**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD, THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021, AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**

**Present:**  John Knoblock, Chair

Barbara Cameron

Benjamin Pellegrino

Dennis Goreham

Martin Jensen

BK

Kelly Boardman

James Hicks

Chelsea Phillippe

Will McCarvill

Pat Shea

Deborah Case

Dan Knopp

Sarah Bennett

**Staff:** Blake Perez, CWC Deputy Director

Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director

Kaye Mickelson, Office Administrator

1. **Introductions.**

Chair John Knoblock called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. He noted that the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Trails Committee Meeting agenda would proceed slightly out of order. He asked that the Committee start with item number three in order to hear from the Mayor of Brighton, Dan Knopp, the Director of Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation, Martin Jensen, and Forest Service Trails and Inventory Planner, Chelsea Phillippe.

1. **Review and Approve Past Meeting Minutes.**

**MOTION:** Barbara Cameron moved to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2021, Trails Committee Meeting. Sarah Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

1. **Discuss How the Big Cottonwood Trails Master Plan will Fit in with the USFS Trails Plan and SLCo Trails Master Plan.**
2. **Dan Knopp, Martin Jensen and Chelsea Phillippe.**

Chair Knoblock wished to discuss the status of the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan as well as the potential Brighton Trails Master Plan to determine how those plans would work with the U.S. Forest Service Salt Lake Ranger District trails inventory. Chair Knoblock reported that one of the primary objectives included in the Mission and Vision Statement for the Trails Committee was to provide input on various trail planning documents.

It was noted that at one point, Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation wanted to be the lead agency for the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan. Chair Knoblock asked for an update from Mr. Jensen with respect to funding. Mr. Jensen first discussed the Regional Trails Master Plan. There was a draft of that plan that was nearly complete. Mr. Jensen explained that there would be some final internal reviews and then the plan would be made available to the public. Additionally, there would be a process where the Regional Trails Master Plan was presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Mayor’s Office, and the County Council.

Mr. Jensen clarified that the Regional Trails Master Plan was a broad document. The goal of the plan was to try to get all of the trail pathways in one location. Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation was not trying to plan trails for cities or for the federal government. They were trying to be a partner and to bring everything together in a high-level document. Mr. Jensen explained that during the planning process, there was a realization that a more detailed plan was also desired. Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation was happy to work with cities and federal partners on a more detailed plan. However, he corrected the statement made earlier that Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation wanted to be the lead agency for the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan. They did not necessarily want to lead that process but the County would be a good partner and may be able to bring the landowners together to try to create a more detailed plan.

Discussions were had about possible funding. Mr. Jensen explained that he had lost staff and was having a difficult time hiring. In addition, the budget had been cut by $3 million and he did not have the funding to hire a consultant. The current focus was on completing the Regional Trails Master Plan. The Natural Surface Trails Master Plan was on a list of items to do but that list would need to be prioritized as resources were made available. While the 2022 budget preparations were currently beginning, he was unable to guarantee that the plan would be included in the budget for that year. It would depend on where everything else on the list prioritized.

Chair Knoblock reported that there had been support from several County Council Members. However, it sounded like Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation had various competing needs. Mr. Jensen confirmed this. He explained that over the next eight weeks, they would be looking at the list of needs and prioritize them based on the current environment and feedback from the public and stakeholders. The prioritized list would be submitted to the Mayor and County Council, who would determine the funding level. That funding level would dictate whether the Natural Surface Trails Master Plan could be started in 2022.

Mr. Jensen wondered what Trails Committee Members envisioned as the scope for the Natural Surface Trails Master Plan. Chair Knoblock noted that the Trails Committee was a subcommittee of the CWC Stakeholders Council. Technically, the Committee only dealt with the CWC area, which included Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyon, Millcreek Canyon, Parleys Canyon, and areas like Alta and Brighton. Chair Knoblock explained that for the scope, it would be ideal to have a GIS layer developed that would have all of the County-wide natural surface trails. He noted that the Draper to Corner Canyon Trail System, Salt Lake City Foothills Trail System, and the trails inventory that Ms. Phillippe was working on could all be incorporated and the plan could build in any missing sections.

Chair Knoblock wondered if there was anything the Trails Committee could do to elevate the Natural Surface Trails Master Plan on the priority list. Mr. Jensen noted that the Trails Committee could send him something in writing that stated that the plan was a priority for the Trails Committee. That would assist in the consideration and prioritization process.

Mr. Jensen believed it was important for all cities and organizations to work together to make sure regional connections tie into local connections. Connectivity was important as was identifying areas for future improvements and areas where there was demand and a need for growth. Pat Shea asked if Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation ever used students and faculty from Salt Lake City universities or colleges to help out. Mr. Jensen reported that they had not recently. There had been limited success with those types of internships in the past.

Mr. Jensen informed the Trails Committee that Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation would be sending out a County-wide needs assessment survey in August. The last two times the survey had been conducted, trails and open space had been in the top three for County resident priorities. As soon as the data was gathered from the latest survey, it would be shared with municipalities, partners, and the CWC. Mr. Jensen anticipated that trails would still be a top priority.

Chair Knoblock noted that the next part of the discussion related to the Town of Brighton. Mayor Knopp was interested in undertaking a Trails Plan as trails are important to the area. He asked Mayor Knopp to describe his vision for a Brighton Trails Master Plan. Mayor Knopp reported that discussions had taken place with the Council and there was a framework for the budget. They were working with the Greater Salt Lake Municipal Services District (“MSD”) to do the Brighton Town Master Plan and he believed that would also include the Brighton Trails Master Plan. Mr. Jensen believed it was appropriate for MSD to support Brighton in that effort.

Chair Knoblock noted that the U.S. Forest Service was working on a trails inventory and trails planning on Forest Service-owned lands. He commented that two-thirds of Brighton land is Forest Service owned and wondered if Ms. Phillippe would be working with MSD on the trails plan. Ms. Phillippe confirmed this. She explained that Zinnia Wilson was trying to set up a phone call to start coordinating that effort. There should be additional details following that conversation. She believed the discussions would take place in the next couple of weeks.

Will McCarvill asked how the ski area trails plans would be integrated into the Brighton Trails Master Plan. Mayor Knopp noted that the ski areas typically made their own plans. There was a new manager at Solitude that he would try to meet with to discuss the issue further. Chair Knoblock noted that the ski areas often struggled to have enough staff to do a lot of planning work. He reported that Randy Doyle from Brighton Ski Resort had said many times that he would like to do a comprehensive trail plan. He believed Mr. Doyle would want to be involved in the Brighton Trails Master Plan process. Mayor Knopp commented that he would speak to the New Manager at Solitude as well as Mr. Doyle in the next few weeks.

Chair Knoblock reported that trails planning in Brighton had been difficult in the past due to land ownership. Some was ski resort-owned, some was private property, some was County property, Forest Service property and Salt Lake City Public Utilities property. Chair Knoblock added that Carl Fisher from Save Our Canyons believed that it would be beneficial to have a trail that connected Brighton Ski Resort to Guardsman Pass. The Forest Service had also suggested that connection in the past. Chair Knoblock noted that there seemed to be some agreement on that connection, but communication would be necessary in order to make it happen.

Chair Knoblock wondered whether there was a potential timeline for the Brighton Trails Master Plan. Mayor Knopp reported that they were working on getting a consultant to help with the plan in addition to MSD. Barbara Cameron added that the Brighton General Plan process would begin on July 22, 2021. She believed there would be discussions about trails during that time. The General Plan would take approximately one year to 18 months to complete. Ms. Cameron stressed the importance of trail connectivity.

Ms. Phillippe shared an update related to the Forest Service trails inventory process. The current focus was on inventorying the system trails. At the end of the season, a data analysis would be done, which could be shared in the winter. From there, a plan would build. However, the current focus was trying to understand what was tangibly on the ground, the existing conditions, and the kind of use that was taking place. Chair Knoblock wondered whether the Forest Service would continue to move forward with color-coding the GIS layer of all the existing trails. Ms. Phillippe confirmed this. They had already started some of the color coding but were still waiting for different GIS lines from ski resorts and were making sure they had the correct data from different landowners and municipalities so everything was represented correctly.

Ms. Cameron wondered if there would be priorities related to which trails should be removed or expanded. Ms. Phillippe explained that those types of discussions would come later. Once the Forest Service had assessed what currently existed, they would be able to go through and prioritize different trails based on what was causing the most resource impact, what should stay the same, and any additional opportunities for connectivity. She believed that type of information would come after the data had been mapped out and analyzed.

Chair Knoblock reported that he had made a Google Drive folder for the Trails Committee Members to access. Several documents had been added to the folder, including the KMZ layer that Ms. Phillippe had sent with the draft inventory of the user-created trails. Chair Knoblock could resend the Google Drive link to those interested. Ms. Phillippe noted that the KMZ layer was a draft. Changes could be made as discussions were had with different organizations.

Benjamin Pellegrino asked a question in the Zoom chatbox. He wondered what jurisdiction the Donut Falls Mill D traffic light fell under and referenced the winter gridlock. Chair Knoblock believed the light was controlled by the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”). Ms. Cameron confirmed this. She noted that based on the heat map from the Unified Police Department (“UPD”) there were a lot of accidents and citations in the Donut Falls area each year. Mayor Knopp noted that the gridlock issue in the area had improved throughout the season but it was still a work in progress. Chair Knoblock commented that the traffic light was relatively new. He believed that UDOT would likely study the issue to best utilize the new tool they had.

Mr. McCarvill shared an update related to the Visitor Use Study. He reported that Phase I of the Visitor Use Study had been contracted by the CWC to Utah State University. That portion of the study was currently underway. Mr. McCarvill noted that there were ongoing conversations related to Phase II. Discussions were had about visitor use following the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Knoblock noted that he had seen fewer people while he was out but Mr. McCarvill commented that he had seen more. The visitation levels seemed to vary based on location.

1. **Get Input on Ideas on Alternative Funding for the County-Wide Trails Master Plan.**

Chair Knoblock noted that funding was always an issue. Based on the conversation with Mr. Jensen, it did not appear that funding for the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan would be readily available despite the fact that trails were a priority for county residents. Mr. McCarvill stated that he had spoken to Jim Bradley from the Salt Lake County Council about the plan being a higher priority as it related to county funding. Chair Knoblock reported that both Ann Granato and Dea Theodore were also supportive of the plan being prioritized.

Discussions were had about the suggestion made by Mr. Jensen for the Trails Committee to put something in writing that expressed support for the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan. Mr. McCarvill felt the letter would also need to be sent to the County Council. Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen explained that the letter would need to be sent to the Stakeholders Council for approval and then to the CWC Board for approval. Mr. McCarvill noted that the item could be added to the July 21, 2021 Stakeholders Council Meeting agenda. If approved, the letter could then be discussed at the August 2021 CWC Board Meeting. Chair Knoblock noted that the timing would be important. If the letter was approved and forwarded in August, that would provide Mr. Jensen enough time to consider the letter with the budget priorities.

**MOTION:** Chair Knoblock moved that the Trails Committee write a letter asking that funding for the Salt Lake County Natural Surface Trails Master Plan be prioritized. The letter would require approval by the Stakeholders Council and the CWC Board. Will McCarvill seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

Chair Knoblock wondered whether there were other possible sources of funding or grants that could be looked into. He noted that in the past it had been difficult to obtain grants to fund studies or plans. Chair Knoblock believed it would cost approximately $120,000 to hire a consultant to help with the plan. Dennis Goreham suggested reaching out to organizations that were connected to Stakeholders Council Members. Mr. McCarvill explained that there were a number of private citizens on the Stakeholders Council. Not all of the members were associated with an organization.

Committee Members discussed possible organizations to reach out to. Mr. McCarvill suggested the Mountainland Association of Governments. Sarah Bennett suggested the Wasatch Front Regional Council. Mr. McCarvill noted that there would need to be further discussions with Mr. Jensen to confirm the amount of funding needed and the deliverables. Then a package could be put together to present to different organizations. Ms. Bennett agreed and commented that it would be important to consider the verbiage used in the package. For instance, the plan was about recreation but it also tied into watershed protection and the ability to plan for transportation infrastructure. Mr. McCarvill added that there was an economic piece to consider as well.

Mr. McCarvill noted that once a rough draft was completed, they could approach Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson to look over the draft. It might be beneficial to have some sort of political advice beforehand. Chair Knoblock liked the idea. Ms. Cameron wondered who would handle the potential donations and contributions. Mr. McCarvill believed that some advice from CWC Staff would be needed in order to determine the best approach.

Ms. Bennett expressed concerns about an earlier comment made by Mr. Jensen. He had stated that Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation did not want to get into the business of telling municipalities what they needed to do. She was concerned because a hands-off approach could be problematic. The involvement of all of the municipalities would be critical to the success of the Natural Surface Trails Master Plan, but it did not sound like Mr. Jensen and his staff would handle the outreach to the various municipalities. That seemed to be a key piece.

Chair Knoblock commented that Mr. Jensen had said he wanted to take on the plan at one point. However, it seemed that he was not certain that he had the staffing or resources to do so. It was important that the Trails Committee kept their minds open to various options. For instance, the General Manager of MSD, Bart Barker, or Salt Lake County Program Planning Manager, Jake Young may be able to take on the project instead.

Patrick Nelson from Salt Lake City Public Utilities had informed Chair Knoblock that there was no new update or identified timeline with respect to the Watershed Management Plan.

1. **Make Final Comments and Suggestions to Family-Friendly Hikes List Sent Out Last Meeting.**

Chair Knoblock noted that he was not sure how family-friendly it was to reach Circle All Peak. Ms. Bennett commented that Mill D trail and some of the other trails could use moderation of the grade in certain places. Chair Knoblock did not believe those types of projects were high on the list of priorities, but the Mill A trail up from Butler Fork could benefit from some grade reduction in order to become family-friendly. Additionally, Chair Knoblock reported that Save Our Canyons would be holding a volunteer trail maintenance project on the Butler Fork Trail on July 10, 2021.

1. **Updates for Ongoing 2021 Trail Projects**

Chair Knoblock shared updates related to ongoing trail projects. He reported that Mount Olympus Trail was going to start getting redone. Mr. Pellegrino asked in the Zoom chat box about the Bonneville Shoreline Trail between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Chair Knoblock reported that there was action between Ferguson Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon. The section of trail across the grassy hillside above the neighborhood homes had been built. In the fall, there would be a connection to the Ferguson Canyon Trailhead.

It sounded like the Forest Service Regional Engineers were still trying to evaluate the bridge over Big Cottonwood Creek to see if the trailhead could be opened. Knowing the Forest Service Regional Engineer’s heavy workload, Chair Knoblock did not expect to have the trailhead open as soon as the trail was ready. Discussions were had about the location of the bridge.

Chair Knoblock reported that Trails Utah was working with Matt Malone, a contractor with Nature Trails, LLC, to get the trail section built-in Millcreek Canyon that would connect down to Elbow Fork. That work was almost done and there was approximately one-quarter mile left of trail to complete. Following that project, Nature Trails, LCC, would move down to Rattlesnake Trail and begin construction on a new lower grade trail. It would be parallel to Rattlesnake Trail but have a 9% grade. That would become part of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail in the future. Chair Knoblock explained that this would help to disperse users that were on the Rattlesnake Trail.

The Utah Conservation Corps groups had spent 15 days doing trail maintenance work on the section around Dog Lake to the East and West. Chair Knoblock also reported that the bridge material for the reroute of the Desolation Trail had been flown in and was sitting on site. The work for the footings was done and the bridges needed to be assembled so the trail could open.

Chair Knoblock noted that at Elbow Fork, there used to be a bridge over Millcreek that was destroyed during the windstorm. Zinnia Wilson and Steve Brown from the Forest Service had been working hard to get that bridge replaced. The bridge was critical to the new trail in Millcreek Canyon becoming open to the public. Unfortunately, Forest Service Engineering Staff had many different priorities and the bridge replacement was not highest on the list.

Ms. Wilson hoped that the bridge would be installed before the end of 2022. Alternatively, the Nature Trails, LCC contractor had a civil engineering license and believed a bridge could be ordered an installed in approximately one month. Ms. Wilson noted that the Forest Service procurement rules would allow the Forest Service to pay for 50% of the bridge cost in that instance. Ms. Wilson believed the cost would be $80,000 but the contractor believed the total cost would be $40,000. Ms. Bennett was concerned that a new trail had been built but it was unable to be used until the bridge was constructed. The preferred timeline to have the work completed was the current season rather than the end of 2022. Ms. Nielsen suggested reaching out to Salt Lake County. Chair Knoblock noted that he would phone Helen Peters.

Ms. Bennett reported that there were two other trail projects on the horizon. One was a new section of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail that would start at the mouth of Parleys Canyon. It was almost a four-mile section of trail. Additionally, there would be a reroute on Rattlesnake Trail that would begin work shortly. Ms. Bennett noted that there had been some misinformation and misrepresentation about trail-building projects in the foothills. It had been unfortunate to see some of the comments that had come out against trails and tail planning. She felt that the Trails Committee could put thought into how to further the discussion at a community level. While it was good that people had expressed concerns, it was also important to articulate the needs related to trails, such as the need for proper design and maintenance.

Ms. Bennett explained that she had reached out to Save Our Canyons to state that certain projects would be starting. She reported that Trails Utah was working with the Forest Service and land managers and had done everything that had been required. They were working within the parameters that had been given. Ms. Bennett commented that everyone cared about the resource and it was frustrating as a long-time trail advocate to hear people suggest that the foothills were being ripped up. She encouraged Trails Committee Members to contribute in a positive way to the discussions related to this topic if it was at all possible to do so.

Mr. McCarvill commented that he had been having discussions with Salt Lake City Trails and Natural Lands Division Director, Lewis Kogan on the subject. Mr. McCarvill also noted that he was now the Trails Planning Coordinator for the Wasatch Mountain Club. He had been reaching out to members to hear their opinions and have a better understanding of their viewpoints. The members he had spoken to had been measured and reasonable. He was continuing to monitor the situation and was interested to see what Salt Lake City would come up with. Chair Knoblock noted that it was hard to please everyone. He believed it would have been disappointing for Mr. Kogan to receive 3,500 public comments on the trails plan as it was being developed only to have a few dissatisfied voices pause the plan.

Ms. Bennett felt this was an opportunity for the broader community to have a discussion about trails, trail implementation, and trail planning. More and more people were going to the foothills. In addition, throughout the development of the Mountain Accord, there had been discussions about putting more people on trails in the foothills to lessen impacts to the watershed and the more sensitive higher alpine areas. She noted that residents needed more access to local trail experiences and that would likely require some trail development. The Trails Committee needed to be aware of the conversations that were happening within the community and find opportunities to contribute information in a productive manner.

1. **Review of How SLRD is Partnering with the UCC and RRI Grants.**
2. **Discuss Other Ideas to Improve Funding for Trail and Other Infrastructure Maintenance within the CWC Area.**

Chair Knoblock reported that the Salt Lake Ranger District was partnering with the Utah Conservation Corps and the Recreation Restoration Infrastructure (“RRI”) grant from the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation. This would allow there to be some assistance with the Salt Lake Ranger District’s workload. Chair Knoblock stressed the importance of trail maintenance and discussed the Adopt-A-Trail program. Mount Olympus Community Council, Wasatch Mountain Club, and Big Cottonwood Community Council had all adopted trails. He hoped that in the future there would be more businesses adopting trails by choosing the financing method. That could cover a lot of different trail work that needed to be done.

1. **Adjourn.**

**MOTION:** Chair Knoblock moved to adjourn. Will McCarvill seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Central Wasatch Commission Trails Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Trails Committee Meeting held Thursday, July 8, 2021.***

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes

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Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_