

Wasatch Mountain Club Endowed Scholarship

In celebration of the Wasatch Mountain Club's Centennial Anniversary, members collectively gave over \$25,000 to establish the Wasatch Mountain Club Endowed Scholarship in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. The purpose of the scholarship will reflect the Wasatch Mountain Club Constitution, which promotes the physical and spiritual well-being of the community by outdoor activities; to unite the energy, interests and knowledge of students, explorers and lovers of the mountains, deserts and rivers of Utah; to collect and disseminate information regarding the Rocky Mountains on behalf of science, literature, and art; to explore and picture the scenic wonders of this and surrounding states; to foster awareness of scenic beauties; and to encourage preservation of our natural areas including their plant, animal, and bird life.

John Muir wrote, "In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." This scholarship will provide students the opportunity to receive the education they need to achieve what they seek in their careers. The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism thanks the members of the Club for imparting this scholarship to students who embody the Wasatch Mountain Club's Constitution.

Julie Kilgore (pictured below), president of the Wasatch Mountain Club, has written an article sharing ways to enjoy the outdoors this winter. Spending time outdoors is an expedient way to improve your mental health. As the pandemic looms, this winter offers the opportunity to discover new outdoor adventure activities. Julie doesn't let the cold winter months keep her inside, and neither should you. If interested, please visit the Wasatch Mountain Club's site for ways to participate in more activities. <https://www.wasatchmountainclub.org/>

Celebrating a Century of Outdoor Experience



As a Salt Lake native, I have always felt a connection with the mountains that surround our city. They were primarily a backdrop, or maybe a cocoon, always wrapped around me. But I didn't play in the mountains much as I was growing up. I didn't ski, and my family trended more to urban dwelling. Oh, a few picnics here and there, some 4-wheeling behind the capitol or above Foothill Boulevard, and a party or two up Millcreek or Storm Mountain. But otherwise, no real exploration of the natural wonders rising above me.

That all changed when I was an adult college student, and one of my fellow classmates told me about this amazing canyon right off Wasatch Boulevard that was full of waterfalls, thick vegetation, and huge ferns. I had no idea! I bought a book (Hiking the Wasatch) and started my explorations, beginning with Bell Canyon. Once I found that upper reservoir, got my first taste of wilderness, and bagged a few peaks, I was hooked. But I quickly found out how difficult and frustrating it was to find the right way to go. I dragged a few people along with me now and again, but I soon ran out of friends and family to hike with. More troubling was that winter was coming on, and I did not want to lose all the hiking conditioning I had built up over the summer. That's when a friend suggested that I try out the Wasatch Mountain Club.

The Wasatch Mountain Club was officially formed in May 1920, and is the oldest and most prolific outdoor recreation club in Utah. I didn't know that at the time. All I knew was that this organization had hiking, bicycling, mountain climbing, canyoneering, rafting, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, all right here in my backyard! Almost every day there was some new adventure on the club calendar. If I wanted to explore a place, tackle a peak, or check out a trail I'd never been on, I suddenly had over 1,000 new friends who were eager to explore with me or (more often) show me the way. Cold weather was coming on? Gear up, layer up, and follow friends on a snowshoe, backcountry ski, or foothills hike. Inversion is in? No problem. Change up the destination to an area above the inversion blanket where blue skies (or night stars) shine. Need some fresh ideas for some place to hike? Browse the club's online calendar where one can find 15 years of club activities that have been posted.

The Wasatch Mountain Club is an all-volunteer organization. The depth and breadth of activities is only limited by the interests of the members. Sometimes a couple of people show up, sometimes 10 or more. All activities are rated for difficulty, ranging from NTD (Not Too Difficult) to EXT (Extreme). This rating system is primarily a calculation of distance and elevation gain, further refined with specific factors such as bouldering, scrambling, route finding, or exposure. A short hike on a steep trail may be posted as "Not Too Difficult" simply because the distance is only a mile or two. Pace is also critical. A moderate pace is generally about 2 miles per hour plus an additional half hour for every 1,000 feet of elevation gain. As an example, using that calculation, a moderate paced hike to the top of Mt. Olympus and back (7-1/2 miles and 4,200 feet of elevation gain) would take about 6 hours. Club members who are strong hikers will bust out Mt. O much faster, while others take a more leisurely pace and make a day of it.

The club has produced the "Rambler" newsletter since 1922, sporadically at first, but produced monthly since 1952. Every issue (that we have found so far) has been uploaded to the club's website (wasatchmountainclub.org/the-rambler). Browsing through these old rambles is a fascinating walk through history. It's amazing how much has changed, but also, thanks to conservation efforts, how much has remained the same. You'll notice some familiar names in these Ramblers. Pfeifferhorn was named in honor of Chick Pfeiffer, an early club member. Goodro's Wall in Big Cottonwood Canyon was named after Harold Goodro, another long-time club member. Then there is Pete's Rock, that prominent quartzite cliff that rises above the Mt. Olympus parking lot. "Pete" was O'Dell Peterson, a mountaineering pioneer and prominent club member for over 70 years.

Yes, the club has a long history, and has maintained a steady membership of 1,000 or so members over the last decade or so. In 2020, the Wasatch Mountain Club celebrated its centennial. Thanks to COVID, our centennial wasn't exactly the year we had planned, but all in all, there were many wonderful accomplishments throughout the year that will have far more lasting impact than all those parties we had to cancel. One of those accomplishments was raising the funds to establish a permanent education endowment for scholarships that will be awarded annually to students who are pursuing a degree in the department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Salt Lake City and the surrounding area have a unique urban/wilderness interface that is unmatched. The primary objective of club members is to explore and share the experience of the outdoors. By touching nature - feeling it, hearing it, smelling it, being part of it - that's how we foster awareness of these scenic beauties, encourage preservation, and protect the future of outdoor recreation.

Written by Julie Kilgore