

We are developing a long-term (2060) Vision for the Central Wasatch, and we are defining long term as well as shorter term (by 2040) Goals and proposed actions that will help achieve our long-term Vision.

### Recreation Vision Statement (written from the perspective of someone in 2060):

The recreation system in the Central Wasatch is balanced, sustainable, and provides a range of settings that accommodates mountain recreation by promoting high levels of use and convenient access at key developed locations while protecting the solitude and naturalness associated with backcountry recreation.

### Recreation Goals, Metrics and Targets

	<i>Existing Condition</i>	<i>Future Trendline</i>	<i>Future Target</i>
<b>An Ideal Central Wasatch Recreation System Would:</b>			
<b><i>Goal 1: Establish high use areas to focus where future growth in recreation occurs.</i></b>			
<i>Metrics TBD</i>			
<b><i>Goal 2: Preserve special, unique recreation areas and settings.</i></b>			
<i>Metrics TBD</i>			
<b><i>Goal 3: Provide a well-designed, appropriately maintained, well-signed, and interconnected trail network that meets demand and can adapt to evolving uses.</i></b>			
<i>Metrics TBD</i>			
<b><i>Goal 4: Pursue the most appropriate and feasible means of securing legal access to critical recreational opportunities while mitigating conflicts on privately-owned lands.</i></b>			
<i>Metrics TBD</i>			
<b><i>Goal 5: Establish appropriate levels of access and designed settings in harmony with the desired recreation experience.</i></b>			
<i>Metrics TBD</i>			
<b><i>Policy Goal 1: Establish an organization that provides united management of recreation in the Central Wasatch and education for users, with authority to act based on public support.</i></b>			
<b><i>Policy Goal 2: Secure ongoing funding for the continued maintenance, evolution, and management to ensure success of the recreation system in the Central Wasatch.</i></b>			

### Why this Vision and these Goals?

Vision: Mountain recreation in the Central Wasatch supports the healthy lifestyles of our residents, fosters environmental values in the community, attracts visitors, contributes significantly to the economic health of the region, and is one of the most defining characteristics of our

communities and our region as a whole. The key recreational values that support the current success of the Central Wasatch are the accessibility, variety of mountain recreation opportunities, and availability of backcountry and undeveloped experiences near population centers. Promoting these values in the context of forecast rapid growth in population, existing geographic constraints on land available for recreation, and increasing pressure for development in the mountains is exceedingly challenging. Allowing unrestricted access to the mountains risks harming backcountry experiences, restricting access threatens our closely held value of accessibility, and prescriptive, intensive management approaches could restrict the variety and flexibility we enjoy today. Our vision for the future of recreation in the Central Wasatch seeks to balance these challenges in a sustainable manner such that future generations have easy access to mountain recreation, a variety of recreational activities and settings to choose from, and can experience the beauty and solitude of backcountry recreation that we enjoy today. Achieving this vision will require transforming how we view the future of recreation in the Central Wasatch. Areas where high levels of use are desirable to promote recreation accessibility and community participation in mountain recreation will need to be identified. Facilities and amenities (e.g., trails, restrooms, transportation infrastructure) will need to be designed and built (or re-designed and re-built) to attract and bring people to these locations. At the same time, areas important for preserving backcountry and disperse recreation opportunities will need to be identified and protected. Accessibility provided to these areas will need to consider the protection of the backcountry experience. Key steps to achieving this vision are outlined in the goals identified by the Recreation System Group.

Goal 1: Population growth will result in increasing demand for recreation and increasing volumes of use in the Central Wasatch. Unrestricted access to outdoor recreation is critical for promoting healthy lifestyles in our communities and fostering public concern for the outdoors. The intention of this goal is to identify locations that can be designed to accommodate high levels of future use while maintaining high quality user experiences. By identifying areas for high levels of use and providing attractions and infrastructure to bring users to these areas, the burden of increased recreation users will be concentrated in areas appropriately designed to handle high volumes of use as opposed to spreading users equally across the entire Wasatch. Additionally, costly active management of users that detracts from user experience can be minimized by thoughtful design of high capacity areas. These areas may or may not be the areas we think of as high use today and would likely include leveraging existing infrastructure including ski resorts for increased and different types of uses, especially outside of the winter ski season.

Goal 2: The Central Wasatch has many unique environments, including areas important for backcountry recreation and high quality scenic vistas. These areas are critically important to provide a range of recreation opportunities in the Central Wasatch. Development occurring in important, unique recreation environments often exceeds recreation users' thresholds for acceptable change and results in permanent modification or loss of the recreational value in these areas. Therefore, it is imperative to protect important recreation areas in perpetuity where under threat of degradation from development and overuse. In some areas, a wilderness designation may not appropriately address the multiple human-powered recreation uses of the Central Wasatch or provide the flexibility in management that may be required to adapt to changes in recreational demands over time. Establishment of a special designation that provides protection of unique recreation environments while allowing for multiple types of recreation and management adaptability may be one strategy to address this desired outcome.

Goal 3: Outside of the winter ski season, the trail network in the Central Wasatch is the main attraction for recreational users and provides the avenue by which the population experiences the outdoors. A well-designed trail network can accommodate increasing levels of use while avoiding natural resource degradation and is essential to support safe and enjoyable trail experiences. The trail system should be highly interconnected and individual trails should be thoughtfully designed with uses managed to contribute to the safety and success of the overall system. The trail network should include high-capacity, intensively designed trails like those found in our national parks, purpose built trails to accommodate specific uses, and multi-use and backcountry trails where appropriate. Effective signage should educate and guide users to trails meeting their desired experiences in high capacity areas while trails in backcountry areas should be signed at a level allowing for discovery and solitude. The system should be well-maintained, designed to minimize resource degradation, and adaptable to support a reasonable range of evolving uses.

Goal 4: As a result of historical management and recreational use of the Central Wasatch, many popular recreation areas are on private lands. Recreational users of these private lands often do not understand the complex land ownership pattern in the Central Wasatch and are not aware that they are recreating on private lands. However, stakeholders view preservation of access to these opportunities and experiences as critical to the future of recreation in the Central Wasatch. Conflicts associated with privately-owned lands commonly used for recreation can be reduced by securing access using a variety of methods, including the purchase of lands, the establishment of legal easements, and placing lands into conservation with the intent of providing long-term recreational access.

Goal 5: Management of a recreation setting balancing a spectrum of high capacity and highly designed areas while providing opportunities for backcountry recreation experiences requires careful consideration of accessibility and appropriately locating infrastructure designed to attract users. Identification of areas appropriate for high, moderate, and low density use will inform decisions regarding accessibility and other infrastructure (e.g., designed trails, restrooms, and commercial facilities). Areas where high density use is identified as desirable should have convenient access and a highly designed recreation experience. These locations are appropriate for transportation improvements, high-capacity, highly designed trails, large parking areas, commercial facilities, and other amenities anticipated to attract users. Areas where low density use is identified as desirable should be more difficult to access and have limited development. Small parking areas, backcountry trails, and minimal other amenities to attract or facilitate use of these areas should be provided.

Policy Goal 1: The number of agencies involved in management of recreation in the Central Wasatch and education of recreational users makes holistic, cohesive management exceedingly difficult. Past efforts at inter-agency coordination have been helpful but suffer from competition with other competing goals of each entity involved. Establishment of an organization focused on comprehensive management of recreation across local, state, and federal jurisdictional boundaries is essential for successful management of recreation in the Central Wasatch. This organization must have the ability to act based on legal authority and public support. A fundamental purpose of this organization will also be educating the public about responsible use of the Wasatch Mountains and associated recreation facilities and providing information that will lead users to appropriate facilities for recreation.

Policy Goal 2: Ongoing funding is crucial to facilitate the establishment, maintenance, and adaptability of recreational infrastructure in the Central Wasatch. The current funding mechanisms do not provide adequate funding to develop new facilities or maintain some existing facilities at their existing levels of use. Furthermore, current funding is not reliable and is insufficient to provide the types of transformative changes that the Recreation System Group would like to see implemented in the Central Wasatch. Funding mechanisms to achieve this goal may include user fees, property taxes, bonding measures, allocations from government entities, public/private partnerships, and leveraging donations.