



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING, HELD TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026, AT 3:30 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: Meaghan McKasy, Co-Chair
Dan Zalles
Olivia Juarez
Maura Hahnenberger
Ayja Bounous

Staff: Will McKay, Director of Public Affairs

Others: Sandy Wingert

OPENING

1. Chair Kelly Boardman will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Environment System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.

In the absence of Chair Kelly Boardman, Co-Chair Meaghan McKasy called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Environment System Committee Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the June 9, 2026, Meeting.

Co-Chair McKasy noted that there was a typo in the meeting agenda, as there was not an Environment System Committee Meeting held on July 14, 2026. She clarified that the vote will be on the Meeting Minutes from the June 9, 2026, Environment System Committee Meeting.

MOTION: Maura Hahnenberger moved to APPROVE the June 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes. There was no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

VISITOR BEHAVIOR SURVEY WORKSHOP

1. The Committee will Continue Work on a Visitor Behavior Survey.

Co-Chair McKasy reminded the Committee Members that work has been done on a Visitor Behavior Survey. Several comments were added to the working document since the last Environment System Committee Meeting. She suggested that there be a review of the document.

A question was raised about whether survey respondents will see a dialogue box with additional information and links to specific resources depending on the answers provided. Co-Chair McKasy thought it made sense to show the correct answer. There can be a discussion about whether there should be language such as, “Congratulations, you answered correctly,” or if the dialogue box should simply state the correct answer. There are many possibilities, but it depends on how complex the Environment System Committee would like the layout of the survey to be.

Co-Chair McKasy noted that while there have been references made to a survey, there was a decision made for this to be more trivia-based rather than be a traditional data gathering survey. Dan Zalles noted that this will provide an opportunity for respondents to test their knowledge of the Central Wasatch. As for responses, rather than stating that someone answered a question correctly or incorrectly, the answer could simply be provided with some additional resources.

Co-Chair McKasy added language to the survey document to indicate that there is an interest in sharing the correct information. There could be separate pages for correct and incorrect responses, but the language would be positive on both. Under the seventh question, there was language that mentioned putting up posters as a volunteer activity. She wondered if there should be clarification provided. Other members of the Environment System Committee agreed clarification is needed. Mr. Zalles believed the poster language had to do with announcements about road closures and other necessary communication. It was determined that this language will be removed.

Co-Chair McKasy mentioned a comment left by Doug Tolman on the second question. It stated that this paragraph could be a suitable place to announce the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) enhanced bus service beginning in winter 2028/2029. She asked for Committee Member feedback. There could be a filtered response based on how respondents travel to the Central Wasatch. Mr. Zalles expressed support for educational information about the buses. Olivia Juarez pointed out that there could be a link to the UDOT planning page in this section.

There was also a comment from Mr. Tolman left on the eighth question in the survey document, which had to do with swimming in streams. Co-Chair McKasy previously added information to this section but asked for additional Committee Member feedback. Mr. Zalles believed it is possible to swim in the stream in Millcreek Canyon, but not in Big Cottonwood Canyon or Little Cottonwood Canyon. Co-Chair McKasy thought it was possible to wade in, but that swimming was discouraged. Mr. Zalles believed the rules in Millcreek Canyon are different than in the Cottonwood Canyons, because the Cottonwood Canyons feed the water supply. He does not think that Millcreek Canyon is used the same way as Big Cottonwood Canyon or Little Cottonwood Canyon, which is the reason that dogs are allowed to be in Millcreek Canyon. Additional discussions were had about Millcreek Canyon and whether swimming is allowed in the area.

1 Director of Public Affairs, Will McKay, reported that there is one highly visible tire swing that sits
2 above Millcreek. There is also a commonly used swim spot before the fee booth. Discussions were
3 had about the currently proposed language. It was suggested that the language be rewritten to mention
4 swimming in the Cottonwood Canyons. This would differentiate between what is allowed in the
5 Cottonwood Canyons and what is allowed in Millcreek Canyon. Ms. Juarez stated that there could
6 be clarification provided that two of the canyons are connected to the watershed.

7
8 Mr. Zalles mentioned the survey language about a moose. He pointed out that this is a matter of
9 safety. While no one will get in trouble for running away from a moose, it is not necessarily the best
10 way to handle that kind of scenario. It might make sense to remove the moose language and insert it
11 somewhere else. There could be a question asking about smart behavior around wildlife. Co-Chair
12 McKasy asked if there is a difference between activities and actions. For instance, something like
13 picking wildflowers or slowly backing away from a moose are actions. Mr. Zalles stressed the
14 importance of providing useful information that will increase overall visitor safety.

15
16 Co-Chair McKasy thought it was important to avoid subjectivity. The current question that is being
17 discussed feels different than some of the yes and no questions that are included in the draft survey.
18 Ms. Juarez noted that some of the examples involve legal actions. For instance, fishing, which is
19 legal, and driving off-road vehicles, which is illegal. That could be used as a guide to determine what
20 examples should be included and what ones should be removed. Co-Chair McKasy liked that
21 distinction, as it provides a separation between legal and illegal actions.

22
23 Mr. Zalles asked if there is a survey question about bringing dogs into the canyons. He reminded
24 Committee Members that it is possible to bring dogs into Millcreek Canyon but not into the
25 Cottonwood Canyons. Co-Chair McKasy reported that this is addressed in the fifth survey question.
26 She added that the survey is intended to be short and easy for Central Wasatch visitors to engage in.
27 She pointed out that after the fourth question; there is an opportunity to highlight appropriate
28 responses to some of the more dangerous animals that could be encountered.

29
30 Support was expressed for the submitted suggestion for Question Nine. Co-Chair McKasy explained
31 that the suggestion was to link to an image in the response. Committee Members discussed what to
32 do with the later questions in the survey. There are questions about how far the survey respondent
33 lives from the Central Wasatch and how often the respondent visits the area. Maura Hahnenberger
34 suggested that survey respondents be asked about their concerns and what could be done to preserve
35 and protect the area. There could be some interesting and informative responses. Committee
36 Members preferred this approach. Ms. Hahnenberger stated that Question 12 and Question 13 are
37 unlikely to provide much useful information. However, asking survey respondents about their
38 concerns and their ideas will likely generate more meaningful data.

39
40 Olivia Juarez reported that Question 12 could be: "What is an idea you have for the betterment of the
41 Central Wasatch?" She stated that Question 13 could be: "Do you know about the Mountain Accord?
42 Your idea might align. Here is how you can find out more information about attending future CWC
43 meetings." Co-Chair McKasy thought it made sense to include those questions.

44
45 Co-Chair McKasy reported that she will clean up the survey document. The comments made during
46 the meeting will be incorporated. From there, it will be possible to build out the survey. She
47 encouraged Committee Members to further review the document and share other suggestions.

WATER QUALITY DATA DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss Macroinvertebrate Data as a Water Quality Indicator in the Central Wasatch.

Mr. Zalles explained that there is a desire for the Environment System Committee to discuss whether it would be useful to have more data about water quality in the canyon streams. One way that water quality is measured is through the macroinvertebrate population. He reported that one model used is the Biological Condition Gradient (“BCG”), which is a scientific framework to interpret aquatic ecosystem health. There are six levels, with low numbers indicating the water is largely unimpeded and undisturbed by human factors, with a healthy macroinvertebrate population. The highest level indicates there is severe alteration and degradation. Mr. Zalles shared additional information about macroinvertebrates with the Environment System Committee.

In 2018 and 2019, there was a study that used the BCG model to make judgements about water quality at different locations in the Central Wasatch and other areas. Mr. Zalles explained that there are aggregates in particular areas. This makes it possible to see what the general conditions are in the upper canyons compared to further down. There was a water quality presentation at a previous Environment System Committee. Mr. Zalles stressed the importance of additional data. He asked if this is something other Committee Members are interested in looking into further. It might be possible to request that additional data be collected so the information is more current.

Sandy Wingert stated that she decided to attend the Environment System Committee Meeting after seeing this item on the meeting agenda. She works for the Division of Water Quality and is able to speak to the Committee about water quality data. She can present, summarize information, or assist with the Central Wasatch Dashboard. Mr. Zalles expressed appreciation for her willingness to share information and assist the CWC. He would like to see a presentation scheduled for a future meeting. He asked how frequently data is collected. Ms. Wingert explained that Salt Lake County collects data more frequently, but the Division of Water Quality has a Memorandum of Understanding with them. She shared information about monitoring locations.

Mr. Zalles reported that the Environment System Committee can create a paragraph that outlines what there is a desire to see monitored. Some questions can also be posed. Ms. Wingert confirmed that there can be information shared about the program at the next scheduled meeting. She has also been working on a lot of water quality studies, some of which are specific to E. coli. There is a lot that can be shared with the Committee. After that presentation, the Environment System Committee can provide additional direction about how she can best assist moving forward.

Mr. Zalles offered to brainstorm some questions and then share those with the rest of the Environment System Committee, so additional questions and areas of interest can be determined. He felt it would be beneficial to brainstorm ahead of the scheduled water quality presentation.

Ms. Wingert mentioned metals impairments in the canyons, which are largely due to legacy mining operations. The more development there is, the more opportunity there is for those metals to enter the waterways. It might be worthwhile for the Committee to look at metals in the water. She can provide background information or answer Committee Member questions ahead of the next meeting. It was reiterated that Ms. Wingert will present at the meeting scheduled for September.

1 **MILLCREEK CANYON DISCUSSION**

2
3 1. **The Committee will Share Updates or Raise Topics Related to Millcreek Canyon, as**
4 **Desired.**

5
6 Ms. Juarez reported that someone from Salt Lake County called her recently and they were exploring
7 the idea of a library pass. She believes this was related to Millcreek Canyon access.
8

9 **NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

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11 1. **The Committee will Determine Whether it will Meet Next in September or October.**

12
13 2. **The Committee will Discuss Items for the Next Meeting Agenda.**

14
15 Co-Chair McKasy discussed potential items for the next Environment System Committee Meeting
16 agenda. There can be a continued discussion about the visitor behavior survey. She will reach out to
17 Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack, so the survey can be created in Google Forms. In the meantime,
18 she will work on cleaning up the document. She asked Committee Members to review the document
19 and submit additional suggestions about the response paragraphs. At the next Environment System
20 Committee Meeting, there can also be a presentation from Ms. Wingert.
21

22 Mr. McKay reported that at the next Stakeholders Council Meeting, there will be a discussion about
23 the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act ("CWNCRA"). He anticipates
24 there will be a discussion at the Environment System Committee level as well. Mr. Zalles wanted to
25 know if there is a new version of the CWNCRA that has been drafted, which was denied. Mr. McKay
26 explained that on August 17, 2026, there will be a CWC Board Retreat. During that time, the CWC
27 Board will discuss the next steps and a potential strategy for the CWNCRA. The goal is to have a
28 redrafted piece of legislation at the beginning of 2027. He encouraged interested Committee
29 Members to attend the retreat as members of the public.
30

31 **OTHER ITEMS**

32
33 There were no additional items discussed.
34

35 **CLOSING**

36
37 1. **Chair Boardman will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Environment System Committee**
38 **Meeting.**

39
40 **MOTION:** Olivia Juarez moved to ADJOURN the Environment System Committee Meeting.
41 Maura Hahnenberger seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
42 Committee.
43

44 The Environment System Committee Meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Environment System Committee Meeting held Tuesday,*
3 *August 11, 2026.*
4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary
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10 Minutes Approved: _____