



**SOUTHERN  
OREGON  
LAND  
CONSERVANCY**

# Terra Firma Times

Fall 2007

## 81 Acres of Endangered Species Habitat Conserved

A conservation easement to protect 81 acres of unique habitat southwest of Cave Junction was recently donated to the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy by Greg and Sharon



endemic plants, some of which are globally rare or in decline regionally.

“The Nature Conservancy is pleased to partner with the Bennetts and the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy

Bennett. The conservation easement, created in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, protects the federally endangered plant, Cook’s desert parsley, and its habitat as well as other rare serpentine plants and conservation values of the property.

The goal of the project was to help the landowners retain the property’s ecological diversity and to maintain the environmental conditions that support the plant communities on the property.

The property is located on the lower slopes of the Siskiyou Mountains which grade into the Illinois Valley west of the Illinois River. The area is known for its extensive serpentine geology and

vancy to protect one of the best occurrences of Cook’s desert parsley along with a high concentration of other rare serpentine species,” said Darren Borgias, program manager and ecologist with The Nature Conservancy’s Medford office. He added, “the concentration of serpentine wildflowers, including the sensitive Siskiyou butterweed and Howell’s *Microseris*, is phenomenal.”

The property lies on the edge of the Josephine peridotite sheet, one of the largest expanses of serpentine geology on the globe. The botanical richness and importance of this zone on the west side of the Illinois Valley is recognized by conservation organizations, and

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# To Everything There is a Season

*Executive Director's Message*

Fall has arrived. Looking out my office window I see an explosion of colors as the sweet gum, Ash and apple trees get ready for winter. I love this season of change. It's a daily reminder of the beauty I am privileged to witness in this gorgeous valley of ours. We let go and embrace the new. That couldn't be more true than here at the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. We completed a new strategic plan in June and are now moving forward on it. Many of you helped determine important aspects of the plan during the focus groups we held last February. We asked you how you wanted us to work—what was important to protect and how to go about it. You told us to focus on priority areas, be proactive and go for the gusto—the really important and large lands.

Our new Strategic Plan contains all those recommendations. Jackson and Josephine Counties will be our priority areas over the next three years. We'll continue to respond to requests for land protection in and outside those areas as capacity allows, and we'll also begin a proactive approach after we identify specific areas and properties that fit our land protection criteria. Our vision is to work with more community partners to achieve our goals, to conduct more outreach in communities where we're not as well known, and to grow our organization so we can adeptly handle the ever increasing workload.

Capacity building is our top priority now. We've applied for two grants to add new staff and staff hours to our already highly competent team. Eight Trustees (a new tier of leadership) have volunteered to help open doors to new constituencies and resources. Our four standing committees have welcomed new members, and we had our most successful and well attended Conservation Celebration in September. The groundwork is laid. As nature readies for winter, so do we. We're well poised and excited to launch into this next season of conservation.

*Wishing you all a bountiful fall,*

*Diane Garcia*

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## Conservancy Receives Conservation Easement

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy received a conservation easement on 60 acres of land from the South Coast Land Conservancy in July.



The property is located just off Highway 42 outside the town of Myrtle Point.

The site contains several streams and numerous seeps which feed the wetland and connect it to the tidally influenced South Fork

Coquille River.

The property is a working farm with 60 acres of functional wetlands which could serve as important summer and winter rearing

habitat once connectivity to the South Fork of the Coquille River is improved.

This easement acquisition brings the total protected acreage held in trust by the Land Conservancy to 8,166 acres, nearly double from last year at this time.

## Welcome New Members

Jolie Johnson  
Rita Johnson  
Lillian and Alex Maksymowicz  
Joseph and Rebecca Dworkin  
Constance Stallings  
Nancy Jo and Jay Mullen  
Rich and Sharon Schaefer  
Dry Creek Holdings  
Mary Kay Michelson  
Joan Marie and Greg Holmes  
Mike Jewett  
Wendy Resnick  
Allen Hallmark  
Dave and Karen Asche  
Alex Krach  
Kathi Olsen  
Mary Ellen O'Toole  
Karen Schank  
Anne Ainsworth

## In Memorium

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy lost one of its founding members in July. Bob Doty passed away after a long and courageous battle with Parkinson's disease. Bob and his wife Carol joined the Land Conservancy at its inception and helped guide the organization in its early years. Bob served on the Board of Directors for several years in the 1980s. His love for nature and the land lasted a lifetime and left an indelible imprint on the communities and people he touched.

The Land Conservancy extends our gratitude to all those who made donations in Bob's name to support the preservation of the beautiful Southern Oregon lands he loved.

## Ask Alex

Questions and answers from our staff attorney, Alex Dykema. Have a question? Send it to [info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org) and we'll try to answer it in our next newsletter.



### Can I protect my land through my estate after my death?

The simple answer is yes. Any property owner may donate their land or a conservation easement on their land in their will. These gifts are treated like any other charitable donation from an estate and may be a very sensible part of a well thought out estate plan. Of course, just like any other substantial decision, this plan should be carefully crafted and reviewed. There are multiple possible tax issues both in terms of income taxes and estate taxes that should be carefully considered. Because real property is involved, there are some unique issues that must be addressed.

The easiest option is to make a straightforward gift of the land to a charitable organization or a government entity. This simply involves a direct transfer of title and the full value of the property is treated as a donation from the estate. The issue with this approach is it offers little guarantee that the land will be protected. In many cases, the property is sold by the receiving organization to finance other land conservation projects. Often that is the most practical and sensible response on the part of the donee, but it may not reflect the wishes of the donor. In short, this is a wonderful tool if your primary goal is to benefit the donee organization, but it may be lacking if your goal is the conservation of your property.

Another option is to make a gift of a Conservation Easement in your will. If done correctly this will protect the land and be treated as a charitable donation from the estate. In this way, you make a gift and protect your land, but careful

planning is crucial.

It is very important to make sure the gift of a conservation easement will be accepted by the donee organization. Unlike outright gifts of land where a donee can sell the property and is therefore likely to accept it unless it poses a clear liability, the gift of a conservation easement brings with it permanent obligations, costs and responsibilities. Without acceptance, both the easement and the gift may fail.

To avoid these complications the best course is to discuss in detail your plans with the donee Organization. It would also be wise to draft the conservation easement ahead of time and have all parties agree on the document and the plan. The draft can become part of your estate plan, leaving some room for changes if necessary to reflect changes in the underlying statutes and codes. This is certainly more work, but it also makes for a more certain plan and insures that the final outcome reflects your desires and goals for the property.

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several areas have been protected nearby including Woodcock Bog Research Natural Area, the French Flat Area of Critical Environmental Concern, and two natural area preserves jointly created and managed by The Nature Conservancy, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service: the Rough and Ready Preserve and Eight Dollar Mountain Preserve.

The conservation of Sharon



*Cook's desert parsley*

and Greg Bennett's property complements the reserve system by protecting a key part of



Cook's desert parsley's historic range in the Illinois Valley.

## A Legacy of Land

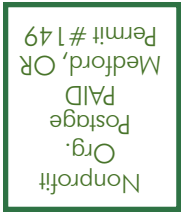
Naming the Land Conservancy as a beneficiary of your estate is a way to make a lasting gift that benefits future generations.

For information on gifts of stock, real estate, or estate planning options, please contact us at 541-482-3069.



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## Welcome to the Board

Three talented and passionate individuals recently joined the Land Conservancy Board bringing with them a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Kara Olmo lives in the Applegate Valley and is co-owner of Wooldridge Winery. She currently serves as vice-president of the Oregon Wine Board, board member for the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation and the Three Rivers District Schools Foundation. Kara is an active member of the Southern Oregon Winery Association, Rogue Valley Winegrowers Association and the Applegate Valley Vintners Association.

Karen Smith is a fifth generation valley resident, born and raised in

Ashland. Employed by Jackson County since 1978, Karen has guided the progress of the Bear



*Karen Smith*

Creek Greenway through the planning, land acquisition, and development phases. Karen was a founding board member of both the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy and the Lower Table Rock Stewardship Committee and has served on numerous local and state committees. We are glad to welcome her back!

In his 30 year BLM career, Rich Whitley has served at all levels of the organization from field operations to executive level leadership

and policy positions. He currently works out of the national office working with communities, non-governmental organizations and industry on conflict resolution. Rich is also active with the Ashland School District and with City of Ashland workforce housing issues.



*Rich Whitley*

As we welcome these new Board members, we also extend our gratitude to outgoing member Jon Deason for his many years of service. Jon continues to be active on the Leadership and Lands Committees.