed study. Please use one of the following methods to contact the study team and share your input.

- Fill out a comment card and leave it in the box provided.
- Take a comment card home and return it to the address indicated.
- Take a comment card home for friends and family to complete.
- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with a study team member.
- Email the study team at email@ashleywatershed.com.

Public involvement is an important part of the Environmental Assessment. If you would like a response to your comment, please indicate that on your comment and a member of our study team will respond as soon as possible. Thank you for your participation.

Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Public Scoping Meeting • May 23, 2019



Utah State Office

Natural
Resources
Conservation
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Name

Street Address

City/Zip Code

Phone

Email

Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Public Scoping Meeting • May 23, 2019



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Name	Street Address	City/Zip Code	Phone	Email



Ashley Valley Watershed Project



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[illegible]

Comment #: 1

Date: 5/17/2019

Source: Email

Name: Anonymous

Location:

Comments:

Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Quick question.

Who will be the signatory(ies) of the of the Decision Record or Record of Decision if needed?

Comment #: 2

Date: 5/20/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name:

[REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.20.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>



May 20, 2019

Mr. Marcus Murdock
The Langdon Group
466 North 900 West
Kaysville, UT 84037

Dear Mr. Murdock:

My husband and I are unable to attend the public meeting on May 23 at the Uintah County Western Park concerning the Ashley Valley Watershed Project. Since we are unable to attend, I would like to express our concerns in this letter.

We are opposed to enclosing 9.6 miles of Ashley Central Canal in a pipeline. I understand that valuable irrigation water is lost to evaporation and ground absorption, but the value and uses of this canal goes beyond irrigation alone. Our property borders this canal and we watch migrating ducks return year after year to nest and raise their young on the canal. Also, Partridges, Robins, and dozens of other varieties of birds rely on the canal as their only source of drinking water; not to mention the deer that need it for their survival. There are also generation after generation of children who have enjoyed fishing and floating the canal.

Please consider the value of this canal for recreational purposes and how its loss will impact our wildlife and our rural way of life in general.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,



Comment #: 3

Date: 5/22/2019

Source: Open House Comment

Name: [REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.22.19_Comment.pdf can be found on the next pages.>

May 22, 2019

Hi, My name is [REDACTED] I hope I can communicate clearly and respectfully, and as a friend.

I'd like to speak in favor of finding another solution, without piping the canal.

The central canal, as the oldest canal - because of how long it's been in existence, it's not just a utility anymore, it is a feature of the community.

I grew up in the canal. Quite literally. I spent countless hours of unstructured time as a child playing in and around the canal.

In our beautiful section of the canal, there are 4 different switchbacks, and a waterfall, and a pond - all on my dad's property.

As kids we went tubing down the canal, we built rope swings across it, bridges where we would play stick races, tree forts, and just whenever we felt like it – we would take a walk.

It was a healthy way to grow up. And I wish everyone in the world had that kind of environment to grow up in.

Now those things just aren't in the past. When I moved back to Vernal, I built a house next to my parents so that my own children could have open access to the canal – access to that same beautiful world I grew up in.

Who wouldn't want to raise their children in such a beautiful place? Who wouldn't want to have a beautiful stream that winds its way through the back field? Who wouldn't want their kids to play in such a fascinating place, a place that provides endless hours of adventure and imagination?

Now I've always worked hard to keep my dad's section of the canal clean. I'm routinely cleaning out sticks, trash, trees that have fallen over into it – both so that the water can flow better, and also because I believe it's more beautiful when it's that way.

I remember when my dad built the pond, using water from the canal, with an inlet, an outlet back into the canal, stocked it full of fish. I've spent many happy hours on or near the pond.

There's a giant tower – a repurposed oil rig – right next to its shore. We've strung zip lines across the pond a couple of different directions, I built a dock, out over the water, we've had various kinds of rafts or boats that we played around with on the pond.

Over the waterfall, my dad built an old English style covered bridge out of reclaimed wood. I've built 6 other smaller foot bridges going over peninsulas and other spots. Basically, we've taken the canal, and improved it.

I think a good analogy would be to imagine a proposal to replace Steinaker reservoir with an underground water tank. Pretend that such a thing is possible for a moment.

You could make the argument that we should do it for several reasons.

We would lose less water due to evaporation, seepage, and all the trees and wildlife that use it up.

A tank would be more efficient, more economical, easier to maintain.

And maybe you could say that Steinaker isn't a natural thing anyway – it was man-made, for the purpose of storing water.

You could say all those things, but you have to acknowledge that Steinaker is not just for storage anymore. It is a feature of the community.

If we replaced it with a water tank, the first thing we would lose is the recreation, all the watersports and people gathering that happens on and around Steinaker.

In addition, we would lose a thing of beauty – sure it might not have been there before the settlers came to the valley, but it is a beautiful, picturesque scene. You could paint a picture of it.

And we would also lose all the waterfowl and trees that surround it.

It is the same thing with the canal. By piping it, we lose recreation, a beautiful setting, and plant and animal life.

Do you consider those things to have value?

You must weigh these things in the balance of the decision.

And I think, just like Steinaker would be sorely missed if it were destroyed, the things we would lose by piping the canal clearly outweigh the benefits.

My point in telling you all of this is that – our section of the canal is beautiful, its serene, the water flows well, it's peaceful, it's a wonderful place to be, even just to sit and think.

Several families have come there to take family photographs. My own family included.

We've hosted youth conferences, and scout camps, pretty much yearly, cub scout nature walks, When I was a kid, we did the requirements for the nature merit badge there.

Kids from the neighborhood still go swimming or come and fish on the pond. It's almost like a community park.

One of my favorite things is to just take a walk, with my kids, just wander through the trees, wander around the canal, over the bridges, and see the beautiful wildlife, there's all sorts of frogs and fish, ducks and geese, all sorts of different trees to climb, new places to explore that I've never explored, new places to clean up and do landscaping work on.

Anytime friends or family come to visit, we always take them on a tour of the canal.

One of my favorite things ^{taking a walk in} about the canal is to watch the seasons change. Spring, summer, fall and winter, each provide their own different beauty.

So when we talk about piping the canal, I hope you can see what I see of when I think of the canal. To me it is all those things. It be would be a sad day for my children, my neighbors, and me to see it destroyed. We appreciate the beauty and variety it brings to our lives.

Because if a pipe goes through that property, it goes right through all those peninsulas, it goes right through the waterfall, the beautiful covered bridge and all the other bridges, it cuts down trees that I've built tree forts in, it stops the flow of water to the pond.

There is a lot of expense associated with all that demolition, and it's not just monetary.

There has to be a better way. There has to be a better way to get the water to the end of the row and yet still keep the canal for future generations. We can find a better way.

I'll finish where I started. The canal isn't just a utility, it is a treasure. It is a beautiful feature of the community, and I, along with many others, would be very sad to see it go.

Comment #: 4

Date: 5/23/2019

Source: Open House Comment

Name: [REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.23.19_Comment.pdf can be found on the next page.>



Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Public Scoping Comment Card

Comments

As part of project request the deep canal running along side 2500 so from highway 40 to the east be filled in. It is a safety hazard next to the road.

Comment #: 5

Date: 5/24/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name: Erica Gaddis

Location: Salt Lake City

Comments:

<Attachment Erica Gaddis_5.24.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next pages.>



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Environmental Quality

Alan Matheson
Executive Director

DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
Erica Brown Gaddis, PhD
Director

May 24, 2019

Marcus Murdock
The Langdon Group
466 North 900 West
Kaysville, Utah 84037

Subject: Utah PL566 Watershed Operations - Ashley Valley Public Project Scoping

Dear Mr. Murdock:

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality (DWQ) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Ashley Valley Watershed Project in Uintah County, Utah. The primary goals of the project to increase flood protection and irrigation efficiency are in accordance with DWQ's mission to safeguard and improve Utah's waters. DWQ wishes to highlight that the proposed project is located in the Middle Ashley Creek watershed assessment unit (UT14060002-002_00) that has been designated with the following beneficial uses: 1) Class 2B - protected for infrequent primary contact recreation, 2) Class 3B – protected for warm water species of game fish and other warm water aquatic life, and 3) Class 4 – protected for agricultural use, including irrigation of crops and stock watering (UAC R317-2-6). In 2008, this assessment unit (AU) was listed as impaired for exceeding the warm water aquatic life selenium standard and the agricultural total dissolved solids standard. In 2014, it was also listed for exceeding the warm water aquatic life aluminum standard (Division of Water Quality 2016a). Because the assessment unit is not meeting its beneficial uses, it has been placed on Utah's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters (Division of Water Quality 2016b).

Given the impairment of waters in the Middle Ashley Creek AU, DWQ respectfully reminds the Langdon Group to ensure that all precautions are taken to reduce erosion and runoff associated with the construction of the detention basins and canal pipeline. In this case, a 404 dredge and fill permit through the US Army Core of Engineers, a 401 Water Quality Certification and/or a General Construction (Storm Water) UPDES permit may be required.

Page 2
Marcus Murdock
The Langdon Group

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Erica B. Gaddis, PhD
Director

EBG/JG/ch

References

- Division of Water Quality. 2016a. Utah's Final 2016 Integrated Report. Salt Lake City, UT. Utah Department of Environmental Quality.
- Division of Water Quality. 2016b. Prioritizing Utah's 303(d) List. Salt Lake City, UT. Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

DWQ-2019-005461

Comment #: 6

Date: 5/24/2019

Source: Email

Name: [REDACTED]

Location:

Comments:

Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Hello.

I was unable to attend the public meeting held last night, and I have a couple of questions regarding the Watershed Project. Is it true that all canals will be piped? Ashley Upper is literally in my backyard. Will it also be piped? If so, what will happen to the mature trees lining the canal? My concerns with losing the mature trees along the canal is the impact on wildlife and birds. We have owls who nest in the trees every year, as well as hawks and other raptors. Will this be taken into consideration? Also, what about home values? We purchased our home and lot specifically because of the appeal of the mature trees lining the canal. Also, what is the proposed timeline for construction on the Ashley Upper Canal?

Thank you for any information you can provide.

[REDACTED]

Comment #: 7

Date: 5/25/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name: [REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.25.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>

Comments You are wanting to change an area that has a beautiful atmosphere. The sounds of the canal, the trees that will die when you take away their natural supply. It will ruin the landscape & the area for which we purchased our home. It will also reduce the oxygen supply to our area which we need for reduction of pollution. We have lots of wildlife that lives near the canal throughout the year.

We personally have a well that will probably dry up from that will ruin our ability ~~not~~ not to mention the expense of drilling the well.

We know there will be issues regarding the shares. Because the creek that ran behind the other side of the houses have never received their shares after the water was piped in.

Comment #: 8

Date: 5/25/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name: [REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.25.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>



Ashley Valley Watershed Project

Public Scoping Comment Card

Comments

We are wondering why we were not notified of the original meeting. How did this get voted in without asking property owners to vote on this issue-

We do not want our community canal atmosphere to change. The environment needs the trees. We have days that pollution is high. As a community they have asked people to plant trees and you are now telling us that you are planning to kill all the trees along our canal. This project needs a class action lawsuit to be stopped!

Comment #: 9

Date: 5/25/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name:

[REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.25.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>

Comments As a property owner I was not notified of this project. As a property owner I should have been allowed to vote for or against this project.

You are Not Granted Permission to Touch The Trees or the Area that is connected to my property line. I own to the middle of the Creek! I am aware of my Rights as a Landowner & I will have an attorney that will be addressing your lack of Notifying me of any changes that your trying to Push through!

Comment #: 10

Date: 5/25/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name:

[REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.25.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>

Comments

We purchased our home because of the beautiful atmosphere that the canal provided. We have loved taking our children down to fish and splash and play in it.

Our property line goes to the middle of that canal so we are concerned with how the decision was made to pipe on our property line without notification. Running an ad in a paper is not sufficient notification.

We feel that waters our yard would be ruined by this action, not to mention the lack of beauty & destruction from your piping. We are not in support of this action! We will fight you the entire way!

Comment #: 11

Date: 5/25/2019

Source: Mailed In

Name: [REDACTED]

Location: Vernal

Comments:

<Attachment [REDACTED]_5.25.19_MailedComment.pdf can be found on the next page.>