



Annual Report 2020

Virgin River Land Preservation Association

Mission Statement

The Virgin River Land Preservation Association works with land owners and communities to protect southwest Utah's heritage of scenic vistas, open lands, and quality of life.

Message from the Trust President

Utah has seen a population growth rate of 1.8 percent between 2020 and 2021, the highest since 2017. This percentage accounts for the entire state while specific counties are experiencing percentages of less growth and some with more growth. Well, certainly Washington County is on the high side with a growth rate last year of 3.16 percent. With this rapid population expansion many of the places that bring great benefits to communities as open space are also seen as great places for development. There have also been unprecedented increases in visitors to Washington county. The drastic increase in visitors to American National Parks in the past years is well documented, an increase of 60 million nationwide with Zion National Park hosting a record 5 million visitors in 2021 out pacing parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite.

The many special undeveloped places in Southern Utah, more often than not, are among the most significant draws for people to visit this area. The goal of the Land Trust is to preserve as many of these special places as we can. Despite what often

may appear as impossible odds, the work of the Land Trust continues with successful conservation projects added every year, and this past year, 2021, is no exception.

The Land Trust continues to see significant increases in landowners investigating the possibility of selling their property for conservation purposes or placing conservation easements on their property. It often can be hard to keep up with all the project possibilities. We are always mindful of our capacity as we take on new projects, and mindful of our organizational resources, project funding resources, and time constraints. Of course fund often is our highest hurdle for a projects success. The Trust's board is putting together strategies to increase funding for projects and for organization operations. We are hopeful.



The Land Trust has an uncommon record for completing projects. All projects require partners, governmental partners, conservation partners, and most of all landowner partners. One such partner family donated a significant conservation easement to the Trust this past year that greatly adds to the Pine Valley Meadows easements already in place. There is more preservation needed in the meadows and the conservation work at Pine Valley continues. The Trust is also currently working with partners on lands around Zion National Park that will add several easements in 2022.

The Trust feels that these combined efforts can focus resources to increase the pace, quality, and permanence of conservation work. We hope we can create changes in the way land development takes place in our area.

Conservation matters. For many of us, saving the places that enrich our lives is reason enough to support land conservation. The Board of the Virgin River Land Preservation Association is a hard-working group of people with real stature in their dedication to a land ethic. It is a humbling honor to represent them. With your help we plan to continue the work of land conservation in our backyard.

Thank you for your support.

William S. McMurrin
President
Virgin River Land Preservation Association



The Year in Review

The Virgin River Land Trust has been working for more than two decades to protect the meadows at Pine Valley in perpetuity. Currently, 70 acres of meadow land on both sides of the road into town are protected with conservation easements. This outstanding pasture land with all of its historic significance remain in private ownership. When easements are in place the historic uses of farming and grazing to continue and the possibility of losing this open land to development cannot happen .

Working with two land owner's conservation easements on one of the last parcels along the road crossing the meadows into town are underway. Applications for funding have been sent and completion of these easements is anticipated in a few months. Pine Valley continues to be one of the priorities for our conservation work. The Land Trust has greatly been enhanced and directly aided by the overwhelming support of the local residences, support that is inspiring to the Land Trust Board of Trustees. Being able to enter into partnerships with landowners to protect land that is loved by so many is conservation at its best.

Strategic Plan for 2020

The Trust has achieved incredible results with a pioneer can-do attitude on a shoestring budget. With no publicity or fanfare, using effective partnerships, avoiding common environmental labels, by working positively with respect for people of diverse convictions, this small, very local group is expanding the protection of privately-owned open lands in a fast-growing area.

1. Land. Conserve more of the most important, most threatened land
 - Focus on protecting boundary and entry corridors of Zion National Park
 - Increase the number of successfully completed projects

2. People. Increase local involvement in and awareness of voluntary land conservation
 - Increase the number of people currently participating in VRLPA (members, board, committees, staff, volunteers)
 - Be a presence in every community in our service area as a resource and partner for open space protection
3. Organization. Create a structure of permanence with stable financial support
 - Secure a permanent physical home
 - Build economic stability through developing and implementing an effective fundraising program
 - Create organizational permanence to fulfill our conservation obligations—an organization that outlives the people involved
 - Develop capacity to remain flexible, fast on our feet, opportunistic
 - Develop a strong board supported by new talent and effective committees

Annual Financial Summary

VIRGIN RIVER LAND PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION Statement of Activities For the Year Ended December 31, 2020

	Unrestricted	Donor Restricted	Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES			
Cash Contributions	\$ 5,375	\$ 4,120	\$ 9,495
In-Kind Contributions	4,500	0	4,500
Interest and Dividend Income	5,049	824	5,873
Net Realized/Unrealized Gains	32,503	3,829	36,332
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES	47,427	8,773	56,200
EXPENSES			
Donations	9,337	90,663	100,000
Professional Fees	4,500	0	4,500
Insurance	2,733	0	2,733
Outside Services	1,367	1,135	2,502
Appraisals	1,500	0	1,500
Assessment Fees	820	0	820
Dues and Subscriptions	481	0	481
Other Expenses	40	0	40
TOTAL EXPENSES	20,778	91,798	112,576
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	26,649	(83,025)	(56,376)
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	5,801,340	220,930	6,022,270
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION	493	(493)	0
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 5,828,482	\$ 137,412	\$ 5,965,894

VIRGIN RIVER LAND PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION Statement of Functional Expenses For the Year Ended December 31, 2020

	Program	Administration	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES				
Donations	\$ 100,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 100,000
Professional Fees	3,600	900	0	4,500
Insurance	2,186	547	0	2,733
Outside Services	2,502	0	0	2,502
Appraisals	1,500	0	0	1,500
Assessment Fees	820	0	0	820
Dues and Subscriptions	279	101	101	481
Other Expenses	0	13	27	40
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 110,887	\$ 1,661	\$ 128	\$ 112,576

Thank You

Partners

Savage, Esplin & Radmall
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Utah Quality Growth
Commission
The Nature Conservancy
Washington County Commission
Our Landowners
Our Members

Board

William McMurrin, President
Kolene Granger, Vice President
Christopher Blake
Denny Drake
Mary Jo Hafen
Dennis Kay
Dannielle Larkin
Steven Snow

Kent Peterson, Investment
Advisor
Lori Rose, Project Director
Steve Radmall, Accountant

Volunteers

Heather Johnson Louise Excell
Michelle Bonner Darlene Pope
Nathan Wotkyns, photographs

