



For Immediate Release
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Preserve Midway raises final dollars for Midway Open Space Project

Midway, UT—Utah Open Lands was presented with a \$15,000 check from Preserve Midway on Saturday bringing in the last dollars needed for the protection of 37 acres along Midway’s entry corridor. Four years ago, Utah Open Lands began working with Jeff Kissel from the Christian Michel Family on the protection of their generational farm along Midway’s River Road. The family came together for a bargain sale conservation easement which included the family making a contribution of a portion of the value of the conservation easement. Other sources of funding include: Midway City, Wasatch County, Utah Open Lands Northfields Protection Initiative, the State’s LeRay McAllister Working Lands Fund and the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s Agricultural Easement Program.

“We received two pieces of good news in the last couple of days” said Wendy Fisher, Utah Open Lands Executive Director. “First we heard Thursday that our \$2.5 million dollar grant from the federal agricultural easement program under NRCS was unfrozen and then today we were handed a \$15,000 check from the incredible community efforts of Preserve Midway” Fisher said at a Midway City Open Space Open House on Saturday.

“We are grateful that Utah Open Lands has done so much to leverage our local open space bond dollars, so when we heard they needed help, we rolled up our sleeves” said Lori Stone President and founding board member of Preserve Midway. “As a lifelong resident of Midway I know how important protecting these family farms is to our way of life, our quality of life” said Stone.

Preserve Midway raised the money at their annual celebration; Volksmarch. “The community came out to support us, to support this Utah Open Lands Project and to support our local landowning families who have made a decision to safeguard our community values in preserving their land” Said Brad Winegar, Preserve Midway Board Member. “Beyond the farmland, the pastoral view you see coming into Midway would be gone were it not for landowners like the Michels and Kohlers” said Winegar. Utah Open Lands will now work through the federal process to finalize the conservation easement with the family.

The first Midway Open Space bond was responsible for \$250,000 grant to the project. “Midway City was proud to kickstart funding for this project, utilizing some of the last dollars of our first open space bond” said Midway Mayor Celeste Johnson. “What is exciting is that this is another farm along the entry corridor that is now forever protected.” said the Mayor.

Utah Open Lands was also successful in a request of \$750,000 from Wasatch County’s open space bond. “We are really proud of our work to leverage these community dollars with sources outside of the community.” Said Maryssa Fenwick who leads Utah Open Lands’ Land Protection Division and was responsible for securing a \$16.5 million dollar Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant for the protection of an expanded area of the Northfields which includes many properties in Midway. “We currently have 12 projects that are part of our new grant several of which are in Midway.” said Fenwick.

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The organization acknowledged the critical importance of having groups like Preserve Midway and the community at large engage in making the conservation possible. “Even with the successful funding we have sought we will still need additional funds to ensure the protection of these lands we all love in Midway” Said Fisher

Utah Open Lands is currently working on a \$7.5 million dollar funding campaign to match federal and local funding for land preserves in the Heber Valley.

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Board members of Preserve Midway hand final dollars to Utah Open Lands for the Christian Michel/Kissel land protection project