

Plan & Recommendations

Planning Process
Regional Open Space Priorities
County-by-County Open Space
& Recommendations



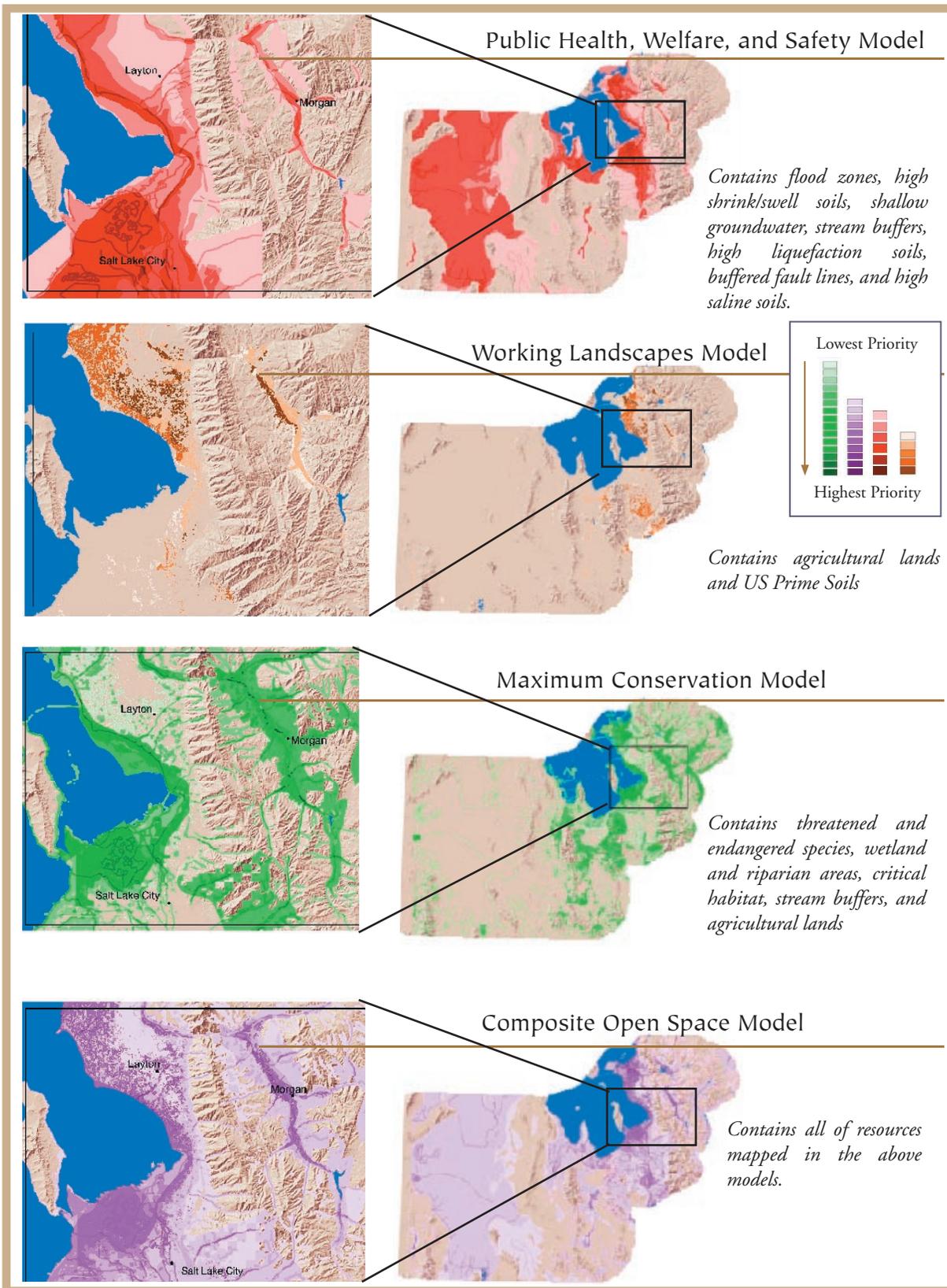
Planning Process

This planning effort studied the region at two different scales simultaneously—the five-county WFRC region as a whole, and each county individually. This promoted an understanding of regional issues and open spaces while fleshing out a more detailed understanding of open spaces in each county. Because there were few precedents to model at either scale, so this is a rough framework, for future efforts should build upon this work to create a more specific plan.

The plans that follow used GIS data generated by Utah State University as a base and then enhanced this information with local knowledge, ideas and priorities uncovered through public workshops. At the workshops, citizens were first asked to consider and prioritize types of open spaces to protect, across the region as a whole as well as in their own county. They reviewed the range of open space models created by USU that emphasize preserving different resources and varying levels of protection, from the bare essentials to the maximum possible. They also looked at the individual components, such as streams, wetlands and agricultural lands and were asked to prioritize which types of land and resources should be protected. Finally, participants worked on maps of the region to identify individual open lands to protect and then create a conceptual network that linked them together. Throughout this group process, workshop participants also answered individual surveys as well. These were collected and used to understand their ideas and preferences and incorporate them onto the maps and descriptions that follow. Detailed survey results are available on the CD-ROM distributed with this report.

Figure 6 on the following page shows the models created by USU, used during the workshops to determine priorities. They were created using a number of different resource layers, with each model emphasizing a certain issue, such as hazards in the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Model or agriculture in the Working Landscapes Model. An additional model, not shown, highlighted the trails of the region and could be added into any of these scenarios. When an element was linear, such as a stream or trail, a buffer added with widths that varied relative to the impact and importance of that element in the model.

Figure 6: Open Space Protection Models



Regional Open Space Priorities

The project team faced the challenge of unifying ideas and priorities across a region with tremendous diversity. For example, Tooele and Morgan Counties were far more concerned with protecting agriculture and had much more opportunity to do so than Salt Lake, Weber and Davis Counties, which have much stronger interest in trails and recreation. Issues of regional concern are described in this section and on maps 1 and 2, shown here, while issues or places that have a more local impact are shown and described in the next section. The Regional Conceptual Open Space Plan (Map 1, page 24) is a general view of the most significant landscapes connected into a regional network, while the Regional Open Space Plan (Map 4, p. 27) displays and labels more detailed components and significant connections. Shared concerns and challenges are highlighted here, while recommendations for taking action are outlined in Chapter 4 – Strategies for Implementation.

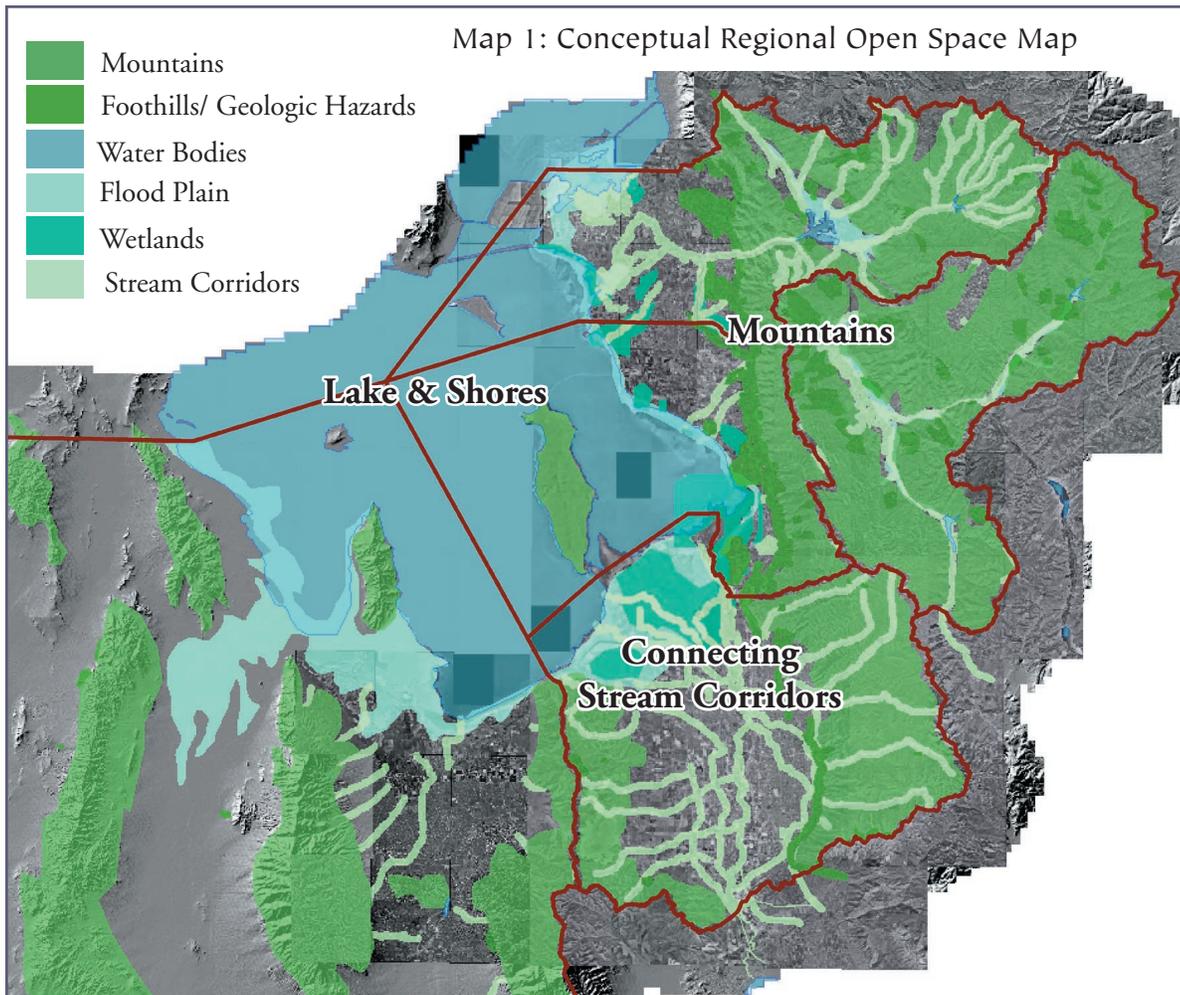
Workshop participants in each county were asked to select a model (see Figure 6, page 22) that suited the entire WFRC region as a whole (more details on these numbers may be found in the Phase One Report). Concerns for the region differed between counties because each has unique landscapes and different opportunities, yet people unanimously indicated a strong preference toward offering a high quality lifestyle through diverse open lands. The two most commonly chosen models were the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Model followed by the Composite Open Space Model. Considering the diversity of the area and its rapid urbanization, people are concerned foremost with protecting communities from hazards, likely because this is not yet standard practice. The second choice, the Composite Open Space Model, is the most inclusive model, indicating a desire to protect as many different resources as possible.

When challenged to identify the landscapes of utmost importance in the region, a simple and predictable pattern emerged:

- Mountains and foothills
- Rivers and Streams
- Great Salt Lake and its wetland shores

This is shown on the Conceptual Regional Open Space Plan (Map 5) on the following page.

Rivers and waterways emerged as the most important open space resource concerns across the Wasatch Region, seen as a natural network to tie landscapes together. Any water source or drainage holds special importance in an arid environment, even canals or places where streams have been piped. Citizens were concerned with protecting and restoring not just the streams themselves, but a wide swath to each side including the floodplain, wetlands and riparian habitat, with ample room to include trails and parks. The major rivers– the Jordan, Weber and Ogden Rivers tie the entire region together, across municipal and county boundaries, but are still very vulnerable to development. The Jordan River, in fact, was declared one of the top ten most endangered rivers by Scenic America in 2003. Citizens also identified the lack of access to many rivers and streams as a problem. Trails along the rivers are often incomplete, and there are limited places to actually boat down a river unobstructed and with easy put-ins and takeouts. Both the natural condition of streams and access to them should be improved.



Protecting mountains and foothills, the backbone of the open space system, was the second priority for residents. In addition to preserving the views, citizens wanted access through foothill areas to the mountains, and along them on the Bonneville Shoreline Trail corridor. Participants also identified numerous hazards (such as faults and landslides) to avoid in this area. A 2002 survey conducted for Davis County as they crafted their hillside ordinances indicated almost unanimous support for protecting this landscape zone in their county.¹ Yet, the foothill zone is one of the most vulnerable to development because of desirable real estate and the fact that public land boundaries are at higher elevations in more mountainous areas. The pressing concerns in the foothill and mountains are protecting public access to public lands, and not overloading these areas with recreation or hazardous building and excess development.

The Great Salt Lake is the linchpin in the open space system of the Wasatch Region. While the lake itself is often ignored, it is a key element of the natural systems and a place with tremendous recreation potential. Antelope Island, one of the few places designed for public access, is very popular. In addition, the lowlands surrounding the lake are filled with important wetlands,

¹ Dan Jones and Associates, Inc., *Study conducted for the Davis County Comprehensive Hillside Plan*, August 2002.

agricultural land is – important to the health of the lake and enhancing the views and experience of the lake. Pressing concerns for the lake are protecting important lands around it that are an integral part of its ecosystem and improving recreational opportunities around and on the lake.

These three components—streams, mountains, and lake— are one system despite human action that have isolated them. The health of the lake and its waters relies directly on healthy streams and the mountains within its watershed. The system functions with large natural areas in the mountains and the lakes, with waterway corridors along urbanized areas connecting them. The corridors are critical for connecting natural areas and giving people easy access to natural landscapes. It is impossible to prioritize one element over another because they all have an irreplaceable role, but there are areas that are more pristine and larger in size that rise to the top in urgency to protect.

In general terms of types of land to protect, concerns were more diverse and localized. Again, rivers, streams, and important watershed features gained top ranked, and had support by a majority. Other landscapes had far less consensus. Critical habitat and ecological systems were also favored across the board, though in some areas more than other. Agricultural land garnered strong feelings from residents – many felt it was important, but few felt optimistic about protecting it. Tooele County, Morgan County, and south Weber County still have significant tracts of farmed and grazed lands that residents felt strongly about protecting. In more urbanized counties, agriculture is a low priority within their county, but still felt to be important at a regional scale. Parks and recreation areas are more important in urbanized areas, but trails are very popular in all counties, and citizens felt strongly about building trails along every waterway as well as along the foothills and many also wanted to see east-west connections between the mountains and the valleys. Finally, several cultural features were repeatedly mentioned, such as pioneer trails and historic downtown areas.

These priority landscape types and significant places to protect were mapped according to cultural, agricultural, ecological and recreational importance. These maps were then synthesized into the overall Regional Open Space Plan (Map 5), shown on page 27. Detailed recommendations for action are found in Chapter 4 – Strategies for Implementation.

A regional open space system should be thought of as a network of destinations and connections. Destinations are nodes of activity—places to stop, spend time and enjoy the experience outside. This could include education centers, picnic areas, scenic overlooks, and recreation spots. Connections are linear greenways that offer an interesting experience as one travels through it – sights, sounds, people watching or simply a chance to exercise.

These patterns have a parallel in ecological systems. Patches, similar to destinations, are large areas of a particular landscape. They are the heart of a functioning ecosystem and are healthiest when they are large, contiguous, and limit impacts to their fringes, retaining their core in a natural condition. Corridors are the blood vessels of the system, offering a safe, continuous route for animals, plants, and resources such as water to move through. They function best when they are wide enough to contain a diverse, healthy core as well as an ample buffer to reduce impacts from their surroundings. An example of a healthy corridor is a river that has a mix of trees, shrubs, and

low vegetation along its banks, and a wide strip of natural uplands beyond that to absorb runoff, floodwater, and human impacts. Great Salt Lake is an example of a patch, its edges inhabited by humans, but given over to wildlife and natural systems closer to its shore and waters.

There are different goals when building an open space system for people verses. wildlife and other natural systems and not every place is suited to accommodating both. The focus of this study is on place where people interface with nature, so the regional open space map focuses on destinations and connections. These are outlined below and highlighted on the Regional Open Space Map (Map 2)

Destinations:

Great Salt Lake – The lake has tremendous offerings and potential for getting into the outdoors, yet few people have easy access to it. Davis County has the best access with Antelope Island, but Salt Lake, Weber and Tooele Counties have only limited offerings for wildlife watching, environmental education, water sports, and shoreline recreation. Passive recreation and a lakeshore trails where people could experience the different types of landscapes along the lake- wetland, saline playa, beaches— would be an amenity. Any activity should be sensitive to the resident wildlife as they are a main attraction.

Pineview, East Canyon, and Causey Reservoirs - Because they offer water and waterside recreation, reservoirs are logical nodes for activities. Offerings are limited to camping, fishing, and boating in many places but new visitor or education centers could become highlights, and these are logical destinations for trail corridors, too. As public land and access is limited along some shorelines, efforts should be made to keep as much open to the public.

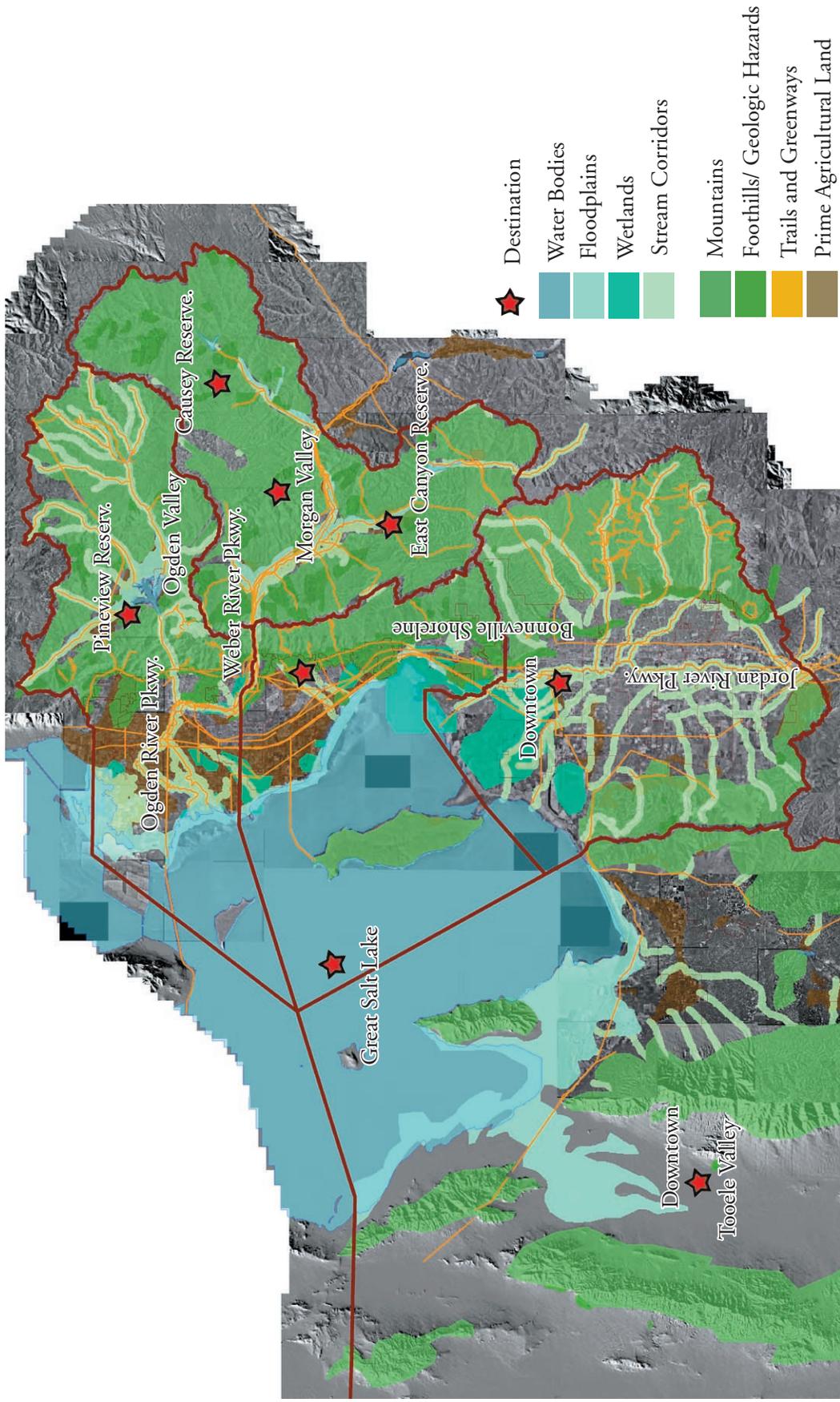
Agricultural Valleys – Tooele Valley, Ogden Valley, and Morgan Valley are all special for their views, rural character and extensive natural elements. A primary concern in these valleys, whether or not these areas can maintain agriculture is protecting water sources (whether surface or groundwater) and natural vegetation. Their scenic, rural character makes these places destinations, even if the public is limited in what they can access.

Historic Downtowns – Many cultural and recreation attractions are already found here, but they need to have friendly outdoor and pedestrian spaces such as beautiful streetscapes, urban parks and greenways, to encourage everyday outdoor experiences.

Connections:

Jordan River Parkway, Weber River Parkway, and Ogden River Parkway – All three of these rivers are undergoing some restoration and revitalization, but development pressures are quickly shutting off options. These rivers need protection from development and pollutants across their length. While some trails have been completed and have noticeably improved the areas they span, there are still many stretches to work. Increased fishing and boating access would also be welcomed.

Map 2: WFRM Regional Open Spaces



Foothill Corridors – The foothill bench created by ancient Lake Bonneville has always been a landmark. Its value as a recreation corridor has been tapped into with the Bonneville Shoreline trail, which residents would like to see continued throughout the region. It is also significant for its characteristic foothill vegetation that is extremely valuable to wildlife. It is often noted as a logical upper limit to development, although this has already been surpassed in many areas. In places yet untouched, particularly along Salt Lake’s west bench and in Tooele County, it could serve as a significant buffer between development and the mountains. Similar elevation lines could be drawn in places where the shoreline does not appear, such as in Morgan County, to protect a foothill corridor.

Historic Trails – Historic trails such as the Mormon Trail and Pony Express offer opportunities for connecting more rural areas together and tie them to urban places. A wide corridor of the historic landscape should be protected to get a feel for what travel was really like. In addition, these can serve as ecological and recreational corridors. A formal trail may not be necessary, but the chance to traverse long sections of it is ideal.

Canyons and stream – Nearly every canyon and stream flowing out of it was mentioned for protection. These streams are found up and down the valleys, creating multipurpose links into the mountains for people and wildlife. But many of these streams are diverted or buried once they hit the valley. Resurfacing these streams to create a grid of green corridors is a popular goal. Canyons are also popular driving destinations and should have their scenic properties protected. Trails up into canyons are also desired.

County by County Open Space Recommendations

Each county’s open space plan is derived up from the green space design maps and surveys completed at their public workshop. The results follow on pages 29-62. For each county, there is a written summary of major issues and their preferred open space model, as well a ranking of their priorities for places and types of resources to protect. An example map from their county’s workshop is also included to illustrate the work done by citizens. This is followed by four analysis maps showing cultural, agricultural, ecological and recreational resources identified through citizen input. These maps are then synthesized into the overall County Open Space map. The maps are followed by a listing of the significant open space resources identified and recommendations for action in that county. In some cases, these are quite specific, and are included to help understand the bigger picture. Recommendations for achieving these plans across the region are further outlined in Chapter 4 – Strategies for Implementation.

WEBER COUNTY

Weber County stretches from remote mountain tops to the Great Salt Lake traversing Ogden a major core, creating many diverse interests to manage and prioritize. The county has worked hard to create open space corridors and trails but has struggled with larger challenges – the Ogden Valley and farms near the shores of the Great Salt Lake.

Cultivated agricultural lands were the first priority of residents, followed by critical habitat, then stream buffers, and regional trails. When asked to rank open space models, the Maximum Conservation choice was the most popular, followed by Public Health, Welfare, and Safety. While people talked a lot about protecting agricultural land, they did not choose to focus primarily on them. Residents would like to protect as much farming as possible, but have realized they are a diverse community with strong growth pressures at this time and need to protect a full spectrum of resources.

Major concerns identified include:

- Protecting river and stream corridors and their flood plains
- Protecting view of Wasatch Mountains from east and west
- Protecting the Ogden Valley floor and west Weber, with a strong interest in maintaining agriculture
- Keeping the historic character of Downtown Ogden
- Connect trails into other counties

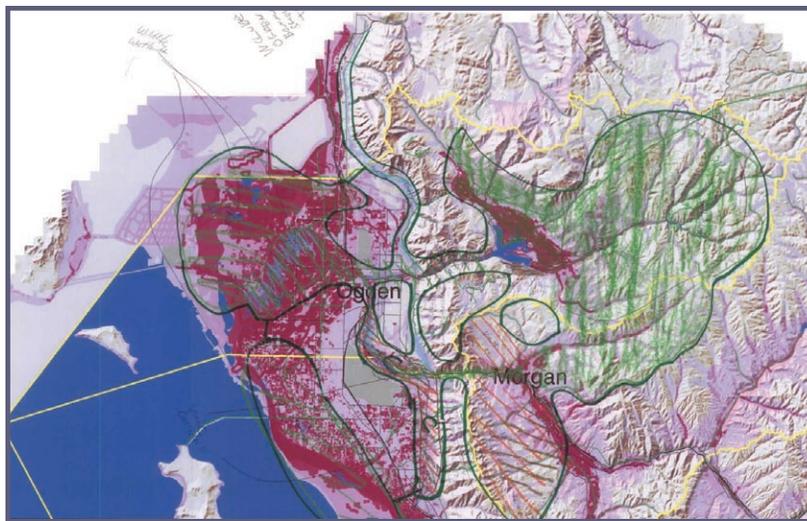


Figure 7 One of four public input maps completed at the Weber County workshops using the Composite Open Space Model created by USU as a base. The model shows least important to most important open spaces in progressively darker shades of purple. The public highlighted important open space resources in blue (recreation), orange (cultural), brown (agricultural), and green (ecological) and outlined the overall system in green marker.

General types of land to protect:

1. Rivers
2. Agricultural lands
3. Trails and access to them
4. Wetland and Riparian areas
5. Wildlife habitat

Specific places to protect:

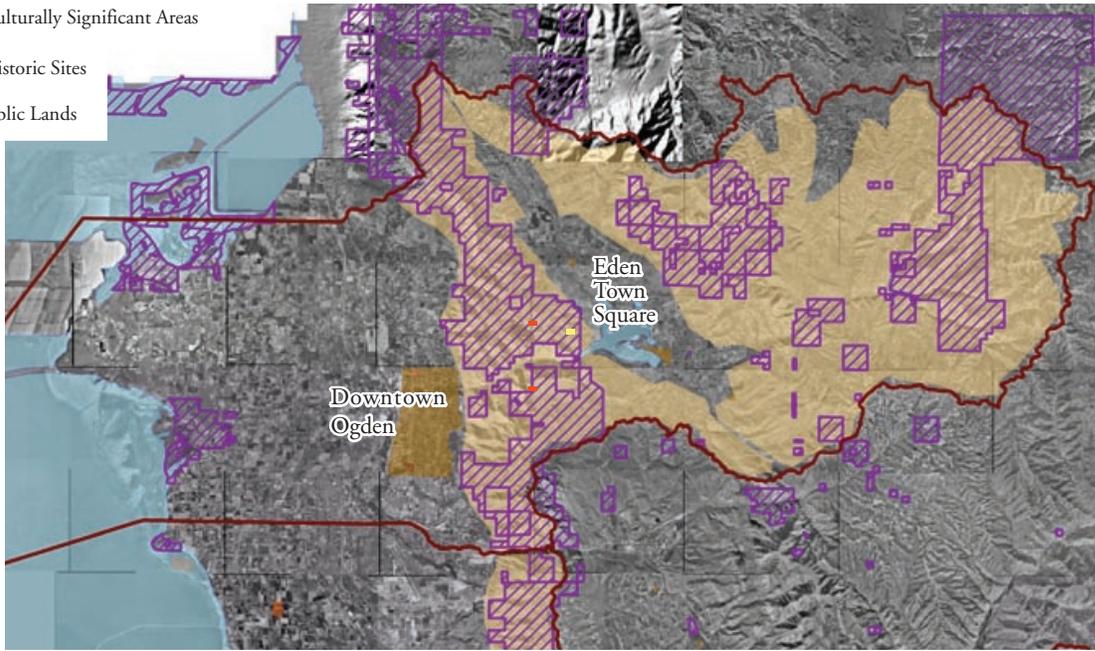
1. tie: Weber and Ogden Rivers
2. Agricultural lands
3. Wasatch Mountains and foothills
4. tie: Pineview Reservoir and Trails
5. tie: Ogden Canyon and Ogden Valley

Weber County Open Space Resources

Map 3: CULTURAL

Weber County's cultural map shows viewsheds, especially to the mountains, as well as historic sites such as Fort Bueneventura, and Bingham Fort. Also shown are historic downtown Ogden, including 25th Street, and Eden Town Square.

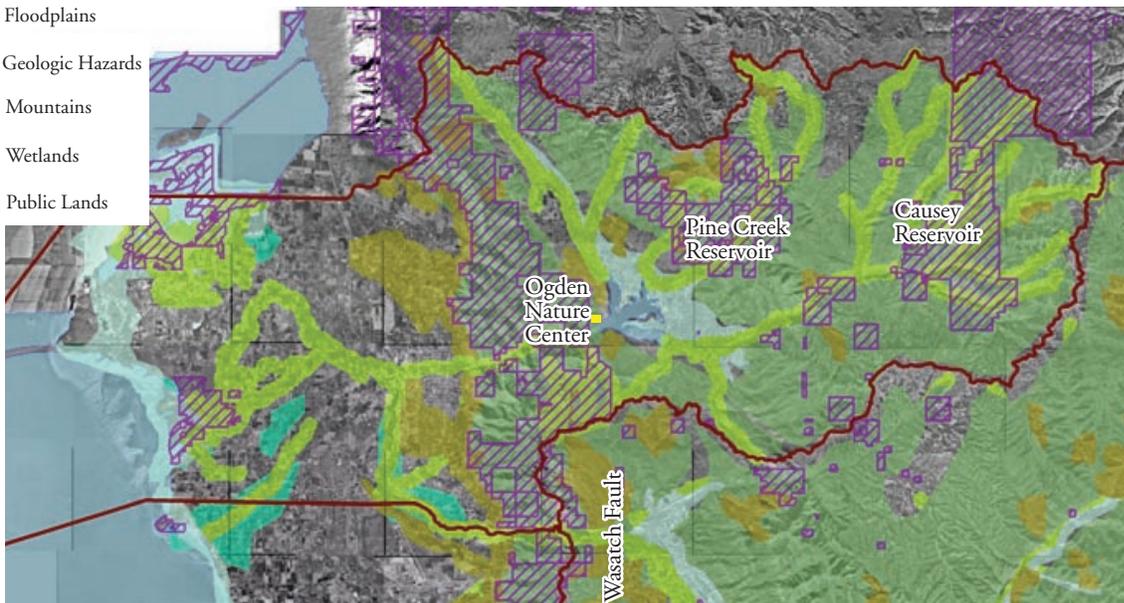
- Viewsheds
- Culturally Significant Areas
- Historic Sites
- Public Lands



Map 4: ECOLOGICAL

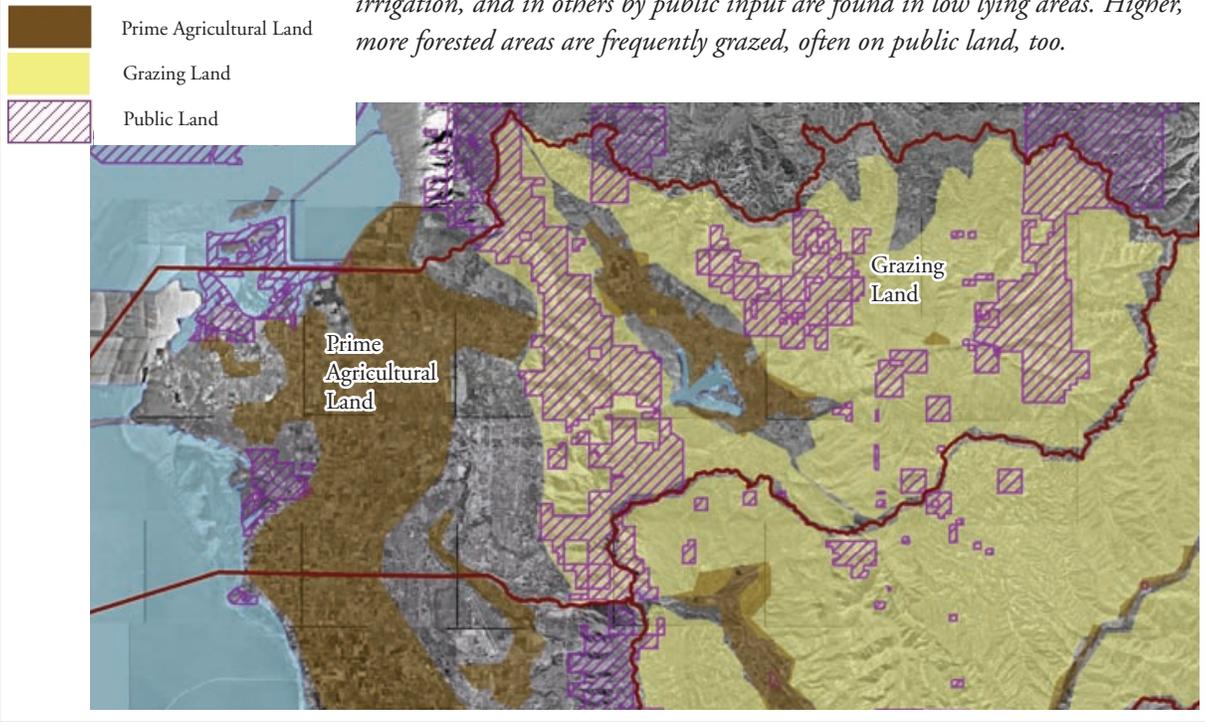
Weber County's ecological map shows the Ogden and Weber Rivers, the Middle Fork and North Fork Rivers and other major drainages, as well as the wetlands along the Great Salt Lake. Mountainous areas show slopes over 25% and are important as the watershed for these streams as well as for wildlife. Landslide and earthquake fault zones are shown, too.

- Nature Center
- Stream Drainages
- Floodplains
- Geologic Hazards
- Mountains
- Wetlands
- Public Lands



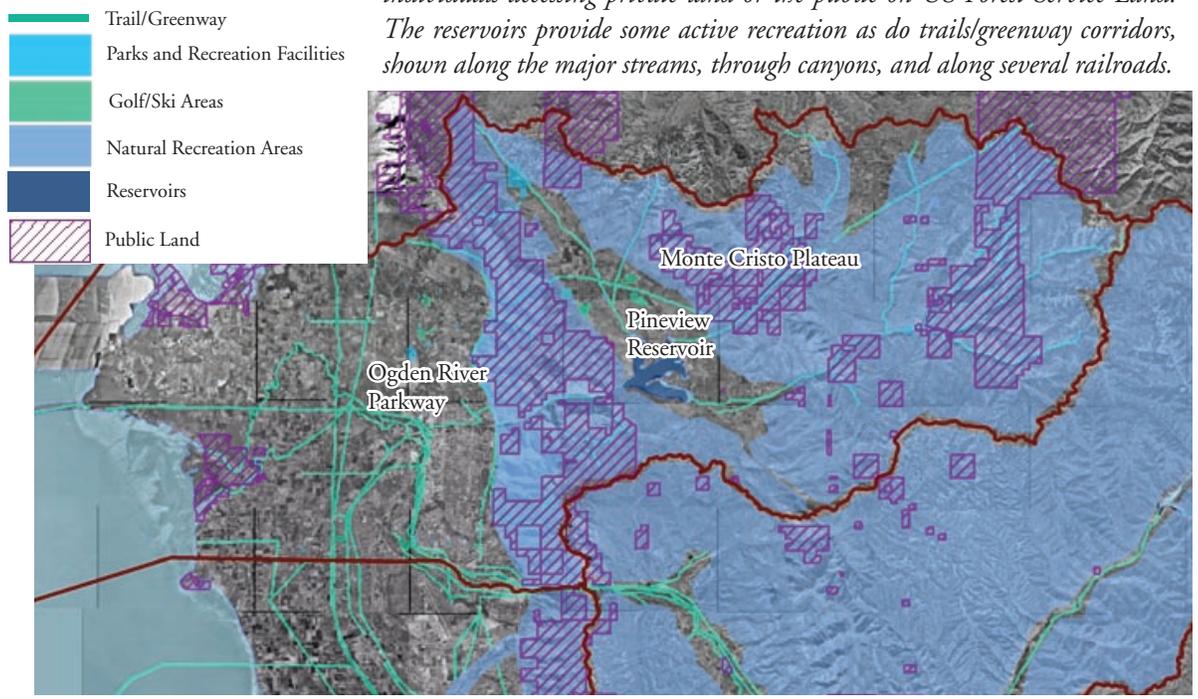
Map 5: AGRICULTURAL

Prime agricultural land, determined in some cases by productive soils and irrigation, and in others by public input are found in low lying areas. Higher, more forested areas are frequently grazed, often on public land, too.



Map 6: RECREATIONAL

Nearly all of the mountains serve as passive recreational areas, whether for individuals accessing private land or the public on US Forest Service Land. The reservoirs provide some active recreation as do trails/greenway corridors, shown along the major streams, through canyons, and along several railroads.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Weber County is perhaps the most diverse in the WFRC region because it spans a wide spectrum of landscapes, from the Great Salt Lake, across the valley, over the Wasatch Front into the Ogden Valley, surrounded by the Wasatch Mountains. This diversity demands a range of approaches and residents have some experience and success with a number of areas, such as the Ogden River Parkway. The challenge here is to help individual communities protect their unique landscapes while still working to add to a regional open space network.

Not surprisingly, Weber County and the communities within it identified flood plains and mountainsides as the two hazardous areas they are most concerned with protecting. Resource and open space plans should be prepared for the major water sources, including the Ogden and Weber Rivers and the Great Salt Lake and Pineview Reservoir. Weber County is advised to undertake a shorelands plan, much like Davis and Box Elder Counties have completed. They have actively worked on corridor plans for the Ogden and Weber Rivers, but should ensure that these plans encompass the range of ideas raised here – safety, recreation, wildlife, and water quality and quantity concerns.

Beyond these areas, residents were very concerned with protecting agricultural land across the county. The most productive agricultural lands remain along the Great Salt Lake where a milder climate prevails. This area is linked to orchards and other agricultural lands in Box Elder county that remain more viable. The Ogden Valley is also highly desired to remain in agriculture, maintaining the scenic and rural qualities it is treasured for. While agriculture is barely a viable business today, the community feels strongly about protecting it, for open space and as a buffer from hazards. They are encouraged

Open Spaces Identified as Desirable for Protection:

- Weber and Ogden Rivers
- Ogden River Parkway
- Weber River Parkway
- Downtown Ogden
- Fort Buenaventura
- Old Buildings
- Railroads
- Historic farms
- Ogden Canyon
- Pioneer Trails
- Antelope Island
- Indian Camps and fur trade areas
- South Weber
- Promontory Point
- Bear River Bird Refuge
- Farmington Bay
- Downtown Huntsville
- Pineview Reservoir
- Bonneville Shoreline and Trail
- Waterfall Canyon
- Ogden Nature Center
- Monastery of the Holy Abbey
- Monte Cristo Plateau
- Trapper's Loop
- Sugar Factory
- Snow Basin
- Powder Mountain
- Morgan Valley
- Fruit Heights
- Willard Bay
- Wasatch Terrace
- Bountiful Wetlands
- North Fork Park
- Wolf Creek/Middle Fork
- South Fork Trail
- Centennial Trail
- Causey Reservoir
- Cutler Basin
- Browning Ranch near River Fork
- Jensen Farm
- Bingham Fort Farm

Map 7: Weber County Open Space Map



to help to protect it through purchases or transfers of development rights program or conservation easements.

With a strong basis for its trails plan in the Ogden River Parkway, the region is encouraged to keep creating and linking these corridors. Plans are in place for the Bonneville Shoreline Trail and Weber River Parkway, and there is a desire to protect a rail corridor as a north-south link. Corridors should be as wide as possible to accommodate the diversity of users – from people to wildlife and lush vegetation. There is strong concern over recreation in highly sensitive areas. Opening areas to the public can destroy wildlife and habitat values. Every plan needs to consider and set desired levels of access and standards for restoration to ensure areas maintain the character which they are desired.

The final recommendation is perhaps the most important. With such a diverse landscapes and population, from urban to rural, valley to mountain, everyone must help contribute to building the green space network. Participation is needed from all sides and all should be expected to contribute something to achieving the goals. Strong concern about property rights, and local needs points toward creating more specific local plans.

