



For Immediate Release

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Partners release white paper on use of conservation easements in Oregon

Portland, OR (June 1, 2015) — In a unique partnership between local, state and national organizations, five groups have come together to produce a [white paper that examines conservation easements](#) as a land use tool in Oregon. The paper, the first of its kind for Oregon, specifically looks at more ways conservation easements can protect special lands in the state.

The five partner organizations, the **Land Trust Alliance**, the **Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts**, **East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)**, **Clackamas SWCD** and **Friends of Family Farmers**, share a common interest in providing landowners with tools to protect Oregon's unique natural and cultural resources including water quality, habitat, open space and productive farm, forest and ranch lands. Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between willing landowners and a qualified "holder" to conserve resources on private lands. With nearly 500 easements protecting over 150,000 acres, Oregon ranks 40th nationally in the number of easements and 36th in the number of acres protected by easements.

Through extensive research and interviews with over 20 professionals and land use specialists, the white paper:

- Provides a comprehensive overview of the current use of easements in Oregon;
- Reviews other state and national funding programs for easements;
- Provides an overview of current funding mechanisms and financial incentives in Oregon; and
- Strategizes potential opportunities to increase the use of easements in alignment with Oregon's land use laws.

Kelley Beamer, Executive Director of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, explains the importance of the white paper: "This is a unique opportunity Oregon has to look at how we can better utilize this important, voluntary conservation tool. As we look toward the future and the land use needs of our state, we hope the [paper](#) will help facilitate a statewide discussion."

The partner organizations hired land use attorney William F. (Fritz) Paulus and his assistant, Alejandro Orizola, to research and write the paper. Paulus is an attorney with a law practice in Portland that focuses on land conservation, real estate, and land use matters in Oregon. He is the former real estate negotiator with the natural areas program at Metro and authored a chapter about conservation easements for the Oregon Real Estate Deskbook, a publication by the Oregon State Bar.

"Working lands conservation easements have significant potential to help protect farms from development and smooth the transition of agricultural lands to a newer generation of farmers. One thing is clear: Oregon needs a more comprehensive strategy to better take advantage of this important tool," said Ivan Maluski, Policy Director for Friends of Family Farmers.

The partner organizations hope this [white paper](#) will be a resource for conservation implementers in Oregon who help protect land that provides natural, economic and social benefits to our communities. We hope it contributes to a larger statewide dialogue about conserving Oregon's unique resource lands.

Partner Organizations:

Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts: <http://oregonlandtrusts.org/>

Contact: Kelley Beamer, Executive Director (503) 348-9612

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is the state association of land trusts in Oregon, made up of 20 nonprofit land trusts serving communities around the state. COLT focuses on improving and advancing land conservation in the state through increased land trust capacity and coverage, engagement of stakeholders, defending and developing new and larger sources of funding, and supportive policies. It represents the land trust community and provides leadership on important initiatives in public policy advocacy, policy implementation decisions, and outreach to public and private stakeholders.

Land Trust Alliance: <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/>

Contact: Brad Paymar, Northwest Conservation Manager (971) 202-1483

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents more than 1,100 member land trusts supported by more than 100,000 volunteers and 5 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C. and operates several regional offices.

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District: <http://emswcd.org/>

Contact: Rick McMonagle, Land Legacy Program Manager (503) 935-5374

The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is a unit of local government serving Northwest Oregon's Multnomah County east of the Willamette River. EMSWCD works entirely on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis. All of our work is geared toward keeping water clean, conserving water and keeping soil healthy.

Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District: <http://conservationdistrict.org/>

Contact: Tom Salzer, General Manager (503) 210-6001

Clackamas SWCD is a unit of local government with an elected board of directors. We provide service to landowners, organizations, agencies and local communities within Clackamas County, Oregon. Our mission is to provide technical and financial support to conserve and use resources sustainably today and for future generations.

Friends of Family Farmers: <http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org/>

Contact: Ivan Maluski, Policy Director (503) 449-2270

We are a grassroots organization promoting sensible policies, programs, and regulations that protect and expand the ability of Oregon's family farmers to run a successful land-based enterprise while providing safe and nutritious food for all Oregonians. Through education, advocacy, and community organizing, Friends of Family Farmers supports socially and environmentally responsible family-scale agriculture and citizens working to shape healthy rural and urban communities.

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