

# The Salt Lake Tribune

## Help Chart the Future of the Wasatch Canyons

By Brian Ferebee and Michael Mower (10 May 09)

The Wasatch Mountains dominate the landscape in the Salt Lake Valley. Our quality of life continues to be enriched year-round by the proximity of these towering mountains and their canyons.

Their beauty and recreational opportunities are easily accessible, and the local economy benefits from out-of-state visitors who enjoy skiing, climbing, fishing and other outdoor activities.

In addition, the Wasatch canyons provide much of the water that sustains valley residents.

Being outdoors with our family and friends is important to us. We want easy access to nature so that we can enjoy a healthier, more relaxed life. Providing quality recreational opportunities within the framework of watershed protection will be an increasing challenge as the Wasatch Front population continues to grow.

The Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow process will help us address this challenge. This effort, sponsored by the State of Utah, Salt Lake County and Salt Lake City, and supported by the U.S. Forest Service, is aimed at engaging the public in determining the future for these canyons.

We need to understand how projected population growth and increased pressure on the Wasatch canyons will affect water quality and supply, recreation, natural resources, animal habitat, tourism, transportation, land use and public safety. Exploring strategies to address these impacts is essential.

Envision Utah will facilitate Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow workshops on the 12th, 13th and 14th of May, offering the public the best opportunity in decades to have a say in Salt Lake County's Wasatch Canyons Master Plan.

The plan guides land-use policy and decisions, as well as ordinances for City Creek, Emigration, Red Butte, Parleys, Millcreek, Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood canyons.

The canyons currently are managed by many entities to balance watershed, natural resources and recreation needs. Continued coordination and cooperation among federal, state and local government agencies, residents, businesses and the public will be imperative to meet growing demands.

To make wise public decisions about the future of these canyons, decision-makers need to hear from Utah residents. We encourage them to make their preferences known by either attending a Wasatch Canyons Tomorrow workshop or completing an on-line survey. (Details on both can be found at [www.wasatchcanyons.slco.org](http://www.wasatchcanyons.slco.org).)

Continued enjoyment of the canyons into the next century may only be assured by adoption of policies that are scientifically and socially sustainable. You will make that happen.

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