

SAVING THE SIERRA

Grassroots Solutions for Sustaining Rural Communities
A One-Hour Radio Documentary by jesikah maria ross & Catherine Stifter



SUSTAINING RURAL PLACES TOOL KIT

Brought to you by the Sierra Business Council in partnership with Saving the Sierra

Land Trusts

A land trust is a non-profit organization whose mission is either in part or completely focused on conserving land through supporting the acquisition of land, or the acquisition of conservation easements on land, and the stewardship of land and easements to achieve a conservation purpose.

Most land trusts focus on preserving land for natural, recreational, scenic or historic values. Some land trusts focus on agricultural productivity, water supply and specific cultural resources as well.

Land trusts operate as charitable organizations under the IRS tax code. Most donations to land trusts are tax deductible.

Land trusts often assist landowners to permanently and legally limit use of their land in order to protect its conservation values. This legal agreement is called a conservation easement. The easement allows owners to continue to own and use their land, and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. When a conservation easement is placed, some rights associated with the land are given up. For example, a landowner may give up the right to develop the land, but may maintain grazing, recreational uses, scientific uses or other uses on the land. The land trust is responsible for making sure the easement's terms are followed.

There are approximately 1600 land trusts in the United States today, that have preserved more than 37million acres of land. The pace of land conservation has quickened in the past several years, as has the pace of urban and rural development. Land trusts are expanding most rapidly in the west, where rural development is encroaching on other productive land uses.

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In Saving the Sierra's documentary several land trusts contributed to the success of establishing conservation easements in the Sierra Valley area of the Sierra Nevada, and in preserving Martis Valley. Truckee Donner Land Trust (in Truckee, CA) and Feather River Land Trust (in Quincy, CA) were instrumental helping to preserve these places from development.

There are many ways to help protect other millions of acres threatened with development pressures.

By visiting these national sites and joining the land conservation community, we can work together, across the country, to save open space in America.

www.lta.org - Land Trust Alliance
www.nature.org - The Nature Conservancy
www.farmland.org - American Farmland Trust

There are also several local organizations in your area working to protect property in California by conserving natural areas, and increasing awareness and support of local land conservation.

www.calandtrusts.org - California Council of Land Trusts
www.sierracascadelandtrustcouncil.org - Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council
www.rangelandtrust.org - California Rangeland Trust
www.tdlandtrust.org - Truckee Tahoe Land Trust
www.frlt.org - Feather River Land Trust
www.easternsierralandtrust.org - Eastern Sierra Land Trust

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