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2
3 **MINUTES OF THE MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD**
4 **TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2020, AT 3:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED**
5 **ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM WITH NO ANCHOR LOCATION.**
6

7 **Present:** Chair Ed Marshall, Paul Diegel, Del Draper, Polly Hart, John Knoblock,
8 Mike Mikhalev, Nancy Carter, Hilary Jacobs, Helen Peters
9

10 **Staff:** CWC Deputy Director Blake Perez, Communications Director Lindsey
11 Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye Mickelson
12

13 **Excused:** Tom Diegel
14

15 Chair Ed Marshall called the meeting to order at approximately 3:09 p.m.
16

17 **1. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the June 15, 2020, Meeting.**
18

19 The minutes were reviewed and modified.
20

21 **MOTION:** Del Draper moved to approve the minutes of June 15, 2020, as corrected. Paul Diegel
22 seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
23

24 Chair Marshall thanked Millcreek City for their contribution of \$2,000 and FIDOS who
25 contributed \$1,500 to the Scoping Study.
26

27 **2. Update from Helen Peters or Jared Stewart Regarding the FHWA’s Initial Work.**
28

29 Chair Marshall stated that he received an email from Salt Lake County Transportation Program
30 Manager, Helen Peters earlier in the day indicating that she had nothing to update.
31

32 **3. Updates from Lindsey Nielsen Regarding Chipper Days Project.**
33

34 Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen reported that as part of the Central Wasatch
35 Commission’s (“CWC”) short-term projects pool of funding that was available in the 2019-2020
36 fiscal year budget, the Board approved funding for the CWC to enter into a partnership with the
37 State Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands and local jurisdictions to co-sponsor chipping and
38 cutting across the CWC’s project area. It includes Millcreek Canyon, Parleys corridor, and the
39 Cottonwood Canyons. This past month the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (“FFSL”) has
40 been doing extensive work in Millcreek Canyon thanks in part to the funding approved by the
41 CWC Board.

1
2 Chipping and cutting were done two weeks ago above the winter gate before it opened along the
3 roadside. Ms. Nielsen reported that the crew is currently at Porter Fork and will be doing chipping
4 at Log Haven removing fuel materials. Additional roadside chipping was also in the works for the
5 lower part of the canyon, to be completed around Labor Day. Details regarding dates and the exact
6 locations within the lower canyon were not yet set but once details are obtained, they will be shared
7 with the public and the Committee. Ms. Nielsen reported that chipping will be done at the Firs
8 Cabin Association in August.

9
10 Del Draper noted that when chipping has been done near his home, it is up to the homeowners to
11 gather wood they want chipped and they carry it to a central location. He asked if different rules
12 apply in the canyon and if dead trees will be cut down or if chippers are limited to chipping only
13 what is on the ground. Ms. Nielsen stated that Dax Reid from FFSL could better answer the
14 question but to her knowledge, hazards will be removed along the roadside. The process could
15 include removing hazard trees as well as field materials along the road and removing brush in
16 bicycle lanes, which was done above the winter gate.

17
18 John Knoblock reported that in the first week of July in Millcreek, along the Mount Olympus
19 Community Council area, people had cut down brush, low limbs, and trees close to their homes
20 and had stacked them along the roadside with the large ends out. The Unified Fire Authority
21 (“UFA”) drove along with the chipper and fed in the materials. Mr. Draper noted that that system
22 works well only if homeowners are willing to cut down trees and drag them to the side of the road.
23 He wondered if there was a way to drag wood that is within 20 feet of the road to the roadside, as
24 he was unsure whether the chipper crew will do that. Ms. Nielsen responded that when FFSL went
25 above the winter gate, they mowed and cut between 15 feet at a minimum and 30 feet at maximum
26 from the road. The same would happen in the lower canyon as well.

27
28 Chair Marshall noted that there has been a build-up of materials for a long time. The FFSL crew
29 is very professional and knowledgeable in terms of clearing areas and chipping. Ms. Nielsen
30 reported that when it comes time for roadside chipping in the lower canyon, FFSL did not believe
31 road control would be an issue. The only time both lanes would be closed is if a hazard has fallen
32 into the road, such as a branch or tree.

33
34 Mr. Knoblock commented that Forest District Ranger, Bekee Hotze, has a program that is
35 independent of the CWC program for fuels reduction. A group within the Forest Service Quarterly
36 Stakeholders Meeting was focused on Parleys and Lambs Canyons this year with a focus on
37 Millcreek Canyon next year and other canyons after that. He thanked Ms. Nielsen for her work
38 on the Chipper Days Project.

39
40 Chair Marshall reported that he gave the \$1,000 to the CWC for this purpose. Half will likely go
41 toward chipping at Log Haven. His intent was for the other half to go toward the roadside in the
42 lower canyon.

43
44 Chair Marshall referenced a memo from Guy Wilson, who is in charge of Fire Prevention Services
45 with the U.S. Forest Service. Two paragraphs in the memo relate to Millcreek Canyon. The first
46 pertains to brush trimming and delimiting in the upper canyon to improve user safety and first

1 responder access. The second paragraph mentions their plans to conduct a Density Survey next
2 year of the slopes around the firs in the upper canyon. Work will be done along the roadway to
3 better understand the type of fuels reduction plan they should put in place, particularly for dead
4 and dying trees. His concern was that the memo does not mention reducing fuels in the lower
5 canyon. He drafted a letter on behalf of himself and Log Haven but did not include the CWC or
6 the Millcreek Canyon Committee. He asked if this issue was of concern to the Committee as well.

7
8 Mr. Knoblock stated that he did not read the memo the same way. His impression was that they
9 were going to do the entire canyon but they do not have a detailed plan. He stated that they can
10 potentially have some influence and input. He also noted that the Forest Service is concerned
11 about large spans of woolly adelgid affected fir trees that are dying and pose a hazard throughout
12 the canyon.

13
14 Mr. Draper stated that the first paragraph of the memo addressed all of Millcreek Canyon. He did
15 not read it as being limited to the upper canyon. Chair Marshall re-read the first paragraph and
16 agreed with Mr. Draper. Mr. Knoblock commented that this was an opportunity for the Committee
17 to give feedback to the Forest Service regarding potential hazard areas. Chair Marshall stated that
18 he could write a general letter stating that some members may want to make suggestions. He also
19 noted that the July 22, 2020, Forest Service Stakeholder Meeting is public and he would forward
20 the link to the meeting.

21
22 **4. Updates from Committee Members Who Have New Information.**

23
24 Mr. Knoblock reported that Apex Trail Construction began work earlier in the week and have
25 1,000 feet of trail cut. The Forest Service has had trees cut from the corridor to within a few
26 hundred feet of the Alexander Basin Trail. The intent is to reroute the flag lines so the trail crosses
27 the Alexander Basin Trail near the road. This will allow it to become an on/off point for cyclists.
28 The goal was to have the trail completed to Elbow Fork in two months.

29
30 Mr. Knoblock confirmed that it will be a multi-use trail that will serve as an extension to the
31 Pipeline Trail. Several names had been used, including the Upper Pipeline, and Upper Millcreek,
32 Lower Big Water, but it had commonly been referred to as the Upper Millcreek Canyon Trail at
33 this point. Mr. Diegel expressed concern that a name like Upper Millcreek Canyon Trail will carry
34 connotations that the trail will be closed to bikes on odd days. Mr. Knoblock clarified that it would
35 be a multi-purpose trail open to bicycles every day with odd/even leash rules for dogs.

36
37 Mr. Knoblock thanked Helen Peters for her help with the \$20,000 of the Fourth Quarter
38 Transportation Sales Tax for work on the Desolation Trail. He noted that Ms. Peters is still looking
39 to determine if there is potential funding for the Rattlesnake Trail Project for which the track
40 funding was pulled. Ms. Peters reported that she did not yet know the Mayor's decision but would
41 keep the Committee Members informed.

42
43 Chair Marshall reported that the County has widened the downhill lane at the AB Curve to go back
44 to its original location. They also posted 25 MPH speed limit signs with curving arrows on them.
45 He stated that they are quite visible. He expressed the hope that the signs will have an impact on
46 cars crossing over lanes. Chair Marshall reported that there was no update on Church Fork but he

1 would continue to seek out information. He noted that Jared Stewart arranged an introduction
2 between the Millcreek Canyon Committee and the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee.
3 He and Paul Diegel recently joined their monthly meeting. They are mostly urban riders but a
4 number are also canyon riders including Mike Mikhalev who was present at the meeting.
5

6 Chair Marshall reported on the recent CWC Meeting where there was lengthy discussion regarding
7 the Capacity Management Study. Acting District Ranger, Lance Kovel, was asked about the stance
8 of the U.S. Forest Service regarding a Capacity Management Study. Their view is that the U.S.
9 Forest Service has all of the data it needs to make decisions based on its Bi-Annual Forest Plan
10 Monitoring Report and the National Use Monitoring Report. He stated that they do not look at
11 capacity numbers but impacts on the National Forest. If the forest is impacted in a specific area,
12 they take the necessary action. For instance, they may close a section for some time to allow it to
13 rehabilitate. In their view, capacity is not yet a problem and they can handle the increases.
14

15 Mr. Kovel also reported that the U.S. Forest Service does not have the authority to restrict the State
16 Highways in the Cottonwood Canyons or limit the number of users at the ski resorts due to a
17 Federal Act called the National Visitors Ski Act that limits the authority of the Secretary of
18 Agriculture. Mr. Kovel felt that a capacity study could augment data the Forest Service has but
19 could not guarantee that it would be used.
20

21 Mr. Knoblock commented that if a specific area becomes a hazard, the U.S. Forest Service might
22 decide on a limit for that area but they would not put a limitation on a forested area as a whole.
23 Mr. Diegel felt that the response from the U.S. Forest Service was disappointing. He believed it
24 was a reactionary rather than a proactive policy. Mr. Draper shared similar concerns, noting that
25 the U.S. Forest Service has a policy where they cannot limit the number of visitors to the ski area.
26 They can, however, deal with an issue if it were to occur but were unlikely to look at potential
27 issues in advance.
28

29 Chair Marshall reported that while the U.S. Forest Service cannot limit the number of people that
30 visit the ski areas, they can cooperate with the accommodation of roads to bring visitors up the
31 canyon. He felt it was important to have the U.S. Forest Service and the Parks and Recreation
32 Department involved in the next discussion. Ms. Nielsen addressed a Q&A document the U.S.
33 Forest Service released pertaining to visitor capacity and use and offered to email it to Committee
34 Members.
35

36 **5. Discussion Regarding Potential Biking/Dog/Hiker/Pedestrian Resolutions and Signs.**

37

38 Chair Marshall reported that the following are to be considered with regard to user groups and
39 safety:
40

- 41 • Engineering;
- 42 • Education; and
- 43 • Enforcement.
44

45 He felt important to determine rules that can help provide information to users through signage
46 that is enforceable.

1
2 Chair Marshall outlined the six primary user groups as:

- 3
4 • Vehicles;
5 • Bicycles;
6 • Dogs and dog walkers;
7 • Pedestrians (including fishermen);
8 • Hikers; and
9 • Joggers.

10
11 Chair Marshall also noted that occasional horses and riders use the trails.

12
13 An outline that Paul Diegel and Hilary Jacobs prepared regarding roads was discussed. Chair
14 Marshall noted three conditions addressed in the outline that include:

- 15
16 1. Road Open to Cars;
17 2. Road Open, Snow-Covered; and
18 3. Road Open, Partially Clear of Snow.

19
20 Chair Marshall suggested that the conditions be organized with specific situations identified in the
21 outline. One example related to snow on the ground when the gate is closed. It was noted that
22 skier and pedestrian dog conflicts are an issue as are dogs on long leashes. Chair Marshall
23 questioned whether dogs on leashes need to be limited to six feet on even and odd days and whether
24 long leashes present a problem for cyclists and skiers. Mr. Diegel noted that County Law defines
25 a leash as having a six-foot maximum length. He shared concerns that extendable leashes can lead
26 to issues with pedestrians and cyclists. The Committee Members agreed that leashes should be
27 limited to six feet above the Winter Gate when it was closed. It was suggested that the six-foot
28 length limitation be communicated to visitors. Ms. Jacobs agreed but wanted to ensure that visitors
29 understand that on off-leash days, leashes are not required.

30
31 Chair Marshall reported that the outline also describes the importance of different users moving at
32 different speeds. He wondered whether it should be a requirement for cyclists riding on trails to
33 have a bell on their bicycles. Mr. Diegel felt this made sense, but some sort of regulation and
34 enforcement would be needed. Mr. Mikhalev believed it would be beneficial to encourage bells
35 but a requirement would penalize people who are not aware of the rules and regulations. He also
36 spoke of an initiative from the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee where bike lights
37 are given out for free to those who do not have them. There was some question as to whether a
38 similar initiative would be possible with bicycle bells. Chair Marshall liked the suggestion and
39 believed it would entice people to use bells voluntarily. Another potential warning device was
40 identified as your voice.

41
42 Mr. Draper noted that those taking shuttle buses may be less familiar with the rules and it would
43 be beneficial if information was provided on shuttle buses. Mr. Mikhalev was familiar with the
44 owners of Big Rack Shuttle Company, Michael Thomas and Cris Fox. He believed the buses
45 would be an effective way to communicate information since the shuttles transport 2,000 people
46 at a minimum each month. Ms. Jacobs believed that bicycle bells would be an appropriate and

1 safe warning to pedestrians. Chair Marshall observed that it appeared that the Committee was in
2 agreement that voluntary bells are a good idea. Distributing them free of charge, potentially
3 through a shuttle company, would decrease the number of incidents between cyclists and
4 pedestrians.

5
6 Mr. Knoblock wondered where the County’s responsibility stops and starts compared to the U.S.
7 Forest Service’s responsibility. He noted that the County owns the roads and is responsible for
8 road maintenance, posting speed limit signs, determining passing and no-passing zones, and
9 providing bike lane striping. The Forest Service is responsible for the road when the Winter Gate
10 is closed and the odd/even bicycle and dog leash days in the upper canyon. Chair Marshall stated
11 that the two governments need to work together. Ms. Hart noted that dog rules are written by the
12 County and enforced by the Deputies or Sheriff’s Office. The bike rules in the canyon are written
13 and enforced by the U.S. Forest Service. Additionally, on-road bicycling has no regulations aside
14 from the normal State of Utah road rules.

15
16 Chair Marshall wondered how to separate various types of traffic, especially with COVID-19 and
17 pedestrians wanting distance between one another. He referenced Mr. Diegel’s suggestion where
18 pedestrians use the south lane and the north lane was left open for skiers and cyclists. He noted
19 that he rarely sees snowmobiles in the area and did not believe they would be an issue.
20 Mr. Knoblock reported that the 1997 Forest Closure Order stated that any type of motorized
21 vehicle on Millcreek Road when the Maple Gate is closed is forbidden.

22
23 Chair Marshall reported that with COVID-19, people are walking in both lanes to maintain social
24 distance, which could make it more difficult for skiers and cyclists. Mr. Knoblock felt that the
25 width of the road plus the shoulder area provide sufficient room for social distancing. Mr. Draper
26 commented that the committee needs to plan for the post-COVID era by focusing on long-term
27 solutions. Ms. Jacobs felt that a model like the one in City Creek Canyon would work well. In
28 City Creek Canyon, pedestrians are required to stay on the canyon’s stream side with bicyclists
29 staying to the left in the same lane. Cyclists stay on the slope side when traveling downhill.
30 Ms. Jacobs noted that it had taken awhile for people in City Creek Canyon to get used to the
31 regulations, but clear signs throughout have been effective. The purpose of the system was to keep
32 the fast track, which includes bicycles, away from slower traffic and pedestrians.

33
34 Mr. Knoblock stated they would need to work with the U.S. Forest Service to determine the best
35 way to communicate with visitors, either with paint or signs on the side of the road. Chair Marshall
36 wondered how to deal with large families or groups blocking lanes. Ms. Jacobs discussed the
37 importance of signs to help educate visitors, including large groups. She noted that there would
38 be a learning curve, but over time, the signs will help alleviate a lot of problems.

39
40 Mr. Draper wondered if the rule about dogs being off leash on odd number days should apply to
41 the trails but not the roads. Ms. Jacobs noted that the area where dogs could go off leash is small
42 and cyclists will have to be respectful. Chair Marshall suggested a sign at the top of Big Water or
43 Elbow Fork that states, “Caution: Expect Off Leash Dogs on Odd Days.” Mr. Draper also liked
44 the idea of the shuttle buses providing additional information or warnings. Mr. Mikhalev informed
45 the Committee that the shuttle buses do not run on off leash dog days because cyclists could not

1 use the upper trails. The Committee still believed it would be beneficial to warn visitors or put up
2 signs in the shuttle buses.

3
4 Chair Marshall asked for clarification about the rules relating to Millcreek Canyon. He asked if
5 bikes are allowed in more areas on days that dogs can be off leash, such as Big Water, Little Water,
6 and the Great Western Trails, rather than days where dogs were on leash. Mr. Diegel stated that
7 this is due to the Pipeline Trail being the only practical trail in Lower Millcreek. Most of the bike
8 riding in Millcreek took place in the upper canyon. Chair Marshall wondered what will happen
9 when the connector goes in between Elbow Fork and the Dog Lake parking lots. Mr. Diegel stated
10 there would be more use but would follow the same rules as the existing Pipeline.

11
12 It was suggested that bicycles could be used one day and pedestrians with dogs could visit the area
13 another day. Chair Marshall felt that while this would be easily enforceable, it would place a
14 burden on cyclists and dog owners. Mr. Knoblock suggested that Little Water Trail could be
15 closed to cyclists so hikers and people with dogs would always have a trail they could visit without
16 worry. Both Mr. Diegel and Mr. Mikhalev noted that the Little Water Trail is often used by
17 cyclists.

18
19 Chair Marshall discussed the first condition on the outline that Mr. Diegel and Ms. Jacobs
20 prepared. Under the title, Canyon Problems, it listed Road Open to Cars. He suggested replacing
21 that with Road Open to Multiple User Groups instead, to avoid placing blame on one particular
22 user group.

23
24 Chair Marshall reported his concerns related to foot traffic and congestion around Church Fork,
25 where there are trailheads and picnic grounds on both sides as well as the Millcreek Inn. This
26 creates parking issues requiring people to park on the opposite side of the road and walk across.
27 Chair Marshall reported that he had been after the County to do something there similar to what
28 was done at Log Haven. He wanted the County to focus on signage, paint on the road, and possibly
29 provide two crosswalks instead of one for increased user safety. The main concern was the fact
30 that there is a 60-foot stretch of road where people cross but cannot see downhill. Chair Marshall
31 wanted all areas of the canyon to be safe, including in the Church Fork area.

32
33 Chair Marshall referenced a bullet point in the outline related to foot traffic and congestion with
34 picnic areas and restaurants. He wanted to ensure that Log Haven is not lumped in with the issues
35 found at Millcreek Inn and Church Fork. A request was made that the references be more specific.

36
37 Chair Marshall brought up the idea of a crosswalk that flashes only when a pedestrian is crossing.
38 It was a more expensive solution but would get the attention of both cars and cyclists. The idea
39 was something Chair Marshall wanted to see in the outline moving forward. The Committee
40 Members agreed that it would be safe, simple, and effective.

41
42 Ms. Peters stated that a lot of items in the outline are general. The outline is an attempt to set
43 standards so that the different user groups would be compatible and the canyons would be safer.
44 A lot of the fine details had not yet been worked out or expanded. Chair Marshall wanted to start
45 making those finer distinctions moving forward. He also brought up the idea of having a sign to
46 indicate that pedestrians, joggers, and hikers should be using the bike lane in the lower canyon.

1 However, Leon Berrett from Salt Lake County’s Public Works previously determined that the lane
2 was not of consistent uniform width and, therefore, not considered a bike lane. Any signage would
3 need to avoid the term and instead indicate that pedestrians should use the right shoulder.
4

5 Mr. Knoblock believed that a U.S. Forest Service partnership was key for the approval of signs
6 moving forward. Mr. Draper stated that the U.S. Forest Service needs to hear about legitimate
7 safety concerns from the Committee. Chair Marshall noted that everything discussed during the
8 meeting related to education, which indicates a need for additional signs and handouts for visitors.
9

10 Mr. Diegel asked that if any Committee Members had suggestions, corrections, or additions to
11 make to the outline, that they submit to the group. Chair Marshall volunteered to take the points
12 discussed in the outline and convert them to a memorandum for the County and the U.S. Forest
13 Service. He would send it out to Committee Members within the next two weeks for discussion
14 at the next meeting, which he hoped would include representatives from the County and the U.S.
15 Forest Service. Mr. Mikhalev wanted to bring the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee
16 on board and Mr. Knoblock suggested bringing on Millcreek City Council Members as well.
17

18 **6. Other Business Relating Directly to Millcreek Canyon.**

19
20 **7. Adjournment.**

21
22 **MOTION:** Paul Diegel moved to adjourn. John Knoblock seconded the motion. The motion
23 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
24

25 The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate and complete record of the Millcreek*
2 *Canyon Committee Meeting held Tuesday, July 14, 2020.*

3

4 *Teri Forbes*

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____