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## INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER 1

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Often noted for their unique beauty and recreational opportunities, the Wasatch mountains bordering the Salt Lake Valley's east side are also a primary source of quality culinary water. Over the years, several steps have been taken to identify primary watershed areas and prepare resource management plans designed to protect this valuable resource. The most recent study, Salt Lake City's 1999 Watershed Plan, provides management objectives and directives for City Creek, Red Butte, Emigration, Parleys, Millcreek, Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood canyons.

Recognizing the need to proactively protect and manage its watershed resources, the Sandy City Department of Public Utilities began a process in the summer of 2000 to develop a watershed plan for the canyons directly east of the City. The Sandy City effort was designed to complement Salt Lake City's plan and extend watershed protection measures to additional Wasatch Front canyons.

The area encompassed by the Sandy City Watershed Plan includes seven canyons used by the City and others as culinary water sources. From north to south, these canyons include: Little Cottonwood, Bell, Middle Fork of Dry Creek, South Fork of Dry Creek, Rocky Mouth, Big Willow and Little Willow. For purposes of this study, Sandy City has defined the term "watershed" as the total land area that drains into an existing or proposed culinary water diversion point. Once adopted, Sandy City watershed management guidelines and regulations will apply to these areas. A map of the watershed area and diversion points may be found on page 1-5.

Sandy City also receives a significant portion of its culinary water from the Provo River through the Salt Lake City aqueduct. A section addressing Provo River watershed issues has been included as part of this study.

Consistent with the City's primary watershed management objectives of maintaining water quality and protecting water resources, the Sandy City Watershed Plan encourages multiple uses within the watershed as long as these activities do not adversely impact water quality. Currently, water quality appears to be excellent, however, concern over potentially deteriorating conditions has led to recommendations in this plan to protect and improve Sandy City's watershed conditions.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Salt Lake City's watershed plan includes objectives encouraging other municipalities, specifically Sandy City, to "become more involved in watershed management" activities. In response to this invitation and with an interest in protecting their community's water resources in the face of increased use, the Sandy City Public Utilities Department initiated the process to prepare a Sandy City-specific watershed plan. By design, the Sandy City process utilizes the updated Salt Lake City plan as a model.

The Sandy City watershed planning project formally began with a public scoping meeting held on June 14, 2000. Fifteen residents attended this work session. The purpose of this meeting was to solicit citizen input concerning watershed management issues, assess current use of the canyons, and identify community watershed management priorities. Comments gathered at this meeting were compiled by project consultants and reviewed by the Public Utilities Department. These issues became the focus of the planning process and remaining public workshops.

Specific topics discussed by residents and resource experts during the scoping meeting include: protecting the City's water rights and interests; maintaining and improving water quality; protecting watershed resources; identifying canyon use levels, types of uses, and associated impacts; educating community leaders and citizens concerning watershed issues; and developing partnerships with other communities and agencies to address watershed management issues and pursue resource management objectives. A list of the issues discussed by Sandy City residents is attached as Appendix C, *Issues Identified in Scoping Meetings*.

To assist project consultants refine citizen input and develop a draft watershed plan, the City organized a Citizen's Advisory Committee composed of representatives from various interests within the watershed and water resource experts. Committee activities included a watershed tour and five work sessions. During the latter, participants discussed each watershed "priority issue" in detail. These discussions included developing community watershed management goals and alternative implementation strategies for each topic. Depending on the topic discussed, members of the committee or other "experts" were invited to present background information and assist the group in developing a recommended approach. The results of these discussions are reflected in the objectives and recommendations section of this document (see Chapter 2).

Based on community and Public Utilities Department participation and input as described above, a *draft* plan was prepared and made available to the general citizenry for review and comment. Following Planning Commission and City Council public hearings, the *draft* plan was officially adopted by the Council as the Sandy City Watershed Plan in (month will be inserted after adoption) of 2002.

In addition to the Sandy City plan, several other plans are applicable to the watershed area. These plans include the U.S. Forest Service Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan (1985), the Salt Lake County Little Cottonwood Canyon Plan (1973), the Salt Lake County Wasatch Canyons Master Plan (1989), the Town of Alta General Plan (1992), and the Salt Lake City 1999 Watershed Management Plan.

### **WATERSHED PLAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES (Overview)**

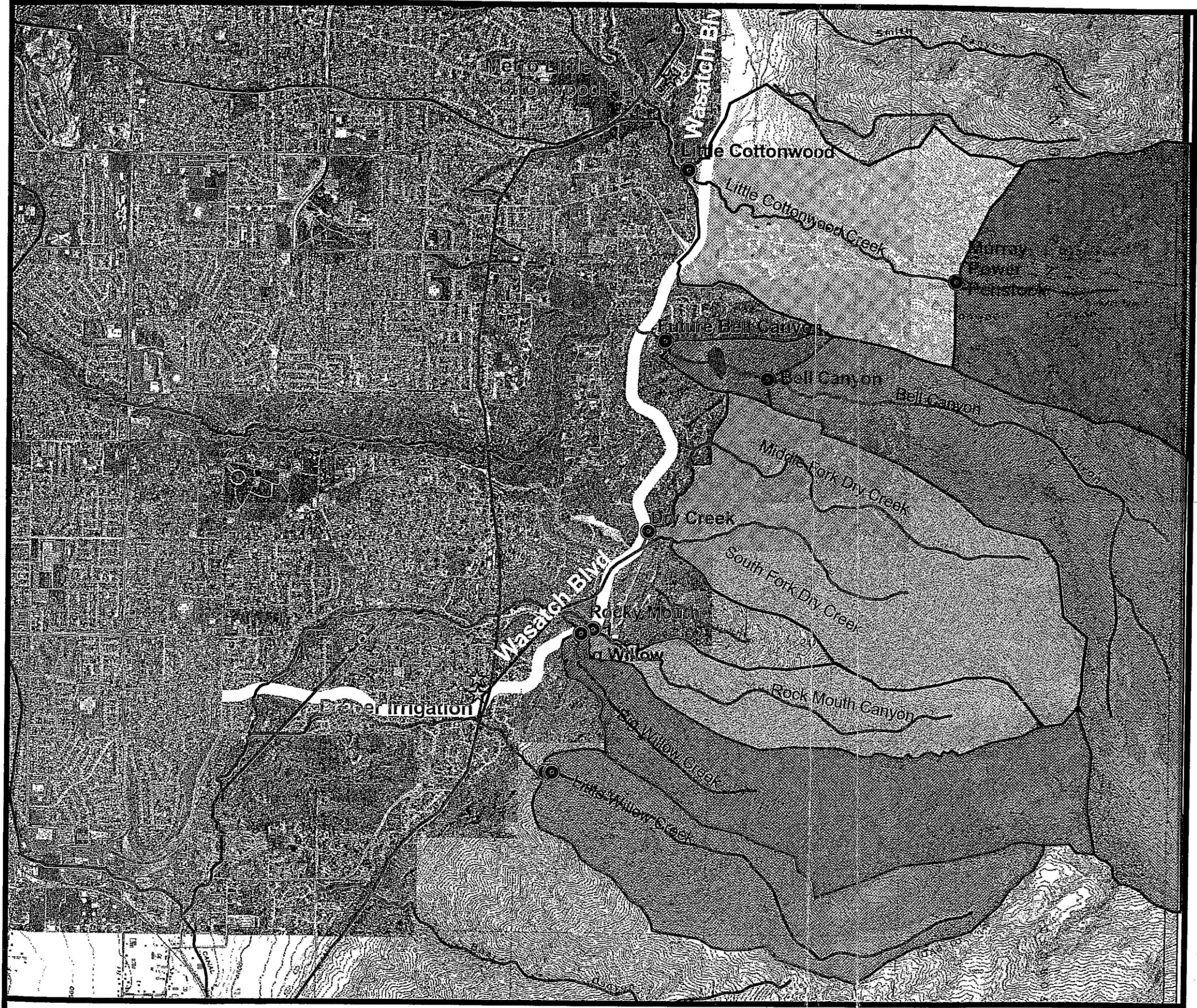
Successful implementation of the Sandy City Watershed Plan will achieve a future condition in the project canyons that maintains excellent water quality and protects the associated watershed resources. The City's Department of Public Utilities' management policies and procedures will emphasize water quality first and multiple use of the watershed second. Through these efforts, the canyons will be protected to maintain a healthy ecological balance with stable environmental conditions, healthy streams and riparian areas, and minimal sources of pollution. Existing and potential uses that could lead to the deterioration of water quality will be limited, mitigated, or eliminated. To the extent that a proposed development or activity poses a potential impact to the watershed or water quality, Sandy City will either oppose, or seek to modify, regulate, or otherwise influence such proposed development or activity in order to eliminate or mitigate potential impacts.

All jurisdictional agencies involved in monitoring and permitting development in the watershed will become aware of and involved in the development proposal process. In this light, all applicable community, county, and agency "development suitability criteria" (such as slope restrictions, vegetation removal, and setbacks) will be carefully reviewed and subsequent regulations strictly enforced. Variance applications will be carefully reviewed to ensure water quality and watershed resources are not adversely impacted. It is anticipated that once all relevant jurisdictional agencies understand and share a common vision for the Valley's watershed areas, implementing watershed management objectives will become a cooperative endeavor.

In addition, public and private partnerships will be fully utilized to effectively manage the watershed. New partnerships will be continually sought to support effective and efficient management of the watershed resources.

Many people use the watershed each year for a variety of recreational activities. It is anticipated that as management objectives of the Sandy City Watershed Plan are implemented, uses and use levels will be appropriately managed. As stated, recreation facilities (restrooms, parking lots, trails, picnic areas, and camping sites) will be permitted within the watershed only if they can be sited, designed, and maintained in a manner that adequately protects water quality. Another measure which will be used to decrease recreational impacts is an extensive watershed education program. This program will be designed to educate watershed users about the importance of environmentally healthy watershed areas and the associated benefits in maintained/improved water quality.

# Sandy City Watershed Project Area



## Legend

- Watershed**
-  Upper Little Cottonwood
  -  Lower Little Cottonwood
  -  Upper Bell Canyon
  -  Lower Bell Canyon
  -  Dry Creek / Middle/So Fork
  -  Rocky Mouth
  -  Big Willow
  -  Little Willow
- ★** Treatment Plants
- Diversions
- Waterways



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