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PARK CITY AND SUMMIT LAND CONSERVANCY PROTECT 53 ACRES ON RISNER RIDGE NEXT TO ROUND VALLEY

Agreement Preserves Open Space and Public Recreation Access

(PARK CITY, Utah) February 14, 2014 – Yesterday, Park City’s City Council unanimously voted to permanently protect 53 acres on Risner Ridge by granting a permanent preservation easement to Summit Land Conservancy. This agreement strengthens the protections that already existed on the property and will forever preserve open space and public recreation access on Risner Ridge. The City will maintain ownership of the property while the Conservancy will hold the easement and enforce its terms.



“The City is grateful for the tremendous effort the Summit Land Conservancy, its members and area residents dedicated to saving more undeveloped land in Park City,” said Heinrich Deters of Park City’s Sustainability Department. “Protecting more public recreational access and natural open space furthers the City’s core value of preserving the natural environment and will undoubtedly enhance our City’s position as a world class destination.”

This three-year project would not have been possible without the support of the City and the Citizens Open Space Advisory Committee (COSAC), and generous gifts from the Wildlife Protection Society, Risner Ridge area residents, and the Conservancy’s members. All costs associated with the easement have been funded through these gifts; no public money is being used for the project.

“We can’t thank our supporters enough for bringing this project to fruition,” said Cheryl Fox, Summit Land Conservancy’s Executive Director. “The City had the forethought years ago to recognize this area for its value and designate it as open space. It demonstrated yesterday its commitment to permanently protecting those values.”

“We also applaud the Wildlife Protection Society and several Risner Ridge neighbors who first approached us in 2011 and helped fund the stewardship endowment,” continued Fox. “This endowment allows the Conservancy to protect the easement forever by financing monitoring activities, title and property use reviews, record keeping, and legal defense if needed among other things.”

The Risner Ridge property encompasses undeveloped open space in the upper Park Meadows neighborhood, connects Round Valley to Quarry Mountain and features the Round Valley Cove Trailhead. Visible from State Roads 224 and 248, the property provides habitat for wildlife including moose, deer, elk and birds. Outdoor recreationists access Risner Ridge year round for hiking, biking and snowshoeing.

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About Summit Land Conservancy

A local land trust dedicated to saving open space, the Summit Land Conservancy works in partnership with landowners to permanently protect the remaining agricultural lands, view sheds, animal habitats, waterways and rangelands in Park City and Summit County, Utah. Over the past decade, this local, non-profit organization has facilitated more than 2,500 acres of conservation easements. Conservancy staff and area landowners' current efforts include working to preserve an additional 400 acres.

The Conservancy is the first land trust in Utah, and one of only 238 in the country, to be accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This seal of approval resulted from an extensive, external review process. Accreditation means that the Conservancy demonstrated it meets the rigorous professional guidelines of the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices for nonprofit management, conservation transactions and stewardship.

Residents from Park City, Summit County, Wasatch County and the Salt Lake Valley, as well as visitors from around the world, enjoy the open spaces saved by the Conservancy. These open spaces provide the exhilaration and solace of trails; the critical habitat for elk, moose, bald eagles and sandhill cranes; the ecological systems that give us clean air and fresh water; and the fertile soils for local agriculture. The Conservancy's work to save open space, a precious natural resource, permanently preserves the regional landscapes that define a sense of place and protects this heritage for future generations.

Properties protected by the Conservancy include McPolin Farmlands, Round Valley, Quarry Mountain, Empire Canyon and Prospect Ridge in Park City and the Judd, Fawcett and Pyper Tracey Ranches located along the Weber River in Eastern Summit County. Currently the Conservancy is working to protect Gambel Oak in Park City and the Siddoway Ranch in Peoa. Recent completed projects include the 53-acre Risner Ridge property in Park City and the 86-acre Stoner Dog Holler Farm near Hoytsville.

The Stoner Farm agreement represents the fourth project to be closed as part of the Conservancy's Weber River Watershed Initiative. Other properties include the 50-acre Pyper Tracey Ranch and the 44-acre Fawcett Ranch in Henefer, and the 35-acre Judd Ranch in Hoytsville. The next property the Conservancy is seeking to protect under the Weber River Watershed Initiative is the 73-acre Siddoway Ranch in Peoa. The Weber River Watershed Initiative works with willing landowners to preserve land along the Weber and its tributaries so that hydro systems remain intact. The Weber Basin provides 21 percent of Utah's population with irrigation and drinking water.

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