



CENTRAL
WASATCH
COMMISSION



Capacity Committee Meeting

July 7th, 2026, 2:00 – 3:00 pm



John Adams recently reminded me of a quote attributed to
Einstein

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask... for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."

We are in that first 55 minutes.



The New York Times had a great article on overcrowding in Yosemite after suspending a reservation system; it had a pic of people crawling all over themselves at a popular attraction, the mist trail.

Is there a hint here?

In this region we are on a trajectory that takes us there.

- I don't think that even the most libertarian people among us want that result.

Yogi Berra: Nobody goes there anymore; it's too crowded

Attempts in the past to tackle the issue of determining capacity and doing something about it have failed. **Understanding why they failed might be instructive.**

Following the traditional path, e.g., analyzing the capacity of the resource, may not be the most productive route.

- We all know there is a limit, but coming up with a defined number may not be the most useful result.

Is the problem that we can't accurately compute the carrying capacity of this resource?

- I don't think so.
- And if that's the case, spending resources on trying to better sharpen that quantity is not a good use of those resources.

Another Einstein Quote:

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

Reconciling the growing demand for access to wilderness-like areas, driven mostly by population growth and economic interests, with finite or shrinking supply is the fundamental challenge.

How have other societies dealt with this, e.g., UK or Europe?

There may be a point of no return here, where inertia takes us over the cliff—**an uncomfortable thought, but one that needs some consideration.**

Key Statements from June Meeting

Need statements made during the June 8th meeting:

- To understand the patterns and underlying drivers of the issues facing the Central Wasatch Mountains before making "phase shift" decisions.

Purpose statements made during the June 8th meeting:

- Whatever is produced will serve as a tool for the resource authorities and there is value in producing the study even if it is not enforced.
- To aid in the passage of the CWNCRA.
- Assist in analyzing the efficacy of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the LCC EIS.
- To help determine what level of use is consistent with the ideal conditions (watershed, visitor level, and public safety) in the Central Wasatch.
- To provide a sustainable canyon framework study to preserve conditions that promote watershed, recreation, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The study will establish benchmarking indicators that will serve as a basis for evaluating the ideal conditions of the Central Wasatch Mountains.
- This study should support the long-term goals of the CWNCRA and should work in harmony with the long-and medium-term planning efforts for the sustainability and viability of the region.

Key Statements from June Meeting

Important notes from June 8th:

- SLC (water authority), and presumably the other resource authorities do not need this study to assist in their management, as those authorities likely already have management protocol.
- It will be important to not silo elements of the study due to the interconnectedness of the issues.
- If the data already exists, what is there for this committee to do?
- A holistic visitor-use analysis framework would include desired conditions, indicators and thresholds for those conditions, and recommendations on how to manage and monitor for those ideal conditions.

Task 1

Determine the desired outcome of this endeavor. Let's write a statement together.

Outcome Statements from the Poll

- A policy and set of procedures for protecting the area from the degradation described.
- The desired outcome is to have foundational objective information about capacity in order to allocate appropriate resources to the Central Wasatch; make better policy decisions about the future of the Central Wasatch; and prioritize short and long term management strategies.
- To achieve broad participation and buy in of a capacity study and its outcomes from state leaders, resorts, UDOT, WFRC and others.

Task 2

Determine the need of this committee. Let's agree to and write a statement.

Need Statements from the Poll

- The Central Wasatch are in imminent danger of being overrun by humans and thereby losing their attractive and uplifting character. In the absence of visitor limitations this trend will continue or accelerate.
- The need is associated with significant increases in visitation and pressures in the Central Wasatch Mountains.
- If we are to achieve good-functioning transportation solutions in the canyons, we must know the 'carrying capacity' of the canyons, themselves, so as not to overwhelm the ecosystem. Transportation solutions that kill the ecosystem with overuse is no solution at all.

Task 3

Determine the purpose of this committee and a capacity study. Let's agree to and write a statement.

Purpose Statements from the Poll

- To find a mechanism to prevent the condition stated above.
- The purpose is to understand the impacts of increased visitation and pressures.
- I would like the product of the analysis to underpin the yet-to-be determined transportation system/s so they do not inadvertently expedite the demise of our Wasatch ecosystem and natural resources.

Question

Should we continue meeting monthly for one-hour, or increase to 90-minute monthly meetings?