

# 2026 CWNCR Act Online Petition

## MEMO

To: Executive/Budget/Audit Committee  
Chair: Erin Mendenhall, Co-Chair: Roger Bourke, Treasurer and Secretary: Christopher F. Robinson

CC: Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Public Utilities, Shayne Scott, Summit County Manager

From: Will McKay, Communications Director  
Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director  
Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations

Subject: 2026 CWNCR Act Online Petition

Date: June 11, 2026

From the drafting of the Mountain Accord to the formation of the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC), one goal has remained at the heart of the CWC's mission: **the passage of the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (CWNCR Act)**. This novel federal designation would provide additional watershed and airshed protections, limit economic development, and preserve public lands through new wilderness designations within the Central Wasatch.

Throughout the development of the CWNCR Act, many groups and individuals have played a role in drafting, refining, and advocating for the legislation—from CWC board members and ski resort managers to community stakeholders. While the public has had the ability to comment on previous drafts of the bill, they have yet to have the opportunity to explicitly endorse the bill for the purpose of its passage.

To address this gap, CWC staff is proposing an **online petition campaign to engage the public and build broad support for the CWNCR Act**. Through this campaign, we will collect signatures using an online petition platform. By demonstrating widespread public support, we believe these signatures can help strengthen the case for the CWNCR Act's passage.

The petition campaign will be supported and promoted through **a series of short-form video interviews** featuring notable figures discussing the importance of the CWNCR Act. Participants will include CWC board members, stakeholders, and other prominent members of the community. These short-form videos will serve as the primary form of communication regarding the petition to Utahns in both the Wasatch Front and Back.

**The timing of this proposed campaign warrants further discussions from the board.** On one hand, the current environment for public lands related policy is ripe for public support. Additionally, this project could serve to reengage the public in the work of the CWC before the final push to get this legislation passed. However, initiating this campaign before the final draft of the CWNCR Act has been written runs the risk of losing public trust if the petition does not align precisely with the final draft.



We recommend the details of the campaign as well as the implementation schedule be discussed at the next board retreat or board meeting.