

# WFRC

WASATCH FRONT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

## REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PLANNING STUDY



*A partnership between:*

Wasatch Front  
Regional Council

*and*

US Geological Survey,  
Biological Resources

Utah State University  
College of Natural  
Resources,

Utah Division  
of Wildlife Resources,

Marriner Eccles  
Foundation,

Envision Utah,

Utah Governor's Quality  
Growth Commission,

Swaner Design



# 2003

## Phase II



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# Executive Summary



The Wasatch Front Regional Open Space Planning study is a first step toward protecting a network of important open spaces across Weber, Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake and Tooele Counties. Through meetings with planners and city leaders, public workshops and surveys, and extensive mapping, a vision for the region was created that identifies issues, resources and connections from a scale and perspective never before attempted. While a plan at this broad scale is never exhaustive, it is comprehensive. It is extremely useful for showing different municipalities and agencies what other communities are doing and for highlighting sentiments and ideas held in common. This study lays out the facts for each community to interpret and act on to achieve their goals. It is hoped that this is useful not only to local leaders, but to policy makers at state and regional levels and in other government agencies. This report is a call for support and action by all, and it will take a combined effort to reach the high expectations of this region's residents.

This public process affirmed that residents of this region value a wide diversity of open spaces and resources—from mountainsides to shorelines, farmlands to urban lots—and strongly support protecting them. As the metropolitan areas come close to exhausting their supply of easily buildable land, development is starting to enter more critical and sensitive areas that have long provided buffers from hazards such as flooding and earthquakes, nuisances such as sewer treatment plants, and supplied important services like aquifer protection, stormwater absorption, trails and fresh produce. There is so much to protect and time is running out, and the region still has very few plans in place and almost no funding established to take on this challenge.

Several steps are critical to achieving the goal of a regional open space network. Public awareness—promoting the goals of this plan and the strategies to achieve them—is the basis for communities taking action. Because resources and open space systems stretch across boundaries, regional coordination is also important to help communities share strategies and create a strong force to push for more planning and funding. Coordination at an even larger scale to protect entire natural systems is just as important. A WFRC area forum should also include public land management agencies and coordinate with other regional entities such as Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) and Bear River Association of Governments. WFRC is advised to either continue its coordination role or create a regional forum to do so.

Ultimately, it is up to individual communities to create their own plans and adopt own strategies. Comprehensive open space programs can take years to fully implement, but once in place, reap benefits well beyond their cost. Programs should encompass planning tools to protect sensitive lands and direct development into the most suitable locations, acquisition

tools for opportunities to protect land outright, and funding to purchase land and to pay for the staff needed for planning, maintenance, enhancements and education. All fair and successful programs rely on a comprehensive approach as well as a broad base of support. Because the benefits will be shared all every component of a community should be expected to contribute—citizens, developers, landowners, municipalities and managing agencies. Legislative action should also be considered to generate statewide support for these programs.

This report outlines the reasons and the methods for acting now to protecting important landscapes and resources. Chapter One of this study explains the purpose and need for a regional open space study. Chapter Two assesses the Wasatch Region's needs and outlook on open space resources and protecting them. Chapter Three displays and describes a desirable open space network, both across the region and in each of the five counties that constitute it. Chapter Four outlines strategies to achieve this goal and the Appendix contains numerous resources and facts to support such an effort.

# Introduction



Why Create an Open Space Plan?  
 Project History and Participants  
 Public Process and Input  
 What is a Regional Open Space Plan?  
 Economic Benefits of Open Space

## Why Create an Open Space Plan?

The Wasatch Front is experiencing the most rapid growth in its history as mentioned previously, growth by numbers of people—a projected jump from 1.4 to 2.2 million residents by the year 2030<sup>1</sup>—and land for development is being consumed at a staggering pace. More and more, citizens are asking their leaders to protect the character of their community and the places they care about. A recent Dan Jones survey indicated that quality of life, open space, and walkable communities are the highest priorities of Utahns, second only to education. Protecting open space is a goal agreed to by 87% of residents<sup>2</sup> and a majority surveyed are willing to pay at least a quarter percent tax to help these efforts.<sup>3</sup> Citizens have voiced support for protecting critical lands for the health, safety and welfare of residents.<sup>4</sup> As well, they expect leaders to seek solutions to growth challenges and be fiscally responsible in extending and paying for new infrastructure. Unbuilt land requires fewer public services and performs valuable natural functions, such as stormwater absorption and temperature cooling, and raises the quality of life in a community. The economic value of such “green infrastructure” has been quantified (see “Economic Benefits of Open Space,” in this chapter) and should be taken seriously.

Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC or the Council) is responsible for coordinating much of the infrastructure across the five-county region it serves. For years, it has coordinated transportation plans, construction and upgrades and has helped communities discuss and plan for population growth and impending land use changes. In this role, the Council has come to realize that their transportation projects have the ability to shape communities, for better or for worse. The Council is aware that they can be a more effective and positive force by considering land uses just as integrally as transportation factors. In recent years, the council established the Regional Growth Committee with the charge to address and evaluate growth-related issues in the region with the hope of improving the overall quality of life for its residents. This committee came to realize that open spaces and development are intertwined and must be addressed as a part of the

<sup>1</sup> Wasatch Front Regional Council projections 2005-2030.

<sup>2</sup> Wirthlin Associates, *Envisioning the Future of the Greater Wasatch Area*, March 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Envision Utah Study*, January 2002.

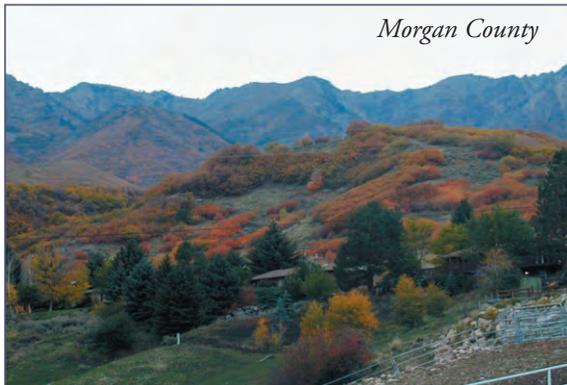
<sup>4</sup> Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Study conducted for the Davis County Comprehensive Hillside Plan*, August 2002.

land use mosaic to protect the region's quality of life. A separate Open Space Sub-Committee was thus formed, charged with finding a way to define and identify regional open spaces and explore possibilities for protecting it.

A critical first step is to understand the regional context and importance of open lands. This plan, prepared for the WFRC Open Space Sub-Committee is the second phase in an extensive study of the region's open lands to promote the creation of a green infrastructure network for the region. The next step – implementing this plan – is absolutely essential and should be undertaken immediately before costs escalate and opportunities disappear forever.

## Project History and Participants

The Wasatch Front Regional Council's Regional Growth Committee, chaired by Commissioner Carol Page, started this planning process by creating an Open Space Sub-Committee in March of 2000. At that point they contracted with Swaner Design and Utah State University's (USU) College of Natural Resources to conduct the first step of this planning process—defining and mapping regional open spaces and identifying the issues that surround them. The scope of work included: defining the meaning of regional open space, researching and analyzing the cultural and biophysical aspects of the Wasatch Front region; defining and assembling a GIS



(Geographic Information Systems) mapping database; reviewing and summarizing existing public surveys on open space; defining and proposing a conceptual open space pattern; identifying conflicts between conceptual open space and development; and identifying implementation strategies to protect open space. This phase of work concluded with a report by USU's College of Natural Resources entitled *Alternative Futures for Utah's Wasatch Front*, which highlights different resources of

concern and alternative models of protection, reflecting diverse public opinions on preservation priorities. The extensive GIS mapping database created by USU was used as the basis for the work in the following phase as WFRC proceeded to help make these plans a reality across the entire Wasatch Region.

With issues identified and an information base established, the next step was to involve the general public in further identifying and prioritizing resources to inform an actual plan for a regional open space network. The partnership of WFRC, Swaner Design and USU continued their work with a number of steps to involve constituent communities and citizens, outlined in the "Public Input and Process" section on the following page.

This project was made possible over the first two phases by generous funding from the Wasatch Front Regional Council, matching funds from participating counties, a grant from the Quality Growth Commission and in-kind services donated by Utah State University with the support of

the US Geologic Survey, Biological Survey. Additional support was contributed by the Mariner Eccles Foundation, Envision Utah, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Swaner Design was hired as the project consultants to coordinate the project. Without this alliance of concerned partners, this plan could not have been completed to this point. Likewise, ongoing partnerships and cooperation will be essential for its success and implementation.

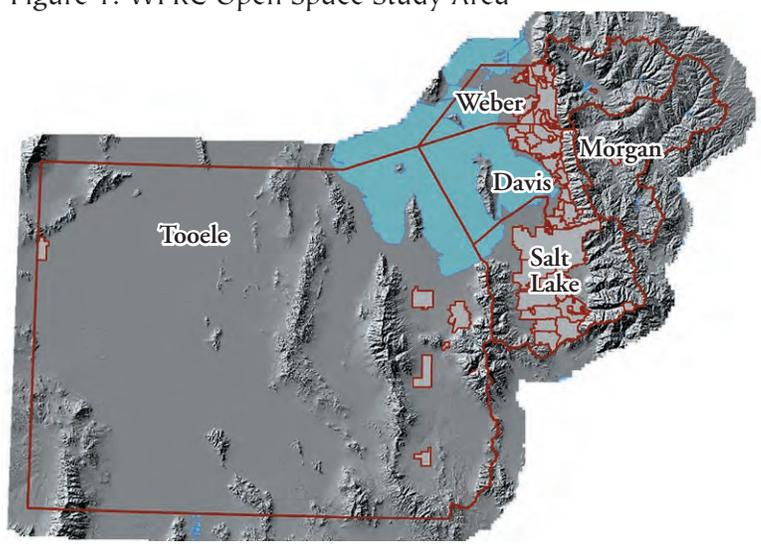
Primary team members on this phase included planners George Ramjoué and Aric Jensen and on behalf of Wasatch Front Regional Council; Sumner Swaner, Sharen Hauri and Rachel Fenton, land planners with Swaner Design; and Professors Richard E. Toth, Thomas C. Edwards and Robert J. Lilieholm coordinating the efforts and students of Utah State University. Many thanks are also due to the members of the leadership team, whose names are mentioned in the appendix, and the cities and citizens who participated, lent their support and provided input to this effort.

## Public Process and Input

With a region encompassing 10,000 square miles comprising five counties—Weber, Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake and Tooele—and 53 municipalities (Figure 1), public involvement was a daunting task. Budget limitations demanded simplifying the process as much as possible. To garner commitment from municipalities, every city and county was asked to contribute a representative planner, mayor or involved citizen to join a leadership team as a liaison between the project team (WFRC, Swaner Design, USU) and their local leaders and citizenry. The leadership team became the main vehicle to enlist public participation and convey the sentiments of their constituents to the project team. They were involved in shaping the workshop format, participating at their county's workshop, and reviewing the planning study report. They also participated in a workshop amongst themselves, to pilot the format and create their vision for the region.

Leadership team members submitted names of interested stakeholders from their community, to whom the project team sent personal invitations to the workshops. The project team also sent direct invitations to the mayors, city councils, and planning commissions of each municipality. A series of articles in newspapers across the region highlighted the project and invited the public to attend a workshop in their county. A total of 149 citizens attended one of five workshops in October and November 2002 to contribute their input and learn about the plan.

Figure 1: WFRC Open Space Study Area



At the workshops, citizens were asked their preference for open space models created in the first phase of the study by USU. Prioritizing was based on how desirable the level and type of protection was in their community. They were also asked to prioritize the resource elements that made up each of these models—such as agricultural lands or streams—to convey what their county’s residents felt was most important. Then, they identified on maps specific places and resources worth protecting, and, while doing so, were asked to record these ideas in individual written surveys. Evaluations were also conducted as part of the workshop to assess how participants felt about the plan and the workshop process and to guide next steps. The workshop results are summarized in Chapter 3. More detailed surveys and evaluation results, as well as GIS mapping data are available on the CD distributed with this report. Recommendations were also drawn from this input to guide communities to the next step—implementation. These materials were distributed to the leadership team as well as the Open Space Sub-Committee for final review and approval and additional copies are available from WFRC.



*Salt Lake County workshop participants*

## What is a Regional Open Space Plan?

As a regional plan, this effort was conducted in comprehensive terms using very broad strokes to define and identify open space resources. Regional plans such as this are inherently rough and make no claims of complete accuracy. Instead, they point the way toward more refined plans at a countywide or local community level. Stretching beyond the plan created, the effort strove to boost understanding of shared resources and common issues across boundaries; present a cohesive vision for jurisdictions, land management agencies and landowners; and establish a unified strategy for communities to use in developing their own regulatory tools. The planning process—gathering as much input and considering as many issues as possible—was emphasized instead of the product—the plan currently in hand. Every community included is strongly encouraged to use this foundation to create a more specific plan or a cooperative plan with neighboring communities to meet their own needs and realities.

This Regional Open Space Planning Study is not a plan until it is implemented by a community. It not only sets goals for the next decade or two, but it creates a blueprint for the ultimate goal of protecting a network of open spaces and resources as well as enhancing communities, which may take fifty or even a hundred years, and change over time. Thus, the conceptual plan included here suggests a desirable pattern of growth and preservation, understanding that individual communities and projects will influence the eventual outcome, but that the spirit and function of the landscape should be maintained. The recommendations in this study are guiding principles by which a community could start their own open space program. Some areas identified as green

spaces on the map are currently built, or would need restoration to function to their fullest. Such ideas are suggestions and ultimately long-term goals not meant to be desired and forced on a location, but achieved only as it makes sense. For example, most stream corridors are identified for protection, even in places where the water is piped underground. By identifying the corridor now, future development can be designed so that the stream may be re-surfaced and restored as a tree-lined corridor in the future.

#### Definition of Regional Open Space

*For the purpose of this study, Regionally Significant Open Space is defined as land which is important to residents for its actual or perceived cultural, ecological, agricultural or recreational values and meets the following criteria:*

- Contributes to the unique character of the region.
- Has ecological importance.
- Contributes to recreation and tourism.
- Crosses jurisdictional lines or is of multi-jurisdictional interest.

Areas are identified for their regional importance to people and to handle their demands on natural systems. Many places are highlighted on this map, indicating they are worthy of preservation or at least special consideration when development happens.

An open space network is a voluntary effort that takes the contributions of everyone in the community—citizens, landowners, developers and city leaders alike. The green on the map simply highlights areas that residents value and would likely work to protect given the opportunity. The green on the map does not restrict building in an area, nor does it mean that the public wants to purchase and take responsibility for that land. Just the opposite is typically true—most communities have a very limited capability to buy and maintain lands and

prefer landscapes that take care of themselves or are tended to by the people who own the parcel. This plan has no authority or intentions to take land, development rights, or control away from landowners. But it does have the goal of guiding development in a positive direction, for the benefit of residents and for the health and future well-being of this region. Several examples of plans that have implemented strategies for protecting open spaces and important natural resources are named in the “Model Plans and Resource Contacts” section in the Appendix.

## Economic Benefits of Open Space

The benefits of a green space system go far beyond quality of life, they reach to the foundation of a community’s economy, function, services, and safety. The information here is excerpted from numerous publications, including the Trust for Public Land’s (TPL) *Economic Benefits of Open Space*, which can be found at [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org), and from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UTDWR) website on nature tourism <http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/outreach/naturetourism/index.html>.

Benefits of open lands are almost too numerous to quantify, but economists in recent years have tried to put a dollar value on the natural services they provide. They include absorbing

stormwater to prevent floods, purifying water and air, cooling air temperatures, breaking down organic waste, providing habitat for pollinating animals and insects, and much more, at a value that has been estimated worldwide at \$33 trillion dollars per year. Keeping water pure is almost always cheaper than cleaning it. New York City spent \$1.5 billion dollars to protect land at the source of its water supply rather than spending \$8 billion dollars on a water filtration plant. Trees are another overlooked resource. Covering 27% of the total land area in Atlanta, Georgia, trees improving air quality at an estimated annual value of \$15 million. They also have eliminated some of the need for stormwater retention saving \$883 in the long term. A single acre of wetlands is estimated to generate \$150-200,000 in benefits.

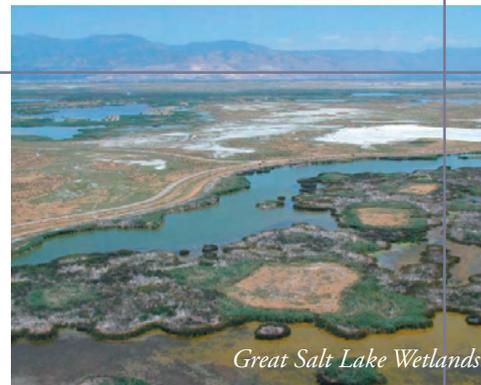
From an economic development standpoint, protecting open space networks makes money. Corporate CEOs have said that quality of life is the third-important factor in locating a business, behind access to markets and a skilled employee base (TPL). Owners of small businesses have stated that recreation, parks, and open space are the single highest priority for relocating their business. On a recreation note, outdoor recreation is a huge draw and revenue generator, with more participants than the combined total of those who own a pet, tend a garden or attend professional sports events (UTDWR). A 1996 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey reports that Americans spend \$102 billion annually on wildlife recreation, far exceeding the \$81 billion spent for new cars each year. Since tourism is the number one industry in the world and still growing, there is no doubt nature tourism is a burgeoning industry worthy of investment.

These reasons alone make sound economic sense, but there are still more financial incentives to protect land. Agriculture, even at a small scale, is the foundation of the nation's economy, indirectly providing 10% of our gross national product. As well, farmlands and other open lands typically pay far more in taxes than they receive in services. Residential development on the other hand, rarely pays for itself as it demands police, school, sewer, and other costly public services. When included within a residential development, open space adds to the value of surrounding properties, paying for itself while increasing property tax revenues for a community. In addition, conservation designs where homes are clustered on only one portion of a site typically have more efficient, less costly infrastructure and the natural open space is more affordable to maintain than a manicured landscape.

# Assessment

## III

Population & Growth Trends  
Landscape at a Glance  
Protected, Public and Unbuilt Land  
Existing Programs & Tools  
Major Challenges



Great Salt Lake Wetlands



## Population and Growth Trends

Protecting open space is a pressing issue because population along the Wasatch Front is growing at a much higher rate than the national average. According to the *Wasatch Front Region Small Area Socioeconomic Projections* published in 2001, the WFRC region is projected to grow by over 50%, in the next twenty five years, from 1.4 million people in 2005 to nearly 2.1 million in 2030. This is shown in Table 1 below and Figure 2 on the following page.

Table 1: Wasatch Region Population Projections

County	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<i>Salt Lake</i>	914,190	1,028,508	1,136,706	1,223,218	1,308,787	1,383,907
<i>Davis</i>	261,297	292,173	322,395	346,203	369,640	392,003
<i>Weber</i>	201,850	227,032	251,782	271,369	290,204	307,350
<i>Tooele</i>	42,450	50,333	58,487	65,852	73,413	80,938
<i>Morgan</i>	7,856	8,829	9,810	10,659	11,552	12,453
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,427,643</b>	<b>1,606,875</b>	<b>1,779,180</b>	<b>1,917,301</b>	<b>1,053,596</b>	<b>2,176,651</b>

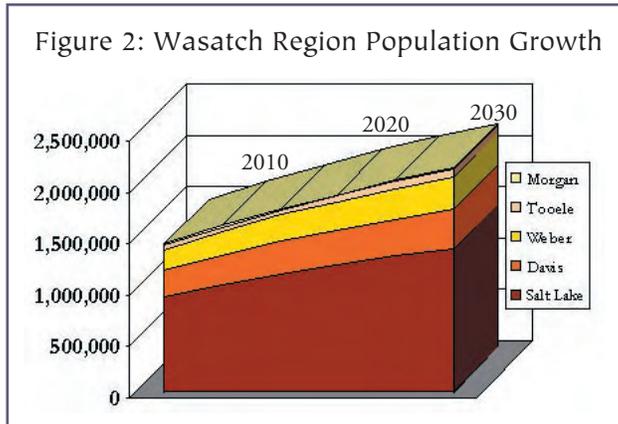
source: *Wasatch Front Small Area Socioeconomic Projections: 2005-2030*

Population will not be evenly dispersed. Salt Lake County dominates, with more than half the population of the entire WFRC region, while Morgan and Davis Counties together contain less than 5%. Yet, growth rates in Salt Lake County and Davis County are expected to be much slower than the outlying areas of Weber, Morgan and Tooele Counties, who have far more room to grow. Their projected increases of 56%, 58% and 91% respectively may be adjusted even higher as more population moves in and other areas approach build out. In general, the density of housing and businesses decreases with distance from downtown Salt Lake City, Ogden and Davis County employment centers. The majority of growth will be in the form of single residential units. Lower density, single-use development not only consumes more land, it places people farther from job centers, placing additional demands on the land for road and transit networks. As growth presses into less well developed areas of southwestern and northwest Salt Lake County, northwestern

Davis county, western Weber County, and Tooele County, municipalities are urged to find ways to make these communities more compact and self-sufficient while incorporating a green space network as feasible.

Average household sizes vary slightly between counties, but the WFRC region average of 2.85 persons per house is currently lower than Utah's statewide average of 3.13 (the highest in the nation), yet still 10% higher than the national average 2.59 persons per household. Utah is following the national trend of shrinking household sizes, with an average of 2.70 persons per household projected by the year 2030 for the WFRC region. Shrinking household sizes mean more land is needed to house a given population unless lot sizes are reduced or redevelopment projects add projects of greater than average density. Thus, population densities drop, making less efficient use of infrastructure and services as described above, Fortunately many residents surveyed in this study were comfortable with increasing densities as a trade off for more efficient land use and open spaces. This sentiment and the trend of shrinking household sizes should make cities reconsider their zoning densities and encourage compact growth as a primary tool for protecting open space.

These trends highlight some of the most significant reasons for regional open space and land use planning. First, areas with the most population have both the strongest demand for open space and place the greatest strain on remaining unbuilt land. Second, areas with lower populations have the richest supplies of open lands and resources but a small tax base and citizenry overwhelmed by such a large challenge. A broad strategy can help bring open spaces across the region into public use drawing from a wider support base. Finally, coordinated land use and transportation can ease pressure on many unbuilt lands allowing time and thought for including them in an open space network.



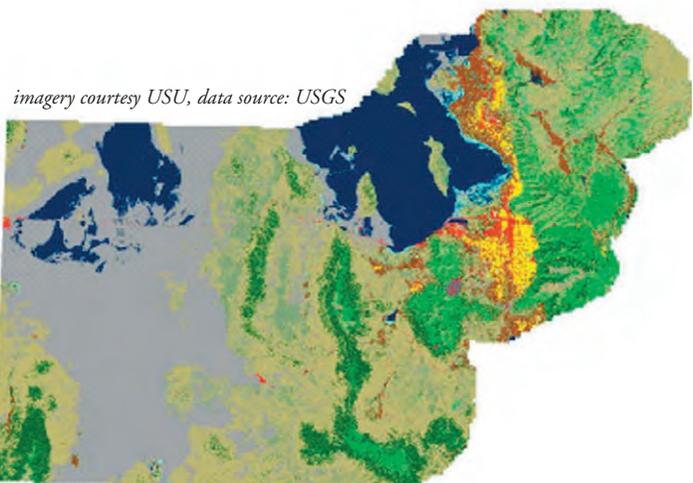
## Landscape at a Glance

The region studied is a cross-section of life in northern Utah, stretching from the Great Salt Lake across valleys to the east and south, up and over the Wasatch Mountains into secluded alpine valleys. The metropolitan area stretches along a crescent of flat land for sixty miles along the eastern shores of the lake, and heads west in pockets of development alternating with forgotten landscapes. Two major forces shaped this landscape. The first was geologic folding, creating a basin and range pattern of long valleys oriented north to south separated by steep mountain ranges. The second force was ancient Lake Bonneville, at many different depths over prehistoric times, creating benches at different water levels, collecting sediments on a flat valley floor and receding into the current Great Salt Lake. The streams that cut the canyons flowing into the former bed of the lake left deltas of sediment at the mouths of each canyon as they

flowed towards the lake. Evidence of the past is clearer in some places than in others, but traces of these elements are nearly universally desired for protection.

Because this region spans wildly fluctuating topography, a third force has shaped this landscape—weather and climate. A number of microclimates and life zones are encountered from barren desert to dry plains to high desert to alpine meadows and peaks, each with distinct vegetation, geology and wildlife. Different microclimates are created by varied terrain from valley floors at 4,000 feet to mountain peaks over 11,000 feet in elevation. As storms approach from the northwest and southwest, they traverse arid rangelands before hitting the Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch Mountains. As clouds approach the mountains, they drop progressively more rain and snow, creating a gradient of precipitation and vegetation types. Tooele County is the driest part of the region, with vast expanses of completely barren land. At the opposite end of this region, Morgan and east Weber Counties host lush agricultural valleys and reservoirs that capture up to 60 inches of precipitation falling in the mountains each year. Apart from these extremes, there is a noticeable difference moving from west to east across the valley. The shift from approximately 12 inches to nearly 20 inches of precipitation may seem small, but this sixty percent increase is enough to shift an arid landscape from sage and grasses to trees and shrubs. Elevation also creates huge differences as higher elevations capture more water, but also endure colder temperatures. A final component, aspect, is simply a shift in the compass direction toward which a slope points, but makes a striking visible difference. South and west facing slopes receive substantially more direct sunlight, making them much warmer and drier. These subtle shifts not only affect vegetation, but wildlife has also adapted to using certain areas to fulfill specific needs, and often rely on multiple habitats in close proximity for survival.

Figure 3: Land Use Coverage Map



As Figure 3 above shows, vegetation ranges from barren and salt playa areas to scrub brush and sage desert to grasslands at low elevations up to gambel oak and sagebrush on the foothills into alpine environments of aspen, fir and pine at higher elevations and cooler aspects. The most diverse habitat and vegetation is found in riparian areas along the waterways that cross the region. Water is a rare resource in the high desert and these strings of cottonwoods, willow, and

occasional wetland plants are a rare treat for animals and people alike. Dense trees and shrubs used to line the banks of the Jordan, Weber and Ogden Rivers and likely every stream that flowed into them, but are today fragmented by piped streams, development, and invasive weeds. The life of the stream itself—aquatic animals and insects and fish—also relies on this protection from the sun and pollutants. Wetlands frequently line streams and old stream corridors, but are most significantly found along the Great Salt Lake. The lake and the Jordan River combined are a globally significant migration corridor for millions of shorebirds every year. All components of the lake system, from mud flat to wetland to upland are important for supplying the needs of the different wildlife that visits these landscapes, whether once a year or all year long. Beyond their vegetation, these areas are often an interface for groundwater as it either drops into aquifers or upwells to the surface. The remaining farmlands of our region are often found in this same general zone because water is more available and the flood hazard is more imminent. Farms line most of Great Salt Lake and stretches of the Jordan, Weber and Ogden Rivers. While providing food for people, agricultural land is also a tremendously important secondary habitat and buffer

Figure 4:  
Wildlife of the Region



**Federal Threatened & Endangered:**  
 peregrine falcon  
 bonneville cut-throat trout  
 grey wolf  
 bald eagle

**State Sensitive Species:**

spotted frog  
 least chub  
 western burrowing owl  
 ferruginous hawk  
 white faced ibis  
 Bonneville cutthroat trout  
 pocket gopher

**Commonly seen:**

*Mammals*  
 mule deer  
 mountain lion  
 mountain goat  
 moose  
 fox  
 bobcat

coyote  
 beaver  
 badger  
 gopher mice  
 groundhog  
 porcupine  
 jackrabbit  
 pronghorn antelope  
 elk  
 mink  
 muskrat  
 squirrel  
 rat  
 raccoon  
 skunk

*Birds*  
 raptors/hawks  
 eagles  
 waterfowl/ducks

great blue heron  
 sand hill crane  
 Canadian geese  
 shorebirds  
 turkey  
 quail  
 dove  
 pheasant  
 rock chucks  
 grouse sage and blue  
 vultures  
 turkey

*Reptiles & Fish*  
 frogs  
 rattlesnake  
 brown trout

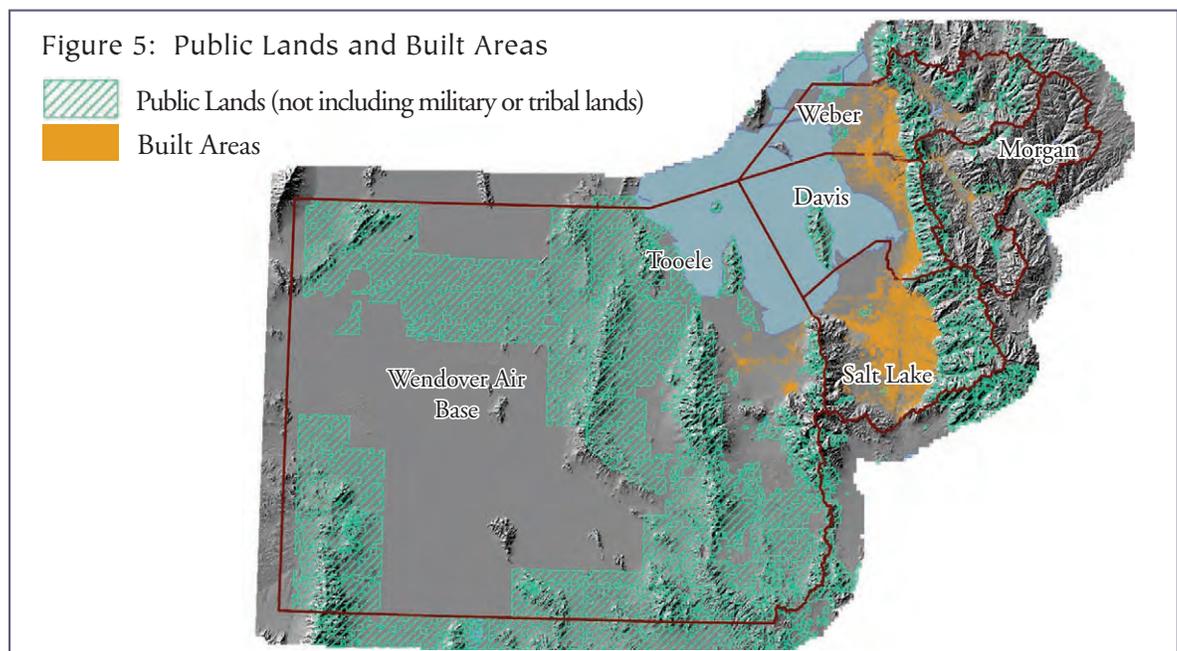
from development for many animals. A partial list of wildlife found across the region are noted in Figure 4 below.

Another important location for recharging aquifers are the foothills where runoff from the mountains seeps into loose, rocky soils. Major faults run roughly along the same line, the most notable being the Wasatch Fault. These are not the only areas susceptible to earthquakes. Because the soils of the valley floor are largely loose sediments, they are highly prone to liquefaction, or shaking and subsidence, during earthquakes. There are several secondary faults on the valley floor that respond to movement along the major faults that could easily set off substantial liquefaction.

Rockfall and landslides are also common along the foothills, especially when combined with faultline movement and erosion or large precipitation. Slopes over 12% are especially prone to damage and instability when development is added. Many city standards allow building on up to 25-30% slopes which is a practical absolute maximum, but not necessarily a safe guideline. A final hazard to avoid are the floodplains that line streams and lakes. Geologic hazards must be taken seriously because they pose an immediate and unpredictable threat to human lives.

## Protected, Public, and Unbuilt Lands

One of the greatest challenges to protecting open space in Utah is the perception that the state already has so much public land. While it is true that 78% of the state is public or tribal land, Utah residents are concerned not just with quantities, but also with qualities. The WFRC area contains a substantial amount of public land, owned by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management in the Wasatch and Oquirrh Ranges. These areas are treasured by locals for hiking, biking, skiing, climbing and rich vegetation and wildlife. Yet they are but a slice of what this region has to offer. The Great Salt Lake is a wonderland of wildlife and wild vistas. Its valley was once a broad grassland with open vistas in every direction. This variety of landscapes and recreation opportunities offers something for every ability and interest. But it has been taken for granted. Nearly all of the valley except for the lake is privately held, making it extremely difficult to protect for public use. Much of the foothills is also private property, with the potential to cut off access off to residents who hike and bike along them. A vast majority of the Wasatch Back is also private land, including a surprising 97% of Morgan County, a rough and remote mountainous area. A wide spectrum and sprinkling of open spaces available to the public not only encourages a healthy lifestyle for our residents, but it promotes the health of these resources, not overburdening and degrading vegetation, water quality, or our experience in these well-loved places. Figure 5 below shows the relationship between public and private lands in the region as well as the pattern



of areas that are built versus unbuilt. The map shows what many overlook—the vast majority of remaining buildable lands are in private hands and are under pressure for development. An effort was made in this project to map all the publicly owned lands in the region, whether municipal parks, school grounds, or public facilities. This task proved too daunting for this study since frequent changes arrive as new properties and projects are built every day. But it is a worthwhile exercise, to inventory and understand the breadth of open lands, and to draw attention to the need for communities to act now to ensure they are conserved in all corners of the region for people to utilize and enjoy for generations.

## Existing Programs and Tools

While trails programs have begun gaining ground (Weber Pathways, Ogden River Parkway, Jordan River Parkway, Bonneville Shoreline Trail), they are only a part of the solution. Recent trails planning efforts have considered a regional perspective to make connections and share resources. They are a model approach, but trails cover only a small slice of important landscapes, so additional efforts must be made to plan for other important resources. Larger patches of agricultural lands, habitat, and regional parks and open space are the nuclei of a system that makes the trails and corridors worthwhile.

This open space planning study is one of the numerous first steps this region has taken to consider many types of open space at a very large scale. Other efforts at different levels are listed in the section “Model Plans and Resource Contacts” in the appendix, that have started transforming communities. Open space has long been considered in recreation plans often regulated to parks, and impact fees can be collected to preserve areas with public access. But the definition of open space has expanded far beyond parks. Many planning departments have adopted sensitive lands ordinances to protect the most critical lands and protect the public from hazards, like steep slopes, hillside areas (Davis County), wetlands (Davis County) and floodplains (Salt Lake County). In locations where mandating protection cannot be easily justified, communities have begun offering incentives. Programs to transfer development rights (Davis County, West Valley City), agricultural greenbelt zoning (West Valley City) and development incentives for including open space into plans (Draper, West Jordan) offer win-win situations for landowners, developers and communities. Agricultural protection such as greenbelt zoning incentives and 160-acre minimum lots sizes (Summit County) have also been instituted. Many communities have also partnered with non-governmental organizations, such as land trusts and conservation organization to negotiate the purchase of conservation easements (Utah Open Lands, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited) or help fund restoration. Some groups have found success partnering with government programs, such as the Rivers, Trails and Corridors program of the National Park Service (Weber Pathways) or the USDA’s Wetlands Restoration Program (Swaner Nature Preserve). Also many new alliances (Jordan River Natural Areas Forum, Davis County Shorelands Plan) have created new networks of support and combined efforts. There are also funds for planning and improvements in various state and federal funding programs, such as the LeeRay McAllister Open Space Fund and the Governor’s Trails Initiative and Federal and UDOT Transportation Enhancement Funds.

While programs such as these have set a precedent for better planning, funding remains a struggle. Such programs have succeeded in protecting a bare minimum, certainly not enough to maintain a high quality of life for the future. Further, these few efforts have already overextended existing planning and funding sources. It is painfully obvious to communities that are trying to start programs that demand exceeds supply and major change is needed now.

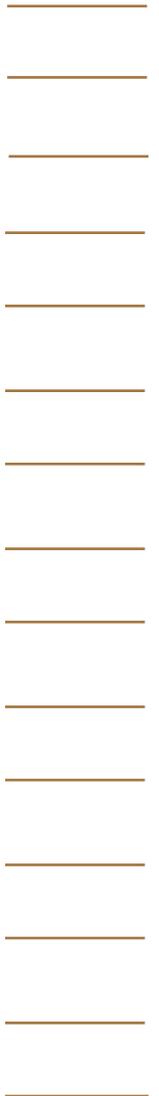
## Major Challenges

As mentioned previously, open space protection measures are beginning to take hold, but with the rapid pace of development, they are in the unfortunate position of “too little, too late”. The simple goal of instituting an open space preservation ethic in community planning is itself a time-consuming challenge. Political leaders and citizens are willing to address a popular issue that benefits everyone, but have many questions about building an open space system effort fairly and affordably. Awareness of the economic, social and ecological benefits (see Introduction) is a first step, followed by education on the techniques available and creative strategies to achieve these goals. Success takes support from all sides, from elected officials to citizens and volunteer groups to city staff and landowners. Therefore programs should target and encourage all these parties to participate to maximize the potential for success.

After gaining political and social will to address this challenge through awareness programs, community members must craft protection and acquisition programs, and then follow with maintenance, restoration, and user amenities. Before a community gets into the business of protecting land, it should already be capable of caring for it. A community must determine in advance how a parcel will be owned and who will be responsible for maintaining it. Communities are advised to keep parcels in their existing care and ownership as much as possible to reduce costs and responsibility, but in turn, they should expect to assist owners in their preservation efforts. This highlights the need for city and agency staff who can concentrate specifically on the issue of open lands, to collaborate with partners to plan an open space network, identify parcels to protect within it, assist in preservation or restoration, and ensure on-going maintenance. An overarching issue that must also be addressed up front is access. Different types of open space welcome different levels of public use and not every parcel may benefit from people accessing it. For example, citizens often want to protect farmland and wildlife habitat but understand that any public use at all can have a negative impact on the land. A public that understands the many ways an open space network benefits everyone and every living thing within it is more supportive of protecting all types of land, regardless of their ability to access it.

By far, the toughest challenge this region faces is funding these efforts. City and county funds are very limited, and are restricted to some degree on how they are spent. Development impact fees have helped many cities build recreational facilities within or adjacent to new subdivisions, but are limited to recreational interests only. Few or no funds exist at a city or county level to protect other types of open space except in rare cases (Summit County). State and federal funds have broader uses, but are also hard to come by and usually require a local match. Communities must be willing to raise and utilize funds to first staff a broader open space program and then

help fund such efforts as restoration and maintenance. This is money well-invested because it is a financial savings to communities in the long run and is vital to economic development. More information on the economic benefits of open space is in the Introduction and potential sources of funding and assistance can be found in the Appendix.



# Plan & Recommendations

Planning Process  
Regional Open Space Priorities  
County-by-County Open Spaces  
& Recommendations



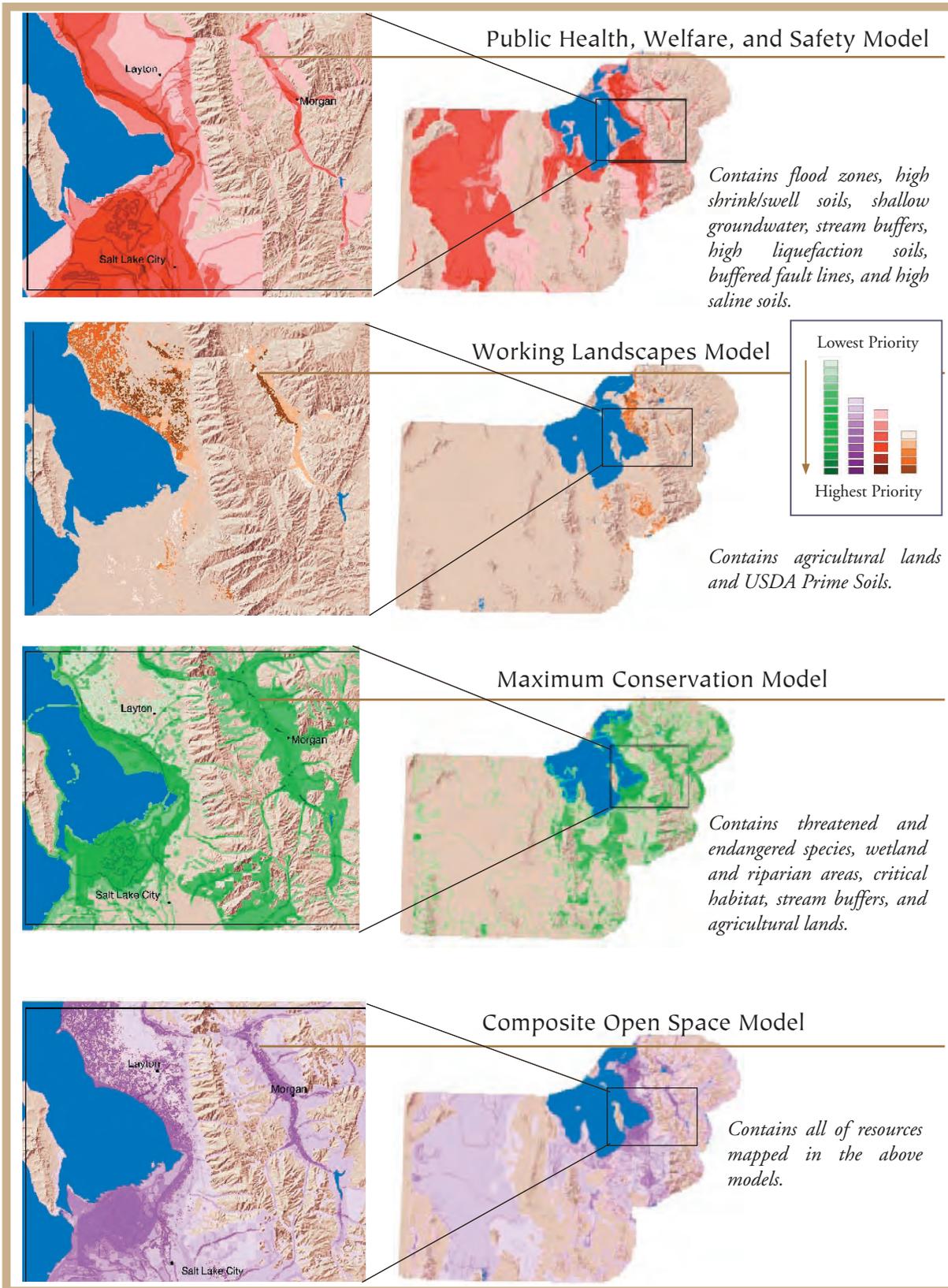
## Planning Process

This planning effort studied the region at two different scales simultaneously—the five-county WFRC region as a whole, and each county individually. This promoted an understanding of regional issues and open spaces while fleshing out a more detailed understanding of open spaces in each county. Because there were few precedents to model at either scale, this is a rough framework for future efforts to build upon to create a more specific plan.

The plans that follow used GIS data generated by Utah State University as a base and then enhanced this information with local knowledge, ideas and priorities uncovered through public workshops. At the workshops, citizens were first asked to consider and prioritize types of open space to protect, across the region as a whole as well as in their own county. They reviewed the range of open space models created by USU that emphasize preserving different resources and varying levels of protection, from the bare essentials to the maximum possible. They also looked at the individual components, such as streams, wetlands and agricultural lands and were asked to prioritize which types of land and resources should be protected. Finally, participants worked on maps of the region to identify individual open lands to protect and then create a conceptual network that linked them together. Throughout this group process, workshop participants answered individual written surveys as well. These were collected and used to understand their ideas and preferences and incorporate them into the maps and descriptions that follow. Detailed survey results are available on the CD-ROM distributed with this report.

Figure 6 on the following page shows the models created by USU, used during the workshops to ascertain priorities. They were created using layered maps of different resources, with each model emphasizing a certain issue, such as hazards in the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Model or agriculture in the Working Landscapes Model. An additional model, not shown, highlighted the trails of the region and could be added into any of these scenarios. When an element was linear, such as a stream or trail, a buffer was added with widths that varied relative to the impact and importance of that element in the model.

Figure 6: Open Space Protection Models



## Regional Open Space Priorities

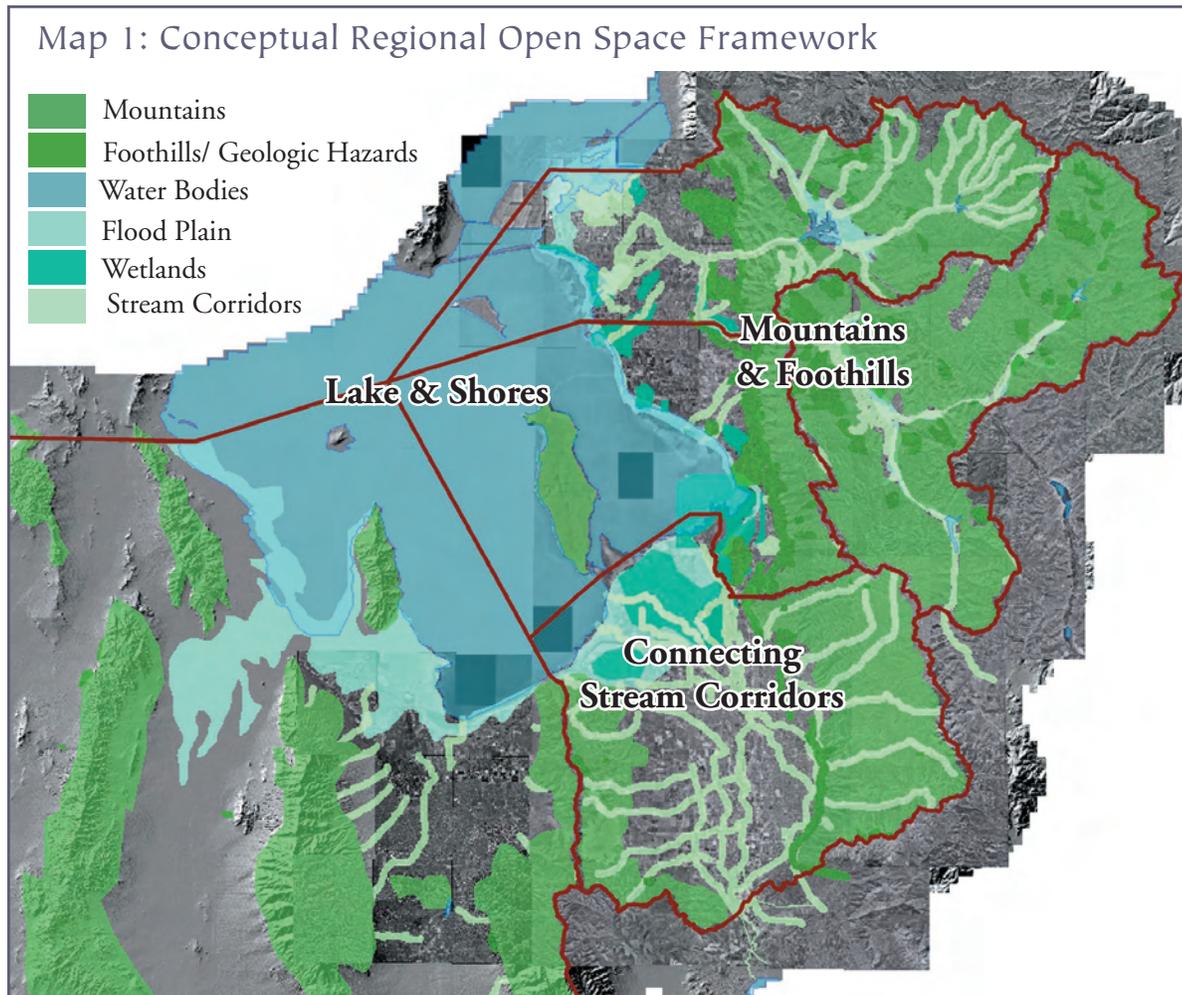
The project team faced the challenge of unifying ideas and priorities across a region with tremendous diversity. For example, Tooele and Morgan Counties were far more concerned with protecting agriculture and had much more opportunity to do so than Salt Lake, Weber and Davis Counties, which have much stronger interest in trails and recreation. Issues of regional concern are described and mapped in this section, while issues or places that have a more local impact are shown and described in the next section. The Regional Conceptual Open Space Plan (Map 1, page 24) is a general view of the most significant landscapes connected into a regional network, while the Regional Open Space Plan (Map 2, p. 27) displays and labels more detailed components and significant connections. Shared concerns and challenges are highlighted here, while recommendations for taking action are outlined in Chapter 4—Strategies for Implementation.

Workshop participants in each county were asked to select a model that suited the entire WFRC region as a whole (see Figure 6, page 22—more details on these models may be found in the Phase One Report). Concerns for the region differed between counties because each has unique landscapes and different opportunities, yet people unanimously indicated a strong preference toward offering a high quality lifestyle through diverse open lands. The two most commonly chosen models were the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Model followed by the Composite Open Space Model. Considering the diversity of the area and its rapid urbanization, people are concerned foremost with protecting communities from hazards, likely because this is not always outlined in local standards. The second choice, the Composite Open Space Model, is the most inclusive model, indicating a desire to protect as many different resources as possible.

When faced with identifying the landscapes of utmost importance in the region, a simple and predictable pattern emerged. The three most important landscapes, as shown on the Conceptual Regional Open Space Plan (Map 5) on the following page are:

- Mountains and foothills
- Rivers and streams
- Great Salt Lake and its shoreline

Rivers and waterways, seen as a natural network to tie landscapes together, emerged as the most important open space resource concerns across the Wasatch Region. Any water source or drainage holds special importance in an arid environment, even canals or places where streams have been piped. Citizens were concerned with protecting and restoring not just the streams themselves, but a wide swath to each side including the floodplain, wetlands and riparian habitat, with ample room to include trails and parks. The major rivers—the Jordan, Weber and Ogden tie the entire region together, across municipal and county boundaries, but are still very vulnerable to development. The Jordan River, in fact, was declared one of the top ten most endangered rivers by Scenic America in 2003. Citizens also identified the lack of access to many rivers and streams as a problem. Trails along the rivers are often incomplete, and there are limited places to actually boat down a river unobstructed and with easy put-ins and takeouts. Both the natural condition of streams and access to them should be improved.



Mountains and foothills, the backbone of the open space system, were the second highest priority for residents. In addition to preserving the views, citizens wanted access through foothill areas to the mountains, and along them on the Bonneville Shoreline Trail corridor. Participants also identified numerous hazards (such as faults and landslides) to avoid in this area. A 2002 survey conducted for Davis County as they crafted their hillside ordinances indicated almost unanimous support for protecting this landscape zone in their county.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the foothill zone is one of the most vulnerable to development because of desirable real estate and the fact that public land boundaries are at higher elevations in more mountainous areas. The pressing concerns in the foothills and mountains are protecting public access to public lands and not overloading these areas with recreation or hazardous building and excess development.

The Great Salt Lake is the linchpin in the open space system of the Wasatch Region. While the lake itself is often ignored, it is a key element of the natural systems and a place with tremendous recreation potential. Antelope Island, one of the few places designed for public access, is very popular. In addition, the lowlands surrounding the lake are filled with important wetlands, and

<sup>5</sup> Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Study conducted for the Davis County Comprehensive Hillside Plan*, August 2002.

agricultural land—important to the health of the lake and enhancing the views and experience of the lake. Pressing concerns for the lake are protecting important lands around it that are an integral part of its ecosystem and improving recreational opportunities around and on the lake.

These three components—streams, mountains and lake—are one system despite human actions that have isolated them. The health of the lake and its waters relies directly on healthy streams and the mountains within its watershed. The system functions with large natural areas in the mountains and around the lakes with waterway corridors through urbanized areas connecting them together. The corridors are critical for connecting resource areas and giving people easy access to natural landscapes. It is impossible to prioritize one element over another because they all have an irreplaceable role, but there are areas that are more pristine and larger in size that rise to the top in urgency to protect.

In general terms of types of land to protect, concerns were more diverse and localized. Again, rivers, streams, and important watershed features gained top ranking and had support by a majority. Critical habitat and ecological systems were also favored across the board, though in some areas more than other. Other landscapes had far less consensus. Agricultural land garnered strong feelings from residents—many felt it was important, but few felt optimistic about protecting it. Tooele County, Morgan County, and south Weber County still have significant tracts of farmed and grazed lands that residents feel strongly about preserving. In more urbanized counties, agriculture is a low priority locally, but still felt to be important at a regional scale. Parks and recreation areas are more important in urbanized areas, but trails are very popular in all counties, and citizens felt strongly about building pathways along every waterway as well as along the foothills and many also wanted to see east-west connections between the mountains and the valleys. Finally, several cultural features were repeatedly mentioned, such as pioneer trails, historic downtown areas and views to the mountains and lake.

These priority landscape types and significant places to protect were mapped according to cultural, agricultural, ecological and recreational importance. These maps were then synthesized into the overall Regional Open Space Map (Map 2, p. 27). Detailed recommendations for action are found in Chapter 4 – Strategies for Implementation.

A regional open space system can be thought of as a network of destinations and connections. Destinations are nodes of activity—places to stop, spend time and enjoy the experience outside. This could include education centers, picnic areas, scenic overlooks, and recreation spots. Connections are linear greenways that offer an interesting experience as one travels through them—sights, sounds, people watching or simply a chance to exercise.

These patterns have a parallel in ecological systems. Patches, similar to destinations, are large areas of a particular landscape. They are the heart of a functioning ecosystem and are healthiest when they are large, contiguous, and limit impacts to their fringes, retaining their core in a natural condition. Corridors are the blood vessels of the system, offering a safe, continuous route for animals, plants, and resources such as water to move through. They function best when they are wide enough to contain a diverse, healthy core as well as an ample buffer to reduce impacts from their surroundings. An example of a healthy corridor is a river that has a mix of trees, shrubs,

and low vegetation along its banks, and a wide strip of natural uplands beyond that to absorb runoff, floods, and human impacts. Great Salt Lake is an example of a patch, its edges inhabited by humans, but given over to wildlife and natural systems closer to its shores and waters.

There are different goals when building an open space system for people versus wildlife and other natural systems and not every place is suited to accommodating both. The focus of this study is on places where people interface with nature, so the regional open space map focuses on human destinations and connections. These are outlined below and highlighted on the Regional Open Space Map (Map 2) on the next page.

Obviously, resources do not stop at city or county boundaries. This regional map shows important open spaces as they flow across boundaries. This is also true in looking beyond the five WFRC counties. MAG, which serves neighboring Summit, Wasatch, and Utah counties, has been conducting similar studies to identify and map their important open spaces. These two efforts should be joined in some format to show regional open spaces at an even greater scale.

Destinations:

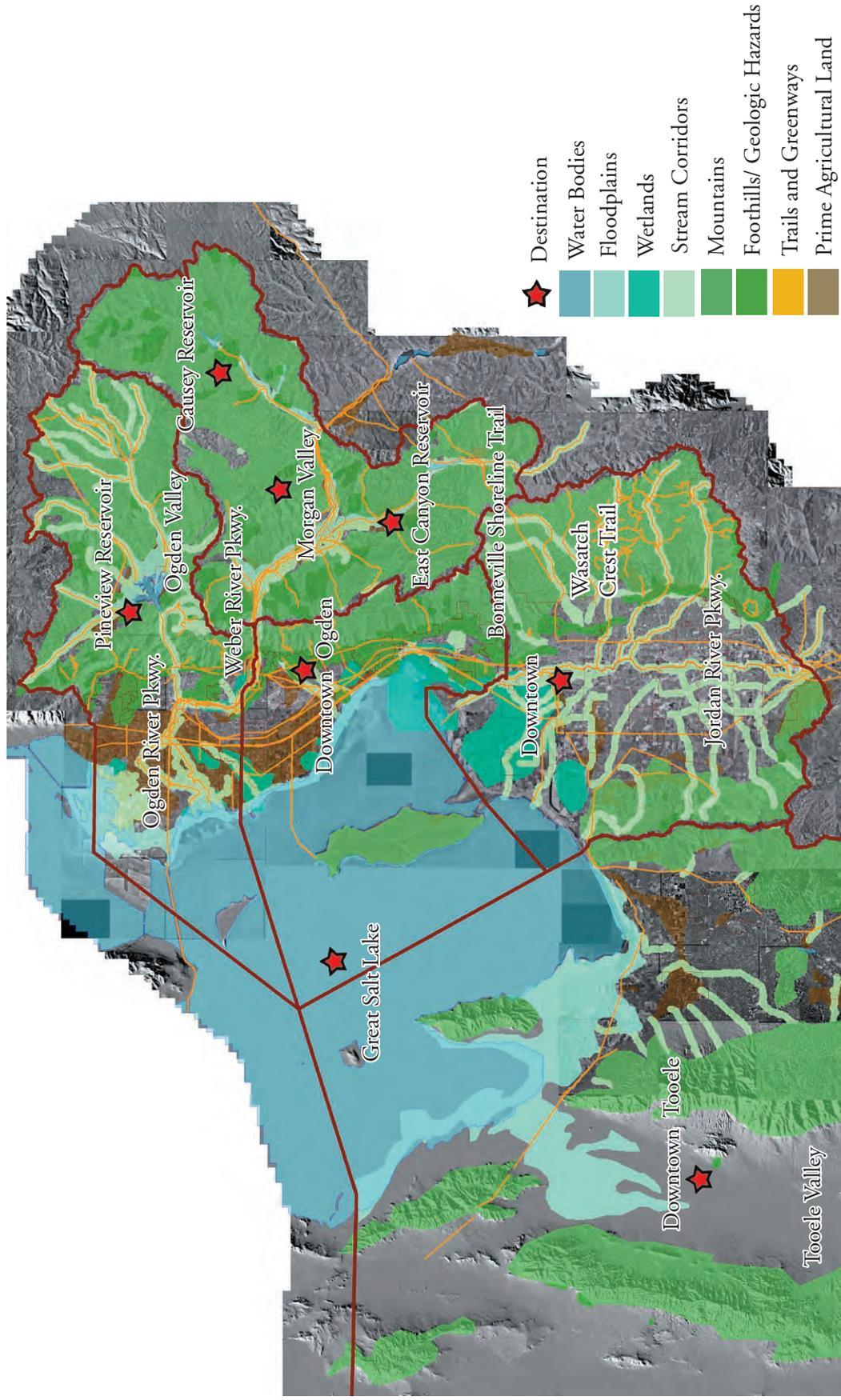
*Great Salt Lake* – The lake has tremendous offerings and potential for getting into the outdoors, yet few people have easy access to it. Davis County has the best access with Antelope Island, while Salt Lake, Weber and Tooele Counties have only limited offerings for wildlife watching, environmental education, water sports, and shoreline recreation. Passive recreation and a lakeshore trail where people could experience the different types of landscapes along the lake—wetland, saline playa, sandy beach—would be an amenity. Any activity should be sensitive to the resident wildlife as they are a main attraction.

*Pineview, East Canyon, and Causey Reservoirs* – Because they offer water and waterside recreation, reservoirs are logical nodes for activities. Offerings are currently limited to camping, fishing, and boating in many places but new visitor or education centers could become highlights and these are logical destinations for trail corridors, too. As public land and access is limited along some shorelines, efforts should be made to keep as much open to the public.

*Agricultural Valleys* – Tooele Valley, Ogden Valley, and Morgan Valley are all special for their views, rural character and extensive natural elements. A primary concern in these valleys, whether or not these areas can maintain agriculture, is protecting water sources (whether surface or groundwater) and natural vegetation. Their scenic, rural character makes these places destinations, even if the public is limited in what they can access.

*Historic Downtowns* – Many cultural and recreation attractions are already found here, but they need to have friendly outdoor and pedestrian spaces such as beautiful streetscapes, urban parks and greenways, to encourage everyday outdoor experiences.

Map 2: WFRC Regional Open Spaces



**Connections:**

*Jordan River Parkway, Weber River Parkway, and Ogden River Parkway* – All three of these rivers are undergoing some restoration and revitalization, but development pressures are quickly closing off some opportunities. These rivers need protection from development and pollutants across their length. While some trails have been completed and have noticeably improved the areas they span, there are still many stretches to work. Increased fishing and boating access would also be welcomed.

*Foothill and Ridgeline Corridors* – The foothill bench created by ancient Lake Bonneville has always been a landmark. Its value as a recreation corridor has been tapped into with the Bonneville Shoreline trail, which residents would like to see continued throughout the region. It is also significant for its characteristic foothill vegetation that is extremely valuable to wildlife. It is often noted as a logical upper limit to development, although this has already been surpassed in many areas. In places yet untouched, particularly along Salt Lake’s west bench and in Tooele County, it could serve as a significant buffer between development and the mountains. Similar elevation lines could be drawn in places where the shoreline does not appear, such as in Morgan County, to protect a foothill corridor. Ridgelines, which are often protected for clear views to the sky, also offer trail opportunities, as in the case of the Wasatch Crest Trail.

*Historic Trails* – Historic trails such as the Mormon Trail and Pony Express offer opportunities for connecting more rural areas together and to tie them to urban places. A wide corridor of the historic landscape should be protected to get a complete feel for the past. In addition, these can serve as ecological and recreational corridors. A formal trail may not be necessary, but the chance to traverse long sections of it is ideal.

*Canyons and Streams* – Nearly every canyon and stream flowing out of it was mentioned for protection. These streams are found up and down the valleys, creating multipurpose links into the mountains for people and wildlife. But many of these streams are diverted or buried once they hit the valley. Resurfacing these streams to create a grid of green corridors is a popular goal. Canyons are also popular driving destinations and should have their scenic properties protected. Trails up into canyons are also desired.

## County by County Open Spaces & Recommendations

Each county’s open space plan is derived from the green space design maps and surveys completed at their public workshop. The results follow on pages 29-58. For each county, there is a written summary of major issues and their preferred open space model, as well a ranking of their priorities for places and types of resources to protect. An example map from their county’s workshop is also included to illustrate the work done by citizens. This is followed by four analysis maps showing cultural, agricultural, ecological and recreational resources identified through citizen input. These maps are then synthesized into the overall County Open Space map. The maps are followed by a listing of the significant open space resources identified and recommendations for action in that county. In some cases, these are quite specific, and are included to help understand the bigger picture. Recommendations for achieving these plans across the region are further outlined in Chapter 4 – Strategies for Implementation.

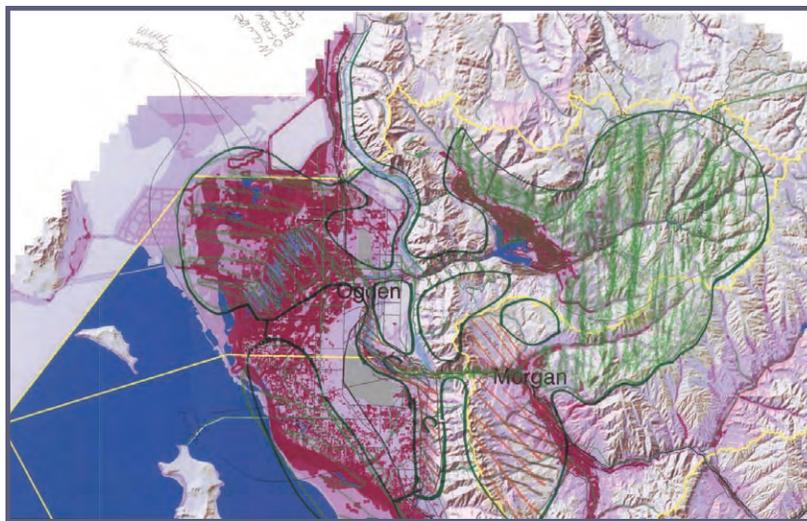
# WEBER COUNTY

Weber County stretches from remote mountain tops to the Great Salt Lake traversing Ogden, a major urban core. This gives rise to many diverse interests to manage and prioritize. The county has worked hard to create open space corridors and trails but has struggled with larger-scale challenges—the Ogden Valley and farms near the shores of the Great Salt Lake.

Cultivated agricultural lands were the first priority of residents, followed by critical habitat, then stream buffers, and regional trails. When asked to rank open space models, the Maximum Conservation choice was the most popular, followed by Public Health, Welfare, and Safety. While people talked a lot about protecting agricultural land, they did not choose to focus primarily on them. Residents would like to protect as much farming as possible, but have realized they are a diverse community with strong growth pressures at this time and need to protect a full spectrum of resources.

## Major concerns identified include:

- Protecting river and stream corridors and their flood plains.
- Protecting view of Wasatch Mountains from east and west.
- Protecting the Ogden Valley floor and west Weber, with a strong interest in maintaining agriculture.
- Keeping the historic character of Downtown Ogden.
- Connecting trails into other counties.



**Figure 7:** One of four public input maps completed at the Weber County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

### General types of land to protect:

1. Rivers
2. Agricultural lands
3. Trails and access to them
4. Wetland and riparian areas
5. Wildlife habitat

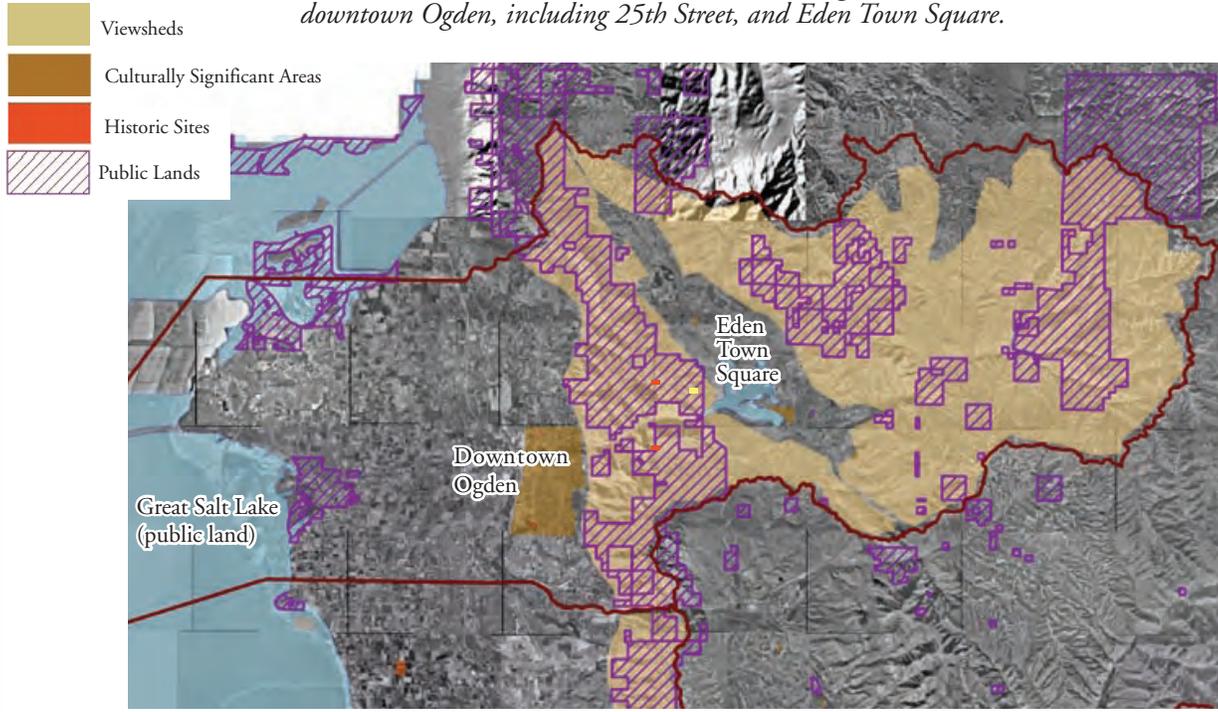
### Specific places to protect:

- 1 & 2. Tie: Weber and Ogden Rivers
3. Agricultural lands
4. Wasatch Mountains and foothills
- 5 & 6. Tie: Pineview Reservoir and Trails
- 7 & 8. Tie: Ogden Canyon and Valley

# Weber County Open Space Resources

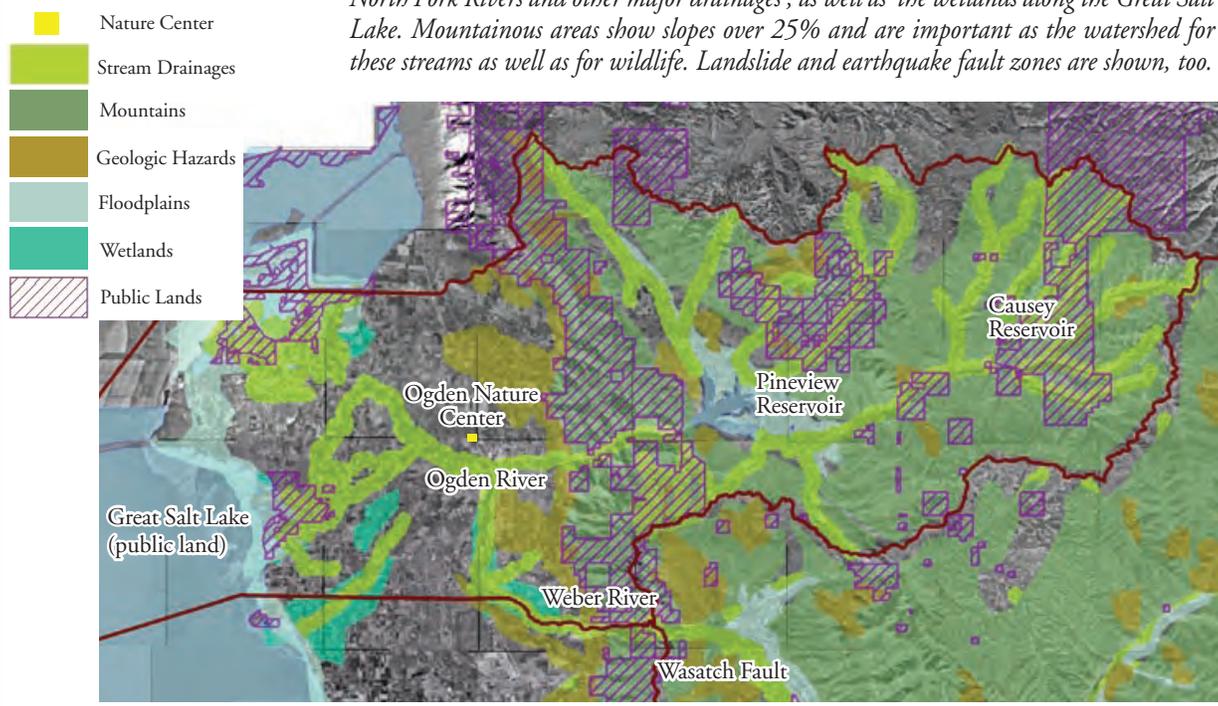
**Map 3: CULTURAL**

Weber County's cultural map shows viewsheds, especially to the mountains, as well as historic sites such as Fort Buenaventura, and Bingham Fort. Also shown are historic downtown Ogden, including 25th Street, and Eden Town Square.



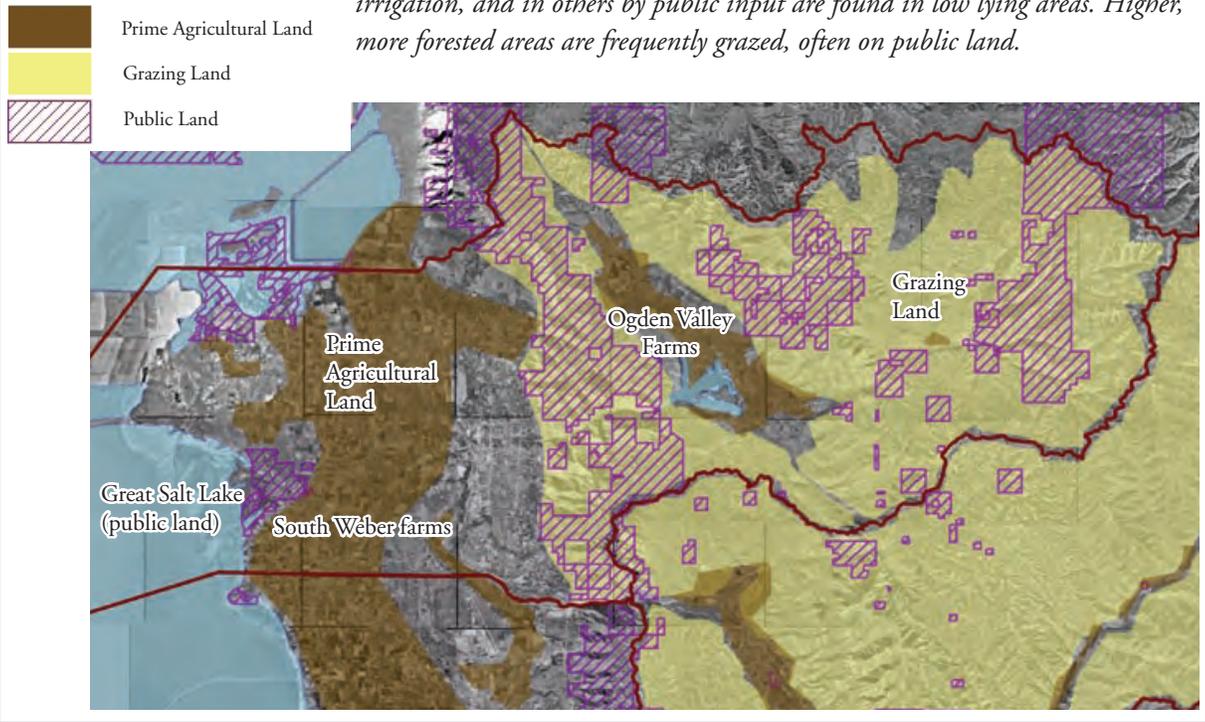
**Map 4: ECOLOGICAL**

Weber County's ecological map shows the Ogden and Weber Rivers, the Middle Fork and North Fork Rivers and other major drainages, as well as the wetlands along the Great Salt Lake. Mountainous areas show slopes over 25% and are important as the watershed for these streams as well as for wildlife. Landslide and earthquake fault zones are shown, too.



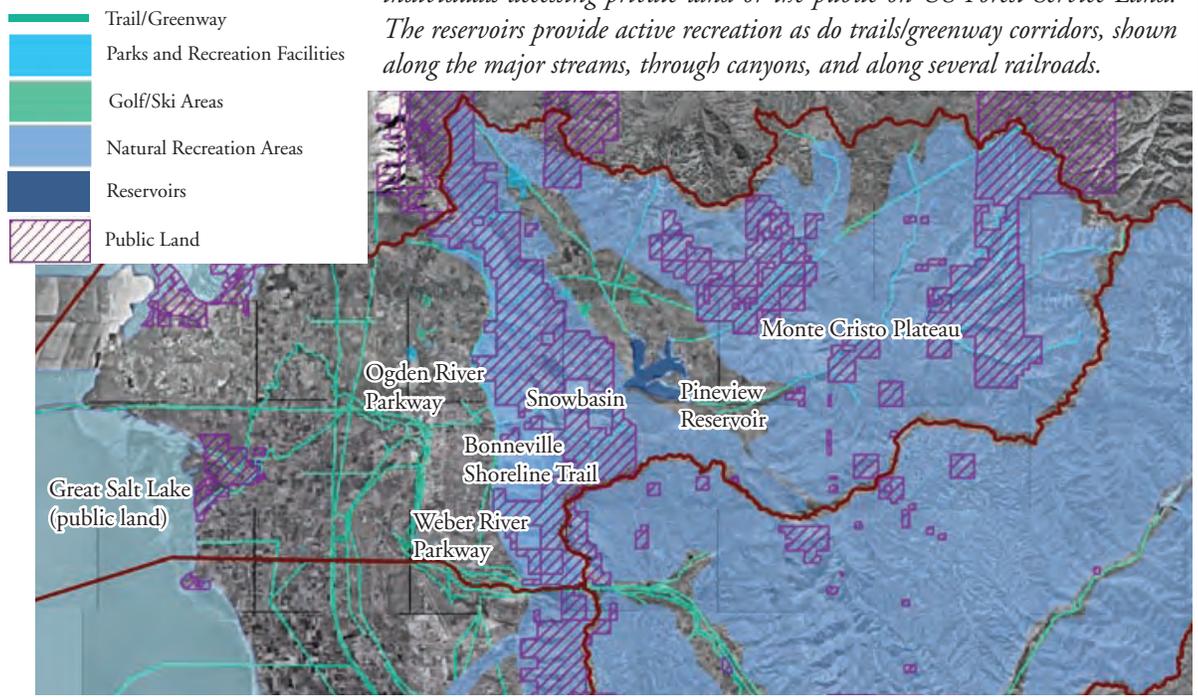
**Map 5: AGRICULTURAL**

*Prime agricultural land is determined in some cases by productive soils and irrigation, and in others by public input are found in low lying areas. Higher, more forested areas are frequently grazed, often on public land.*



**Map 6: RECREATIONAL**

*Nearly all of the mountains serve as passive recreational areas, whether for individuals accessing private land or the public on US Forest Service Land. The reservoirs provide active recreation as do trails/greenway corridors, shown along the major streams, through canyons, and along several railroads.*



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Weber County is perhaps the most diverse in the WFRC region because it spans a wide spectrum of landscapes, from the Great Salt Lake, across the valley, over the Wasatch Front into the Ogden Valley, surrounded by the Wasatch Mountains. This diversity demands a range of approaches and residents have some experience and success with a number of areas, such as the Ogden River Parkway. The challenge here is to help individual communities protect their unique landscapes while still working to add to a regional open space network.

Not surprisingly, Weber County and the communities within it identified flood plains and mountainsides as the two hazardous areas they are most concerned with protecting. Resource and open space plans should be prepared for the major water sources, including the Ogden and Weber Rivers and the Great Salt Lake and Pineview Reservoir. Weber County is advised to undertake a shorelands plan, much like Davis and Box Elder Counties have completed. They have actively worked on corridor plans for the Ogden and Weber Rivers, but should ensure that these plans encompass the range of ideas raised here—safety, recreation, wildlife, and water quality and quantity concerns.

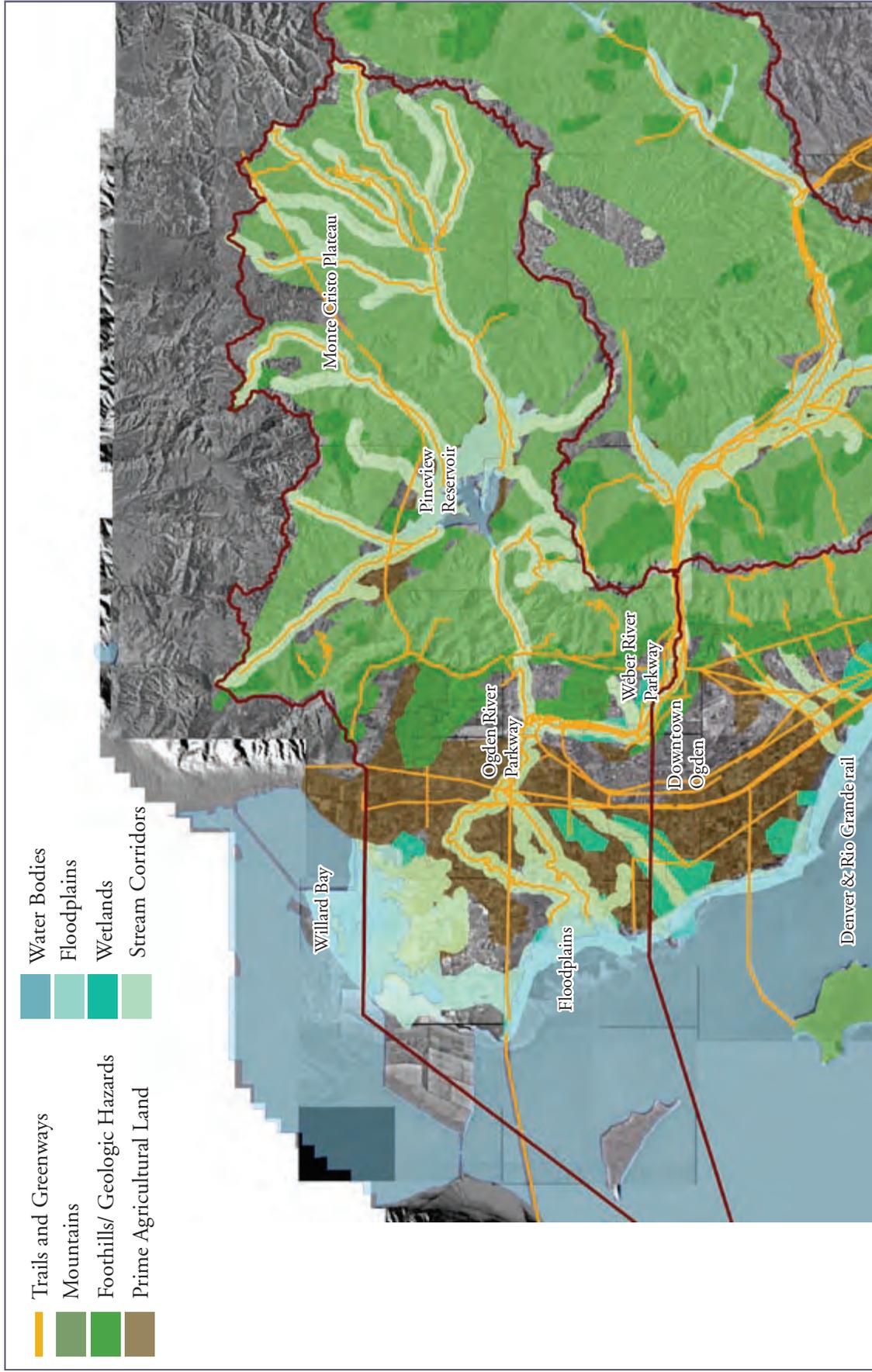
Beyond these areas, residents were very concerned with protecting agricultural land across the county. The most productive agricultural lands remain along the Great Salt Lake where a milder climate prevails. This area is linked to orchards and other agricultural lands in Box Elder county that remain more viable. The Ogden Valley is also highly desired to remain in agriculture, maintaining the scenic and rural qualities it is treasured for. While agriculture is barely a viable business today, the community feels strongly about protecting it, for open space and as a buffer from hazards. They are encouraged to help to protect it through purchases or transfers of development rights program or conservation easements.

*cont. on p. 34*

**Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection:**

- Weber and Ogden Rivers
- Ogden River Parkway
- Ogden Canyon
- Weber River Parkway
- Weber Canyon
- Centennial Trail
- Bonneville Shoreline and Trail
- East Bench Trails
- South Fork Trail
- North Ogden/Pleasant View Trails
- Four Mile Creek
- Fort Buenaventura
- Downtown Ogden
- South Weber
- Promontory Point
- Bear River Bird Refuge
- Willard Bay
- Downtown Huntsville
- Pineview Reservoir
- Waterfall Canyon
- Ogden Nature Center
- Monastery of the Holy Abbey
- Monte Cristo Plateau
- Trapper's Loop
- Denver & Rio Grande rail for trail
- Snow Basin
- Powder Mountain
- Wasatch Terrace
- North Fork Park
- Wolf Creek/Middle Fork
- Weber River Kayak Park
- Cutler Basin
- Browning Ranch near River Fork
- Jensen Farm
- Bingham Fort Farm
- Historic farms
- Old buildings
- Railroads
- Indian camps and fur trade areas

# Map 7: Weber County Open Space Map



With a strong basis for its trails plan in the Ogden River Parkway, the region is encouraged to keep creating and linking these corridors. Plans are in place for the Bonneville Shoreline Trail and Weber River Parkway, and there is a desire to protect a rail corridor as a north-south link. Corridors should be as wide as possible to accommodate the diversity of users – from people to wildlife and lush vegetation. There is strong concern over recreation in highly sensitive areas. Opening areas to the public can destroy wildlife and habitat values. Every plan needs to consider and set desired levels of access and standards for restoration to ensure areas maintain the character which they are desired.

The final recommendation is perhaps the most important. With such a diverse landscapes and population, from urban to rural, valley to mountain, everyone must help contribute to building the green space network. Participation is needed from all sides and all should be expected to contribute something to achieving the goals. Strong concern about property rights, and local needs points toward creating more specific local plans.



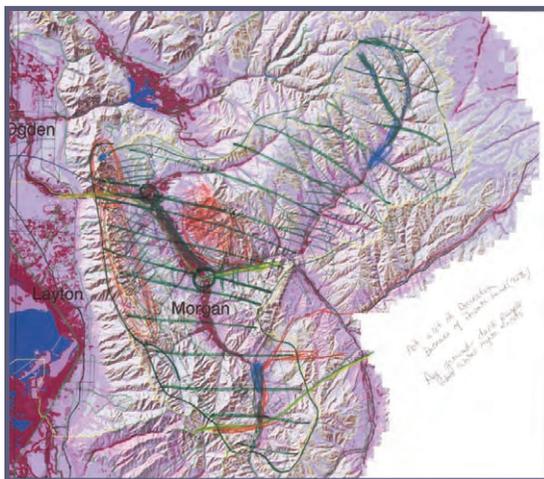
# MORGAN COUNTY

Morgan County spans a large stretch of the Wasatch back and appears much like it has for decades—an agricultural valley. The vast majority of land is privately owned, but is also mountainous and somewhat difficult to build. The most used areas are the valley floors, which have traditionally been farmed but are now highly desired for development. Residents are strongly interested in protecting land, but don't want it to be a burden to the private landowner.

Flood zones were in the first priority of residents, followed by cultivated agricultural lands, shallow groundwater, prime soils and critical habitat. These elements all coincide on the valley floor along the Weber River. When asked to rank open space models, Public Health, Welfare, and Safety was the first choice for the county but broader protection, the Composite Open Space model was sought for the greater region. While this area is still largely agricultural, the number of active farms is quite small and landowners feel the need to keep their options open for the future. The community generally wants to protect the lifestyle and appearance of the valley, but want it to be viable as well.

## Major concerns:

- Strong interest in preservation, but concern for how to do it equitably.
- Desire to protect agriculture but acknowledge it is hard to make a living.
- Protecting prime agricultural lands that have water rights, especially around the river and on valley floor.
- Protect water quality in several reservoirs and mountains at the top of Ogden's watershed.
- Significant diversity and populations of wildlife to protect.
- Connecting trails into and over the mountains into Weber and Davis counties.



**Figure 8:** One of two public input maps completed at the Morgan County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

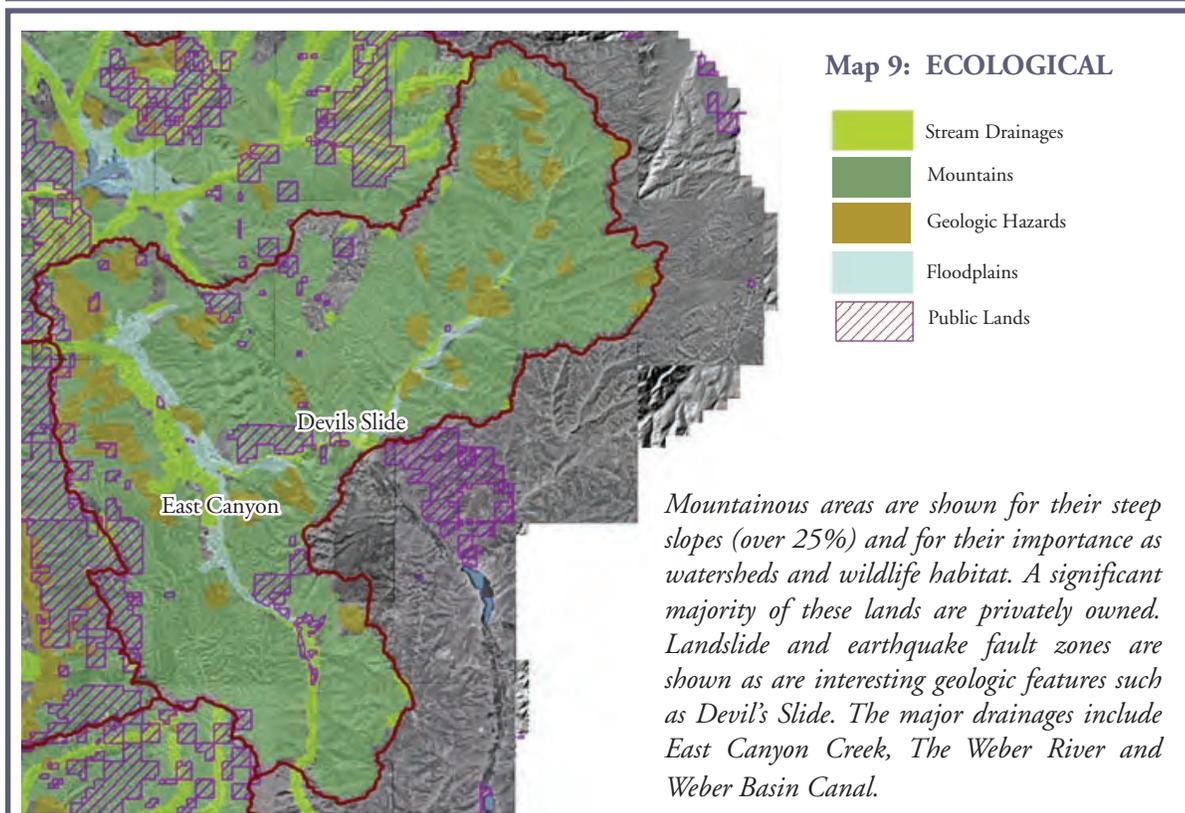
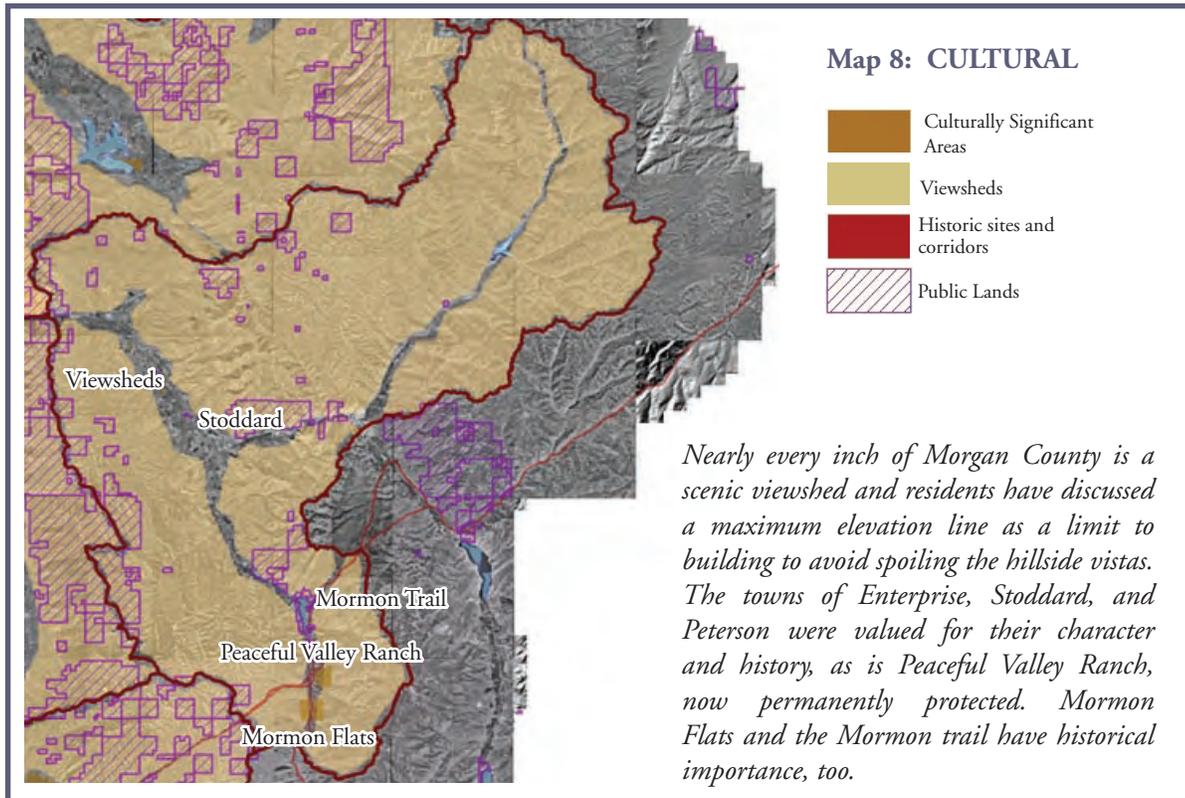
## General types of land to protect:

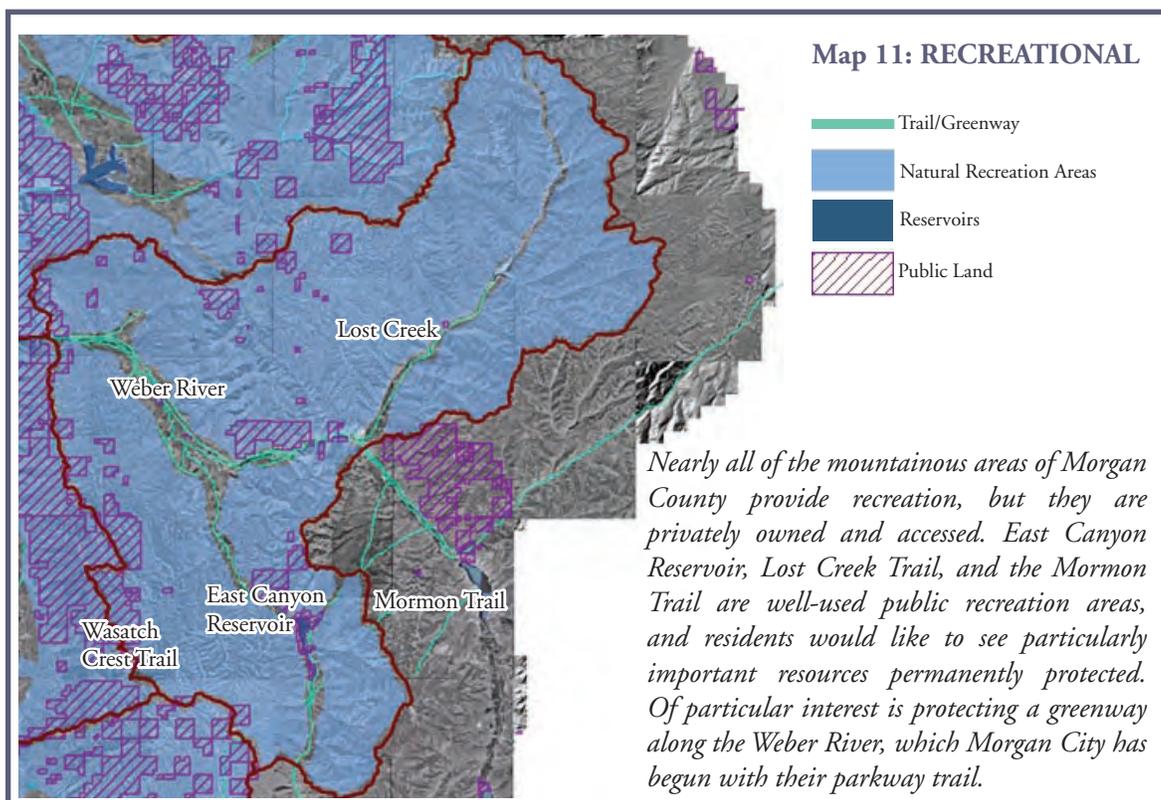
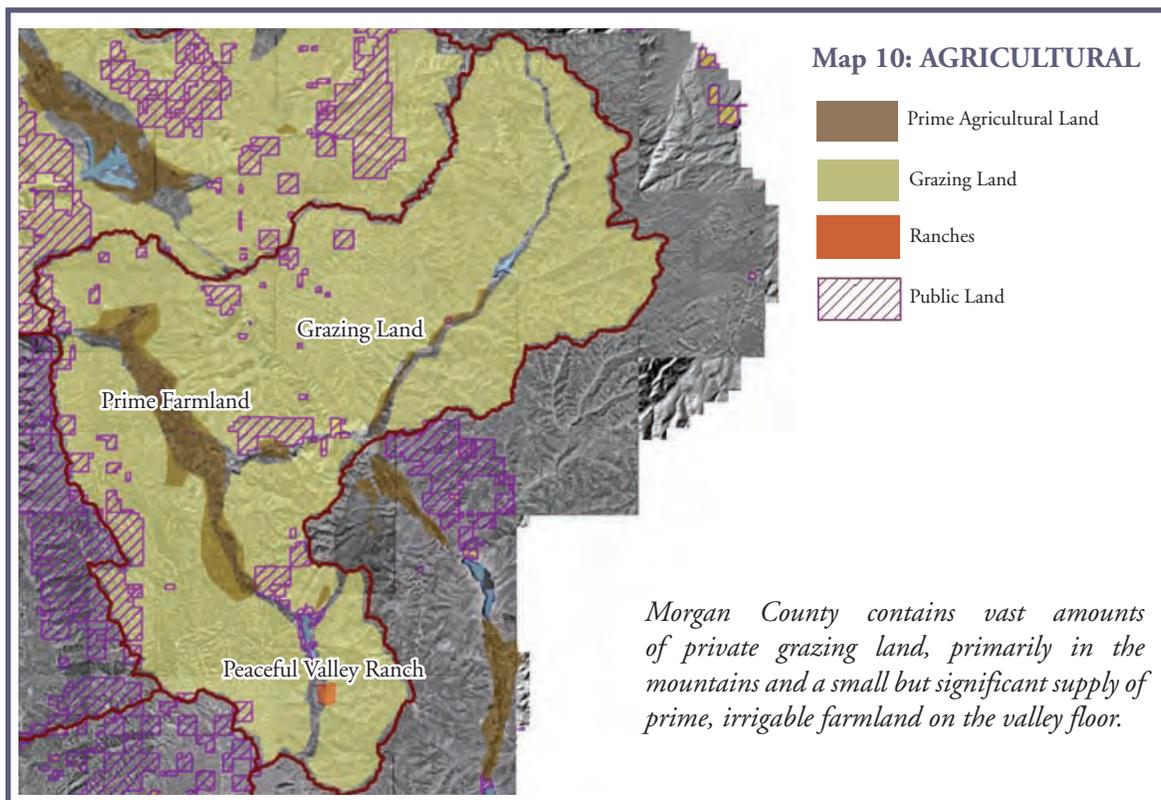
1. Rivers and streams
2. Mountains
3. Viewsheds
4. Agricultural lands
5. Three way tie: watersheds, wildlife habitat, protecting dark night skies

## Specific places to protect:

- 1 & 2. Tie: East Canyon and Lost Creek
- 3, 4 & 5. Tie: Mormon Trail and Mormon Flats Snowbasin  
Golf Course in Round Valley

## Morgan County Open Space Resources





RECOMMENDATIONS:

Morgan County’s workshop maps had every inch identified as open space, revealing there are few places residents are willing to part with. This reflects residents’ feelings as well as the county’s master plan. It can’t be stressed enough that developing a plan for preservation will be a challenge. The county planning and zoning commission already struggles with these issues weekly. But, the alternative—doing nothing—will surely yield worse results. Morgan County residents need to accept a level of development they are comfortable with and then plan on how best accommodate it. Without standards or a guiding plan, the threat to the health and character of the community is great.

Because so many areas are felt to be critical, the challenge is to decide on criteria or locations that are acceptable for development. Steep slopes, aquifer recharge areas and flood plains were identified as hazards, but safer areas that contained wildlife habitat or important views were also felt worth preservation. The community is advised to develop a list of critical areas and discuss why they are important. From this, they can develop a ranking system of areas to protect. The county is advised to then adopt strict development guidelines to funnel building into the least sensitive areas.

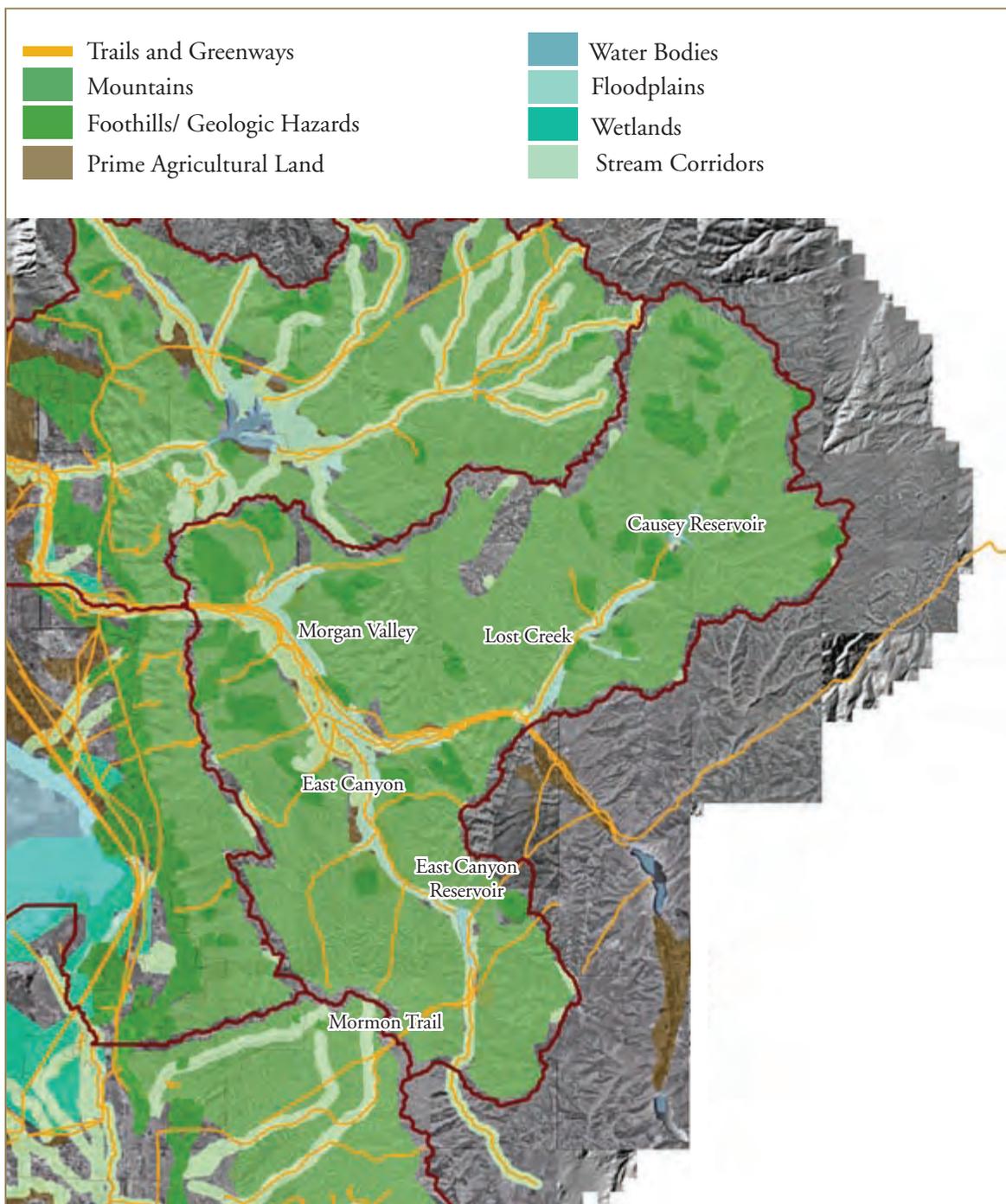
A cursory view of the area reveals few locations that are not sensitive to development, but the valley floors contain all of the top concerns: flood zones, cultivated agricultural lands, shallow groundwater, prime soils and critical habitat. Because the valley floors are a small proportion of the land than the mountains, they become even more critical. On the contrary, the base of the foothills, far from river corridors and nestled against gentler slopes, may be the least sensitive area to build. The county may wish to explore development styles that can nestle against the mountains, distant from riparian corridors, yet blend in with the mountains and do not break the visual plane of ridgelines. This may disperse development significantly, which might not be desirable because of infrastructure expenses. However, if projects are self-sufficient, this may be the most sensitive solution. In addition, communities should allow higher densities within established towns to create a true community core and promote more less costly and more land conserving style of development.

Public access is another critical issue. Because the vast majority of this region is privately owned, there are few places for the public to recreate, whether they are local or not. But many people

**Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection**

- Morgan Valley
- Mormon Trail and Flats
- Lost Creek
- Weber River
- Snow Basin
- East Canyon & Reservoir
- Causey Reservoir
- Devil’s Slide
- Enterprise Bench
- Peterson Mountains
- Stoddard/Enterprise
- Round Valley Golf Course
- Peaceful Valley (McFarland) Ranch
- Weber Basin Canal
- Pony Express Route
- West Mountains
- Backside of Wasatch Front
- Faultlines
- Parks
- Historic buildings
- Canyon gateways
- Private properties

## Map 12: Morgan County Open Space Map



wish to see the landscape protected simply for the views, something that demands no access. In every decision to acquire or protect lands, the appropriate level of access should be determined in advance and funding sources should be aware of this expectation. Limited or no access can be appropriate in areas where ranching or existing activities will continue, but landowners should anticipate a desire for even minimal access if public funds contribute to its preservation.



# DAVIS COUNTY

While Davis County is a narrow strip of land, it spans a cross section from mountains to lake and is at the core of this study area, touching all but one of the other counties. As such, it is a critical link in regional corridors and trails, and can play a role in spurring action in other counties. Yet, much of the critical land is privately owned and Davis County is advised to help the public understand the boundaries of public versus private land and realize the vast critical areas that are not yet protected from development.

Reflecting their urban bent and concern for all types of open spaces, Davis County residents chose the Composite Open Space Model followed by the Trails Model as their top choices to guide preservation in their county. Their top choices for the WFR region were Composite Open Space, followed by Maximum Conservation. Considering the diversity of open lands in the county and the critical roles they play, these choices reflect ongoing efforts to target as many areas as possible for protection.

## Major concerns:

Connecting trails into Salt Lake and Weber Counties and over the mountains into Morgan County.

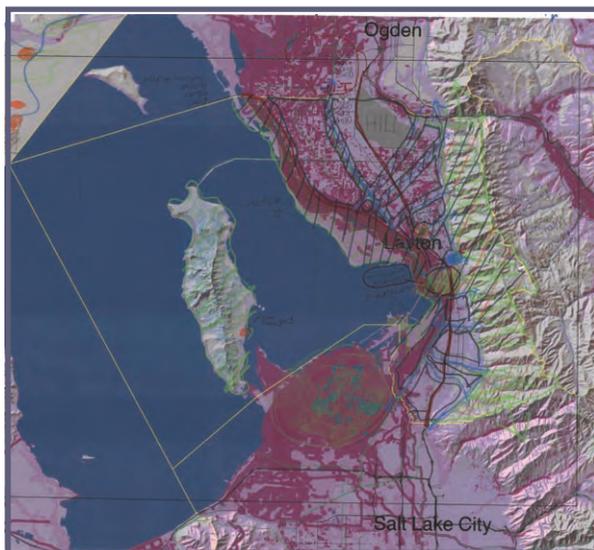
Restoring stream corridors to connect the mountains to the lake.

Establishing access points to enjoy Great Salt Lake, its wetlands, wildlife, and water recreation.

Maintaining agriculture as a buffer to the lake.

Protecting a variety of habitat wildlife in natural and developed areas such as Hill Air Force Base.

Water quality in the Great Salt Lake and the Jordan River.



**Figure 9:** One of three public input maps completed at the Davis County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

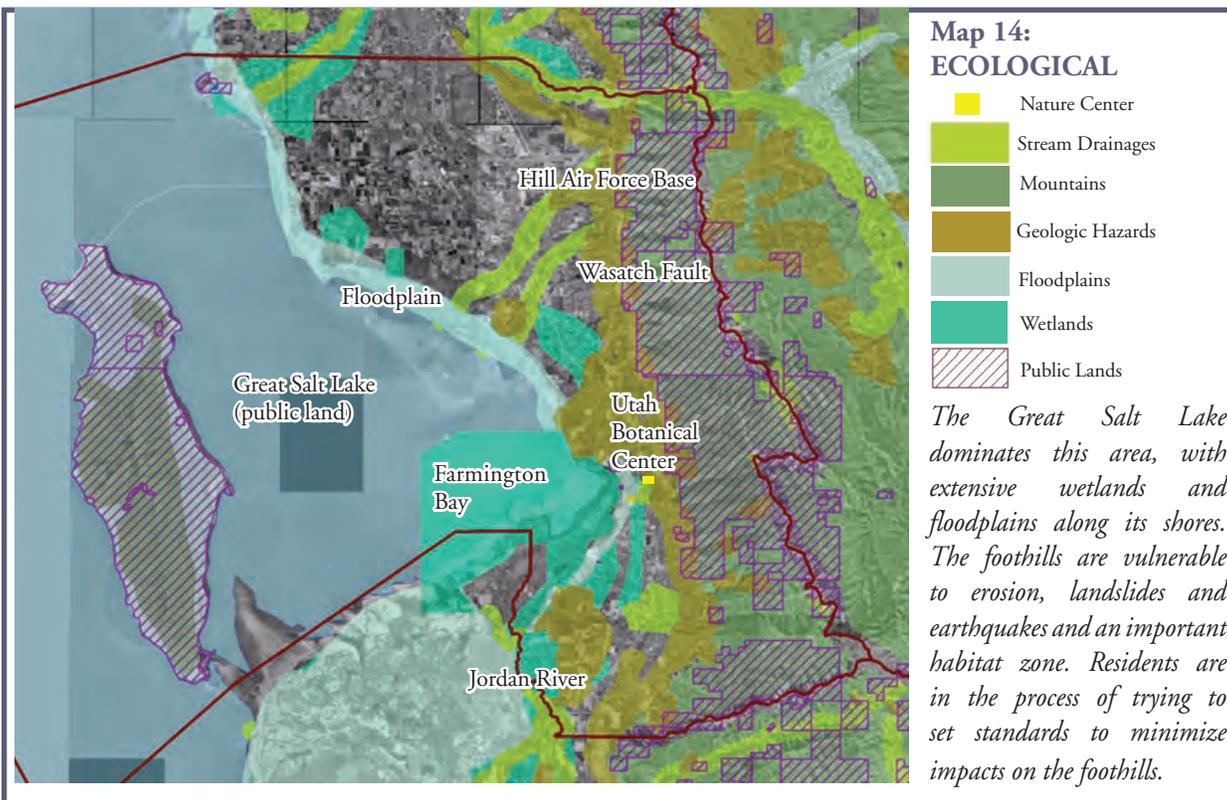
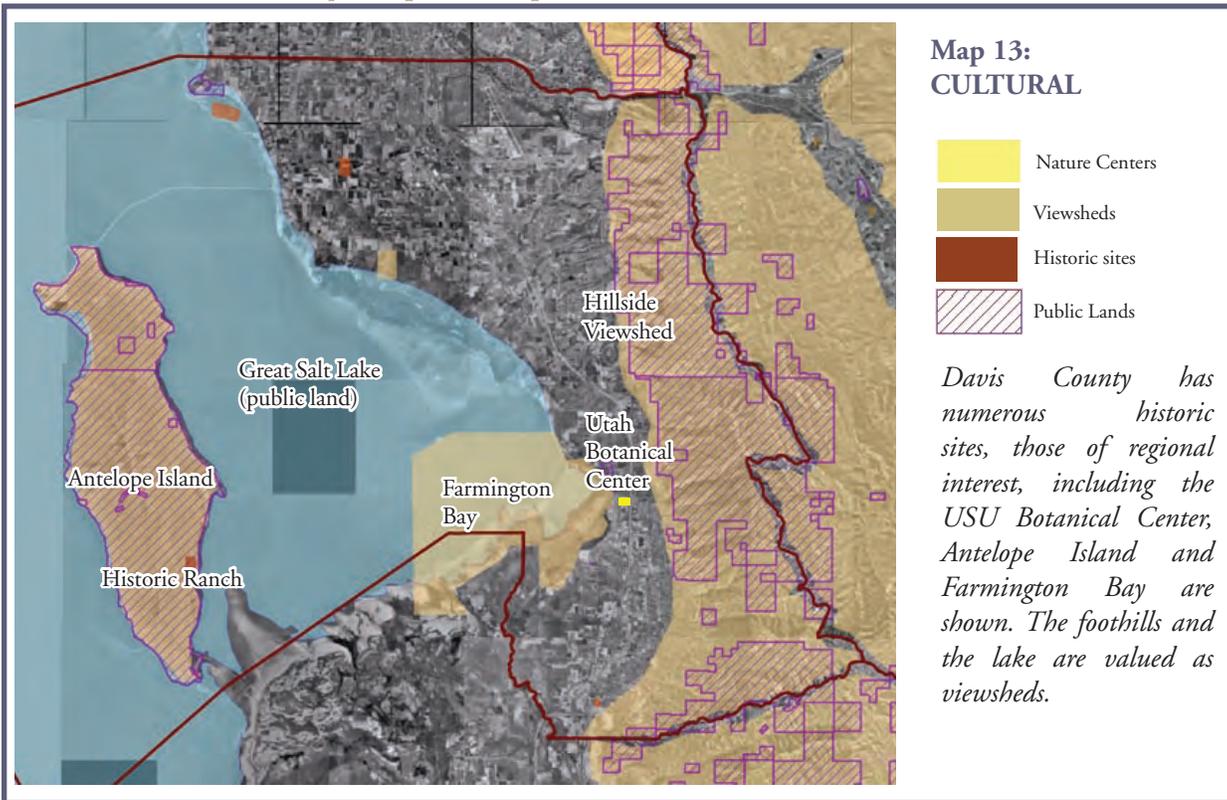
## General types of land to protect:

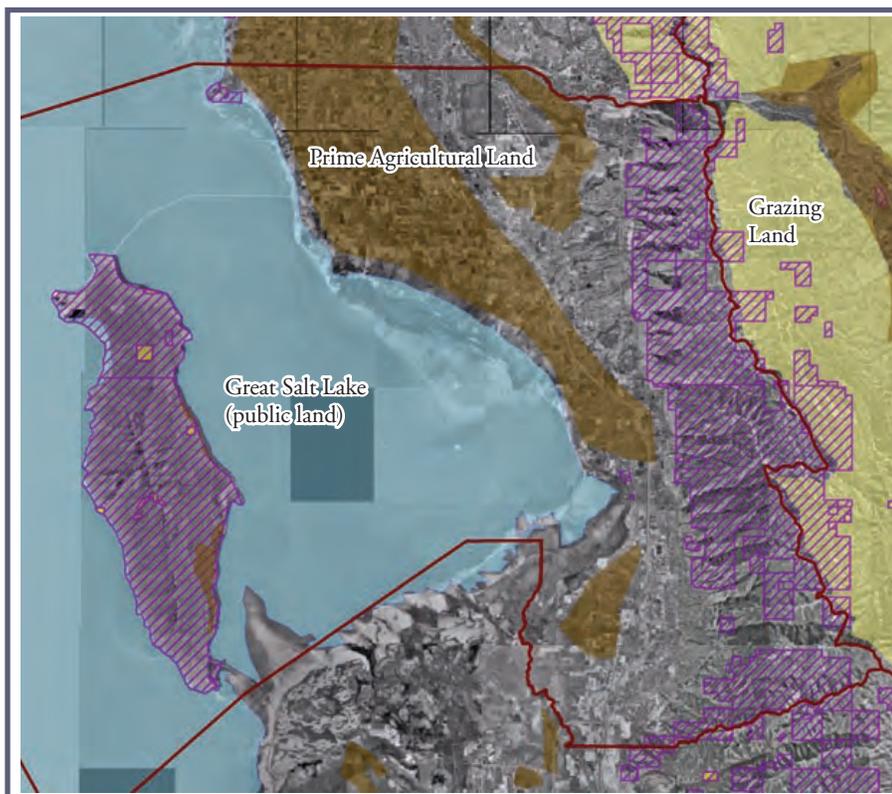
1. Rivers and streams
2. Trails
3. Foothills
4. Wetlands
5. Tie: Recreational areas and Critical habitat

## Specific places to protect:

- 1 & 2. Tie: Jordan River and Foothills and Bonneville Shoreline
- 3 & 4. Tie: Denver & Rio Grande rail corridor and Agricultural lands
- 5 & 6. Tie: Great Salt Lake plus shoreline and Corridors plus streams channels

## Davis County Open Space Resources

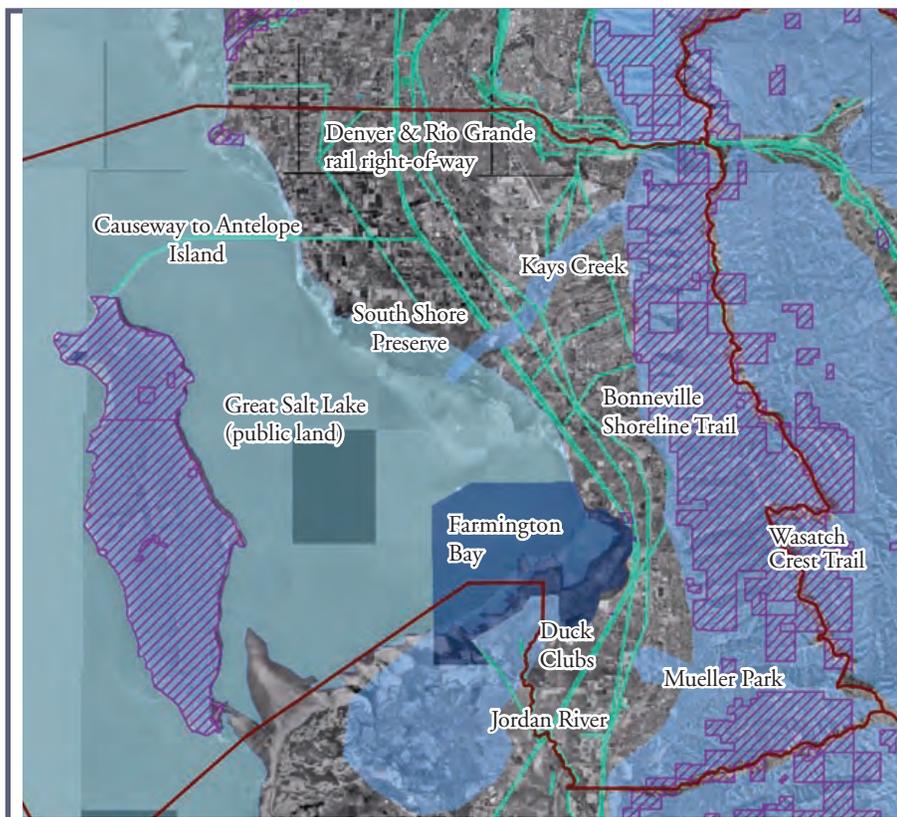




**Map 15:  
AGRICULTURAL**

- Prime Agricultural Land
- Grazing Land
- Public Land

*Davis County agriculture is focused on prime farm lands remaining along the Great Salt Lake, many within its floodplain.*



**Map 16:  
RECREATIONAL**

- Trail/Greenway
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Golf/Ski Areas
- Natural Recreation Areas
- Reservoirs
- Public Land

*Recreation in Davis County includes urban parks and trails as well as duck clubs for private hunting, and a wealth of opportunities to watch wildlife near Great Salt Lake. Residents would like to see trails connecting Davis County to other regions and boating access on the Jordan River.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Davis County and many communities within it have already begun tackling some of their most pressing concerns. The recently completed Davis County Shorelands Plan has been adopted by the communities along the Great Salt Lake and the effort has begun to implement a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to protect critical lands in this area. A similar TDR approach could be taken with the foothills. Some communities have begun to adopt hillside ordinances, but continuous protection is needed to ensure the entire stretch is preserved. A uniform protected elevation is recommended to keep buildings below a certain level across the foothills. At the minimum, hillside ordinances should protect residents from the hazards found here, such as the Wasatch Fault and unstable slopes with the potential for landslides and rockfall. To supplement this protection, TDRs could also be used to move development to more appropriate locations. A coordinated hillside effort should also consider keeping a corridor open across communities for the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. Additional trails that residents showed strong interest in were a centralized commuter and recreation trail along the old Denver & Rio Grande Railway right-of-way and along the Great Salt Lake, connecting the major natural attractions from the Antelope Island causeway along Farmington Bay to the Jordan River.

Residents have also been concerned with protecting agricultural land. While some pieces may be protected along the Great Salt Lake as a natural buffer during periods of high water, residents also expressed an attachment to the agricultural lands along Highway 89. In the past, this road passed through farms and orchards all along the Wasatch Front. The strongest remnants of this past are found in Brigham City, along the Fruitway, but Davis County residents expressed a desire to protect some of the last traces of this past along the Highway 89 corridor. A coordinated effort could spread the burden of protection to the greater community.

Davis County residents are eager to protect and gain access to streams and other waters within their boundaries. The Jordan River does in fact flow into the Great Salt Lake in Davis County, yet residents have no access to the river, either on shore or on the water itself. Davis County is encouraged to participate in the Jordan River Natural Areas Forum to raise this access and recreation issue as well as the health of the river and pollutants at its delta. In addition to the Jordan

**Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection**

- Foothills
- Bonneville Shoreline Trail
- Trail corridor along Great Salt Lake
- Freshwater and saltwater wetlands
- Views of Great Salt Lake
- Antelope Island & causeway
- Nature Conservancy Preserve
- Farmington Canyon and Creek
- Muller Canyon and Creek
- Kay's Creek
- Davis Creek
- Deuel Creek
- Steed Creek
- North Canyon Creek
- Jordan River
- Farmington Bay
- Warm Springs
- Historic Downtown Farmington
- Highway 89 "Fruitway"
- Beck St. grade-separated trail
- Denver & Rio Grande rail for trail
- Utah Botanical Center
- Davis County Arts Center
- Syracuse Museum
- Hill Air Force Base Museum
- Woods Museum

# Map 17: Davis County Open Space Map



River, residents expressed a desire to restore one or more of the streams that once flowed across the valley. Today, some of these streams are piped underground. “Daylighting” or bringing these streams to the surface again would create corridors from the mountains to the lake for people and wild things alike. There is no protected east-west corridor today. Such an effort would be a logical place to start. In more general terms, securing and protecting access points to public trails and corridors is a critical step to expanding the system. Appropriate levels of access should be determined for all present and future open spaces as some combinations of uses, such as agriculture with recreation or wildlife with trails can be detrimental.



# SALT LAKE COUNTY

Salt Lake County has urbanized to the point where it is more focused on protecting places for people to recreate than for any other reason. There is a large and strong enough base of support to put a comprehensive, county-wide approach into place, but city leaders need to get behind the plan before it is too late.

Showing concern for all types of open space, Salt Lake County residents selected the most comprehensive choice—the Composite Open Space Model—as their first choice, followed by Public Health, Welfare, and Safety. They felt similarly about the region, with Public Health, Welfare, and Safety as their top choice, followed by Maximum Conservation. While trails were not included in any of these models, residents did wish to see them included in any protection effort.

Major concerns:

Concern for losing any of what little land is still left unbuilt.

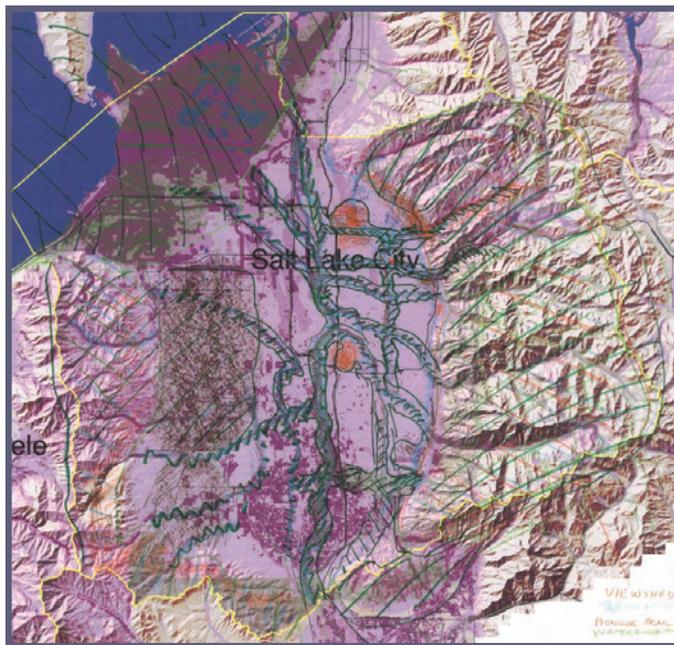
Residents are willing to build more densely to protect remaining open lands.

Natural resources and recreation in the valley have been overshadowed by the mountains, but need just as much protection.

Recreational parks and greenways are gaining popularity and more are needed across the region. In particular, east-west corridors are wanted to link mountains and canyons to the Jordan River.

Mountain and hillside views, which define the area, need protection.

While agriculture is gone as a way of life, remaining farmlands are remnants of the most critical natural areas, and are worthy of protection.



#### General types of land to protect:

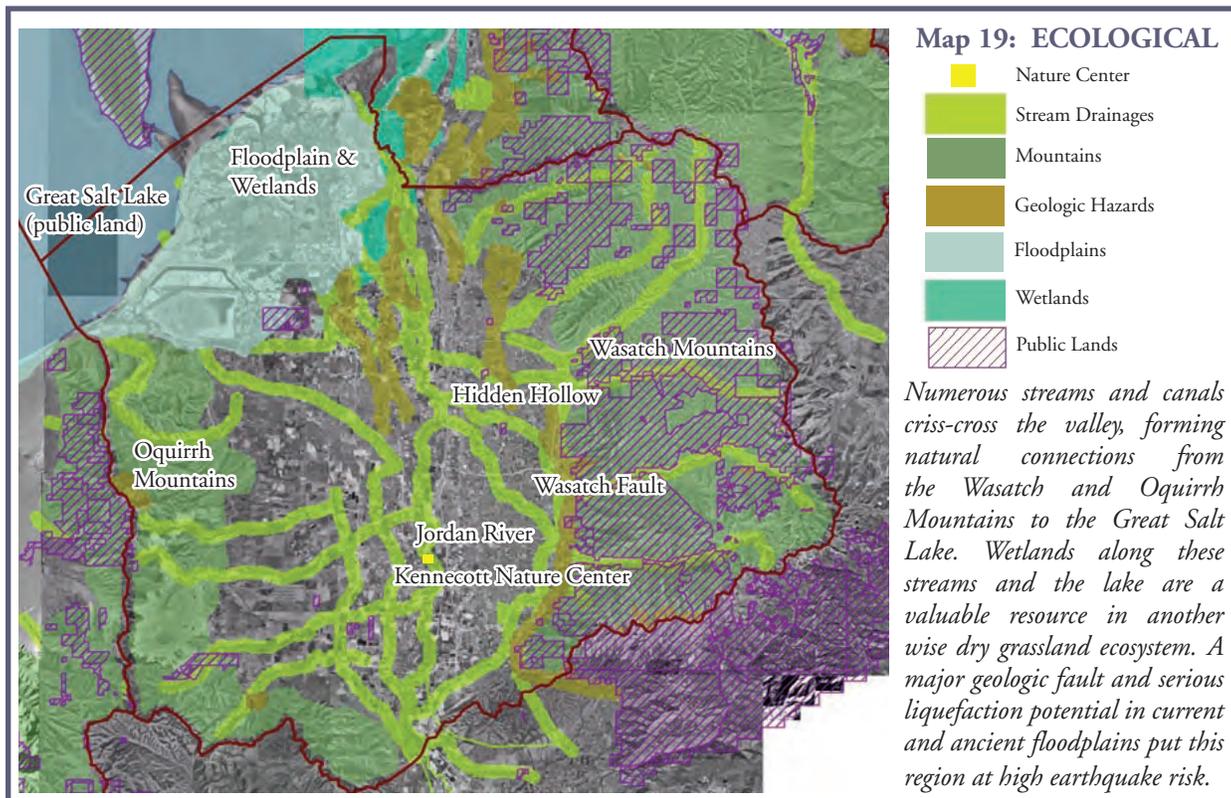
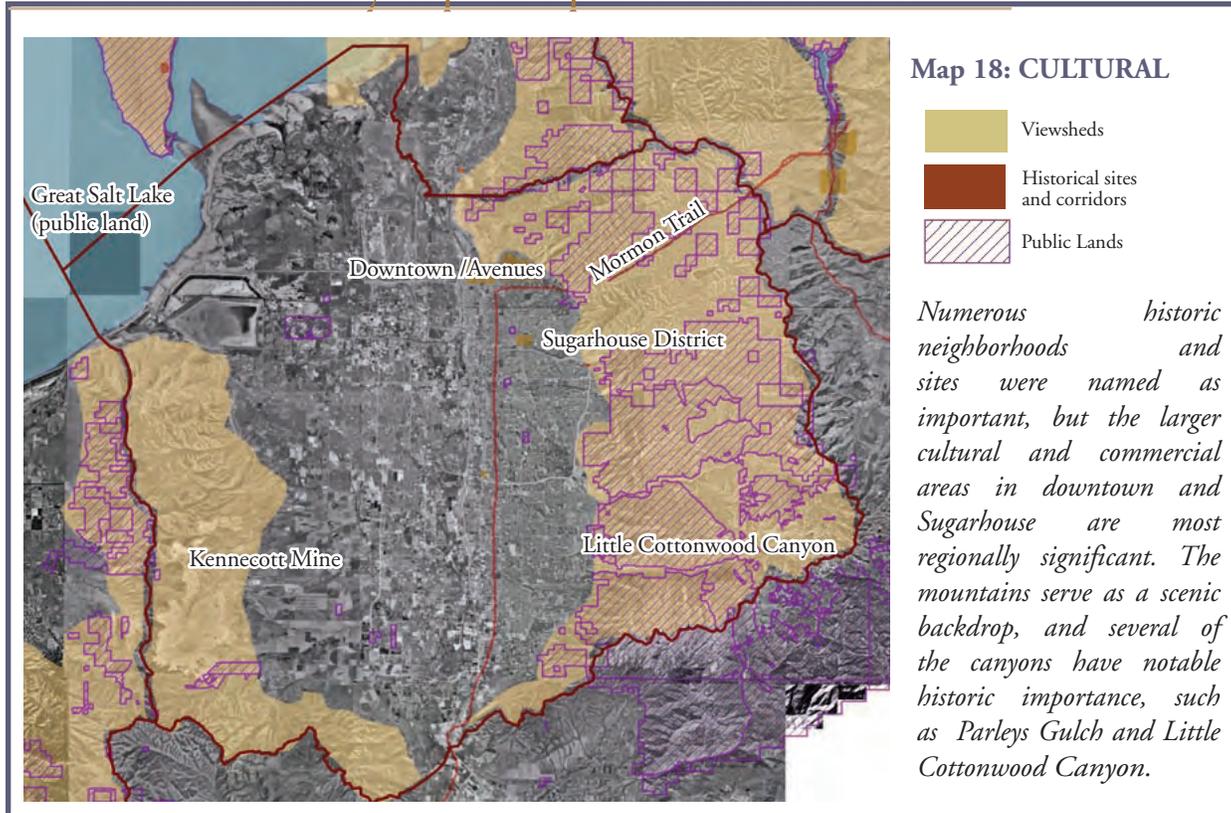
1. Wetlands
2. Trails
3. Critical habitat
- 4 & 5. Tie: Agricultural land and Water corridors

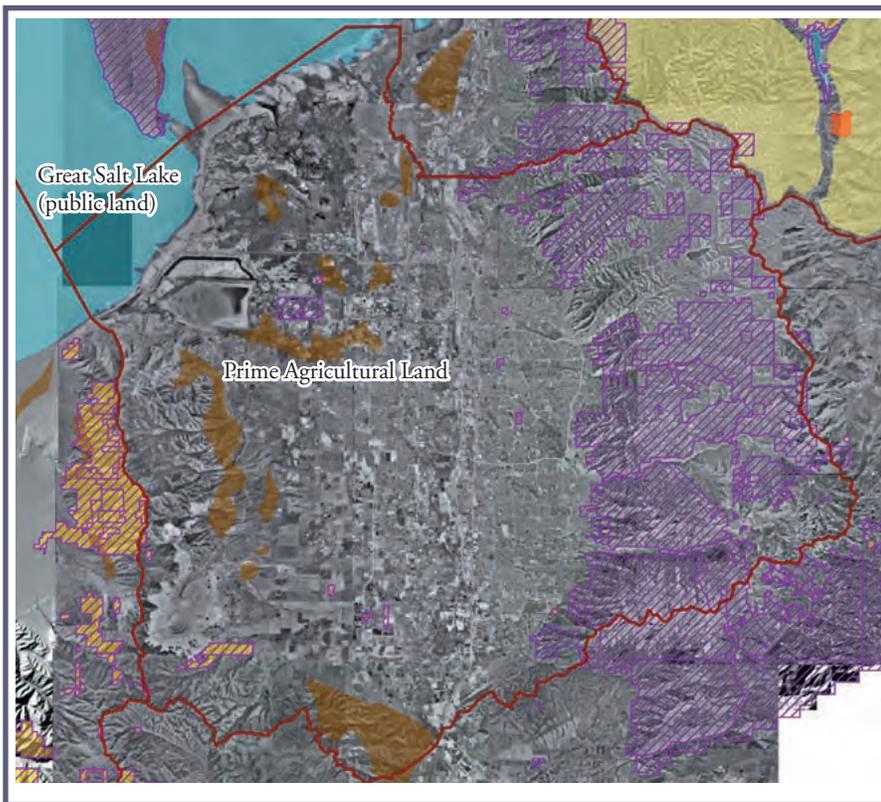
#### Specific places to protect:

1. Jordan River
- 2, 3, 4 & 5. Tie: Parley's Creek Corridor, Great Salt Lake Wetlands, Bonneville Shoreline Trail, Corner Canyon

**Figure 10:** One of seven public input maps completed at the Salt Lake County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

## Salt Lake County Open Space Resources

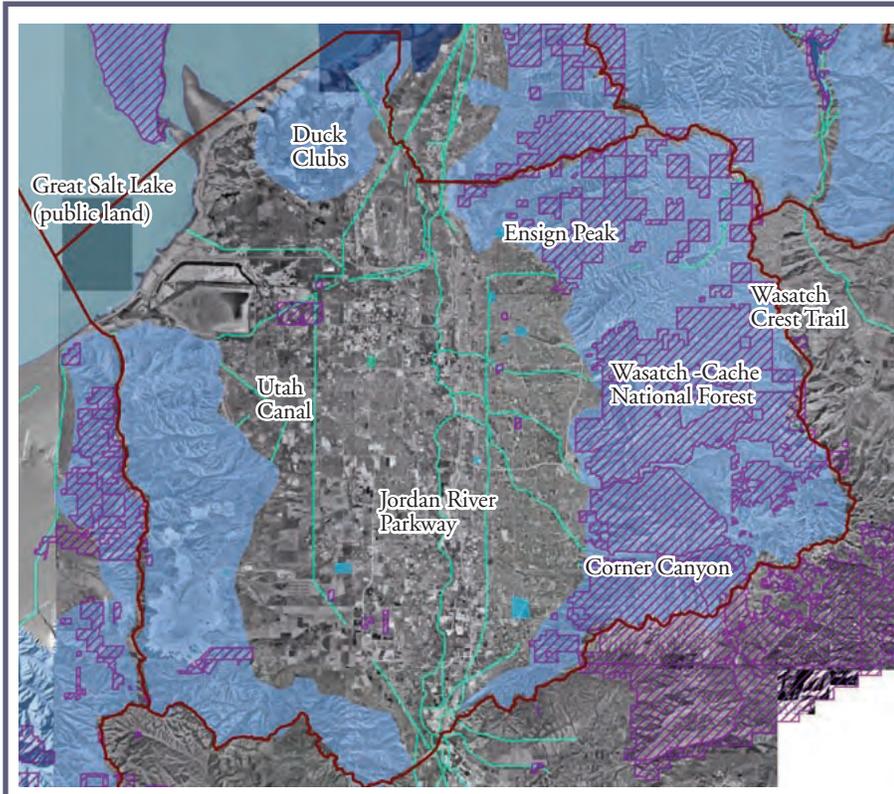




**Map 20:  
AGRICULTURAL**

- Prime Agricultural Land
- Grazing Land
- Ranches
- Public Land

*Salt Lake County's agricultural map shows the location of the few prime agricultural lands left. Although insignificant by regional measure, there are also small urban farms, nurseries, and community gardens. Residents are also concerned with preserving agricultural lands in other parts of the region.*



**Map 21:  
RECREATIONAL**

- Trail/Greenway
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Golf/Ski Areas
- Natural Recreation Areas
- Reservoirs
- Public Land

*Major recreational opportunities shown here include mountain areas for hiking, biking, skiing, hunting at duck clubs, and major trail and streams, corridors that do or could provide green parkways across the valley.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Residents are blessed with the Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges enclosing the valley and forming scenic views and offering countless recreation opportunities. But while many residents enjoy natural areas and diverse sports in the canyons, the offerings in the valley itself are more limited. Natural corridors and resources have been neglected for years and people are finally taking notice as the last opportunities are lost. Many residents are conscious of the ecological importance of these areas and have an appreciation for the last vestiges of agriculture, but the focus of most workshop participants was protecting green spaces and places to soften urban areas and remind us of the importance of our environment.

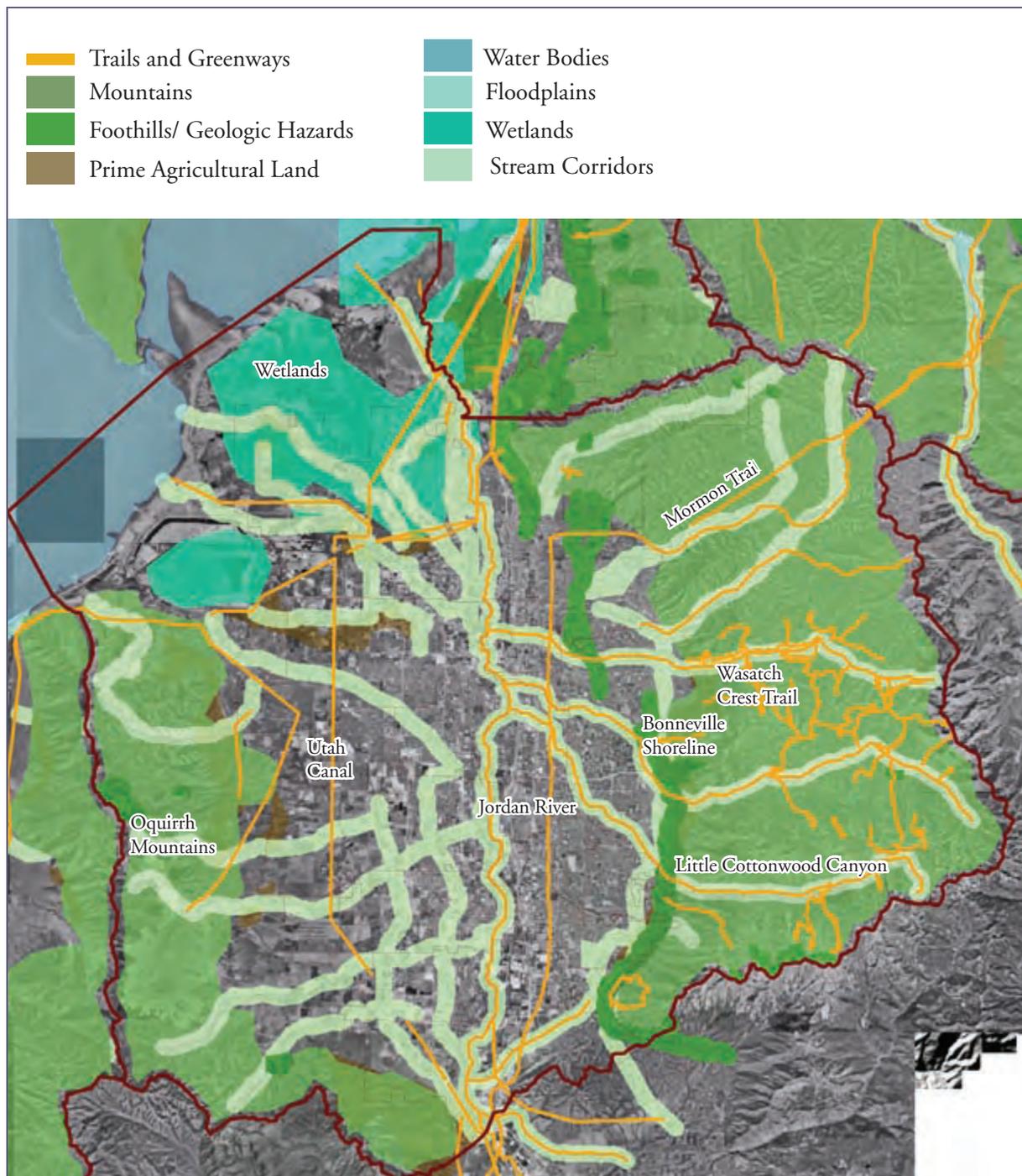
The major areas identified for protection are the ring of mountains around the valley and the waterways that connect them to the Great Salt Lake. The major canyons and the streams form some of the last continuous corridors of green space in the valley. Most communities are crossed by some major stream or the Jordan River or are adjacent to an important canyon, a natural network of unique resources, important to the health of all living things. Yet, many of these streams are cut off before reaching the Jordan River, either being piped underground or drained dry. They are also threatened by expanding development at the top of the watershed, in the canyons. While efforts are being made to protect the Jordan River corridor and the Great Salt Lake, these areas have long been overlooked and overstressed and it will soon be too late. Both are part of a globally significant habitat network for migrating birds and are locally critical resources in a desert environment for the small populations of wildlife that still subsist around the city. Continued protection of the Jordan River into Utah and Davis Counties is essential to conserving the resource for the entire region. Outdoor environmental education is a critical component of increasing awareness and stewardship and should be a part of any effort to protect or enhance green spaces in the region.

**Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection:**

- Jordan River
- Great Salt Lake
- Little Cottonwood Creek / Canyon
- Big Cottonwood Creek / Canyon
- Mill Creek / Canyon
- Parley's Creek / Canyon
- Emigration Creek / Canyon
- City Creek / Canyon
- Bell Canyon
- Corner Canyon
- Butterfield Canyon
- Bingham Canyon
- Ferguson Canyon Trail
- Wasatch Hollow
- Hansen Hollow
- Hidden Hollow
- Wasatch Mountains
- Oquirrh Mountains
- Mt. Olympus
- Lone Peak
- Dimple Dell Park
- Liberty Park
- Sugar House Park
- Tanner Park
- Copperton Park
- Albion Basin
- Rose Creek
- Ritter Canal
- North Salt Lake Canal
- East-West Trail to Jordan River
- Views of the Wasatch Mountains
- Historic main streets and neighborhoods
- Olympic venues
- Pioneer trails
- Native American sites



## Map 22: Salt Lake County Open Space Map



The commitment to protection needs to be increased. Municipalities in this area are encouraged to formulate plans for small local open spaces as well as the large regional network passing through them. Ordinances should be crafted to protect wide stream corridors to accommodate the needs of humans and natural systems and to protect hillsides from hazardous development. Residents have expressed a willingness to pay to protect open space and make it accessible. Community leaders should take note and begin funding and staffing programs that achieve these critical goals before every opportunity is lost. A final note is the importance of getting elected and appointed leaders involved in this effort. While many residents who attended these workshops have been working toward these goals for years, they have had little support from their city governments. Several non-governmental organizations and quasi-governmental partnerships have arisen to meet the challenge, but widespread success requires full participation, cooperation and understanding by all parties.



# TOOELE COUNTY

Residents understand the limits to their precious resources of prime farmlands, water and wildlife. They were most concerned with protecting the best of these while maintaining much of Tooele Valley's rural character. They also had very serious concerns about protecting resources and communities from contaminants and wastes stored nearby. The workshops and resulting maps focused most on Tooele Valley, but brief coverage of the entire county is also given.

Reflecting their concern for protecting agricultural lifestyles, prime soils were the first priority of residents, followed by cultivated agricultural lands and then critical habitat. Not surprisingly, residents ranked Working Landscapes tied with Public Health, Welfare, and Safety highest among open space models for their county. The same was true for the WFRC region—these two models ranked highest, reflecting Tooele County's dependence on the rest of the region to keep agriculture viable and protect the valley from waste disposal from beyond their borders.

## Major concerns:

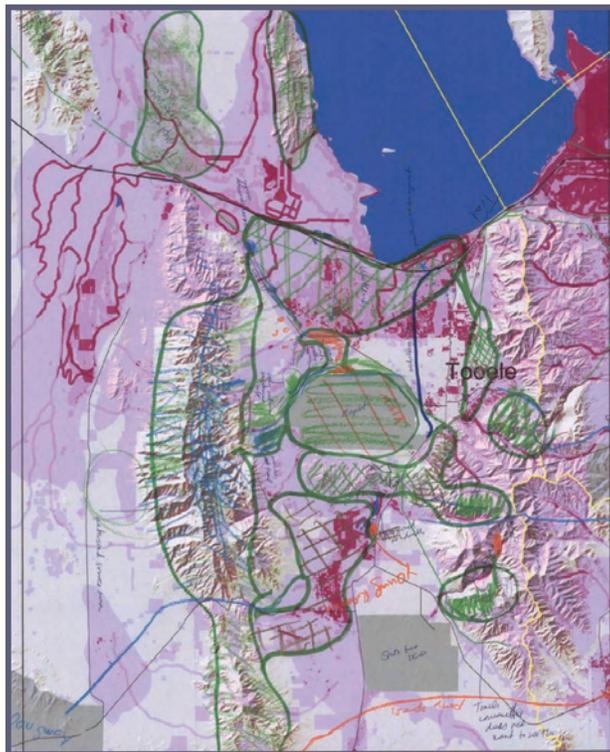
Protecting ground water quality and severe water limitations may threaten natural resources as well as ability to develop.

Avoiding building hazards—high water table, wetlands, water, slopes, and contaminated areas.

Maintaining agriculture as it is on the verge of dropping below the critical mass needed to economically sustain it.

Preserving existing wildlife habitat and corridors across the Tooele Valley.

Keeping a range of recreation options open—motorized and non-motorized.



### General types of land to protect:

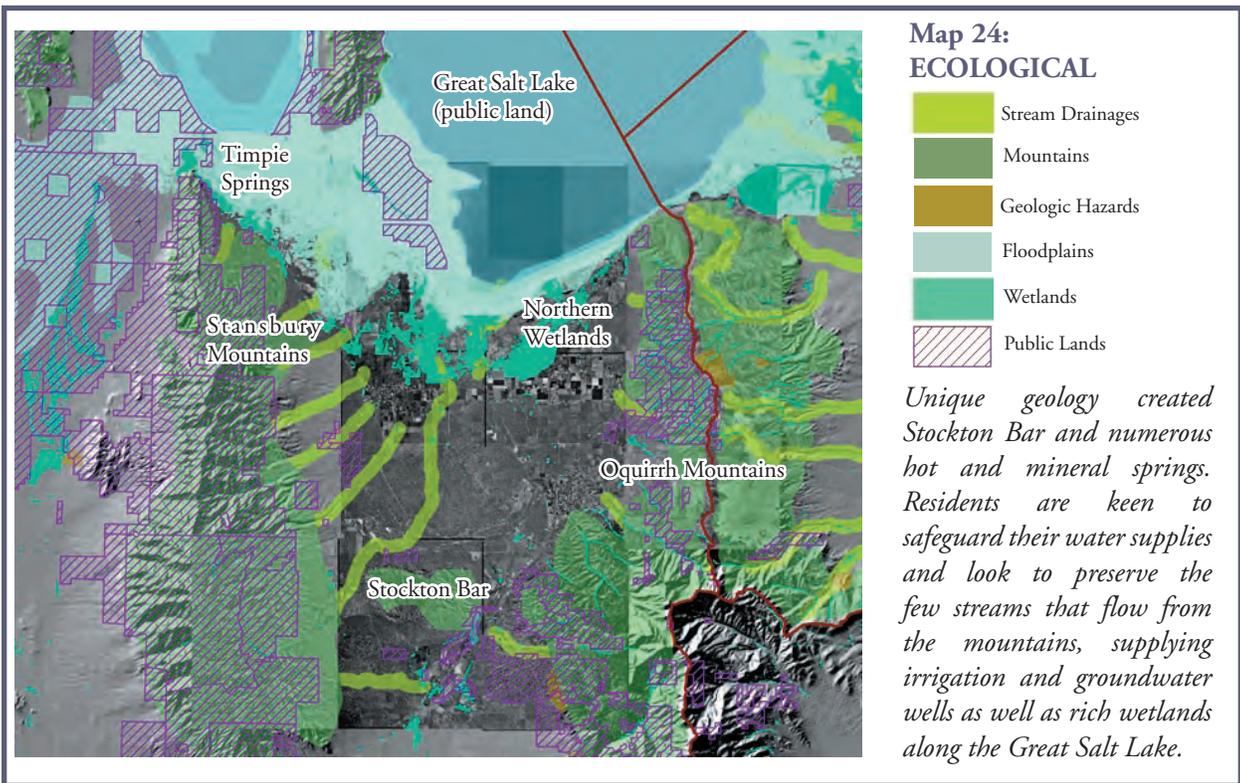
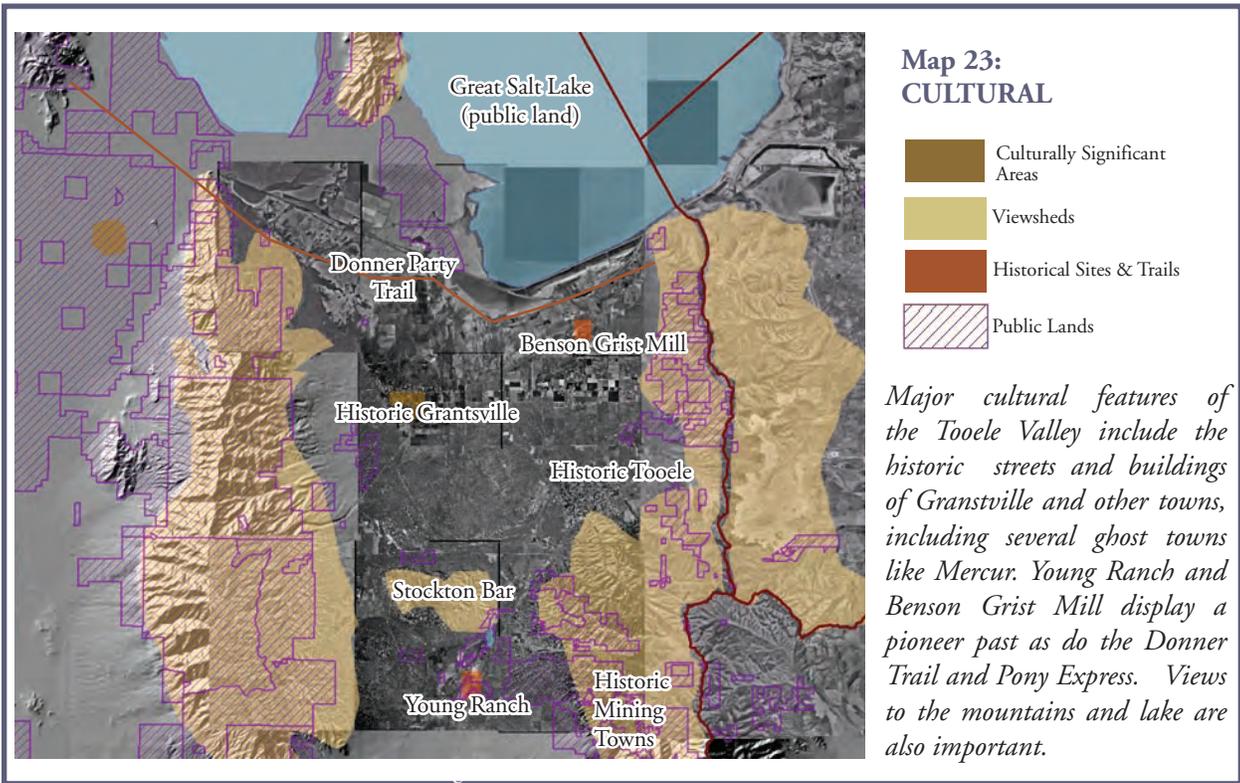
1. Tie: Prime agricultural land and Watershed areas
2. Mountains
3. Wetlands

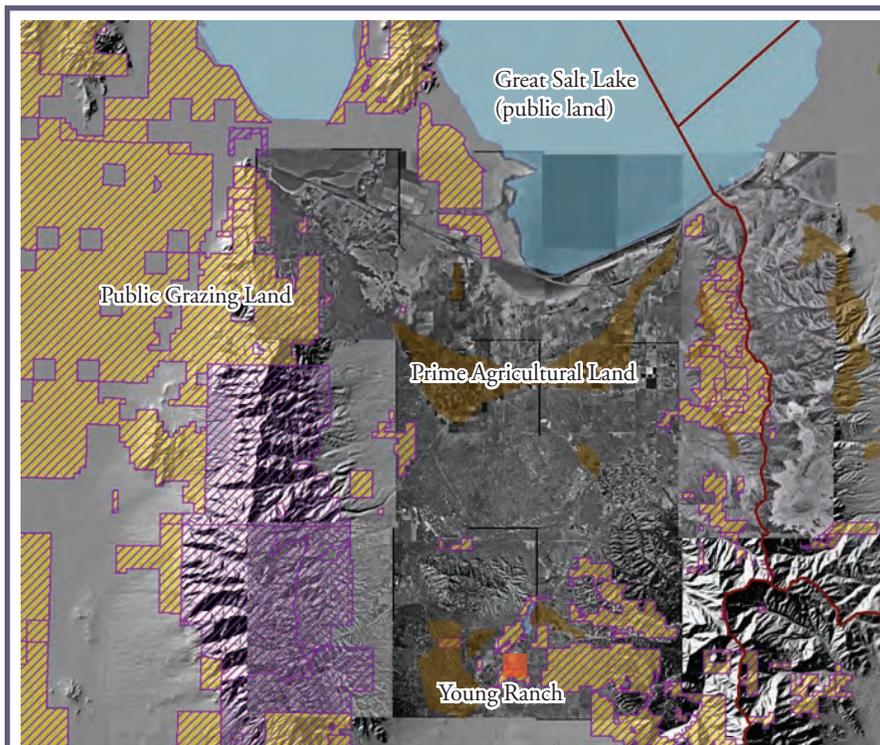
### Specific places to protect:

1. Stockton Sand Bar
2. Foothills and mountain ranges
3. Northern wetlands

**Figure 11:** One of two public input maps completed at the Tooele County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

# Tooele Valley Open Space Resources

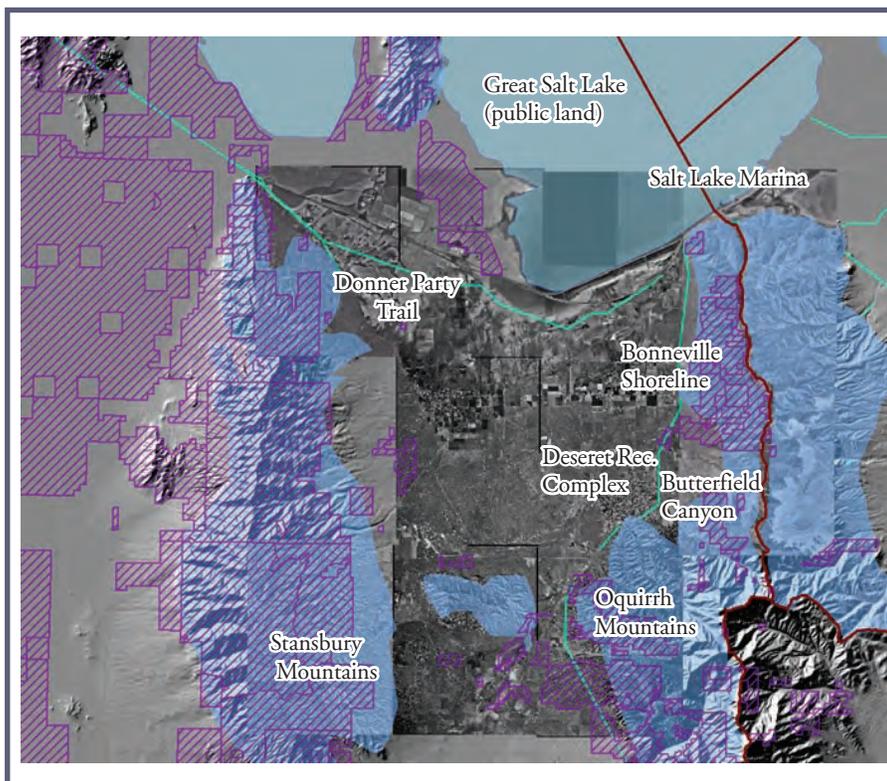




**Map 25:  
AGRICULTURAL**

- Prime Agricultural Land
- Grazing Land
- Ranches
- Public Land

*Agriculture still has a strong presence in the Tooele Valley, particularly close to the lake. Grazing is present on farmland across the valley as well as on vast public and private lands to the west and south.*



**Map 26:  
RECREATIONAL**

- Trail/Greenway
- Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Golf/Ski Areas
- Natural Recreation Areas
- Reservoirs
- Public Land

*Much of the recreation in Tooele takes place in the canyons and mountains with offerings for motorized and non-motorized sports. Trails are still in the planning stages, and could be combined along some of the historic trails. The Deseret Recreation Complex serves the entire Valley.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

While the largest county by far in the region, Tooele is largely public lands or reservation lands and is very sparsely populated beyond the Tooele Valley. Participants naturally focused on the part of the county closest to the Wasatch Front. While it is the least densely developed county in the WFRC area, it is also the most likely to experience exponential growth in the coming decades because it is flat, supplied with water and within commuting distance of Salt Lake City. Yet of all the counties studied, it placed the most emphasis on keeping farms and a rural lifestyle. Agricultural land is valuable to residents for more than just the farming products and rural lifestyle, it is a buffer from floodplains, an aquifer recharge area, secondary wildlife habitat and creates expansive views across the valley to the mountains and Great Salt Lake. Ranching also plays a role as farms are used to grow feed and surrounding public lands are used for grazing. Even with its towns growing at unprecedented rates, the prospect of keeping some of this lifestyle is strong and highly desired.

Beyond protecting the valley and mountainsides for scenic reasons, there are very strong health, safety and welfare concerns. Tooele County residents have worried for years about the safety of their water supplies and land that is built upon. Military, industrial and waste facilities have been located in the region for decades and their pollution impacts are only somewhat known. Residents were extremely sensitive to the need to protect water and resources from potential contamination and to only locate housing and other buildings in locations known to be safe. Many areas, such as the Tooele Army Depot will likely remain largely open space for years to come, and residents are thankful they will continue to provide unobstructed views and habitat for many animals.

Many residents in Tooele County live close to the land and are very aware of their natural surroundings. The canyons that drain into Tooele and Rush Valley are used for hunting, hiking, and motorized recreation. Residents felt strongly about protecting natural areas both for human use and for wildlife. The streams that flow out of the mountains fade out in the valley, creating areas with a high water table and lush vegetation, especially on the perimeter of Great Salt Lake. Residents identified a wide band around Great Salt Lake, including its floodplains, wetlands and nearby agriculture as important to protect for habitat and other reasons. They also identified numerous wildlife corridors crossing from the mountains across the valley into the Army Depot and agricultural fields.

### Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection

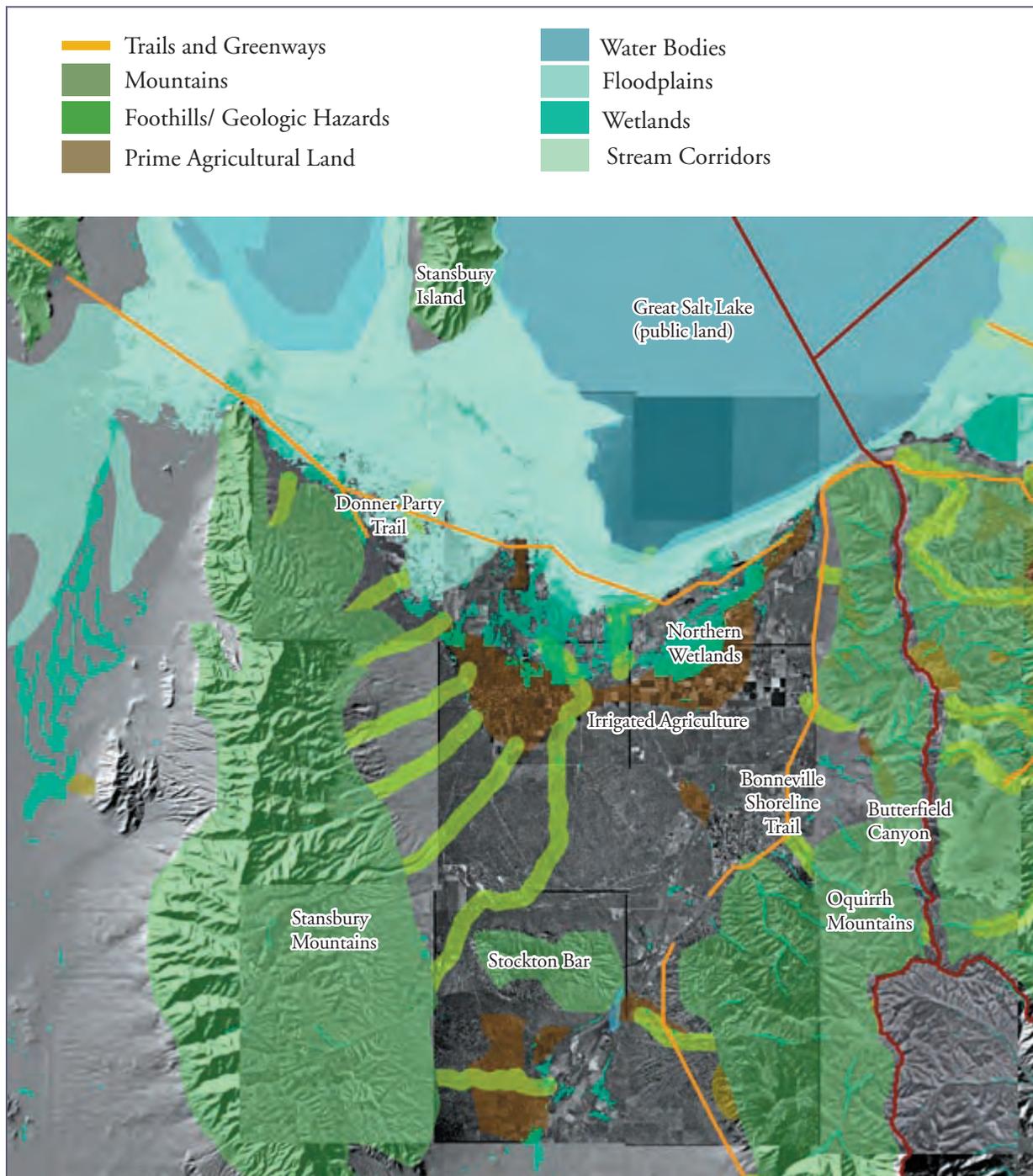
#### *Tooele Valley:*

Stockton Sand Bar  
Northern Wetlands  
Great Salt Lake  
Spring at Young Ranch  
Stockton Canyon  
Butterfield Canyon  
Army Depot open lands  
Donner Party Museum and Trail  
Pony Express Route  
Historic Granstville and Tooele  
Sod Farms, Church Farms  
Deep soils in Granstville  
Tooele Valley farmland

#### *Tooele County:*

Rush Lake  
Simpson Springs  
Fish Springs Bird Refuge  
Horseshoe Springs  
Fish Springs  
Rush Valley  
Skull Valley  
Soldier Mountain  
Oquirrh Mountains  
Stansbury Mountains  
Cedar Mountains  
Deep Creek Mountains  
Wig Mountain  
Deseret Peak  
Middle Canyon  
Dry Canyon  
Settlement Canyon  
Ophir Canyon  
5-Mile Pass  
Lincoln Highway and Goodyear Route  
Adobe Rock  
Iosepah  
Topaz Internment camp  
Wendover Airbase  
Bonneville Salt Flats  
The Knolls OHV area  
Mercur, Ophir, Joseph City  
Vernon  
Alpha  
Erda  
Agriculture south of Stockton  
Agricultural areas with water

## Map 27: Tooele Valley Open Space Map

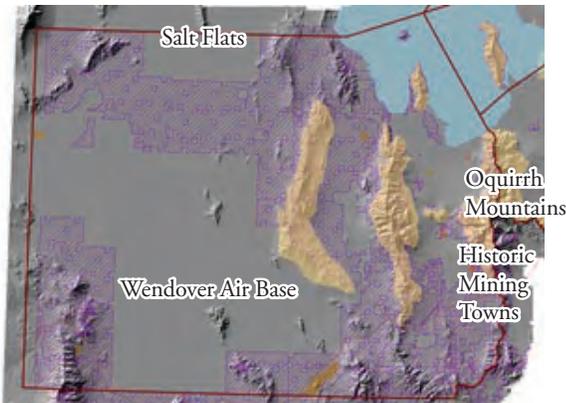


Tooele County is urged to take its agricultural preservation efforts seriously. Numerous tactics such as greenbelt zoning and transfer of development rights programs could be used to funnel development into urbanized area and create a true city in the valley, rather than disconnected subdivisions. Stringent site analysis should be adopted by the county and municipalities, too, ensuring every project avoids sensitive areas and hazards to humans.

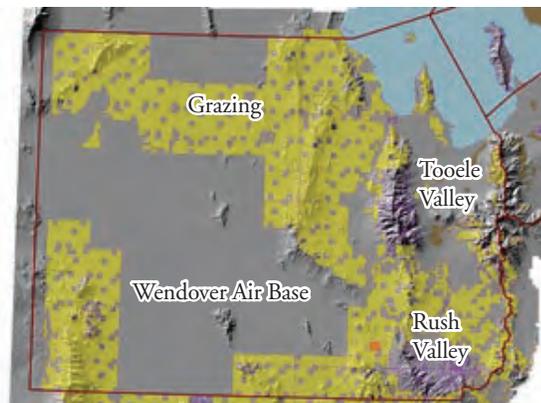
## Tooele County Open Space Maps

The following maps show Tooele County in its entirety to show resources that stretch beyond the Tooele Valley. Most notable are the Salt Flats, shown in the ecological (Map 29) and recreational (Map 31) maps, the Knolls OHV area as well as the vast amount of grazing land shown in the agricultural map. On the cultural map the Stansbury, Cedar and Oquirrh Mountain ranges are shown as viewsheds.

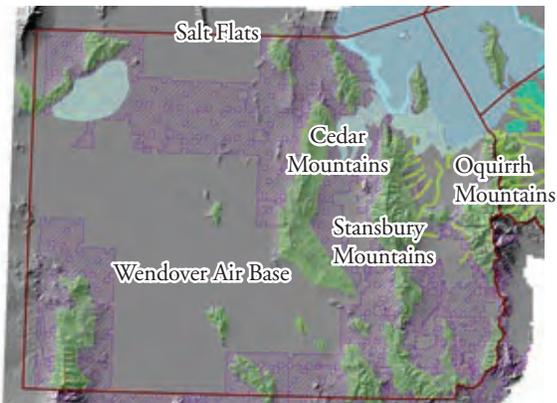
Map 28: Tooele County—CULTURAL



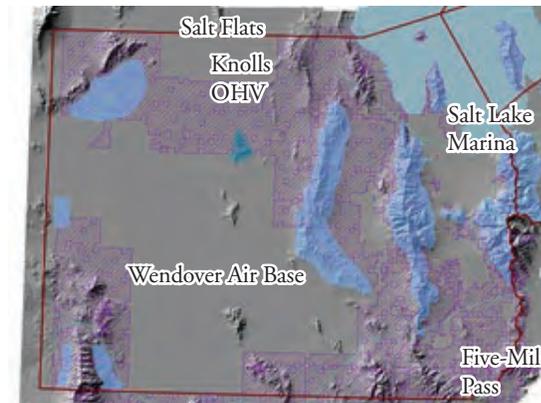
Map 30: Tooele County—AGRICULTURAL



Map 29: Tooele County—ECOLOGICAL



Map 31: Tooele County—RECREATIONAL



# Strategies for Implementation

Strategic Plan for the Wasatch Region  
Strategic Plan for Communities  
What Next? A Call for Support



*Lone Peak*



## Strategic Plan for the Wasatch Region

This study, as a conceptual regional planning document, can only scratch the surface of strategic planning. It is on the shoulders of individual municipalities and agencies to implement plans, but the support given by broader entities and a wide network of experts is tremendously helpful. Therefore, this strategic plan is broken down into suggestions to the region as a whole and to organizations that may take on the role of regional assistance, then suggestions for individual municipalities and agencies.

*Encourage communities in the region to promote this effort.*

- Distribute and present this plan to every community to help them understand the program and its benefits.
- Make this plan known to all municipal leaders—including mayors, city councils and planning commissions, planners and recreation departments, school districts and the head of every district or department related to land use.
- Offer incentives to participate or join the planning effort, such as technical assistance, a speaker's bureau, or “toolbox” presentations on topics of concern.
- Write an open space mission or Memorandum of Understanding for all participating municipalities to adopt.

*Involve related agencies and institutions.*

- Support WFRC's Open Space Subcommittee in promoting the plan's implementation.
- Share plan with other regional councils and planning organizations, such as MAG and BRAG, and work to coordinate them as one.
- Present plan to federal, state and local agencies with jurisdiction over resources and land use in the area.
- Present plan to conservation organizations and potential sources of funding and assistance.
- Continue the relationship with USU Extension to promote the plan and help communities institute it.

*Create or become involved in partnerships to protect important places and resources.*

- Encourage participation in existing partnerships such as the Jordan River Natural Areas Forum, Provo Jordan River Parkway Foundation, Weber Pathways, the Governor's Trails Initiative, and similar efforts to maximize the scope and influence of protection efforts.
- Support the creation of partnerships to protect specific resources, such as watersheds, agricultural lands, foothills and mountain lands, trails and historic sites.

*Implement a public awareness and education program.*

- Create and distribute materials that explain the plan and efforts to implement it.
- Enlist media coverage to heighten awareness and promote the plan to the general public.
- Support education and volunteer opportunities to learn about, build and fund new open space networks.
- Support outdoor education, wildlife watching, active living and other efforts that encourage people to experience the outdoors.

*Promote quality growth as a primary solution to losing valuable open lands.*



*Dog Park in Salt Lake City*

- Create a plan targeting areas for development, redevelopment and infill to take pressure off more sensitive lands.
- Promote a region-wide program for transfer and purchase of development rights (TDR and PDR) or density incentives to encourage development in more appropriate places.
- Coordinate open space, land use, and transportation plans at a regional level, ensuring they are complementary and achieving mutually beneficial goals.

## Strategic Plan for Communities

*Build or enhance the open space system with every new project.*

- Establish ordinances that provide basic protection from hazards such as steep slopes, slide areas, dangerous geology, fault lines, floodplains and wetlands.
- Update subdivision process to ensure careful site analysis and consideration of resources.
- Adopt ordinances that promote conservation subdivisions and/or minimum open space requirements.
- Update ordinances to address related concerns, such as street trees, landscaping, water conservation, walkability of communities, and reducing excess night lighting.

*Update city policies to reflect open space concerns.*

- Eliminate “low-density” zones of 1 to 10 acres minimum lot sizes in rural areas to make large-lot land consumption prohibitively expensive.
- Establish transfer of development rights programs to move development pressure away from sensitive zones into more desirable locations.
- Adopt service area boundaries for services such as sewer to encourage predictable growth and offer density incentives or transfer of development rights bonuses for building within this zone.



*Group working at the Morgan County workshop.*

*Establish open space program and policies.*

- Complete an open space planning study for own community, tying into this plan and those of neighbors.
- Designate or hire a staff person responsible for coordinating open space efforts within and among communities.
- Establish an Open Space Advisory Committee to watch for opportunities, coordinate regularly with agencies and landowners to maximize project benefits, and to advise on development proposals.
- Create a plan to maintain, restore, improve, and determine appropriate access to open space parcels.
- Meet regularly with developers, landowners and the public to refine changes to planning policy.
- Organize volunteer events, such as tree planting or fund raising to build support.
- Distribute newsletters with updates on newly protected parcels, policies,

maintenance, and “best practices” for homeowners.

- Offer workshops, speakers, and outdoor education programs to help public understand and support efforts.
- Submit press releases and solicit media coverage of milestones and new policies.

*Secure funding*

- Survey residents to determine the level of funding support likely and favored options for fundraising.
- Secure a basic planning and operations budget to ensure opportunities to bring parcels into the open space network are not missed.
- Establish funding for acquisitions, improvements and maintenance.
- Leverage all monies contributed by the community with matching funds from government programs and special interest organizations and with volunteer labor when appropriate.

*Encourage private landowners to consider conservation of their lands.*

- Send letters to landowners inviting them to learn more about this plan and their options for protecting land.
- Regularly invite landowners to presentations by local land trusts and conservation funders to present options and ideas.
- Establish agricultural protection strategies such as zoning and tax relief.

## What Next? A Call for Support

This project was conceived in three phases: data collection and analysis; design and planning; and implementation. The first two phases are now complete, but have only begun to break ground on the true purpose of this process —action. The analysis and design in this plan are just a basis for people to understand the situation and make informed decisions. The implementation of these ideas is the most lengthy and complex task—in fact, it never ends. Communities need their own open space plans and need to update and adjust them over time as their land uses change. They also need staff and funds to carry out plans and build the open space network. This is a critical juncture in the process. If support continues into another phase, communities will be able to get a foothold and begin plans and funding efforts, hopefully supported by larger-scale efforts to achieve the same goals. If the support and action stops here, the years of work building to this point will fall short of their goal of truly transforming the future of the Wasatch Region. It is essential that these efforts continue into a third phase of education, public awareness, and seeking further funding and staff support resources.

# Appendix



- Participants
- Sources and Credits
- GIS Mapping Sources
- Definitions
- Funding and Support Resources
- Model Plans and Resource Contacts



## Participants

### WFRC Open Space Subcommittee:

_____	Aric Jensen, Chair	Centerville City/Davis County
_____	Nicole Cline, Vice-Chair	Tooele County Planning
_____	Carol Page	WFRC Regional Growth Committee Chair, Davis County Commissioner
_____	Emery Crook	Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation
_____	Jeannie Ault	Riverton Planning
_____	Ron Chandler	City Of South Weber
_____	Rick Wixom	Ogden City Planning
_____	Kent Page	Morgan County Planning
_____	Wilf Sommerkorn	Davis County Community Development
_____	Craig Barker	Weber County Planning
_____	Kort Utley	Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
_____	Alex Beseris	Envision Utah

### Project Team:

_____	George Ramjoué	Wasatch Front Regional Council
_____	Sumner Swaner	Swaner Design, LLC.
_____	Sharen Hauri	Swaner Design, LLC.
_____	Christie Oostema	Swaner Design, LLC.
_____	Rachel Fenton	Swaner Design, LLC.
_____	Tim Brown	Swaner Design, LLC.
_____	Richard Toth	Utah State University, Department of Environment and Society
_____	Tom Edwards	US Geological Survey, Biological Resources, Utah State University
_____	Rob Lillieholm	Utah State University, Department of Environment and Society
_____	Erin Buteau	Utah State University, Graduate Research Assistant
_____	Glen Busch	Utah State University, Graduate Research Assistant

**Leadership Team:**

John Guldner	Town of Alta
Laura McIntyre	Town of Alta
Kent Bush	Clearfield City
Steve Thacker	Centerville City
J. Lynn Crane	Herriman
Glenn Graham	Herriman
Brian Cook	Kaysville City
Nathan Pace	Kaysville City
John Thacker	Kaysville City
Randy Phipps	Marriott-Slaterville
Bill Morris	Marriott-Slaterville
Phillip Hill	Midvale City
Kent Wilkerson	Morgan County
Doug Hill	Murray City
Stan Porter	North Salt Lake City
Brenda Mumford	North Salt Lake City
Kay Briggs	North Salt Lake City
Lisa Romney	Salt Lake City
Ken Jones	South Ogden City
Judy Hansen	South Jordan City
Colleen Redhair	South Jordan City
Geoff Ellis	Weber County Pathways
John Janson	West Valley City
Craig Thomas	West Valley City

## Sources and Credits

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*All photos, unless otherwise noted, were contributed by Swaner Design.*

Arendt, Randall. *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996.

Arendt, Randall. *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1999.

Blahna, Dale J., Steve W. Burr, Michael F. Butkus, and Judith A. Kurtzman. *Utah's Great Outdoors Open Space Project. Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*. College of Natural Resources, Utah State University. Logan, Utah, 2000.

Lerner, Steve and William Poole. *The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space*. San Francisco: The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

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Envision Utah. *Envision Utah Study*. Dan Jones Survey of Wasatch Area Residents. January 2000.

Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Study conducted for the Davis County Comprehensive Hillside Plan*, August 2002.

## GIS Mapping Sources

### GIS Mapping Summary:

The maps displayed in this report are for regional planning purposes only and are not intended to be used for zoning or site-specific decisions. While some of the mapping data used is relatively specific, some data was originally generated at a very broad scale or was created specifically for this project, also at a very conceptual level. Future users are advised to refer to the original source of the data, listed below, to understand the scale at which it was created and intended for use.

### Satellite Imagery:

Imagery covering all Weber County, Morgan County, Davis County, Salt Lake County, and the eastern part of Tooele County was downloaded from the *State of Utah Information Technology Services, Automated Geographic Reference Centers (AGRC) website at (<http://agrc.its.state.ut.us>)*. For the remainder of Tooele, a hillshade file created for Phase I: *Alternative Futures for Utah's Wasatch Front Conservation of Open Space* was used.

### Resources used directly from original source:

This plan uses data that was collected from publicly available sources and modified by Utah State University for Phase I of WFRC Open Space Plan. Refer to Phase 1 report and materials entitled "*Alternatives Futures for Utah's Wasatch Front*" for original source and citation. Where original source is known, it is noted in parentheses.

- Prime Agricultural Land
- Landslides (ARGC)
- Faults (ARGC)
- Rivers (ARGC)
- Streams (ARGC)
- Lakes
- Floodplain
- Public Land
- Built Lands (EGI Lab and ARGC for QGET)
- County Boundaries
- WFRC hillshade (USU)
- Trails
- Wetlands

### Mapping resources created by Swaner Design for WFRC planning study:

In addition, this plan uses new combinations of existing data combined with public input. The following layers use this modified or newly created data:

- Cultural Open Space
- Ecological Open Space
- Agricultural Open Space
- Recreational Open Space
- Regional Open Space
- County (Weber, Morgan, Davis, Salt Lake, and Tooele) Open Space
- 4,212 and 4,212 elevations (originally created by SWCA Environmental Consultants)

## Definitions

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*Prime farmlands* are generally defined as lands with adequate irrigation water supply, ideal soil temperatures and other characteristics that will produce more without sustaining a loss of production potential. Farmlands of Statewide Importance are not as valuable as prime farmlands, but are nevertheless important to the agricultural base of the area. These farmlands have more limitations than Prime Farmlands, such as steeper slopes, high water tables, and alkalinity problems. However, these lands can be made just as productive as the Prime Farmlands with proper management. If farmlands of either type are located within incorporated city limits, it is presumed they will be eventually developed into urban type land uses. Currently, a majority of the acreage of these farmlands is being used to grow winter (dry farm) wheat and alfalfa. *From Wasatch Front Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan: 2002-2030*

*Transfer of Development Rights* is a planning technique to keep the given densities of a parcel or community (as shown on the zoning map) in place to hold the property value, while transferring the ability to build those rights to the most appropriate locations. In this way, portions of a community or parcel can be protected as green space, while property owners still receive compensation and a community can still build out to its capacity, just in a different pattern or location.

*Conservation Subdivisions* (also called compact or clustered housing) make the most of a site by concentrating development on one portion of a site to reserve another portion for a different purpose such as playing fields, wetlands, or views. Homes are placed on smaller lots, but their proximity to a protected open space increases their value while decreasing the maintenance responsibility of a large lot.

*Infill Development* rebuilds underutilized land within a built-up area. Infill utilizes existing services like schools, police departments, and utility lines, saving money for the developer and the city. While infill uses lands that have a development advantage, it also allows untouched land at the urban fringe to remain natural or productive for agriculture.

*Conservation Easements* are a commonly used tool whereby a landowner sells or donates the right to build on all or part of a property. Since the fair market value is reduced, estate taxes are consequently lowered and donors of conservation easements may also receive a charitable deduction for their contribution as an income tax benefits.

## Funding and Support Resources

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The following list of resources is by no means comprehensive, but it does show the breadth of programs that can be employed to help protect and preserve the natural qualities and resources of open lands. Many programs are specific to certain types of habitat or land uses and most programs cover only a fraction of the cost of protection or restoration, but can often be combined with other sources with shared goals to maximize funds. The expertise and project guidance from many of these organizations is also invaluable. Leadership from a person with preservation partnership experience can be critical to securing the right team and stretching resources. For further research, an exhaustive search engine that searches by conservation goal and type of assistance can be found at: <http://cat.sonoran.org/>.

**LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund**

This fund, administered by the by the Utah Quality Commission provided close to \$900,000 in 2002 to preserve or restore critical lands and agricultural lands. Applicants must provide matching funds equal to or greater than the amount of money received from the Fund and purchases of fee title to land may not exceed 20 acres, but purchases of conservation easements or restoration projects are exempt from this restriction. Website: [http://governor.utah.gov/quality/Funding/Land\\_Conservation/land\\_conservation.htm](http://governor.utah.gov/quality/Funding/Land_Conservation/land_conservation.htm)

**Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC)**

The URMCC is responsible for coordinating the implementation of fish, wildlife, and recreation mitigation for the Central Utah Project and other federal reclamation projects in Utah. The Commission's work has concentrated on wetland and stream habitat restoration as well as angler access in and around Utah Lake, the Great Salt Lake, the Jordan River, the Provo River and in Diamond Fork Canyon and the Duchesne and Strawberry Watersheds. With programs such as the Jordan River Conservation Forum, they partner with willing agencies, municipalities, and non-profit conservation organizations to jointly protect and maintain important habitat for the long term. Website: [www.mitigationcommission.gov](http://www.mitigationcommission.gov)

**Non-point Source Implementation Grants, Section 319 (319 Program)**

The 319 Program provides formula grants to the states to implement non-point projects and programs in accordance with Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Formula grants are awarded to a lead agency in each state. States and local organizations are required to provide 40 percent of the total project or program cost. This EPA program is administered by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

**Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR)**

The DWR has several programs that work through partnerships with local governments and communities protect and enhance habitat and improve access and amenities for these areas. Such programs typically target a specific wildlife species or type of landscape. Some examples of programs that offer assistance or cost sharing are Urban Fishing, Rural Roadsides for Wildlife, and Nature Tourism. They can also help communities identify sources of federal grants and funding.

**Wetlands Protection Development Grants Section 104(b)(3)**

The EPA Wetlands Protection Development Grants program provides financial assistance to states, federally recognized Indian tribes and local governments to support wetlands development or augmentation and enhancement of existing programs. Project grants are used to fund individual projects. States or tribes must provide a 25 percent match of the total cost of the project. This EPA program is administered by the Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

**Riverway Enhancement Matching Grants**

This program provides protection for river and stream corridors in areas that impacted by high-density populations or that are prone to flooding with special recognition of such values as recreation, flood control, water conservation and wildlife resources. These 50/50 matching grants are administered by the Utah Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation. Website: [www.parks.state.ut.us/parks/riverway.htm](http://www.parks.state.ut.us/parks/riverway.htm)

**Utah Open Lands**

Utah Open Lands is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist landowners in protecting the scenic, wildlife, historic, agricultural, and recreational values of open land. As a non-governmental, non-political community based organization they use educational outreach, donations and acquisitions of land

and conservation easements, and conservation buyers and investors to accomplish its goals of tangible land protection. As the easement holder, Utah Open Lands assures that the terms of the agreement are followed in perpetuity. To date, Utah Open Lands has completed 31 projects statewide, totaling over protected 32,000 acres. Website: [www.utahopenlands.org](http://www.utahopenlands.org)

#### **National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (Rivers & Trails)**

Each year, Rivers & Trails helps local groups with over 200 locally-led conservation projects across the country such as developing trails and greenways or protecting rivers and open space. RTCA can provide staff for short consultations or longer assistance programs working just long enough to build momentum so that the local groups can finish the project on their own. They helped Riverton develop an eight-mile greenway along the Jordan River. Website: <http://www.nrc.nps.gov/index.html>

#### **Rails to Trails Conservancy**

The goal of the Trail Conservancy is to rescue exceptional tracts of railroad corridor before they are broken up and lost permanently to the public. Through its Trail Conservancy program, they have the ability to acquire and own corridors or acquire corridors on behalf of third parties and often serves as a short-term intermediary between railroad companies and trail groups or public agencies. Website: [www.railtrails.org](http://www.railtrails.org)

#### **Transportation Enhancements**

Transportation enhancements (TE) are transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of our nation's intermodal transportation system. Several federal programs, including ISTEA, TEA-21 and the upcoming SAFTEA, have provided funds over the years, and reauthorization is underway currently. The expanded definition of *transportation enhancements* includes safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; scenic or historic highway programs; environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff; and reducing vehicle-caused wild-life mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity. Website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/index.htm>

#### **USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Programs**

The NRCS division of the United States Department of Agriculture sponsors numerous programs that help protect natural resources and agricultural lands. A number of programs, including the *Forestry Incentives Program*, *Wetland Reserves Program*, *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program*, and *Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act* provide funding and technical assistance to landowners and communities wishing to protect or restore important farms, forests and critical lands. Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

#### **The Nature Conservancy**

The Nature Conservancy of Utah helps conserve private and public lands of significant to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive Working primarily with conservation easements on a willing buyer-willing seller basis, they seek parcels of outstanding ecological values for preservation or restoration. TNC's Utah Chapter has focused extensively on the Great Salt Lake Ecosystem, including the lake and all its tributaries (including the Jordan River) and their associated wetlands. Website: [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

#### **The Trust for Public Land**

TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities. TPL's legal and real estate specialists work extensively with conservation buyers and conservation easements and often use limited developments to make a project pencil. They are also often enlisted to research a community's interest in paying for open space before a bonding or taxation proposal. Website: [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)

**Sonoran Institute**

In their own words, the Sonoran Institute brings diverse people together to achieve their conservation goals in Western North America. Their “Conservation Assistance Tools” website provides free technical and fundraising advice including a search tool for finding grants or funding programs that match your project’s goals. Website: <http://cat.sonoran.org/>

**Habitat Conservation Organizations**

Numerous conservation groups can be enlisted to partner on projects that significantly improve the mission of their organization. Organizations such as Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Pheasants forever exist to protect habitat and specific vegetation for targeted wildlife species. They are most interested in the highest quality areas, but can often be counted on to help restoration efforts as well. Websites: [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org), [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org), [www.rmef.org](http://www.rmef.org), [www.pheasantsforever.org](http://www.pheasantsforever.org)

## Model Plans and Resource Contacts

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Numerous communities have already undertaken efforts to protect important resources and open lands. The following plans and people involved in their creation and implementation are included as resources for getting more information on creating new plans and programs.

*Davis County Hillside Plan**Davis County Shorelands Plan**Davis County Trails and Bike Plan*

Contact: Aric Jensen, Centerville City Planning  
(801) 292-8232

[ajensen@ccpublicworks.com](mailto:ajensen@ccpublicworks.com)

*Salt Lake County Shorelands Plan*

Contact: Tom Roach, Salt Lake County Planning  
(801) 468-2074

[troach@co.slc.ut.us](mailto:troach@co.slc.ut.us)

*West Valley City Transfer of Development Rights*

Contact: John Janson, West Valley City Planning  
(801) 963-3277

[jjanson@ci.west-valley.ut.us](mailto:jjanson@ci.west-valley.ut.us)

*Open Space Preservation and Pathway Study**Resolution declaring an Open Space Program City*

Contact: Bill Morris, Marriott-Slaterville  
(801) 627-1919

[mscity@webpipe.net](mailto:mscity@webpipe.net)

*West Jordan Open Lands Plan*

Contact: Mike Meldon or Craig Hinkley,  
West Jordan Planning

(801) 569-5060

[mikem@wjordan.com](mailto:mikem@wjordan.com) or [craigh@wjordan.com](mailto:craigh@wjordan.com)

*Draper Open Space Conservation Plan*

Contact: Grant Crowell, Draper City Planning  
[grant@draper.ut.us](mailto:grant@draper.ut.us)

(801) 576-6516

*Weber Pathways Plan*

Geoff Ellis, Weber Pathways

(801) 393-2304

[gellis@xmission.com](mailto:gellis@xmission.com)

*Parley’s Rails Trails and Tunnels (PRATT)*

Contact: Bill Farrand

(801) 539-4253

[Bill\\_Farrand@nps.gov](mailto:Bill_Farrand@nps.gov)

*Provo-Jordan River Parkway Foundation*

Contact: Juan Arce-Larreta, Board President

(801) 487-6736

*Park City Citizens Open Space Advisory Committee*

Contact: Myles Rademan

(801) 615-5200

[myles@parkcity.org](mailto:myles@parkcity.org)

*Swaner Nature Preserve*

Contact: Sumner Swaner, Board Member

(801) 483-2100

[sswaner@greenspacedesign.org](mailto:sswaner@greenspacedesign.org)

### Why Create a Regional Open Space Plan?

The Wasatch Front is experiencing the most rapid growth in its history—a projected jump from about 1.4 to 2.2 million residents by the year 2030—this growth is consuming land for development at a staggering rate.<sup>1</sup> More and more, citizens are asking their leaders to protect the character of their community and the places they care about. A recent survey showed quality of life, open space, and walkable communities taking top ranks in the priorities of Utahns, second only to education.<sup>2</sup> Protecting open space is a goal agreed to by 87% of residents, and a majority surveyed are willing to pay at least a quarter of a percent tax to help these efforts.

Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC or the Council) is responsible for coordinating and planning much of the region's transportation infrastructure. The Council has come to understand that they can be a more effective and positive force by considering land use integrally with transportation. In recent years, the council established the Regional Growth Committee, with the charge to address and evaluate growth related issues in the region, with the hope of improving the overall quality of life for its residents. A separate Open Space Sub-Committee was thus formed, charged with finding a way to define and identify regional open spaces and explore possibilities for protecting it and the quality of life for future generations.<sup>3</sup>

1. Wasatch Front Regional Council projections 2005-2030.  
2. Wirthlin Associates, *Envisioning the Future of the Greater Wasatch Area*, March 2000.  
3. Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Envision Utah Study*, January 2002.

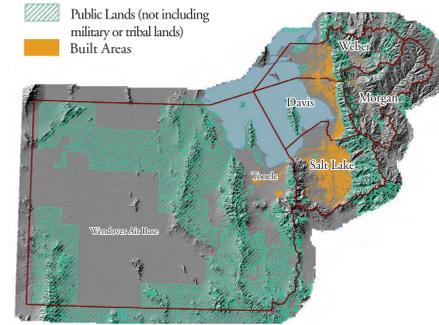
Table 1: Wasatch Region Population Projections

County	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Salt Lake	914,190	1,028,508	1,136,706	1,223,218	1,308,787	1,383,907
Davis	261,297	292,173	322,395	346,203	369,640	392,003
Weber	201,850	227,032	251,782	271,369	290,204	307,350
Tooele	42,450	50,333	58,487	65,852	73,413	80,938
Morgan	7,856	8,829	9,810	10,659	11,552	12,453
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,427,643</b>	<b>1,606,875</b>	<b>1,779,180</b>	<b>1,917,301</b>	<b>2,053,596</b>	<b>2,176,651</b>

source: Wasatch Front Small Area Socioeconomic Projections: 2005-2030

Population in the WFRC region is projected to grow by more than 50% between 2005 and 2030, from about 1.4 million to 2.2 million people. Growing communities will require a significant amount of land to accommodate new homes, businesses, schools and other infrastructure.

### Public Lands and Built Areas



A substantial amount of land within the WFRC region is public or protected land that will likely remain open space. But many of the most critical and significant resources are found on private land that is in the path of development. This map shows where public lands are located in relation to major population centers and the limited amount of land available to accommodate new growth.

### Creating a Regional Open Space Plan

This phase of planning builds on research conducted by Utah State University's College of Natural Resources, report entitled "Alternative Futures for Utah's Wasatch Front." This report outlines the need and support for an open space network across the region and highlights resources worthy of consideration in such a system. The second phase of work, represented here, brought public input into the planning process to allow citizens from the 5 counties and 59 municipalities in the region to add their own ideas and preferences for what an open space network should include and how it should function. Citizens were invited to public workshops where they were asked to identify and prioritize important resources and open spaces in four categories: cultural, agricultural, ecological, and recreational. (Maps 1-4) These maps were combined into one comprehensive open space map that covers all these values and connects them into one system. (Map 5). The network consists of major destinations connected by major corridors. Thus, mountainous areas are connected to Great Salt Lake along stream and river corridors.

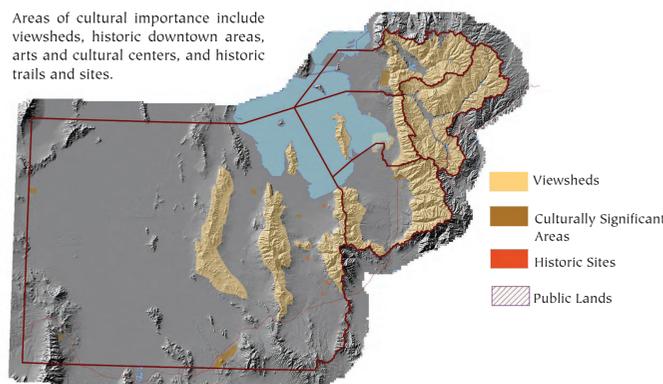
#### Definition of Regional Open Space

For the purpose of this study, Regionally Significant Open Space is defined as land that is important to residents for its actual or perceived cultural, ecological, agricultural, or recreational values and meets the following criteria:

- Contributes to the unique character of the region.
- Has ecological importance.
- Contributes to recreation and tourism.
- Crosses jurisdictional lines or is of multi-jurisdictional interest.

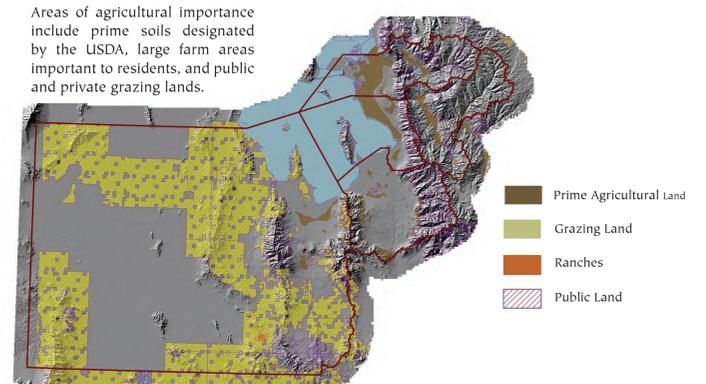
#### Map 1: Cultural Resources

Areas of cultural importance include viewsheds, historic downtown areas, arts and cultural centers, and historic trails and sites.



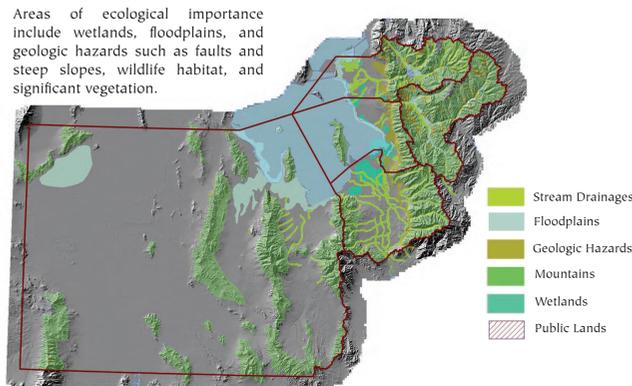
#### Map 2: Agricultural Resources

Areas of agricultural importance include prime soils designated by the USDA, large farm areas important to residents, and public and private grazing lands.



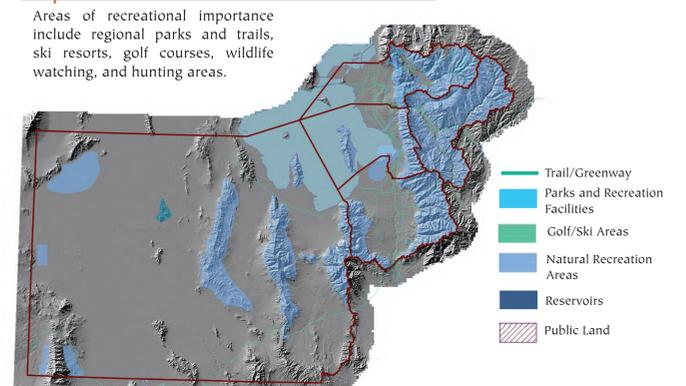
#### Map 3: Ecological Resources

Areas of ecological importance include wetlands, floodplains, and geologic hazards such as faults and steep slopes, wildlife habitat, and significant vegetation.



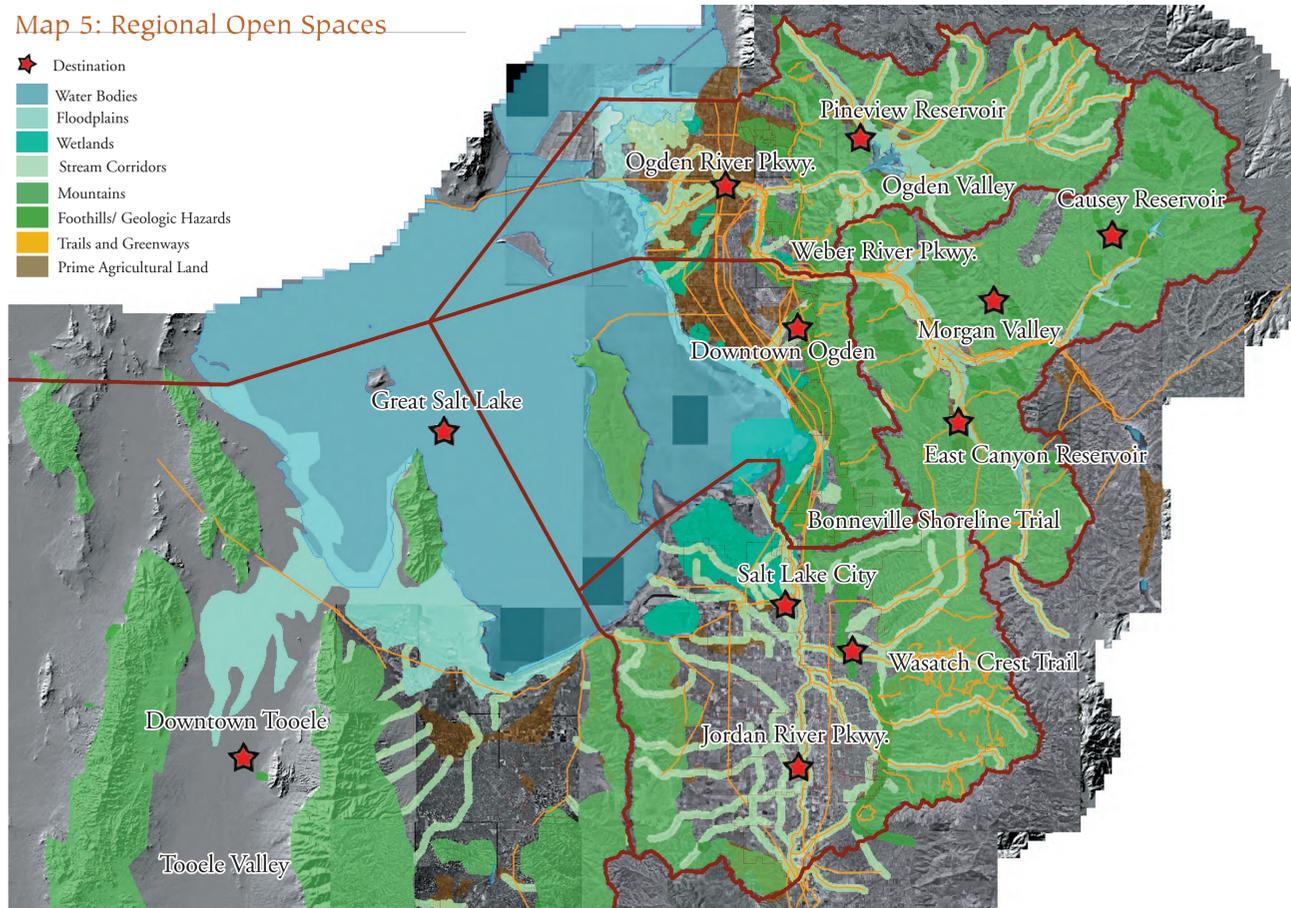
#### Map 4: Recreational Resources

Areas of recreational importance include regional parks and trails, ski resorts, golf courses, wildlife watching, and hunting areas.



### Map 5: Regional Open Spaces

- ★ Destination
- Water Bodies
- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- Stream Corridors
- Mountains
- Foothills/ Geologic Hazards
- Trails and Greenways
- Prime Agricultural Land



### Recommendations for Implementation Program

- Encourage communities in the region to promote this effort.**  
Distribute and present this plan to every community and its leaders to help them understand the following program and its benefits. Implement a public awareness, education program with media coverage to heighten awareness and promote the plan to the general public, and support opportunities to learn about, experience, build, and fund new open space networks.
- Involve related agencies and institutions.**  
Share the plan with other regional councils such as Mountainland Association of Government and Bear River Association of Governments. Present the plan to federal, state, and local agencies; non-governmental conservation organizations; and potential sources of funding and assistance.
- Create or become involved in partnerships to protect important places and resources.**  
Participate in existing partnerships such as the Jordan River Conservation Forum, and Weber Pathways. Create partnerships to protect specific resources such as watersheds, agricultural lands, foothills and mountain lands, trails, and historic sites.
- Promote quality growth as a primary solution to losing valuable open lands.**  
Target specific areas for development, redevelopment, and infill to take pressure off more sensitive lands. Support region-wide programs to transfer or purchase development rights (TDR and PDR) or density incentives to encourage development in more appropriate places. Coordinate open space, land use, and transportation plans at a regional level, ensuring they are complementary and likely to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Establish ordinances that provide basic protection from hazards such as dangerous slopes, floodplains, and wetlands, that ensure careful site analysis for new development, and that promote design guidelines that protect open space.
- Secure funding to spur implementation efforts.**  
Establish a basic planning and operations budget to ensure that opportunities to bring parcels into the open space network are not missed. Leverage all funds with matching dollars from government programs and special interest organizations and use volunteer labor.