

SPECIAL EDITION
LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON --
SITE OF NEXT SALT LAKE SUBDIVISION?

The Rambler

Official Publication of

THE WASATCH MOUNTAIN CLUB

Salt Lake City, Utah

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SUBDIVISION PLANNED FOR

LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON

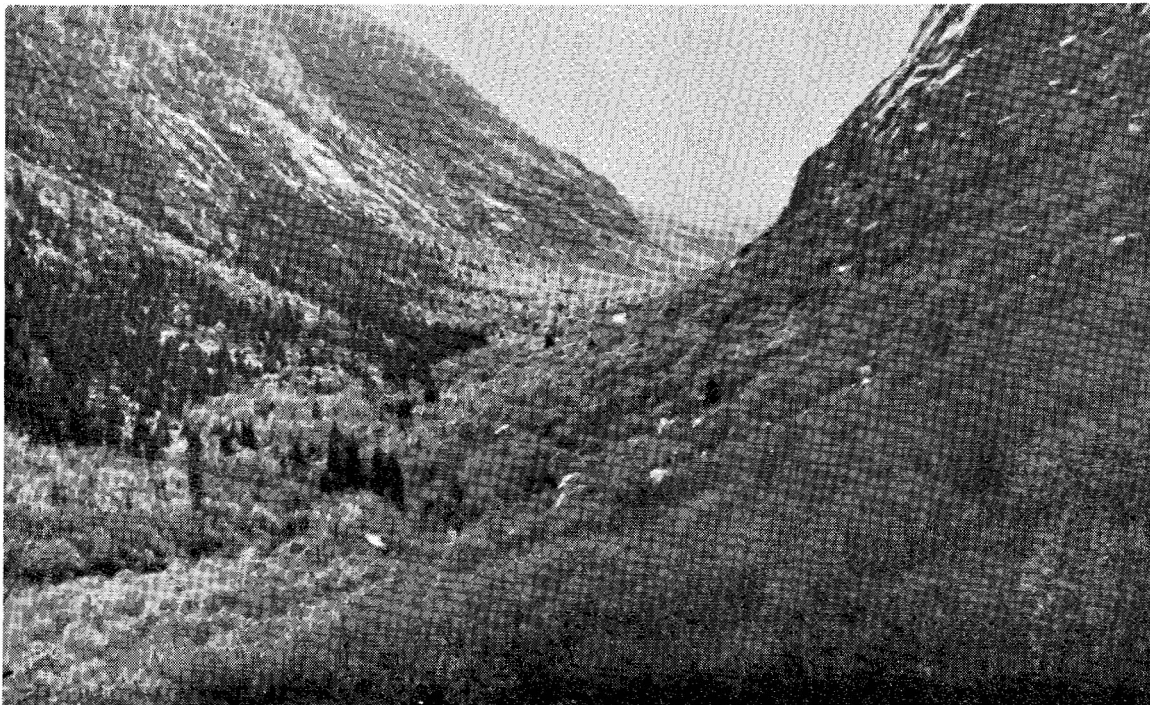
Alta Vista, Inc., a local land development corporation, has asked the Salt Lake County Planning Commission to approve its plan to build over 300 homesites, possibly three commercial areas, and one 5.12-acre multi-unit housing area in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The subdivision would be built on both sides of Little Cottonwood Creek, which supplies about 16 percent of Salt Lake City's drinking water.

The Alta Vista proposal calls for an initial development of some 60 homesites at the mouth of the canyon. This would be followed by successive stages of development that would stretch the subdivision up the steep canyon along the stream for over three miles, nearly to Tanner's Flat Camp Ground. The land developers have asked the county to approve their request as soon as possible, saying they would like to begin construction immediately. They have a legal opinion that the development does not conflict with existing zoning ordinances.

The County Planning Commission has solicited opinions from the Forest Service, state and county boards of health, water boards, state and county park and recreation departments, and other interested groups, including the Wasatch Mountain Club.

Action on the request has been held up by the County Planning Commission until more information and opinions have been gathered. Time is running out, however, and any steps taken to block this extensive development must be taken immediately. The Wasatch Mountain Club Board of Directors and Conservation Committee urges you to write or phone the County Planning Commission and all other organizations and departments listed at the end of this article, informing them that you are against the Alta Vista subdivision in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Recommend that the Forest Service, county, or state purchase the land to be protected as a national forest, or as a county or state park, preventing commercial exploitation of beautiful Little Cottonwood Canyon.

COVER PHOTO by Carl Bauer shows a portion of Little Cottonwood Canyon that would be developed as a subdivision.



Part of Area Proposed for Subdivision

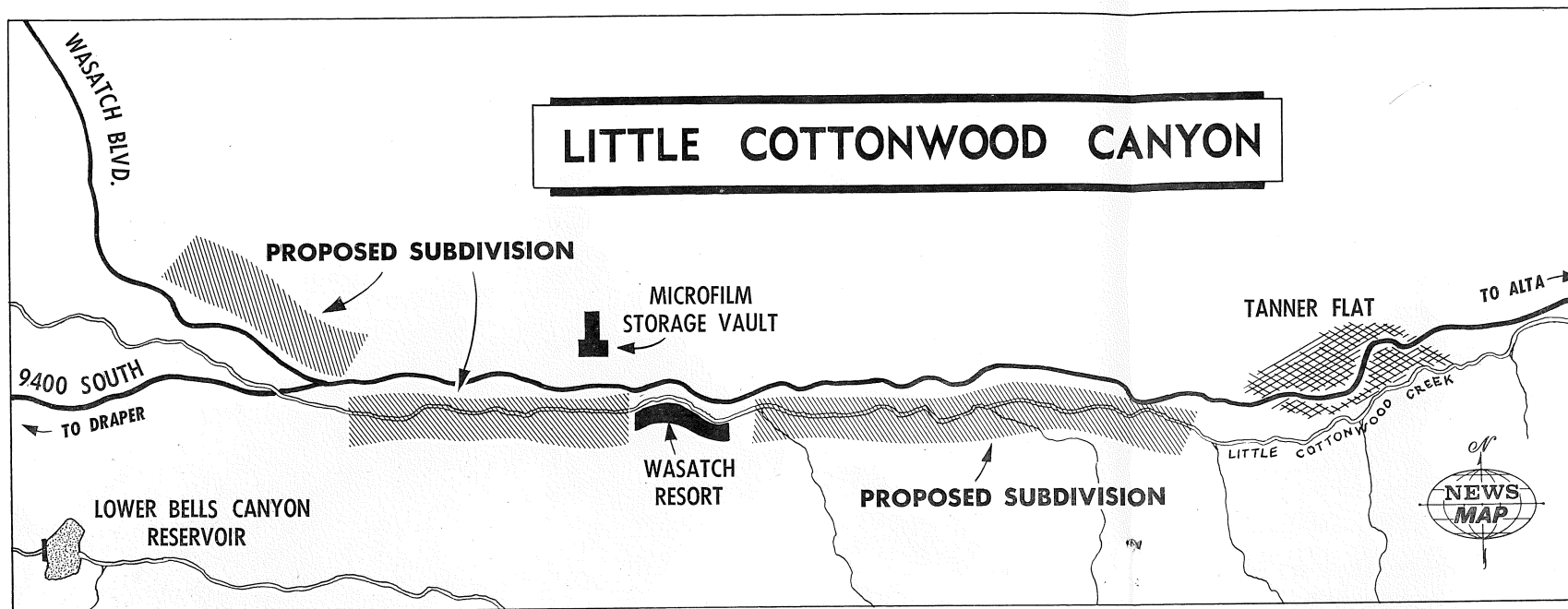
Photo by Laird Crocker

MAJOR OBJECTIONS

The following statements provide the major objections to the Alta Vista land development proposal:

● STREAM POLLUTION

The housing development could endanger health because of excessive stream pollution. Mr. Wilbur Parkinson, Chief Sanitarian of Salt Lake City Board of Health, has stated that even though sewage disposal could probably be made adequate, surface runoff through a heavily populated area picking up normal human debris, scattered garbage, and pet excrement would reach a dangerous level of contamination. More than 1,000 people could live in the area. He has further stated that the water treatment plant is at the saturation point now, and that we can not allow possible loss of any water because of contamination.



● BURDEN TO TAXPAYERS

After the first flood, pressure would be applied to the county to prevent recurrence - just as is happening today from the flooding caused by extensive shortsighted building of subdivisions on the East Bench. This belated "protection" could mean huge quantities of money coming out of taxpayer's pockets for studies, building of dams, drainage conduits, etc.

● TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

Traffic in the canyon is bad enough today, as anyone who has gone to Alta in the winter to ski, or in the other parts of the year for picnics and scenic drives readily agrees. Imagine the congestion caused by 3-1/2 miles of residential and business areas, and the associated increased traffic, parked cars, children, and reduced speed limit.

● EXTENT OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed subdivision would straddle both sides of Little Cottonwood Creek, which supplies about 16 percent of greater Salt Lake's water supply. Over 300 homesites, possibly three commercial areas, and one 5.12-acre multi-unit housing area would be constructed on land beginning below the mouth of the canyon and extending up-canyon about three miles, not far from Tanner's Flat. Natural beauty of the lower canyon would be partially, if not completely, destroyed.

● EXTENSIVE FLOODING

Hundreds of buildings and associated roads and driveways, damaging the present important watershed, could cause disastrous floods during spring runoff. Flooding would add to stream pollution, and cause property destruction not only in the canyon, but especially further down in the valley. Mr. George Tourtillott, Supervisor of Wasatch National Forest, is vitally interested in the key watershed area, and warns of the consequences of destroying it - possible floods and water loss.

● POSSIBLE RECREATION AREA DESTROYED

A shortage of recreational areas for the valley inhabitants already exists. Our increasing population has caused heavy use of picnic and camping areas; even now many have to be turned away by lack of facilities. We need more, not less, of green areas, open areas, for outdoor recreation. Tanner's Flat Camp Ground, now heavily used, would become much less desirable by being so close to a subdivision. Glaciated, flat-floored Little Cottonwood Canyon contains the largest, most useable undeveloped land for a controlled recreational area near Salt Lake City.

● DEGRADED HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Lower Little Cottonwood Canyon figured heavily in the development of Salt Lake City. Granite blocks of the Salt Lake LDS Temple were taken from the canyon on both sides of the stream for over a mile up the canyon from the present monument. The glacial boulders were cut in place, and transported to the Temple. No official statement has been heard from the LDS Church at time of preparation of this article. We

doubt, however, that they would welcome a housing development on two sides of their property near the storage vaults. Their security and policing problems would be drastically increased. Forest Service, state, or county park protection would help prevent degradation of a historical environment.

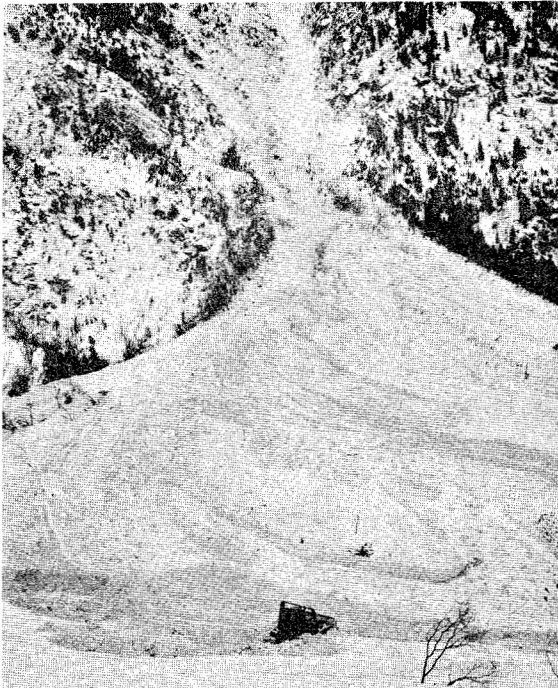
● BEAUTY OF CANYON DESTROYED

A crowning blow would be to the people who bought land in the canyon for the beauty they saw before homes and businesses were built. After the construction of hundreds of homes, possible shopping centers, and multi-unit buildings, the beauty might no longer exist -- just another housing development.

● AVALANCHE DANGER

Much of the proposed development would be directly situated at the base of side canyons posing a very real danger from avalanches. Houses could be destroyed. Families could be isolated for days by

blocked roads. In the 1950's, a major avalanche hundreds of yards wide (see photo) roared down Coalpit Gulch, crossing nearly in the middle of the proposed development, and extending 300 feet across the other side of the canyon road. Removal of trees and brush would add to avalanche hazard. The first avalanche would bring a cry from the people of the subdivision for avalanche deflectors -- more money out of the taxpayer's pocket.



Coalpit Gulch Avalanche, Lower Little Cottonwood Canyon. Forest service photo. Scale is given by the tractor in the foreground, working directly over the highway.

NEED FOR PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion will influence the decisions to be made by all officials concerned. Discuss the matter with your neighbors, at school, and at work. Show them this article. This is your chance to take an active part in modern conservation. The Planning Commission has scheduled a public meeting on Friday, November 18, 1966, at 9:00 am, at 2033 South State St., second floor. All interested persons are invited to attend. Those who wish a place on the agenda of the meeting must contact Mr. Douglas Campbell, Planning Director, as soon as possible. We urge you to attend and present your views.

Write and phone the following commissions and departments. Let them know that you don't want a subdivision in Little Cottonwood Canyon.

County Planning Commission, Leland S. Swaner, Chairman; 2033 S. State St., SLC (328-7461)

County Planning Director, Douglas Campbell, 2033 S. State St., SLC (328-7461)

County Commissioners, City & County Bldg., SLC (328-7307)

County Recreation Dept., Paul Rose, Chairman; 5177 S. State St., SLC (266-4485) Ask them to buy or agree to buy the land within a year under the Green Belt Program - 40% matching funds.

County Board of Health, 117 E. 21st S., SLC (466-8704)

City Health Department, 610 S. 2nd E., SLC (328-7736)

City Water Supply Superintendent, City & County Bldg., SLC (328-7885)

Utah Park & Recreation Commission, F. C. Kozial, Superintendent; 132 S. 2nd W., SLC (328-5881)

Wasatch National Forest, George Tourtillott, Supervisor; 125 S. State St., SLC (524-5030)

Senators and Representatives -- Urge appropriations for Forest Service to buy the land. Talk to them personally if possibly,

Club Headquarters: 425 S. 8th W., Salt Lake City, Utah 84104
Telephone: 363-7150 Lodge at Brighton, Utah

WASATCH MOUNTAIN CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PURPOSE OF THE WASATCH MOUNTAIN CLUB

The Wasatch Mountain Club, Inc., is a non-profit organization. Its purpose is to promote the physical and spiritual well being of its members and others by outdoor activities; to unite the energy, interests and knowledge of students, explorers and lovers of the mountains of Utah; to collect and disseminate information regarding the Rocky Mountains in behalf of science, literature and art; to explore and picture the scenic wonders of this and surrounding states; to advertize the natural resources and scenic beauties of the State of Utah; to encourage protection of wild animals and birds; and to encourage preservation of forests, flowers and natural scenery.

WASATCH MOUNTAIN CLUB, INC.

Application for Membership

To Board of Directors:

I hereby apply for membership in the Wasatch Mountain Club. I enclose \$2.00 entrance fee and \$3.00 dues (spouse, \$1.50). The club event I have attended is _____ on _____ (approx. date). I agree to abide by all rules and regulations of the club.

Name: _____ Recommended by: _____
Address: _____ Member: _____
City: _____ Director: _____
State: _____
Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

*Clark R. Powell, West Covina, Calif.
M.D. Holtom, 1334 E Woodland Ave, SLC
R.S. Nielsen, 5483 Woodcrest Dr., SLC*

WASATCH MOUNTAIN CLUB, Inc.
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84104