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OREGON
LAND
CONSERVANCY**

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Terra Firma Times

Spring 2008

Landowners to Conserve Historic Farm

The Land Conservancy is working with members Jud Parsons and Diana Gardener on their second conservation project to protect



agricultural land in the Rogue Valley. The new project will place a conservation easement on 40 acres that is home to the Wood House (pictured above), the iconic pioneer-era house located on Highway 62 north of Eagle Point. This property supports a diversity of agricultural uses while possessing ecologically important and rare natural features unique to the Rogue Basin valley bottom. These aspects, along with the outstanding historical and cultural value of the Wood House, make this property highly valuable for conservation.

In the years following the Civil War, veteran Sylvester Wood and his brother homesteaded the land and built the Wood House in 1870. It was moved to its current location in 1946 to make way for Highway 62. For much of the twentieth century Sylvester's son Walter occupied the house until his death

in the late 1900's. The Eagle Point Historical Society now owns the Wood House and has secured its present location through a

long-term lease agreement with Jud and Diana.

Another fascinating feature on the property is the presence of vernal pools over much of the pasture area. The property lies

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(Re)Fund an Acre!

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy is your local land trust.

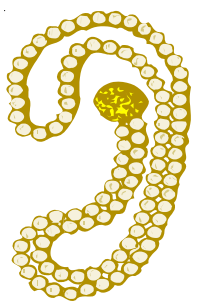
Since 1978, we've been working to permanently protect local forest, agricultural, and scenic lands in our region.

It takes only \$150 to permanently protect one acre of land.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today!

30 Years and a Pearl Necklace

Executive Director's Message



I'm one for traditional anniversary gifts. I have happy memories of opening boxes of silver chaffing dishes and lazy susans after my parents' 25th wedding anniversary party back in the 1960s. I have inherited many of those pieces and have passed some along to my children in recent years.

The traditional gift for a 30th anniversary is pearls. The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy was founded in 1978, thirty years ago this October and pearls seem fitting as we celebrate this special year.

We hold 38 properties on a delicate strand of trust given to us by the community. Our Board, Trustees, staff and volunteers represent the carefully knotted strand that provides the foundation on which the pearls are strung. Each pearl represents a unique property that contributes to the

beauty of the necklace. Each has its own luster, color, and brilliance. Each one is unique. They differ in size and shape but none is more important than the other. Each year as we add to the necklace it grows more beautiful. The necklace is held together by two clasps: one represents the easement donors, the generous landowners who choose to preserve the natural landscape for the public good; the other represents the members and supporters of the Land Conservancy, those of you who have made gifts, large and small, that have helped us get to this momentous year.

There are still many pearls waiting to be added to the strand. Our Conservation Strategy Plan will identify those properties and, together with our members and partner agencies and organizations, we will work toward the permanent protection of those vital lands.

Like a pearl necklace, the lands we protect will be passed down from generation to generation, leaving a rich and beautiful landscape for the generations that follow.

Happy Anniversary!



New State Law Encourages Conservation

by Michael Stringer

Southern Oregon landowners now have one more reason to consider a conservation easement on their property. Senate Bill 514, which was signed by Governor Kulongoski last July, relieves a tax burden for certain landowners who want to conserve their property.

Landowners interested in conservation easements are occasionally deterred by the risk of losing the property tax benefits associated with a *farmland* or *forestland* special assessment, which are limited to lands used for commercial production. These landowners can now apply for a *conservation easement* special assessment to prevent any additional county tax burden incurred from changing the status of the property.

Greg Bennett, a landowner who recently placed a conservation easement on his property near Cave Junction, appreciates the new law. "It saved me from paying any back-taxes and now all of the conserved property is taxed at a lower rate," he said.

The new law will benefit donors of conservation easements who currently have a special tax category assessment and want to donate their land without losing the tax benefits of the special assessment. It will also encourage landowners with no current special tax assessments to place a conservation easement on their property by allowing the new assessment category.

For more information, contact the Land Conservancy or your local county tax assessor's office.

Welcome New Members

Holiana Sapinsley
Mary and Tom Glatte
JP Newman

Donald Rubenstein
Eileen & Gregg Skoog
Bob and Judi Pohan
Bob and Lisa Schroeter
Annette Batzer

Frances Aversa
Rob and Susan Saladoff
Ellis Feinstein
Edward and Claire Salmonson
Peggy Malone Garnier
Hope Robertson &
Neal Anderson

Julie Norman
Maggie Purves
Scott Bandoroff
James Hutchinson
Lois Pettinger & Diane Erickson
Cynthia Lawrence
Cynde Bagley
Rich Whitley
Harvey Ray & Robert Semes
Patrick Tovatt
Rick and Lindea Kirschner
Evelyn Cook
Keri Green
Ron & Myra Silverman
Mary and Ted Warrick

Grants Bring New Staff to the Conservancy



Michael Stringer

The Land Conservancy received two grants to help meet the growing need for land conservation services in the region.

A grant from the Oregon Community Foundation increased the hours of Conservation Coordinator, Dom DiPaolo, from half-time to full-time. The Meyer Memorial Trust awarded the Land Conservancy a three-year grant to hire a Development Director in order to bring new resources to the organization and expand the visibility of the Land Conservancy.

Michael Stringer was hired in April as the Land Conservancy's first Development Director. Michael and his family moved to Southern Oregon six months ago and made Ashland their home. He recently earned his Masters Degree in Environmental Management from Duke University and has worked for the Cumberland River Compact and the Sitka Tribe in Alaska as an environmental educator. Michael is an outdoor enthusiast and loves snowboarding, biking, running and spending time with his wife, Kathryn, and their two children, Hank and Ella. We are thrilled to have Michael working fulltime to raise awareness of our work in Southern Oregon.

Many thanks to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Rogue Valley for making a special gift to the Land Conservancy at their Environmental Service in April!

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within a portion of the vernal pool mounded prairies, a unique landform defined by distinct depressions and mounds underlain by an impervious hardpan layer. Rainwater collects in the pools during the winter and evaporates in the spring and summer resulting in a predictable pattern of pool filling and drying. This seasonal fluctuation supports a unique natural community with associated plant and animal species, several of which are endangered including the vernal pool fairy shrimp which was recently identified on the property. The US Fish & Wildlife Service, a partner in the project, is working with Jud and Diana and the Land Conservancy to ensure the long-term integrity of this unique landscape.

A small vineyard on two irrigated acres will be planted and operated by Steve and Mary Gardner of the nearby Crater Lake Cellars. They plan to grow a Grenache variety and market the wine produced from the grapes using the image of the Wood House on the label. The remainder of the property is prairie and has likely been grazed since the settlement period.

A conservation easement placed on this property will protect the scenic backdrop for an emblematic piece of Jackson County history. Jud and Diana plan to maintain the agricultural uses on the land while protecting the vernal pools and their endangered inhabitants. As with much of the low elevation grasslands in the Rogue Valley, highly invasive non-native annual grasses and yellow star-thistle have come to dominate, leaving little room for

native plant species to flourish. Carefully managed cattle grazing has potential to keep the non-native annual grass in check and increase native plant numbers and diversity.



Grazing management on the Wood House property could provide a model for land use that is compatible with biodiversity conservation and endangered species recovery.

We are grateful for the continued commitment of Jud and Diana to protect important agricultural lands and biodiversity values in the Rogue Valley.

Dom DiPaolo


2008 Farm Bill Helps Conservation

The 2008 Farm Bill enacted in May 2008 extends the enhanced tax benefits of donated conservation easements through December 2009

For more information, contact the Land Conservancy

541-482-3069

Save the Date!
30th Anniversary Conservation Celebration
Sept. 13, 2008

SOUTHERN OREGON LAND CONSERVANCY

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Learning to Love the Woods

by Leslie van Gelder

None of the children seemed to mind that a few snowflakes were falling as they put on big rubber boots and plunged their nets into the cold waters of Hamilton Creek looking for invertebrates (or “bugs” to many of us) the last week of April. It was all part of the excitement of exploring the natural world through “Loving the Land”, an outdoor education program sponsored and organized by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy and funded by grants from the Oregon Parks Foundation and the Ashland Food Cooperative.

Each spring third, fourth, and fifth grade classes from local elementary schools visit the Oredson-Todd Woods off Tolman Creek Road in Ashland to take part in the program, coordinated by outdoor educator EthelAnn Ackerman. Hands-on stations are set up in the Woods to explore the trees, birds, rocks, riparian habitat, local trails, and the waterfall found there. Many happy discoveries are made and, hopefully, will instill in the kids a sense of wonder about the life and natural history of this little known, beautiful area owned by the City of Ashland and protected by a conservation easement held by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy.



Students explore Hamilton Creek

This year some 200 kids, their teachers, and parent chaperones took part in the program, and twelve volunteers guided them through the woods on their journeys of discovery. “Loving the Land” activity books given to each child help them retain what they learn about our local ecosystem and encourage them to respect and value it.

For more information on the Oredson-Todd Woods and the Siskiyou Mountain Park, an area encompassing 281 acres within city boundaries, go to the online map of Ashland City Parks at http://ashland.or.us/Files/Parks_Properties.pdf