

Charlie Luke

Candidate for Salt Lake City Council

District 6



1. Introduce yourself to our members. Describe your relationship to the Central Wasatch Mountains. What's your favorite place to visit? What are your favorite activities? What do you find compelling about the Central Wasatch Mountains?

I'm Charlie Luke. I'm running for re-election to serve a third term representing District 6 on the Salt Lake City Council.

I was raised about a mile west from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. I spent many spring, summer and fall days riding my bike up the canyon to fish the creek near Mill D. I still love fishing that creek, but now use a 3-weight rod with a dry/dropper set up instead of worms.

Effective management of the canyons continues to make them as compelling now as they've always been. Preserving and protecting Salt Lake City's watershed has been one of my top priorities during my eight years in office.

2. In your mind, what are the most important issues facing the Central Wasatch Mountains today?

Growth and its impact on the watershed are the most concerning issues. As a frequent user of the canyons I have seen the impact of more public pressure. Whether hiking or mountain biking or fishing or snowshoeing or skiing, there is a lot to do so close to home. Salt Lake City will continue to work hard to collaborate with our regional partners to best regulate and preserve responsible public usage.

3. Transportation. What are your thoughts about UDOT's plans for reducing traffic congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon? How much do you think this plan should try to reduce congestion by increasing the number of cars that the highway and parking areas can handle versus some form of public transit that reduces reliance on cars?

I am supportive of better planning and transportation management in the canyons. This includes UDOT's work in Little Cottonwood. We should also look at options in Big Cottonwood as well.

4. Public Lands. What are your thoughts with regard to the current Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (CWNCRA) proposal and efforts to enact federal legislation to protect the Central Wasatch Mountains?

I am very supportive and grateful for every effort to preserve and protect our watershed.

5. Recreation. Are you concerned that very high recreational usage is harming the environment(s) or degrading the experience of being in the canyons? What zoning, ordinance or policy decisions would you support to maintain a balance of recreational use and habitat health and water quality in the Central Wasatch Canyons?

I am very concerned. While I wouldn't support closing the canyons, I do believe there are examples of day and use restrictions that could be implemented. Example: Millcreek's dog/bike days. Since dogs aren't allowed in the watershed perhaps odd day for biking and even for hiking. Tolls are also helpful, especially if revenue remains in the canyons.

6. Water policy. Utah cities have been granted authority to protect sources of

drinking water under a provision called “extraterritorial jurisdiction.” In recent years this authority has come under attack by legislators, developers, and speculators seeking to diminish Salt Lake City’s ability to protect water quality. If elected, how will you insure citizens continue to have access to high quality drinking water while balancing other uses in our watersheds?

If re-elected I will continue working towards the defeat or amending legislation that could weaken Salt Lake City’s watershed management. Here is a link to an op-ed about this issue that I wrote for The Salt Lake Tribune last year: <https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2018/01/27/commentary-allowing-development-in-big-and-little-cottonwood-canyons-would-destroy-a-legacy-and-our-precious-water/>

7. Local Ordinance(s). What types of ordinances should be put in place (or revisited) to protect the environment, water quality, access, and integrity of the Central Wasatch Mountains?

Current laws have been effective at curbing some of the potential destructive development, but they continue to be under attack from those who look to profit at the public’s expense. It would be more effective to continue working to enforce the laws already on the books and oppose any effort from local governments or the state legislature to weaken those laws and regulations. I will also support

new laws and regulations that strengthen protections.

8. Land Use Planning. The canyons are already very heavily used and, as you probably know, the population of the Wasatch Front is expected to double within several decades. What would you like the canyons to be like in fifty or sixty years, and what, if anything, do you think our government needs to do to make sure it will be that way?

Our population will continue to grow, which means there will be more and more pressure on the canyons. As I mentioned before, management and regulations will be keys to ensuring the canyons will still be beautiful and inspiring in sixty years.

9. Is there anything else people should understand about your vision, plans, ideas, or policies for the Central Wasatch Mountains?

I love western water issues. Prior to the serving on the City Council I represented the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. I’ve said this many times, but it bears repeating once more - the one thing Salt Lake City has consistently done right from its foundation is the protection and preservation of Salt Lake City’s watershed. We need to work together to ensure that continues! I will do so.

Save Our Canyons is a 501c3 non-profit organization. These questionnaires are provided for the benefit of our members and the community we seek to serve. We reached out to all candidates for the particular office and have provided responses un-edited as they were received, some candidates have opted to not respond. If you have questions about the responses, we encourage you to reach out to the candidate. If you have a comment about the questionnaire or a suggestion of others elected seats we should issue to, please reach out to Save Our Canyons. 801-363-7283, info@saveourcanyons.org