



**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL RECREATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025, AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES, LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

**Committee Members:** Patrick Morrison, Chair  
Dennis Goreham, Co-Chair  
Barbara Cameron  
Craig Williams  
Sarah Bennett  
Mark Baer

**Staff:** Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations  
Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director

**Other:** Doug Tolman (Stakeholders Council)

**OPENING**

**1. Chair Patrick Morrison will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Recreation System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

Chair Patrick Morrison called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

Chair Morrison reported that at the last Recreation System Committee Meeting, a decision was made to schedule future meetings to be an hour and a half. That does not necessarily mean all meetings will be an hour and a half, but it will be beneficial to have the extra half hour available when needed.

**2. Review and Approval of the August 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes.**

**MOTION:** Mark Baer moved to APPROVE the August 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Dennis Goreham seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

Chair Morrison reviewed some of the items on the Recreation System Committee Meeting agenda and asked different Committee Members to lead each discussion. When it comes to the creation of meeting agendas, it is often the Chair and Co-Chair working with CWC Staff via email. At the end of each meeting, he asked Committee Members to share suggestions for future agenda items.

## **CENTRAL WASATCH SYMPOSIUM DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Committee will Discuss Ideas for the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium, including a Potential Session on the Economic Value of Wilderness.**

Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, shared information about the Central Wasatch Symposium. When it comes to the panel discussions, there has been an organic process so far. CWC Staff brainstorms ideas and then surveys are shared with the Stakeholders Council. For the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium, there have been discussions about a focus on the Mountain Accord. It has been 10 years since the Mountain Accord. She offered to answer questions about the panels.

Co-Chair Dennis Goreham shared a panel suggestion. He noted that there could be a conversation about the economic value of wilderness preservation. Wilderness preservation is an important component of the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”). During the Mountain Accord process, there were agreements and compromises made. Some of that had to do with wilderness. It is possible to start building interest in wilderness and focus on advocacy.

Co-Chair Goreham reported that there are studies related to the economic value of preservation. While there has been a lot written about the economic value of outdoor recreation in general, not as much has been written about wilderness specifically. Barbara Cameron reported that last night, there was a Beaver Symposium organized by the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. The panelists were excellent and could be considered for the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium. There were approximately 40 attendees at the Beaver Symposium, so there is some clear enthusiasm. Ms. Kilpack confirmed that it is possible to explore this as various symposium panel ideas are considered.

Mark Baer suggested that someone well-versed in economic benefits be on a 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium panel, because that is what motivates those in power. It is important to highlight the economic benefits of wilderness. It is also possible to tie in the idea of medical degradation to the population. This can happen when there is not enough open space and greenery for clean air. There needs to be someone who bridges the gap between those with an environmental perspective and those with a financial perspective. Chair Morrison asked Committee Members to consider ideas for panelists. He asked if there might be opportunities for Committee Members to lead in some way. As an example, it could be beneficial for symposium participants to spend time in recreational areas.

Doug Tolman expressed support for the comments that have been made. He likes the idea of bringing in an expert or economist. Someone from Save Our Canyons could speak about wilderness. Information about the People’s Great Salt Lake Summit was shared. Mr. Tolman reported that Professor Brigham Daniels participated in an interesting panel related to the Great Salt Lake economy. He attempted to quantify the non-quantifiable values associated with the lake. He would be an interesting person to reach out to as a potential moderator for the future symposium discussion.

Ms. Kilpack reported that CWC Staff has approached CJ Blye about the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium. She will likely speak about capacity planning, similar to what was shared at the Stakeholders Council Meeting. Ms. Kilpack asked Committee Members to share suggestions for potential panelists who might be able to speak to the economic value of wilderness. Mr. Baer wondered whether someone from Trails Utah should be included on the panel. Sarah Bennett reported that there have been some studies conducted that look at how the proximity to open space can impact

1 real estate values. She offered to look into other studies that might be available. There was discussion  
2 about some of the studies that exist and the data that can be referenced during the symposium.

3  
4 Co-Chair Goreham noted that other factors can be considered. He pointed out that water quality,  
5 wildlife, air quality, and climate change are impacted by wilderness and open space. Chair Morrison  
6 reported that there has been some Legislation passed at the State level looking at Wildlife  
7 Management Areas. There needs to be more education on the purpose of a Wildlife Management  
8 Area. While these are sources for recreation, that is not their main purpose. Chair Morrison reiterated  
9 his request that the Recreation System Committee think about contacts that might be suitable to  
10 approach about participation in a symposium panel. There can be additional discussions in the future.

11  
12 Co-Chair Goreham asked about the results of the Stakeholders Council survey. Ms. Kilpack reported  
13 that the program for the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium is starting to be formed. There is a desire  
14 to pursue the economic value of the wilderness idea. In addition, there could be breakout sessions  
15 with suggested pairings to add more of a learning element. She does not recall the specifics of the  
16 program that Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, has started to put together. The survey results  
17 have been taken into account and have informed some of the thinking as the program continues to be  
18 drafted.

19  
20 Ms. Cameron thought it would make sense to discuss protected and non-protected wildlife at the  
21 symposium. Ms. Kilpack reported that there is at least some kind of wildlife session being considered  
22 at this point. She believes the Sageland Collaborative will be involved in some manner. Ms. Kilpack  
23 will share the ideas proposed by the Committee with Ms. Nielsen after the meeting. During the 2026  
24 Central Wasatch Symposium, there is a desire to discuss historic mining and canyon uses. A breakout  
25 session could focus on the ways the uses have shaped the character of the canyons. Mr. Baer noted  
26 that if there is a panel related to outdoor economic activity, it would make sense to invite a  
27 representative from the hunting community, as that could provide a different perspective.

## 28 29 **ROADLESS RULE DISCUSSION**

### 30 31 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Potential Rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule.**

32  
33 Mr. Tolman shared information about the Roadless Rule and reported that it was enacted back in  
34 2001. He shared an image with the Committee and explained that the brown layers are Inventoried  
35 Roadless Areas. Back in 1964, the Wilderness Act was passed, and one of the directives was for the  
36 U.S. Forest Service to inventory all areas that had wilderness potential. Throughout the 1970s and  
37 1980s, a series of inventories were completed to understand where there were potential wilderness  
38 areas within the Forest Service System Lands. A second major inventory was done in the late 1990s.

39  
40 The areas that were roadless and could become wilderness were starting to be logged and receive  
41 access roads for mining, utilities, and so on. The Clinton Administration enacted the 2001 Roadless  
42 Area Conservation Rule, which essentially stated that in most circumstances, those areas are off limits  
43 to new roads, logging, and mining. Ski resort expansion is relevant to the Wasatch. Mr. Tolman  
44 reiterated that all of the brown areas on the image shown are Inventoried Roadless Areas in the  
45 Wasatch. He pointed out some of the locations relevant to the CWC study area. In the Wasatch,  
46 there are approximately 323,000 acres. There are approximately 4 million acres in the State and  
47 approximately 60 million in the country. However, the Roadless Rule does not include Colorado or  
48 Idaho, as there are state-specific rules in place. As a result, this protects 45 million acres of land.

1  
2 In late June, the Trump Administration and the Secretary of Agriculture announced that they would  
3 be rescinding the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. To comply with the Administrative Procedure  
4 Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) process must be followed. The comment  
5 period for the Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) is open and will remain open for 21 days.  
6 Mr. Tolman explained that there is a desire to submit comments in opposition to the rescission. The  
7 idea is to point out that they are flawed in their reasoning. The reasoning that has been given for the  
8 rescission is that the rule impedes wildfire mitigation. He acknowledged that roads can be used to  
9 create fuel breaks, for evacuation, and for containing a wildfire. However, given that 85% of wildfires  
10 are started by humans and many major studies point to roads leading to increased ignition density, it  
11 is clear that more roads and more logging can lead to more wildfires. The language that Save Our  
12 Canyons has been promoting relates to shared stewardship projects in the Wasatch Mountains. There  
13 are ways to treat these areas without bringing in roads and commercial logging.

14  
15 Mr. Tolman reported that the comment period on the Roadless Rule closes on September 19, 2025.  
16 It is possible for those interested to look at the interactive map on the Save Our Canyons website. He  
17 spoke to the former Executive Director of Save Our Canyons, Carl Fisher. The way he described it  
18 for the Central Wasatch specifically, it will not necessarily result in logging in the area. There are  
19 not a lot of viable logging areas in the Central Wasatch. There are different layers of protection in  
20 place, including watershed protections, FCOZ, and the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The layers  
21 of protection prevent excessive development in the canyons. If one of the layers is removed, then  
22 there is one layer of redundancy gone. Removing this rule will not necessarily result in logging and  
23 ski resorts everywhere, but it would be one piece of meaningful protection that would be lost.

24  
25 Co-Chair Goreham asked what happens after the comment period closes. Mr. Tolman reported that  
26 there will be a six-month waiting period. The EIS will require a second comment period and that will  
27 likely take place in March. It is possible that there will be a Draft EIS that can be commented on at  
28 that time. In this case, there are two alternatives: rescind or do not rescind. The Trump  
29 Administration has expressed a desire to rescind the Roadless Rule. The purpose of submitting  
30 comments at this time is to preserve the right to object and the right to litigate. The National  
31 Resources Defense Council (“NRDC”), Southern Environmental Law Center, and Earthjustice are  
32 already planning to litigate. The more substantive comments there are, the better. In the meantime,  
33 there is an Act in Congress called the Roadless Area Conservation Act. It would codify the rule, but  
34 given the current layout of Congress, he explained that it is unlikely to pass.

35  
36 Chair Morrison asked about the CWC process for submitting comments. Ms. Kilpack reported that  
37 CWC Staff is working on a Resolution opposing the rescission of the Roadless Rule for CWC Board  
38 consideration at the September 25, 2025, CWC Board Meeting. When issues like this arise and there  
39 is a desire to take a position, there is something drafted for the CWC Board to vote on at a meeting.

40  
41 Communications Director, Ben Kilbourne, explained that one of the main concerns relates to the  
42 CWNCRRA. There is a significant wilderness area included as part of that Legislation. If the Roadless  
43 Rule was rescinded and the Parleys Mine goes through the State permitting process and starts to be  
44 built, there could, in theory, be an application for access roads that went into the proposed Mount  
45 Aire wilderness. That could impact the establishment of the wilderness area as part of the CWNCRRA.

46  
47 Chair Morrison asked if there is a vetting system attached to either of the two alternatives, specifically  
48 the rescission. He wanted to know if information has been released that outlines what the process

1 would be to create a road. Mr. Tolman reported that there are 45 million acres currently where a road  
2 cannot be built unless very specific emergency order requirements are met. For example, the Utah  
3 Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) has claimed that it can build a road to access a gondola  
4 tower in a roadless area. Mr. Baer mentioned the earlier comment that Colorado and Idaho have their  
5 own local rules. Mr. Tolman explained that State lawmakers attempted to create a Utah-specific  
6 Roadless Rule in the 2010s, but it would have been significantly weaker. Colorado and Idaho both  
7 prevailed in their efforts. It is unlikely with the political leanings of the State Legislature that anything  
8 like that would happen in the near future. Discussions were had about the different possibilities.

9  
10 Chair Morrison stated that there are a lot of efforts being made already to address fire risks, which  
11 seems to be the main rationale for the rescission. He asked that updates continue to be shared with  
12 the Recreation System Committee and thanked Mr. Tolman for all of the information presented.  
13 Mr. Tolman reported that there are two ways to submit comments. It is possible to sign the Save Our  
14 Canyons comment, which will be submitted as one document on behalf of the signatories. In addition,  
15 it is possible to visit regulations.gov to submit an individual comment related to the proposal.

16  
17 Co-Chair Goreham reported that the inventory was done as part of a requirement in the Wilderness  
18 Act. If the Roadless Rule is rescinded, he wanted to know if that process would start all over again  
19 in order for there to be compliance. Mr. Tolman confirmed that roadless areas had to be inventoried  
20 as part of the Wilderness Act, but did not have to be preserved. Similar to the way the inventory had  
21 to be redone in the 1990s, he expected there would be another inventory in the next 10 or 20 years.

## 22 **RECREATION NODES DISCUSSION**

### 23 **1. The Committee will Continue Discussions from the August 20, 2025, Stakeholders** 24 **Council Meeting about Recreation Nodes.**

25  
26 Co-Chair Goreham noted that most of the Recreation System Committee was able to attend the last  
27 Stakeholders Council Meeting. During that time, there was a conversation about capacity studies.  
28 There was a speaker from the University of Utah who introduced some new ways of looking at  
29 capacity. Something that she spoke about was recreation nodes. The Stakeholders Council broke  
30 into small groups and after those discussions, it was suggested that each of the System Committees  
31 discuss this further. Co-Chair Goreham noted that during the Stakeholders Council discussion, it was  
32 determined that nodes would be both trailheads and destinations, but this can be discussed further.

33  
34  
35 Chair Morrison asked if the intention is to segment geographic areas in the canyons so it is possible  
36 to identify the carrying capacity of each specific area, which was confirmed. Co-Chair Goreham  
37 explained that it is possible to determine how many people can be accommodated through a specific  
38 trailhead. It is also possible to look into the capacity in other specific areas. He pointed out that there  
39 could be hundreds of nodes within the three canyons: Little Cottonwood Canyon, Big Cottonwood  
40 Canyon, and Millcreek Canyon. Co-Chair Goreham wanted to know if the intention is to create a list  
41 of nodes and then share the list with the rest of the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board.

42  
43  
44 Ms. Kilpack asked if the Recreation System Committee has a goal in mind. For example, if there is  
45 a desire to define recreation nodes and then pursue a definition of the capacity for each node.  
46 Alternatively, this could be an exploratory process where there are continued discussions. Co-Chair  
47 Goreham believes it should be exploratory at this time. Based on the presentation at the Stakeholders  
48 Council Meeting, some kind of capacity study could be done, but he does not know who would do it,

1 when it would happen, or what it would cost. The Stakeholders Council and CWC Board can be  
2 asked if there is a willingness to look into a capacity study. Co-Chair Goreham reminded those  
3 present that current capacity and ideal capacity are different from one another.

4  
5 Co-Chair Goreham asked CWC Staff how some of the other System Committees are addressing this  
6 matter. He believes there was interest in having additional discussions. Ms. Kilpack reported that  
7 John Knoblock has been spearheading a baseline data gathering effort to assess current use in the  
8 canyons. Once there is a baseline determined, it will be possible to measure changes in the future.  
9 At this point, none of the System Committee members have established specific goals or projects  
10 related to capacity. In order for there to be a formal capacity study, it would need to be approved by  
11 the CWC Board. Something the Recreation System Committee can do is continue to work on the  
12 baseline data gathering process. It is also possible to bring this matter to the CWC Board in the future  
13 to see if there is a desire to define capacity more clearly. This can be done in collaboration with other  
14 Committees.

15  
16 Co-Chair Goreham thought it made sense for there to be a collaborative effort. It might be best for  
17 the Stakeholders Council to decide the next steps at a future Stakeholders Council Meeting. He does  
18 not want to put in the effort to determine recreation nodes if there is no support to move forward.  
19 Mr. Baer asked about the data that has been collected as part of the baseline process. Ms. Kilpack  
20 reported that the data from Mr. Knoblock is available in the shared Google folder. However, she  
21 clarified that the numbers are not currently sourced in the document, which is something that needs  
22 to be done.

23  
24 Chair Morrison reported that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers states that in recreation management,  
25 the carrying capacity refers to the level of use that a recreation resource can receive without suffering  
26 negative impacts to its environmental elements or the visitor experience. The visitor experience can  
27 still be high when the environmental degradation is high, so that is something to take into account.  
28 Co-Chair Goreham does not see the Recreation System Committee moving forward with the  
29 identification of recreation nodes until there is support from the Stakeholders Council to do so.

## 30 31 **CENTRAL WASATCH TRAILS BROCHURE**

### 32 33 **1. The Committee will Discuss Uses for a Self-Guided Foothill and Urban Hikes Guide,** 34 **Including Potential Integration into the Central Wasatch Dashboard.**

35  
36 Chair Morrison explained that recreation information on the Central Wasatch Dashboard has been  
37 discussed previously. It was not built as a recreation resource, but there are opportunities to link to  
38 other existing resources. Discussions were had about the Central Wasatch Trails Brochure.  
39 Ms. Cameron reported that some links have been added to the references that she used. There are  
40 many organizations that contribute to the Central Wasatch in a positive manner. She asked if this is  
41 something Committee Members feel should be included on the Central Wasatch Dashboard.

42  
43 Co-Chair Goreham pointed out that there are likely other locations on the CWC website where  
44 something like this would also be appropriate. He was pleased to see that the document was  
45 highlighted in the CWC Annual Report. The report shares background information about the process  
46 and states that: "...Barbara Cameron developed a comprehensive guide that includes trail etiquette  
47 and links to approximately 30 hikes with historical significance in the Central Wasatch." Chair  
48 Morrison expressed support for the CWC Annual Report and the guide that was created. He explained

1 that the intention is to connect visitors to history, recreation, and health. There are a lot of  
2 opportunities to share this information. Discussions were had about various historic hiking areas.

3  
4 Co-Chair Goreham reported that the Wasatch Mountain Club recently had a guided tour by the Salt  
5 Lake Climbers Alliance of the historic trail at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon. There was  
6 information shared about the history of climbing in that area. That area could be added to the  
7 document. He believes it is appropriate to share this list with the Stakeholders Council for feedback.  
8 Ms. Kilpack reported that it can be added to the CWC website and the Central Wasatch Dashboard.  
9 Ms. Cameron would like feedback from the Stakeholders Council, as there is not much for Alta.

10  
11 Chair Morrison expressed support for the Central Wasatch Dashboard but noted that there is not a lot  
12 related to recreation there. It is not a recreation-centered dashboard, but there are opportunities to  
13 add in some relevant information. He thanked Ms. Cameron for all of her efforts on the document.  
14 Ms. Bennett echoed those comments and expressed appreciation for the work done by Ms. Cameron.  
15 It highlights what the trails in the area can offer visitors, other than being a recreational opportunity.  
16 This is evidence that it is possible to learn about history while recreating on a trail. Ms. Cameron  
17 would love the Stakeholders Council to review this and share additional suggestions. Ms. Kilpack  
18 pointed out that it is possible to solicit feedback via email rather than at a scheduled meeting.

19  
20 It was reported that Salt Lake Climbers Alliance is doing guided hikes on October 11, 18, and 25,  
21 2025. Those hikes are scheduled to take place from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Information is listed  
22 on the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance website for those who are interested in participating. Co-Chair  
23 Goreham thought it made sense to consider the Alpenbock Loop as part of the earlier 2026 Central  
24 Wasatch Symposium discussion. It is dry enough in January that it could be a suitable location.

## 25 26 **COMMITTEE PRIORITIES AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

### 27 28 **1. The Committee will Discuss Priorities, Ideas, and Desired Topics for the Next Meeting** 29 **Agenda and Upcoming Meetings.**

30  
31 Chair Morrison explained that whenever Recreation System Committee agendas are built, there is a  
32 desire to receive feedback from Committee Members. He asked if anyone had agenda item  
33 suggestions. Ms. Bennett asked what the action item is for the economic benefits of wilderness, open  
34 space, and trails. Chair Morrison offered to reach out to some of his connections about this. He asked  
35 Committee Members to consider their connections and who might be appropriate to speak to about  
36 the symposium. It is also possible for Committee Members to share relevant studies or data with the  
37 Recreation System Committee ahead of the next scheduled meeting. Co-Chair Goreham explained  
38 that one of the studies that he found came out of the University of Montana. It is possible to look for  
39 experts more broadly. Ms. Kilpack noted that there are a lot of different options that can be  
40 considered. If there is an expert that Committee Members would recommend, she asked that the  
41 contact information be shared with CWC Staff so Ms. Nielsen can handle the symposium outreach.

42  
43 There was discussion about the work of the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. Ms. Bennett noted that  
44 there is also a group at the University of Utah, Nature and Human Health. That group looks into the  
45 impacts of nature on health and wellness, which is something that should be woven into the economic  
46 discussion. It might be worthwhile to conduct some outreach to that group ahead of the symposium.

1 As for future agenda items, Co-Chair Goreham would like to sit down with the Mountain Accord and  
2 review the goals specifically related to recreation. There might be some that require additional  
3 attention. Other Committee Members expressed support for a focus on the recreation items.

4  
5 Mr. Baer discussed the document created by Ms. Cameron and expressed his appreciation for her  
6 work. Getting that to the CWC Board is important because he would like them to see that there are  
7 tangible results coming out of the Stakeholders Council and subcommittees. Once the CWC Board  
8 is aware of the listed information, it will be possible for them to share it where appropriate.

9  
10 Ms. Kilpack reported that she has been able to review program ideas for the 2026 Central Wasatch  
11 Symposium. Ms. Nielsen will be reaching out to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to find out what  
12 their work entails as far as the economic value of recreation and wilderness. Ms. Kilpack informed  
13 the Committee that the next CWC Board Meeting is scheduled for September 25, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.  
14 She encouraged Committee Members to attend the meeting, as the CWC Annual Report will be  
15 reviewed at that time. The work of Ms. Cameron has been highlighted in that report.

16  
17 Ms. Cameron shared information about the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation's weed mitigation work.  
18 The team is wonderful and hundreds of pounds of weeds were removed recently. In addition, there  
19 was information provided about why certain weeds are invasive and how to control the spread. She  
20 wondered about the economic impacts of organizations like the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation.

## 21 **OTHER ITEMS**

22  
23  
24 Mr. Baer asked when the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium is scheduled. Ms. Kilpack reported that  
25 it is scheduled to take place on January 8 and 9, 2026. There are no times set at this point. Mr. Baer  
26 shared information about Friends of the Great Salt Lake cleanup event that is scheduled this month.  
27 There were discussions about other events that are scheduled to occur in the near future. Ms. Bennett  
28 informed the Recreation System Committee that National Public Lands Day is September 27, 2025.

## 29 **CLOSING**

### 30 31 32 **1. Chair Morrison will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Recreation System Committee** 33 **Meeting.**

34  
35 **MOTION:** Barbara Cameron moved to ADJOURN the Recreation System Committee Meeting.  
36 There was no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

37  
38 The Recreation System Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.



1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*  
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting held on Thursday,*  
3 *September 11, 2025.*  
4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes  
7 T Forbes Group  
8 Minutes Secretary  
9

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