

**MEDIA CONTACT**

David Zook
435-890-9239

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 25, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Cache County Secures Massive Open Space Deal Preserving Nearly 800 Acres in Sherwood Hills Area

Wellsville, UT – Cache County today signed closing documents finalizing a significant land conservation agreement with Bridle Path Partners. After years of negotiations, the County will acquire 471 acres of scenic and environmentally sensitive land in Wellsville, Utah for \$7.5 million, for the purpose of preserving it as public open space, and another 300-acre parcel will be conserved as privately-owned open space.

“This is a huge win for our community,” said Cache County Executive David Zook. “Not only are we preserving this pristine land for future generations to enjoy, but we are also preventing one of Cache County’s most beautiful open spaces from being consumed by a massive development. By securing this land, we are protecting the beautiful gateway to Cache Valley, while providing future recreational benefits to our community.”

The deal represents the most ambitious land preservation effort undertaken by Cache County to date and reflects a collaborative effort with many partners to balance land preservation with responsible development and private property rights. Under the terms of the agreement:

- Cache County will acquire 471 acres to remain undeveloped and open to public recreation in perpetuity.
- A 300-acre parcel will be conserved as privately-owned open space
- The County receives the right of first refusal to acquire an adjacent 18-acre Utah Department of Transportation-owned parcel.
- The Bridle Group will retain and develop 105 acres of the original parcel into about two dozen residential lots and an indoor riding arena.
- A restrictive covenant will be recorded limiting the retained land to a maximum of 29 lots.

Bridle Path Partners had purchased more than 900 acres around the former Sherwood Hills Resort and could have developed hundreds of homes on the land.

The land being preserved will also provide significant environmental benefits, including safeguarding critical water sources for Wellsville City and the migration pathways for wildlife from the rugged Wellsville’s to the now-preserved critical winter range on the east side of the highway, a priority of the private land owner.

The funds used to purchase the land include approximately \$4 million from the voter-approved Cache County Open Space Bond, a \$2 million grant from the State of Utah’s Division of Outdoor Recreation, \$1 million from Wellsville City and \$500,000 from a private donor.

“This historic agreement underscores the County’s commitment to preserving what makes Cache Valley great - the beautiful open space we all love,” added Executive Zook. “The deal will ensure this beautiful gateway will

remain a protected natural space forever. And it could not have happened without the many partners who collaborated to reach this landmark deal. On behalf of the citizens of Cache County, I would like to express sincere appreciation to the following for the roles they played in this monumental collaborative effort.”

- The Cache County Council, especially Nolan Gunnell
- Wellsville City, especially Mayor Thomas Bailey and City Manager Scott Wells
- County Attorney Taylor Sorensen
- Utah Representative Casey Snider
- Citizen advocates Jack Draxler and Mark and Gina Thompson
- Hickman Title
- The Cache Open Space Advisory Committee (COSAC)
- The Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation
- Bridle Path Partners, LLC
- Cache County citizens who helped to get the open space bond on the ballot
- Cache County citizens who voted for the open space bond

###