MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL RECREATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024, AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY UTAH.

Committee Members:	Sarah Bennett, Chair Barbara Cameron, Co-Chair John Knoblock Tom Diegel Patrick Morrison Caitlin Curry
Staff:	Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
Others:	Emily Salle, Cottonwood Canyons Foundation

OPENING

1. Chair Sarah Bennett will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Recreation System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.

Chair Sarah Bennett called the Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC") Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed those present. She reported that a guest is attending the meeting to discuss the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation.

2. Review and Approval of the October 3, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Patrick Morrison moved to APPROVE the October 3, 2024, Meeting Minutes. Barbara Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

COTTONWOOD CANYONS FOUNDATION TRAILS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

1. Emily Salle will Discuss the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation's 2024 Trails Stewardship Program.

Emily Salle introduced herself to the Recreation System Committee and explained that she was present to discuss the 2024 Trails Stewardship Program from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation.

She is the Trail Stewardship Director for the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, which means that she manages a 10-person seasonal crew. The crew works in the canyons from May through October and oversees 150 miles of trail maintenance and trail work alongside the Salt Lake Ranger District and other local partners. Ms. Salle shared the 2024 Season Report with the Committee.

The report includes information about what the trail crew did from May through October. Ms. Salle noted that there is a side-by-side comparison between last year and this year. The number of volunteer hours was boosted in 2024 as well as the number of individuals involved. The hope is to continue to grow that number next season. A lot of the increase was due to collaboration with the Wasatch Trail Run Series and the Wasatch 100. Both have an eight-hour volunteer requirement for their members. There was a partnership between the organizations to ensure there was a straightforward process. In 2024, a lot more ground was covered in terms of the trails. Ms. Salle reported that the number of trails scouted was almost doubled. A lot of time and energy was spent working with the U.S. Forest Service to invest in the S-212 training. This year, the number of trees that were logged out increased due to the number of certifications. Problems were able to be addressed directly.

A lot of volunteer time was spent on brushback and corridor improvement. Ms. Salle reported that 5.6 miles of corridor was done by hand, which is significant. There was also a partnership with the Plant Stewardship crew to focus on naturalization using native seed revegetation. One of the main locations for that was at Silver Lake. She noted that a lot of time was spent on rock work this year as well, some of which was done in association with the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. There was also a collaborative process with Salt Lake County through the Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention ("TRCC") program. Tom Diegel asked about the Wasatch 100 requirements. He believed that collaboration has been in place for a long time. Ms. Salle confirmed this but explained that over the years, the relationship with them has been formalized. The collaboration has become easier each year and momentum continues to build over time. Work is done directly with them to set up dates and times that are the most convenient for their schedule, deadlines, and requirements.

Mr. Diegel asked for additional information about the log-out process mentioned. Ms. Salle reported that log out is the first spring maintenance activity, where someone goes onto a trail to see what has fallen. For example, fallen trees or debris from the winter season that is now blocking the trail. Logout typically happens in the spring because there are more fallen trees during the winter months. However, this could also be caused by certain events, such as an avalanche or mudslide. It is an important activity in general but is tackled first in the spring. In wilderness areas, it has to be done with a crosscut, because a chainsaw cannot be run in a wilderness area. On some of the other trails, the work is mostly done with a chainsaw. The volunteers are not able to participate in those more technical saw activities, such as crosscut or chainsaw, but there is a 10-member crew and those members are professionally trained. Those with certifications can participate in the saw activities.

Patrick Morrison thanked Ms. Salle and the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation for the work that is done. The program continues to improve. He asked if there is a surplus of volunteers. He wants to know if there are instances where volunteers are being turned away, as it might be possible to have a volunteer sharing program with other entities working in the Central Wasatch. Ms. Salle would not say that there is a surplus of volunteers, but there are numerous volunteers. Some events are designed to be larger and other events have a smaller group of volunteers present. One of her goals is to ensure that all volunteers have a feeling of purpose and experience in community building. Due to the community-building aspect, she would love to see more collaborative volunteer events. The Plant Stewardship crew has done some of this with Trails Utah on days when there are weed pulls. There

has been some outreach to Save Our Canyons about some potential collaboration there as well. While the focus is primarily on professional development rather than volunteer development, the hope is that the work can be done simultaneously. Cottonwood Canyons Foundation would love to be able to share professional training and technical skills with other trail-focused groups in northern Utah so those groups will have the necessary skills to train their volunteers.

Ms. Salle further reviewed the report document. It includes information about the crew and who supports the work of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. The report also has details about the projects that were conducted as well as some background information about maintenance. There was a wonderful crew this year. The Cottonwood Canyons Foundation had 100% retention from 2023 to 2024. That was significant and allowed skills to be further developed. Ms. Salle expressed gratitude for the support the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation receives from the community.

Reservoir Ridge was the first climbing project and East Gate Buttress was the second climbing project. Other notable projects in the tri-canyons were reviewed, which included a brushback project with the Wasatch 100 volunteers. That was an extended project with recurring work on a trail that is used for the race. The Alexander Basin Pipeline reroute is related to the Federal Lands Access Program ("FLAP") grant. The FLAP project will take out a section of the trail when the parking lot is rebuilt, so the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation connected that trail ahead of time and closed the old trail. While the construction is taking place, there will still be continuous access through the area. It was a 540-foot reroute. At Desolation Lake, there was a 1,200-foot reroute to avoid the steep hill section right under the lake. There was braiding, widening, and erosion happening in that area. There was also a project done on the Albion Meadows Trail with Alta. The trail is an old road but it sees an incredible amount of traffic, so it was resurfaced with native fill and drain work was done. Example images of some of the climbing projects were shared as well as additional project details.

Ms. Salle stated that the report will be available on the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation website for additional review. There is a lot of before and after information included. Chair Bennett asked if any of the projects were done outside of the CWC study area. Ms. Salle confirmed that there was one done in Farmington. Those types of projects are considered on a case-by-case basis. Chair Bennett asked what criteria is applied to those types of projects. Ms. Salle reported that the Forest Service trail crew has a large district and they are under increasing pressure each year to get more done with fewer resources. When something fits into the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation's general scope of work and can alleviate pressure from the tri-canyon area, there can be assistance provided. Co-Chair Barbara Cameron heard that in the summer of 2025, the Forest Service will not be able to hire seasonal workers. She wonders how trails will be selected for the work that is done. Ms. Salle reported that there is constant communication with the Forest Service about the needs and available resources.

John Knoblock commented that he will always advocate for a third trail crew. One route could be the expansion of the Adopt-A-Trail program. Another is the Division of Outdoor Recreation. He asked what kind of grant funding is received for different projects. Ms. Salle reported that there is enthusiastic support from the Division of Outdoor Recreation. Last year, there was also some funding received from American Trails. Chair Bennett asked if the grant writing is project-oriented. Ms. Salle explained that it is either project-oriented or deferred maintenance-oriented. There are also grants related to training and equipment. She noted that there is collaboration on the grant writing. Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Salle for sharing information with the Recreation System Committee.

CWC BOARD RETREAT AND DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

1. John Knoblock will Discuss the CWC's Recent Board Retreat and December Meeting with the Committee.

Mr. Knoblock shared information about the CWC Board Retreat and CWC Board Meeting that took place recently. The CWC Board Retreat was held at the River Oaks Golf Course in Sandy City. The retreat focused primarily on the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act ("CWNCRA"). Information about the history of the CWNCRA was shared as well as what needs to be done to move that forward. During the CWC Board Retreat, Salt Lake City stated that the CWNCRA is the main reason for their participation in the CWC. Salt Lake City feels strongly about the land protections in the legislation. With respect to the CWC Board Meeting, the CWNCRA was further discussed and information about the Central Wasatch Symposium was shared. Additionally, there were conversations about transportation and the Big Cottonwood Canyon environmental study. The Millcreek Canyon FLAP grant work was discussed as well as the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS").

Mr. Knoblock noted that the Millcreek Canyon FLAP grant work will take place over the next two years. During the winter months, the canyon will be open for winter use, but during the next two summers, the canyon will be closed above the winter gate. Most of the trails will remain open, so it will be interesting to see how the FLAP grant construction impacts recreation in the canyon.

The CWC Board considered a request to update the study that was conducted in 2012 by Fehr & Peers. Based on the discussions, the CWC Board determined that it will need to wait until the next budget cycle. There is no desire to move the study update forward within the current fiscal year. Spencer Shaver and Amber Broadaway have officially left the Stakeholders Council to be Special Advisors on the CWC Board. The intention is to have representation from each of the systems.

Mr. Diegel shared additional information about the CWC Board Retreat and CWC Board Meeting. The retreat happened in early November and was similar to the Stakeholders Council Meeting which had multiple breakout sessions. There were similar outputs from the different groups as far as the CWNCRA comments. It was nice to see the CWC Board was mostly aligned with the Stakeholders Council. That being said, at the CWC Board Meeting, Park City representative, Bill Ciraco shared comments about the lack of a gondola connecting Park City to Big Cottonwood to Little Cottonwood. Mayor Erin Mendenhall shut down those comments and stated that Salt Lake City would not endorse that connection. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, clarified that Salt Lake City does not have an interest in reinvestigating a transportation mode UDOT has no desire to pursue. That includes the suggestion from the Transportation Committee to look into a Little Cottonwood Canyon train. Mr. Diegel informed the Committee that the Big Cottonwood Canyon plan proposed almost directly reflects what was submitted in the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan ("BCC MAP").

Mr. Knoblock reported that the CWC Board also spoke about the baseline study proposed by the Stakeholders Council. That ties into the Visitor Use Study and the Human Element of the Environmental Dashboard. The CWC Board felt it could be an expensive and complicated undertaking, especially if a consultant is needed for the work. Stakeholders Council leadership has suggested that the Council do whatever is possible at a Council level and work to obtain some baseline information. At the Transportation System Committee Meeting, there was a discussion about what that Committee could do. For example, obtain counts of the number of official parking spots in the

tri-canyons, determine how many informal roadside parking spaces are used, determine some of the vehicle counts in the canyons, and determine the number of UTA bus routes in the canyons.

For the Recreation System Committee, it is possible to look into resort skier numbers, the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance trail counter data, and the data related to pedestrian use in the canyons. The Salt Lake Climbers Alliance might be able to partner and share canyon-specific climber information.

Mr. Knoblock asked if anyone is willing to volunteer to take the lead and coordinate this baseline information work. The first step would be to outline the methodology in more detail. Chair Bennett believes Mr. Knoblock has already presented a methodology, which is to identify the user groups and then identify the organizations that can provide meaningful feedback or data. She offered to reach out to the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance or the shuttle companies. There might be a way to break the outreach out to different members of the Recreation System Committee. Chair Bennett and Mr. Knoblock can start by creating a list of different types of recreational use and potential sources of information. Committee Members can then start to do some of the necessary outreach. Co-Chair Cameron suggested that this process be discussed during the next Stakeholders Council Meeting.

Chair Bennett believed what has been suggested is a good approach. It will make it possible to better understand the different types of use taking place. It can also provide details of the Visitor Use Study and Environmental Dashboard missed. She supported bringing this matter to the full Stakeholders Council for consideration. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that after the existing data is obtained, there can be a conversation about what needs to be done next. He noted that this ties into the Storyboarding Workshop that is contemplated for February 2025. Ms. Nielsen reported that the date has not been finalized, but it will likely take place in mid to late February. In response to Stakeholders Council requests, the Storyboarding Workshop is being planned with the developers of the Environmental Dashboard, which is Phoebe McNeally and her team. The goal is to look through the Environmental Dashboard and share ideas about potential improvements in terms of usability and interface.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the baseline study information is being shared at each of the System Committee Meetings. When the Transportation System Committee met this week, there were discussions about members of that Committee focusing on transportation-related data. The Recreation System Committee is asked to focus on recreation-related data. Though there is potentially a lot of data to collect, it can be broken out into different System Committees to make it more manageable.

Mr. Morrison reported that there will be a Statewide recreation participation trends report conducted. He is not sure how granular that will be, but some of that information could be useful for the baseline study work that has been mentioned. The baseline study work seems ambitious with all volunteers. At some point, there will likely need to be an entity that takes that data and does something with it. Chair Bennett believes the ultimate goal would be for an entity to conduct a study that will make the data collected more meaningful. At this point, it seems there is a desire to carry forward this grassroots methodology where Council Members can start to do some initial research. Whoever is ultimately hired to do the more formal data gathering will have that information available to work from. She would like to reach out to the full Stakeholders Council to see if there are individuals who would be especially interested in seeking out information. There was support for that approach.

BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1. Barbara Cameron will Discuss UDOT's Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment.

Co-Chair Cameron shared information about the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. UDOT is concerned that there has not been a lot of input received so far. There are three ways to submit comments and CWC Staff has been asked to send that information out. It is possible to submit comments on the UDOT website, text or call, or send an email. Co-Chair Cameron reported that UDOT has a desire to hear feedback on tolling, enhanced buses, and mobility hubs.

Co-Chair Cameron expressed concerns about the Cardiff restrooms remaining open and roadside parking. There is no desire to see parking on the S-Curve and instead to open the Mill B parking lot. Support was expressed for the mobility nodes. Big Cottonwood Community Council had strong opinions about tolling and the location, but there was no consensus for the comment submitted. Mr. Knoblock discussed the idea of putting the toll before Solitude Entry 1. That will lead to people driving, parking at Mill D for free, and taking the bus to the ski resort. Additional discussions were had about the proposed tolling location. It could be problematic to fill those lots with resort skiers.

Chair Bennett stressed the importance of purchasing passes for parking and wintertime use in the canyons at the Salt Lake Ranger District office or one of the participating businesses. If the passes are purchased in those locations, the money stays within the district, which is beneficial. Caitlin Curry asked for more information about the businesses that are offering the pass and how those relationships came about. She wondered whether other local businesses could offer this as well. Mr. Knoblock confirmed that it is possible to have more local businesses participate in the future.

Mr. Morrison asked whether UDOT has specifically stated there have not been a lot of comments received on the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. Co-Chair Cameron reported that approximately 900 comments have been received, which she feels is strong. It might be possible that the numbers are being compared to what was submitted as part of the Little Cottonwood Canyon process. Mr. Morrison pointed out that there might be burnout after the Little Cottonwood Canyon process. Some people did not feel heard after that experience, which could impact this comment period. That being said, the Big Cottonwood Canyon work seems to be much less controversial.

Chair Bennett asked about some of the strengths associated with the Big Cottonwood Canyon proposal as well as some of the issues. Co-Chair Cameron believes the strength is that enhanced buses are being considered. However, there does not seem to be an interest in listening to comments about summer use. Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Cameron for sharing comments about this matter.

49-MINUTE HIKE INITIATIVE DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss Promoting Short, "49-Minute Hikes," Potentially Including Creating Pamphlets, Marketing Materials, and a Broader Outreach Plan.

Chair Bennett noted that the 49-Minute Hike initiative has been discussed by the Recreation System Committee in the past. There was some uncertainty about how to disseminate that information. She likes the idea of presenting visitors with different locations that are appropriate for shorter hikes.

Co-Chair Cameron reported that she gave some material to Dennis Goreham to show the Committee at the last meeting. There was no indication in the Meeting Minutes that this was done. Chair Bennett

did not recall him bringing any material forward to the Committee at the last meeting. Co-Chair Cameron stated that she has been impressed with the Cottonwood Heights trails. It seems some communities have trails in place. It would be fairly simple to provide a link to that information. Chair Bennett noted that it might be worthwhile to engage municipalities in Salt Lake County.

Co-Chair Cameron discussed the stewardship outreach of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. There was a meeting with Liz Anderson and Joanna Wheelton on Monday. It was suggested that some of their reports be viewed by Committee Members, as the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation is a wonderful partner. On December 18, 2024, at the Holladay Library is a presentation from Ms. Anderson from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She encouraged interested Committee Members to attend.

Chair Bennett reported that Trails Utah is looking for an artist for the next t-shirt and the subject will be Silver Lake. Anyone with ideas for artists can share those suggestions with Trails Utah.

NEXT MEETING

1. The Committee will Discuss Items for the Next Meeting Agenda.

The next Recreation System Committee Meeting is not scheduled. Chair Bennett likes to be on the even months so it is possible to be fully engaged during the Stakeholders Council Meetings on the odd months. Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, reported that in 2025, the Stakeholders Council Meetings will take place on even months. As a result, the Committee will meet in odd months. The Central Wasatch Symposium is scheduled on the date that the Recreation System Committee Meeting would normally take place. The last week of January will work for the rescheduled meeting. The Recreation System Committee will meet for the next time in March.

2. The Committee will Determine Its Meeting Schedule and Cadence for 2025.

Ms. Kilpack reported that the meeting invite for the next Recreation System Committee Meeting will be sent out to Committee Members shortly as well as the rest of the 2025 meeting invites.

OTHER ITEMS

There were no additional items discussed.

CLOSING

1. Chair Bennett will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Recreation System Committee Meeting.

MOTION: Sarah Bennett moved to ADJOURN the Recreation System Committee Meeting. Barbara Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting held Thursday, December 12, 2024.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____