



# Net Gain of Private Land

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To offset the preservation of lands, the state has a policy to assure that a sufficient base of private land remains available for development and property taxes.

The Commission has studied this issue and developed a policy for the state to increase the amount and value of private land. The policy emphasizes four actions:

- **Achieve Net Gain.** The Commission recognizes that private lands serving a compelling public purpose should be preserved and, conversely, public land not serving a compelling public purpose should be converted to productive private use. The Commission believes it is in the state's best interest to facilitate the reallocation of public and private lands to best meet the needs of current and future residents. Due to the preponderance of publicly owned land in the state, the state must strive over time to achieve a net gain of private land.
- **Set High Standards.** State critical land preservation funds should only be used for the truly critical and highest priority projects, which serve a compelling public and statewide interest. Decisions about the use of these funds must include a balancing of conservation and economic interests of the state since both are relevant to quality growth.
- **Build Capacity to Monitor.** The State must implement the necessary procedures to monitor the goal of a net gain of private land and to set high standards for state involvement in land conservation.
- **Provide More Resources for Planning.** Prudent decisions require careful research, accurate information and long-term strategic thinking. In order to make the best decisions, the state must provide additional resources for critical land planning and other state and local planning activities. The primary source for conversion of public land to private ownership or economic use is the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). SITLA engages bi-annually in a sales process that auctions parcels of Trust land to private buyers. More than one third of Utah's current private land was at one time under SITLA's management. Land acquired by SITLA through federal exchanges can also be turned around and sold to the private sector, not only adding to the Trust's permanent funds, but also increasing private ownership around the state. In recent years, SITLA has exchanged 106,000 of scattered state-owned lands for 120,000 acres of federal lands that are suitable for residential, commercial, oil, gas, and mineral development.

Facilitating the discussion of preservation of private lands, GOPB has developed a Utah land ownership map and data.