



9
10 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
11 **COUNCIL MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,**
12 **MARCH 17, 2025, AT 1:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**
13 **AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**
14 **LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET,**
15 **SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

16
17 **Present:** Maura Hahnenberger, Chair
18 Tom Diegel
19 Del Draper
20 Ed Marshall
21

22 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
23 Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
24

25 **Other:** Christine Cline
26

27 **Opening**
28

29 **1. Chair Maura Hahnenberger will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Millcreek**
30 **Canyon Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**
31

32 Chair Maura Hahnenberger called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders
33 Council Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. and welcomed
34 those present. Chair Hahnenberger reported that she has been on the Millcreek Canyon Committee
35 for several years, but has recently been appointed as Chair of the Millcreek Canyon Committee.
36

37 **2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the November 18, 2024, Meeting.**
38

39 The Meeting Minutes from November 18, 2024, were not voted on by the Committee.
40

41 **Millcreek Canyon Impacts of Reduced Federal Staffing And Funding**
42

43 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Impacts of Reduced Federal Staffing and Funding on**
44 **Millcreek Canyon.**
45

46 Chair Hahnenberger reported that the Millcreek Canyon Committee will discuss the impacts of

1 reduced Federal staffing and funding on Millcreek Canyon. This is something that was mentioned
2 during the last Stakeholders Council Meeting. There has also been some outreach to the U.S.
3 Forest Service to ask what is expected. Chair Hahnenberger explained that staffing is uncertain.
4 She asked Committee Members to share any staffing concerns specific to Millcreek Canyon.

5
6 Ed Marshall explained that his concerns relate to fire suppression and fuels reduction. Six days
7 ago, he spoke to Lance Kovel and Adam Shaw with the Forest Service. Mr. Kovel told him that
8 they had lost 48 employees as of that time. Mr. Shaw stated that approximately 10 of those
9 employees were from the Salt Lake Ranger District. The Forest Service was not supposed to lose
10 anyone directly involved in firefighting, because they have primary firefighter certificates.
11 However, the Forest Service was losing support staff for firefighting. That puts additional pressure
12 on those involved in fuels reduction, because those individuals may need to focus on firefighting.
13 It was unclear to Mr. Kovel and Mr. Shaw what impact the staffing changes would ultimately have.

14
15 Later that day, a court that controls Federal employees issued a stay of the termination order for
16 45 days. There is still uncertainty about what will happen after the 45-day period ends and whether
17 the administration will even honor the stay. The day after that, the U.S. District Judge in San
18 Francisco issued an injunction ordering the reinstatement of the workers. There are a lot of
19 unknowns at this point and the Forest Service is trying to figure out how to staff appropriately.

20
21 Del Draper asked about the 10 employees lost in the Salt Lake Ranger District. He wanted to
22 know how many remaining employees there are. Mr. Marshall was not certain. Mr. Draper noted
23 that the vast majority of the money collected at the fee booth in Millcreek Canyon is used for
24 salaries. He asked if that could be used as an argument that certain Forest Service employees
25 should remain in Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Marshall believed it could be, especially since that money
26 was supposed to be used in Millcreek Canyon. The Forest Service is supposed to request it from
27 the County. Once the request is approved, the money is released to them. If the Forest Service
28 does end up short on workers for fuels reduction, it might be wise to let the seasonal people
29 working on trails go instead, so the money can be used on employees who will focus on fuels
30 reduction work.

31
32 Mr. Marshall asked if other Committee Members had information about the Federal Lands Access
33 Program (“FLAP”) grant work. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the funds of
34 the FLAP grant project currently underway and the one planned for do not appear to be in jeopardy.
35 She will ask for more details during the monthly internal staff meeting with the U.S. Forest Service.

36 **Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Grant**

37 **1. The Committee will Discuss Short-Term and Long-Term Actions for Implementation** 38 **of a Millcreek Canyon Shuttle.**

39
40 Chair Hahnenberger noted that the next item on the agenda relates to the Millcreek Canyon shuttle.
41 This is something that the Millcreek Canyon Committee has discussed a lot in the past. She asked
42 if there were any Committee Member updates on recent actions that have been taken. There might
43 also be short-term and long-term action items that the Committee can move forward with.
44
45
46

1 Tom Diegel reported that he met with Mr. Shaw on Thursday. It is a testament to the new
2 leadership at the Salt Lake Ranger District that two members of the Millcreek Canyon Committee
3 have been able to speak with Mr. Shaw in the last week. In addition, Ella Abelli-Amen, who is
4 with the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation and is a member of the Stakeholders Council, has also
5 spoken to Mr. Shaw. It is clear that Mr. Shaw is reaching out to the community, but is also a part
6 of the community. Mr. Diegel shared information about the meeting he had with Mr. Shaw, which
7 included a discussion about the Millcreek Canyon shuttle. The Committee previously shared
8 background information with Mr. Shaw related to the Millcreek Canyon shuttle process so far.

9
10 Mr. Diegel informed Mr. Shaw that there is still a desire to see a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon and
11 there was disappointment that Dave Whittekiend previously stated there was not a lot of interest.
12 Mr. Diegel reminded those present that CWC Staff suggested an update to the Fehr & Peers study
13 from 2012. Fehr & Peers came back with a quote of \$34,000. The CWC stated that they would
14 come up with \$17,000 of that and then left it to CWC Staff to raise the other \$17,000 needed.
15 There was a presentation made to the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”), but the funding
16 period had ended. Mr. Shaw is aware of the challenges in Millcreek Canyon as far as traffic.

17
18 Mr. Diegel pointed out that winter use is just as busy or busier than summer use, especially when
19 parking is limited by snow plows. Mr. Shaw is aware of the issues and has expressed support for
20 a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. There has not been a discussion between Mr. Shaw and
21 Mr. Whittekiend about that past reluctance, but Mr. Shaw has offered to look into this further.
22 Mr. Shaw believes the original idea makes sense, which was to initiate the National Environmental
23 Policy Act (“NEPA”) process before the upper road improvements were completed. The pressure
24 on the lower canyon in the summer when the upper canyon is closed will be intense. Mr. Shaw
25 appreciates the fact that Mr. Draper and John Knoblock have done a lot of work reaching out to
26 the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) and the school to identify land for parking.
27 Given the discussions with Mr. Shaw, it makes sense to ask the CWC to further support this effort.
28 Mr. Diegel plans to attend the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting and share comments.

29
30 Mr. Marshall asked about the status of the Fehr & Peers study update. Ms. Nielsen reported that
31 she met with Helen Peters from Salt Lake County to discuss the Millcreek Canyon shuttle and she
32 expressed interest. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that it is a County road in Millcreek Canyon. CWC
33 Staff previously looked into a grant that was mentioned by Mayor Erin Mendenhall, but the WFRC
34 deadline for application funding had passed shortly before. As a result, a grant through the WFRC
35 is not an option, but the County was amenable to the conversation around the shuttle. At the last
36 CWC Board Meeting, Chair Jeff Silvestrini stated that he was not interested in updating the Fehr
37 & Peers study given the timeline. She followed up with him after that meeting and he stated that
38 he was open to being convinced otherwise. Many of the questions the Forest Service needs
39 answered that the CWC has not been able to answer will be addressed in the updated study.

40
41 The CWC operates on a fiscal year. Ms. Nielsen would like to see if it is possible for the \$34,000
42 plan update to be added to the budget so that work can move forward in July. The update will take
43 between four and six months. After that time, with approval from the Forest Service, it would be
44 possible to move forward with the NEPA analysis. The Forest Service has stated in the past that
45 it is anticipated the NEPA analysis level would be a Categorical Exclusion (“CE”). This is not as
46 involved as an Environmental Assessment (“EA”), as seen in Big Cottonwood Canyon.

1
2 Ms. Nielsen reported that the Forest Service provided an estimate of \$100,000 for a CE. At that
3 point, she would want to bring in some community partners, like the County. She asked Ms. Peters
4 if the shuttle would be allowed to drive on the road during the construction period if this moved
5 ahead. Ms. Peters said no, but there are still ways to determine what is possible. Not having the
6 canyon be accessible by vehicle will impact the other canyons, as there will be a lot of visitation
7 to absorb. Ms. Nielsen reiterated that CWC Staff will speak to the CWC Board about the
8 possibility of fully covering the \$34,000 study update. From there, some community partners can
9 be brought in to assist with the NEPA analysis and construction for the parking and staging.

10
11 Mr. Marshall reported that there are six primary problems with the shuttle, as cited by the Forest
12 Service. This includes a lack of parking in the valley, the start-up costs, the operating costs, the
13 lack of infrastructure, the environmental impact of the shuttle stops, and the reduction in revenues
14 from the fee booth. None of those issues have anything to do with traffic. The original Fehr &
15 Peers study from 2012 looked at traffic and noted that a shuttle is one recommendation. Traffic is
16 not a problem in Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Marshall explained that parking is the real issue. He does
17 not feel an updated traffic study is needed and believes a shuttle study would be more appropriate.
18 The parking continues to be a problem in Millcreek Canyon and the shuttle is a potential solution.
19 It is important to look at the problems that are currently facing a shuttle.

20
21 Ms. Nielsen asked what Mr. Marshall would like a shuttle study to look at. Mr. Marshall stated
22 that he would like the study to look into the six primary problems with the shuttle that have been
23 outlined by the Forest Service. He would ask a consultant to deal with those issues rather than to
24 look at traffic. Ms. Nielsen clarified what the study update is proposed to look like. It would not
25 be a carbon copy of what was done in 2012. The update will address the issues that the Forest
26 Service highlighted, such as parking and the construction and infrastructure needed to stage and
27 store a shuttle. There can also be work done to figure out an operational service plan and the costs.
28 Mr. Marshall pointed out that what has been described is an entirely different study than the 2012
29 version. This kind of feasibility study should be called a Shuttle Feasibility Study. The original
30 Fehr & Peers study did no feasibility work for a shuttle, but looked at traffic and proposed a shuttle
31 as one possible solution. He reiterated that the issues in Millcreek Canyon are not traffic-related.

32
33 Mr. Diegel appreciates the perspective shared by Mr. Marshall. He agrees that parking is the main
34 issue in Millcreek Canyon, but traffic and parking go hand in hand. The original Fehr & Peers
35 study was trying to find a way to accommodate the number of vehicles that are entering the canyon
36 and are wanting to park, without the addition of more parking spaces. He pointed out that the
37 Forest Service does not want to add a lot of additional parking spaces. Additionally, there is not a
38 lot of room to do so, because the canyon is naturally limited. Mr. Diegel clarified that traffic is a
39 catch-all term to describe the issues in the canyon. The intention is to move people into the canyon
40 in a way that reduces the number of personal vehicles. Mr. Marshall supports a voluntary shuttle
41 but feels appropriate terms should be used when discussing the needs in Millcreek Canyon.

42
43 Ms. Nielsen reported that she has had discussions with Jon Nepstad at Fehr & Peers, who was the
44 lead on the 2012 study. During those discussions, she was very clear about what the CWC is
45 interested in seeing as part of the updated study. That has been considered in the cost estimate.
46 She is not interested in spending CWC money on a study that will not provide what is needed.

1
2 Mr. Diegel recalls that the original study included diagrams and designs for how to accommodate
3 a shuttle and parking in the canyon. That is what he believes is needed. Mr. Marshall stressed the
4 importance of focusing on the problems that need to be solved rather than looking at car counts.
5 Chair Hahnenberger asked if there is support the Millcreek Canyon can provide at this time. It
6 was noted that Mr. Diegel plans to share comments during the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee
7 Meeting that will take place later in the afternoon. Ms. Nielsen explained that being an advocate
8 at the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting is meaningful. She suggested that Committee
9 Members let Mr. Diegel know if there are any specific comments they would like communicated.

10 11 **Identification of Private Parcels for Conservation**

12 13 **1. The Committee will Identify Private Land Parcels for Potential Conservation Efforts.**

14
15 Chair Hahnenberger explained that the Millcreek Canyon Committee has discussed private parcels
16 for conservation in the past. This is also something that was mentioned during the recent
17 Stakeholders Council Meeting. She reminded Committee Members that there had been
18 discussions previously about a parcel that was near the fee booth at the mouth of the canyon. That
19 parcel was listed for sale, but she was not able to find clear information about its current status.
20 Chair Hahnenberger also searched other locations in Millcreek Canyon and could not find anything
21 of note currently. There is more opportunity for this kind of work in some of the other canyons.
22 Ms. Nielsen noted that Mr. Knoblock is not present at the current Millcreek Canyon Committee
23 Meeting. This item will likely be added to a future meeting agenda when he is available.

24 25 **Environmental Dashboard Data**

26 27 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Environmental Dashboard and Potential Changes** 28 **and Data Needs for Millcreek Canyon.**

29
30 Chair Hahnenberger reported that she also serves on the Environment System Committee. There
31 has been a lot of discussion about the Environmental Dashboard in that Committee. In looking at
32 the data on the Environmental Dashboard and what datasets are available, it is clear that there is
33 less data available for Millcreek Canyon than there is for the other canyons in the Central Wasatch.
34 While there is some Millcreek Canyon-related data on the Environmental Dashboard, it is more
35 limited. She asked if there are any datasets that Committee Members know about that should be
36 on the Environmental Dashboard. Any concerns about the current data can be shared as well.

37
38 Mr. Draper pointed out that it seems difficult to obtain a count of the number of people paying at
39 the Millcreek Canyon fee booth. That is data that should be collected by the County. When he
40 uses the canyon in the morning, he has noticed that the fee booth is rarely open before 10:00 a.m.
41 It makes sense to ask the County to release annual reports on the number of canyon visitors.
42 Mr. Diegel asked if it was a Forest Service booth or a County booth. Mr. Draper reported that it
43 is a County booth. It would be useful to have data about the number of visitors to Millcreek
44 Canyon. With the fee booth in place, it should be fairly straightforward to determine the vehicle
45 counts.

1 Mr. Diegel reported that the Stakeholders Council is working on baseline study collection. The
2 different System Committees are looking into existing data. Christine Cline stated that she is a
3 Millcreek resident and has lived in Millcreek for approximately 30 years. She is in the canyon a
4 few times a week. When it comes to the Environmental Dashboard, it would be useful to have
5 information about daily patterns of use. A vehicle counter that tracks the number of cars per hour
6 passing the toll booth could be useful. Ms. Nielsen expressed support for adding more Millcreek
7 Canyon-related data to the Environmental Dashboard. The road data there currently comes from
8 UDOT. She asked if there was a volunteer to reach out to the County and Mr. Diegel volunteered.
9

10 Mr. Draper hopes that if personnel is cut back at the Forest Service level, there will not be a
11 reduction in the work that is done with trail counters. Mr. Diegel stated that this is in jeopardy.
12 The person who was working with Chelsea Phillippe was let go. That person was the one working
13 directly with the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance on the tradeoff of the trail counters in the spring
14 and fall. The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance has not spoken to the Forest Service yet about what
15 that means for the future, but he offered to find out. The trail counters will continue to be used by
16 the Forest Service in the summer, even without that employee. The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance
17 is using volunteers from the community to assist with the trail counter information collection.
18

19 Mr. Marshall asked that any information received from the office of Helen Peters related to traffic
20 be checked carefully. The last information he received approximately three years ago did not list
21 either the number of people who paid or who had passes. The count needs to include both.
22

23 **Other Items**

24
25 Chair Hahnenberger thanked the Millcreek Canyon Committee for being committed and engaged.
26 Mr. Diegel appreciated Chair Hahnenberger and her willingness to serve as the new Chair.
27

28 **Public Comment**

29
30 There were no public comments.
31

32 **Closing**

34 **1. Chair Hahnenberger will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Millcreek Canyon** 35 **Committee Meeting.**

36
37 **MOTION:** Ed Marshall moved to ADJOURN. Del Draper seconded the motion. The motion
38 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
39

40 The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:20 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the*
2 *Stakeholders Council Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting held on Monday, March 17, 2025.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____