

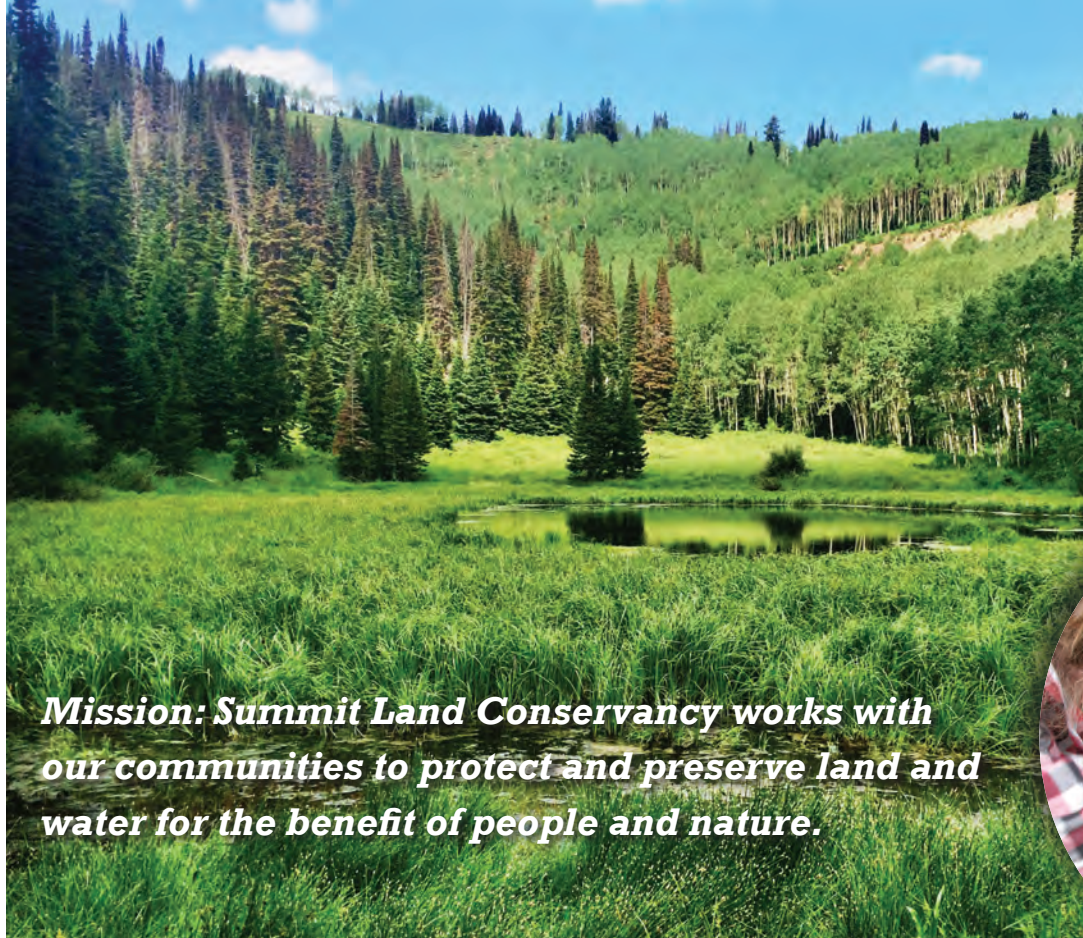
# Summit Land Conservancy Conservation Plan





# Open Space Is the heart of our community:

Our sense of place is defined by the shared landscapes that anchor us here. These mountains and trails, rivers and ranches connect us to each other and to the natural world.



*Mission: Summit Land Conservancy works with our communities to protect and preserve land and water for the benefit of people and nature.*

**fact:**  
Utah is a lonely landscape for conservation. While California and Connecticut each have over 100 land trusts focusing on protecting habitat, farms and open spaces important to their communities, only seven land trusts function in Utah. Colorado has 42; Idaho has 16. The Summit Land Conservancy partners with the national L and Trust Alliance to bring the best practices of the conservation community to work here in Summit County. We are not alone.



## We Save Land

Open space is essential for our quality of life and our economic health. The Summit Land Conservancy protects some of the most important natural landscapes for public recreation, private agribusiness, and quality wildlife habitat.

Since our inception in 1998, our purpose has always been to raise money here to save land here. We have developed collaborative partnerships with governments, agencies, foundations, and individuals in order to permanently protect the lands that give context to our community.

Gifts from individuals are generally matched at least ten times as we partner with local, state, and federal funding partners, private foundations, and the landowners themselves.

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | ✓ Sound Finances                          |
|  | ✓ Strong Transactions                     |
|  | ✓ Excellent Land and Easement Stewardship |
|  | ✓ Effective Governance                    |

## Forever

Our conservation easements are perpetual obligations, therefore the Conservancy has to exist for many years to come. To that end, the Summit Land Conservancy was the first land trust in Utah to be accredited by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2011.

In 2014 the national Land Trust Alliance selected the Summit Land Conservancy to be one of the first 75 participants in its inaugural Excellence Program. The Alliance believes in our abilities and has made significant investment to help us become more efficient and more effective at saving land.





# Strategic Conservation Plan

A **strategic conservation plan** focuses organizational resources. Land conservation projects are time consuming and require professional analysis of natural resources, legal expertise, and strong relationship skills.

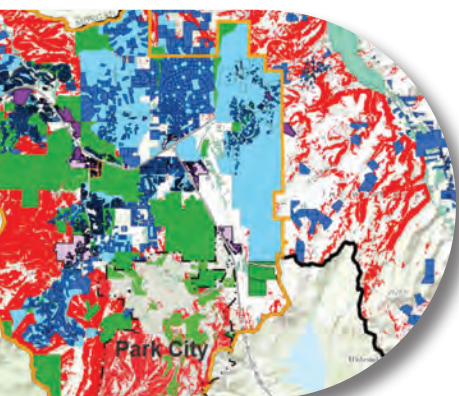
This Conservation Plan has been developed to insure that the Conservancy's resources are put to the best use, preserving the most critical landscapes in Summit County.



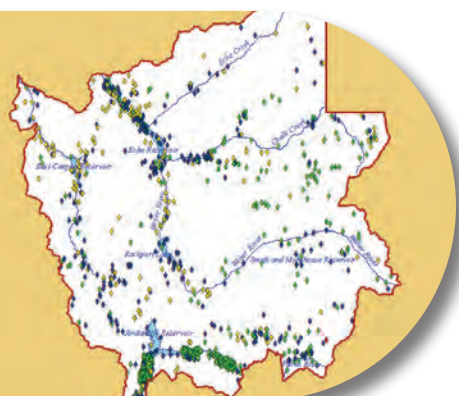
Free Recreational Access



Majestic Wildlife



Snyderville Basin Buildout



Critical Species Map

## Elements we considered:

### Community Priorities:

Over the past few years, the Conservancy has asked community members to rank a list of land qualities and uses. Consistently, those surveyed ranked recreational open space, rural landscapes and lifestyles, and wildlife habitat as the community's top priorities.

*"Carbon reduction, energy and water conservation programs and open space acquisition not only attract residents and visitors to Park City, but also advance community environmental goals and preserve the unique natural setting."*  
—Park City 2030, July 2012

### State and Local Plans:

The Conservancy reviewed the plans, policies and studies from a variety of stakeholders. These plans incorporate the desires and requirements of the broader population as well as jurisdictional regulations imposed by state and federal agencies.

*"Open Space is the backbone of the Snyderville Basin economy. To the extent possible, preserve open space in the Basin that contains Critical Lands and recreational, cultural, and scenic spaces. Preservation of these lands and connections between them is necessary in order to support a healthy environment and to retain the sense of place, quality of life, and the economic success of the resort economy."*  
—Snyderville Basin General Plan, June 2015

### Threat:

Summit County is experiencing rapid growth, which is projected to continue. Our population increase of 6% from 2010 to 2013 is higher than the state average. With a median household income of \$89,886, Summit County is Utah's most prosperous county. According to the 2000 census, only 324 homes in Summit County were worth over a million dollars; at the most recent estimate, 1,417 homes were worth over a million dollars, (which amounts to over 10% of homes in the county).

*"Utahns envision feeding their families with healthy, high-quality food grown in Utah. They see an abundance of locally grown products as part of a healthy lifestyle that will improve the quality of life for them and future generations. Utahns also envision being more self-reliant and less dependent on other states and countries to provide their food. They also want a future in which Utah's food industry provides jobs across the state."*  
— YOUR UTAH, YOUR FUTURE VISION FOR 2050

### Geospatial Analysis:

The Conservancy commissioned a mapping analysis to identify critical natural resources within our service area. Lands within the analysis area include private undeveloped parcels with no conservation protection. Lands were excluded if they were in an industrial zone, developed subdivision, or managed by the state. Spatial information was weighted and ranked in the following order: threatened, endangered and conservation/biodiversity species, greater sage grouse target habitat zones, big game winter range habitat, big game calving grounds, crucial big game habitat, critical soils, jurisdictional wetlands, impaired water quality assessment units, agricultural protection areas, and riparian buffer zones.





# Focus area #1: Greater Park City

The Conservancy's primary focus area is Park City and the Snyderville Basin. This is where we began and where most of our supporters, board members, and staff live.

The local community has worked diligently to save the open spaces we enjoy in the greater Park City area, and now there are only a handful of large unprotected green spaces left. Whether they are used for agriculture, contain jurisdictional wetlands, or help to maintain the community charm residents and visitors have come to expect, protecting these remaining open spaces is our top priority.

As these last properties are protected, the Conservancy turns its focus in this area to developing deep community connections to our shared landscapes, to insuring sound stewardship so that these lands are open forever, and to leading a community dialogue about other conservation opportunities (such as daylighting Poison Creek or restoring the McCloud Creek/ Kimball Creek fishery).

**We save:**

- Recreational access & trails
- Water quality & wetlands
- Wildlife habitat and corridors
- Critical view sheds



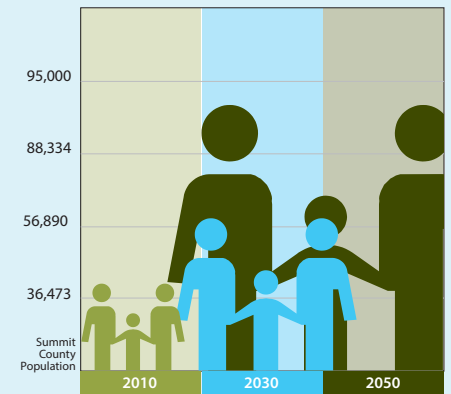
*"Houses are the last crop"*  
Steve Osguthorpe, rancher, Park City native and winner of the 2011 Aldo Leopold Conservationist of the Year.



### Map Area = Park City

- Legend**
- Our Project Area
  - Our Protected Lands
  - Other Protected Lands

### fact:



In 2010 the population in Summit County was 36,473. By 2030 estimates say there will be 56,890 people in Summit County and 88,334 by 2050.





## Focus area #2: Weber River

The Conservancy's second focus area is the main stem of the Weber River and the vital tributaries that flow to it.

As property along the Weber increases in value, farm and range land of statewide importance is converted to home sites. The 2012 Agricultural Census shows a 35% decrease in active farmland within Summit County since 2007, and a 53% decrease since 1997. Yet county residents consistently say that they want to preserve the rural, small-town quality of life they currently enjoy.

The Weber River Watershed supplies water to 22% of Utah's population. The farms that currently line the river protect the water quality, provide critical wildlife habitat, absorb storm and flood events, maintain the highly valued view sheds, and rural community values of Eastern Summit County. The Weber is also the 2nd most-fished river in Utah, contributing to Summit County's resort economy.

## We save:

- Water quality
- Critical view sheds
- Angler access
- Wildlife habitat and corridors
- Farm and range land of statewide importance
- Prime soils



Protected: Judd Ranch, Hoytsville

### Weber River Fact:

The Uinta Mountains and Wasatch Mountains around Park City form the headwaters of the Weber Basin. The Weber River flows through the rural heart of Summit County before making its way through two other counties to its terminus in the Great Salt Lake.

### fact:

**Farm and Range Land of Statewide Importance** – Is defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Services as land “that is of statewide or local importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, bio-fuels or oil seed crops... these farmlands produce high yields of crops when treated and managed in accordance with acceptable farming methods”.





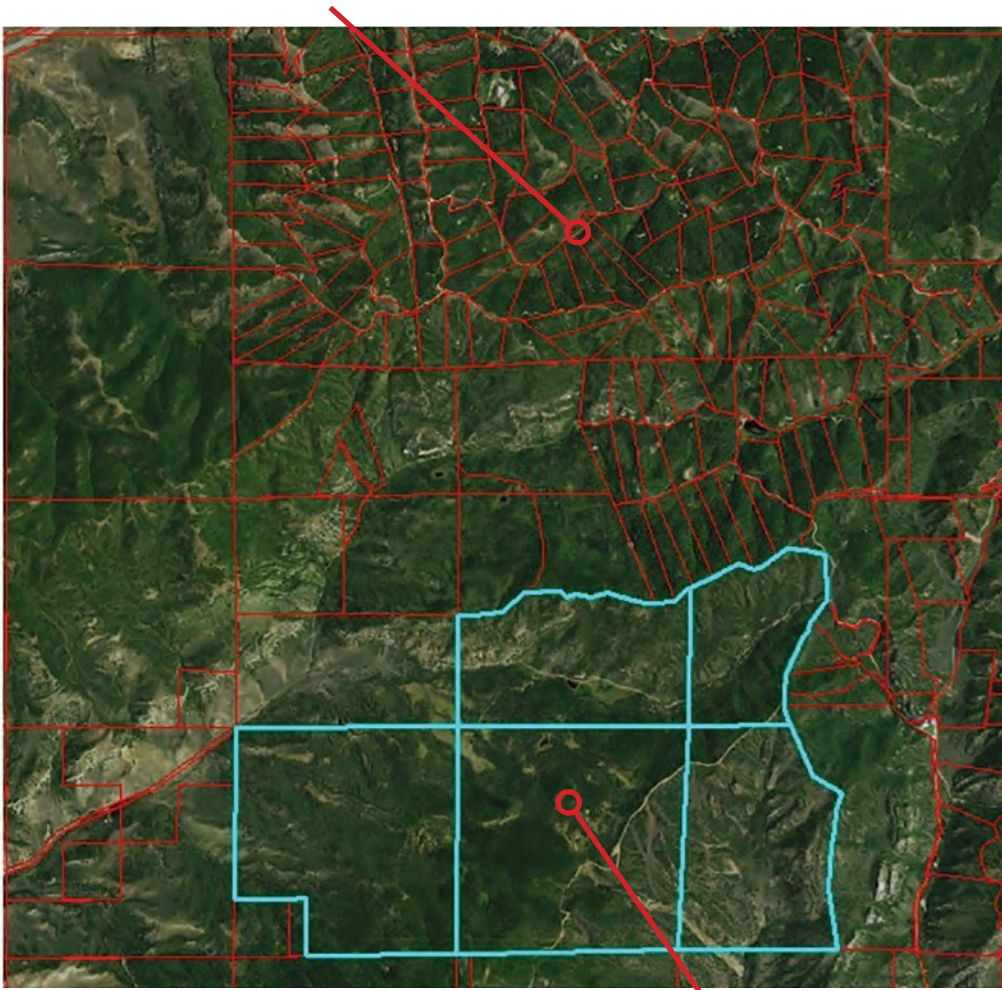
## Focus area #3: Landscapes

The Conservancy's third focus area is large, landscape-scale projects that encompass thousands of acres and protect critical habitats.

An elk doesn't know when it crosses a property line and a bald eagle doesn't care, but both require the traditional vast open spaces of the American West to survive. Private ranches often hold critical water sources and winter range for species that otherwise live on public land. Many of Summit County's large ranches have been carved up into "mini ranchettes" that fragment habitat and decimate agricultural uses of the property.

Approaching these projects from an ecosystems' services point of view maintains the integrity of the habitat and implements best practices for agricultural management. It is the most cost effective way to maintain the long term health of the land, the wildlife, and the surrounding community. Conservation on this scale takes us across county and state boundaries to find synergies and partnerships at the national level.

New subdivisions like this fragment the landscape.

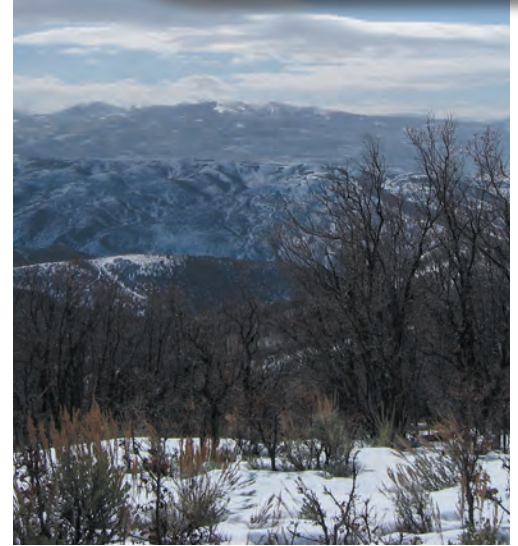


Which is why large landscape scale conservation like the Ercanbrack Livestock Ranch is important.



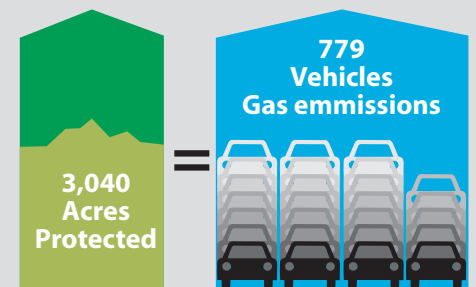
## We save:

Critical wildlife habitat  
Water quality  
Heritage ranches



## fact:

Carbon Sequestration is the process in which carbon is captured and long-term storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is achieved. Forests and soils draw carbon out of the atmosphere.



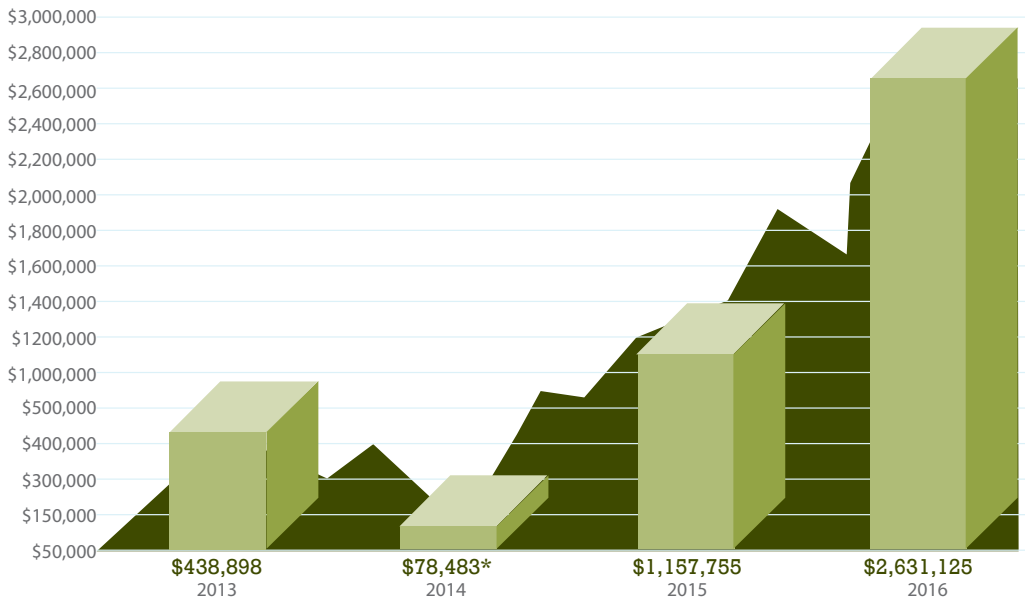
Summit Land Conservancy has already protected over 3,040 acres of mix landscape, which sequesters over 3,700 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> per year. This number is approximately the amount of greenhouse gas emitted over driving 8,800,000 miles in an average passenger vehicle or 779 vehicles/year.

# Implementation

Through a comprehensive strategic planning process, the Conservancy determined that our work should focus on the community's priorities, our partners' plans, mitigating the threat of development, and the hard science that shows which landscapes contain the most critical natural resources. As we pursue our mission to protect and preserve land and water for the benefit of people and nature, we will endeavor to simultaneously conserve properties in all three of our focus areas: Greater Park City/Western Summit County, along the Weber River, and large, landscape scale ecosystems. In the event that we have two projects competing for the same resources, we will prioritize them based on the ranking of the focus areas, but also with consideration of the conservation values on each property.

– Summit Land Conservancy Board of Directors 2016

## Dollars Raised by Summit Land Conservancy for Land Protection Projects



\* Only stewardship funding was raised for easements this year as Park City Municipal already owned the land.

# Our Challenge

The state of Utah funds conservation through appropriations to the LeRay McAllister fund. Over the last five years, only \$1.4 million\* has been dedicated to this fund. By comparison, Colorado set aside \$23 million dollars for land conservation in a single fiscal year\*\*. Because Utah supplies virtually no state funding to save land, organizations struggle to find the dollars required to match federal funding programs. The Conservancy is one of the few organizations in Utah that has built the expertise and the partnerships to access critical federal funding to save land here in Summit County.

\*since 2011  
\*\*fiscal year 2014-2015



Park City



Weber River



Landscapes

*"If you wish your children to think deep thoughts, to know the holiest emotions, take them to the woods and hills, and give them the freedom of the meadows; the hills purify those who walk upon them."*

– Richard Jefferies





# Conservation starts when the land speaks to our hearts.

That first conversation is followed by many others. The Conservancy collaborates with individuals, organizations, public agencies, and communities to identify challenges, devise workable solutions, and achieve mutual goals.

## Documents Consulted

- Park City 2030, July 2012
- Snyderville Basin General Plan, June 2015
- Eastern Summit County General Plan, August 2013
- YOUR UTAH, YOUR FUTURE VISION FOR 2050
- Summit County Council Vision Statement
- Draft Utah Wildlife Action Plan, 2015-2025
- Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Utah, February 2013
- "Water Resources in the area of Snyderville Basin and Park City in Summit County, UT." August 1998.
- Environmental Protection Agency. Calculations and References. 2012. 2013.
- Environmental Protection Agency. Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. 2013.
- "Climate Change in Park City: An Assessment of Climate, Snowpack and Economic impacts." 2009.
- "Climate Change and Utah: The Scientific Consensus" September 2007.
- U.S. Census Data, Utah
- The Water Cycle: Snowmelt Runoff.
- USDA Forest Service. Carbon Sequestration. March 2012.
- Weber River Watershed Plan 2014
- Inventory of Sensitive Species and Ecosystems in Utah, June 1998
- Land Use, Impervious Surface, and Water Quality, April 2009
- Weber River Basin Planning for the Future, September 2009
- Relevant TMDL Reports
- Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0 Investment Strategy, FY 2015-2018, August 2015



**We would like to thank our partners who assisted with the creation of this Conservation Plan, and support its implementation with financial and in-kind aid:**

Red Tail Ranch  
Utah Department of Environmental Quality  
Summit County  
Morgan County  
Wasatch County  
Park City Municipal  
US Natural Resources Conservation Services  
Utah State University  
Utah Division of Natural Resources  
US Fish and Wildlife Services  
Land Trust Alliance  
Vail Epic Promise  
Deer Valley Resort



Photos courtesy of Charlie Lansche, Steve Joyce, and Summit Land Conservancy Staff. Document creation by GrafixSolutions.







**Life . . . it's better with open space.**



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