INSIDE

• Tracy Aviary in all Seasons

• Phase IIa of the Jordan River Nature Center Begins
Message from the Nest

My first concept of fluency centered on the ability to speak and understand languages with proficiency. Years later, my understanding of fluency expanded when I had the pleasure of watching a top athlete excel in their sport. I then realized that fluency goes way beyond language; it also applies to sport, bird songs, or any subject for that matter.

It could be said that Tracy Aviary’s work is to help people become fluent in nature. We attempt to accomplish this through our bird collection, exhibits, education, conservation programs, and the botanical oasis we steward. In this issue of the Bird’s Eye View, we share a glimpse of how our education programs help people explore nature during colder weather. We also describe the next phase of the Jordan River Nature Center. This includes converting several weedy acres into habitat for birds and insects, creating beautiful paths for people of all ages to enjoy, building a wildlife viewing blind and topping it all off with The ALSAM Foundation Observation Tower.

The key to fluency is exposure and a desire to learn. Tracy Aviary strives to broaden people’s fluency in nature, birds and conservation in all seasons.

Nature Year Round

“WHEN DO YOU CLOSE FOR THE WINTER?” We get this question a lot as soon as the leaves change color and the weather begins to chill. The answer, “We don’t!” is always met with pleasant surprise. Cooler weather brings unique ways to connect with nature at Tracy Aviary and Botanical Garden and our Jordan River Nature Center. The natural world is still very much alive even in the coldest weather, and it has a lot to teach us in every season.

The fact that so many of Tracy Aviary’s birds are still out and active in cold weather is a learning experience in itself. It illustrates how species that migrate do so, not because of the cold itself, but relocate in an effort to seek better food sources. With our dedicated Bird Care staff providing everything they need, our birds have no need to migrate and are often found outside in freezing temperatures, despite having heated spaces to access if they choose. And of course, some species stay in cold habitats in the wild. One look at our New Zealand kea romping around in snow and it’s obvious that these alpine parrots are made for it.

Our education programs don’t stop in the winter either. In our year-round programs like Family Nature Club and Let’s Go Birding Together, participants are given the time and space to make observations of the changing seasons, a grounding experience that one just can’t get indoors. Throughout fall and winter our Conservation staff continues to survey the variety of birds that are here in the nonbreeding season and study the distribution of black rosy-finches. Both survey projects offer opportunities for the public to get involved. Evening owl surveys start in February and are a great outing for families.

You may be surprised to learn that Tracy Aviary also participates in the longest running community science project in the world - the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which began in 1900! Conservation staff lead a group of volunteers up City Creek Canyon, while Education staff host a CBC for Beginners. The CBC for Beginners is a great entry point for those who are curious about birdwatching and are looking for a short, guided experience. This year’s count is set for December 18th.

Even as the days grow shorter, the trees lose their leaves, and animals seem to go quiet, there is life teeming under the surface, and you can find it at Tracy Aviary!
Inspire curiosity and caring for birds and nature through education and conservation.

Jordan River Nature Center
Phase IIa Poised to Begin

In late summer, Tracy Aviary signed a lease with Salt Lake County to officially move forward with the next phase of the Jordan River Nature Center, adding acres to the existing transition campus. This next phase of the project will include acres of landscaped gardens that provide habitat for birds, wildlife, and insects. The expansion will also provide several walking paths for guests, nature play areas, the Emma Eccles Jones Pavilion, and The ALSAM Foundation Observation Tower, which sits atop a Wildlife Viewing Blind.

Beyond creating important habitat and removing invasive weeds, Phase IIa will create numerous spaces for education. The habitat plots will be wonderful locations to study science or get drawn into an art project. The nature play areas will allow youth to expend energy while connecting to nature through climbing, jumping, fort building, and more. The Emma Eccles Jones Pavilion and the Wildlife Viewing Blind will be protected spaces that can accommodate group gatherings. The ALSAM Foundation Observation Tower will provide a unique canopy view of the Jordan River and surrounding riparian habitat as well as beautiful views of Mount Olympus and the Wasatch Range.

Naming rights are still available on key elements of Phase IIa. Contact development@tracyaviary.org, 801-596-8500 x112 for more information on how your contribution can support this enriching community project.

| PHASE IIa NAMING OPPORTUNITIES                  |       |
| Wildlife Viewing Blind                          | $375,000 | available |
| Observation Tower                              | Funded   | The ALSAM Foundation Observation Tower |
| Conservation Base Station                      | $500,000 | available |
| Animal Barn and Yard                           | $630,000 | available |
| Mud Play Zone                                  | $200,000 | available |
| Outdoor Skills Area                            | $200,000 | available |
| Large Pavilion                                 | Funded   | Emma Eccles Jones Pavilion |
| Wildflower Garden                              | $200,000 | available |
| Monarch Butterfly Garden                       | $200,000 | available |

Project rendering of the Emma Eccles Jones Pavilion.

Project rendering of the Wildlife Viewing Blind and The ALSAM Foundation Observation Tower.
Thank you to Donors

March 1 through August 31 2021

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Heritage Society Spotlight Juanita Sonntag

GROWING UP ONLY TWO BLOCKS AWAY from Liberty Park, Juanita Sonntag remembers her childhood spent exploring the park almost every day along with her siblings and neighborhood friends. “My mother would send us kids out the door with a mustard and onion sandwich and we would be gone for most of the day.” She recalls, “Back then the Aviary was very small, only a few enclosures for birds with the girls swimming pool nearby.” Juanita has _not_ been to Tracy Aviary for years but on her recent visit this fall with her grandchildren and great-grandchild, she was truly beautiful!” Over the years, Juanita has witnessed the many changes Tracy Aviary has undergone and is grateful for the happy childhood memories of Liberty Park and the Aviary. “I want Tracy Aviary to continue to bring joy to children of all ages - even 91 year old little girls like me,” she says with a grin. “Knowing that my bequest will help the Aviary continue to be a place that my posterity can enjoy after I am gone, makes me feel like I have left them a true gift.”

Leaves a Legacy Join our Heritage Society

The TRACY AVIARY HERITAGE SOCIETY honors and recognizes the philanthropic leadership and vision of individuals who create a planned giving strategy to benefit the mission of Tracy Aviary, forever. Too often, these gifts are unrecognized because they come at the end of the donor’s life. Our Heritage Society allows us to celebrate and thank donors for their generosity, today! Examples of planned giving strategies include:

- Bequest by Will
- Charitable Gift Annuity
- Charitable Remainder Trust
- Life Insurance
- Retirement Account Assets

If you have already included Tracy Aviary in your planned giving strategy, or would like to discuss your options with our staff, contact: development@tracyaviary.org, 801-596-8500 x112.

If we missed your name on these lists, please contact development@tracyaviary.org and we will include you in the next newsletter.

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Leash your dogs and help birds!

MIGRATORY BIRDS TRAVEL a long way to get to and from their wintering habitats. Off-leash dogs can chase birds, depriving them of valuable foraging and resting time, scaring them away from feeding and potential nesting areas, and causing them to burn needed energy reserves.

You may find it surprising that our furry friends’ output equals more than six million tons of it a year in the United States alone. More than just a curbside mess, feces can carry potential health threats to birds and humans. So along with leashing, picking up after your pets is also extremely helpful for birds. 🗑️