

Summary of 10/26/2018 CWNCRA Act Changes

The Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act is aimed at settling longstanding disputes and protecting the Central Wasatch mountains. Major landmarks of the legislation include:

- Establishment of a new designation for federal lands in the Central Wasatch Mountains to provide stronger management direction for this heavily used area while protecting watersheds and environmental values
- Authorization for dollar-for-dollar, appraised value land exchanges between the U.S. Forest Service and ski resorts located in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons to move mountainside private lands outside ski areas into public hands while consolidating private lands in the base areas of the ski resorts
- The creation of a new Mount Aire/Grandeur Peak Wilderness Area
- An addition to the existing Lone Peak Wilderness Area
- A proposed new White Pine Special Management Area
- Adjustment of small pieces of Wilderness areas to allow for an alignment of the Bonneville Shoreline trail as a multi-purpose trail

The CWNCRA was originally introduced in 2016 by Congressman Jason Chaffetz as HR 5718. The CWNCRA is a direct result from the Mountain Accord agreement, a locally driven, consensus-based effort. The purpose of Mountain Accord was to bring all parties together to find long-term solutions to issues in the Central Wasatch range. The legislation would further protect the sources of our drinking water, preserving recreational opportunities and access for the future, and ensure enjoyment of the Central Wasatch Mountains in the face of pressures from a growing population and visitors.

Under direction of the Central Wasatch Commission board to redraft the legislation from 2016, two drafts were made available to the public for review and comment on July 17th, 2018, and August 2nd, 2018. This draft of the legislation, dated October 26th, 2018, is presented to the public for review and comment. The CWC plan to take up this draft of the legislation during the November 5th, 2018 regular Central Wasatch Commission meeting at Cottonwood Heights City Hall.

Following is a list of issues addressed in the October 26th, 2018 draft and under consideration for further changes. A new draft NCRA map has been prepared that reflect the changes that are described below

Alta Ski Lifts-Grizzly Gulch Resolution

The 10/26/18 draft removes Alta Ski Lifts from the land exchanges and holds their private lands harmless in CWNCRA. The accompanying draft map shows Alta Ski Lifts current ski user permit boundary, boundary expansion area, and private lands. Alta Ski Lifts private lands adjacent to

permit areas are also excluded from the NCRA designation boundary. Alta Ski Lifts Resort Boundary Adjustment Area includes the Avalanche Protection Zone Forest Service Permit Area, and the slivers of Forest Service Land at the mouth of Grizzly Gulch. The language in the updated draft explicitly gives Alta Ski Lifts the ability to apply to the USFS for resort expansion within the “ASL Resort Boundary Adjustment Area” (as identified on 10/26/18 map).(Sec 6(a)(10)(C))

Land Exchanges for Solitude, Brighton, and Snowbird

The 10/26/18 draft includes the land exchanges from previous CWNCRA drafts for Solitude, Brighton, and Snowbird. All land exchanges between the ski areas and the USFS are subject to FS administrative process, as described in the legislation.

Split Estates Exchanges

The 10/26/18 draft provides for split estate exchanges between the USFS and private lands within the CWNCRA boundary. (Sec 7(d)(4)(B)).

Additional Lands in Exchange

The 10/26/18 draft adds a provision that would allow for ski areas to include other private lands in their exchanges not identified on existing maps. This provision provides the option for ski areas involved in the exchange to acquire other private properties within the CWNCRA boundary and add them to their proposed exchanges to consolidate more of their base areas in private ownership while preserving additional mountain lands. (Sec 7(d)(4)(A)).

Bonneville Shoreline Trail Wilderness Reduction and Offset

To accommodate mountain biking for the popular Bonneville Shoreline Trail corridor, a portion of wilderness would need to be adjusted to accommodate a trail alignment because mountain biking is prohibited in wilderness areas. Those discussions are ongoing and resolution is underway that would include adding some wilderness to offset the wilderness loss from the BST accommodation. No changes are reflected in maps in this draft of the legislation.

White Pine Mountain Biking Issue

An issue has arisen over whether mountain biking would be allowed in the White Pine Special Management Area. In this draft of the bill, like earlier drafts, mountain biking would not be permitted.

Assurance of Protecting Private Property Rights

The 10/26/18 draft includes additional provisions to the White Pine Special Management Area to clarify protection for the South Despain Ditch Company’s water rights and use (Sec. 5).

Little Cottonwood Canyon Transportation Corridor

In earlier versions of the proposed legislation, a sliver of land was removed from the Lone Peak Wilderness Area to accommodate an expanded potential transportation corridor in Little

Cottonwood Canyon. UDOT analysis has concluded that no foreseeable need exists for an expanded corridor. The sliver removal has been removed from the draft legislation.

Millcreek Canyon Fire Prevention

Discussions continue over whether buffer areas are needed for private property in Millcreek Canyon for fire prevention measures. Those discussions continue; no changes are reflected in this version of the proposed legislation.