



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SUMMIT LAND CONSERVANCY TO INCREASE NUMBER OF PROTECTED PROPERTIES BY 10%**

*Local land trust will protect another five properties in Park City and along the Wasatch  
Back before the end of the year*



**(Park City, Utah) October 26, 2023** – Thanks to their new fundraising campaign, the For the Future Fund, Summit Land Conservancy is saving land faster than ever before. Over the past month, Park City's local accredited land trust has placed more than 500 acres into conservation easements and plans to protect an additional 1,000 acres before the end of the year.



In September 2023, Summit Land Conservancy closed on YR Ranch, a 28-acre property located along the Weber River between Peoa and Oakley. The conservation easement sits adjacent to 300 acres currently owned by the landowner, Gerald Young, and the Marchant Meadows property purchased by Summit Land Conservancy in November of 2020. The Conservancy purchased Marchant Meadows to protect the land from residential development,

maintain agricultural uses, protect wildlife habitat, and allow for low impact public recreational access to the Weber River. Given the proximity to the Stevens Grove property, the Conservancy also aspired to develop a connection between the two properties: a soft surface trail extending from Wooden Shoe Lane to Millrace Road. In 2022, Gerald Young and Summit Land Conservancy entered into discussions and agreed to the exchange of 10 acres of land on the Marchant Meadows property for 28 acres adjacent to the Weber River to ultimately make that connection happen. YR Ranch, Marchant Meadows and Stevens Grove all exist within the Weber River Corridor which the City of Oakley, Summit County, South Summit Trails Foundation, and community stakeholders have engaged in protecting. The preservation of YR Ranch will advance efforts for the Oakley River Corridor Project, a vision to connect communities along the corridor with a soft surface trail from the base of the Uintas to Peoa. In addition to facilitating these connections, the entire YR Ranch property contains “soils of statewide importance” as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the land will continue to be used for cattle grazing through flood-irrigation: traditional uses important to the heritage of Summit County and sustainability of the watershed.

Earlier in October, the Conservancy completed the Iron Mountain project in partnership with Park City Municipal Corporation and Iron Mountain Associates. A conservation easement now permanently protects 481 acres of the iconic hillside that is clearly visible from vantage points in and around Park City and the Snyderville Basin. The Iron Mountain conservation easement adjoins 105 acres of protected open space known as Warren Claims, previously protected by the Conservancy in 2002. Preservation of Iron Mountain is consistent with the community open space values reflected in the Snyderville Basin General Plan and the Park City General Plan adopted by the Park City Municipal Corporation in 2014.

In 2021, residents of the Iron Canyon neighborhood contacted the Conservancy about the possibility of placing City-owned land on Iron Mountain into a conservation easement. The land trust then contacted the City and requested that it be brought before the Council for consideration and approval. In December 2021, the City Property, Real Estate, Trails & Open Space Manager, Heinrich Deters, recommended the transaction. In addition to



having discussions with the City, the Conservancy realized another 158 acres of land owned by Iron Mountain Associates connected to and surrounded the City-owned parcels. The Conservancy asked IMA if they would grant this land to the City contingent upon a conservation easement. Iron Mountain Associates agreed, and earlier in September, they placed a permanent easement on the 158 acres before transferring ownership to Park City Municipal Corporation. Park City amended the easement to include the 326 acres it owns on Iron Mountain making the project total 481 acres of protected wildlife habitat, scenic values, public recreation, and water quality. The extremely popular Mid-Mountain trail which extends from Deer Valley to Summit Park traverses through the Iron Mountain property.

“Every morning, Iron Mountain catches the first rays of light and draws them down to me. It’s what I see out my bedroom window; it’s the background in so many photos of my kids when they were small playing in our yard. I got to sign a conservation easement permanently protecting this landscape,” said Fox. “I am so grateful to our partners at Iron Mountain Associates, Park City Municipal, and the many donors who helped save this mountain so it will catch every morning forever.”



Next month, Summit Land Conservancy will sign and close on Sommet Blanc, a 3-acre forested property between Marsac Avenue and the Empire Canyon Lodge in Deer Valley. The land also contains a portion of the Mid-Mountain Trail, an integral part of Park City's greater trail network. The property is adjacent to the public parking lot that serves as a main access point to Mid-Mountain Trail and Bonanza Flat Conservation Area in the winter months when the Guardsman Pass

road is closed. Sommet Blanc sits at 8,400 feet and functions as a buffer area to a new residential development in Empire Canyon.

In addition to the 500+ acres of land that has been recently preserved, Summit Land Conservancy has been working diligently on two other projects near Coalville that will save almost 1,000 acres of farming and ranchland within the Weber River Watershed: Sargent Ranch and Richins Chalk Creek.

The 110-acre Sargent Ranch property is comprised of upland grassland, irrigated crop land, riparian wetland, and a quarter mile of the Weber River. Like YR Ranch, the pasturelands contain soils of statewide importance as designated by the NRCS. The property is visible from Interstate-80 and the City of Coalville, and the preservation of the 110 acres will contribute to the Weber River Watershed Plan which aims to address growing water use demands and declining water availability and quality in the Weber Watershed. The preservation of farmlands like Sargent Ranch directly contributes to these conservation goals by preventing development that would lead to increased water usage.





Located in the Chalk Creek drainage, a tributary to the Weber River, the 850-acre Richins Chalk Creek property is positioned within a state-designated Sage Grouse Priority Management Area and sits adjacent to known summer and winter habitat for the Greater Sage Grouse, according to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. In the waters below the banks, the

trout population in Chalk Creek is one of the few remaining pure intact-strain populations of the Bonneville cutthroat and bolsters the population in the Weber River downstream. This section of Chalk Creek saw significant habitat improvements in the late 1990's to 2000's through a voluntary restoration project initiated by the landowner and because of these efforts Jerrold Richins Ranch was the recipient of the 2016 Sand County Foundation Leopold Conservation Award. The Richins family has been farming and ranching in eastern Summit County for multiple generations. The Chalk Creek parcel has operated as both a ranching and hay operation since the 1930s, and a conservation easement will protect their agricultural legacy for generations to come.

The five conservation easements will increase Summit Land Conservancy's projects by ten percent. All of the Conservancy's preservation efforts are part of the Utah Headwaters Initiative, and the For the Future Fund campaign, which aims to increase the rate of conservation over the next five years across four counties of the Wasatch Back to protect the watershed of the Great Salt Lake.

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### **About Summit Land Conservancy**

Founded in Park City in 1998 as a project of Leadership Park City, the Summit Land Conservancy works with communities to protect and preserve land and water along the Wasatch Back for the benefit of people and nature.

In 2011, the Conservancy became the first land trust in the state of Utah to be nationally accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. It currently holds 51 permanent conservation easements and manages 2 preserves on over 13,000 acres of open space, much of it with public access in and around Park City. It protects swathes of Round Valley, Quarry

Mountain, Empire Canyon, and the McPolin Farmlands, as well as farms and ranches along the Weber and Provo Rivers. It is currently working to preserve an additional 5,000+ acres across the Wasatch Back.

The Conservancy's goal when it started in 1998 was to raise money locally to save land locally, and that hasn't changed. Since 2011, the Conservancy has brought in over \$31 million federal dollars for local land conservation.

As a regional land trust, the Conservancy understands that open space is the heart of our rural and recreational communities. Area residents' sense of place is clearly defined by the shared landscapes that anchor them here. The mountains, trails, farms, and rivers connect people to each other and to the natural world. The Summit Land Conservancy cares for these lands forever, nurturing a healthy community that is founded on its strong connection to the places it has protected together.

More information is available on the Conservancy's website ([wesaveland.org](http://wesaveland.org)) and on Facebook ([facebook.com/WeSaveLand](https://facebook.com/WeSaveLand)), Instagram ([instagram.com/wesaveland](https://instagram.com/wesaveland)) and Twitter @Summit\_Land ([twitter.com/summit\\_land](https://twitter.com/summit_land)).