

# Central Wasatch Commission Project Proposal

## Wasatch Graffiti Busters (WGB)—April 2020

- **Background Information:** The WGB started its existence as a nonprofit/tax-exempt organization in September 2019 as five members, four actually removing graffiti and one doing meetings and paperwork. Since then we've lost one active member and gained one and are currently working on expanding membership to include more young people. The reason is threefold: young people will be better able to carry the heavy burden of Elephant Snot<sup>1</sup>, water, portable power washers, etc., up steep slopes and across difficult terrain; they can better reach other young people, through Facebook/other social media, to encourage them to help remove—not create—graffiti; and they will be able to carry this mission forward over time.

We plan to work through the Salt Lake Ranger District (SLRD) (which encouraged our formation), the Friends of the SLRD, CWC, Unified Police Department, and many outdoor organizations (Wasatch Mountain Club, Save Our Canyons, etc.) and retailers (REI and many others) to encourage graffiti reporting, discourage graffiti creation, and aid in catching, prosecuting, and helping taggers perform community service (through graffiti removal). The WGB has at least one member who is quite willing and able to teach convicted taggers how to clean boulders in and out of the watersheds and simultaneously develop both an appreciation and respect for the beauty of our canyons.

Because several members have attended meetings such as the Utah Public Archeology Network, through which we've become known as able graffiti-removers, and because SLRD District Ranger Bekee Hotze has encouraged members to help out in other Ranger Districts (such as Pleasant Grove RD), we expect to continue to teach others around the state how to remove graffiti from boulders, trees, and man-made materials (restrooms, bridges, signage, etc.).

- **WGB 2020 Workplan:** The members recognize that new graffiti vandalism is perpetrated on public lands every year. We have been relatively successful in reducing the amount of old graffiti, but new vandalism is inevitable every year on public lands.

**Project Timeline:** WGB members have already begun the task of finding, photographing/ sharing, and removing graffiti in our local canyons, particularly in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC). Members will continue removing tags, both in our local canyons and elsewhere until weather conditions prohibit such action in the canyons, probably late fall or early winter of 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> One gallon of Elephant Snot, a cleaner that is safe in watersheds, will clean about 10 average-size tags. It weighs 10 lbs.

**Project Area:** Several areas of LCC have old graffiti or have already been vandalized this year, including various rocks in the vicinity of the old pavilion and the White Pine Boulder Field. As the snow melts and weather permits, additional graffiti will be found and removed. Areas of Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC) are also planned for cleaning, including Ferguson Canyon (south of mouth of BCC; steep/difficult access); it's already been cleaned this year, but there's more to do. Moss Ledge (still extensively vandalized); Butler Fork; and Donut Falls are other areas to be worked in BCC. Basically, wherever the vandals go, we will follow!

**WGB Project Lead:** Peter (Pete) Lenz will act as the WGB project lead. As a retiree and frequent hiker, who loves the splendor of our canyons, Pete has a difficult time seeing graffiti on a boulder, bridge, or tree, without wanting to turn around and come back with Elephant Snot to clean it off! He also takes pictures and shares with others, including UPD Canyon Patrol.

**WGB 2020 Budget:** It is difficult to accurately predict how many tags will reappear, the number of new tags, or old tags that haven't previously been reached. We are also hoping to expand our membership, which should result in more tags being found and removed. So, our original estimate of requiring a total of \$6000 for all the tags to be removed by the WGB (not just the Cottonwood Canyons) is likely an underestimate. However, we will assume that the tags in LCC and BCC will require the amount of materials and equipment that we originally estimated in our proposal, and we will work to try to find other sources of donations as they are needed.

### Budget

Supplies	Unit Cost	Amount Req'd	Total Cost
Elephant Snot	\$345 <sup>2</sup> /5 gal.	80 gal. <sup>3</sup>	\$5520
Small Power Washer	\$279 each	1	\$279
Rollers, gloves, trash bags	≈\$100/3 month supply	8 month supply	\$200
Total:			\$6000
Total requested of CWC Project Grant for LCC and BCC		≈30 gal. ES Rollers, etc.	\$2000 <u>\$600</u> \$2600

<sup>2</sup> Best prices quoted currently are \$345/5 gal.

<sup>3</sup> This is based on removing an average of 300 tags during a three-month period, as occurred in 2019. We expect to work for about eight months in 2020.



## Little Cottonwood Canyon Graffiti—April 2020

Mary,

I have been tossing and turning in my sleep all night, after discovering some of these tags (earlier sent) on my bike ride up the LCC trail yesterday late afternoon. These tags are at the easily accessed 'ground zero area' near the old pavilion site.

Sadly, the lovely spring weather has brought the same group of culprits that we had largely cleaned up after last year. We kind of expected this, and will be getting after the removal within the next few days.

This could be a great opportunity to remind our partners and associates who love the canyon as we do that the battle continues. Could you craft a general email to send out today?

Also, a specific email to Sgt. Blanton and the UPD with a plea for help? I think these taggers are just getting started and will be back even within the next several days. I spied a group of suspicious older teenagers down in the stream passing around the bong. Could be the same bunch that did some of the tags, as some of the tags are very familiar like 'dope,' etc.

Thanks

Scott Whipperman  
Cell: (801) 915-7300









**File Code:** 1800  
**Date:** April 17, 2020

Central Wasatch Commission  
41 N Rio Grande Street, Suite 102  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

To whom it may concern,

The Salt Lake Ranger District of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest fully supports the proposal submitted by Wasatch Graffiti Busters for promoting and conducting environmental stewardship along the Wasatch Front.

The Salt Lake Ranger District manages 216,000 acres of National Forest System lands in close proximity to Salt Lake City. This area provides for outstanding recreational opportunities as well as 60% of the culinary drinking water to Salt Lake Valley. Unfortunately, this area also attracts those that vandalize nature's beauty. Graffiti is the most visible and prominent crime within National Forest System lands along the Wasatch Front and can make areas that contain a lot of graffiti appear unsafe. Many people escape from city life to enjoy the peace and natural setting the National Forest System lands provide. Graffiti adversely impacts many visitors' experiences and may sometimes prevent people from connecting with nature. In areas where graffiti dominates the natural setting, human waste, used hypodermic needles, and empty and broken alcohol containers were also commonly found. What goes on the land within the watershed ends up in our water supply – from forest to faucet. The best way to ensure we have high quality and safe drinking water for current and future generations is to protect it at its source.

The Wasatch Graffiti Busters (WGB) is a grass roots organization that started a few years ago to combat the negative effects of vandalism on public lands and restore our Forest to a natural setting. The group is dedicated to eradicating graffiti, protecting the watershed that provides water to most of our population, educating the public about the impacts of graffiti on and near public lands, and restoring our beloved canyons to their natural wild and pristine environments. Members of the group have volunteered hundreds of hours, donated the use of their own equipment, and purchased much needed supplies using their own funds. In addition, they have received financial support from local municipalities and other non-profit organizations to purchase supplies and other non-profit organizations have provided volunteer services. Both the Granite Community Council and PacifiCorp have provided funds for the purchase of graffiti-removal supplies.

Their proposal, if funded, would further their work in ensuring everyone has access to natural areas undamaged by vandals. They plan many small group expeditions into the canyons of the Wasatch to remove graffiti, along with larger groups (when conditions allow) to train new people to help clean graffiti and possibly become new WGB members.



I encourage you to consider awarding them the full requested amount. I am available to answer any of your questions at (801)733-2675 or at [rebecca.hotze@usda.gov](mailto:rebecca.hotze@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hotze  
District Ranger