



## Mountain Accord & ONE Wasatch

The staff and Board of Friends of Alta (FOA), are often asked “where do you stand” on issues affecting Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC). Our mission is quite clear – it is to protect the environment of Alta including its watershed and wildlife habitat as well as preserving Alta’s unique “top of the canyon” character and recreation opportunities for future generations.

Recent ski area consolidations, the introduction of Mountain Accord (a phased regional planning effort for the Central Wasatch Front and Back) and a marketing concept referred to as ONE Wasatch (ski interconnect for the 7 Central Wasatch Resorts using lifts) have caused the FOA Board to come to some unanimous agreements about these efforts and how they might affect the fulfillment of our mission. There are four system groups in the Mountain Accord program with stakeholders examining and making recommendations for the transportation, recreation, economics and environment systems of the Central Wasatch. FOA has taken a position on each. **We ask that these agreements be seen through our mission as what we stand FOR, not what we are against.**

### TRANSPORTATION

The group’s vision is “to meet the growing demand for access to and within the Central Wasatch Mountains through a dynamic and sustainable multi-modal mountain transportation system that provides year-round transportation choices to residents, visitors and employees, improves safety and efficiency, and is compatible with the unique environmental characteristics of the Central Wasatch.” In LCC recommendations range from doing little to a rail system that would tunnel through the end of the canyon to Solitude and then to Park City. The advent of this kind of interconnect would be antithetical to what FOA stands FOR. We are FOR an alternative that does not interconnect because:

1. Watershed protection is our highest priority!
2. Our remaining open spaces, such as Albion Basin must be conserved
3. We aim to have the least impact on the environment by limiting our footprint
4. The construction of a train would cause irreparable harm to the canyon
5. We support maintaining the current balance between resort and human powered recreation
6. Increasing transit infrastructure increases the pressures for additional development
7. To reduce canyon traffic we desire a reliable bus/mass transit system with convenient parking at the base of canyon that provides stopping points for dispersed recreation
8. We support a responsible and scalable transportation solution

### RECREATION

This groups vision is “balanced, sustainable, and provides a range of settings that accommodates increasing demand for year-round outdoor recreation opportunities while protecting solitude, naturalness, and other backcountry values...” FOA is FOR present access to commercial and dispersed outdoor activities. We are FOR responsible use of the Central Wasatch and LCC that would:

1. Protect the watershed! - vital to Alta, Snowbird, Sandy & Salt Lake City
2. Conserve wildlife habitat that also enhances the outdoor experience
3. Preserve the unique “top of the canyon” character that cannot be found elsewhere
4. Preserve a variety of recreation opportunities for all as the population grows

## **ECONOMICS**

The group's vision is to "achieve a balance of broadly shared economic growth, high-quality development and high-value transportation infrastructure that is attractive, sustainable, and provides opportunity for visitors and residents...prioritized protection of natural and scenic resources ensures that quality of life and quality of experience are enhanced over the long term." FOA is FOR managed development within the Town of Alta's base facility zone as prescribed by the town's zoning regulations and water contract with Salt Lake City. Other commercial development (hotels & restaurants) should be outside the canyon at its base where there is year-round economic support. This stance makes sense because:

1. Watershed, wildlife and open spaces are the foundations of Alta's economy
2. The Town of Alta has zoning regulations permitting development in limited areas
3. The Town has a limited quantity of water to provide for additional developments
4. The "Alta Experience" is seasonal which inhibits investing in year-round commercial services

## **ENVIRONMENT**

This group's vision is "a natural ecosystem that is conserved, protected, and restored such that it is healthy, functional and resilient for current and future generations." FOA is FOR environmental resiliency and health, conservation of the watershed, and protections of views and wildlife habitat. These features are desired by both winter and summer visitors. Conservation of these features is critical because:

1. Watershed protection is critical for healthy and affordable water as the population grows
2. Greater population will increase the appetite for unspoiled space and our dependency on limited natural resources
3. Alta's unique "top of canyon" experience cannot be replicated

## **ONE Wasatch**

Intertwined in the Mountain Accord program is a desire by Ski Utah and the 7 Central Wasatch ski areas to connect via ski lifts. The underlying reason behind this concept has taken on a greater urgency as the Mountain Accord discussions move ahead. Ski area and transit interconnect while different, are interdependent and should not be studied independently of one another but in consideration of one another. As with the Mountain Accord planning, FOA remains firm on the fulfillment of its mission, thus FOR the relatively unspoiled environment that presently exists. ONE Wasatch, its lifts and service roads would be detrimental because:

1. Protection of the watershed
2. Significant environmental impacts such as fragmentation of habitats and migration corridors
3. Views would be permanently affected
4. Current backcountry access would be negatively impacted
5. Added snow safety concerns
6. Preservation of Alta's unique top of the canyon character

Staff and Board members would be glad of the chance to talk about these issues with interested parties.

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