

## Book Review



**UTAH'S WASATCH RANGE:  
FOUR SEASON REFUGE**  
25 Years of Photographs by  
**Howie Garber**  
Peter E. Randall—Publisher  
Portsmouth, NH 2012  
211 pages

If you've been a regular reader of the Utah Adventure Journal, you've no doubt seen the work of frequent contributor Howie Garber. A resident of Salt Lake City for 40 years, he has spent more than a fair amount of time taking photographs of his beloved Wasatch Range (and the rest of Utah), capturing the everyday beauty that eludes the casual observer, while documenting the stunning vistas, flora and fauna—both winter and summer—that this magnificent and unique mountain range sustains. In addition to preserving the beauty of the Wasatch via his stunning photographs, he has also been active for an equal amount of time in physical protection of the range, and seeing that its beauty is preserved for generations to come. Indeed, the proceeds from his first photographic book, *Four Season Refuge*, will benefit organizations working on clean air, wilderness and protection of natural areas in the Wasatch.

While Garber's images in *Four Season Refuge* are no doubt stunning, and are the inspirational star of this beautiful, oversize picture book, he adds a total of 19 authors who contribute essays detailing the issues facing our overworked and overloved range.

The Wasatch is unique due to the fact that over 2 million people live at the foot of its soaring peaks, and much of this population depends on the range for their precious water supply. Unlike many other watersheds across the U.S., we are allowed (mostly) to recreate freely in the range year-round. The stress on the land of multiple users and needs we ask of the range are often evident. Mormon pioneers who arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 were the first to recognize the need for protection of the watersheds, and established rules prohibiting 'the filthing' of these waters, notes Jeff Niermeyer, Director of Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities.

The Wasatch supports over 1100 species of plants and 250 species of animals. A few of these species are unique to the Wasatch as well, notes contributor Allison Jones of the Wild Utah Project.

The Wasatch also supports a growing number of backcountry skiers chasing the Greatest Snow on Earth, notes Jim Steenburgh, Meteorology Professor at the University of Utah. It was the famous Wasatch snows that lead to the eventual development of the 4 ski resorts developed in the Cottonwood Canyons. Backcountry skiing, virtually unheard of 75 years ago now thrives throughout the range.

The Wasatch also sustains the largest wetland ecosystem in the entire West, notes Zach Frankel, Executive Director of the Utah Rivers Council. The Great Salt Lake would essentially be non-existent, and the massive wetlands that surround it, without the river flows of water that tumble out of the Wasatch. These wetlands provide vital habitat for over 250 species of migratory birds, nearly 10 million birds stop over during migrations along these shores.

The Wasatch provides jobs, and supports businesses. Not only through recreation, including skiing, and a number of summer related outdoor recreation, but also the range provides a quality of life for the increasing population that lives at its base. This, says economist Brad Barber, is impossible to measure by any economist, as he notes "how many doctors, lawyers, artists, engineers, and CEOs do you know who have moved to Utah because of the Wasatch and its incredible peaks, lakes and snow?"

Along these lines, Black Diamond CEO Peter Metcalf notes that the "outdoor industry's ability to create these economic benefits depends on the health of our public lands for its continued success.

(People) need access to well-preserved landscapes, including wilderness, wild lands, and waters. Places like the Wasatch Mountains, with their natural undeveloped areas, have an intrinsic economic value. They are the state's competitive economic advantage for this vibrant industry."

The resounding premise throughout *Four Season Refuge* is the often unappreciated and unknowing facts of what the Wasatch provides for its residents and users. From the water that sustains us, to the quality of life it provide us for solitude, recreation, and the life giving soul that goes along with time spent in the mountains. Garber's book and photography is sure to inspire those who have spent any time at all in our spectacular range, and will open your eyes to new vistas and views, not only those that are amazing from the high peaks, but to the issues that impact our everyday life, and seeing the need to preserve this magnificent range from the modern day threats that endanger the sustainability for future generations to enjoy. ■

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