

On September 6th, 2002, a grass fire burned 60 acres below the City Creek-Bountiful ridge (Salt Lake Tribune). On September 6th, 2005, local poet Katharine Coles, who has won the Utah Book Award and the Salt Lake City Mayor's Arts Award, comments that she "enjoys cycling in City Creek Canyon . . ." (Salt Lake Tribune). On September 6th, 2005, a memorial service is planned for 46 year old Kevin Wageman at a picnic site in City Creek Canyon (Salt Lake Tribune).

On September 6th, 1944, the Rotary Club voted to transfer ownership of lower Rotary Park to the State Department of Parks (Salt Lake Tribune, September 6th and 12th, 1944). The State was requiring the transfer of all of City Creek Canyon Road and its surrounding banks as a condition of accepting the proposal (Salt Lake Tribune, September 12th, 1944).

On September 6th, 1899, the City Council in a Democratic Party line vote, rejected minority report criticisms of alleged discrepancies in City Engineer Kelsey's financial report (Salt Lake Tribune). On September 6th, 1887, the Salt Lake Tribune responded to the Salt Lake Herald's September 4th editorial accusing the Tribune of "apostasy", that is religious heresy, for supporting the Avenues Dry Bench residents on their water supply issues.

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## **September 7th**

### **Coyote Friend**

6:30 p.m. While jogging near mile 0.4, I hear something moving in the brush. I freeze and remain silent. Across the stream, a small female Coyote is noisily picking its way through the brush and towards the stream. She cannot see me because the stream is several feet below the roadbed, and her view of me is blocked by the bank. She did not hear me because the coyote itself was making so much noise walking across dry leaves. This is the closest that I've been to a coyote in my life. Usually they are seen several hundred feet away crossing an open meadow.

The coyote spends a couple of minutes drinking at the stream. She finishes and then works her way back up the opposite bank. I make a small noise, she

stops, and turns around to look me over. The coyote has large erect black fringed ears that stick out perpendicular from its narrow head. The snout is also narrow and has a delicate yellow side coloring. The eyes are bright deep yellow. Beneath the jaws, the neck hair has a subtle yellow black molted pattern that I do not see in photographs of other coyotes. In her eyes I see canine intelligence. It is the same dog intelligence that I see in the eyes of a friend's domestic Border collie. She betrays no fear or aggression, other than a few raised hairs on her back. She is relaxed and sniffs the surrounding leaves while keeping one eye on me. We both get bored of this game after a minute or so, and we go our separate ways.

I wonder how many times in the past this coyote friend has sat quiet and unseen in the brush watching me and other joggers go by.

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Coyotes are a predator of Mule deer. They principally take deer fawns, and studies indicate that coyote depredate between 9 percent and 50 percent of annual deer births. The statewide survival rate for fawns is between 52 and 73 percent (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 2015b). The portion of Utah fawns lost to coyote depredation is unknown.

Science has been unable to determine whether coyote predation significantly impacts the deer population. This is because of the confounding effect of compensatory versus additive predation. In compensatory predation, the coyotes take deer fawns that would have died from other natural causes. In additive depredation, the coyote takes a fawn that would have survived those other natural causes of mortality.

Utah Division of Wildlife does not regulate the taking of coyotes because they are not classified as a "beneficial" species. In addition, the Utah State Legislature funds the Division's program that pays a 50 USD bounty for taking a coyote, and each year about 7,000 hunters claim the reward. Another 140,000 USD is set aside for contract hunters who take another 260 coyotes at an average cost of about 600 USD each. A Wildlife Division map indicates that three or four coyotes have been taken in City Creek Canyon between 2007 and 2014.

The program is designed to make more deer available for the annual deer

hunt, but the scientific basis for this practice is open to question. It is common sense that coyotes take immature deer, but even though Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Colorado all fund similar coyote removal programs, the national decline of deer population continues in both states that have and do not have removal programs. This suggests that the decline of the mule deer population is related to loss of habitat or climate change and not to the coyotes. Mathematical biology for managing wildlife populations is a complex topic, and due to the uncertainty in measuring populations, it is an inexact science.

The role of natural predators is also a matter of perspective. By 1900, unrestricted hunting had reduced pre-colonial deer populations in the United States from about 40 million down to about 5 million individuals. Through management by 2000, the national deer population was restored to its pre-colonial level. Since then national deer populations have been on a steady but slow decline. In Utah, the mule deer population peaked in 1992 at about 350,000 individuals, and since the severe winter of 1993, in which a large portion of Utah's herd perished, the population has fluctuated between about 275,000 and 325,000 individuals.

Annual human predation of mule deer is also substantial. There are about 10,000 deer, mostly young does, killed annually in Utah by cars (Olson, Bissonette and Cramer et al. 2014, Utah Division of Wildlife 2015b, 4-5). About 21,000 bucks are harvested during the annual deer hunt (Utah Division of Wildlife 2015b). Human predation accounts for about 31,000 deer, or about ten percent of the herd. In addition to this direct human predation, the Utah Division of Wildlife has identified habitat reduction from the invasive and less nutritious Cheat grass ([July 7th](#)), another legacy of ranching era abuses, as a major cause of the deer's population decline.

Coyotes do eat fawns, but there may be other social benefits to coyotes consuming deer. In July 2016, Gilbert at the University of Washington and her colleagues suggest that the predators of deer create a benefit to human society by reducing deer populations and thus decreasing automobile-deer collisions. In the 1990s, the South Dakota undertook the opposite experiment from Utah's: they re-introduced cougars that had been expatriated from the state, and by 2010, the cougar's numbers had increased to the point that they

were reestablished. According to Gilbert et al., between 2010 and 2014, there was an associated drop in automobile-deer collisions of about 9 percent. Numerically, the number of avoided collisions was small, about 158 annually, but the avoided damages in the form of property loss and medical costs was about 1.1 million USD per year.

In the calculus of net benefit, the life-of-quality benefits of hunting more deer are often computed, but the costs of having more deer are not. We should view fawn-eating coyotes as a friends and not as foes. In 2005, the Utah Department of Transportation examined the cost-benefits of abating deer-human vehicle collisions, but did not weigh the benefits of Utah's coyotes and mountain lions in reducing the costs of wildlife-automobile collisions (Utah Department of Transportation 2005).

My own uninformed impression is that the primary predator of Utah mule deer is the SUV, and that this mangy, malnourished coyote in City Creek Canyon is being given more credit by hunters and state legislators than is warranted.

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On September 7th, 1933, a 105 acre brush fire in City Creek Canyon is contained (Salt Lake Tribune). On September 7th, 1916, Fort Douglas soldiers sparked and fought a brush fire that burned two miles of City Creek Canyon (Salt Lake Telegram). The soldiers started the fire when discharging blank rifle cartridges during exercises (*id*).

On September 7th, 1905, Avenues resident A. J. Johnson of 324 I Street was caught in a flash flood in City Creek Canyon (Salt Lake Herald, Salt Lake Tribune). Johnson was caught in a six foot wall of mud and water about one-half mile up lower City Creek Canyon (Salt Lake Herald). In the Avenues at S Street, water flooded through the cemetery and deposited mud below 11th Avenue one foot deep (*id*). On September 7th, 1905, real estate developer F. J. Senior claims that he owns 640 acres of land in the Pleasant Valley area, and he plans to build a resort hotel in the canyon (Salt Lake Tribune) (*see* August 29-30th, 1915 re: city's condemnation of the land). On September 7th, 1901, the Red Bird Mine in City Creek reports delivering lead ore (Salt Lake Tribune).

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