

Walkara Way Open Space Regional Park: An Opportunity of a Lifetime



WALKARA
WAY

We are observing a flurry of development and growth in Utah County, at levels never seen before. As we convert aging farmland into beautiful neighborhoods and master planned communities, we occasionally stumble onto an opportunity of a lifetime to create something even more majestic; something memorable and wild in the midst of this growth.

Here in the heart of Utah County, adjacent to the shoreline of Utah Lake, we have a chance to establish a 1,000-acre open space legacy park. While this particular land mass holds very little development potential, it is packed with a diversity of wetland, riparian and lowland habitat and crisscrossed with natural streams and ponds. Historically it was farmed but was also home to thousands of birds, fish and other wildlife. Prior to settlement, this was a rich ecosystem and gathering place for Native Americans who convened here to hunt and fish for food.

In the more recent history, land management agencies and private landowners on this site were at odds about management practices about land ownership. Sadly, the land was neglected. Invasive plant species such as phragmites have taken over much of the ground, and a concerted effort at restoration will be needed.

Today, a restoration and management plan for the park have gained consensus among these groups, and we have literally a once-in-lifetime opportunity to create a public space like no other.

The park borders Provo City, Orem City and Vineyard City, and is managed by a wide variety of government entities and private landowners. All are excited about the opportunity to create public access to this scenic area and support the project which will include several public amenities, as listed below. We are asking for the support of the Utah Legislature with a one-time appropriation of \$5.8M.

Park Features

Utah Lake Shoreline Trail/Active Transportation (Orem-Vineyard): \$3M

The communities along the shore of Utah Lake have been planning and working for decades to build a bicycle and pedestrian trail along the northeastern shore of the lake. This project will provide a critical 2.8-mile section of that trail, along one of the prettiest wetlands and historic farming areas on Utah Lake. The segment will tie the Vineyard portion of the Lakeshore Trail with the Orem City Community Trail, and then to the Orem UTA Frontrunner Station. It will connect with the new pedestrian overpass at Utah Valley University and will provide relief in local commuter vehicular traffic to UVU. The completed trail will provide both an active transportation corridor as well as an escape into nature for tens of thousands of residents and visitors.

Trailheads: \$700K

Trailheads with adequate parking and restroom facilities will be constructed at both ends of the new trail. Signage for easy route finding as well as informational signage describing the rich history associated with this area will be installed throughout the project area.

Phragmite Control Cattle Fencing System: \$400K

After visiting the Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area, an area now successfully grazed by cattle but once inundated with Phragmites, the Utah Lake Commission realized it had a unique opportunity here in the Powell Slough to implement a similar operation to manage

the invasive vegetation and restore native grasses and reeds. A non-profit will arrange for and manage the rest-rotation of cattle on the project and the public and wildlife benefits from the restored habitat.

A fence has been designed to create a strong barrier between Communities and the park. The design provides multiple pedestrian and non-motorized access points while safely allowing the implementation of cattle grazing as the sustainable vegetation management tool.

- 3.6 miles of 8' wildlife type divider fence between neighborhoods and the Walkara Way Park.
- 4.9 miles of 4' box and barb wire fencing to divide grazing sections and create a western park fence which protects the lakeshore.

Movement Management System: \$50K

- Gates for entrance points, maintenance and pedestrian beach access points, Cattle guards, cattle loading area.

Park Management Facility: \$250K

- Getting students into the outdoors and onto the shoreline of Utah Lake has been an incredibly popular Utah Lake Commission sponsored activity for nearly a decade. Having a storage barn with basic facilities that doubles as a protected area for onsite machinery as well as a staging area for K-12 field trips, will open the door for many more schools to have an outlet for invaluable hands-on outdoor learning experiences.

Community Fishing Pond: \$1.4M

- A 3-5-acre park will be developed within the park that will be managed as a partnership between the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the City of Orem. The pond will interface with both the Walkara Way Open Space Regional Park and a future Orem City Multisport Park Complex. Visitation to an enhanced community fishing pond at the center of Utah County's thriving population is expected to be extraordinary

Park Management: Costs covered locally

Walkara Way, a non-profit organization headed by the Holdaway family; a fifth generation land owner on the project, will manage the grazing plan on the park project. The grazing operation is self-sufficient from a financial standpoint. Utah County will manage the care and maintenance of the trail and its facilities using an interlocal agreement between itself and the neighboring municipalities. Orem City has agreed to manage the community fishing pond in partnership with UDWR. Occasional vegetation treatments will be funded through grants currently used to treat the shoreline of Utah Lake available through UDAF and UDNR's WRI program

Total Legislative Request: \$5.8 Million



Trails, grazing, Frontrunner access, bald eagle



- \$5.8 million legislative request
 - 1,000 acre open space park
 - 24 government entities support the project
 - 2 new public access points at Utah Lake
 - 2 connections to the UTA Frontrunner (Orem & future Vineyard stations)
 - 8.5 miles of fencing for sustainable grazing vegetation management
 - 3.5 acre community fishing pond
 - 2.8 miles of critical trail

Habitat restoration, bird viewing tower

Native American heritage education, community fishing ponds, a beautiful public sandy beach

