



P.O. Box 412, Huntsville, UT 84317  
OgdenValleyLandTrust.org 801-745-9246

## NEWSLETTER

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### Message from the Chair

By Jody Smith

I normally don't ponder often. But lately driving around and through our beautiful valley has made me do just that. It didn't seem that long ago when one million Utah residents seemed about right. All of a sudden (or so it seems) 2.9 million folks have decided to call Utah home. According to statistics 46,000 people a year, about the size of a small city, are being born in or are moving to the Beehive State.

I'm sure the low rate of unemployment, easily reachable recreational facilities and most importantly open space are draws that can't be ignored. But, (always a but) what happens in ten years when five million inhabit this great state. We all know about the

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from the Chair	1
Permanent Enhanced Tax Incentive	1
Living Landscapes Bring Health Benefits	2
Liberty Park	4
About the Ogden Valley Land Trust	5
OVERDRIVE 2015	5
2015 Members and Donors	6
Contribution Form	7

traffic in and out of the valley so I'll leave that alone. Have you been to a park lately for a soccer, baseball or football game? How about a gymnasium for volleyball or basketball? Crowded?

Please see *Message* on page 3

### Congress Makes Permanent the Enhanced Tax Incentive for Conservation Easement Donations

By Shanna Francis

Did you know that 80% of Americans now live in cities and suburbs, which means that kids, especially, are missing out on the myriad of benefits of spending everyday play time in the great outdoors? Did you know that America loses over 5,000 acres to development every day? Often we don't see the change coming before it's too late. How much land have you seen lost to development during your lifetime? Did you know that forests and other wild spaces and their accompanying rich soils sequester carbon, helping to keep climate change in check? Preserving nature also builds resilience, shielding us from violent weather and giving wildlife a chance to adapt to environmental changes. Did you know that being around trees and non-urban environments reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and decreases heart rates?

Open space left, in its natural environment, is not only aesthetically pleasing, it also filters the air we breathe and the water we drink, and provides habitat for plant and animal species, including humans! It improves the overall health of humans—mentally, physically, and socially. These are only a few of the reasons for celebrating a bill passed by our U.S. Congress in December.

According to the Land Trust Alliance—a national organization that advocates for policies and incentives to conserve open space—a great victory for landowners interested in conservation was recently won after the U.S. Congress passed a bill that permanently enhances tax incentives for conservation easement donations. The Land Trust

Please see *Incentive* on page 3

## Living Landscapes Bring Surprising Health Benefits:

**Studies show that green space & landscaping contribute to health, happiness and intellect.**

As much of the country deals with winter weather from snow falls to grey skies, it's natural to long for spring when our yards, parks, and other natural spaces bloom. Did you know there's a good reason why you may pine for green? Living landscapes are an important part of the outdoor lifestyle that Americans enjoy, but the benefits go beyond a summer barbecue and backyard baseball. Green spaces are necessary for your health!

"The advantages of grass and landscaping surpass the usual physical benefits that result from outdoor activity," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO, Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "Numerous studies have found that people who spend more time outside or are exposed to living landscapes are happier, healthier, and smarter."

Researchers have studied the impact of nature on human wellbeing for years, but recent studies have found a more direct correlation between human health—particularly related to stress, and the importance of people's access to nature and managed landscapes.

**Getting dirty is actually good for you.** Soil is the new Prozac, according to Dr. Christopher Lowry, a neuroscientist at the University of Bristol in England. *Mycobacterium vaccae* in soil mirrors the effect on neurons that Prozac provides. The bacterium stimulates serotonin production, which explains why people who spend time gardening and having direct contact with the soil feel more relaxed and happier.

**Living near living landscapes can improve your mental health.** Researchers in England found that people moving to greener areas experienced an immediate improvement in mental health, which was sustained for at least three years after they moved. The study also showed that people relocating to a more developed area suffered a drop in mental health.

**Green spaces can make you healthier too.** People who live within a half mile of green space (such as parks, public gardens, green ways, and open space) were found to have a lower incidence of fifteen diseases, according to a Dutch researchers. These illnesses included depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and migraines. A 2015 study found that people living on streets with more trees had a boost in heart and metabolic health.

**Living landscapes make you smarter.** Children gain attention and working memory benefits when they are exposed to greenery, says a study led by Payam Dadvand of the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona. In addition, exposure to natural settings may be widely effective in reducing attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms in children.

This applies to adults as well. Research has also shown that being around plants helps you concentrate better at home and at work. Charlie Hall, Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University, believes that spending time in gardens can improve attention span and memory performance by as much as 20 percent. A National Institute of Health study found that adults demonstrate significant cognitive gains after going on a nature walk. In addition, a Stanford University study found that walking in nature, rather than in a concrete-oriented urban environment resulted in decreased anxiety, rumination, and negative affect, and produced cognitive benefits, such as increased working memory performance.

**Living landscapes help you heal faster.** Multiple studies have also discovered that plants in hospital recovery rooms or views of aesthetically-pleasing gardens help patients heal up to one day faster than those who are in more sterile or austere environments.

Please see *Benefits* on page 4

**Incentive** from page 1

Alliance reports, "In strong bipartisan action, the House voted 318-109 and the Senate voted 65-33 to pass the bills that included the incentive. The president signed it into law on December 18, 2015, and it applies retroactively to January 1, 2015. An earlier version of the incentive expired December 31, 2014. The incentive, considered by many to be the most important conservation legislation in 20 years, encourages landowners to place conservation easements on their land to protect important natural, scenic and historic resources."

A representative for The Land Trust Alliance stated, "The Land Trust Alliance led its more than 1,100 member land trusts and five million supporters through a collaborative, multi-year campaign to secure the incentive's permanency. First enacted in 2006, the incentive is directly responsible for conserving more than two million acres of America's natural outdoor heritage. Lands placed into conservation easements continue to be farmed, grazed, hunted or used for outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation, and these lands remain on county tax rolls, strengthening local economies."

The tax incentive does the following:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
- Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

To learn more about The Land Trust Alliance, visit <[landtrustalliance.org](http://landtrustalliance.org)> To learn more about conservation easements locally, visit The Ogden Valley Land Trust's web site at <http://ogdenvalleylandtrust.org/> or call Shanna Francis at 801-745-2688 to learn about tax incentives and the benefits of placing a conservation easement on your property.

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*The Ogden Valley Land Trust is a proud member of The Land Trust Alliance.*

**Message** from page 1

No parking? You wait for the folks who are currently using the facility to leave so you can get a spot. What will happen with housing, schools, medical facilities and highways (you name it)? How will millions more be accommodated?

Open space. What an attraction. Open space helps to provide and protect cleaner air and cleaner water. A place where friends and families can go and enjoy some time for charging their batteries with down time. Open space provides all realms of sporting to have somewhere recreationists can go to partake in the activity they enjoy. Something we certainly want for future generations.

Development pressures and growth are certainly taking their toll, but hopefully conservation minded individuals plus help from our local and state government will see the virtues of helping to care for this valuable resource.

**INTERESTED IN OBTAINING  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT APPLYING A  
CONSERVATION EASEMENT  
TO PROPERTY ?**

Please contact

**Shanna Francis at  
801-745-2688**

or

**Jody Smith at  
801-745-9246**

**Benefits** from page 2

All of these benefits reinforce the importance of maintaining our yards, parks, and other community green spaces. Trees, shrubs, grass, and flowering plants are integral to human health. Not only do they provide a place for kids and pets to play, they directly contribute to our mental and physical well-being.

For more tips on maintaining a living landscape, even in drought conditions, visit <[www.opei.org/stewardship/](http://www.opei.org/stewardship/)>

## Frequently Asked Questions

*[From [landtrustalliance.org/what-you-can-do/conserv-your-land/questions](http://landtrustalliance.org/what-you-can-do/conserv-your-land/questions)]*

**What is a conservation easement?** A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners retain many of their rights, including the right to own and use the land, sell it and pass it on to their heirs.

**What are the benefits of conservation easements?**

Conservation easements allow people to protect the land they love. They are the number one tool available for protecting privately owned land. All conservation easements must provide public benefits, such as water quality, farm and ranch land preservation, scenic views, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, education, and historic preservation.

**What is the role of the land trust?** It's the land trust's job to make sure that the restrictions described in the easement are actually carried out. To do this, the land trust monitors the property on a regular basis, typically once a year. The land trust will work with you and all future landowners to make sure that activities on the land are consistent with the easement. If necessary, the land trust is responsible for taking legal action to enforce the easement.

## Liberty Park

By Ross Mertlich, Liberty Park Chair

This past year has just been a wonderful year for Liberty Park. Our 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration was just a total success. We started with a Jr. Rodeo the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> that went off without any bones being broken and was just simply a lot of fun. The morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> began with a flag ceremony after which we served some 1100 people for breakfast. This year we had the largest parade we have ever had -- it lasted over twenty minutes -- we were thrilled!! The day ensued with everything from 32 booths featuring various vendors and their wares to park games, i.e., fish catch, mutton busting, greased pig catch, arm wrestling contest, pie eating and watermelon eating contests, saw dust find, volley ball competitions, hatchet throw, plus any number of other daytime activities. We served a Dutch oven dinner that evening with a youth dance and spectacular fireworks that followed at dark. It was just a grand old fashion 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration.

Of note, last year we dedicated the completion of the pioneer monument and garden area that has added greatly to the ambiance and usability of our park. This year we are in a major fund raising effort to raise over \$565,000.00 for the purchase of two pieces of property that border the park to the east. We are about 80% there but are looking earnestly for additional donors. If you are interested in donating, please contact me (Ross Mertlich) by phone at 801-745-3731 or e-mail [MMertl1773@aol.com](mailto:MMertl1773@aol.com) or Marlin Jensen at 801-718-0858.

Finally we sincerely appreciate very much Ogden Valley Land Trust not only for your wonderful support of our park but for the tremendous contribution you make to our valley and its overall well-being.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

*~Shakespeare*

## Ogden Valley Land Trust

The Ogden Valley Land Trust (OVLN) was established in April 1998 by a group of dedicated landowners and residents. The mission of the Ogden Valley Land Trust (OVLN) is to receive and protect charitable donations of conservation easements on properties within Ogden Valley and surrounding areas that have conservation value related to viable agricultural production; endangered, threatened, or ecologically significant species or natural systems such as critical wildlife habitat or migration corridors, or characterized by other unique ecosystems or natural features; have significant view corridor value; and/or have open space, recreational, historical, or cultural value.

The OVLN currently holds conservation easements on approximately 6,000 acres in Ogden Valley, including the stunning Fowers Farm in Huntsville with its white barn set against the scenic backdrop of Pineview Reservoir.

OVLN stewardship efforts include monitoring and defending, in perpetuity, the terms of each conservation easement as determined by the unique individual desires of each property owner who donates an easement. While private property owners donate easements to OVLN, they retain private ownership and the accompanying legal rights to utilize, sell, or convey their property to heirs through traditional means such as will or trusts.

Ogden Valley's agricultural legacy is important to all of us, as is the Valley's unique wildlife habitat; stream, migratory, and scenic view corridors; and unique cultural heritage. The OVLN Board of Trustees is composed of your neighbors who carefully perform their administrative and fiduciary duties to ensure the protection of these assets as directed by private property owners.

## CFOV OVerDRIVE 2015

By Ruby Raccasi

The Ogden Valley Land Trust extends a sincere thank-you to the Community Foundation of Ogden Valley (CFOV) and to those of you who contributed and participated in a successful fourth annual CFOV fund raising campaign.

The CFOV mission is to improve the lives of Ogden Valley residents and visitors through philanthropic leadership and community service. For its 2015 campaign, CFOV shifted into "OVerDRIVE" because all of us who live in Ogden Valley, play in Ogden Valley, and **LOVE** Ogden Valley are **OVer**s, and by working together to give here, we can make a difference. The CFOV campaign supported and promoted a select group of more than sixteen participating Ogden Valley non-profits whose programs benefit the lives of Ogden Valley residents and the thousands of visitors who enjoy Ogden Valley. **OVerDRIVE** 2015 included a Summer Scramble Golf Tournament & Community Event at Wolf Creek Resort and Club.

Funds raised during the 2015 giving period by the Ogden Valley non-profits, including the Ogden Valley Land Trust, were matched up to \$4500 each, to be used for projects that benefit the people of Ogden Valley. OVLN will use our funds to continue work on the quiet walking path encircling the Patio Springs conservation easement --a pristine 16.79 acre scenic wildlife corridor that attracts deer, moose, fox and many bird species. The pathway will allow the area to be enjoyed by the community and used for educational purposes. In addition, OVLN uses funds raised through CFOV's annual event for strategic conservation initiatives, community outreach, and the significant challenge of stewardship.

The Ogden Valley community is unique in its generosity, truly embracing the spirit of philanthropy. The Ogden Valley Land trust could not operate without such support for our all-volunteer organization. We hope you will join us and the Community Foundation of Ogden Valley again during the 2016 campaign.

## Ogden Valley Land Trust – 2015 Members & Donors

### Signature Level \$2500 - \$4999

Community Foundation of Ogden Valley - matching funds  
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PO BOX 412  
HUNTSVILLE UT 84317

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- \$50 Contributing Member
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- \$1000 - \$2,499 Steward
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***“The great use of life  
is to spend it  
for something  
that will outlast it.”***

***William James  
(American Philosopher and  
Psychologist, 1842–1910)***





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**OgdenValleyLandTrust.org**

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