

NEWS RELEASE

December 26, 2007

For Immediate Release

Contact

Larisa Barry, lbarry@tnc.org, 801-574-0599

The Nature Conservancy Honors Envision Utah for Contributions to Conservation

The Conservancy recognizes Envision Utah's success in meeting the needs of people while protecting Utah's natural heritage in its quality growth efforts.

SALT LAKE CITY, UT —The Nature Conservancy recently named Envision Utah as its Conservation Partner of 2007. The Conservancy's annual award is designed to recognize private and public organizations that have made significant contributions to the protection of Utah's lands and waters. This year, the Conservancy recognized Envision Utah for its track record of successful community planning efforts throughout the state, which promote the wise and balanced use of both human and natural resources.

"Much of Utah's record growth is occurring near some of our state's most important natural areas," said Dave Livermore, the Conservancy's Utah State Director. "Envision Utah has perfected a collaborative, open process that enables communities to grow in ways that protect the lands, waters and wildlife that enhance their daily lives."

Most recently, Envision Utah has brought innovative community planning to Washington County, one of the nation's fastest growing counties, through the *Vision Dixie* program. Initiated by Envision Utah, the Washington County Commission, the Utah State Office of Planning and Budget, the Conservancy and the Park City Center for Public Policy, *Vision Dixie* is a comprehensive land-use planning process that allows the community to come together to plan where and how they want their cities to grow.

"Envision Utah is honored to receive this award, recognizing that many partners, including the Nature Conservancy, have contributed to *Vision Dixie*'s success," said Alan Matheson, Envision Utah's Executive Director. "We hope our actions will lead to more choices and a greater quality of life for our children and grandchildren. That's what motivates us."

Over the past year, Envision Utah conducted community research, convened working groups and public meetings, and used maps and analytical tools to help citizens plot out the future of Washington County. Envision Utah is now working with key stakeholders and community leaders to share the results of the *Vision Dixie* process with the public, and ensure the implementation of the new community-driven Quality Growth Vision.

"Washington County supports an unparalleled diversity of unique plant and animal life as well as some of the most critical lands in our state," said Dave Livermore, the Conservancy's Director of Government Relations. "The Conservancy is proud to work with Envision Utah in our state's special places, where growth planning enables citizens to determine their quality of life and protect the natural assets in their backyard."

Envision Utah and The Nature Conservancy have partnered on other projects in the past, including Envision Utah's work on the Davis County Shorelands Plan in 2002, which provided an important forum for expanding communities to plan for growth while preserving the wetlands and uplands that provide critical habitat for birds at the Great Salt Lake.

"The Nature Conservancy is committed to preserving nature for people, not from people," said Livermore. "So we view Envision Utah's leadership on quality growth planning as a vital asset in the preservation of Utah's special natural places."

The Envision Utah Public/Private Partnership was formed in 1997 to guide the development of a broadly and publicly supported Quality Growth Strategy - a vision to protect Utah's environment, economic strength, and quality of life for generations to come. Ten years of scenarios analysis, research and public involvement have helped Envision Utah bring the topic of planning and preparing for growth to the forefront of the public mind. With the help of thousands of Utah residents, Envision Utah has developed a Quality Growth Strategy that will help preserve critical lands, promote water conservation and clean air, improve our region-wide transportation systems, and provide housing options for all residents.

The Nature Conservancy, active in Utah for more than 23 years, has helped to protect nearly 900,000 acres of important lands statewide. The Partner of the Year Award is presented at the annual board meeting of the Conservancy's Utah Chapter Trustees.

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