



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD, TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025, AT 3:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Committee Members: Kelly Boardman, Chair
Dan Zalles, Co-Chair
Meaghan McKasy
Doug Tolman
Jonny Vasic
Adam Lenkowski
Maura Hahnenberger
Brenden Catt
Ella Abelli-Amen

Staff: Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director

OPENING

1. Chair Kelly Boardman will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Environment System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.

Chair Kelly Boardman called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Environment System Committee Meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the April 8, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Boardman reported that she was unable to attend the last Environment System Committee Meeting but she listened to the meeting recording and reviewed the Meeting Minutes. There was a presentation from Otto Lang at the last meeting about dust on snow in the Central Wasatch. In addition, there was a brief discussion about the Environmental Dashboard, which has since been renamed the Central Wasatch Dashboard. Committee Members discussed some of the U.S. Forest Service needs as well. There was also a discussion about land acquisition and conservation efforts.

1 **MOTION:** Kelly Boardman moved to APPROVE the April 8, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Maura
2 Hahnenberger seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
3 Committee.

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5 It was noted that there was a new member of CWC Staff present at the Environment System
6 Committee Meeting. Communications Director, Ben Kilbourne, introduced himself to Committee
7 Members.

8 9 **PROPOSED PARKING EXPANSION AT SOLITUDE RESORT**

10 11 1. **The Committee will Use a Systems Approach to Analyze the Potential Impact of the** 12 **Proposed Parking Expansion at Solitude Mountain Resort through the Lens of the** 13 **Mountain Accord.**

14
15 Chair Boardman reported that there is a parking expansion proposed at Solitude Mountain Resort.
16 Save Our Canyons has recently shared some information about this proposal. It appears that there is
17 a 593-stall parking lot proposed directly across SR 190 from Solitude Village. Chair Boardman
18 explained that the reason this item is on the Environment System Committee Meeting agenda is so
19 Committee Members can learn more about the proposal and determine whether this fits with the goals
20 of the Mountain Accord. Links were shared to an article in The Salt Lake Tribune and the proposed
21 plans.

22
23 Doug Tolman reviewed some of the known information. In February, Solitude Mountain Resort
24 submitted a Conditional Use Permit application for a new paved parking lot. The access to that
25 parking lot would be from what is now Old Stage Road. There are two levels to the proposed parking
26 lot. The top level would have a 40-foot retaining wall behind it. Currently, the site is mostly a
27 Quaking Aspen grove. The parcels on the east and west sides are residential. On the southwest side
28 is a parcel of land that is owned by Salt Lake City Public Utilities to protect water resources. To
29 access the parking lot, an easement would be required across the Salt Lake City Public Utilities land
30 that would extend the 150-foot road to 1,000 feet. It would turn the historic jeep track into a paved,
31 two-lane road with retaining walls and switchbacks. Mr. Tolman reported that the Town of Brighton
32 has 240 parking spaces in its inventory. In the Solitude Mountain Resort application, the rationale
33 for the parking lot is to remove vehicles from the highway. This is due to possible dangers associated
34 with parking on the side of the highway and the impacts of congestion. However, the number of
35 spaces in the proposed parking lot is 593. Even if the Town of Brighton removed all official roadside
36 parking spaces in the area, that would still result in an additional 353 parking spaces in the canyon.

37
38 At the last Transportation System Committee Meeting, there was a discussion about the impacts on
39 transportation, such as adding more parking spaces and the pedestrian crossing. The plans do not
40 specify whether the pedestrian crossing would involve a crosswalk, bridge, or tunnel. There were no
41 details about that provided. Mr. Tolman reported that there were concerns expressed during the
42 Transportation System Committee Meeting that safety issues could potentially be caused by the
43 proposal. Additionally, there could be congestion issues associated with the additional parking spots.

44
45 The Transportation System Committee made a motion to forward a recommendation to the
46 Stakeholders' Council. There is a desire for the CWC Board to make a public statement in opposition.
47 Mr. Tolman and Mike Marker will be creating a draft letter that will be circulated to members of the
48 Transportation System Committee. It will then be brought to the Stakeholders Council for

1 consideration. The letter will be related to incompatibility with the Mountain Accord. The intention
2 is for the letter to be systems-focused. The majority of the Transportation System Committee believed
3 the proposed parking lot would negatively impact transportation and safety in the canyon.
4

5 Co-Chair Dan Zalles asked for additional information about the location. Mr. Tolman explained that
6 the proposed parking lot is near the Mill F Fork. A lot of people access the Willow Lake area from
7 there, as there is a well-known backcountry recreation access spot. Co-Chair Zalles wondered if the
8 parking area would be visible from the Mill D Fork. Mr. Tolman believed it could be visible from
9 certain spots. However, this is directly across the street from Solitude Village, so it would be more
10 visible from the upper canyon. Jonny Vasic believed Solitude Mountain Resort is interested in this
11 parking lot in order to address parking on the road, which was confirmed. Mr. Tolman confirmed
12 that based on the application and the supplemental information provided, that is their rationale. Mr.
13 Vasic wondered whether roadside parking is something Solitude Mountain Resort is able to enforce.
14 Mr. Tolman clarified that the resort does not have that authority, but the application stated that there
15 is a desire to work closely with the Town of Brighton since the town has enforcement authority for
16 roadside parking. It is possible for the town to ticket vehicles for parking illegally or over the line.
17 On the other hand, the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) is able to restrict parking.
18

19 Mr. Tolman noted that there is a complicated jurisdictional relationship between the Forest Service,
20 UDOT, municipalities, and the Unified Police Department (“UPD”) when it comes to parking and
21 enforcement. He suggested that the Environment System Committee discuss environmental impacts.
22

23 Co-Chair Zalles asked about the aspen grove. He wanted to know whether cutting down some of it
24 would harm the entire grove. Chair Boardman wondered whether an Environmental Assessment is
25 required with this Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Tolman does not believe it is subject to the National
26 Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) process because it is primarily on private land. He does not
27 believe there will be any Environmental Assessment conducted. Chair Boardman asked what could
28 limit the project. Mr. Tolman reported that it is a Conditional Use Permit application. Within the
29 zone, ski resort expansion is a conditional use. He explained that a conditional use is not always
30 granted, but it is not always denied either. It is granted if certain conditions are met. Under State
31 law, Conditional Use Permits generally must be approved unless the negative impacts cannot be
32 reasonably mitigated. He pointed out that “reasonably mitigated” is a subjective term. Co-Chair
33 Zalles shared comments about the Endangered Species Act and stated that the Environment System
34 Committee should discuss the environmental impacts associated with the loss of this natural area.
35

36 Mr. Tolman clarified that while there will not be an official Environmental Assessment, there was a
37 Conditions Assessment conducted. That assessment was conducted to determine the species that
38 were present. It is possible to review that list and determine whether there are endangered species
39 mentioned. Chair Boardman asked whether this proposal fits the goals of the Mountain Accord. What
40 is proposed would add more impervious surfaces and more vehicles, which is important to consider
41 if the intention is to reduce the number of vehicles in the canyons through transportation solutions.
42 When it comes to the proposal, it is also necessary to consider wildlife habitat, flora, and watershed.
43

44 Meagan McKasy pointed out that there is a recreational component to consider as well. For example,
45 when someone is skiing down, the view could either be of an aspen grove or a parking lot. It seems
46 Solitude Mountain Resort is thinking only about the transportation element as opposed to the other
47 systems. She asked whether Salt Lake City Public Utilities is supportive of what has been proposed.
48 Mr. Tolman reported that the application from Solitude Mountain Resort states that there is a desire

1 to work with Salt Lake City Public Utilities. He has not spoken to anyone from Salt Lake City Public
2 Utilities at this time, so he is unable to make a comment about their perspective on this proposal.
3 Mr. Tolman has been in contact with a number of homeowners who are concerned about the
4 additional noise and fire risk. He explained that Quaking Aspens are known to be a fire break and
5 are a species that keeps fires smaller. The aspens are beneficial as far as fire mitigation.

6
7 Co-Chair Zalles shared comments about the Mountain Accord. The consensus was that the Central
8 Wasatch should be a sustainable entity that is attractive and appealing. An environmental argument
9 could be that making the area less attractive and less appealing would make people less likely to visit.
10 This is also true if the area becomes less safe due to the removal of the Quaking Aspens that are there.
11 An argument could be made that changes to the aesthetics could ultimately impact economic interests.
12 Solitude Mountain Resort is likely thinking about the revenue that can be made from the parking lot.
13 When people park on the street, there is no money being collected, but in the parking lot, it would be
14 possible to charge a fee. Chair Boardman explained that the reason there is a charge for parking is to
15 remove vehicles from the canyon and encourage visitors to carpool to the resort.

16
17 Chair Boardman stated that the proposal is in direct conflict with the goals of the Mountain Accord.
18 It highlights the need for Legislation like the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation
19 Area Act (“CWNCR”). Adam Lenkowski shared comments about the proposed parking lot and
20 referenced the stream that exists in the area. There would be at least one stream impacted.
21 Mr. Tolman commented that the primary access from USA Bowl involves a handshake agreement for
22 an easement so backcountry skiers can access the area over private property. That landowner is in
23 opposition to a mountain bike crossing and is only supportive of non-commercial recreation on foot.
24 He imagines that there could be some user conflicts and landowner conflicts associated with
25 additional visitation to the area. Chair Boardman agreed that the proposed parking lot would change
26 the landscape significantly. Ella Abelli-Amen does not believe that cutting down some of the aspens
27 would damage the rest of the clones. The rest of the clone would likely be fine, but it would be a
28 major disturbance and there are already a lot of invasive species in that area. The invasive species
29 would be likely to take over the surrounding area. If this project moves forward, then a lot of invasive
30 species mitigation will be necessary. There was discussions about next steps for the Committee.

31
32 Chair Boardman suggested that a motion be made so the Environment System Committee is able to
33 contribute to the letter that the Transportation System Committee is currently working on.

34
35 **MOTION:** Kelly Boardman made a motion to contribute to the Transportation System Committee
36 letter related to the proposed parking lot application from Solitude Mountain Resort. Doug Tolman
37 seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

38
39 Mr. Tolman reiterated that he and Mr. Marker are working on the draft version of the letter. He asked
40 if there is a member of the Environment System Committee who would like to assist with this process.
41 The draft will be written at the Save Our Canyons office on May 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Ms. Abelli-
42 Amen stated that she can provide detailed maps to indicate where the invasive species occur nearby.
43 There are also some useful tools online to map endangered species, which could be accessed to
44 determine what species might be in the area. While she can provide that information, she is unable
45 to join Mr. Tolman and Mr. Marker at the Save Our Canyons office. She believes there is a strong
46 argument for there being more invasive species in areas where natural vegetation is removed and
47 there is a disturbance. It is also possible to highlight the potential impacts on the watershed. Chair

Boardman offered to review the draft letter and contribute, but she is unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Tolman stated that he would share a draft with both committees so feedback could be received.

LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON TRANSIT DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Use a Systems Approach to Discuss the Record of Decision for the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement through the Lens of the Mountain Accord.

Chair Boardman explained that there is a desire to discuss transit in Little Cottonwood Canyon. An email was received from CWC Staff back in the fall and she would like some clarification about the information shared, which stated that the CWC Board decided not to take a position on the proposed gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the last time the CWC Board considered taking a position for or against any alternative in the canyon was back in 2020. At that time, the Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”) process took place. The CWC Board evaluated three different transportation modes: enhanced bus, gondola, and train. Out of that process came the Pillars for Transportation Solutions in the Central Wasatch Mountains document, which calls for an accessible and equitable solution that is not environmentally impactful. There was no unanimous agreement at that time about a specific mode. Consensus means that every viewpoint and approach to an idea is considered, which was the reason the pillars document was created. Environment System Committee Members can listen to past meetings.

Chair Boardman reported that she listened to some of the previous CWC Board discussions. It seemed the CWC Board thought that without implementing Phase I, as proposed in the Record of Decision (“ROS”), it was difficult to evaluate whether the gondola would even be necessary. It concerns her that the gondola still seems to be the plan for UDOT. There are lawsuits limiting what can be done. She stressed the importance of starting to implement some of the solutions that were outlined. Ms. Nielsen noted that the Environment System Committee can forward a request to the CWC Board. If there is a desire for Board Members to revisit the alternatives, then a recommendation can be made.

Chair Boardman referenced the Pillars for Transportation Solutions in the Central Wasatch Mountains document, which was created in June 2021. The document includes statements about the following:

- Visitor Use Capacity;
- Watershed Protection;
- Traffic Demand Management, Parking and Bus (or other transit) Strategies;
- Integration into the Broader Regional Transportation Network;
- Year-Round Transit Service;
- Long-Term Protection of Critical Areas Through Federal Legislation.

Chair Boardman reported that she read something recently that stated the gondola, as proposed, is not intended to run year-round. It is only intended to run during the winter season. Ms. Nielsen reported that UDOT will likely be the entity running the ski bus service. If there is movement on the lawsuit and Phase I is able to move forward, it will likely be that UDOT is the one implementing and managing that. Co-Chair Zalles pointed out that a lot has changed since the last time the CWC Board discussed the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) and the alternatives. For example, there are now the lawsuits to consider. It is possible to ask the CWC Board to talk about this issue again. Chair Boardman believes it makes sense to take a stand against the

gondola proposal based on the goals outlined in the Mountain Accord and the systems approach. There was discussion about the previous CWC Board process and the pillars document. Co-Chair Zalles thought it made sense to move forward with enhanced buses while the lawsuits related to the gondola are taking place.

Mr. Tolman pointed out that the CWC Board taking a public stance might impact the CWNCR work. As far as the ongoing litigation, there have been multiple attempts by plaintiffs to have a mediation session with UDOT to move forward with Phase I. However, those have been unsuccessful at this point. Given the current stalemate and the numerous parties that are involved, he does not necessarily believe that there is anything the CWC can do until the litigation process is further along.

Co-Chair Zalles discussed the CWNCR. There seems to be a consensus that it is the central mission of the CWC. While it is aspirational and sounds beneficial, there is uncertainty about whether it would move through Congress. If it did, there are questions about what it would ultimately look like. He does not feel it makes sense to compromise other items to build political capital for the CWNCR.

TIMBER PRODUCTION IN THE CENTRAL WASATCH

1. The Committee will Discuss the Executive Order Titled Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production and Its Potential Impact on the Central Wasatch.

Co-Chair Zalles reported that there was an Executive Order related to timber production. It expresses a desire to expand production, including on BLM and Forest Service lands. He does not know whether this is an issue that the Environment System Committee should be concerned about at this time, but the Committee could discuss potential impacts on the Central Wasatch. In the past, there was clear-cutting in the Wasatch and it caused a water crisis in Salt Lake City. There have been some fuels reduction projects in Millcreek Canyon and there will also be some in Big Cottonwood Canyon.

Under the former President, there was an Executive Order that expressed an intention to protect old growth in mature forests. However, there is uncertainty about whether that will continue under the new President. Co-Chair Zalles is not sure whether there will be clear-cutting in the Central Wasatch. One question for the Forest Service is whether there is the potential for commercial logging in the area. Mr. Tolman noted that the Salt Lake Ranger District does not usually answer questions related to Federal policy or proposed Federal policy changes. There are two other pieces of policy change that could be discussed by the Environment System Committee, including the House reconciliation bill and a Secretary's Order that declares a state of emergency on 60% of all National Forest land. He noted that the reconciliation bill requires every Forest Service district to enter into a major contract for logging with a private company and has a provision to allow for NEPA streamlining.

It was noted that this process will be evolving for quite some time. There are opportunities to see what direction these agencies are heading in as they continue to evolve. This is something the Environment System Committee can continue to track as the various deadlines approach and pass.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

1. The Committee will Discuss Items for the Next Meeting Agenda.

There was discussion about possible items to add to the next Environment System Committee

1 Meeting agenda. Chair Boardman suggested a review of the letter that will be written by Mr. Tolman
2 and Mr. Marker. Alternatively, it is possible to review that draft via email and share comments.
3 Mr. Tolman explained that email would be best, as the intention is to present the letter at the
4 Stakeholders Council Meeting on June 4, 2025. It was confirmed that all comments will be shared
5 by email.
6

7 Co-Chair Zalles asked that the timber issue continue to be tracked. He offered to be proactive in
8 tracking what was happening but asked if there were any suggestions about who he could reach out
9 to about this matter. Mr. Tolman reported that the National Wilderness Coalition has some letters
10 going out and will also be meeting with members of Congress in the next few weeks. He offered to
11 forward any relevant information he receives to the members of the Environment System Committee.
12

13 A request was made to discuss the Central Wasatch Dashboard efforts. Director of Operations,
14 Samantha Kilpack, reported that CWC Staff is still working with the DIGIT Lab. Some simple
15 changes are being made to improve the useability. For instance, a table of contents has been added
16 to a lot of the pages. There is still work being done to develop a map for the front page of the Central
17 Wasatch Dashboard. The DIGIT Lab will also look into what data gathering is needed, but the
18 timeline has been pushed back. Changes are slowly being made to the Central Wasatch Dashboard.
19

20 Chair Boardman noted that there has been a push to include more data in the Human Element. She
21 thought it might be worthwhile to receive an update from John Knoblock about the Baseline Study
22 efforts. Ms. Kilpack stated that the Transportation System Committee and Recreation System
23 Committee are both looking into baseline data. Different members are looking into the available data.
24

25 Mr. Lenkowski asked about the funding available for the Central Wasatch Dashboard. Ms. Kilpack
26 reported that in the budget, there is funding for ongoing maintenance. Additionally, there is funding
27 to fulfill the contract with the DIGIT Lab to make the changes discussed. There was a smaller State
28 appropriation received this year than requested, because it was a difficult budget year overall.
29

30 Brenden Catt asked whether there was a desire to reevaluate the survey that was conducted. At the
31 next Environment System Committee Meeting, there could be a discussion about the status of the
32 survey, funding, and the efforts of the DIGIT Lab. It was noted that survey responses are still being
33 submitted. Co-Chair Zalles suggested the Solitude Mountain Resort parking lot be a future agenda
34 item. A comment was left in the Zoom chat box from Mr. Lenkowski. He pointed out that the Central
35 Wasatch Dashboard has a section about the history of logging in the Wasatch that can be reviewed
36 by members.
37

38 **OTHER ITEMS**

39

40 There were no additional items discussed.
41

42 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

43

44 There were no public comments.
45

1 **CLOSING**

2
3 1. **Chair Boardman will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Environment System Committee**
4 **Meeting.**

5
6 **MOTION:** Kelly Boardman moved to ADJOURN the Environment System Committee Meeting.
7 Dan Zalles seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

8
9 The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Environment System Committee Meeting held Tuesday,*
3 *May 13, 2025.*
4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary
9

10 Minutes Approved: _____