

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

County Plan Objectives, Role

The purpose of the Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan is to more clearly guide and coordinate the allocation of future uses in accordance with the present and future needs and resources within the seven major Wasatch canyons through the year 2010, particularly the use of privately owned land in the canyons (which comprises 20 percent of the area). When completed and adopted, the plan will become part of the Salt Lake County Master Plan and will be utilized by Salt Lake County to guide future land-use decisions within the Wasatch Canyons.

The Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan goal is to provide diverse opportunities for public enjoyment of the Wasatch Canyons within the constraints of a limited geographic setting and the capacities of the natural environment to accommodate uses without significantly diminishing either the quality of the canyon resources or the quality of the canyon experience.

Through the twenty-year intended life of the Plan, it is recommended that reviews be conducted each five years and that the Plan be updated after the first ten years. Major canyon proposals or other changing circumstances may cause additional plan reviews. Plan amendments will be considered consistent with the process established in Utah statutes. The amendment process under Utah statute is identical to the formal plan adoption process including notice and public participation through hearings before the Planning Commission and County Commission. (For pertinent excerpts from Utah statutes on the plan adoption and amendment process, see Appendix 1.)

Specific jurisdiction and management responsibilities within the canyons are shared by Salt Lake County, the U.S. Forest Service, the Salt Lake City-County Board of Health, the Town of Alta and Salt Lake City. Therefore, a County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan will not only guide county canyon land-use policy, but also will be applicable to County interaction with the other agencies involved in canyon resource management. For Plan area lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, this Plan serves as County land-use recommendations to the Forest Service. It is anticipated that if an amendment is proposed to the Forest Service Plan not consistent with this Plan, a parallel amendment would be proposed to the Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan.

The Wasatch Canyons Master Plan is the official statement of Salt Lake County public policy on the future use of the seven major Wasatch Canyons in Salt Lake County. It provides continuity of direction against which a broad range of programs will be judged as they are presented for implementation and approval.

The canyons of the Wasatch Mountains have historically provided diverse benefits to the Salt Lake Valley. Their abundance supplied water, timber, minerals, and a mountain retreat to the earliest settlers. The quality of life in the Valley continues to be enriched by the proximity of these towering mountains and their canyons. Their beauty and recreational opportunities are easily accessible and the local economy benefits from the canyon amenities, tourism and the ski industry. The continued enjoyment of the canyons into the next century can only be assured by the adoption and implementation of policies which will sustain their resources.

The Wasatch Canyons are utilized for a broad range of both public and private purposes. Their watersheds and streams provide much of the water supply for the Salt Lake Valley. They host primary and secondary residences, scientific research, restaurants and lodging, ski resorts, backcountry and Alpine skiing, snowmobiling, snowplay activities, big and small game hunting, fishing, picnicking, camping, transportation corridors, sightseeing, bicycling, utility corridors, jogging, hiking, mining (historical), and livestock grazing. Each of the canyons is unique in its physical and environmental characteristics, management and uses. Each of the canyons is environmentally sensitive and has limits on the levels of utilization it can sustain. In addition, not all uses are compatible with one another resulting in potential use conflicts.

Plan Area

The plan area encompasses the seven major canyons of the Wasatch Front in Salt Lake County: City Creek, Red Butte, Emigration, Parleys, Mill Creek, Big Cottonwood, and Little Cottonwood. Emigration and Parleys Canyons were migration corridors for early settlers and all of the canyons provided them with building materials, water for irrigation and culinary use, minerals, livestock grazing range and recreational opportunities. Through the 1940's the canyons were used primarily for watershed, grazing, recreation, and mining. Mining and grazing uses have been replaced by a wide variety of recreational activities which will be the dominant uses into the next century.

Several smaller canyons, including, Neffs, Tolcats, Heughs, Dry Hollow, Ferguson, North Fork, Deaf Smith, Bells, Willow Creek, and Little Willow Canyons, that face the Salt Lake Valley, are not included in the Plan area for this Plan. However, it is believed that many of the Plan policies for the seven major Wasatch Canyons are pertinent to these canyons, and should provide helpful direction to the County for issues arising in them.

Canyon Descriptions

City Creek Canyon provides an average of 8,000 acre feet of culinary water per year and is a popular hiking, picnicking, hunting, and bicycling area. Salt Lake City owns 56 percent of the land and manages the Canyon as a nature preserve, watershed, and City park.

Red Butte Canyon has been closed to general public use since 1910. As a result, it is one of the most pristine areas in the plan area. The Federal Government owns over 80 percent of the land area and since 1970 has managed it as a Research Natural Area, where scientific research in a relatively pristine environment is conducted. General public access is still prohibited, though the U.S. Forest Service has initiated experimental, short-term public access.

Emigration Canyon with the largest percentage of private land ownership is primarily used as a year-round residential area with limited commercial development. Jogging, hiking, and biking also occur in the Canyon, but there are no developed recreational facilities.

Parleys Canyon is a major interstate transportation corridor. Mountain Dell Reservoir and the Parleys Canyon treatment plant store and process culinary water from the large drainage area. Summer homes, camping, picnicking, target shooting, golf, and opportunities for a variety of dispersed recreational activities occur in the Canyon. With the completion of Little Dell Reservoir in 1992, additional recreational opportunities will be available.

Mill Creek Canyon is a popular picnic area and is heavily used in the summer and fall months. Winter dispersed recreation is less intensive. Some seasonal cabins exist on Forest Service leases. The Federal Government is the dominant landowner. Livestock grazing under Forest Service permit and horseback riding occur in the upper Canyon.

Big Cottonwood Canyon contains a wide variety of uses including Solitude and Brighton ski resorts, year-round homes, summer cabins, developed camping and picnicking, fishing, hunting, and dispersed summer and winter sports. The dominant landowner is the Federal Government, but significant private land ownership exists in the Canyon.

Little Cottonwood Canyon silver mines once dominated canyon use. Today the canyon is largely a recreation area, heavily used for hiking, rock climbing, camping, picnicking, resort activities and sightseeing in summer months and downhill and backcountry skiing in the winter. It has two developed ski resorts, Snowbird and Alta, with associated lodges, hotels, restaurants, and user

facilities. Ownership is predominantly by the Federal Government with National Forest Service management. The Town of Alta is located in the upper Canyon with responsibility for its own land-use management decisions.

Additional information on the individual Canyons is provided under Canyon Plans in Chapter 6.

WASATCH CANYON MASTER PLAN

NOTE:

Maps are for planning purposes only, and are not a substitute for site-specific evaluation.

SOURCE INFORMATION:

Surface Ownership from:

U.S. Forest Service - Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Salt Lake Ranger District, Status and Encumbrance Map. Updated 1987, 1:24,000 scale

City Boundaries from:

Salt Lake County Public Works. Revised 1987, 1:24,000 scale.
NOTE: Information entered from 1:12,000 photo-enlarged blue-line prints. Salt Lake City Engineering, Revised 1987, 1"=1500' scale.

City Creek Nature Preserve from:

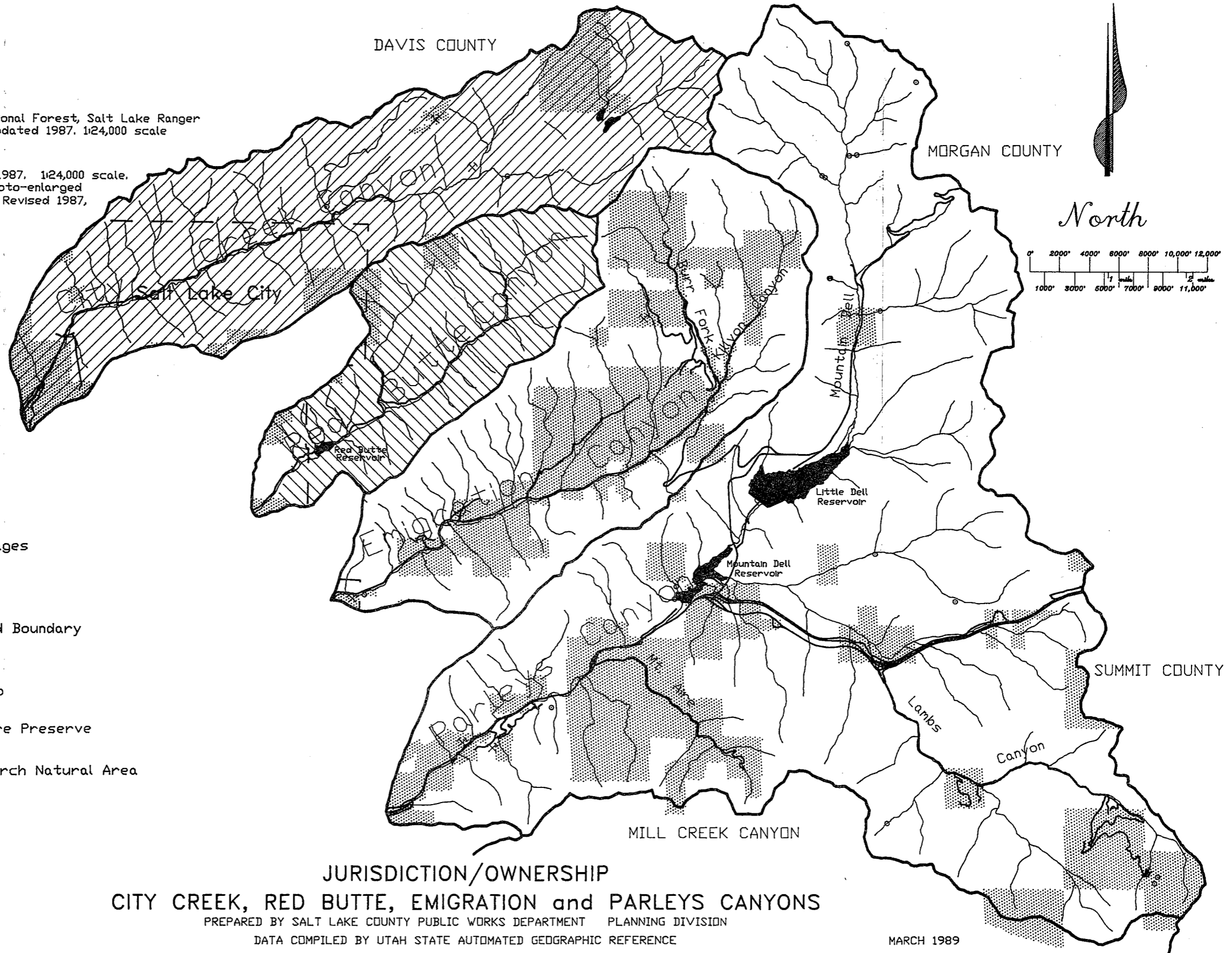
Salt Lake City Planning Division.
City Creek Master Plan, 1986.

Red Butte Research Natural Area from:




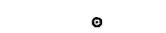



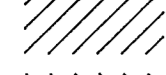
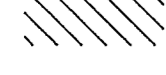
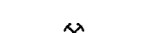
U.S.F.S. - Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Salt Lake Ranger District.
Update January 1987, 1:24,000 scale.

Roads and Hydrology from:

U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute quad maps.
1:24,000 scale.



LEGEND

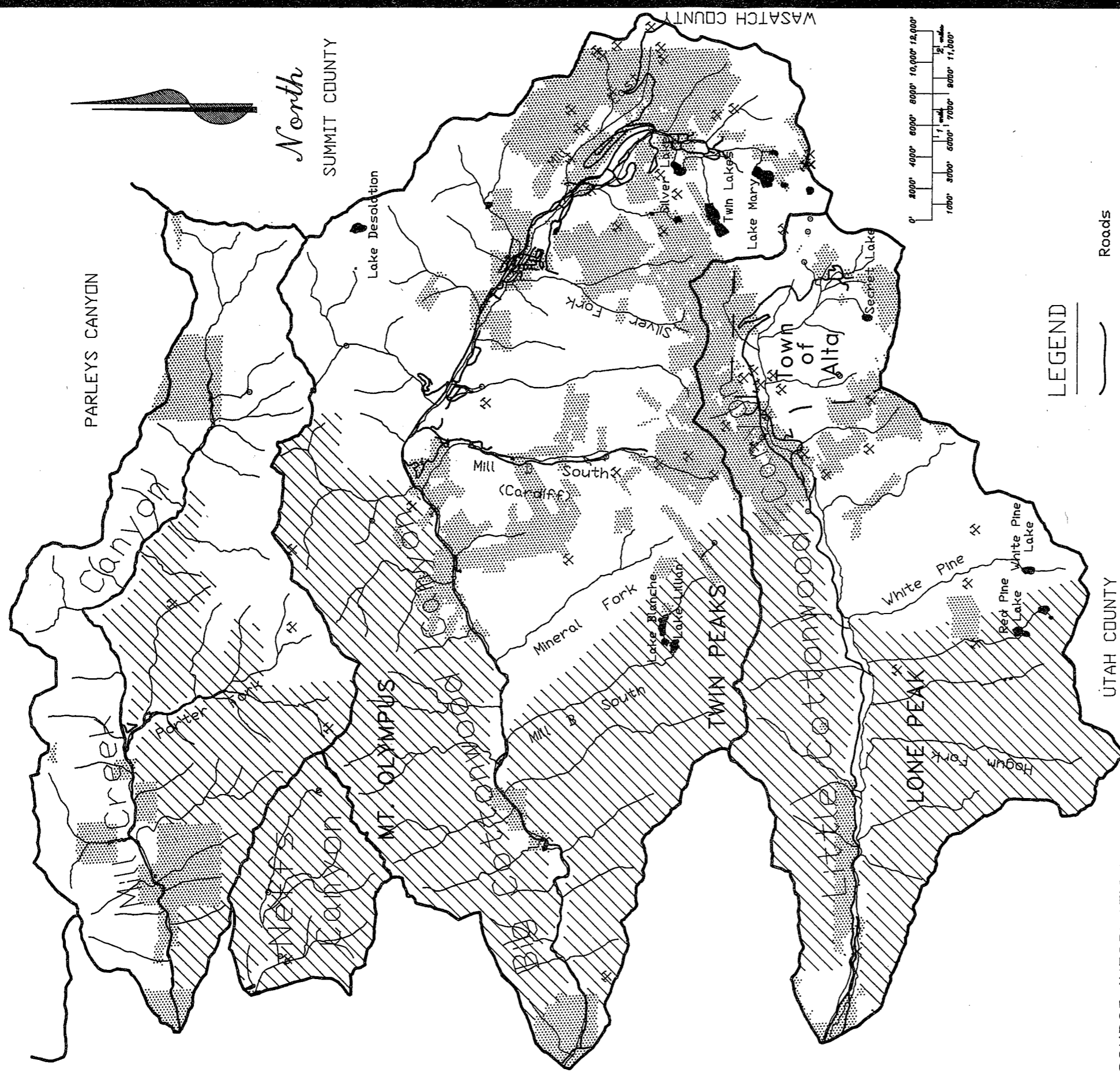
-  Roads
-  Streams / Drainages
-  Lakes
-  Springs
-  Study/Watershed Boundary
-  City Boundary
-  Private Ownership
-  City Creek Nature Preserve
-  Red Butte Research Natural Area
-  Mine Locations

**JURISDICTION/OWNERSHIP
CITY CREEK, RED BUTTE, EMIGRATION and PARLEYS CANYONS**

PREPARED BY SALT LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT PLANNING DIVISION
DATA COMPILED BY UTAH STATE AUTOMATED GEDGRAPHIC REFERENCE

MARCH 1989

WASATCH CANYON MASTER PLAN



SOURCE INFORMATION

Surface Ownership from:

U.S. Forest Service - Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Salt Lake Ranger District, Status and Encumbrance Map, Updated 1987, 1:24,000 scale

City Boundaries from:

Salt Lake County Public Works, Revised 1987, 1:24,000 scale.
 NOTE: Information entered from 1:12,000 photo-enlarged blue-line prints.
 Salt Lake City Engineering, Revised 1987, 1"=1500' scale.

Wilderness Areas from:

U.S. Forest Service - Wasatch-Cache National Forest Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, Updated 1987, 1:24,000 scale.

Roads and Hydrology from:

U.S.G.S. 7 1/2 minute quad maps, 1:24,000 scale.

LEGEND

- Roads
- Streams / Drainages
- Lakes
- Springs
- Study/Watershed Boundary
- City Boundary
- Private Ownership
- Wilderness Area
- Mine Locations

NOTE:

Maps are for planning purposes only, and are not a substitute for site-specific evaluation.

JURISDICTION/OWNERSHIP

MILL CREEK, NEFFS, BIG and LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYONS

PREPARED BY SALT LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT PLANNING DIVISION
 DATA COMPILED BY UTAH STATE AUTOMATED GEOGRAPHIC REFERENCE

MARCH 1989

Existing Plans and Policies

Prior to development of this Master Plan, plans and policies affecting management and uses of the canyons were already in place and being implemented by the various entities with canyon jurisdiction. Some existing plans or policies are applicable to all of the canyons, while others are specific to only certain canyons.

Salt Lake County

Salt Lake County has primary private land-use jurisdiction within the Canyons. The Canyons were first zoned in 1972. The Alta/Little Cottonwood Canyon Plan was adopted in 1974 and included the Alta-Snowbird area. The Emigration Canyon Plan was adopted in 1985.

This Master Plan will guide county canyon management policies and plans for all Wasatch Canyons. It is intended to supercede the Alta/Little Cottonwood Canyon Plan of 1974. However, it does not substantially review, nor does it replace, the recently adopted Emigration Canyon Plan. Salt Lake County has a history of cooperative land-use decisionmaking with the U.S. Forest Service, Salt Lake City, and other jurisdictions. In the development and implementation of this Plan, Salt Lake County looks forward to cooperation with all other Canyon jurisdictions.

The County Planning Division prepares Master Plans to guide public and private development, prepares amendments to zoning ordinances, and prepares and maintains development standards. The Development Services Division processes zoning and conditional use applications, building permits, and is responsible for ordinance enforcement. Proposed developments must comply with building codes, Board of Health standards, and the county zoning ordinance.

U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service manages the majority of lands within the Canyons and in 1985 adopted the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for its canyon management responsibilities. The Forest Service, a major direct provider of dispersed and developed recreation, manages three wilderness areas in the Plan area (Lone Peak, Twin Peaks, and Mt. Olympus), and authorizes permits for others to provide recreational opportunities on National Forest lands.

Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City holds the majority of the water rights in the canyons and under Federal and State statute, exercises policies to protect the watersheds from which the water sources are derived. Since 1981 Salt Lake City has had in place a moratorium on any new contracts for in-Canyon use of its surplus Canyons water supply. In April 1988, the city adopted a Watershed Management Plan to enhance protection of the watersheds. Acts of Congress in 1914 and 1934 established Federal protection of the valley's water supply.

Board of Health

The Salt Lake City-County Health Department maintains water quality and waste water treatment standards within the Canyons. A 208 Water Quality Plan was completed in 1977 and was scheduled for update in 1988 regarding waste water treatment, development controls, and prevention of future water pollution.

Salt Lake County Council of Governments

The Salt Lake County Council of Governments' Canyon Advisory Committee developed goals and recommendations for canyon management in 1983, focusing on Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.

Town of Alta

The Town of Alta maintains zoning and master planning within its boundaries.

Existing Permit Approval Status

Several development proposals have received varying phases of approvals from Salt Lake County, the U.S. Forest Service, and Salt Lake City. Projects with governmental approvals are pre-established for purposes of the Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan. Approved projects and activities as reflected in Appendix 2 are established.

Plan Process and Public Involvement

Development of this Master Plan significantly expanded upon the minimum public participation required under State statute. It was assisted by a twenty-five member citizens advisory committee and a seventeen-member technical committee (appointed by the Salt Lake County Board of Commissioners), the Bear West Consultant Team, and the County Planning Division staff.

The Citizens Advisory Committee met regularly to review the plan and actively participated in making recommendations. Subcommittees were appointed from this Committee to more fully explore specific issue areas and concerns.

The Technical Advisory Committee served as a coordinating body for the public entities having jurisdiction in the plan area and as a technical review team. Individual members contributed data and personal knowledge to the development of the plan.

Early in the planning process and as part of the overall goal of maximizing public participation, two well-attended public meetings were held to help identify canyon issues. Twenty major issues, with many sub-issues, were identified in hundreds of written and oral comments presented during the first round of public meetings and comment period.

Following accumulation and analysis of background data and extensive deliberations by the Citizens Advisory Committee, Scenarios and Policy Options for Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan was published in July 1988. The document solicited public comment on policy options and five different hypothetical scenarios representing various levels of possible future Canyon uses. The scenarios were not designed or intended to be plans.

Maps displayed how lands might be devoted to new uses to meet the objectives of each hypothetical scenario. (Existing and approved uses were assumed to remain in place in the scenarios.) The scenarios were built on a foundation of base data, suitability analyses, user data and demand projections, and carrying capacities. A baseline scenario illustrated canyon land-use allocations assuming current user trends continued into the future. The other four scenarios illustrated variations of levels of uses that could occur. In addition to the scenarios, alternative options were presented for public comment on a variety of issues and policies applicable to the canyons' planning process.

Public meetings were conducted on July 27 and August 1, 1988, to receive oral comments on Scenarios and Policy Options for Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan. A "response form" was prepared and distributed to assist the public in providing comments on the July options and scenarios document. Tabulations of the response forms and a synopsis of oral and written comments are available in a separate document at the County Planning Division.

Following the public comment period on Plan options, the Consultant Team, County Planning Division staff, and a group including representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, the Utah

Transit Authority, and Salt Lake City met to consider background data and information, public comments, and implications for other canyon jurisdictions. After extensive deliberations additional consultation with the citizens advisory committee a Preliminary Wasatch Canyons Master Plan was published November 10, 1988.

The Salt Lake County Planning Commission provided public notice and presided over a well-attended public hearing of approximately 1,000 persons on the Preliminary Plan on November 22, 1988. The Planning Commission also received over 250 written comments on the document. Comments and comment summaries are available for public review at the County Planning Division.

This Final Plan represents action by the Planning Commission in considering public comments and exercising its own judgment on modifications to the Preliminary Plan. The Planning Commission conducted a hearing, under the process provided in statute, on this Final Plan, made such changes it deemed appropriate, decided by resolution to adopt the Plan, and made recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for hearing and adoption.

Documents prepared in the Plan process, and available for review at the Salt Lake County Planning Division include:

Wasatch Canyons Preliminary Master Plan -- prepared for public comment and County Planning Commission consideration prior to preparation of a final Master Plan.

Scenarios and Policy Options for Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan -- scenarios and policy options for public comment, synopsis of data and information used in scenario development. No preferences were suggested or recommended.

Wasatch Canyon Characteristics, Data, and Analysis -- additional background information on Canyon environmental and jurisdictional characteristics, suitability analysis, and carrying capacity analysis;

Analysis of Demand for Recreation Uses in the Wasatch Front Canyons -- a statistical review of current recreational use in the Canyons, and projections of future Canyons recreational use levels with an explanation of the methodology for arriving at those projections;

Salt Lake County Canyons Master Plan Analysis of Transportation Facilities for the Cottonwood Canyons -- additional information and analysis of transportation issues in the Canyons;

Detailed Color Maps (for review only) -- display a broad array of environmental data, use information, suitability of the Canyons for various uses, and scenarios; and

Public Comments on Scenarios and Policy Options for Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan -- tabulations of public comments as indicated on "response forms" and a synopsis of oral and written comments received on the July 1988 document.

