

Date:

SLC Public Lands threatens community garden??

Hi [Salt Lake City Council member name],

I'm writing to urgently ask for your support for the Og-woi People's Orchard and Garden (Og-woi)^[1]. The Og-woi is a community based project modeling how food can be free and accessible along the Jordan River Parkway trail, created lovingly by, and for, the people.

The Og-woi started in a neglected lot on the Jordan River Parkway with a fruit tree planting on Earth Day 2020. Volunteers thereafter returned each Sunday planting the Og-woi. Salt Lake City officials soon approached Og-woi volunteers, proposing to negotiate a formal agreement recognizing the garden. An extensive process has ensued. Og-Woi volunteers established an expert advisory board and adopted 'Garden Volunteer Safety Measures', to address contamination issues that occur in the soil throughout the valley^[2]. In the subsequent years Og-woi volunteers invested thousands of labor hours and tens of thousands of dollars, planting and tending to the garden and orchard. Salt Lake City conducted a public engagement process in 2021 and made an initial decision to uphold the Og-Woi project, finding overwhelming support for the Og-woi^[3, 4].

Unfortunately, on March 21st, of this year, Salt Lake City Public Lands Department made a sudden and stunning reversal. The department is now demanding that the Og-Woi public art, garden boxes, and all other materials be removed before May 1, 2023. This order would destroy important community generated art located at the Og-woi, and threatens the Og-Woi's carefully planned landscaping and dozens of fruit trees which will positively benefit a diverse community for generations to come. The Department is even demanding removal of the memorial mural of beloved community organizer Margarita Satini. I am in shock that the city decided to kill this project. This abrupt and unjustified about-face will harm the westside community generally and the Og-Woi volunteers, who worked with the city in good faith for years, developing the Og-woi in line with a draft agreement, best practices, and ongoing discussions with the Department.

I request that you please show support for the Og-woi by requesting Salt Lake City Mayor, Erin Mendenhall, and Public Lands Department Director, Kristin Riker, complete the formal agreement process that was initiated in good faith three years ago, so this inspiring community stewardship of the Og-woi People's Orchard and Garden can continue to build community within our community.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[email]

[contact address]

[] I prefer to remain anonymous

1 Og-woi Garden webpage <https://dirt2table.org/dirt2table/the-og-woi-peoples-orchard-and-garden/>

2 Link to the Og-woi soil remediation plan & Garden Volunteer Safety Measures:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nV3JqmkjtmSNKXzEBdxXEBvuLERE-X-P/view?usp=share_link

3 U o U, College of Social & Behavioral Science, Environmental Justice Lab, 'URBAN AGRICULTURE ON THE JORDAN RIVERA: An Analysis of The Og-Woi People's Garden and Orchard in the Context of Salt Lake City and County Planning'. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AXhTS8erSBQh_pTRK4MqLv4bSZC7Hw8h/view?usp=share_link

4 U o U, College of Social & Behavioral Science, Environmental Justice Lab, 'INCREASING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: INSIGHTS FROM SALT LAKE CITY FARMERS & FOOD ADVOCATES'.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ueNeA8eGVI964Chfo5n-MKBcWn3OE7V/view?usp=share_link