

# SAVE OUR CANYONS

Dedicated to protecting the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains

## FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

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ALEXIS KELNER  
Editor Emeritus

# THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME



This is a republished cover from 2002.

# THE CAPACITY CONUNDRUM

Written by our Executive Director, Carl Fisher

How many people can you fit in a VW Beetle? The manual for the vehicle says that four people can fit in the car for safe operation, however, for decades people have attempted to push the limit. The quick Google search says that for the original body style the Guinness Book of World Records says 20 people can fit. For the newer body style, an attempt of 28 people has been made. I didn't have the time, or interest, to see if they were successful.



Is this the future of the Wasatch Mountains?

The point is, if your objective is to enjoy the utility of the vehicle safely and as it was designed to function (you might want to first look at something besides a VW Beetle), the answer is four people. If you and your passengers are willing to take additional

risks and compromise safety, function, and comfort you could perhaps fit five, maybe six people. Any more than that is absurd, the utility of the car will be completely compromised. The car, is reduced to a stunt and a joke, its value completely changed, its upholstery damaged and parts potentially broken. It has a functioning carrying capacity.

The Wasatch, like a VW Beetle, can never become a Chevy Suburban, let alone the capacity of a 15-passenger van. It seems that state and federal leaders are hell-bent on seeing how many folks we can fit in the Wasatch without thinking about the impact it will have on the functionality of the environment. Their metric, which comes as little surprise, seems to be economic impact. They have little regard for wildlife, watershed, or even the many year-round uses of the canyons. The nut Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) appears to be trying to crack with its Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is how to get as many skiers to the resort as quickly as possible, with little regard of other values or uses of the canyons. The resorts too, have a capacity. Increasing their capacities, intentionally or otherwise, has an impact on the rest of the canyon. You'll remember that at one point on Hidden Peak, a warming hut was adequate for the capacities (and expectations) of guests. The primary driver and reasoning for the new structure atop the peak formerly known as Hidden, was capacity. As more people come to the region, and make trips into the Wasatch, it oftentimes drives the need for more infrastructure. The question is at what point will this positive feedback loop end?

I was encouraged earlier this year when the majority of the Stakeholders Council of the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) voted, albeit narrowly, to undertake a carrying capacity study for the Central Wasatch. Those opposed to the study brushed this effort off as a delay tactic that will merely delay finding a transportation solution as the analysis will surely take time. Those asking for the analysis correctly state that if you →

believe these canyons have a carrying capacity and that nearing or crossing that will have real environmental consequences, we shouldn't explore transportation systems that would put us over that limit. Seems like a logical and conservative approach to me.

Well, since that time, we've been told, yes, we will begin to look at carrying capacity, but UDOT will not stop their process to wait for that information. In fairness to UDOT and USFS, the Little Cottonwood EIS must look at capacity issues and impacts, but only as it pertains to the roadway, not as it pertains to function of the watershed. It is these differences in scope that promulgate the, "death by a thousand cuts" epidemic that confront the Wasatch. An example of this scope and what does/doesn't get analyzed is resorts transition from fixed grip lifts to high speed quads. This transition fundamentally changed how many people the resorts could move around the mountain, hence inducing visitation, which thereby has placed stresses on the roadway. The changes in uphill capacity of the resorts has outpaced the capacity of the roadway, which was always known to be a limiting factor for the ski areas cited in numerous documents, including the USFS Plan.

This is not to say there are not strategies to deal with or even manage growth in our canyons. The trouble is that they are subject to change. For instance, the USFS Revised Forest Plan calls for parking to not exceed the levels they were in the year 2000. A recent interpretation of this now includes all the roadside parking, where they will close parking on roadsides and replace those spots in new parking lots. While the agency cites it is a wash for accommodating cars, it requires disturbing, or in the case of Alta ski area, not having to remediate previously disturbed areas (ie. The old supreme lift base which is now the site of a large parking lot). Our interpretation of the rule was that natural areas and remediation of impacted areas is a higher priority than disturbance. It is this type of interpretation, that happens on numerous levels, that facilitates the erosion of the Wasatch. There are few guarantees in life, but every mealy mouthed sentence in well intended plans or regulations will ultimately defer to the human environment over the natural one. We believe the Wasatch deserves more defense than this, that future generations deserve to not arrive to parking lots where there were once moose and wildflowers.

What is current visitation to the Wasatch?

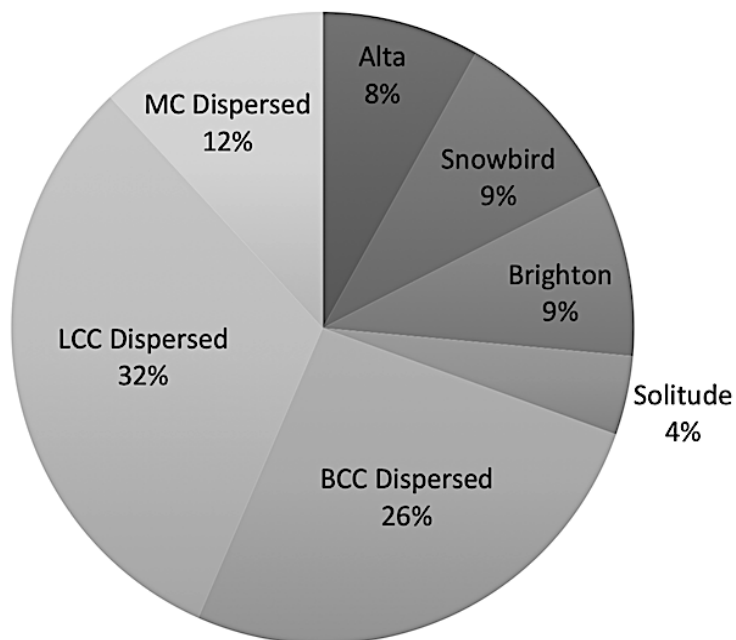
Well, in 2015 Save Our Canyons used our precious membership dollars to fund a survey to understand information about visitation to the Central Wasatch. The team we hired from Utah State University concluded annual visitation to the region was 4.505 million. Broken down by canyon it looks like this:

- Big Cottonwood - 1.734 million
- Little Cottonwood - 2.199 million
- Millcreek Canyon - 531,775

What is most interesting, is how that visitation is broken down in resort visitation vs dispersed visitation.

As you can see, visitation to undeveloped sites and areas of the Wasatch far outpaces resort visitation, with 70% of visitors going to dispersed sites. This is perhaps because the values we found through the Central Wasatch Visitor Study, where we ->

**Figure 1: Summary of Tri-Canyon Usage**



Estimation of Visitor Use Study , 2015 , Save Our Canyons

surveyed both at trailheads and at resorts, found that people were seeking connection with nature, and to get away from the urban areas - something difficult to find at the ski areas.

What this should tell us, is that if we want to reduce congestion and traffic in our canyons, we need to look at trailheads and resorts. In coming months, however, you are going to start hearing how 90% of the visits to the Wasatch are to the ski areas and how we need to ensure transit serves the resorts, but not trailheads or other congested areas of the Wasatch. Because of our proximity to Utah's most populous region, we have real challenges managing the masses. We don't fault anyone for wanting to be in these canyons at anytime of the year as they are inspiring, beautiful and wild. However, failing to look at the Wasatch in the context of the entire year will result in more, not less issues in the Wasatch. Are our efforts to help the resorts, or to help the Wasatch? These are very different questions that are being muddled by UDOT and the Little Cottonwood EIS.

The Mountain Accord affirmed the decades long call for more transit in the Mountains, year round transit at that, as the population loathes the congestion issues and wants to do something to make it better. For the better part of 40 years, we've known the canyons, the roads and our watersheds have a capacity. What earthmoving changes are you comfortable seeing in these canyons to accommodate more people? Should we build to accommodate demand or manage to protect community values and the canyons carrying capacity?

I bet Save Our Canyons volunteers could break the world record of people in a VW Beetle, if we were allowed to remove the back seat and steering wheel. What will you allow your state and local leaders to remove or compromise the functional integrity of in order to break another visitation record? That gimmicky record appears to be the primary focus of efforts led by the State, why do we celebrate visitation anyhow? County and local governments are complacent in allowing it to happen. Inducing visitation justifies more development and generates more money. It also displaces wildlife and puts our water resources at greater risk. The state has shown their cards and priorities on the opposite corner of the county with the Inland Port. We are naive if we think the state's involvement in our Wasatch Canyons will yield anything less ruinous than what is happening in Salt Lake City's North West quadrant. If you've gone to the State Capitol and sat in on any meetings that concern the Wasatch, it's pretty obvious the state shows little restraint in aiding and abetting those who seek to exploit these canyons for personal gains. It is perplexing why our county and local governments remain complicit in the state's hostile takeover of our canyons. They've stood up against the Inland Port, they've stood up for other public lands in the State, will they stand for their own backyard, the Wasatch Mountains?

It might be exhausting and it is certainly infuriating, but we all need to be more vocal advocates for the protection of the Wasatch and for stricter adherence to management plans and regulations in our canyons. We can't expect things to get better if we don't engage, the exploiters are in control, sprinting toward environmental catastrophe. It is happening to bedrock environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. It happened to Grand Staircase Escalante and Bears Ears National Monument. It is happening with the Inland Port, Utah Lake, and our National Parks. It would be naive to think it won't happen in the Wasatch, and it is an experiment, I for one am not interested in partaking in.

Because we don't currently have laws, policies and/or ordinances looking at these things it's exactly why we need federal legislation, state law changes as do modifications to local ordinances. These continue to be the priority of Save Our Canyons, and where we are putting your membership dollars. Our behaviors as it pertains to these canyons, needs changing. We need your assistance to help get us there. We need your financial support, your policy chops, your passion, your friends and neighbors to stand up and help the Wasatch. My faith in government is at an all time low, but as I glance across the meadow and see wanderlust in the eyes of those whom the Wasatch has touched, my hope for people stepping up, to do something altruistic for this place and what it means is restored. Share your experiences and inspiration with your elected leaders and employ them to protect the Wasatch, post haste!

# WE'VE MOVED

Save Our Canyons has moved offices. You can now find us at the base of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Our new address is:

3690 East Fort Union Blvd, Suite #101  
Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121



We'll never miss an opportunity to #KEEPBALDYBALD

Please consider walking, biking or using transit as we do not have onsite parking. Limited parking is available on street or in park 'n ride lots. Please do not take spots from businesses in the area.

The Wasatch Mountains are what connects us. It's why so many of you are passionate, dedicated, and loyal to helping protect the areas we all love. We will see you at our next event or we hope you will stop by the new office and say hi. Until then, let's enjoy the Wasatch together.

## 5 UNDER 25 AWARD



Our Education and Stewardship Coordinator Luke Golden has been awarded with the Utah Society for Environmental Education 5 Under 25 Award.

This award recognizes individuals, 25 years old or younger, who are game-changers in their communities. These young people are taking on leadership positions to make a difference for the planet. They are engaging their communities, building relationships, and using the power of education to create change.

# COMMUNITY AND CONSERVATION

Written by Tiffany Wimer

Before I became a Community Outreach Intern for the first time at Save Our Canyons, I was nervous about everything. Going from not having much experience with nonprofit work, to having the greatest joy of meeting new people in the community during all of my tabling events. Hearing others have the same value as I do for the mountains gives me hope for this messy world. Having Alex as my mentor was one of the coolest experiences I have had being an intern because for once, someone let me do what I wanted to do myself. I got to choose how and what I wanted to learn during the summer and that is how everyone's learning experience should be.

The important part of this specific internship is to reach out to the community. One of the ways I did that was by tabling at events, stores, and big races. I learned how to introduce myself to so many people, and that is one skill I know will help me in the long run. I was able to talk with so many people about their experiences in the Wasatch Mountains, and why they love and care for the mountains. This helped me learn about the community's perspective, but also learn a lot about what I am studying during my undergraduates (Environmental & Sustainability). I had the opportunity to recruit, schedule and help train volunteers to help me table for a few of these community events. We would just sit and have a great time talking about ourselves and why we both are involved with Save Our Canyons. Explaining petitions, handing out stickers, and explaining volunteer opportunities helped me understand how important it is to get involved as a community. Even though the big power is held by the crazy politics and big corporations, I do believe that having everyone in the community involved can do big things too.



Protect Our Water Event; Tiffany Loves The Wasatch Because...

One out of many of the important skills I have learned in this internship was emailing professionally and consistently. When you are looking for a partnership or need to contact a specific person for an event, it can be intimidating not knowing the person at all. Alex helped me by revising my emails, and this helped me learn how emailing in the real world works. I would also have to reach out to people personally by emailing about any volunteer opportunities. I love that this nonprofit is mostly based around volunteers, and the community gets to have a voice with us! I was lucky to be able to experience grant searching and learning how to find sponsorships by big companies that support us!

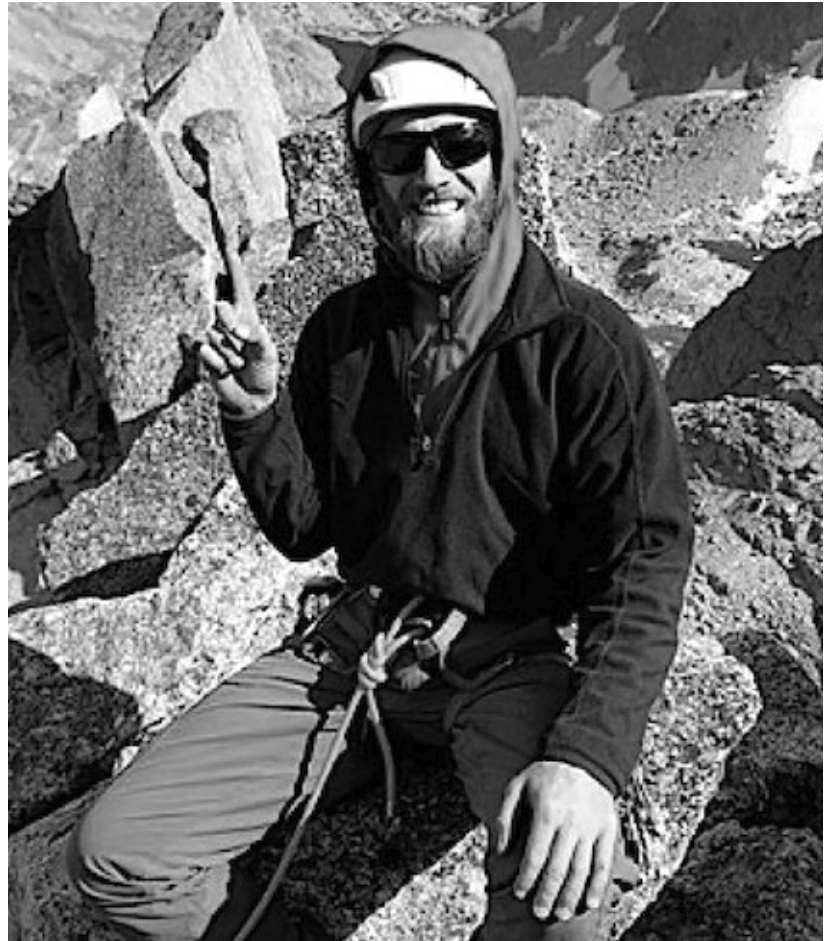
After everything I have done with Save Our Canyons, I can definitely say that nonprofit work is very meaningful. I was able to go table, attend events, and talk to the people of Salt Lake City and feel good about myself and what I did because I was helping out an organization like Save Our Canyons. I feel lucky to have been able to enjoy this internship while I learned the important qualities of keeping the mountains clean, safe, and wild for everyone.

# OBSERVATIONS FROM A NOR'EASTER

Written by Jacob Northcutt

One of the reasons I moved to Salt Lake City for graduate school was because of the access to outstanding recreation opportunities. As an avid climber, skier, runner, and aspiring alpinist, Salt Lake seemed like an amazing place for me to both pursue graduate studies and also continue to progress as an athlete. When I arrived last summer, I was excited to explore the mountains and quickly bought a used pair of AT skis for the upcoming winter. Though I grew up on skis in New England, after college I moved to Northern New England where I spent more time ice and mixed climbing than skiing. This past winter, however, I traded my crampons for ski boots and skied as much as I could.

The Central Wasatch Mountains are an incredible place to ski, and the time I spent this past winter in the backcountry was full of joy, laughter, and too many high fives to count. This was my first winter of sustained backcountry touring, and I felt incredibly lucky to be in these mountains. Skinning with new friends under early morning sun, watching the light fade from Flagstaff Ridge, and linking powder turns in the Big Cottonwood backcountry are powerful memories I will carry with me forever. As we all know though, the Central Wasatch are facing incredible pressure as the human population in the valley continues to grow like bacteria in a petri dish.



Jacob Northcutt will belay for food

As much as I have grown to love the Wasatch Mountains as a place to recreate and reconnect with the natural world, these mountains are more than a recreational landscape. These mountains are our watershed, and they are the habitat for a diverse population of wildlife species. We need to begin to think about the Central Wasatch Mountains not just as the place we love to go hike, climb, run, ski, bike, and picnic, but also as the home of a number of animal and plant species. This is where Save Our Canyons comes in. The work Save Our Canyons does protecting the Wasatch Mountains from development is important, vitally so.

This summer working with Save Our Canyons has been an opportunity to explore the world of environmental non-profits. I value the work Save Our Canyons is doing to preserve and protect these landscapes from development, and this summer has been a crash course in how an organization is successful in doing this. I've been involved in many different facets of the organization this summer, from SOCKids hikes to requesting government documents and drafting official comments to proposed projects, and have felt invigorated knowing that the work I've done this summer will contribute to the continued health of this place. Save Our Canyons serves to educate the public about key issues facing the Wasatch Mountains, and they do this with joy and laughter. These people care deeply about the Wasatch Mountains and work hard to insure the mountains remain an intact landscape and ecosystem for future generations. The future of the Wasatch Mountains depends on the decisions we collectively make now. Let's not screw this up.

# IN MEMORY OF KARLA STEINER KELNER

Written by Gayle Parry

Karla was born in Jerome, Idaho and grew up in Garfield, Utah. She graduated from the University of Utah in 1958. She met Alexis Kelner when they were both working at Saltair, Karla selling tickets and Alexis operating rides. When love is in the air and you want to impress a girl on the first date, what do you suggest doing? Why, hiking the sixteen-mile round trip up Mount Timpanogos and back, of course, even though the girl has never hiked. Alexis Kelner, his friend, and a new girl friend, Karla Steiner, started the Timp hike at 5:30 in the morning and returned about midnight. Karla says her two companions were patient, encouraging and went very slowly. It must have worked out because Karla and Alexis were married in 1959.



Karla Kelner spelunking in an ice cave

This first hike up Mount Timpanogos was to be a glimpse of the woman Karla would turn out to be. She met life's challenges like she climbed that mountain. She was a quiet, intelligent woman with optimistic determination. Some of Karla's exploits illustrated her love for adventure, and showed she was no coward. Nor did she shirk the hard stuff. She helped Alexis shingle their roof by delivering shingles forty feet to the roof. It took them two summers to get the job done. Karla and Alexis loved the outdoors and hiked and camped at every opportunity. Spelunking was another pursuit they both loved. Spelunking was an activity close to Karla's heart. If she wasn't going up a mountain she was going down into a cave. One of the caves she helped explore was Big Brush Cave, one of the longest-if not the longest-cave in Utah. One of the most enjoyable things Karla and Alexis did was to visit, by jeep, the Canyon Lands before it was designated a national park. Karla also had a humorous and rebellious streak as when she took part in painting of a huge Fisher Beer can that some climbers placed on the steeple of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah. The fire department had to remove it.

Few people have known what Karla did for Save Our Canyons for twenty-nine years and that she was probably the group's first volunteer. She spoke of silk-screening the first Save Our Canyons bumper stickers and cutting each one individually with a paper cutter in her dining room in 1972. Some congressmen and government officials must know her name by sight because of the many letters she wrote to them about environmental issues, particularly those that concern the Wasatch Mountains. She gave feedback, suggested topics and edited hundreds of newsletters, combed through Freedom of Information Act documents at the Forest Service, recorded and tabulated 1500 heli-ski postcards, helped with mailings, helped to develop pictures for the newsletters not to mention supplying food at Save Our Canyons gatherings. She did all this quietly and competently with few people knowing about it. Karla was a member of the American Association of University Women, the Wasatch Mountain Club, and Save Our Canyons. Karla Kelner died peacefully in her sleep on May 22nd of this year. She leaves behind her husband, Alexis, son Eric, daughter-in-law Kristy and granddaughter Calista, and sister Betty Marshal.



# HOWIE GARBER IMAGES

Written by our Development Director, Grace Tyler

If you don't have a Howie Garber Images photograph hanging in your home — you should! 30% of the proceeds will go directly to Save Our Canyons to preserve the Wasatch Mountains.

Howie Garber is a professional fine arts and nature photographer. He has lived in Salt Lake City since 1972. Howie's interest in photography started in 1969 when he took a "History of Photography" class while at the University of Rochester. Howie's images have been widely published as book and magazine covers; and in calendars, and greeting cards. Some of his clients have included Newsweek, National Geographic, Patagonia, Anheuser Busch, the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, Greenpeace, and ColdWater Creek.



Howie Garber Images, "Cecret Lake Prism"

To view his full inventory please visit his website today: <https://www.howiegarberimages.com/#/framed-inventory>! To order prints call Howie at 801-450-3770. You may also email orders to [howie@wanderlustimages.com](mailto:howie@wanderlustimages.com).

## PLANNED GIVING AND STOCK DONATION TO BENEFIT SAVE OUR CANYONS

As a small, grassroots organization, Save Our Canyons depends on generous support from our members to achieve substantial victories in our fight to protect the beauty of the Wasatch Mountains.

Donate stocks, bonds, mutual funds, IRA accounts, real estate, life insurance, business interests, and bequests through your will or trust!

If you're interested in leaving a legacy of support for the continued preservation of this amazing range and the communities it supports please contact Sarah Sleater at [sarah@saveourcanyons.org](mailto:sarah@saveourcanyons.org) or 801-363-7283.

# WHAT A SUMMER...

Written by our Campaigns Coordinator, Alex Schmidt

Save Our Canyons has had a busy summer and we want to share some highlights. Like a young touring band, we took advantage of any and all opportunities to create a groundswell around the organization. Did you catch us at the Farmer's Market? Join us on the Wasatch Wildflower Walk? Pick up a "Pika T" at the Fisher Brewery event? Run by our booth at one of the Discrete Cirque Series races? Or refuel at our CoreLife Eatery donation day?

Our emphasis this summer has been to empower our base and educate those who may only know Save Our Canyons as a statement on a bumper sticker, but are enjoying the Wasatch and care for its future. We realize that as an organization, we must do a better job to represent the diverse, vibrant, and growing population of people who make Utah such a great place.

## **THE BEAUTY OF THE WASATCH: WASATCH WILDFLOWER WALK LED BY PROFESSOR BILL GREY**

Amazingly, this year was Professor Bill Grey's 20th year leading SOC members out into the Wasatch to learn about, identify, and appreciate the flora of the Wasatch Mountains. A jovial group shown here, spent half the day hunched over a few dozen different species of

plants. As our two groups split for an "easier and harder" hike one attendee told us "I'm not going home till I hit my goal of 100 species!" That's the kind of tenacity and exuberance we've come to expect from our stalwart members. We want to thank Bill and all who have attended and supported these walks. Till next year.



Wildflower walk group at Silver Lake up BCC

## **A FULL LINE UP: SAVE OUR CANYONS, UTAH RIVERS COUNCIL, THE HEX PRESS, LATE FOR THE TRAIN (BAND) AT FISHER BREWING COMPANY**

The only place better than a lofty peak or alpine meadow just might be the patio at Fisher Brewery surrounded by good people, live music, and wet ink on the rollers of The Hex Press's t-shirt printing press. The →



Late For The Train, "Nature makes beautiful music"

Pika is a small mammal that resides in alpine meadows and scree fields such as Albion Basin. These areas face a myriad of threats from development, climate change, and habitat loss. As an “indicator species” the Pika landed a spot on our summer SOC t-shirt to act as a conversation starter for our efforts to conserve wild habitat in the Wasatch. Didn't get a shirt? Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming happenings on our events calendar.

### **LEAVING IT ALL ON THE TRAIL: DISCRETE CIRQUE SERIES HOSTS SAVE OUR CANYONS**

Though posting up the SOC table at a ski area trail running race may not be all that common for us, we were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Discrete Cirque Series at Alta, Brighton, and Snowbird Resorts over the summer. Hundreds of athletes of all levels joined in on these lung crushing, knee quivering races and we were

there to talk about our efforts to engage with the forest service, ski area management, and outdoor enthusiasts about how we can work collaboratively to ensure a healthy future for the Wasatch Range.

### **REFUEL YOUR BODY: DONATION DAY AT CORELIFE EATERY MILLCREEK AND CITY CREEK CENTER**

Eat good, feel good, and do some good – CoreLife Eatery hosted two donation days where every customer that mentioned SOC during checkout would be rewarded by the restaurant donating 20% of the purchase to Save Our Canyons. Thank you CoreLife Eatery for not only providing quality food to the community, but for helping to protect the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains.

Attending events, hosting events, and collaborating with others is all part of how we protect the Wasatch Mountains. This summer we:

- Collected 393 petition signatures to support our different campaigns
- Raised \$6,803 dollars to help protect the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains
- Attended 18 different events along the Wasatch Range
- Handed out 3,000 Save Our Canyons stickers to enhance our grassroots efforts

It's clear after this exciting and busy summer, the number of people who wish to see the Wasatch retain the wild and beautiful characteristics found there today is only increasing. We're especially grateful to all those who volunteered, hosted, or donated to one of these events. All of these events and outreach opportunities take a lot of staff time and money to coordinate. If you enjoy our stickers, attend our events, or like seeing us out in the community – please make a donation today! Here are several ways you can donate to Save Our Canyons:

- Online Donation: <https://saveourcanyons.org/donate>
- Mail in our donation envelope included: PO Box:112017 Salt Lake City, UT 84147
- Donate through PayPal (send to email: [carl@saveourcanyons.org](mailto:carl@saveourcanyons.org))

We hope that you continue to support our work of protecting the beauty and wildness of the Wasatch Mountains!



New Save Our Canyons Pika-T, printed by The Hex Press!

# EDUCATION IN THE WASATCH

Written by our Education and Stewardship Coordinator, Luke Golden

As advocates who have worked to protect these mountains and canyons through policy measures since 1972, Save Our Canyons recognizes our responsibility to actively care for this landscape by helping to maintain it and by educating those who use it.

## SOCKIDS

Save Our Canyons Kids Program (SOCKids) aims to introduce under privileged students and youth from schools and clubs around the valley to the natural world, instill a sense of wonder, foster a desire for exploration, and set kids on the path of being future advocates for the protection of these beautiful, vital, and delicate public lands. We live in an age where much of the natu-



YMCA SOCKids hike to Donut Falls on July 9th

ral world is being exploited for profit and being able to provide students with a memorable experience that will help them cherish these areas is vital to the future health of both the youth and wilderness.

On each hike we ask, "Who has been in these mountains before?" Upwards of 60% of the youth respond that they have never been into the Wasatch Mountains. We have focused on improving their knowledge about the watershed, the flora and fauna, and guiding them through the "Leave No Trace" ethics, and how to share the trail in a safe and courteous manner while in the Wasatch Mountains.

During one of my hikes a teenager started telling me about how she has only been hiking in the Wasatch two times and both times were with SOCKids. She went on to say that she would love to bring her parents on this hike because they haven't been hiking before and she wanted her family to see how beautiful the area is. During every viewpoint she stopped to take in the exquisiteness of what she was seeing and took pictures to show her family when she got home. On the way down, I overheard the girl telling her friends that she was planning to go to Walmart to print the photos and hang them up in her room. This stuck with me because these will be lasting memories for her, and also for her to share with her family.

By now, I am sure you are wondering how you can help with our SOCKids program? This program is solely supported by grant funding and donations. Printing field journals and buying materials to keep kids ->

engaged on hikes is a significant expense. Save Our Canyons is an organization driven proudly by its membership base. Make a donation today to help fund our SOCKids Program on our website or by mailing in the enclosed envelope.

## **WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP PROJECT (WSP)**

As active users in the Wasatch Mountains, it is our responsibility to give a helping hand in the restoration and preservation of wilderness areas located in the Wasatch Mountains. The Wasatch Mountains see nine million visitors per year and the Central Wasatch in particular experiences six million of these visitors. That's more people in and out of the Central Wasatch than all five National Parks combined.

With these kinds of numbers, the Central Wasatch is being heavily overused and is experiencing the repercussions. We need dedicated volunteers who want to give back and ease the stress that humans are creating in these areas.

On our first WSP hike, we enjoyed ourselves while performing meaningful trail maintenance. As we hiked, we frequently stopped to close user made trails, which seemed to be every 100 feet. The hiker in the back would hear the person in the front call, "here is another one", and with that we would take off our backpacks and start searching for loose rocks and debris to cover the user made trail to help restore and revegetate the land back to the natural state.

We have had 8 total volunteers who have joined Save Our Canyons to assist the US Forest Service Wilderness Rangers to mitigate impacts on the Bells Canyon Trail, Red Pine Trail, and make a difference that will help this popular portal to Lone Peak Wilderness.

I would like to thank the Salt Lake City Ranger District and our volunteers for dedicating their time and energy to making this project possible. If you are interested in volunteering within our WSP contact Luke Golden at [luke@saveourcanyons.org](mailto:luke@saveourcanyons.org).



NICE InContact employees helping to install new Wilderness Designation signs

# BUILDING OUR FUTURE, EXPANDING OUR BASE

Written by our Campaigns Coordinator, Alex Schmidt

As another newsletter's deadline was upon us, I went to the book shelf in our new office and pulled several back copies of SOC's newsletter as I have done many times in the past. Flipping through the articles from staff and board members as well as a wide range of contributors, I was invigorated by the battles won and lessons learned from efforts that fell short. In our Spring 2002 newsletter, the "President's Message" penned by founder Gale Dick back in 1972 about how he, Alexis Kelner, and Floyd Sweat imagined the "fledgling organization may last a year and then solving the problems we faced we could abandon the nuisance of fretting about the Wasatch canyon problems and get on with enjoying them."

The necessity of Save Our Canyons, and the desire to be involved and champion the organizations mission that came about long before I was born is alive and as important as ever. Below I've rattled off just a few of our current campaigns and projects:

## **SALT LAKE COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

We are excited to see trail corridors and connections in the county that provide recreational opportunities from our doorsteps into the green spaces around the valley, in the shadows of the Wasatch. Our growing population, and failure to better protect natural areas throughout our region, continue to stress the areas we find respite. While we acknowledge there is no replacement for the awe-inspiring Wasatch, we need to make sure it is not the only place in our communities for folks to scratch that recreation itch.

## **WASATCH PEAKS RANCH AND NORDIC VALLEY SKI AREA DEVELOPMENT**

Areas of the northern Wasatch that lie in Morgan and Weber Counties have been the focus of two intensive development proposals – Nordic Valley Ski Area expansion and Wasatch Peaks Ranch re-zone and development – that have us and many local residents and Wasatch advocates seriously concerned for the future of the northern Wasatch. The challenges we've seen in the Central Wasatch over the past 40 years are eeking their way into other corners of the region.

Driven by growth, a lack of planning, a fear of conservation minded strategies, and a love of money, we hope to work with new communities to take a stand for the land.

## **CENTRAL WASATCH NATIONAL CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AREA ACT (NCRA)**

This important legislation has received broad support during its creation involving a large and diverse group of participants during the Mountain Accord process and is now being reviewed and forwarded by the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC). Many state leaders, joined by Alta Ski Area still →



Help protect the Central Wasatch through the NCRA

wage ideological battles against the notion of protecting public lands. CWC meetings are open to the public and held the first Monday of every month. Showing up to share your own thoughts or echo others is well worth the time spent. Visit [cwc.utah.gov](http://cwc.utah.gov) for meeting agenda and location.

### **CANYON RESIDENTS, FOREST SERVICE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS COMBAT GRAFFITI IN LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON**

Together, a dedicated group of volunteers, Unified Police Department, Forest Service, SL Climbers Alliance, LCC resident Scott Whipperman, and the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation have remained attentive to the graffiti issue along the Temple Quarry Trail in Little Cottonwood Canyon and have gained ground on this issue that is plaguing the canyon. If you see people defacing the canyons contact Unified Police Department 801-743-7000.

### **SUCCESS OF THE WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP PROJECT**

As we advocate for expanded protections for our water, public land and quality of life, Save Our Canyons "Wilderness Stewardship Project" led by Luke Golden has made strides in educating visitors via our Wilderness Education Plan pamphlet as we worked alongside SL Ranger District Wilderness Rangers to repair trails, install 5 new wilderness portal signs and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for SOC members.

### **STATE OF UTAH'S ROADLESS RULE PETITION**

A coalition of local and national groups worked collectively to prevent the state of Utah's Roadless Rule petition that would alter the "Roadless Conservation Recreation Act," a federal rule protecting 4 million acres of forested lands across the state to allow for increased timber, oil and gas and motorized use. Roadless areas are little known by the general public, but are a very important conservation designation of the land. While we still have little info on whether or not the roadless petition will be accepted. In June 2019, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue inked a Shared Stewardship Agreement with Gov. Herbert. Save Our Canyons will engage state, local and federal land managers to work under this agreement to forward projects that will reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire, protecting communities and watersheds after decades of fire suppression and starving land managers of resources needed for common-sense stewardship projects.

### **COLLEGE STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

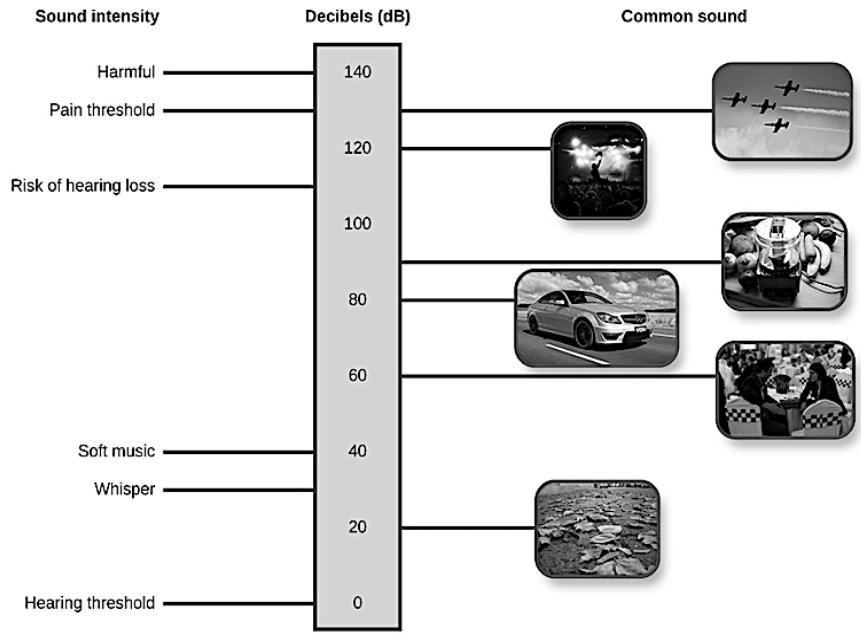
Save Our Canyons has had a steady flow of competent and effective volunteer interns from the University of Utah, Westminster College and Brigham Young University for the last two years. Hundreds of hours developing outreach materials, attending community events and writing public comment, articles and blog posts has been a huge help to our small staff.

These are just a few of the many topics that we hope you are aware of, or have interest in becoming involved with as a supporter of Save Our Canyons. In 2017-2018 staff and board members participated in a strategic planning process to help us home in and refine our organizational direction in an effort to better represent you, our members goal to protect the Wasatch Range. This effort resulted in a comprehensive plan that has guided us over the last year. We heard from many of our members where the gaps in our organization are as well as some great ideas on how to best continue on a productive path. The work we do, isn't for us individually, it is on behalf of our broader community and of course for future generations. Participation from members in these projects aids in innovation and problem solving to the many and nuanced issues challenging this landscape.

The decisions being made about our public land, water, recreation and access, development and conservation now will impact the future of the Wasatch Range. We are excited and anxious to have you become involved with this effort. The likelihood that an organization working to preserve the Wasatch is no longer warranted isn't one I would bet on and so we appreciate your involvement and encourage you to make a donation, spend a few hours volunteering and bring a friend to an upcoming SOC event. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas about how we can better involve the multitudes of people who are experiencing firsthand, the value of this mountainous landscape at the edge of a vibrant, urban environment.

# GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY

**BAD:** Is it time to address canyon traffic noise? Salt Lake County ordinance requires decibel (dB) levels at speeds greater than 40 MPH not exceed 88 dB and vehicles under 40 MPH not exceed 94 dB. After inquiring with the Unified Police Department's Canyon Patrol we have learned that enforcing and citing drivers whose vehicles exceed these noise levels can be difficult. Calls to our office have increased as noise from vehicles is degrading visitor experience. Couple that with new research that is showing impacts to predators populations and the greater ecosystem as human noise reaches deeper into their habitat (The Atlantic - Humans are the Scariest Predator: <http://bit.ly/2Mk9hUa>).



This figure demonstrates the loudness of common sounds heard daily.

**GOOD:** Our biggest and most impactful campaign goal, to protect 80,000 acres of public land continues as we work with Congress to pass the Central Wasatch National Conservation & Recreation Area (NCRA). We have collected over 4,000 signatures to show public support for this legislation. Let's give a big THANK YOU to the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) for supporting and working with us to protect the Wasatch Mountains through the NCRA.

**INCREDIBLE:** We have some pretty amazing people living in our community. This summer we had two interns who volunteered over 100 hours each to help protect the Wasatch Mountains, but it wasn't just students. We had 51 Wasatch advocates who donated 751 total hours of their time to keep public lands wild. Want to give back to a place that gives us so much? Contact [alex@saveourcanyons.org](mailto:alex@saveourcanyons.org) if you're interested in our internship program or volunteer opportunities.



Big Cottonwood Canyon Highway Cleanup



**UGLY:** There was more bull at the Utah State Capitol this July than ever before. Eight American-bred long-horns graced the front lawn of the Utah State Capitol to start the Days of '47 Cowboy Games & Rodeo. "Beverly Hills may have Rodeo Drive, but we have the real rodeo," a Wrangler-clad Gov. Gary Herbert proclaimed. Fun fact: It seems cattle has better access to State elected officials than most Salt Lake County residents.

**UGLY:** Turns out that Smokey the Bear, the beloved 75 year old ambassador of using care when lighting a campfire is right that, "Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires." Wildfire data from the past 12 years shows that 95% of forest fires are human caused! Makes you wonder why some state legislators and Governor Herbert are seeking a change to management that would allow more road building in forested areas that are susceptible to fire especially when more humans are visiting the area. Wildfire is an important, natural, and productive factor in the health of a forest. However, altering a celebrated conservation rule to open more roads for extractive industry doesn't address issues of wildfire in the "wild-urban interface" zone where communities are already developed or new homes are being built.

**BAD:** Utah Division of Wildlife Resources increasing Mountain Lion trophy hunting permits. According to Voice For Wildlife, "An adult female Cougar spends approx 70% of her life either pregnant or actively caring for young cubs. And unbelievably, Utah allows up to 40% of the Cougars hunted to be female." In the past year, Utah handed out 517 Mountain Lion hunting permits, and 553 individuals were killed. 517 through "sport" and hunting and the others through various conflicts. Since, a female Cougar is pregnant 70% of the time and with 1-3 cubs per litter, that means about 134 were caring mothers at the time of their death. What this really means is on top of the 517 Mountain Lion permits, there is an additional 268 kittens being killed as well. Oh, and don't forget about the 6,000 Bobcat permits that are also available for hunters to "take." It's important to remember that Cougars and Bobcats are apex predators who are vital in keeping the food chain in check by naturally controlling populations and decreasing disease. Learn more by visiting [wildlife.utah.gov](http://wildlife.utah.gov).

**WHEN GOOD GOES BAD:** The Forest Service proposes changes to the National Environmental Protection Act, taking the public out of public lands. NEPA is a law that has ensured the American public has the opportunity to be involved in public land management decisions across the nation when mining, logging, and construction projects are proposed on public lands. NEPA, put into law in 1970, requires USFS or Army Corps of Engineers to conduct environmental impact reviews of their actions and projects. This is one of the best tools we have to vet and give comment on proposed projects that take place on public land. The proposed change, open for comment back in August, would significantly limit public comment on Forest Service projects to only 7% of proposed projects if the change is approved.



Smokey the Bear from 2006

# NEW SOC BOARD MEMBERS

## CYDNEY EMERY

I am lucky to call myself a Utah native. I grew up in Park City and moved to Salt Lake to attend Westminster College. I studied economics, while getting up to the mountains as often as possible to hike, mountain bike, ski, and climb. Being in the Wasatch, particularly Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons was and still is my lifeblood.

I now work as an analyst at Energy Strategies, and continue to get into the mountains with family and friends as much as possible. It is never enough!

I have traveled the world, but the beauty and proximity of these mountains continue to make this the place I want to call home. After learning of the mission of Save Our Canyons, I was determined to become part of the movement to protect the wildness and essence of these canyons and mountains.

This work is becoming more and more important as the Utah population grows and as visitation increases. I am humbled and thrilled to be a part of an organization so dedicated to protecting this pressured resource.

My goal is to bring awareness to this organization, promote community participation, and fervently push for preservation

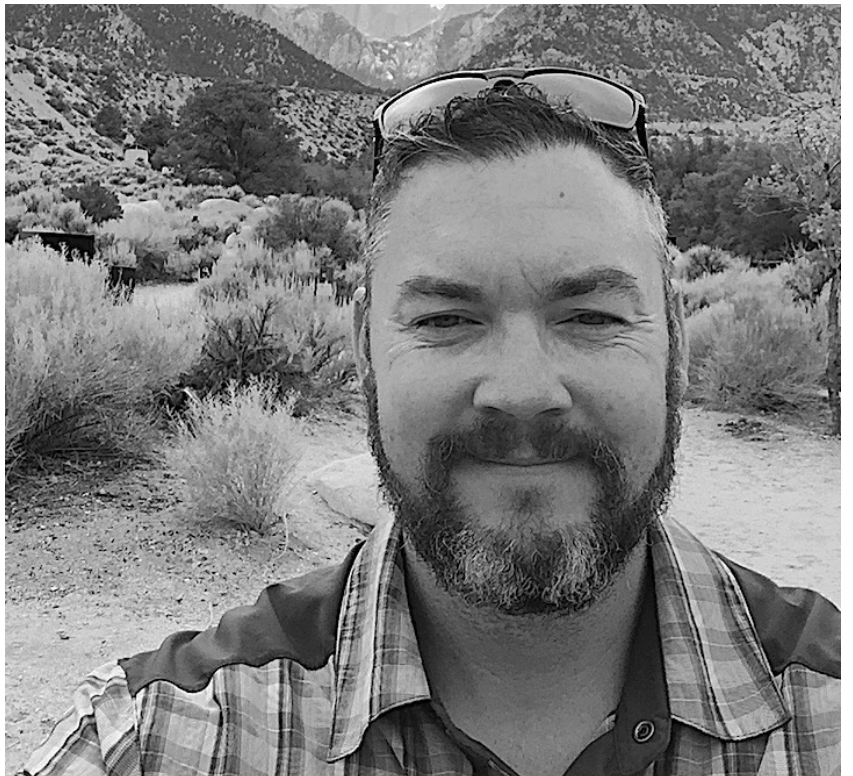
## BRANDON WILKEY

Brandon grew up in Taylorsville routinely hiking and biking the Wasatch, exploring the Uinta Mountain range at his family's cabin in Weber Canyon, and taking numerous trips to Southern Utah to explore slot canyons and trail systems. In his travels to 15 countries, he still finds Moab Utah to be his favorite place on earth.

His career path has taken him from customized production management to financial operational management over the last two decades. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree from →



Cydney Emery new Save Our Canyons Board Member



Brandon Wilkey new Save Our Canyons Board Member

Westminster College with an emphasis on High Performance Organizations and an undergraduate degree in Business Management with a minor in Marketing. With a passion for entrepreneurship, Brandon launched his second business venture in 2018, called JiB Products, LLC, designing bicycle seat bag systems.

Life in South Jordan at the Wilkey residence is busy, his wonderful wife Jacinda, who helps him be a better person every day, and their incredible combined five children ages one to fifteen are always on the move, between piano lessons, soccer and volleyball games, and football practice, life is full of joy and challenges. They love taking family road trips to Hurricane Utah and Grand Junction Colorado to spend time with grandparents and enjoy the beautiful landscape.

**JENNIFER ANGELL**

A Utah native, I grew up in Sandy back when Draper was nothing but farmland. The Dimple Dell gully was the backdrop of my childhood where I spent many a day catching insects and collecting plants to press in books. My parents got me hooked on camping and hiking at a young age and today, backpacking and canyoneering are two of my favorite pastimes.

I received an undergraduate degree in Graphic Design in 2003 as well as one in Mechanical Engineering in 2011, both from the University of Utah. I have worked in Product Development for years, mainly as a Technical Program Manager, and received my PMP certification in 2016. With the goal of continuing to pursue a career in Product Development, I recently graduated from the MBA-TC program at Westminster College. I truly enjoy bringing a project together and driving it to successful completion, and like to take a strategic and focused approach when doing so.



Jennifer Angell new Save Our Canyons Board Member

Utah has become a tech hub in recent years, and with this has come a great deal of population growth. I'm excited to be a part of this board so I can help strengthen the force that must exist in order to counter the threat of overdevelopment in this beautiful state, maintaining the balance and natural beauty of our canyons for years to come.



Sunset Peak Central Wasatch

Citizens' Committee to Save Our Canyons  
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Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121

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Photo by: Howie Garber



As a community driven organization, our members guide and direct our work. Join us! Annual memberships are \$35 and allow us to continue to advocate loudly for our water, land, recreational access and quality of life that result from a connected and protected Wasatch Mountains, canyons and foothills. It's easy, we've included a donation envelope in this newsletter or donate via [saveourcanyons.org](http://saveourcanyons.org).