New land management agreement to ease visitor pressure on popular Kanarra Falls hike.

Permit fee required starting May 1, 2018

Kanarraville, UT: In recent years, the scenic Kanarra Falls slot canyon hike located in southwest Utah has gained notoriety as a favorite destination for adventure seekers; however yearly increases in visitation have raised concerns for residents of Kanarraville town.

According to Kanarraville town clerk David Ence, “Water quality for our culinary and irrigation water from the spring and creek is of major concern due to the amount of human waste and debris left along the trail.” Recent surveys indicate visitation to be over 40,000 hikers per year, mostly on holidays and weekends during the summer months. Kanarraville Town Mayor Randy Carter stated, “We have been compelled to look for some solutions that balance the hikers wishes and the wishes of town residents. In an effort to keep everyone as happy as possible we have hopefully created some solutions to fix the issues involved.”

Last spring, Kanarraville turned to Iron County for assistance, “In addition to Kanarraville’s water concerns, the large numbers of people were impacting the fragile slot canyon ecosystem and because of its remoteness, Iron County Search and Rescue has been called out on several instances,” said Iron County Natural Resources Manager Mike Worthen. “However, like Kanarraville, Iron County didn’t have jurisdiction to regulate the number of hikers going into the canyon. The land in which the actual slot canyon and waterfalls are located is managed by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)”.

In an effort to ease visitor pressure and preserve the quality of the hiking experience, the town of Kanarraville, along with Iron County Government and SITLA recently entered into a land management agreement; part of which is to transition the general public to a fee-based permit system to regulate the number of people hiking in Kanarra Falls Canyon.

Beginning May 1, 2018 anyone wishing to hike Kanarra Falls must purchase a hiking permit. Currently, there are no limits on the number of hiking permits available; however daily limits may be considered in the future. Permits can be purchased for $8 per person online at www.kanarrafalls.com. There is a nominal transaction fee and the permit includes parking at both the Town and Sweet Spot parking lots. Hiking permits can also be purchased at the Kanarra Falls trail head, however the transaction will be credit card/debit only. No cash transactions will be allowed and there are no refunds.

There is one group permit available per day for non-profits that allows up to 30 people in the group. The cost is $25 per group. Advance reservation through kanarrafalls.com and proof of non-profit status (IRS tax designation letter or state tax exempt certificate) will be required. The group permit is not available to commercial tours and outfitters. Commercial operations must purchase the $8 per person permit for their guests. “We hope that hikers will be patient with us
as we roll out this new system”, said Mayor Carter. “We know there will be glitches and obstacles that will need to be worked on. We all want to do the right thing for as many people as possible. That takes work from all of us. “

The permit system will also allow officials opportunity to better educate hikers about the slot canyon experience and understand the level of difficulty and caution this trail requires. According to Iron County Sheriff Mark Gower “The hike is mainly through water, so you will get wet and climbing the two waterfalls does require sure-footedness. You hike at your own risk and cell service is limited, so if you are in need of rescue it can take a while before it gets there.” Kanarra Falls is also a slot canyon and there is real danger from flash flooding, it’s highly recommended to check weather conditions prior to your trip with the National Weather Service at 801-524-3057. No pets are allowed along the hike to protect the watershed from contaminants.

With the land agreement, a Kanarraville Falls committee has been formed to assist Kanarraville with management of the hiking area. The committee has already acquired a vault restroom to be installed along the trail, plus they have installed signage to educate hikers and have assembled a group of volunteers to monitor the trail and remove garbage. Proceeds from the permit fees will be used to offset mitigating costs from the trail use, and to maintain and improve town infrastructure; including a planned restroom facility at the Town trailhead parking lot. Royalties paid to SITLA under the land management agreement will be put into the trust fund benefitting Utah schools.

“SITLA appreciates the work and partnership of Iron County, Kanarraville Town and other members of the Kanarraville Falls Committee in completing the management agreement,” said Ron Torgerson, Assistant Deputy Director for SITLA. “SITLA does not have the staff to manage the large amount of foot traffic and trail maintenance that comes with the heavy recreational use at Kanarraville Falls. The Falls are a beautiful and spectacular resource that deserves the kind of management that this agreement will achieve.”

For more information, please contact Kanarraville Town at 435-867-1852 or go to www.kanarrafalls.com

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Kanarraville, Utah is located approximately 10 miles south of Cedar City along Old Highway 91. Approximately 375 people live in Kanarraville. Kanarraville Town Government maintains a municipal water system, community parks, a fire department and a cemetery.

**Maria Twitchell, Executive Director**

Cedar City ● Brian Head Tourism Bureau

Iron County Outdoor Recreation
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