

JT Martin

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?

The Wasatch Mountains make Salt Lake City the desirable and livable fragile environment that must be managed and protected. I grew up on the foothills of Mount Olympus in Holladay, I spent my summer days hiking old trails established by miners and pioneers and explored every canyon, cove and cave. We camped out overnight often and would look out over a mostly dark valley floor with only a few light clusters of the "little towns" of Kearns, Magna, Bluffdale and a couple of others. This was before I-215 was built and only a handful of houses were above Holladay Blvd; We would go all day without seeing anyone else. My friends and I thought the mountain was ours, time has changed all that; Only a memory remains. Today we must share "our mountain" with an ever increasing population who want to enjoy what I did as a boy and I believe should. But with that comes the challenge of this incredible asset to be responsibly managed and protected. It will take organizations like Save Our Canyons and others

to be vigilant, responsive, organized and negotiate quietly and responsibly.

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

While the Wasatch Front area is vast, there are only three road thoroughfares (Millcreek, Big & Little Cottonwood Canyons) that carry the burden of access traffic into the area. Not only are the roads at capacity, but the parking areas, trailheads and resort facilities are stressed to accommodate the increasing number of visitors. The congestion of these access points is having negative impacts, both environmentally and compromising the experience of visitors.

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?

Increasing roadway and parking capacity only kicks the can down the road for future generations. The old outdated thinking the solution to traffic congestion is to add another lane has to change. An all-encompassing plan to both increase capacity as well as public transportation solutions that will reduce the number of cars is needed. However, public transit alone will not solve the problem. Parking facilities throughout the valley and connect routes into the mountain are needed to reduce congestion at the mouths of the canyons 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?

While certainly not perfect, the proposal for public lands protection is a step in the right direction.

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?

During my previous term as a City Councilman, I introduced and passed a measure to protect the riparian corridors in our district (both Emigration and Red Butte Creeks run through our

neighborhoods). This ordinance was not popular at the time but has proven to have foresight and the property owners who had concerns their property rights being threatened now see it is there to protect their rights from others who could impact them from upstream. Cottonwood Canyons are a critical watershed for the Salt Lake Valley, broader measures are necessary to protect all stakeholders of critical riparian corridors.

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?

Quality drinking and culinary water are the lifeblood of any metropolitan area. Without it, economic growth, quality of life and the ability of a city to thrive are threatened. I will vigorously defend against any threats to our access to safe, clean water. As a former Salt Lake City Councilman, I always supported and voted to fund the acquisition of acreage in the watershed which supplies Salt Lake City's water district and if reelected will continue to do so.

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?

More than anything, transparency and public disclosure in the permitting and zoning processes of municipalities are important. If the public is aware of any possible threats, they can, and will hold government officials to account in their decisions. We only have one watershed and it needs to be protected.

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?

We as a city, county and region need to recognize our population is growing and the forecast for continued growth appears to be certain. It's a reality it has to be accepted and a plan put in place to protect and maintain the quality of our trail system and access to the backcountry of the Wasatch Front for all of the residents. The time to plan and act is now to have open transparent discussions on how to lessen the impacts. I suspect it will be contentious and controversial, so there needs to be good leadership which can work to bring all interested parties to a common understanding. Also as unpopular and controversial as the topic always is, understanding the impacts dogs have on the trail system and Backcountry needs to be discussed and I suspect there will need to be some unpopular decisions made on how to control the numbers of off-leash dogs and the

impacts they have to the trails, wildlife, and the quality of the outdoor experience.

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

We live in a beautiful place and because of its beauty and opportunities is a draw for many people to move to the Wasatch Front. It's a reality and we need to face it and accept things are going to change but through devoted and strong leadership policies can be implemented and impact can be lessened to preserve the gift of the central Wasatch mountains for all to enjoy for generations.

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