

Central Wasatch License Plate & First Steps

MEMO

To: Central Wasatch Commission Board
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From: Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director
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Subject: Central Wasatch License Plate & First Steps

In exploring long-term funding options for the CWC and, eventually, the CWNCR, staff have developed the idea of creating a Central Wasatch license plate. Our research intern, Emory Schwieger, brought to our attention the Sawtooth National Recreation Area license plate, which brings in \$50,000 annually. The recent success of the Utah Historical Society license plate and the recently released Great Salt Lake license plate suggest that there is an appetite among Utahns for more plate options that reflect their individual interests.

85% of Utahns live within 15 miles of the Wasatch Mountains, with roughly 3 million people living along the Wasatch Front, and about 1.2 million of those residing in the Salt Lake Valley, where the Central Wasatch anchors their eastern horizon. Many of these residents identify with these mountains in some way—whether as a critical water source or as a place to recreate year-round. It is likely that many would be enthusiastic about seeing the Central Wasatch represented on a license plate. Residents along the Wasatch Back, in Utah County, and in Weber County, among others, could also be interested in a Central Wasatch License Plate.

The purchase of each plate would return at least \$25 to the CWC. Additionally, the minimum \$25 annual renewal fee means that if 500 plates were sold, the CWC would receive at least \$12,500 per year. Given the widespread appreciation for these mountains and the desire to identify with them, there is good reason to believe we could exceed the 500-plate threshold. The Youth Council could assist with canvassing efforts to secure the initial sales.

All new special group plate programs will be requested and approved by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) per Utah Code Annotated Utah Code Ann. §41-1a-1602. The new [eligibility criteria](#) no longer requires the plate to be introduced during the legislative session or obtain the governor's signature.

There is a new License Plate Committee. They are hoping to slowly move towards releasing all specialty license plates as full plate designs. It is unclear how quickly that process will happen. They may want to release some colleges as full plate designs before getting around to other specialty plates such as Great Salt Lake plate or this proposed Central Wasatch plate. The uncertain timeline around these full plate releases should keep the CWC cautious to prevent overpromising and underdelivering.

Here are the initial steps the CWC needs to take to create a specialty license plate to fund the continued preservation of the Central Wasatch Mountains.

1. Plate design

- Decide on concepts that should be included, considering what's special about the Central Wasatch Mountains.
- Set up a meeting with the License Plate Committee so they can advise on design before moving forward with next steps.
- Depending on the information obtained at that meeting, staff, the designer of the GSL plate, or the Committee's own designer will create the license plate design.
- Submit the design to the License Plate Committee.
- Get design approval from the Committee.

2. Generate interest and gather applications

- Decide how the license plate contributions will fund the preservation of the Central Wasatch.
- One option is to gather contact information from people interested in the plate, then reach out for applications once the contact list is close to 500 people.
- When moving forward with collecting applications, continue through the steps below.
- Set up a separate bank account, Venmo, and email address specifically for application contributions.
- Create and maintain a website that explains how the CWC will use the required contributions.
- Advertise widely.
- Consider using an intern for data entry.
- Youth Council canvases for applications.
- Expect up to 2 years to obtain 500 applications.
- Obtain at least 500 complete preorder applications for the Central Wasatch License Plate.
- Allocate \$3,900 for set-up fee. This fee is required to cover programming and initial administrative costs in addition to inventory costs. This fee can come out of the initial round of applications.

3. Plate application

- Send application to DMV and pay \$3,900 administrative fee