

Luz Escamilla

Candidate for Salt Lake City Mayor



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?

My name is Luz Escamilla. I enjoy the beauty of the mountains. I love living close to them and my husband is an avid outdoorsman as well as one of my teenage daughters.

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

I think that the most important issues facing the Central Wasatch Mountains are:

- watershed protection
- public land protection
- equity in recreation access and transportation: the mountains are facing congestion and accessibility issues. The mountains are not enjoyed equitably by all

socioeconomic classes of SLC because of a lack of accessibility to them.

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?

UDOT has invested significant time and expertise in proposing improvements to Little Cottonwood Canyon. Public transit options have improved over the years providing more frequent service up the

canyon. A combination of this service and parking areas at the bottom of the canyon could be a potentially workable solution that needs to be explored. If we do nothing, we will see much more standstill conditions that endanger the users of the canyons and prevent the movement of emergency vehicles.

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

With the different representatives from the different stakeholders the CWNCR is a consensus bill. This resolves decades of conflict and protects sources of our drinking water, preserving recreational opportunities and ensuring the communities enjoy the Central Wasatch Mountains.

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?

Recreational use does put strain on Wasatch Canyons because of our population growth and the attraction of the mountains. As mayor I would like to work on finding dependable, efficient, and clean energy options for public transportation to the many trails and areas on the Central Wasatch range.

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?

Protecting the environment in Salt Lake City is always a priority. I have established laws to monitor water quality in this city and I fully believe that our water should be safe and protected. The protected watersheds in the canyons is very important, we live in a desert. We must ensure, at all costs, that our water is of the highest-quality for our health and our children’s health. As our population grows we require more water, but we shouldn’t be sacrificing our health to obtain

it. Water is always a large draw for recreation and enjoyment but as residents of SLC we need to remember that our water here is more precious because of our climate.

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?

As a bridge builder and convener it is important to have all the stakeholders at the table to revisit ordinances on the issues above and make sure we have best evidence based practices moving forward that protects the beauty and wilderness of the Wasatch Canyons, Mountains, and foothills.

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?

My goal for all of Salt Lake City, including the Wasatch Mountains, canyons, and foothills is for sustainable and responsible growth. My goal as mayor is to engage federal, state, county, and other city leaders to provide up

to date community perspectives. A great example of this collaboration would be the Mountain Accords, established in 2014. As the mayor I want to see us meeting its purposes. This proposal includes responsible stewardship of natural resources, preservation of quality recreation experiences, and establishes an environmentally sustainable transportation system as well as contributing to a vibrant economy.

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

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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.