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9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**  
10 **COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY,**  
11 **JANUARY 9, 2024, AT 2:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**  
12 **AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS CWC OFFICES**  
13 **LOCATED AT 41 NORTH RIO GRANDE STREET, SUITE, 102, SALT LAKE CITY UTAH.**

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15 **Committee Members:** Dan Zalles, Co-Chair  
16 Adam Lenkowski  
17 Maura Hahnenberger  
18 John Knoblock  
19 Patrick Shea

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21 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director  
22 Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations

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24 **OPENING**

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26 **1. Co-Chair Dan Zalles will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Environment Systems**  
27 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

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29 Co-Chair Dan Zalles called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council  
30 Environment Systems Committee Meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

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32 **2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the December 12, 2023, Meeting.**

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34 The Environment Systems Committee Meeting Minutes from December 12, 2023, were not voted on.

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36 **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DASHBOARD**

37  
38 **1. Committee Members will Discuss the Environmental Dashboard within the Context of**  
39 **the Environmental Goals of the Mountain Accord and Potential Improvements to the**  
40 **Dashboard.**

41  
42 Co-Chair Zalles hoped everyone present had taken time to look at the Environmental Dashboard.  
43 Ahead of the meeting, he had written out a list of items he felt were missing from the Environmental  
44 Dashboard. John Knoblock had also put together a document outlining how the Mountain Accord  
45 directed the Stakeholders Council to look at certain issues and challenges, such as overuse and risk  
46 factors to the environment. The Environmental Dashboard did not necessarily have information about  
47 those kinds of risk factors, though there was a lot of useful data available. If there was a way to focus  
48 on some of the risk factors, such as degraded roads, that would be beneficial for all users.

1  
2 Co-Chair Zalles believed there were two challenges related to adding risk factors to the  
3 Environmental Dashboard. The first was whether the CWC had access to that data and whether it  
4 was possible to obtain that data. The second challenge was how to present that kind of data on the  
5 Environmental Dashboard. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the Environmental  
6 Dashboard was a project first considered under the Mountain Accord. Previously, a group of experts  
7 that came to be called the Mountain Accord Environmental Dashboard Steering Committee, was  
8 formed. Many of those Steering Committee Members were now members of the Stakeholders  
9 Council, such as Patrick Shea and Kirk Nichols. A lot had changed since that time. What was  
10 originally contemplated for the Environmental Dashboard was a static paper report. Over the years,  
11 the capabilities increased, and it shifted to a dynamic resource that could be accessed online by people  
12 of all education levels.

13  
14 The Environmental Dashboard work included Jim Ehleringer from the University of Utah and his  
15 team, in partnership with many research groups in Utah. A cataloguing was done of all of the data  
16 that was available. That data was then presented to a wide variety of users. Ultimately, the University  
17 of Utah team made decisions about what would be included in the Environmental Dashboard. If there  
18 was a desire to add something to the Environmental Dashboard, she believed the existing team,  
19 including Mr. Ehleringer and Pheobe McNealy, were fully capable of handling those additions. The  
20 Environment Systems Committee could identify the gaps and ask the team which ones would be  
21 easiest to collect data for. She clarified that some of the gaps existed because the data was not easy  
22 to collect. It was always the intention to reconvene the Environmental Dashboard Steering Committee  
23 to determine what would be included in the human element. Currently included in the human element  
24 was the trails data collected through the Visitor Use Study. While that was a good start, it was not  
25 comprehensive, and more could be added in the future to that specific section.

26  
27 Mr. Knoblock referenced the Mountain Accord, which mentioned monitoring the degraded conditions  
28 in the Central Wasatch to ensure that those were addressed. That kind of information would likely  
29 not be continuously monitored, but it could be done quarterly or on a semi-annual basis. Having that  
30 information would make it possible for the CWC to determine the impacts. It could essentially be  
31 used as a management tool to make sure conditions were being monitored appropriately. Mr.  
32 Knoblock thought it would be worth asking the CWC Board what their priorities were with respect  
33 to a management tool. It might also be worthwhile to see what the U.S. Forest Service thought were  
34 the most important indicators of ecologic health. There could be discussions with the Salt Lake City  
35 Watershed Manager as well. It was possible to determine the best measures and obtain that data.

36  
37 Ms. Nielsen reported that all of the groups mentioned by Mr. Knoblock had been involved in the  
38 process from the beginning. She shared the Environmental Dashboard with those present, specifically  
39 the Data Resources subtab. It outlined all of the agencies and organizations that the team at the  
40 University of Utah had partnered with during the process. When talking about data gaps, she  
41 recommended speaking directly to the people who had developed the Environmental Dashboard. The  
42 team understood what was easiest to collect and what would be the highest priority for future  
43 collection. Additionally, it would be possible to find out what the data collection would cost.

44  
45 Co-Chair Zalles wondered what the best strategy was to start that communication process. Ms.  
46 Nielsen reported that there was regular communication with Ms. McNealy because there were  
47 constant updates taking place on the Environmental Dashboard. Since she had an open line of  
48 communication there, it might be best for her to reach out to the team and initiate that conversation.

1  
2 Mr. Shea explained that the difficulty with a database was keeping it current. He thought the soil and  
3 geology information covered the area that Mr. Knoblock had expressed concerns about. The real  
4 question was who would provide current monitoring and prioritization. One potential path forward  
5 was to ask the Brigham Young University or University of Utah geology departments to conduct a  
6 survey. However, he pointed out that it would likely cost money to have a survey like that conducted.  
7

8 Mr. Knoblock shared information about the recent CWC Board Retreat. One priority was the  
9 implementation of Phase I from the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Little Cottonwood  
10 Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). There was a desire to reduce traffic congestion  
11 and roadside parking. Those goals would arguably impact the environment in Little Cottonwood  
12 Canyon. It would be possible to look at the monthly average vehicle counts up the canyon and the  
13 average amount of roadside parking. That was one way to monitor the activity and consider impacts.  
14

15 Mr. Shea suggested speaking to Laura Briefer to see whether a stream survey could be conducted on  
16 an annual basis. The survey could be done from the headwaters down to the Little Cottonwood  
17 treatment plant. Ms. Nielsen reported that the data included on the Environmental Dashboard was  
18 updated whenever there was new data. Co-Chair Zalles believed there was consensus that it made  
19 sense to reach out to those who may be able to fill in some of the existing data gaps to find out whether  
20 that was feasible. Data was a useful way to persuade others to take action. There might be a way to  
21 set up some milestones in data collection or data monitoring. It was now a matter of reaching out to  
22 others to start those discussions. Mr. Knoblock noted that a lot of the data existed in the  
23 Environmental Dashboard already. It might be a matter of shifting the format and presentation so  
24 that was better understood. For example, looking at the last decade of average vehicle counts to  
25 understand trends. Ms. Nielsen noted that the Environmental Dashboard graphs were interactive.  
26

27 Adam Lenkowski asked whether there was a traffic counter for Big Cottonwood Canyon. This was  
28 confirmed. Ms. Nielsen indicated where that data could be found on the Environmental Dashboard.  
29 Co-Chair Zalles acknowledged that there was a lot of solid traffic data, but the human condition data  
30 still had some existing gaps as did the data related to road conditions. Ms. Nielsen confirmed that the  
31 human element was the least built-out element of the Environmental Dashboard. There was the most  
32 opportunity for growth there. Co-Chair Zalles read data suggestions submitted by Mr. Knoblock:  
33

- 34 • Number of un-reclaimed mine sites;
- 35 • Percent of hardened land surface;
- 36 • Stream e-coli average concentration;
- 37 • Number of road-killed megafauna;
- 38 • Acres of invasive weeds;
- 39 • Wildfire risk (acreage).

40  
41 According to Mr. Knoblock, there were six sets of data that did not currently exist on the  
42 Environmental Dashboard that could be added. Mr. Knoblock explained that there could be a  
43 summary report or summary page that could be established as a more useful management tool. Mr.  
44 Lenkowski believed a presentation needed to be put together that included a summary of the changes  
45 that the Environment Systems Committee wanted to see. That could be presented to the Stakeholders  
46 Council for consideration and then could potentially move forward to the CWC Board for  
47 consideration. Ms. Nielsen confirmed that the Environment Systems Committee could create a list  
48 of data gaps. That list could be sent to Ms. McNealy to see what her initial thoughts were about those.

1 She was willing to bet there was a reason for some of the data gaps that currently existed. A list could  
2 be submitted to the development team to determine what was or was not feasible. From there, the  
3 next steps could be taken with a presentation to the Stakeholders Council and then the CWC Board.  
4

5 Mr. Knoblock suggested speaking to Ms. Briefer, Patrick Nelson, and the Forest Service to determine  
6 what they wanted to see included on the Environmental Dashboard. It did not make sense to spend  
7 time and money on something if it would not be beneficial to the people who utilized the tool. If  
8 others saw value in addressing certain data gaps, it might be worthwhile to pursue that data collection.  
9 Discussions were had about who used the Environmental Dashboard and the importance of public  
10 education. Ms. Nielsen reported that the newly founded CWC Youth Council had self-selected into  
11 an Environmental Dashboard Education Committee. That subcommittee of the CWC Youth Council  
12 had not met yet, but if there was work done in the Environment Systems Committee on the  
13 Environmental Dashboard, that could tie into the subcommittee of the CWC Youth Council. The  
14 focus of that subcommittee was to develop a standard curriculum around the Environmental  
15 Dashboard that could be introduced to outdoor education classrooms and grade school classrooms.  
16

17 Mr. Lenkowski shared some suggestions to improve the Environmental Dashboard, which included  
18 making the graphs larger and adding hyperlinks with additional information. Ms. Nielsen thought  
19 one of the first projects the Environment Systems Committee could tackle was to create a list of  
20 suggested additions to the Environmental Dashboard to identify the data gaps. From there, it would  
21 be possible to determine which data gaps were the easiest to fill and could be pursued. The memo  
22 that was written by the Committee could be sent to the development team directly. If the Committee  
23 ultimately determined that there was a desire to address a specific data gap, that would be the point  
24 that the suggestion would move forward to the Stakeholders Council and then the CWC Board.  
25

26 Co-Chair Zalles thought it was a good idea to forward a memo to the development team. However,  
27 after that point, he thought it made sense to share that with the Stakeholders Council to let them know  
28 what was happening at a Committee level. It would also be possible to ask Council Members for  
29 additional input and suggestions. There could then be another memo submitted for additional  
30 feedback. Ms. Nielsen thought this was a worthwhile project for the Environment Systems  
31 Committee to take on. She reiterated that there was potential to reconvene the Environmental  
32 Dashboard Steering Committee for a human element workshop if that was something there was  
33 support for in the future. The human element was the least robust of all the elements currently  
34 included in the Environmental Dashboard. There was an opportunity to make additions there.  
35

36 Mr. Knoblock stressed the importance of the Environmental Dashboard being used as a management  
37 tool for the CWC Board. The data shared there could impact the decisions made at a Board level. He  
38 thought it was necessary to reach out to other entities to determine their data priorities. Co-Chair  
39 Zalles believed a rough plan of action had been determined. He offered to put together a draft of the  
40 memo that included the previous suggestions from Mr. Knoblock as well as the data gaps he had  
41 noticed. Any suggestions from Committee Members could be emailed to him following the meeting.  
42

43 Ms. Nielsen thought the creation of the memo should be collaborative with suggestions from all. She  
44 noted that Committee Members could further review the Environmental Dashboard to look for gaps.  
45 If all of the prep work was done ahead of the next Environment Systems Committee Meeting, then  
46 the memo itself could be drafted at the next meeting. There was support for that approach. The  
47 review document previously drafted by Co-Chair Zalles would be put into a Google document.  
48

1 **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF VISITOR USE STUDY**

2  
3 1. **Committee Members will Discuss the Visitor Use Study and Possible Supplements to the**  
4 **Study.**

5  
6 Co-Chair Zalles explained that the next item on the agenda related to the Visitor Use Study and  
7 whether possible supplements were needed. There had been some previous discussions about  
8 potential inaccuracies or limitations with the data. Mr. Knoblock thought the Visitor Use Study would  
9 provide a summary of all of the visitor use in the Central Wasatch, but it turned out to be a lot of  
10 detailed data about trail use. There was some data about ski resort use included, however, the numbers  
11 seemed off. It was important to make sure that all of the numbers included in the study were accurate.  
12

13 Ms. Nielsen reported that the resorts were classed through the data collection protocol as proxy sites.  
14 The project team received an updated data set specific to use in those proxy sites. The team was  
15 updating those numbers, so an updated Visitor Use Study would be released with those updated proxy  
16 site numbers. Beyond that, there was no additional work being done on the Visitor Use Study.  
17 Theoretically, there could be additional phases to the Visitor Use Study as time passes.  
18

19 It was noted that there was still time left in the meeting. Co-Chair Zalles wondered whether there  
20 were any other issues that Committee Members wanted to discuss. For instance, there had been  
21 previous discussions about purchasing private lands and the Federal Designation. Ms. Nielsen  
22 reported that the second part of the CWC Board Retreat took place yesterday. The first part was held  
23 in December 2023. The CWC Board did goal-setting and prioritization exercises during the second  
24 part of the retreat to create a 2024 Strategic Plan. The bulk of the discussion centered around  
25 transportation and transit issues in the study area, which would be in service of moving the Central  
26 Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (“CWNCRA”) forward. Many of the issues in  
27 the study area were interconnected. As a result, when there were discussions about environmental  
28 protection, those discussions also included transportation, recreation, and the economy. That was the  
29 approach of the CWC Board and that approach was reaffirmed during the CWC Board Retreat. There  
30 was a desire to primarily focus on transportation in 2024, in service of furthering the CWNCRA.  
31

32 Co-Chair Zalles asked for additional details about how transportation fed into the CWNCRA work.  
33 He wanted to understand the mindset of the CWC Board. Ms. Nielsen explained that the Federal  
34 Delegation and State Delegation had explicitly stated that support for something like the CWNCRA  
35 was dependent on figuring out the transportation issues in the area. Without addressing the existing  
36 transportation issues in the canyons, it was unlikely that the CWNCRA would move ahead. During  
37 the last Stakeholders Council Meeting, there was a presentation on the history of the CWNCRA. The  
38 bill itself would remove the 4(f) requirements, which was an incentive to have parallel efforts between  
39 transportation and legislation. 4(f) requirements related to environmental protections. Removing  
40 those requirements through the bill would essentially remove an additional layer of bureaucracy,  
41 which was important, as it would help facilitate transportation and transit improvements in the area.  
42

43 The Phase I work, which was related to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Record of Decision  
44 (“ROD”), was the focus of the CWC Board currently. There was a desire to make sure the Phase I  
45 efforts were effective, but there was also a desire to define how to measure effectiveness and success.  
46 Ms. Nielsen encouraged Committee Members to listen to the CWC Board Retreat audio at some point.  
47 It was available on the Utah Public Notice website. Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack,

1 reported that she had previously sent an email to the Stakeholders Council with instructions about  
2 how to sign up for automatic alerts whenever something regarding the CWC was posted on the site.  
3

4 Co-Chair Zalles wondered whether the CWC Board mentioned Big Cottonwood Canyon or Millcreek  
5 Canyon. He knew that Little Cottonwood Canyon had been a significant focus recently. Ms. Nielsen  
6 clarified that there had not been specific discussions about those canyons. That being said, large-  
7 scale transportation solutions would impact all of the canyons. She noted that a Special Transit  
8 District had been discussed by the Transportation Systems Committee. Something like that would  
9 essentially serve all of the canyons. While that would be a significant endeavor, it was an idea that  
10 was currently being discussed by that Committee. While the other canyons were not specifically  
11 discussed during the CWC Board Retreat, any transportation work would impact those canyons.  
12

13 Co-Chair Zalles discussed private land acquisition. There had been some discussions about  
14 contacting organizations that did that work to brainstorm with them. It might be possible for the  
15 Environment Systems Committee to bring certain matters to the attention of the CWC Board. He  
16 believed there was a suggestion made about a catalog to determine what parcels were for sale. Mr.  
17 Knoblock reported that during the CWC Board Retreat, he shared a suggestion about inventorying all  
18 of the private parcels in the canyons. It did not receive a lot of votes, because that was a challenging  
19 task, but it was an issue that he had raised at a CWC Board level. Inventorying every parcel would  
20 be difficult, but there were resources out there that could be utilized. It would also be possible to  
21 make a list of the priority parcels and that list could be added to over time. There were likely half a  
22 dozen or more priority parcels that were out there that should be monitored on some level in the  
23 future.  
24

25 Mr. Knoblock referenced a parcel on the southwest corner of Silver Lake that was previously for sale.  
26 He did not like that it had been purchased by a private landowner who could build a house there.  
27 Someone should have been prepared for that kind of scenario and worked to protect the land. As for  
28 the 18-acre parcel at the base of Millcreek Canyon, there had been enough discussions about it that it  
29 appeared protective measures were moving forward. However, the only reason those protective  
30 measures were being prioritized was because of the robust discussions there had been. Having a list  
31 of priority parcels would make those kinds of discussions easier and could simplify the process.  
32

33 Ms. Nielsen confirmed that the CWC Board had considered the suggestion Mr. Knoblock made  
34 during the CWC Board Retreat. There was not a lot of enthusiasm about allocating CWC Staff time  
35 to compiling a catalog of available parcels, but she thought it was important and could be addressed  
36 at a subcommittee level. Even if the CWC Board did not want to prioritize that themselves, it was  
37 still possible for the Environment Systems Committee to prioritize that. She suggested that Co-Chair  
38 Zalles attend one of the future Millcreek Canyon Committee meetings. It would be possible to  
39 combine efforts between the Environment Systems Committee and Millcreek Canyon Committee on  
40 that work. There was a Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting scheduled for next week. Ms. Kilpack  
41 showed Committee Members how to find meeting information on the Utah Public Notice website and  
42 the CWC website. She also showed the Committee how to sign up for the email alerts.  
43

44 Co-Chair Zalles wondered whether there were other topics Committee Members wanted to discuss at  
45 future meetings. Mr. Knoblock thought the Environment Systems Committee might want to pay  
46 attention to the type of bug that was killing the fir trees. It would be worthwhile to be educated about  
47 those kinds of issues as they directly impact the environment in the Central Wasatch. Another matter  
48 to pay attention to was the fire risk reduction work that was taking place within the study area.

1  
2 Co-Chair Zalles reported that the Forest Service was planning on introducing an amendment to their  
3 forest policy document to specifically protect old growth and to set in motion a series of steps that  
4 would nurture mature trees. That followed an Executive Order from the President last year. He  
5 explained that an amendment would be put together, which would include a set of standards that all  
6 of the Forest Service wildfire projects would be beholden to. That could potentially impact how the  
7 work was done in the future. He did not believe there would be a significant impact in the Central  
8 Wasatch, but the amendment would likely impact other areas more heavily based on the practices  
9 there. Co-Chair Zalles believed the trimming being done in the Wasatch was likely well-intentioned  
10 and thought through carefully. He was not concerned about the amendments proposed.

11  
12 Mr. Knoblock pointed out that the Unita-Wasatch-Cache National Forest website had a project page.  
13 It was possible to look at different projects by Ranger District. He noted that the Committee could  
14 review the project list occasionally and determine whether something was appropriate for the  
15 Environment Systems Committee to weigh in on. Co-Chair Zalles liked that suggestion and thought  
16 it was something that the Committee could do in the future. Additional discussions were had about  
17 Forest Service wildfire mitigation. Mr. Knoblock noted that there were a lot of different projects that  
18 ended up on the Forest Service project page. There were usually half a dozen or so projects that  
19 related to the Central Wasatch listed. He offered to share the link to the website in the Zoom chat  
20 box.

21  
22 Co-Chair Zalles reminded Committee Members to look at the Environmental Dashboard before the  
23 next Environment Systems Committee and contribute to the Google document. During the next  
24 meeting, a memo will be drafted to address the existing data gaps. Ms. Nielsen added that it was  
25 possible that the Environmental Dashboard Steering Committee would reconvene in the future for a  
26 human element workshop. Additionally, there could be a collaboration between the Environment  
27 Systems Committee and the Millcreek Canyon Committee to work on a catalog of available parcels.

## 28 29 **CLOSING**

### 30 31 **1. Co-Chair Zalles will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Environment Systems Committee** 32 **Meeting.**

33  
34 **MOTION:** Adam Lenkowski moved to ADJOURN the Environment Systems Committee Meeting.  
35 John Knoblock seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the  
36 Committee.

37  
38 The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*  
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Environment Systems Committee Meeting held on*  
3 *Tuesday, January 9, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_