

River Voices

Land Acquisition:

An Increasingly Important Tool for River Protection

BY PHIL WALLIN, DIRECTOR, THE RIVER CONSERVANCY

River conservation has changed. In the old days, it took all our energy to battle the Corps of Engineers and the other dam-builders. Our victories were always partial and temporary. Today, though, we are on the offensive. We're pulling out dams. We're restoring floodplains. We're fencing cattle out of streams. We're creating greenways and wildlife refuges along rivers.

As the dam threat has receded, river conservationists have been able to step back and take a bigger view. We realize today that a river is more than flowing water. It's the whole river ecosystem, including the headwater forests, the wetlands, the riparian woodlands, the tributaries, the floodplain, all the way down to the river estuary. We realize that you can't conserve a river as a rich, complex living thing unless you conserve the lands that are intimately related to the stream. They are shelter and a food source for fish and wildlife. They are a filter against water pollution, a buffer against flooding, a guarantor of late summer flows, a regulator of stream temperatures.

The organization that I founded, River Network, specializes in technical support for citizen groups that work to protect rivers and watersheds. We believe that citizen action is the best way to secure long-term protection for a river system. At the same time, however, we recognize that the river can't always wait for the long term. Sometimes it needs to be saved in the short term. Sometimes a developer wants to

chop up the shoreline into 4-acre view lots, or a paper company wants to log a steep hillside. Sometimes short-term opportunities present themselves. A major land-holding that is critical to fish and wildlife may suddenly come on the market.

Someone needs to enter the real estate market on behalf of the river and the public.

That's why we established the River Conservancy, a program that buys riverlands for conservation. We knew that there had to be a program that could work creatively with private landowners, that knew how to deal with river real estate, and that could bring money to the table. We're a small program with only five staff, working in offices in Portland, OR and Helena, MT. We've bought about

50,000 acres of land on Northwestern rivers like the Skagit, the Snake, the Willamette, the Icicle.

The Story of Big Chico Creek

There's not a river in the country that doesn't need land stewardship and protection. While growing up in the northern California town of Chico I spent my summers in Big Chico Creek, which flowed from the Sierra foothills to the Sacramento River. We didn't pay much attention to stream conservation in the 1950's and early 1960's. But the greatest



Photo: Pamela Jordan

Early fall on Big Chico Creek, near Chico, California

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River Network is a national organization whose mission is to help people understand, protect and restore rivers and their watersheds.

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From the President



Photo: Linda Kliever

Buying the Farm

Not long ago, River Network's River Conservancy program negotiated an option to acquire a crucial piece of floodplain along Oregon's Willamette River. The same family had farmed the property for nearly a century. When out-of-town siblings inherited the farm last year, they marketed it for sale, and the River Conservancy quickly stepped up with an offer. The local newspaper carried a story on the transaction and the headline read: "Conservation Group Buys Farm."

Given the slang meaning of the term—to die—we were not sure it was the headline we wanted to see about River Network—in fact, buying parts of farms and forests and other crucial riverine properties is one of the things we do.

A long career in the conservation movement has taught me how complex the field is. It involves policy making at all levels and it involves policy implementation, which is an entirely different animal. Conservation needs to be a part of the way we grow our food, produce our fiber and live in our cities. Often broad groups of stakeholders need to spend long periods working to understand how environmental and economic needs can be integrated. At other times, the only way to stop short-sighted development projects is for citizens to make their voices heard through protest and direct action.

Ultimately, property ownership is a primary foundation of our society. It is one of the most unchallengeable rights that we recognize and often trumps other interests. Sometimes, the only way to assure protection for a piece of property is to buy it. Groups like The Nature Conservancy have made tremendous contributions in this regard, and over the last ten years, the numbers of land trusts in this country has exploded. These local land trusts that purchase fee and less-than-fee rights are brilliantly served by the Land Trust Alliance.

When it comes to protecting key river areas through acquisition, our River Conservancy program is the best in the business. Phil Wallin and his staff are superb at identifying areas of river that are both important and potentially available for sale. They have the experience and perseverance to solve complex technical problems—negotiations to protect the headwaters of the Chetco River went on for over nine years—and a gift for finding and working with the right conservation managers for every piece.

This kind of work, often involving millions of dollars, can be daunting for many smaller organizations. And so we hope this issue of River Voices will provide insights and examples of how grassroots groups can find ways to preserve lands crucial to the health of rivers and watersheds.

A handwritten signature in yellow ink that reads "Kenneth Ralston".

Cont. from page 1 joy of my career at River Network has been to return to Chico in the last few years to work with the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance (BCCWA), buying a 4,000-acre nature preserve along five miles of Big Chico Creek.

This project was initiated by Suzanne Gibbs of the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance. By being in touch with landowners in the watershed, Suzanne learned that the Simmons Ranch was available for purchase. Suzanne knew that the ranch had major development potential, with good access off the highway to rolling meadows in a scenic canyon next to a lovely stream. Suzanne convened a meeting with the landowner, the state and federal wildlife agencies, the University and the River Conservancy. The landowner agreed to give us a chance to buy the ranch and the River Conservancy agreed to coordinate the project.

Six months later we had negotiated a purchase agreement. Eighteen months later we closed escrow. The land is now owned by the Research Foundation of California State University, Chico. The University will monitor the recovery of the wild chinook salmon run in Big Chico Creek, and protect habitat for numerous at-risk aquatic and terrestrial species. By the time the Preserve was dedicated, in October 2000, we had purchased an option to buy Phase 2 of the project, the Henning Ranch. This beautiful ranch includes a house that will be headquarters for the Research Foundation at the Preserve. We are now in the process of securing funding for the Phase 2 purchase from a variety of donors.

Could the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance have accomplished the same goal without land acquisition? I don't think so. This is a critical stream segment for fish and

wildlife. We needed permanent protection, not short-term stewardship. A perpetual conservation easement would have prevented development, but what we really wanted was active habitat management, and for that we needed fee title ownership.

Working with Available Resources

Not every watershed in the country has the resources available to it that were utilized for the Big Chico Creek project. However, Big Chico is a textbook example of making the best use of what is available.

The essential starting point for the project was **prioritization**. The BCCWA had done an Existing Conditions Report that surveyed the watershed from many perspectives. They knew the species most at risk and the best quality habitat. This is not a step that can wait until a land development crisis is at hand. It must be done early on.

The second critical step the BCCWA took was **partnership**. They had a good working relationship with California State University, the City of Chico, California Fish & Game and other agencies and organizations, so that when the challenge arose they had allies to help them successfully meet it.

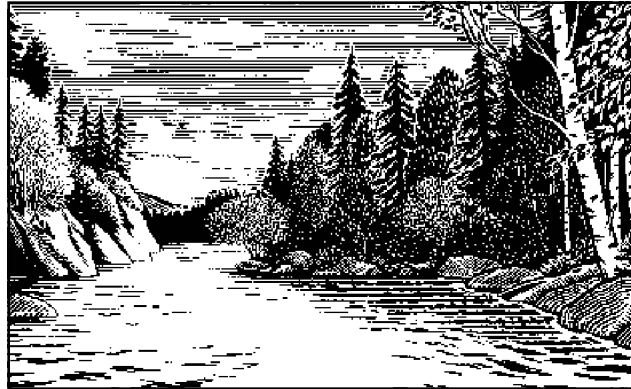


Third, the BCCWA was in close touch with **landowners** on Big Chico Creek. Because of this they received early warning that the Simmons Ranch was coming on the market and had time to initiate a conservation purchase.

When the opportunity arose to buy the Simmons Ranch, the BCCWA looked around for a partner with skills in **conservation land-buying**. This is a technical specialty that involves risk and requires access to capital. BCCWA convened a meeting with the landowner, his appraiser, California Department of Fish & Game, California State University, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the River Conservancy and a few others in Sacramento. I offered to negotiate a deal with the landowner and the group agreed that would be the best way to go.

Our approach was to first **negotiate a deal** with the landowner and secure a one-year option to buy. The negotiations were conducted in confidence between the River Conservancy and the landowner and consumed six months. When we finally came to agreement, the River Conservancy put up substantial money to buy a **one-year option**, with the right to renew for another six months for an additional payment.

With the land secured, we went to work to **pull the funding together**. This is where the partnership among the River Conservancy, the BCCWA and the University's Research Foundation really paid off. As a preliminary step, we hired a wildlife biologist from the University to conduct a **natural area inventory** of the Simmons Ranch. This revealed an impressive number of species, aquatic and terrestrial, that were listed as threatened or at least "of concern" on state and federal lists. It also gave us a good description of the whole ecosystem that we wanted to protect. Equally important, we went to the ranch in the spring to photograph and video the outstanding features of the ranch.



THE RIVER CONSERVANCY

A PROGRAM OF RIVER NETWORK

The first funding was put forward by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, which earmarked \$500,000 from the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program for the project. With this endorsement in hand, we submitted a proposal to the David & Lucile Packard Foundation for a grant under their California Landscapes program. The Packard Foundation made a major grant to the land acquisition, which in turn motivated the California Wildlife Conservation Board to make a grant to the Big Chico Creek project through a new California bond issue for habitat protection approved by voters in 1999. The Packard Foundation then made an additional grant to fund a management plan for the new Big Chico Creek Ecological Preserve.

The land was purchased by the Research Foundation of California State University, Chico. At the closing they gave a **conservation easement** over the new Ecological Preserve to State Fish & Game to protect the State's investment in the project. The State liked the fact that they would not be responsible for day-to-day management. They preferred to be a grantmaker, not a landowner. They also liked the fact that they put up less than half the purchase price. **Private sector involvement** is becoming more and more important in conservation land acquisition.

On October 26, 2000, all the people involved in this project gathered on the Simmons Ranch to dedicate the new Big Chico Creek Ecological Preserve. At the same time, we

cont. on page 6 🍁

Cont. from page 5

announced the signing of a new option agreement to buy Phase 2 of the project, the adjoining Henning Ranch. We handed out plaques to the key players with a beautiful photograph of the land. By celebrating Phase 1, we laid the groundwork for the success of Phase 2.

Keys to Success

Not many areas of the country are as rich in resources as northern California. Nevertheless, for any highly significant land acquisition an appeal can be made to local and regional foundations, businesses and individuals. Even if the private funders can't carry the whole load, they can give momentum to the project and motivate a government agency to contribute. The era is gone when conservation land acquisition was strictly a government function.

Appraisals play a significant role in land acquisitions because everyone—seller, buyer, funders—need to know that a reasonable price is being paid for land. A good appraisal by a reputable appraiser can cost anywhere from \$2,000 to \$20,000, depending on the property, but it's a

necessary investment. This is one more reason to entrust negotiations to a specialized partner like the River Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land or a local land trust. This partner can “front” the money for an appraisal, and can also oversee the appraiser to make sure the appraisal can stand up to review.

In the case of the Simmons Ranch, both we and the landowner hired appraisers. The

landowner's valuation was considerably higher than ours. Rather than argue, the landowner used his appraisal as evidence that he had made a tax-deductible “bargain sale” donation. As is usually the case, tax benefits did not drive the deal but were more like “icing on the cake.”

One technique that is being used more and more by land trusts is the “conservation buyer.” In Montana, for example, the Montana Land Reliance has found private conservation buyers for scores of river properties in Montana. The Reliance finds well-heeled anglers with a conservation bent to buy properties on blue-ribbon streams as they come on the market. The buyer then donates



Photo: Pamela Jordan

Phil Wallin, Suzanne Gibbs and Dan Drake at Big Chico Environmental Preserve dedication ceremony.

a conservation easement that limits development. The challenge, of course, is to link up the buyer with a property that appeals to him in a personal and compelling way.

There are other strategies that can be used for riverland protection. Electric utilities often have an obligation to buy and conserve riverlands, either to mitigate for the environmental impact of their dams or to justify dam relicensing. There is also the concept of

carbon sequestration which holds great promise for the future. Electric utilities are beginning to anticipate treaty limitations on their CO2 emissions to counter the greenhouse effect. In a few cases, utilities are buying forest land for conservation to earn “carbon credits.” The same could apply to industry in general. I can imagine that a whole river corridor could be bought and set aside as a “bank” from which carbon credits could be sold to utilities and industry throughout the region.

Finally, we need to remember that riverlands can be purchased to restore floodplains and reduce flood damage. It was on the Charles River in Massachusetts that the Corps of Engineers, working with the Charles River Watershed Association, bought thousands of acres of wetlands to provide flood storage, eliminating the need for a new dam on the Charles. The River Conservancy is working with the Corps on the Willamette River in Oregon to apply the same principle. Our goal is to buy up enough of the hundred-year floodplain to restore the hardwood forest and open up the old river channels that have been blocked off. The big flood of 1996 showed Oregonians that dams alone cannot protect us from floods. We need to store water in the natural floodplain as well.

The bottom line is that conservation land-buying is an exciting venture that yields benefits forever. Everyone wins. Everyone can see and appreciate the result. The possibilities are limited only by your ability to communicate with landowners, recruit partners and devise creative solutions. If the land you want to protect is truly special, if you have done your homework well, if you get your message out to the people who have a reason to care, the resources for your project will come. 🙌



Photo: Kinnickinnic River Land Trust

Kelly Spring protected by the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust.

Advice from the Field

FROM RICK McMONAGLE, THE KINNICKINNIC RIVER LAND TRUST

One very effective land protection measure is a line-of-credit to buy land or conservation easements. The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust currently has a line-of-credit with two different private foundations and is applying for a third. We have used these loans to buy land in fee title and may use them to purchase a conservation easement. They are particularly effective when you have to act quickly to secure land on short notice (e.g., a land auction). Propose a line-of-credit with foundations/donors that already support your organization. Try lending institutions, local banks, etc. where you have an account. After all, financial institutions lend money all of the time to destroy the environment, why not a few dollars to protect our precious and valuable rivers!

How Land Trusts Work

BY MATTHEW LOGAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE POTOMAC CONSERVANCY

Land trust work demands expertise in such esoteric fields as real estate transactions, tax law, financial planning and archiving, in addition to the countless other skills required to run any nonprofit organization (fund raising, accounting, board development, communications, etc.). So in this sense, bigger is better, or at least easier.

Yet as any land truster will tell you, land trusts are most effective when working locally, community-by-community, with landowners they know and trust. This should come as no surprise. When a land trust representative is discussing conservation options with a property owner, that person is asking the owner to make decisions about a very valuable asset, likely their single most valuable asset. But what is the best way to approach a landowner about an easement? How do you develop familiarity and trust?



Photo: Potomac Conservancy

The Potomac Conservancy's easement on this riverfront property forever protects a highly visible part of the landscape inside the Beltway.

Who is best equipped for discussing conservation options with landowners? This article will outline some tips for approaching landowners that I hope will maximize your chances for successfully helping them to place their land under permanent protection.

First, a few suggestions for beginning this process in the right frame of mind!:

- 1. Land trusts provide a *specialized service for landowners.*** There are two keys to this point. First: because conservation options are complicated matters, land trust volunteers and professionals are best equipped to work successfully with landowners. Other people, no matter how well-meaning, are not likely to help matters. Always leave it to the people at your local land trust to work directly with landowners! Second: land trusts must approach their work with a service orientation. Landowners are our “customers” and we must treat them accordingly. Because our tools are entirely voluntary, our job is to present the full range of conservation options at our disposal and work to find the one that best serves the landowner’s interest.
- 2. Land trust must create a *compelling vision.*** We should be able to describe and ideally show what our communities will look like if we protect our special places, and if we do not. The concerns of landowners who may wonder why they are being approached (singled out in their mind if they are suspicious of our motives) are often assuaged when they see how they fit into a larger vision.
- 3. Land trusts cannot work effectively with landowners without first *developing mutual trust.*** Of course, this

is the key to any partnership (and protecting land is a partnership), but it is oh so tempting to ask a landowner to make decisions before they have developed a trusting relationship with you. We have found that we must constantly demonstrate our professionalism, confidentiality and stability. If you don't inspire confidence, you won't complete deals.



Photo: Potomac Conservancy

This 437-acre working farm in Hampshire County, West Virginia is cooperatively protected by The Potomac Conservancy and the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust.

4. You must learn the landowner's goals and circumstances as quickly as possible.

This is absolutely key to establishing trust. A great icebreaker: What does this ranch/pond/estate mean to you? What do you suppose it will look like in 100 years? Do your children enjoy visiting this place? These answers will help establish the parameters that will define the nature of the deal. There is no sense in spending countless hours drafting an easement only to find out not all of the owners have been contacted.

5. Always be sure to set realistic expectations. All too often we get overly excited about the prospect of securing protection on a choice piece of property. We want to do everything possible to complete the deal as quickly as possible. But we must never oversell what is feasible. Every conservation option has a set of associated costs and benefits. We must always take the time to lay these out in a way that is fully

understood, though that may take time, if we want to succeed.

6. Finally, be patient! In our experience, it may take years of cultivating interest amongst landowners before your efforts begin bearing fruit. Though we have completed a conservation easement from initial contact to signing in less than 90 days, that is very unusual. You are asking landowners to make perpetual commitments on their land. You should take a similar long-term view of this work and be prepared to stick with it over the long haul.

Keep in mind that every situation is different. Of course, that makes this work challenging, but it also means no two days are ever alike. Working with landowners to help them achieve their personal dreams while securing the quality of life and ecological health of your community is wonderful work.



Founded in 1993, the Potomac Conservancy has protected 923 acres in Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and D.C.

This includes five islands in the Potomac.

Census Shows Decade of Growth for Local and Regional Land Trust

BY THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

In the last decade, local and regional land trusts more than doubled the amount of land they protected to 4.7 million acres—up from 2 million in 1988, according to the Land Trust Alliance’s (LTA) most recent (1998) Census of Land Trusts.

The census, compiled over a 12-month period from 1997 to 1998 shows the significant growth of land trust across the country over the past decade—growth in the number of land trusts, the amount of land they have protected and in their organizational strength.

“These figures show just how critical citizen-led land trusts are becoming to our nation’s communities. During a decade of unprecedented pressures on open space, land trusts have expanded their skills, their numbers, and—most dramatically—their land conservation successes,” said LTA President Jean Hocker.

Among the census findings:

- There are 1,213 local and regional nonprofit land trusts operating throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, up 63 percent from the 743 land trusts tallied by the 1988 National Land Trust Census.
- Land trusts hold more than 7,000 conservation easements, protecting nearly 1.4 million acres—almost a 400 percent increase over the amount of easement-protected land just a decade ago.

- A majority of land trust respondents—58 percent—now have paid staff, up from 43 percent in 1992.

Counting by Region

The fastest growing region for land trusts was the Rocky Mountain region, where the number of land trusts sky-rocketed 160 percent in the last decade. The number of land trusts also more than doubled in the Southwest, South and West.

“The western states are seeing an influx of populations from California and the East. That’s putting a strain on traditional land use. You’re seeing more second homes and other development pressures. People are responding and



Photo: Chagrin River Land Conservancy

A section of the Chagrin River, protected.

forming land trusts,” said Chris Herrman, director of LTA’s western region.

New England, birthplace of the private conservation movement, has the largest number of land trusts. The region’s six states have 417 land trusts, 81 of which were established in the last decade.

Land Protection Techniques

Conservation easements are by far the most common land protection tool. Local and regional land trusts hold title to easements on 1.38 million acres across the country—nearly quadruple the 290,000 acres under easement in 1988.

More than half of the land trusts surveyed said they are primarily or very involved in protecting wetlands and watersheds—the most commonly cited types of land protected.

Land trusts also continue to acquire and retain land for protection. Since 1988, they have acquired more than 528,000 acres of land that they continue to own and manage.

While most land trusts are private organizations, many have formed close ties with government agencies and have used their flexibility as independent nonprofit organizations to negotiate land protection for government agencies. Almost 1 million acres have been conserved by land trusts as park land, wildlife refuges and green spaces conveyed to public conservation agencies.

The census revealed that land trusts protect a variety of land types from rare species habitat in remote areas to community gardens in the heart of cities. More than half of the land trusts surveyed said they are primarily or very involved in protecting wetlands and watersheds—the most commonly cited types of land protected. In addition to protecting land, 76 percent of land trusts maintain land for recreation and/or public use; 75 percent provide environmental education within their communities; 60 percent engage in land use planning. A large number of land trusts are also active in biological monitoring and/or research (45%), ecological restoration (44%) and management activities for rare or endangered species (37%).

Strength Beyond Numbers

The growth of the land trust movement cannot be weighed simply by the number of land trusts created in the last decade. Land trusts must ultimately be measured by the land they protected and by their ability to uphold their permanent commitments to this land.

The census indicates that a number of land trusts are developing broader support and stability for their land protection work.



A majority of land trusts now have paid staff. While more than half of land trusts had no paid staff in 1988, now 58 percent of land trusts do.

Land trusts continue to harness grassroots support with approximately 1 million members and financial supporters and 50,000 active volunteers. On average, individual donations still account for more than half of land trusts' operating budgets and capital funds or endowments.

“The last decade has brought impressive growth in numbers of local and regional land trusts and the amount of land they have protected,” Hocker said. “With land trusts now existing in most parts of the country, their actual numbers may grow more slowly in the year ahead. But as land trusts continue to expand their skills and experience, to attract more and more supporters, and to achieve new levels of success, their impact will accelerate at a rate we could not have anticipated even ten years ago.”

“Land trusts will indeed play a major role in land conservation in the 21st century. The Land Trust Alliance is proud to help these remarkable groups grow and flourish.”



REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

LTA's Land Trust Standards & Practices have been reviewed and adopted by 43 percent of land trust boards of directors.

See Page 24 for ordering information.

Conservation Easements: What's Best and When?

BY TIM McNEIL
THE RIVER CONSERVANCY

Conservation easements are a primary tool in land conservation. In the following article Tim McNeil, the River Conservancy's Northwest Project Manager, uses examples from the Conservancy's Willamette River Flood Plain Restoration Project to illustrate when easements are best used to protect key properties. These examples can easily be applied to other conservation projects when weighing the advantages of easements versus outright acquisition.

More than 70% of the population of Oregon resides in the Willamette Valley, and the Willamette River flows down the middle of it. Along each oxbow and meander, landowners tend to their property in various ways that subtly change the river. A farmer may keep the maximum number of his acres in crop production, in order to meet income needs. The sand and gravel operator may excavate existing floodplain gravel pits to a depth of 80 feet. A growing city worried about a limited job market may zone a floodplain area for industrial development in order to attract corporate employers. All of these land uses influence the Willamette River's ability to nourish floodplain habitat, to harbor fish, and to inspire the sound stewardship of Oregonians as the river flows through their backyards. With a wide range of land uses pursued to fulfill a variety of objectives, how do you conserve the river?

One answer seems certain: you can't buy it all. For every owner of Willamette River frontage who is willing to sell his property to a conservation organization (CO), seven other landowners would never consider such a thing, because their land is their family legacy, or the lifeblood of their business or their retirement plan. A CO must be able to do more than buy land, if it wants to protect a river.

Buying land is one way to influence riverfront land use over the long term; acquiring a conservation easement is another. A conservation easement restricts the number of land uses that are available to a landowner on a specific property, usually forever. The type and degree to which a conservation easement restricts a land use depends upon the negotiation between the landowner and the easement holder (the CO); every easement is unique. Once negotiated, the conservation easement is recorded along with the property deed. The landowner retains property ownership subject to the terms of the conservation easement.

What kind of landowner would be interested in conveying a conservation easement to a CO? One example could be a farmer who owns river frontage would rather pass the farm down to his kids than sell the property outright. Let's say a portion of the farm is eroding away, victim to a river's wanderings. The farmer does not want to completely tie the hands of his children with regard to the future of the farm, but he also can't bear the thought of the place being subdivided and developed, which has been the fate of much of the surrounding farmland.

A well-crafted conservation easement may be able to meet most or all of the farmer's objectives. First, it would help the farmer to keep the farm in the family, not only by avoiding a land sale, but also by potentially reducing estate taxes. A conservation easement reduces the value of the property by reducing the number of uses available for a property. The reduced value could lead to a reduced estate tax. Second, a conservation easement could insure the farmer that the property would be farmed in perpetuity, while still giving his children some flexibility with it. Often times a farm will have an upland area, improved with a farmhouse and outbuildings. This area may be remote from and less sensitive than the resource that the easement is intended to protect. In these cases, the easement could allow limited development, including the replacement of existing structures in the upland

area, without compromising the easement's protection of the river.

From the CO's perspective, a conservation easement must do more than preserve family ownership. The conservation easement should also protect the river. One way for the easement to do this is by prohibiting the cultivation of the eroding farmland, thereby reducing the amount of sediment that washes into the river. The farmer may agree to this simply because the land is marginally productive and difficult to farm. The farmer may also agree to the CO's request that the conservation

easement establishes an unfarmed buffer along the entire waterfront, along with the right of the CO to plant native vegetation in this buffer area. By allowing

planting in the buffer area, the farmer stabilizes his stream bank at no cost to him, thereby protecting his inland fields.

A conservation easement carries other incentives that may affect this negotiation. A conservation easement's worth is calculated as the difference between property value without the easement and property value with the easement. If the landowner needs cash, the CO can negotiate the purchase of the easement. If the landowner needs an income tax deduction, the landowner can donate the easement and claim the value of the easement as a deduction (subject to some restrictions). The easement also may carry property tax benefits. The local assessor may recognize that the easement should

lower the assessed value and the corresponding tax owed on the farm. (All of these tax benefits are a bit more complicated than they appear here, but they are worth looking into with the help of a tax advisor, if it appears that they would motivate a landowner). This combination of cash and tax benefits may convince the farmer that a conservation easement is a good idea for his farm and for his family.

Before signing the easement, the CO must consider how the easement will affect the long-term health of the CO. Monitoring the

easement over time will be costly, and enforcing easement terms which a landowner either purposely or innocently ignores may be costlier still. While the CO may have an excellent relationship with the current landowner, as the property changes hands over

time, new landowners will present new relationships. Many CO's request a maintenance fund endowment from the easement seller/donor. This request often adds another tricky issue to the negotiation.

Like land acquisition, the conservation easement fits circumstances which arise from the land, a landowner's objectives and the affected natural resource. It is an important tool for river protection. For the Willamette, which is so many different things to so many different people, river conservation depends upon having a variety of tools in the box.



The Willamette River near Luckiamute confluence.

Photo: Josh Kling

Federal Funding Programs for Land Conservation

PROGRAM & WEB SITE	DEPARTMENT	PURPOSE	FUTURE OBLIGATIONS
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Farm Service Agency	A voluntary program that offers long-term payments and cost-share assistance to establish resource conserving cover on sensitive cropland/marginal pasture land. Thus reducing soil erosion, improving water quality and enhancing or establishing wildlife habitat.	Contract duration is between 10 & 15 years.
Emergency Conservation Program http://www.attra.ncat.org/guide/ecp.htm	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Farm Service Agency	Provides assistance to farmers and ranchers for restoration of farmlands where operations were impeded by natural disasters. Provides funding for emergency water conservation during severe drought. Assists in debris removal, restoring fences, irrigation systems...	
Emergency Watershed Protection http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/CCS/ewpFs.html	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Helps protect lives and property threatened by natural disasters. Concerned with the preservation of areas threatened by excessive erosion and flooding.	
Land and Water Conservation Fund http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/LWCF	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Forest Service	Provides monies to federal, state and local governments to acquire land, water and conservation easements on land and water for the benefit of all Americans.	
Forestry Incentive Program http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cod/cit/fipsmary.htm	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	To assure the Nation's ability to meet future demand for sawtimber, pulpwood and quality hardwoods by planting more trees and placing more forest land under good forest management. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting • Improving a stand of forest trees • Site preparation for natural regeneration 	
Partners for Fish and Wildlife http://partners.fws.gov/index.htm	U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners through voluntary cooperative agreements in order to restore formerly degraded wetlands, native grasslands or riparian areas. Under cooperative agreements, private landowners agree to maintain restoration projects as specified in the agreement but otherwise retain full control of the land.	Must enter into a cooperative agreement for a fixed term of at least 10 years.
Stewardship Incentive Program http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/NRCSProg.htm/#Anchor-Stewardship	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Forest Service	The Stewardship Incentive Program provides technical and financial assistance to encourage non-industrial private forest landowners to keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy. Qualifying land includes rural lands with existing tree cover or land suitable for growing.	Stewardship incentive practices must be maintained for a minimum of 10 years.
Wetland Reserve Program http://www.wl.fb-net.org/	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	WRP is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. Involves such items as: improving water quality; providing fish and wildlife habitat; and recharging groundwater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent easement 100% paid • 30 year easement 75% paid • Cost-sharing
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/general/whip.html	U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	A voluntary program for people wanting to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. Provides both technical assistance and cost sharing. Participants work with USDA's NRCS to prepare a habitat development plan in conjunction with the local district. The plan includes a list of practices and schedule for installation and details the steps in maintaining the habitat for the life of the agreement.	

ELIGIBILITY	BENEFITS
Eligibility of farmers is determined by individual on-site inspections, taking into account the extent of damage and need for assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA pays up to 64% of the total cost. • Maximum \$200,000 cost-sharing paid to individual per disaster. • Technical assistance provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
must be a private land-owner who: owns no more than 1,000 acres of eligible forest land; a private land owner of non-industrial forest; or individuals, groups, associations, corporations whose stocks are not publicly traded may be eligible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • federal cost-sharing. • Limit of \$10,000 per person per year with no more than 65% of the cost may be paid.
Eligible landowners must have an approved Forest Stewardship Plan and own 1,000 or fewer acres of qualifying land. Authorizations may be obtained for exceptions of up to 5,000 acres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides compensation to landowners for the lack of market incentive to invest in watershed/wildlife protection.
Individuals must own or have control of the land under consideration and cannot have the land already enrolled in programs that have a wildlife focus, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program, or use the land for mitigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-sharing assistance: USDA pays up to 75% of the cost of installing wildlife practices. • Technical assistance for successfully establishing habitat development projects.

A Guide to Monitoring Conservation Easements

BY JENNIFER A. ADKINS
LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

Although no boilerplate conservation easement monitoring system has yet been devised to thwart all easement violations, a sound easement monitoring system—stressing regular monitoring—can save a land trust thousands of dollars in legal costs, help protect the conservation easement system, and maintain good landowner relations.

Every monitoring system must be tailored to the particular needs of individual land trusts. But there are several critical components that should be part of a good monitoring program.

Annual inspections have become the standard because they minimize monitoring costs while maintaining a consistent presence. However, in some cases, conditions require more frequent visits or allow less frequent visits due to the particularities of the easement and surrounding area. The physical features and accessibility of easement areas are perhaps the strongest determining factor in choosing a monitoring method.

Easement areas are commonly monitored by a combination of hiking and driving, but aerial monitoring and monitoring by boat may be required for areas with limited accessibility. Frequency and method of monitoring are matters best decided—and certainly must be supported—by an organization's board of trustees. In every case, they are matters deserving thought, discussion and input from all levels of the organization.

Scheduling

Second, an inspection schedule must be implemented. Two basic approaches can be used.

The first is to allow landowners to schedule a date and time for the inspection of each easement area. This is generally done through a mailing to all landowners, requesting that they contact the organization to set up an appointment for their **annual inspection**. In smaller programs or programs with extraordinary monitoring resources, this may be done by telephone and a case-by-case basis.

This method of scheduling allows maximum flexibility for a landowner and can be very convenient for a land trust when there are relatively few easements to inspect. However, when hundreds of landowners must be contacted, such scheduling is impractical.

The second approach—enabling a land trust to complete a large number of inspections as efficiently as possible while still encouraging



Photo: Chagrin River Land Conservancy

The Newbury property in the Chagrin River Watershed.

Establishing Inspection, Frequency and Method

First, how often and how should monitoring be conducted?

Inspection frequency and methodology must be based on the accessibility to easement areas, size and type of easement areas, level of activity permitted on easement and in surrounding areas, level of isolation of easement areas and, of course, an organization's monitoring budget.

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landowner participation—is to have a land trust notify landowners in advance of inspection dates. Landowners must be notified of the visit in advance, generally through written correspondence known as an “inspection notice letter.” The letter alerts a landowner of the upcoming inspection date, giving at least two weeks advance notice, and encourages him or her to participate. Inspection notice letters should come from a land trust representative who is known to most landowners—the director, for many organizations.

In this approach, the inspection notice letter may be the land trust’s only correspondence with landowners prior to inspection. Therefore, it is important that the letter include a brief explanation of the visit’s purpose and a request that all appropriate arrangements be made for the inspection, such as containing unfriendly animals and notifying others on the property about the visit.

Landowners should always be offered the opportunity to reschedule an inspection. Be sure to give landowners the name and telephone number of the individual who will be completing the inspection.

For organizations with a large number of easements, meticulous scheduling is often necessary to maximize inspection efficiency. Moreover, maintaining a general presence year-round in primary program areas can be enormously beneficial to prevent violations and to nip potential problems in the bud. In cases where easements include language regarding grantee inspection rights, care must be taken to insure that the scheduling practice employed is compatible with the easement’s language.

Whichever scheduling approach is chosen, keep in mind that communication with landowners is most important and should not be overlooked.



File Review and Preparation

Before inspecting an easement area, an inspector should have a thorough knowledge of the area and the easement that protects it. Specific preparation procedures will vary depending on the size and character of easement area, complexity of the easement, type of materials and information kept on file, and the inspector’s level of familiarity with the easement and landowner. Detailed files should be maintained on every easement. Inspectors unfamiliar with an area should thoroughly review all files before inspection. In these cases, thorough documentation of inspections and communications with landowners are absolutely necessary to inspection preparation, since review of the easement, past inspection records and landowner correspondence records are critical to assisting inspection.

After or during file review, an inspection form and map should be prepared for use during the inspection. Land trusts generally formulate an inspection form or report that includes a checklist reflecting the organization’s standard easement provisions. A form should be prepared for each property to be inspected and a photocopy of the easement plan map should be on the back for geographical guidance. During file

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The Center for Watershed Protection has examples of numerous model ordinances on their web page, including the Natural Lands Trust's Model Conservation Easement. Visit: www.cwp.org; click on "model ordinances" and then "buffers."

review, notes regarding past problems, unique easement restrictions or any other useful information can be made on the form. During inspection, the form serves as a guide to the property's physical features, an easement's provisions and an easement area's potential problems. The form, along with a clipboard, additional maps/aerials required to navigate the property, and additional supplies needed for the inspection (such as specialized clothing and drinking water in hot weather) should be gathered prior to the inspection.

Taking a camera on inspections is also recommended so photographic documentation of conditions, problems or violations on the property can be made, particularly when there is high likelihood that conditions may change quickly.

Inspection Procedure

The particulars of an inspection are dictated by the property itself and the easement that protects it. However, there are several key components to a thorough, efficient inspection.

First, elicit assistance from those on the property whenever possible. Landowners, managers, farmers or tenants can be immensely helpful to an inspector by providing information on property lines, land management practices and other activities on the property. At the very least, inspectors should introduce themselves to anyone on the property at the time of the inspection. Remember, personal contact with property representatives during inspections is another opportunity to promote the organization and enhance communications.

During the inspection, critical attention should be paid to those areas with the most potential for easement violations. Therefore, getting a good look at property lines, protected natural areas such as woodlands, stream corridors and wetlands, past problem areas,

and high activity areas such as residential areas, farm building clusters, roadside areas and trails are critical. Notes and photographs should be taken, as needed, to describe any obvious changes, problems or possible easement violations.

Inspections should also serve as an opportunity to assess general property conditions. It is important throughout the inspection process to note the conditions present on the property, even when they are not at odds with the easement's terms. Such yearly records may be critical to establishing the property's prior condition in case of a violation. They can also allow land trusts to respond to a landowner's requests for advice throughout the year. Photographs that illustrate the general character and use of the property can be helpful, especially if no recent photographs are on file. All these steps assist in updating documentation and in future inspections.

After an inspection, check with the landowner or other property representatives to let them know that the inspection has been completed or to discuss the inspection's results. The discussion provides an opportunity to bring potential problems to the landowner's attention. It is also an opportunity to praise positive land management practices while suggesting ways in which the property's natural areas can be enhanced.

Inspection Follow-Up

The most important part of an inspection follow-up is to accurately record findings in a way that is easily understood by you and other staff members in years to come. Most inspection forms include a brief description of the property, its resources and uses and a checklist of the organization's standard easement restrictions to be completed by the inspector.

Forms also include a section for noting land management practices and natural resource conditions of the property.

Completed inspection forms should be kept on file for future reference and as updates to the easement's original documentation report. Files should be updated to reflect any changes noted during an easement inspection to assist future management. Computer files and databases can also be used to record inspection findings, although printed copies of inspection reports should also be kept on file.

Taking the appropriate action when problems or violations are detected is part of the follow-up procedure. Clear and serious violations must be acted upon immediately. If the landowner is present during the inspection, he or she should be alerted to the problem while touring the property. If the landowner is not present, and time is of the essence, every effort should be made to contact the landowner by telephone as soon as possible.

If the harm done by the violation is unlikely to worsen with the passage of time, or if telephone contact is not an option, written correspondence should be used. In some

cases, written correspondence may be preferable because it provides a written record of the organization's response to the violation.

Developing a clear and consistent policy for responding to easement violations will increase the comfort of all parties involved. Such a policy should be created with input and support from all levels of the organization. Violation remediation procedures may even be included as part of the easement agreement.

As conservation easements are put to the test of time, violation resolution becomes one of the most critical issues facing land trusts and deserves examination beyond the scope of this article. However, avoiding violations altogether (and the cost associated with them) also becomes more important with the growth of conservation easement programs. Although not every easement violation is avoidable, creating an effective easement monitoring system can deter violations, saving the land trust valuable resources and preserving the strength of conservation easements across the country.

Jennifer Adkins is a planner with the Brandywine Conservancy, Chadds Ford, PA, whose earliest easement dates back to 1969.



Advice from the Field

FROM RICHARD D. COCHRAN, CHAGRIN RIVER LAND CONSERVANCY, OH

Wade in slowly and seek the help of experienced entities. The business of land protection is expensive, extremely time-consuming, complex from a real estate and legal perspective, and can be adversarial. Direct land protection is also an extremely valuable and permanent technique to preserve rivers and watersheds—so it should be pursued.

Chagrin River Land Conservancy was formed in 1987. Through the year 2000, we have protected 2,878 acres in the Chagrin watershed. This includes Lake, Geauga, Cuyahoga and Portage counties.



Photo: Chagrin River Land Conservancy

A Perfect Match: Land Trusts and Watershed Groups

BY RICHARD D. COCHRAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CHAGRIN RIVER LAND
CONSERVANCY

In 1994, a small local land trust called Chagrin River Land Conservancy began thinking about its role in the land use planning of the communities within the Chagrin River Watershed east of Cleveland, Ohio. Efforts were made by volunteers to influence zoning legislation, and to convince city councils and township trustee boards to enact protective measures such as river buffers and setbacks.

However, the Conservancy quickly realized that this was an incredibly time consuming job that detracted from its land protection mission. It was also a job that could cause conflicts which would make land protection more difficult to achieve.

By 1995, Chagrin River Land Conservancy had convened meetings to discuss the possibility of a watershed partnership. The concept

was to create a nonprofit corporation that could influence the land use planning processes in our watershed by having the corporation educate, serve and coordinate its members.

Volunteers worked hard to establish the Chagrin River Watershed Partners. The effort involved countless strategic sessions and meetings, and development of materials. The point of this article is not to describe how to start a watershed partnership; rather, it is to describe how a land trust and a watershed partnership can complement one another.

Today in the 260 square mile Chagrin watershed, the Watershed Partners are a technical resource to communities, landowners and agencies. The corporation consists of members (mostly municipalities) who pay annual dues to support their operations. Chagrin River Land Conservancy, on the other hand, is purely a land protection organization. Our Board is made up of landowners who have shown a great passion for the work we do, and our members are all landowners and organizations within the watershed who believe in our mission to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of the Chagrin Watershed through direct land protection. The Watershed Partners enable us to focus on what we do best, and we allow them to focus on what they do best. We frequently meet with each other to make sure we understand the other organization's program, and to uncover ways in which we can collaborate more effectively. Out of more than fifty trustees between the two organizations at this time, only two overlap. This gives each an independence from the other, but also allows for a modicum of trustee level interaction.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners has quickly established itself as the preeminent



Photo: Chagrin River Land Conservancy

A Chagrin River Land Trust success story.

watershed group in Ohio, and one of the strongest technical watershed groups in the country. Their focus is on cultivating and maintaining a watershed wide effort to plan in ways that make sense, not according to political boundaries, but according to topographical facts such as watersheds. The Chagrin River watershed is fragmented by at least thirty municipal boundaries and four county borders. Consequently, the planning, zoning and building codes fragment the watershed into an impossible mess.

By bringing a common voice and a central convenor to the watershed, Chagrin River Watershed Partners makes an incredibly complex process much more simple. More precisely, thirty municipalities and four counties, plus all of the related agencies and entities, can access centralized expertise to help them plan at a broader level while still focusing on their discrete needs.

The remarkable success of Chagrin River Watershed Partners has enabled Chagrin River Land Conservancy to focus, to the exclusion of almost everything else, on its land protection mission. As a result, Chagrin River Land Conservancy has developed significant capacity and cutting edge techniques to preserve land. The Conservancy recently completed eleven new projects, bringing its total to sixty-four completed land protection deals. Our tools include conservation easements, traditional fee acquisitions, public agency pre-acquisitions, a conservation buyer/investor program, as well as an aggressive public funding program. In addition, we have a land protection fund worth almost two million dollars that provides working capital for us to catalyze land deals.



While it would be possible for both the planning and the land protection programs to be housed under one organizational umbrella, it would be difficult for one organization to reconcile the incredible time demands of these two program areas, and more importantly, they might compete with each other in terms of the organization's ability to gain trust and rapport among different constituents. For

example, one of Chagrin River Land Conservancy's sayings is, "We were founded by landowners, we

are funded by landowners, we are led by landowners and we are inspired by landowners". Our twenty-five Trustees are all local residents of the Chagrin River watershed who care deeply about land conservation. On the other hand, Chagrin River Watershed Partners is set up to serve the communities and entities of the Watershed, and in pursuit of that mission, Watershed Partners also serves the landowners of the watershed. An appropriate saying for Watershed Partners would be, "We were founded by the communities of the Chagrin River watershed, we are funded by the communities, we are led by the communities and we are inspired by the communities". By segmenting the two programs into two separate organizations, we have effectively eliminated any possibility of distrust or conflict.

The key to successful watershed protection is establishing a community that works together. In some cases this community can be inspired and led by a single entity, and in other cases, such as ours, it is better to have two separate corporations leading the charge and cooperating together.

In 1994, Chagrin River Land Conservancy had no employees and Chagrin River Watershed Partners did not yet exist. Today, Chagrin River Land Conservancy has eight employees and Chagrin River Watershed Partners has three.



Balancing Science and Opportunity in Land Prioritization

Building Trust with Landowners

BY BRAD MARTIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
METHOW CONSERVANCY

“How do we justify paying for one piece of property over another?” This question is asked by every land protection organization that has had to decide where to spend their hard won grant funding. A scientific evaluation of the habitat resources of the property is the logical and safe answer, but you can miss other factors that may be just as valuable to an organization’s long-term success, to the community and to the number of acres protected.

Here’s an example of what our land trust, the Methow Conservancy, did that exemplifies the importance of these ‘other’ criteria. While we were certainly concerned about scientific prioritization, we also gave priority to an opportunity to build trust. The net result has had an enormous benefit to habitat protection, and to the community.

The Methow Valley, in north central Washington State, is nestled in the eastern foothills of the North Cascade mountain range. Mountain peaks surround a remote river valley that was not settled or even touched by the western expansion until the late 1890’s. Early pioneers farmed the fertile valley floor, and although logging and mining were the primary occupations, habitat has remained largely intact. The three rivers in the valley, the Methow, Chewuch and the Twisp run clean and clear from high mountain snowfields and have maintained a wonderfully rich ecosystem, full of salmon, cutthroat and bull trout, otter, mink and marten. The uplands have the largest mule deer herd in the state, wolves still howl in the wilderness areas and cougar are seen often.

But, this beauty and abundance have attracted the attention of the growing ‘second homers’ and retirees from the prosperous Puget Sound area and like many ‘last best’ places we are becoming the playground for the affluent nature minded set. Homes are springing up on the landscape like the arrowleaf balsamroot sunflowers that carpet

the hills. (‘Methow’ is the Native American word for the arrowleaf balsamroot.)

In 1997, Craig Boesel, one of the last of our vanishing farmer/ranchers from pioneer families approached us. “If I have to sell those lower fields next to the river, I’m out of business,” said Boesel. “We use those fields for wintering our cows and I’m afraid it just doesn’t make sense to take them down to the Columbia Basin, and besides I can’t afford it.”

Craig had hoped to keep his ranch and alfalfa farming business alive long enough to give it to his son, who has an interest in taking over the operation at some point.

The Conservancy had just been given a \$500,000 dollar grant from the State of Washington to protect riparian habitat. While Craig’s property had over half-a-mile of riverfront and was at risk of becoming five-acre ranchettes, it was not in the biologically richest area of the valley. The fields had seen many years of pioneer-style agricultural practices that did not preserve biodiversity or protect riparian areas.

The Lands Committee of the Conservancy had done an objective evaluation of habitat resources in the watershed and had identified several key areas for protection. Though it was an important viewshed and a valued family business, Craig’s property was not in the region of highest priority.

We were a relatively new organization in a politically conservative rural area. Conservation easements are an idea that farm folk and property-rights minded landowners can look at with more than a bit of skepticism. Let’s just say we weren’t being overrun with offers to do easements. We knew that Craig was well respected in our community and within his peer group of farmers and ranchers. We felt that, maybe, if we were able to do a conservation easement with Craig, we would start the ball rolling with the rest of his peers. Boy, were we right!



In the fall of 1997, after baseline inventories of habitat and conservation values, development of a stewardship plan for the property and appraisals were done, we gave Craig more than \$250,000 of an appraised conservation value of \$350,000. We provided off-channel watering facilities and exclusionary fencing, and did extensive riparian planting and restoration. Getting the cattle out of the river and enhancing the riparian area gave us more justification for the easement purchase, and helped Craig avoid selling or subdividing his property. It was the boost he needed to continue farming. But, this was just the beginning.

Soon after the easement was finalized, the local newspaper, radio and television stations heard of our work with Craig. It had great appeal to them. Our story was written up, televised and spread widely. The phone started ringing and four years later hasn't stopped. Our 1997 grant from the State of Washington wound up protecting more than 600 acres of wonderful riparian habitat valued at over one million dollars. We have been besieged with opportunities.

Craig has become a great advocate. Many

large landowners call him before calling us to make sure that this kind of protection effort can be effective on working ranches. Presently, with help from Craig, we are working to protect more than 6,000 new acres of farm and ranch lands, and have received a new grant of more than 1.2 million dollars, thanks to our past success.

Land protection efforts must have community acceptance. A strict approach to acquisition priorities can miss important opportunities. The reason many organizations have problems working with landowners is a lack of trust. Our community trusted Craig, and the Methow Conservancy was able to follow along on his coattails. Certainly there were other factors, like good staff and a hardworking board of directors, but adding community trust-building to any prioritization process is essential. Opportunity is nourished by good will.

Bradley Martin is a lifelong resident of the Methow Valley. He was the founding president of the Methow Conservancy, a broadly focused land trust founded in 1994 which has protected over 1,500 acres in the Methow Valley.



Resources and References

Conserving land through acquisition can be daunting, especially for people who have never attempted it. So where do you start? Who do you contact if you have a piece of property in mind that you'd like protected? Below are thumbnail sketches of organizations that protect land through conservation.



The Conservation Fund

The Fund believes economic development and conservation efforts can exist together. Through land conservation services, demonstration projects, education and community-based activities, the Fund develops innovative measures to conserve land and water. The Fund has a number of unique programs focusing on specific types of lands for conservation, including its Civil War Battlefield Campaign, the American Greenways program and the Freshwater Institute. The Conservation Fund preserves large tracts of land and looks for public agencies to buy the properties from them. The Conservation Fund, 1800 N. Kent Street, Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209-2156. Phone: 703/525-6300; www.conservationfund.org/conservation.

Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) promotes voluntary land conservation across the country and provides resources, leadership and training to 1,200-plus nonprofit, grassroots land trusts, helping them to protect important open spaces. LTA provides an array of services, including: direct grants to land trusts, training programs, answers to more than 3,000 inquiries for technical assistance each year, and one-to-one mentoring to help land trusts build organizations that are equipped to protect open space. Land Trust Alliance, 1331 H Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC, 20005. Phone: 202/638-4725; E-mail: lta@lta.org; www.lta.org.

LTA publications include:

- *The Standards and Practices Guidebook: An Operating Manual for Land Trusts*. This complete guide provides practical information on every aspect of land trust operations. Sixty sample documents include policies, forms and checklists. 564 pp. ISBN 0-943915-09-0. LTA members \$45; non-members \$65
- *Statement of Land Trusts Standards and Practices*. A booklet outlining practices the Land Trust Alliance believes are essential for responsible operation of a land trust. This 15-page self-assessment form is a helpful companion to the *Standards and Practices Guidebook*. First copy free to organizational members; additional copies: LTA members \$1; non-members \$2

- *Doing Deals: A Guide to Buying Land for Conservation.* Know what developers know after you read this insightful book about buying real estate for conservation. Written by the Trust for Public Land and published by LTA, it includes information on working with landowners, surveys, appraisals, working with government agencies and negotiating. 175 pp. ISBN 0-943915-11-2. LTA members \$18.50; non-members, \$25

- *Starting a Land Trust.* Forget the title! This practical handbook goes beyond the basics to give you valuable information about how to sustain an organization. Includes sample documents, a sample budget and loads of information and straightforward advice about fundraising, grants, government assistance and IRS forms. 184 pp. ISBN 0-943915-06-6. LTA members \$25; non-members \$30

- *Appraising Easements: Guidelines for Valuation of Historic Preservation and Land Conservation Easements.* Contains a digest of selected revenue procedures, revenue rulings and cases relevant to easement violations, sample documents and a step-by-step analysis of the procedure. *Appraising Easements* is a “must have” for land conservationists, appraisers, attorneys and a host of other professionals. LTA members \$24; non-members \$30

- *How Strong Are Our Defenses: The Results of the Land Trust Alliance’s Northern New England Conservation Easement Quality Research Project.* The report assesses the easement stewardship practices of large, staffed land trusts in New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont, as well as the practices of all-volunteer land trusts and public



Photo: Chagrin River Land Conservancy

People enjoying a stream protected by the Chagrin River Land Trust.

agencies. In total, 15 land trusts were surveyed, as well as the public easement-holding agency in each state. The 15 land trusts represent just 8 percent of the 119 land trusts that operate in the three states. LTA members \$10; non-members \$12. Shipping and handling are included.

- *Voters Invest In Open Space: 2000 Referenda Results.* A detailed compilation of the results of state and local voting on referenda that committed tax dollars or taxing authority to the protection of open space. LTA Sponsor and Affiliate members will be mailed one free copy of the “Voters Invest” booklet. Additional copies can be purchased. The cost is \$2.50 per copy for organizational members, and \$3.00 per copy for non-members, sold in sets of five.

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Resources and References, cont.



The Nature Conservancy

This international conservation organization seeks to protect the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters the world's plant and animal species need to survive. It's **Freshwater Initiative** concentrates on the conservation of rivers and other bodies of freshwater throughout the United States, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. To grab the interest of TNC, the property you want to preserve must be the habitat for rare and/or endangered species of animals or plants. Most of their land acquisitions are large—in the thousands of acres. International Headquarters, The Nature Conservancy, 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1606; phone: 1-800-628-6860; E-mail: comment@tnc.org; www.nature.org.

River Conservancy

As a program of River Network, the River Conservancy forms partnerships with corporations, electric utilities, individuals, local governments, federal and state agencies to protect riverlands for biological diversity, as well as recreation and open space. River Conservancy, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 1130, Portland, OR 97204; phone: 503/241-3506; Email: info@rivernetwork.org; www.rivernetwork.org.

The Trust for Public Land

TPL focuses on people's needs for open space by acquiring lands for trails, parks and greenways. Through its Greenprint for Growth program, TPL helps communities create a vision for land conservation, find funding sources for purchasing their most important natural lands and acquire open space critical to quality of life. TPL's conservation projects range in size from one-half acre to thousands of acres. Working with private landowners, communities and government agencies, TPL has helped conserve more than 2,000 properties throughout the United States, protecting over one million acres of the American landscape. The Trust for Public Land, 116 New Montgomery St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, Phone: 415/495-4014; E-mail: info@tpl.org; www.tpl.org.

TPL publications include:

- *Land & People*: TPL's glossy full-color magazine is published twice each year for TPL supporters and partners. It contains articles and interviews on land conservation topics and on TPL projects nationwide, as well as essays on the importance of conserving land for people and the meaning of land in people's lives.
- Newsletters and Bulletins: TPL regional and state offices also publish regular newsletters and news bulletins about their work. Mailed to local TPL supporters and partners, these are also posted to TPL's web page.
- Books and Reports: In support of its mission of conserving land for people, TPL also posts reports and books on urban parks and conservation, watershed conservation, conservation finance, the economic benefits of open space, and conservation as a "smart growth" strategy.

LET RIVER NETWORK HELP YOU KEEP YOUR HEAD ABOVE WATER.



Join the River Network Partnership and connect to the information and resources you need to stay afloat!

- **Access our River Source Information Center with the 1-800 hotline:** Let us help you research a particular issue and put you in touch with the necessary contacts and resources through one-on-one consultations.
- **Log onto our Partner-only web site:** Browse the updated postings of funding sources, upcoming events and trainings, and download river clipart.
- **Receive the myriad of Partner benefits,** including subscriptions to *River Voices* and *River Fundraising Alert*, a copy of the *Directory of Funding Sources for River and Watershed Conservation Organizations*, and a copy of either *Starting Up: A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations* or *How to Save a River...* and more!
- **Apply for a Partner grant** to help sustain and strengthen your organization.

www.rivernetwork.org

SIGN ME UP!

Annual Partner Dues are only \$100

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Please charge my credit card:
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You will receive your initial set of Partner materials, including your choice of: (check one)

- How to Save a River*
 Starting Up: A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations
 River Talk!
 The Clean Water Act: An Owner's Manual
 Testing the Waters

Please make your check payable to River Network and return this form to:
River Network, 520 SW 6th Ave., Suite 1130, Ptld., OR 97204-1511 Phone: 503/241-3506

River Network works to support you and your needs. We provide training and technical assistance to our Partner groups.
 River Network does not promote legislation or represent your organization in legal matters.



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Visit River Network's New Web Site!

River Network's newly improved web site makes it easier for you to find the information you need to preserve and protect watersheds in your community. New features you'll find at www.rivernetwork.org include:

THE RESOURCE LIBRARY contains extensive resources on a wide range of issues facing grassroots river protection groups today, and links to other organizations doing work crucial to the health of our nation's rivers.

THE NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF RIVER AND WATERSHED CONSERVATION GROUPS lists more than 3,600 grassroots river and watershed conservations groups in the United States. Is your group on the list?

THE DIRECTORY OF FUNDING SOURCES is available to River Network Partners, profiles foundations, corporations, and state and federal agencies and other organizations that support small, nonprofit watershed groups.

***Log on today.
Make www.rivernetwork.org
your on-line connection to the
nation's river community.***

