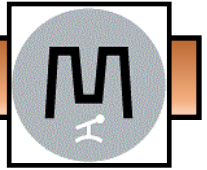


City Council Message



May 2019



Diane Turner

If you are like me, you anticipate with excitement warmer spring weather and the opportunity to be outdoors, hiking, biking, walking, running, and picnicking in the next few weeks. Let me take this opportunity to warn you to be cautious and put safety first in every activity.

The state has experienced record snowfall in northern Utah, with Alta Ski Resort reporting a total of 626 inches in the 2018-2019 season, which is the highest total since 723 inches in 2010-2011. Salt Lake City public utilities has measured Little Cottonwood drainage area at 120 percent of normal, which compares with 73 percent last year on April 1. Currently, both Big and Little Cottonwood Creeks are experiencing fast running water, which changes quickly depending on snow melt and daily temperatures.

Mid May details water speed from 813 to 973 gallons per second in Little Cottonwood and 785 to 1,325 gallons per second in Big Cottonwood Creek. That was concentrated in one to two feet of water level. By the end of May it is expected to be running at 6,000 gallons per second and up to four feet of water depth. The peak is expected around Memorial Day weekend and continues for four to five weeks.

Water temperatures are running in the 40-degree range that rapidly causes hypothermia, which occurs when body temperature dips below 95 F producing confusion and loss of consciousness. The body strives to maintain heat around the vital organs – brain, heart and lungs, consequently, blood circulation to the arms and legs shuts down. Cold, high and swift water from spring rains and snow melt can easily overwhelm even the strongest swimmer who may be rendered powerless.

Little Cottonwood Creek traverses throughout Murray City with the lowest point in Murray Park. For all these reasons, I cannot stress enough how important it is to keep a close watch on children and pets to prevent accidents that happen so unexpectedly one can scarcely react. According to the 2019 Utah State Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2017 recorded a total of 20 fatalities from floods, the most in any year.

Cooler spring temperatures will produce a slower measured snow melt and less likelihood of flooding; however, precipitation adds to the runoff totals. Salt Lake County Flood Control expects highest flooding periods in May and June each year. Prior preparation is important because snow melt often peaks around midnight for those living near waterways. If your home is in a vulnerable position, try to clear a path for floating debris, which can enter a building through windows. Use sandbags to re-direct storm water flows away from property.

Murray City has several locations for sandbag filling in the city. Each site has a pile of sand and sandbags for filling. Bring your own shovel and a way to transport your filled bags.

5300 South Parkside Drive (481 East)
4576 South Creek Land
Meadow Road and 4623 South

Let's all get prepared to safely enjoy our stunning city and state, taking advantage of the opportunities we are afforded to enrich our lives in the great outdoors, at home, in the mountains, and in the parks with our friends and family at our sides.