

MEDIA RELEASE

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Europe's Volksmarch Tradition Finds a Home in Midway, Utah

*Participate * Preserve * Protect*

July 20, 2021 ---- Preserve Midway, a charitable non-profit organization devoted to protecting Midway's rural lands and heritage and the Midway Historic Preservation Committee, welcomes EVERYONE of all ages to celebrate autumn in Midway on September 18, 2021. How? By walking a rural 5K non-competitive walk in Midway's alpine valley or strolling through the town's charming, historic neighborhoods and open lands on the "Pathways to Preservation."

Volksmarch, the organization's annual fundraiser personifies the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 'Smart Growth' principals advocated by Preserve Midway:

- Preserving Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Creating Walkable Neighborhoods
- Fostering Distinctive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

Kris Ward, a founding board member of Preserve Midway, puts it best when she asks, "Will Midway's open lands and rural character be paved or saved?" The pastoral Swiss themed village of Midway, voted Best Small City in Utah in 2017 by KSL.com polls, faces enormous development pressure. Ward continues, "Our group's mission is to preserve rural Midway by promoting and funding conservation options, like the 2019 Open Space Bond." County taxpayers voted overwhelmingly to support open space measures. "Our group has changed the conversation about open space preservation. We encourage better City planning to increase open space and pedestrian trails in Midway." Ward adds, "Once the land is gone, it is gone forever. In this way, the Volksmarch and Smart Growth ideals work hand in hand to support our goals."

Volksmarching is a European tradition that promotes non-competitive walking for fitness and is a fun way of venturing outdoors with friends and family. The American Volksmarch Association hosts many events with local chapters nationwide.

Volksmarch walking clubs <https://ava.org/> were established decades ago as a way to organize nature lovers. Artists were companions to historic Volksmarch wanderers for centuries. As far back as the 1700s, painters at Volksmarch events captured the raw beauty of the Swiss Alps or Germany's Black Forest. Honoring the Volksmarch tradition, Preserve Midway has invited esteemed artists Robert Duncan, Patricia Smith and photographer Quinn Calder to commemorate this Volksmarch event with their original art. Prints are signed and can be purchased at the annual event with proceeds benefitting rural preservation.

How does a Volksmarch work? A group such as Preserve Midway creates a walking route along a predetermined trail or path of varying distances (usually 5K or 10K). After documenting their walk, people of all ages and abilities collect commemorative pins or walking stick medallions, called stocknagels. The unique medallions, which indicate cumulative miles walked, are proudly displayed on a Volksmarcher's favorite walking stick.

Wear a good pair of walking shoes (leaderhosen welcome) and Volksmarch with your kids, neighbors, grannie and friends. Don't forget to pack some water and join Preserve Midway and the Midway Historic Preservation Committee on September 18, 2021, for a fun walk through Midway's beautiful valley and historic neighborhoods.

Visitors are encouraged to download the Utah Heritage Walks app: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/utah-heritage-walks/id913495313> for a guided historical tour. Or choose the self-guided "Pathways to Preservation." The route meanders past current conservation projects, like the 105-acre Kohler Dairy Farm and Midway's historic Mountain Spa. The Utah Heritage Walks mobile app will compliment your "Pathways" stroll with fascinating historical insights.

Ferdinand, the Friesian horse will lead the walk starting at 10:00 am. Finish your walk at Midway's Town Center for festivities including live music, awards, booths, games, bounce house and food trucks from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

Pre-register on line: preservemidway.org or Day-of registration at Midway Town Center, beginning at 9:30 a.m. This is a rain, shine or snow event. Please leave Fido at home and bike, walk or carpool to the event at Midway Town Center. Parking for cars, busses or carriages, is available at the LDS Church at 165 Center, Midway.

OUR MISSION

Preserve Midway is dedicated to thoughtful growth and providing options to landowners to preserve the rural character, open space and heritage of Midway, Utah
preservemidway.org

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