

ConWatch

The Garden Club of America • Spring 2017

From the Editor

Molly Jones

News

Conservation/NAL

Land Conservation

Land is the Answer

Land as a Natural Climate Solution

Economic Benefits of Land Conservation

The Nature Conservancy 50-State Solution

3 Federal Bills that Protect Land

History of Conservation in America

Land Trusts 101

What is a Land Trust?

How a Land Trust Works

How Can I Help?

My Conservation Story

Resilience

The Land Calls Us

Nancy Russell; A Visionary Takes Action

Making a Difference

Inspirations from the Past

Everyday Things

Roses

NAL Issues to Watch

Policies and Legislation

Resources

Climate websites

“Land is the answer.”

—Andrew Bowman

President of the Land Trust Alliance



From the Editor

By Molly Jones

As we continue to Step Up to the challenges of addressing climate change in 2017, the landscape has changed. Legislative support for environmental causes is threatened and we are challenged to renew our efforts to support the gains we've made to assure a safe world for ourselves and for those who come after us. While some march, others are not as comfortable in the role of activist, yet there is a way for each of us to help. Conserving land is one such way.

In this issue, we look not only at the changing political landscape with Suzanne Booker-Canfield's *'Policies and Legislation to Watch,'* but we also look at the landscape literally. Land conservation is a key part of any strategy that preserves the best of our land and our communities.

'Land is the Answer' as Karen Arsenault looks at issues that include clean water and air, food, health, and climate change.

Lisa Ott is a big part of this issue. She educates and encourages us to help conserve land in her series of articles in *'Land Trusts 101.'* Lisa also looks at conservation from a different angle when she examines the positive economic impact of land conservation.

Ned Duhnkrack tells us about the elements that help land, flora and fauna survive and thrive despite climate change in her article, *Resilience.*

When Joan Cathcart put out a call to fellow GCA members for personal stories about Land Trusts, she was overwhelmed with responses. Perhaps you have a story about land, too?

Dede Petri tells us, with humor, the story of GCA ladies who have bravely taken their convictions about preserving land and promoting "beautification" to the US Senate with testimony that resulted in legislation for the benefit of us all.

My inspiration is often close to home. Many of my sources in this issue are from Oregon and the Northwest, yet have a more universal message. Award-winning Seattle author, Debra Prinzing, writes about roses and encourages us to support not only our local flower growers, but embrace the broader concept of buying local as a way of supporting our communities.

For me, conserving land begins with stewardship of the land immediately around me, and broadens outward to include the land making up our communities, and the world at large. This issue is full of ideas and inspiration for doing just that.

Molly Jones

The Portland Garden Club, Zone XII

Molly is the current editor of ConWatch

Ideas, contributions, & suggestions are welcome, as are requests for additional information on any of the subjects presented, and may be emailed to the Editor.



NEWS—From the Conservation and NAL Committees

By Linda Fraser and Missy Jensen

In this issue of Conwatch, the articles clarify the purpose and interconnection of the National Affairs and Legislation and the Conservation Committees. They highlight the very real need to ‘Step Up’ now with a redoubled commitment to education and advocacy. As Dede Petri takes us through an abridged history of the conservation advocacy of the GCA, we are inspired by the strong legacy that we have inherited.

Last year, we were feeling confident about our efforts to educate ourselves and our governmental representatives. Our country signed on to the Paris

Agreement to join a global effort to address climate change, we enacted the Clean Power Plan to engage our industry in limiting greenhouse gas emission, and we renewed and funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund to insure the future of our parks and public lands. The Farm Bill, as well as the America Gives More Act, promised the protection of our rich lands, and established the Tax Incentive Credit for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands. The future of our environment looked rosy. However, the rules of the game changed.

We have a shift in power in D.C. and with that comes a shift in focus and a new agenda. New environmental challenges call for new action.

The good news is that this year's GCA Annual NAL Washington, D.C. meeting was oversubscribed, evidencing our clubs' awareness and acceptance of the responsibility to learn more, to expand our support of legislation as per our Position Papers, and to hold our representatives accountable to safeguard our environment for future generations.

The responsibility for protecting our environment is ongoing. At different times in our history, the challenges shift. At NAL this year, our speakers discussed these shifts. Theresa Pierno, President and CEO of the National Parks Conservation Association, underscored the risks that climate change and underfunding place on our national parks. Deb Atwood, Executive Director of the Meridian Institute AGree program, explained how our agriculture productivity and sustainable food supply are threatened if we deny the science of climate change. Oceanographer and Senior Advisor to the Ocean Conservancy, Sandra Whitehouse detailed the need for federal protection of our oceans at a time when traffic, plastic, and climate change are altering their health. Tim Profeta, Director of the Nicholas Institute at Duke University, explained the critical nexus between national policy and science. These were just a few of the NAL Tuesday educational speakers, but all were keenly aware of our collective responsibility.



[Congressman Earl Blumenauer, \(D. OR\), known for his bike, his bowties and his commitment to environmental causes.](#)

On Wednesday, ten Senators and Congressional representatives from both sides of the aisle discussed their environmental legislative agenda. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, (D. NY) stressed the power of the GCA women to push our environmental agenda forward; Congressmen Garrett Graves, (R. LA) talked about bringing the lessons learned from Katrina to the national forefront in protective legislation; Senator Maggie Hassan, (D. NH) told of her proactive environmental experience as Governor and how it will shape her agenda as a freshman Senator; Congressman Mike Quigley, (D. IL) explained why he agreed to sponsor the Botanical Research Act drafted by the GCA working with the Chicago Botanic Garden, H.R. 1054, and Congressman Earl Blumenauer, (D. OR), whose environmental history is legendary, challenged us to lead by example, as he passed out his energy sensitive transportation pins, and peddled away on his bicycle to attend his next meeting.

On Thursday, all delegates met with their legislative representatives prepared and ready to carry the legacy of environmental advocacy forward.

Linda Fraser

Southampton Garden Club, Zone III

National Affairs and

Legislation Committee Chairman

Missy Jensen

Carmel-by-the-Sea Garden Club, Zone XII

Conservation Committee Chairman





Photograph: Courtesy of York Land Trust

Land is the Answer

By Karen Arsenault

Land nurtures important connections between people and nature, preserves wildlife habitats, and strengthens community connections. Historically, land trusts have been a way of protecting privately held land from unwanted development through direct purchases or easements on properties with important conservation value. The mission of land trusts has always been to sustain wildlife corridors, biodiversity, clean water, wetlands, clean air, open fields, farmlands, prairies, forests, and scenic vistas. Today, it's critical for land trusts to re-envision their role in order to remain relevant to the increasingly diverse people and communities they impact and how they use the land. Land trusts must continue to think strategically about their land purchase priorities, for example, by targeting land that can buffer shoreline erosion, coastal storms and mitigate flooding and sea level rise.

The challenge is that for most people, the work of land trusts in conserving land has never knowingly been a part of their lives, despite the fact that land trusts protect more than 56 million acres of land.

Andrew Bowman, president of the [Land Trust Alliance](#), reporting on his first nine months in office, recently gave a [speech](#) enumerating many environmental challenges facing us, and his answer to them was resoundingly the same: Land is the answer. Here are those challenges and how some land trusts are responding to them.

How do we ensure clean and abundant water supplies?

Land is the answer. Forests and natural lands play an important part in filtering out pollutants and contaminants that reach raw water sources. Land conservation offers permanent protection of critical watersheds and wetlands and provides multiple benefits to communities including flood control, recreation and protection of important cultural, historic and environmental resources.

“water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children’s lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land.”
—[Luna Leopold](#)



Photograph: Courtesy of York Land Trust

How do we secure local, healthy and sustainable food?

Land is the answer. In Wells, Maine, Bill and Anna Spiller of Spiller Farms have recently completed a conservation easement with Great Works Regional Land Trust to preserve their 110-acre farm in perpetuity.

Since 1967, the couple has worked together to produce fruit, vegetables and beef for individuals, for the local school district, as well as donating thousands of pounds of produce to local food pantries. “It’s a wonderful thing to know that our town will have a place to grow food forever,” stated Owen Grumbling, chairman of the town’s Conservation Commission.

How do we foster healthy child development, physical vitality and learning?

Land is the answer. Engaging young people helps inspire them to be the next generation of environmental stewards. Kittery Land Trust (KLT), Great Works Regional Land Trust (GWRLT) and York Land Trusts (YLT) in Maine all expanded programming in their local schools.

- A York High School senior, working on his Eagle Scout badge, recently completed a project on YLT property clearing and blazing trails and installing four interpretive signs detailing the area’s unique history and role in habitat conservation.

- GWRLT developed a program for ninety 7th grade students at Noble Middle School that increased their understanding of what land trusts do and how to use a trail map. Students visited a preserve and had a scavenger hunt, using their map skills to search for a series of natural elements.
- KLT developed Sand Sculpture and Stick Sculpture programs with the Kittery Recreation Department this past summer.
- KLT has also partnered with a Traip Academy teacher who brought her students to Brave Boat Headwaters to help develop a management plan for the preserve. Students will also assist with a deer impact monitoring project that the land trust is undertaking with the US Forest Service.
- YLT partnered with the York Art Association’s Kid’s Camp for the first time, offering environmental and nature activities.
- A new pollinator-friendly garden was completed at York Public Library in concert with a 7th grade science class and the Piscataqua Garden Club.

How do we stem a national health crisis and provide opportunities for people to exercise and recreate?

Land is the answer. There is increasing evidence that human health is linked to exposure to natural areas where clean water, clean air, and beautiful, peaceful surroundings provide opportunities for reflection and inspiration.



Crane Beach

Land trusts create family-friendly activities working with other nonprofit partners to increase connection with the outdoors.

In Massachusetts, Crane Beach, a 1,234-acre conservation and recreation property managed by the Trustees of Reservations, offers more than five miles of trails, fun at the beach for people of all ages and the opportunity to sight piping plovers, shore birds on the threatened/endangered species list.

How do we make sure that iconic American ways of life, such as hunting, fishing and ranching, don't die out.

Land is the answer. The *Montana Land Reliance* partners with private landowners to permanently protect agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and open space.

How do we mitigate climate change?

Land is the answer. A county official in North Florida believed he wouldn't experience any problems from sea level rise. Marc Hudson of North Florida Land Trust showed him through conservation



planning and mapping that the main tributary stream that runs through the county is due for major flooding. Better yet, Marc was able to show the official "we had already identified priority land purchases in the floodplain of that creek, so that the flooding situation would not be exacerbated."

This is but one example of the type of planning that is going on in coastal cities and towns throughout the country as they address the impacts of climate change.

Land sustains us whether we live in a city, suburb or rural area. It connects us to nature, and provides peace and inspiration. City parks, bike paths, soccer fields open spaces, community gardens build stronger connections between people. Communities that work together and set aside open space and educate citizens, especially kids, help protect land in perpetuity for public benefit. Preventing unwanted development, working cooperatively with landowners, farmers and communities to maintain natural beauty and cultural heritage, conserving shorelands, fields, wildlife, clean water, outdoor recreation, healthy forests, fresh food are all part of responsible land stewardship.



Step Up! Connect With Your Local Land Trusts

Joining a local land trust, using its resources and volunteering are all ways to support these wonderful institutions and their important work.

Here's how to get started.

If you are considering donating your own land to a land trust or creating a conservation easement, there are great resources for finding out more about the process, [here](#). Meanwhile, [Read about](#) and [listen to a barred owl](#).

Karen Arsenault

Piscataqua Garden Club, Zone I

Vice Chairman Land Use/Sustainable Development/Public Lands,

NAL and Conservation; York Land Trust, Board of Directors





Noel Kempff Mercado National Park Photo: Jon Hornbuckle Jonathanhornbuckle.webs.com

Land as a Natural Climate Solution

By Lisa Ott

To slow global warming, we must emit less carbon. It is truly that simple. New technologies may get us most of the way there but protecting and restoring nature can play a major role in our success.

Experts say we need to limit global warming to less than 2° Celsius by the end of the century, as nations agreed to do at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference. To reach that goal by 2030, we must reduce annual emissions from a projected 70 gigatons of carbon dioxide to about 40 gigatons. Scientists at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) estimate that nations can achieve about a third of the reduction needed in this next critical period by protecting and restoring nature and its carbon storage capacity.

This involves three strategies:

- Protect natural lands from development where appropriate.
- Restore degraded lands so they can absorb more carbon.
- Implement the most productive and sustainable methods on land that is already in cultivation.

In 2005, British Petroleum and two other energy companies gave TNC money to buy logging rights next to a park in Bolivia. Instead of cutting the trees down, a deal was struck where the forest would be maintained and the trees would be allowed to continue to grow. Through this acquisition, the Noel Kempff Mercado

National Park grew from 1.8 million acres to 3.9 million acres. At that time an independent certification agency estimated that the forest was absorbing more than one million metric tons of harmful carbon emissions. By 2026, that same mature forest will be preventing more than 5.8 metric tons of carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere. Similar forest protection efforts are happening in the U.S., in Louisiana and California, and in other countries including Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia among others.

To restore degraded lands, forest rangers across the world are returning to age-old methods of setting controlled burns in the spring. These small, contained fires clear out brush before the dry season arrives, thereby preventing the fueling of much larger forest fires that can consume enormous swaths of land. At one ranch in Australia's northern savannas, these controlled burning techniques have reduced the land consumed by wildfires from 36% to 1%, resulting in much less carbon being emitted into the atmosphere.

Conservationists also work with farmers and ranchers to restore carbon storage capacity to their land, both by planting cover crops and employing no-till practices that keep more organic matter in the ground. Research suggests that the world's cultivated soils once held more carbon—perhaps as much as 50–70% more than today. These conservation methods improve soil, increase yield and contribute significantly to the reduction of harmful carbon emissions.

Protecting our forests, grasslands, wetlands, peat bogs, and oceans may be the sleeping giant in solving climate change. This protection costs less than many of the technologies that are in development. And, the end product will be a much more sustainable future. ■

Trees and Carbon

- Every tree consists of roughly 50% carbon by weight, which is stored in roots, trunks, branches, and leaves.
- The bigger the tree, the more carbon is stored. When cut, trees decompose and the stored carbon is emitted into the atmosphere.
- This is doubly harmful as cut trees no longer absorb carbon dioxide resulting in a net loss of storage capacity.



The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation

By Lisa Ott

Win-Win

During fiscally challenging times, conflicts often arise between open space preservation and other community goals. The case for conservation is stronger when we can show that protecting land has multiple benefits—especially economic benefits.

As noted in the Trust for Public Lands research report, *Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*, we know that:

Parks And Open Space Generate Increased Property Tax Revenues.

In Madison, Wisconsin, a citizens committee appointed to investigate and report on the amount of increase in the city's assessed value of property attributable to parks concluded:

"In our judgment, from ten to fifteen percent of the increase in the value of taxable property in the city of Madison is attributable to the establishment of parks, drives, playgrounds, and open spaces in and around the city." When translated into dollar terms, the committee concluded that the increased tax revenues the city received from the increase of property values adjacent to the parks "are meeting all the expenses of their maintenance, and all interest charges on the investment, and, in addition, are paying into the city treasury at least \$10,000 to be expended by the city for other municipal purposes."

The economic benefits of farmland preservation include maintaining viable local economies as well as protecting rural and environmental amenities.

Fields, farms, working forests, watershed lands and even undeveloped portions of private lots can provide habitat for plants and wildlife and sources for fresh, local food. They offer scenic views and preserve community character.

Many water issues can be solved more economically with good land use practices

In many instances, it is less expensive for a community to maintain open space that naturally maintains water quality, reduces water runoff and helps control flooding than for it to use tax dollars for costly engineered infrastructure projects such as water filtration plants and storm sewers.

A report by the NJ Keep It Green Coalition found that for every 10% increase in forest cover in a municipal water system's watershed, costs of water treatment decreased by 20%.

An Army Corps of Engineers study in 2002 in Massachusetts estimated that it would cost up to \$100 million for flood control along the Charles River, but only \$10 million to acquire 8,500 acres of wetlands bordering the river that would act as an ongoing flood control.

The economic value of urban trees include improving air and water quality.

Open Space impacts air pollution too. On Long Island, NY, trees and shrubs in parks and protected open space remove air pollutants that endanger human health and damage structures. Such spaces reduce Long Island's pollution control costs by an estimated \$18.9 million per year according to *this study*.

Parks and open space attract businesses and affluent retirees

Proximity to parks, outdoor recreation facilities, hiking, biking trails and greenways often increase the value of homes and properties. A study from Salem, Oregon found that property *“adjacent to open space was worth approximately \$1,200 more per acre than urban land 1,000 feet away from the green belt.”* The National Association of Homebuilders has shown that the proximity to a park in an urban area can increase a property’s value by as much as 15–20%, which also increases tax revenue for local municipalities.

In addition to the economic benefits listed in the TPL report, there are other economic benefits related to land conservation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation conducted a *study*, that found the total contribution from outdoor sports in the United States is nearly \$821 billion a year. The study also found that outdoor sports generate 6,435,000 U.S. jobs and \$99 billion in federal and state tax revenues. These figures include hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and human-powered sports such as hiking, camping, skiing, paddle sports and bicycling. In addition, the study found that outdoor recreation sales (gear and trips combined) of \$325 billion per year are greater than annual returns from pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing (\$162 billion), legal services (\$253 billion), and power generation and supply (\$283 billion).

Tourism is one of Long Island, New York’s largest industries, producing revenues of \$4.7 billion a year. A study conducted by the Trust for Public Land found that approximately 28 percent of visitors (i.e., nonresidents) to Long Island—5.1 million per year—come to visit parks, such as beaches, heritage sites, vineyards

and so on. These visitors spend \$615 million annually in the local economy and generate \$27.3 million in sales tax.

For most of us, the intrinsic value of open space protection is enough. When paired with strong economic data, the choice to conserve land and protect open space becomes clear. ■



The Nature Conservancy's 50-State Climate Initiative

Ultimately addressing climate change calls for a combination of efforts by individual, institutions, non-profits and governmental action. One non-profit, The Nature Conservancy, with its history of on-the-ground work in every state has developed a 50-State Climate Initiative, part of their strategy for addressing global climate change, challenging each state to individually come up with practical solutions for addressing its climate change issues.

Strategies vary widely from state to state and include scientific research, influencing policy, industry collaborations, outreach and education, and conservation programs which provide nature-based solutions, such as forest restoration and no-till farming.

In Oregon, the Conservancy brought local business leaders together to identify policies and programs for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that would also benefit the economy. Catherine Macdonald, of The Nature Conservancy in Oregon says, "Oregon's plan identifies eight strategies and some related measures that Oregon can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." These include:

- Improvements in how emission reduction incentive programs are financed.
- Transportation strategies to accelerate adoption of alternative fuel vehicles, increase transit options and reduce congestion.
- Creating a good accounting system to help landowners advance nature based solutions to climate change that will protect biodiversity, improve water quality etc.

See how other states are addressing The Nature Conservancy's 50-State Climate Change Strategy initiative [here](#). Scroll down to see great videos from other states. And [here](#) are great ideas for how you can take individual action.



The Big Three Federal Bills that Protect Land

Every person living in the United States—all 325 million people—benefit from land conservation. Protecting natural areas filters the air and water supply, absorbs carbon emissions, protects wildlife habitat and ensures that farmers have land on which to grow food. Thus, protecting land is a federal issue. Over the years, three pieces of legislation stand out in land protection. All three have been supported by The Garden Club of America!

Enhanced Incentive For Conservation Easements

was made permanent last year as a part of the America Gives More Act. This legislation allows donors of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive lands to qualify for a tax deduction of up to 50% of their adjusted gross income over sixteen years up to the value of the land. To qualify, conservation easements must be held by a land trust or a government entity responsible for their enforcement. This program, by far, is the most efficient in leveraging public and private dollars to protect land.

Land protected per year, average: 750,000 acres



The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

has infused over \$16 billion of federal energy royalties into more than 41,000 conservation projects over the last fifty years—from iconic national treasures to hometown parks and natural areas. Funds from this program are allocated to federal agencies and the states to create wildlife refuges, purchase unprotected lands within existing parks and to create recreational facilities. Congress has to renew or change this law by September, 2018—or the funding will simply stop. Congress allowed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to expire which, while smaller, was a great tool for protecting land in coastal areas. Some in Congress want to stop federal agencies from buying new lands for parks, refuges and national forests—so reauthorizing LWCF won't be easy!

Land conservation yearly: 50,000–100,000 acres

The 2014 Farm Bill

was a big win for conservation providing \$1 billion over ten years for conservation easements. Farm Bill programs like the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Healthy Forest Reserve, Community Forests, and Wetlands Reserve Program create major opportunities to protect high-priority farm and ranch lands, grasslands, wetlands and forests. These programs provide matching funds to conservation partners, so federal investments go further to protect America's productive land.

Land protected yearly: Approx. 100,000 acres.

Other notable programs, worth a mention and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are the Duck Stamp Program, used to purchase wildlife refuges, and Section 6 Endangered Species grants, used to protect habitats for endangered species.

Special thanks to Russ Shay, Director of Public Policy at The Land Trust Alliance, for his counsel.



The History of Conservation in America

By Lisa Ott

The first blooms of the conservation movement in America occurred between 1900 and 1920. Its most notable leader was the great Republican president, **Theodore Roosevelt** (TR). TR was quite progressive, fighting against corruption, dismantling monopolies, and believing in scientific management principles. He also understood the important relationship between nature and human health. Like English Tories of a generation before, he was convinced that the materialism of the industrial age threatened the tradition of American values. Roosevelt came to his love of nature through time spent outside fishing, hunting and camping and wanted very much to share the values found in nature with others.

The nation's first Conservation Conference was organized by TR at the White House in May 1908. Excerpts from a report generated at the Conference read, "The spirit and vigor of our people are the chief glory of our republic. Yet, even as we have neglected our natural resources, so have we been thoughtless of life and health."

TR's conservation record is unmatched by that of any other president of either party. Thirteen national parks were created by 1916, when the National Park Service was established, and Roosevelt added 130 million acres to our national forest lands, 51 new national wildlife refuges and 18 national monuments. It was a stunning feat achieved through bipartisan support that changed the face of the country.



Other American Presidents Who Shaped America's Landscape

Thomas Jefferson's 1803 Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the country. The United States acquired territory that formed 15 new states and included the future sites of many national parks including Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Jefferson also sponsored the Lewis & Clark Expedition, which led to significant additions to the zoological and botanical knowledge of the continent.

Abraham Lincoln changed the course of America's public lands when he signed a law setting aside the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley as protected lands in 1864. Overshadowed by the Civil War, this news received little attention, but it set a significant precedent — places of scenic and natural importance should be protected for the enjoyment of all people.

Ulysses S. Grant accomplished two firsts in conservation that live on today. In 1868, Grant set aside the Pribilof Islands in Alaska as a reserve for the northern fur seal. This was the earliest effort to use federally owned land to protect wildlife. In 1872, he signed a law establishing Yellowstone as our nation's first national park. Today, there are more than 400 sites in the national park system.

Woodrow Wilson signed the "Organic Act" in 1916, creating the bureau responsible for protecting America's 35 already existing national parks and monuments and those yet to be established. Wilson's administration also presided over the creation of several new national parks, including icons like Dinosaur National Monument and Rocky Mountain National Park.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt created 11 national monuments. His New Deal program — the Civilian Conservation Corps — dramatically impacted existing park lands. Millions of people were put to work building infrastructure in national parks and forests, ultimately planting billions of trees, building roads and trails, and combating soil erosion.

Jimmy Carter had a massive impact on public lands in Alaska. When President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 into law, he set aside over 104 million acres of land, creating 10 national parks and preserves, two national monuments, nine national wildlife refuges, two national conservation areas and 25 wild and scenic rivers ensuring that large portions of wilderness remain undeveloped.

Barack Obama established, in his first seven years in office, 22 national monuments and expanded others to set aside more than 265 million acres of land and water — that's more than any other president. This includes the expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument into the largest marine monument in the world and most recently designating three new national monuments in the California Desert.

Information provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior.



Hikers enjoy Lyle Cherry Orchard hike on land donated to Friends of the Gorge Land Trust by Nancy Russell. Photo: Debbie Asakawa

Land Trusts 101

By Lisa Ott

What is a Land Trust?

Land trusts, also called **land conservancies**, have been in existence since 1891. That was when the first land trust, the Trustees for Reservations, was established in Massachusetts. They are non-profit, non-governmental organizations that, as all or part of their mission, actively work to preserve sensitive natural areas, farmland, rangeland, water sources, cultural resources, or notable landmarks. They include large national organizations like The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land and many smaller grassroots organizations that operate on state, county, and community levels. The smaller groups were often formed around a community need like a treasured place about to be lost to development.

While relatively unheard of for nearly a century, land trusts took off in the late 1970s and by 1980 more than 400 local and regional land trusts existed. Most were still in the Northeast and three-fourths of them were all-volunteer organizations. At that time, most land that was protected was donated outright but the use of conservation easements was growing.

Today, there are approximately 1,363 land trusts operating in every state of the United States except North Dakota. California has the most land trusts, with 136 operating statewide. Despite being much smaller, Massachusetts is a close second with 120, followed by Connecticut with 108.



56 million acres of land have been conserved by state, local and national land trusts, which is double the size of all the land in national parks across the lower 48 states

Photograph: Susan Bein

Per the 2015 National Land Trust Census, 56 million acres of land have been conserved by state, local and national land trusts, which is double the size of all the land in national parks across the lower 48 states. Today, more than twice the amount of land donated consists of conservation easements vs. outright donations of land. The Census also noted that the top three priorities across all land trusts today are: protecting and preserving important natural areas and wildlife habitats, maintaining water quality and preserving working farms or ranchlands.

In addition, successful land trust programs involve land management, advocacy, education, and community outreach. Land trusts advocate at all levels of government for legislation that supports land conservation efforts.

They remove invasive species, restore grasslands, clear trails, engage volunteers and do everything necessary to be good stewards of the land. They also strive to educate their communities about the important relationships between land, water, food and air and engage them in programs and projects that get people of all ages outside to experience all that nature can offer.



Photograph: Debbie Asakawa

How Land Trusts Work

Traditionally, land trusts across the country have relied on three strategies to protect land: outright donations, bargain sales and donations of conservation easements. Additionally, some land trusts purchase land or easements for conservation purposes.

■ Land Donations

One of the greatest legacies a person can leave to future generations, a donation of land ensures that it is protected in perpetuity, and may result in significant tax deductions including gift and estate tax benefits.

■ Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a restriction placed on a piece of property to protect its associated resources. It is either voluntarily donated or sold by the landowner and constitutes a legally binding agreement that limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place on the land in perpetuity while the land remains in private hands. Conservation

easements protect land for future generations while allowing owners to retain many private property rights and to live on and use their land, at the same time potentially providing them with tax benefits.

■ Bargain Sales of Land

Donors sell their land for less than fair market value and take an income tax deduction for the difference between the appraised value and the selling price. This option allows a donor to realize some of the immediate income from the sale of the land while devaluing it enough to make it possible for a land trust to purchase it.

■ Land Purchases

Acquiring land requires financial resources. These are often derived through land trust partnerships with landowners, local governments, communities affected by potential development and funders who support permanent conservation of important landscapes.



How Can I Help Save Land?

■ Donate Land

If you are a private landowner there are two ways to conserve your land. You can donate a conservation easement if it is of environmental significance or you can make an outright gift of land to a conservation organization, private foundation, or governmental entity. This is a wonderful way to create a personal legacy and ensure that the land you love is protected in perpetuity. For information about donations of land or conservation easements, contact your local land trust which you can find [here](#) or online.

■ Join/Support a Land Trust

Land trusts work across the country. They can be large national organizations, like The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited or Trust for Public Land, or small local non-profits that protect land in your town or county. Even better, join two land trusts or more! Your land trust is on the

front line of land protection efforts in your community and they need your help to be successful. Your land trust may also provide you with recreational and educational programs, updates on local land-related issues, opportunities to get involved with land-saving projects and advocacy efforts. To locate a land trust near you, [click here](#)

■ Become a Volunteer

Whether you join the board, head a committee, lead an invasive species pull or stuff envelopes for a benefit party, land trusts need your help. Most land trusts are grass roots organizations which take on large responsibilities for acquiring and maintaining land. The role of volunteers is critical to their existence. Volunteering often allows you to be outside in the most wonderful parts of your community, meeting some of its nicest residents. Volunteers are the heart and soul of many land trusts and their importance cannot be over-emphasized.

■ Lead a Municipal Funding Campaign

Protecting land takes money. One of the best ways to ensure a conservation legacy for your community is through the successful execution of a local ballot measure. On election day, measures for land, water and parks appear on ballots across the county along with the names of elected officials. They are often referred to as “Propositions”. They generally create sustainable funding sources for land and water conservation through municipal bonds, transfer or sales taxes, or fees placed on items such as hunting licenses, pesticide permits, etc. Educational campaigns can ensure the success of a ballot measure and are often run just like political campaigns for candidates. The support of community leaders can be integral to the success of ballot measures.

■ Build a Conservation Ethic

From growing food to recharging our groundwater and from mitigating climate change to ensuring community character, land is critical to a healthy future for us and for our children. Taking an active role in educating our families and our communities about the value of land is crucial. Get inspired! [Here](#) are some people who are taking action in Oregon. Be inspiring! Step up!



Photograph: Susan Bein

BALLOT MEASURES FOR CONSERVATION

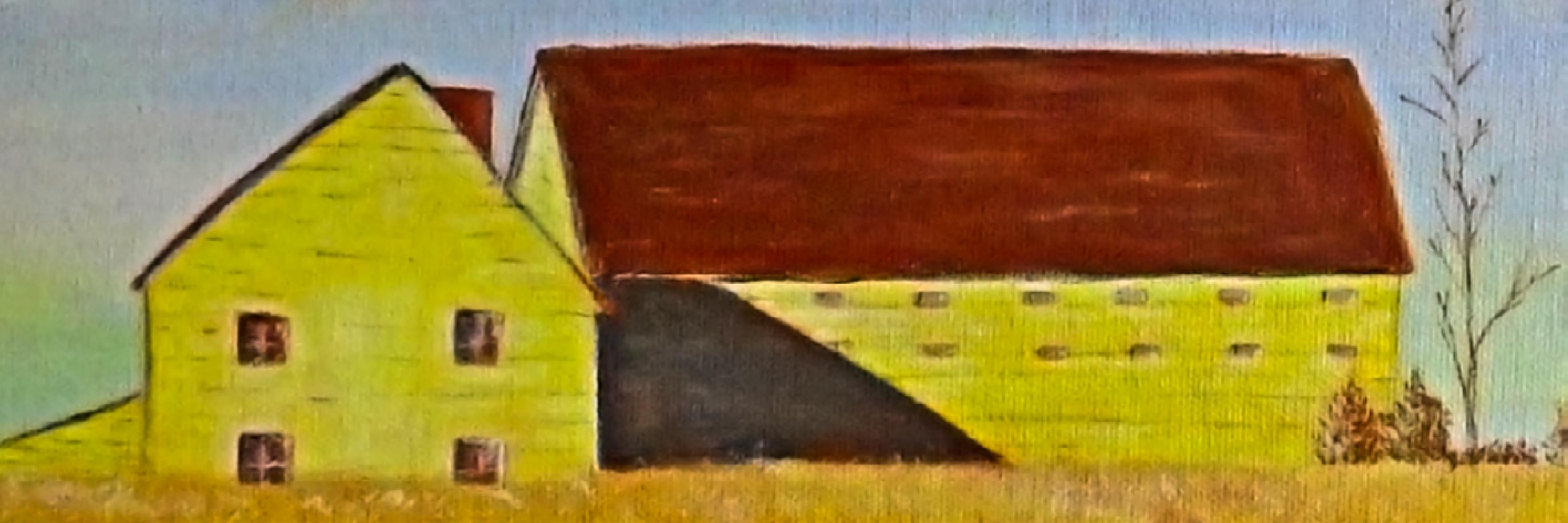
Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Communities across the country were choosing more than elected officials. They were deciding whether to fund ballot measures that would protect land and water conservation, create parks, trails, recreational and cultural facilities, community gardens and more.

From California to Massachusetts and from Washington to Florida, Americans were taking the future health of their communities into their own hands and voted overwhelmingly in support of the environment.

Of the 86 park, conservation, and restoration measures that appeared on ballots across the country, 68 passed. That means that in one day, voters created \$6.3 billion for land conservation, parks, and restoration.

These ballot measures passed in both Democratic and Republican leaning districts, and in many cases, these measures passed with overwhelming public support. ■



My Conservation Story

By Lisa Ott

For each of us, there are places in our communities that make them unique. It could be the church or the courthouse, the meadow you drive by every morning or the pond on the corner with the osprey nest teetering dangerously on a dead branch. Those personal places make you feel at home. Your special place may not be the same as your husband's or your best friend's, but everyone has one or more.

For me, the loss of the antique, yellow dairy barn where my daughter learned to ride was a turning point. That charming barn on my little road was torn down and replaced by a big new house with a cyclops eye! That changed the look of my village, and it angered me. I felt badly I had not at least tried to do something to stop it.

Similar experiences were happening to others in our community. This was the year 2001. Land trusts were well established in other parts of the country, but not in ours. That changed quickly. First, two local villages formed all-volunteer land trusts – one had donors and the other had conservation easements. In 2003, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, a local foundation, and friends from other villages who shared our feeling of loss, the North Shore Land Alliance was formed from those land trusts. My children were older now and I became the first employee.

We incorporated, got our not-for-profit status and assembled a strategic, dedicated board of trustees. Then we did our best to figure out how to save land in a very expensive part of the world where the average cost for an acre of land at that time was \$350,000.



We were very fortunate to have a sympathetic local government. Our county allowed us to put five environmental bonds on local ballots over a six-year period. To be successful, we sponsored campaigns for the bonds with direct mail, TV commercials and those annoying robo calls—just like you would for a candidate. We raised \$265 million to protect land, create parks, remediate storm water run-off and invest in ***brownfield redevelopment***. In addition to winning our bond votes by a 70% majority, our outreach efforts built a community of activists. They, for the first time, felt empowered that through their individual actions they could do something about shaping the future of the local landscape and the environmental resources contained within. We were on our way!

My second beloved place, an open meadow that is the first thing I see when I turn off the highway, came before the planning board a couple of years later. Thanks to the preliminary work we had done, we could purchase that milkweed-filled meadow and establish a local preserve with bluebird houses and walking

trails. I can hardly express the pleasure it gives me when I drive by to know that corner of our world will be protected forever.

Fourteen years later, our little land trust has protected 1,200 acres of land in one of the nation's most populated areas through acquisitions, easements, and gifts and built a membership of 3,000+ families. Together we have hosted educational programs in the schools and provided free walks in the woods. And, finally, we have begun to build a real conservation ethic in our community.

It takes a village to effectively conserve land. I must say that, other than my family activities, this is the most rewarding work I have ever done! ■

Lisa Ott

North Country Garden Club of Long Island, Zone III

Vice Chairman, Water & Wetlands, Conservation/NAL

President of the North Shore Land Alliance



Two land conservation visionaries, Nancy Russell and John Yeon

A Visionary Takes Action

When longtime GCA member Nancy Russell learned she had a terminal illness in 2004, she immediately took steps to make sure that the lands she had acquired over many years would be protected in perpetuity. She left the land to "Friends of Columbia Gorge" with additional funds to create a land trust, which became the Friends of Columbia Gorge Land Trust. Nancy was elected as the first trustee and served until her death in 2008. She left over 600 acres of her own land to the Friends of Columbia Land Trust.

Nancy's original vision has led to projects even she couldn't have envisioned, including the planned 200-mile trail system looping around both Oregon and Washington sides of the Columbia River. The extensive trails, a work in progress, not only give hikers access to natural beauty and day hikes, but also follow a more European model, making extended explorations possible by connecting with local communities offering lodging, and the best of regional foods and wine. Walking the trails has now become a destination.



Resilience

By Ned Duhnkrack

Resilience—the capacity to recover quickly from adversity—is a characteristic we all hope to have. It is equally important to land conservation, particularly within the context of a changing climate. Just like individuals, some landscapes are more resilient than others. As the climate changes, many vulnerable places will degrade and lose species, while other, resilient landscapes will retain their capacity to support a diversity of plants and animals.

Because land trusts work to protect land and natural systems in perpetuity, responding to climate change requires more than protection of the places where plants and animals live today. Those places are changing. To achieve perpetuity, land trusts across the country have embarked on a new initiative to identify and

permanently protect resilient landscapes, thereby creating a network of natural habitats sufficiently resilient to support native biodiversity even as the climate changes.

Ecological resilience refers to the capacity of a natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to and recover from the disruptions caused by our changing climate. Ongoing research will help identify the places to protect today that will likely support a variety of plants and animals tomorrow. This approach to resilience, studied for more than a decade by scientists at The Nature Conservancy, has found that land trusts must focus on areas with existing high quality biodiversity which are also complex and connected. Complex landscapes



are those natural areas with a variety of topography and land formations. This variety creates “micro-climates” that provide species options for survival within the local landscape. To survive a change in climate some plants and animals will need to move. Thus resilient lands are also lands that are connected —that is, provide safe passage to other protected areas. Urban development, roads and agriculture can inhibit natural movement. Maintaining connected natural cover through which species can move is important to resiliency. Using these measures of resilience, The Nature Conservancy has inventoried significant portions of North America, particularly in the East and Pacific Northwest, identifying sites that are complex and connected, and therefore more resilient to climate change. By using tools *such as those created by The Nature Conservancy* and strategically planning to preserve sites that are resilient, land trusts can provide a foundation for the survival and adaptation of diverse species.

The national Land Trust Alliance launched a new program in January, 2017, to help land trusts address climate change. The Alliance has a national network of over 1000 land trust organization members. Thus, local conservation projects can become regionally significant, as land trusts work cooperatively

to put together the pieces of a resilient puzzle. Land trusts can also work with other land owning partners, such as federal, state and local agencies, to combine resources and achieve greater success. Land protection initiatives can also ameliorate the effects of climate change, increasing overall landscape resilience. Forests have great capacity to store carbon and land trust efforts to protect, restore and replant forested land can help reduce the effects of climate change. Conserving marshland may help protect a local community from rising sea levels. Climate change has made conservation planning more complicated for land trusts, while at the same time making land protection all the more crucial for species survival.

Fortunately, frameworks have been developed for land trusts to assess resilience, target their efforts accordingly, and begin to assemble the pieces necessary to protect a diversity of species and natural processes.

Ned (Nancy) Duhnkrack

coordinates the pro bono legal program for the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts and does volunteer legal work for land trusts across Oregon. Thanks to the Land Trust Alliance & The Nature Conservancy for materials used to prepare this article.

What Does Resilience Look Like?

Complex • Connected • Biodiverse • Containing Microclimates

3 case studies model what is being done now

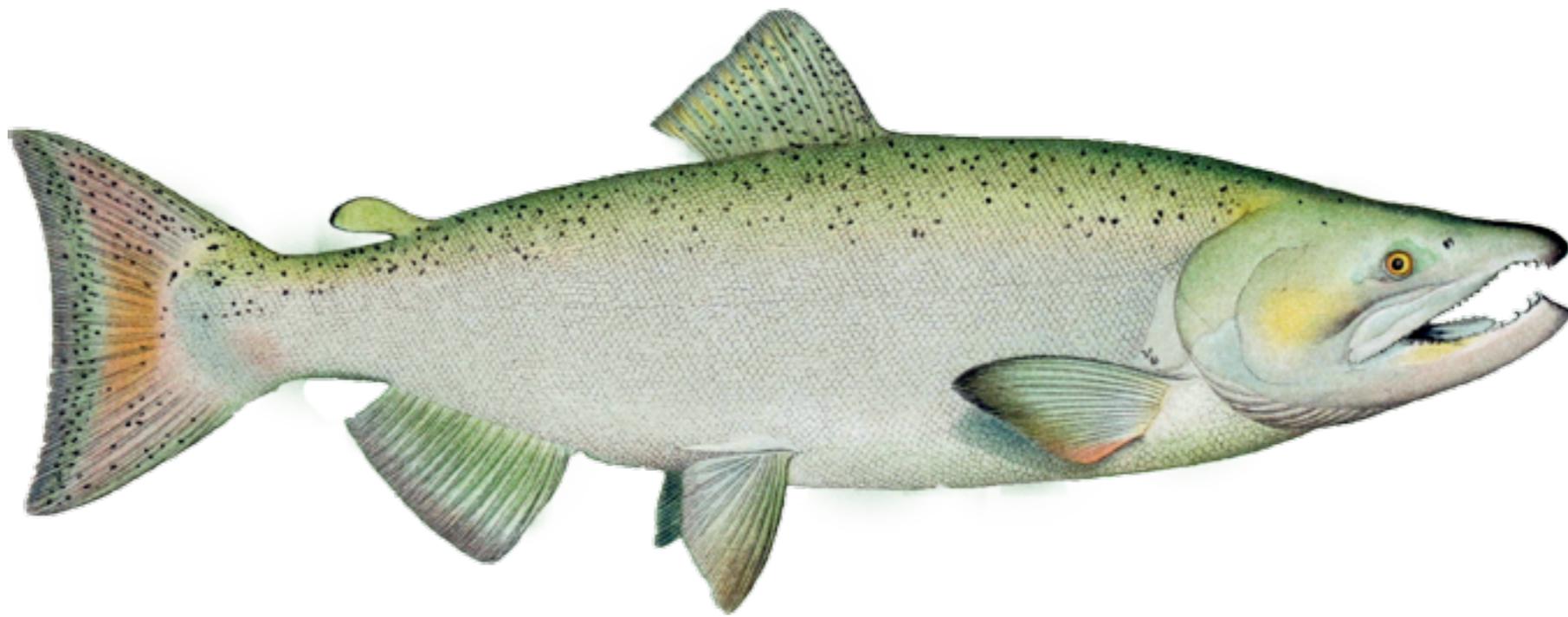


The Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) based in Corvallis, Oregon, is committed to protecting and preserving natural areas, with forests, farmlands, wildlife corridors, hills, meadows, wetlands and watercourses weaving through and around our mid-

Willamette Valley communities. One conservation priority area located in west Corvallis, includes over 1,400 acres of conservation lands and natural areas owned by the Greenbelt Land Trust, the City of Corvallis and Benton County. Benefits from this conservation area include preservation of a diversity of habitat types, increased habitat connectivity, functional habitat targeting at-risk species including the endangered **Fender's Blue butterfly** viewshed protection, extensive network of trail systems for the public and an expanding resource for educational and research students from K-12 and local universities. Bald Hill Farm, located within the 1,400 acre West Corvallis Conservation area, was acquired in July, 2013 by the GLT. This 587-acre farm is at the heart of the mid-

Valley, with three miles of public trails, scenic vistas from pastures to ridge lines, and some of the most critical remnant habitats in Western Oregon. It is a visionary property adjacent to Bald Hill Natural Area, where public trails combine with cows, endangered wildlife and plants find refuge, and children come to learn about the natural world. This is an urban farm that supports local food production, recreation and education.





One *McKenzie River Trust* (MRT) project that incorporates climate change resiliency is a 320 acre conservation easement that protects upland prairie and healthy working forestland near Dorena Reservoir in Cottage Grove. This property situates well within the TNC models for resilient landscapes as it lies within the "bathtub ring" in the Willamette Valley between the pressure of residential development at the valley floor and industrial timber on the surrounding hillsides. Upland prairies now cover less than 1% of their former area, making them one of the rarest North American ecosystems. The few remaining upland prairies in the Willamette Valley are being threatened now both by development as well as the natural succession to shrub and forestland and non-native pest plants. The landowners of the property have worked with Natural Resource Conservation Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, private foresters, and the local watershed council to come up with a restoration and management plan for the 50 acres of upland prairie on their property. The effort with MRT to permanently protect the

property with a conservation easement has been driven by the idea that sites like this can provide refuge and upland habitat connectivity to prairie species in a changing climate as well as focus on providing healthy forestland for carbon sequestration.



Another *McKenzie River Trust* project partially funded by a Nature Conservancy /Doris Duke Charitable Foundation grant made possible acquisition and tidal estuary restoration on the North Fork of the Siuslaw River. To complete the acquisition of this 250 acre property, MRT has also applied for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board acquisition grant. Tidal wetlands play a critical role in coastal resiliency and restoration of properties like this can return a regime of natural sedimentation allowing the site to keep pace with sea level rise in the face of climate change. Furthermore, this property is situated within a well-established network of protected lands in the lower estuary, providing connectivity for the many species that rely on these systems. ■

The Land Calls Us

By Joan Cathcart

When we at ConWatch publication reached out to GCA members regarding land trusts & local involvement, the response was overwhelming. Everyone had a story to tell. They support their local land preservation efforts as well as the umbrella organizations The Nature Conservancy and **Land Trust Alliance**. They donate money, leadership, time, and land. There are 1200 land trusts. GCA members seem to know them all.

Here are just some land trust tales from around the country;

Lookout Mountain Conservancy *From Camilla Burbank, Peggy Laney, Lookout Mtn. Garden Club*

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, the **Lookout Mountain Conservancy** has gone beyond the expectations of a land trust by prioritizing connection to inner city high schoolers. Led by CEO Robyn Carlton and Lookout Mountain GC members, this conservancy has literally used its land to improve lives in their community. They hire student interns to work the land and the students become engaged with nature and their futures. They earn money, better grades, high school graduation, and love of the outdoors.

What started in 1990 as a few “Lookies” cleaning junk from land at the mountain’s foot has transformed into preservation of nature in 3 states and a mountain of good will for the town and its young people. “Conserving land that changes lives has become a way of life for us,” R. Carlton

Western Reserve Land Conservancy *From Jane Ellison, Shaker Lakes Garden Club*

In the manufacturing and agricultural areas of northeast Ohio, Cleveland and Lake Erie, similar efforts are taking place with the **Western Reserve Land Conservancy** (WRLC). Here some 50,000 acres have been conserved and restored with the vision of “communities nourished by natural lands, working farms, and healthy cities.” This conservancy strives for community-oriented development to allow urban parks, farmlands, and open spaces—creating a habitat that serves people. Supported by Shaker Lakes GC and Cleveland GC, the organization led by executive Rich Cochran united 8 small land trusts. In a struggling environment, this conservancy promotes protecting land that has relevancy to its diverse population.



Photo courtesy of the Greenwich Land Trust

Greenwich Land Trust

***From Karen Marache, Libby King & Christine Nichols,
Greenwich Garden Club***

The Greenwich GC has an integral relationship with the [*Greenwich Land Trust*](#) (GLT) having helped start it 40 years ago. GC members worked with other locals to propose the land trust idea to Greenwich and provided initial funding. The club continues its involvement with board service, fund-raising including “An Evening at the Farmstead,” land donations, and partnership work around pollination and environmental awareness. They sponsored a “pollinator garden” and solar-powered waterfall at the Farmstead, and applaud the GLT’s stewardship of 745 acres of woodland, meadows, orchard and tidal marshes.

Monadnock Conservancy

From Sharon Malt, Beacon Hill Garden Club

Sharon tells a personal tale of conservancy with her love of New England vacationland in New Hampshire’s farm country. Years ago she and her husband bought land near Mt. Monadnock and quickly became involved with [*The Monadnock Conservancy*](#) and conservationists at the Garden Club of Dublin. They have worked together to protect open space, small lakes & wetlands, wildlife corridors, and landowners’ sustainable decisions on timber and farming practices. “Farmland Forever” is a rallying cry.

The Conservancy, founded in 1989 and protecting 20,000 acres, has encouraged young farmers to the region by preserving farmland and allowing its continued use. It protects precious forestland similarly with conservation purchase, maintenance, and hiking trails that extend this small region to NH’s statewide Wapack Trail. It also includes “preserving towns with character”.



Photo courtesy of the North Shore Land Alliance

North Shore Land Alliance

From Lisa Ott, North County Garden Club of Long Island, NY

Lisa is both volunteer and CEO of her local land trust, [The North Shore Land Alliance](#), now protecting 1200 acres of valuable landscape. In its purview are 8 acres of former ExxonMobil property that was “an eyesore in the middle of an historic fishing harbor”, cites Lisa. The land had held large oil tanks and buildings and pavement. Uneconomical clean-up costs prompted a donation. The Land Alliance with local government, local garden clubs, and community volunteers transformed the site into glorious waterfront grassland and bird habitat. GC members continue to care for the area and to help with water education programs at the waterfront site.

The Nature Conservancy

From Cindy Scott, Denver Garden Club

In the West, the land trusts become bigger. Cindy is a new board member of CO’s 50-year old [Nature Conservancy](#) (TNC). She is passionate about the recent 4300 acre Trampe Ranch conservation easement on varied land with view corridors near Crested Butte ski area and abutting the Rocky Mountain Biological Station. This private land has been ranched for over 100 years and was in danger of becoming a development. Funds (\$24 million!) are near completion in partnerships with The Trust for Public Lands and the Research Station.

TNC has also just completed conservation of the JE Canyon Ranch protecting nearly 50,000 acres in the sandstone canyons and short-grass prairie area.

Pack Train in the Wallowa Mountains, Oregon.



Wallowa Land Trust. Enterprise, Oregon

From Bennett Burns, The Portland Garden Club

Wallowa Land Trust is a local nonprofit, tax-exempt organization founded in 2004 by Wallowa County landowners and residents. Their mission is to protect the rural nature of the Wallowa country by working cooperatively with private landowners, Indian tribes, local communities and governmental entities to conserve important lands. They use voluntary, non-regulatory tools to protect the special natural areas, wildlife habitat, open spaces and working lands that

make this remote corner of NE Oregon so unique. To date they have completed four conservation projects, providing permanent protection for a working farm, riparian areas along the Lostine and Wallowa Rivers, shoreline on Wallowa Lake, and two forested properties—one on the backside of the east moraine and one on the west moraine.



Photo Susan Bein

Colorado Cattleman's Agricultural Land Trust

From Joanne Sinclair, Denver Garden Club

Unique, bold, and successful is the **Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust** (CCALT). The organization protects Colorado's ranches through conservation easements and dates to 1995 when a few forward-thinking ranchers collaborated bravely with environmentalists to protect and defend ranching way of life. A GC family, The Sinclaires, supported the effort and its mission that "the heart and soul of the American West originate on the land". Former antagonists on land-use have now together conserved 500,000 acres with easements ensuring succeeding generations can enjoy and work the land.

Joanne Sinclair, 86 years old, has served for years on CCALT's board and with the support of many, including Denver & Colorado Springs GC's, has raised \$882,000 to protect the ranches they love with an annual summer BBQ attracting an ever-growing audience. "Protect Colorado – One Ranch at a time"

View "**Hanna Ranch**" a 2013 documentary about cattleman & conservationist Kirk Hanna. Produced by Eric Schlosser, author of Fast Food Nation.

Arroyo & Foothill Conservancy

From Joan Cathcart, Margaret Williams, Pasadena Garden Club

Land use in California is as contentious as any state, although it leads in the number of land trusts with 136. In populous LA County, the **Arroyos & Foothill Conservancy** (AFC), started in 2000, has worked in partnership with local garden clubs, county government, the larger Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and neighbors in protecting a horseshoe of natural acreage at the foothills of metropolitan LA. It preserves open space, wildlife corridors and restores habitat while also providing access and education. The area was a Partners for Plants project to remove invasive non-native plants. The A&F Conservancy was awarded a Zone XII club conservation award.

Joan Cathcart

Pasadena Garden Club, Zone XII

Assistant Editor, ConWatch



Mrs. J. Willis Martin



Victoria Woodhull



Ernestine Goodman

Making a Difference

By Dede Petri

Back in 1871, **Victoria Woodhull** was the first woman to testify before the U.S. Congress. The doughty suffragette was not easily intimidated. Women deserved the right to vote—and Members of the House Judiciary Committee needed to recognize this!

By all accounts, Woodhull was bold, forceful, and passionate. By all accounts, she did a fine job. But, alas, the men were not to be moved. With the exception of two brave legislators, the Committee was solidly against the proposal. It took nearly fifty more years to get the job done.

This is the world that the GCA entered back in 1913. Much like Woodhull, GCA's founders were bold, informed and passionate. And they were not about to take no for an answer. While Milton Berle some years later argued that “you can lead

a man to Congress, but you can't make him think,” GCA members were willing to give it a try. Our history is, in fact, filled with informed and engaged women working to make legislators think—and doing it with aplomb and success!

The History of Conservation in the Garden Club of America, 1913–2013, sheds light on these efforts, outlining the work of the Conservation and NAL committees. Equally informative and inspiring are the four GCA histories, available occasionally on Amazon (yes!) as well as at Headquarters and on the website. While their titles aren't exactly original: ***The Garden Club of America, History 1913-1938***; ***Fifty Blooming Years, 1913–1963***; ***Winds of Change, 1963–1988***; and William Seale's ***The Garden Club of America: A Growing Legacy***, the stories of GCA club members making a difference are truly worth exploring. Let's take a look.

Women's Land Army

The first GCA engagement with national policy took place as World War I approached.

The January 1915 Bulletin includes a report from Mrs. Horace Sellers of The Gardeners. Realizing that the war would likely create the need for food production, co-founder and then-president, Mrs. J. Willis Martin, did what the GCA does so well—appointed a committee. At her direction, Mrs. Sellers and the committee prepared *“a short paper of practical directions for the most economical planting for food of a small plot of ground.”*

When the Secretary of War later called for women across the country to engage in backyard gardening, the GCA ladies were ready! In 1917, the Council of Presidents committed the GCA to the Farm Units of the Women's Land Army. Mrs. Martin, we learn, appointed herself a delegate to the meeting in Washington and wrangled a personal meeting with the Secretary of Labor.

Records suggest that The Women's Land Army was no small endeavor—with every club participating in some way. In her lively history, Ernestine Goodman relates: *“Ladies of every description, many of whom, with large places and excellent gardeners, may have scarcely recognized their own vegetables except on the table, planted and hoed little strips side by side, with more fatigue than results, against the day when gardeners would become fighting men and these earnest souls would presumably produce their own vitamins. Our Farm Units may have been hectic, our canning may here and there have exploded in a truly warlike way...but on the whole we did our bit.”* Bit indeed. Early on, the GCA organization proved it could make a difference.





Fighting the Billboard Menace

Once the war was over, there was need to focus on challenges at home. And GCA leaders wasted no time. In the 1920s, they created a new committee, whose name admirably conveyed their passion and concern—Billboard Menace. While records are not clear, the graphic title may not have been uniformly well received, since the Committee on Billboard Menace was shortly thereafter renamed the Billboard and Roadside Committee, focused on urging *“restriction of all outdoor advertising to commercial districts where it will not injure scenery, civic beauty, or residential values, and to educate the public so far as possible.”*

Going forward, GCA clubs—at the city, state and national level—took the campaign seriously, working vigorously to oppose billboard blight and roadside ugliness. Some ladies, we are told, employed their butlers to cut down ugly road signs in the dark of night.

These efforts were so vigorous that, in 1938, Mrs. George A. Armour of Princeton proposed a resolution in honor of GCA’s first president, Mrs. J. Willis Martin,

proudly claiming that the GCA now *“properly call ourselves the most vital influence in all this land against out-of-door ugliness and for out-of-door beauty.”*

And that was surely the case. As billboards began to appear on roadsides across America, GCA was one of the first to take the challenge. In what can only be called ironic, its first struggle was with a floral group, the Society of American Florists, which was starting a campaign to advertise *“Say It with Flowers”* on billboards twenty feet long by seven feet high.

The GCA passed a resolution of protest, which was apparently dismissed as not representative of the entire GCA membership. Undeterred, the GCA has kept up its campaign for scenic beauty.

Mrs. Thomas Waller (Willie), Bedford GC and Chairman of the Conservation Committee, took on the issue in Washington, testifying before the U.S. Senate in favor of a bill to prohibit billboards on new federal highways. In one of the



first GCA letter-writing campaigns, GCA inundated members of Congress on the issue, resulting in the passage of a provision urging individual states to control billboards on interstate highways.

In the 1960s, Lady Bird Johnson—a favorite of the GCA and later recipient of the Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor Medal—came to town, bringing with her a plan for nationwide beautification. GCA leaders were surely supportive, happy indeed to see a First Lady advocating for the environment. But, we were not without our concerns.

In 1967, Willie Waller reappeared to represent the GCA at a meeting at the White House and later provided a statement to the House Subcommittee on Roads, part of the Committee on Public Works. *“The Garden Club of America,”* she noted, *“has never been particularly enthusiastic about the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, as we feel it is an exceedingly difficult piece of legislation to administer and deplore the mandatory compensation payments.”* Instead, she urged passage of a bill that would have simplified state administration. Over time, Waller’s concerns proved prescient, with the required compensation for removal of signs proving a roadblock to billboard elimination.

Time and time again, the GCA has been outspoken in opposing billboard blight. In 2014, the GCA engaged in a first by submitting an amicus brief, along with the

Sierra Club, the American Planning Association and the International Dark-Sky Association, in support of Scenic America’s challenge to the Federal Highway Administration’s interpretation that digital flashing signs were *“customary use.”* Again, in November 2016, the GCA, Scenic America and Dark-Sky Association were joined by the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and Brenda Moorman, president of the Georgetown Garden Club, in appearing and testifying before the Washington, DC Council (click [here](#) to read the testimony) in opposition to a bill promoted by the Nationals Baseball Team owners and local developers, to allow flashing digital billboards in one of the most prominent entry points to the nation’s capital. They called on legislators to make Washington a “green” capital and a model for the nation

Only a few weeks later, in what many condemned as a fast track process designed to limit public scrutiny, the Council passed a bill allowing five large digital displays on the Nats’ stadium and opening a new entertainment district just north of it to digital signage. Amendments also empowered the mayor to permit additional flashing signs in other—perhaps countless—venues in the capital. Because the matter may still require Zoning Board input, GCA is exploring one further opportunity to oppose this distressing ‘menace’ to the nation’s capital.

Supporting a National Arboretum

What had been the Legislative Committee became the GCA Committee for the National Capital in 1923 with Mrs. Calvin Coolidge as Honorary Chairman and Mrs. Frank Noyes as Chairman. They determined to create a national arboretum and similar projects of national appeal. Much like Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Noyes was a force to be reckoned with. With the help of her husband, who happened to be the publisher of the Washington Evening Star, Mrs. Noyes made the creation of an arboretum a major crusade. Her efforts came to fruition and in March, 1927, Congress passed a bill creating the Arboretum.

But, as the GCA was soon to learn, promising an arboretum, and ensuring its success are not the same thing. Creating the Arboretum took time and, in the intervening years, this federal property, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has suffered ebbs and flows, both in terms of federal support and GCA interest. In 1963 the GCA gave a large Chinese gazebo, designed by landscape architect Perry Wheeler, to the Arboretum in honor of GCA's 50th anniversary.

It was not until 2011 that the GCA again embraced the Arboretum's cause in a significant way. An article in the *Washington Post* reported that management intended to eliminate the Arboretum's historical boxwood and azaleas collections because of a lack of funding.

Jumping into action, GCA president Joan George, representing the Board, along with the chairmen of the Conservation, Horticulture, and National Affairs and Legislation Committees wrote to the Secretary of Agriculture and members of Congress, calling for the Arboretum to stop its misguided plan:

"In these challenging economic times, we surely understand that all public bodies must do more with less. However, we believe that the Arboretum's "economizing" to eliminate two such stellar and irreplaceable collections would tragically undermine the institution's position as the nation's arboretum and its reputation around the world as an unmatched repository of trees and plants. ... Unlike other resources, it is simply not possible to eliminate or "unfund" plants and then hope to make up in future years. Unless funds are found now, critical collections and a major national investment will be lost—and lost forever."

Happy to say, GCA's well-reasoned appeal proved successful, with the Arboretum backing off and agreeing to undertake a major strategic planning process to ensure more thoughtful stewardship of its plant collections.



Mr. & Mrs. President, a mating pair of bald eagles, as seen from a nest-cam in the National Arboretum. This is their third year returning to the nest. You can watch them live, 24/7 [here](#).



Seeing the Need for Botanists

GCA's influence, over the years, has been especially pronounced in areas regarding plants and plant scientists. First in 1997, in a meeting with Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, and then in 1998 and 1999, GCA eloquently called for more botanists in the federal workforce to ensure proper ecosystem management.

In 1998, Jane Henley, then Chairman of the National Affairs and Legislation Committee, appeared before the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations. *"Although birds, fish, and animals are often featured in media coverage of our endangered and threatened species,"* she related, *"actually more than 60% of listed species are plants."* Citing the GCA's **Partners for Plants** project, begun in 1992, Henley noted that public and private efforts to monitor, propagate, plant and protects plants at risk were being severely hindered by the lack of botanists at the federal level.

Despite responsibility for developing and monitoring habitat conservation and recovery plans under the Endangered Species Act, she noted federal agencies had few workers with actual plant experience and instead hired general biologists to cover all science related jobs. She warned, at the same time, that university botany departments were, *"cutting back their programs, or incorporating botany into other programs such as environmental studies or ecology,"* resulting in a dominance of animal specialists. *"If more jobs were available with the government, more universities would provide the training."*

In 2016, the GCA decided again to take the matter in hand, for the first time, drafting legislation designed to ensure more botanists on public lands and a focus on native plants. Called the **Botanical Sciences & Native Plant Materials Research, Restoration and Promotion Act**, the legislation has been endorsed by 60 horticultural and conservation organizations around the country and co-sponsored by Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). The bill does just what Jane Henley called for—ensuring a supply of trained plant scientists to deal with ecological challenges on our public lands. The Conservation and NAL Committees promise to keep readers posted on this important bill.

Is the GCA making a difference? Absolutely. ■

Dede Petri

Georgetown Garden Club, Zone VI

First Vice President

Vice Chairman, National Affairs and Legislation Committee, 2004-2006

Zone VI Representative, Conservation Committee, 1998-2000



Photograph: Rose Story Farm

Everyday Things—Roses

By Debra Prinzing, [slowflowers.com](https://www.slowflowers.com)

A Rose is a Rose, or is it?

Not all roses are created equal, and gardeners of all people know this. There are tiny native roses found in the wild, there are hybrid tea roses in nearly every color of the rainbow but blue, there are old-fashioned garden roses that make us swoon and there are long-stemmed, red roses with giant heads advertised by floral wire services or sold, wrapped in cellophane, at grocery checkout counters.

America's love affair with roses is arguably the number one story in the floral world. According to the [Society of American Florists](#), 250 million roses are produced for Valentine's Day alone, and sadly, a very small fraction of them are grown in the U.S. by domestic flower farms. American-grown roses represent

only one percent of roses sold for February 14th, a \$1.9 billion holiday, according to industry projections.

Meet an American Rose Farmer

The [Certified American Grown program](#) estimates there are only nine commercial rose growers remaining in the U.S., including seven farms in California, one in Minnesota, [Len Busch Roses](#), and one in Oregon, [Peterkort Roses](#), all primarily greenhouse growers. [Rose Story Farm](#) in Carpinteria, California, is the largest and one of only a handful of boutique growers using sustainable practices to produce field-grown roses.



Photographs: Rose Story Farm

Rose Story Farm owner Danielle Hahn is a longtime member of the Santa Barbara Garden Club, part of the Garden Club of America, and recipient of the 2014 ***Great Rosarian of the World award***.

The reason you won't find Rose Story Farm's fragrant, heirloom blooms at the supermarket is because Danielle's 25,000 plants—old garden roses, old American hybrid tea roses, floribundas, German, French and Italian rose varieties and David Austin shrub roses—are seasonal producers; around Valentine's Day, they have just received their winter pruning.

"There's no such thing as a garden rose at Valentine's Day," she points out. "Our plants bloom about six to eight weeks after pruning, so for 2017, we'll start seeing blooms by beginning to mid-April."

During nine months of the year, Rose Story Farm harvests and ships a little piece of its paradise, in 10-stem bunches of couture roses, to florists and wedding designers coast-to-coast. The demand practically out-paces the supply and that's in large part because this isn't a high-production operation.



"There are no machines; no assembly lines. Everything is done by hand. We cut to order and every stem is hand-cleaned and wrapped in organic

material, tied with raffia, and bundled in recycled paper before it is shipped as green and gently as possible," Danielle says. At the height of the season, this means processing up to an impressive 4,000 rose stems per day.

From the Greenhouse

Most U.S.-grown roses hail from California, which accounts for 75% of the nation's production. Yet in Oregon, Peterkort Roses has raised hybrid teas for the floral trade since the 1930s. The third-generation family farm currently produces 2 million roses annually, using many sustainable growing practices.

"We have this certain niche, and we really want to support the local floral industry," says Sandra Peterkort Laubenthal, granddaughter of Joseph and Bertha Peterkort, who came to Oregon from Germany and started flower farming in 1923, growing sweet peas, gerberas and pansies.

Floral designers who value American-grown roses count on Peterkort as an important local source for bridal bouquets, boutonnieres, flower girl wreaths and tabletop arrangements.



Peterkort's elegant blooms look vastly different from those softball-sized imported ones that consumers gobble up by the dozen every February 14th. Instead, the farm's 50-plus varieties are closer to what you might find gracing a mixed perennial border in the garden. Specialties include the hybrid tea rose, with upright, spiraled petals; a German-bred hybrid tea that features multi-petal characteristics reminiscent of garden roses; and dainty spray roses with many small blooms on a single stem.

Sustainable Practices:

American rose farmers are investing in ways to manage resources and produce their stems as sustainably as possible. Here are some of the practices:

- During the winter months, Peterkort increases the amount of artificial greenhouse light, thereby producing more roses in less space for the same amount of energy. Energy curtains provide additional insulation as outside temperatures drop. The panels are made of Mylar and are suspended from cables across the greenhouse ceiling, containing heat within when closed.
- Peterkort uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system of biological controls to curb aphids, spider mites and other predator pests, methods suitable for greenhouse production.
- Peterkort selects disease-resistant rose varieties and suppresses the spread of fungal diseases by maintaining ideal temperature, humidity and air circulation levels inside the greenhouses and keeping the ground clear of dead leaves and debris.

- Rose Story Farm uses a custom organic fertilizer for its plants. For home gardens, Danielle Hahn recommends feeding roses with products that include alfalfa, **mycorrhizae**, bat guano, worm castings and other natural ingredients.

- Field-grown roses, especially own-root varieties, are surprisingly drought tolerant. "We only water our roses once a week here on the farm," Danielle says. She suggests watering rose plants deeper and longer rather than more frequent light watering. Focus on the root zone and keep water off of foliage and flowers. If you have drip or in-ground irrigation, group rose plants together in order to manage the amount of water they receive.

- Fine organic mulches are far preferred over bark or chips. Rose Story Farm prefers a composted mulch mix to suppress weeds, retain moisture and keep soil cool.
- Rose Story Farm does not use synthetic insecticides, which kill both bad and good bugs. Hand removal, spraying with water, organic soaps or Neem oils are commonly employed. Compost teas are used instead of synthetic fungicides.

What About Fair Trade Roses?

There is a price to cheap, imported roses—and it's not all measured in currency. Grocery stores like Whole Foods market "Whole Trade" roses, designed to put an eco- or environmentally-positive spin on the hundreds of thousands of roses the chain imports each year. Supermarkets and big-box merchants like Costco import South American roses labeled "Rain Forest Certified" or "Veriflora Certified." What these labels can't hide is the fact that the roses are imported, and there is inarguably a "transportation footprint" that no domestic rose has. U.S. rose farms adhere to stricter environmental



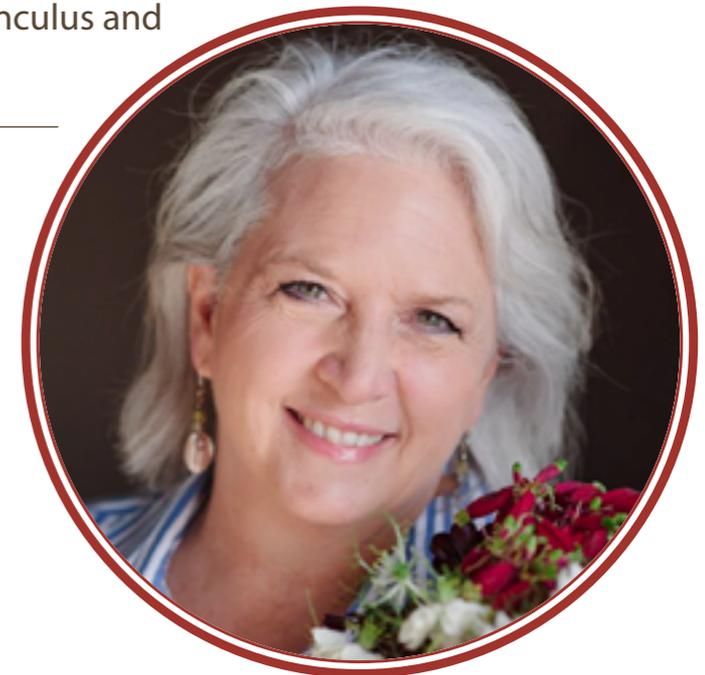
and labor regulations than exist in most rose-export nations, as well. Read more about each of these labeling programs here:

Whole Trade Roses, Rainforest Alliance, Veriflora Certified

What Can We Do?

- Grow your own roses and use them in floral arrangements in your home and for gift-giving. Home gardeners can adopt many of the sustainable methods noted above.
- Ask for locally-grown roses when you order from the florist. If your florist insists American grown roses are not available, refer him or her to this list of growers who sell through wholesalers or direct to florists, which I've compiled [here](#).
- Look for roses with Certified American Grown labeling.
- Order from florists who offer American grown roses; find suppliers [here](#).
- Become more seasonal in your floral choices. For winter holidays, such as Christmas or Valentine's Day, select from what is available, such as flowering spring bulbs, greenhouse-grown ranunculus and anemones, or blooming branches.

Debra Prinzing, Seattle-based founder and creative director of [Slowflowers.com](#), a free, online source to American flowers and the farms, shops and designers who supply them.



Policies and Legislation to Watch

By Suzanne Booker-Canfield, Ph.D.

Environmental Regulations

What They Are And Why They Matter

The 115th Congress is working to strip the existing environmental safeguards that have been established over multiple administrations—both Democratic and Republican. Federal rules that regulate air, water, greenhouse gas emissions, and other public health issues are necessary to implement existing laws. These rules are the products of a lengthy rulemaking process that incorporates public input and peer-reviewed science. Currently at risk are environmental regulations that were finalized after June 2016. These are being targeted for nullification by the Congressional Review Act (CRA). There are 60 “session” days (days that Congress is in legislative session) in which Congress may use expedited rules to nullify a regulation through the CRA. If that happens, then President Trump would likely sign that resolution into law. Under this scenario, the federal agency that issued the rule is prevented from issuing a substantially similar rule again. Congress has already voted to nullify the Stream Protection Rule, a vital rule that protects citizens from having toxic mining waste dumped in their water supply. More CRA attacks are imminent. These CRA actions are swift and permanent, and they could be used to dismantle a broad range of environmental protections.

Estimated Timeframe

These efforts are underway, and many are likely to occur very quickly.

What You Can Do

If you support federal environmental regulation, a cornerstone of environmental protection in America, you can call and/or write your legislators asking them to oppose any effort to use the Congressional Review Act to repeal existing environmental regulations.

"These actions are swift and permanent, and they could be used to dismantle a broad range of environmental protections."

Threats to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Environmental Policy Act

What They Are and Why They Matter

In 1970, President Richard M. Nixon signed an executive order to establish the U.S. EPA, which has protected the environment and human health through a range of regulations that have successfully addressed problems such as acid rain, lead in gasoline, vehicle efficiency standards and emission controls, water pollution, and toxic waste. Prior to the agency's formation, some American rivers were so contaminated that they burst into flames, and the skies in some areas were so filled with smog that residents had to stay indoors. Through EPA efforts, many such problems have been resolved, though Americans continue to need the agency to protect the land, water, and air from harmful pollution. After nearly a half century of environmental successes, a bill has been introduced to eliminate the U.S. EPA altogether. This bill is just one threat amongst a host of other efforts to render the agency toothless. At the same time the U.S. EPA was being formed, the Nixon administration passed the landmark National Environmental Policy Act, the so-called "Magna Carta" of environmental protection in America. NEPA established procedures that all federal agencies must follow to assess the environmental impact of proposed projects, such as building an oil pipeline. This NEPA-review process attempts to prevent environmental disasters before they occur, thus protecting ecosystems and human health while also safeguarding companies and shareholders from costly legal settlements that so often follow such disasters.

Estimated Timeframe

These efforts to weaken the U.S. EPA and the National Environmental Policy Act have begun and may occur quickly.

What You Can Do

If you support the U.S. EPA and the longstanding process of environmental review under NEPA, you can call and/or write your legislators asking them to oppose bills that call for (1) elimination or weakening of the EPA, (2) staffing cuts that would cripple the EPA and its ability to protect the environment and public health, and (3) efforts to alter or circumvent the NEPA process for environmental review. Ask them to support adequate funding for EPA programs and to help prevent environmental disasters by supporting NEPA scrutiny over major federal projects.

"After nearly a half century of environmental successes, a bill has been introduced to eliminate the U.S. EPA altogether."

Global and National Efforts to Address Climate Change

What It Is and Why It Matters

Existing climate change reduction measures are under serious threat. The most prominent examples are the Paris Climate Agreement (the United Nations agreement that aims to have all nations pledge to address global climate change and adapt to its effects) and the Clean Power Plan (the U.S. EPA regulation that would help the U.S. to meet the Paris agreement's goal of cutting American economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 26–28% below the nation's 2005 level by 2025). President Trump faces a dilemma regarding the Paris agreement: the Republican base does not support it, yet many business interests favor it and are lobbying to persuade the Trump administration to honor it. The Clean Power Plan is even more vulnerable. It is currently under judicial review, and attempts will be made to dismantle it. The goals of the Paris Climate Agreement could likely still be met if Congress and President Trump approved of a GOP-endorsed carbon tax, a plan recently put forward by James Baker, who served as Secretary of State under President George H. W. Bush; George Shultz, Secretary of State under President Ronald Reagan; Henry Paulson, Treasury Secretary under President George W. Bush, along with other high-profile economic advisors and business leaders. The proposed carbon tax would price carbon while reducing federal greenhouse gas regulations. Many environmentalists believe that a carbon tax is the simplest and most effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, attempts to limit or eliminate research on climate change will hamper efforts to reduce global warming now and in the future.

Estimated Timeframe

It is unclear when and if President Trump will pull out of the Paris Agreement. The Clean Power Plan is currently being litigated in the U.S. Court of Appeals. There are a number of ways the regulation can be scuttled; therefore, it is difficult to anticipate timing on any potential actions.

What You Can Do

If You Support the Paris Climate Agreement and U.S. efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, you can call and/or write President Trump and your legislators asking them to honor the Paris Climate Agreement and to support (1) federal efforts to reduce dangerous greenhouse gas emissions, whether through the existing Clean Power Plan or through the proposed carbon tax, and (2) continued scientific research on climate change and the use of peer-reviewed science as a basis for public policy regarding global warming.

"Many environmentalists believe that a carbon tax is the simplest and most effective means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

What It Is and Why It Matters

Since it was created in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has served as the primary funding source for federal land acquisitions for conservation and recreation purposes. LWCF helps fund the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Forest Service. The program is authorized for \$900 million annually from royalties paid by oil and gas companies for offshore drilling; when companies deplete one natural resource, they dedicate a small portion of their revenues to fund the acquisition of another natural resource. But Congress has fully funded LWCF only once and has never adjusted its funding for inflation. After this well-liked program lapsed briefly in 2015, a groundswell of bipartisan support has emerged. Efforts to gain full, permanent funding for LWCF came close to passage late last year, but the bill never made it to the floor. Renewed efforts in the form of a standalone bill (and, potentially, as a provision in the omnibus energy bill likely to be reintroduced) are underway.

Estimated Timeframe

If the energy bill is reintroduced this spring as some legislators have indicated, then the vote could potentially come up somewhat quickly. Standalone measures would be much less likely to see floor time.

What You Can Do

If You Support the LWCF, you can call and/or write representatives asking them to support full, permanent funding of LWCF, either in H.R. 502 or in a future energy bill. Also ask for a minimum of \$450 million in FY18 appropriations.

Call or write senators asking them to support full, permanent funding of LWCF, either in a standalone bill or in a future energy bill.

Suzanne Booker-Canfield, Ph.D.

Vice Chair, Legislation and Policy

Garden Guild of Winnetka, Zone XI

View the [Current Legislative Status Chart](#)

(must be logged on to the GCA site first)

LWCF helps fund the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Forest Service.

Climate Related Websites

Compiled by Katy Kinsolving

Because Federal agencies may be removing information from their websites, Most of the organizations on this list are independent non-profits. Just click on any name below to go to its link

BLOOMBERG NEW ENERGY

CLIMATE CENTRAL

CLIMATE NEXUS

NASA

NOAA

PEW CHARITABLE TRUST

SKEPTICAL SCIENCE

WOODS HOLE RESEARCH

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

YALE CLIMATE CONNECTIONS

YALE PROGRAM ON CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS

BREAKING ENERGY