

LIVING LANDS

Helping Land Trusts Conserve Biodiversity



LIVING LANDS NEWSLETTER • SUMMER 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

Grants awarded to Seven Land Trusts

Presented at LTA Regional Conferences

Presented at California Council of Land Trusts Annual Conference

Oregon Easements to Get Property Tax Break

Biodiversity Track at Rally

Defenders Looks to Hire New Leader for Living Lands Project

Living Lands
*Helping Land Trusts
Conserve Biodiversity*

Telephone:
202-682-9400 x126
E-mail:
livinglands@defenders.org
Web site:
www.defenders.org/livinglands



The Hawk Ranch, located in San Cristobal and adjoining the Hondo-Columbine Wilderness Study Area of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service in New Mexico. Photo courtesy of the Taos Land Trust.

Grants Awarded to Seven Land Trusts

Defenders of Wildlife distributed its first Living Lands Biodiversity Grants in April 2007 to seven land trusts across the country. The grants are intended to encourage land trusts across the country to increase their capability to protect, enhance and restore native wildlife habitat and biodiversity as they work to protect farm and forest land, scenic values and open spaces.

"Land trusts play an indispensable role in protecting America's landscapes, historic properties and natural resources, and are increasingly recognizing wildlife conservation as an essential part

of their mission," said Rodger Schlickeisen, president of Defenders of Wildlife.

Thanks to grant monies provided by the Biophilia Foundation, the project assists local land trusts in making strategic decisions about "where to work" to conserve high priority native habitats and species and "how to work" to use effective land stewardship to restore and manage native habitats for their long-term benefits.

The seven recipients of this year's grants are:

- **California:** Eastern Sierra Land Trust in Bishop. The \$10,000 grant will be used to

Continued from page 1

prepare a baseline conditions document and habitat conservation plan for a historic 900-acre working cattle ranch with extensive wetlands, ponds, springs, wet meadows, alkali meadows and upland habitats. Defenders supported this project because of the biodiversity values throughout the property, particularly the bird habitat.

- **Idaho:** Teton Regional Land Trust in Driggs. The \$10,000 grant will help build the land trust's capacity for restoration by training a newly hired restoration specialist on innovative techniques for restoration of a 1-mile stretch along the Teton River. Defenders supported this project because it allows the restoration staff to apply the techniques learned to future restoration projects.

Land trusts play an indispensable role in protecting America's landscapes, historic properties and natural resources

*—Rodger Schlickeisen
Defenders of Wildlife*

- **Massachusetts:** Sudbury Valley Trustees in Sudbury. The \$4,456 grant will be used for a restoration project on 18 acres of shrubland habitat to control invasive plants and promote the growth of native shrubs. Defenders supported this project to restore a declining native habitat, which is an important asset to the Northeast. In addition, the project fits into the priorities identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan, as well as being identified as



Old growth forest near Mt. Rainier, Washington. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.

an area of high biodiversity by a local watershed plan. This project links a complex of 2,000 acres of conservation lands owned by state and private entities.

- **New Mexico:** Taos Land Trust in Taos. The \$10,000 grant will be used to draft conservation easement language, determine baseline conditions and monitor the property, as well to undertake initial restoration work on a 1,826-acre property of prime wildlife habitat. Defenders supported this project because it will provide important wildlife habitat improvements as well as teach staff to use these skills on future projects. In addition, the property adjoins the Colin Neblett State Wildlife Area and the region is identified as under threat in the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- **Michigan:** Washtenaw Land Trust in Ann Arbor. The \$10,000 grant will help develop a conservation easement on the 117-acre Mill Creek East Fen, which is home

to the endangered Mitchell's Satyr butterfly. Defenders supported this project to protect and restore important habitat for an endangered butterfly.

- **Oregon:** Greenbelt Land Trust in Corvallis. The \$10,000 grant will be used to prepare easement documents and write a habitat management plan for 199 acres of upland prairie/oak savanna. Defenders supported this project to enable this land trust to train its staff on endangered species management and improve upon its high quality biodiversity conservation. In addition, the project site is in the high priority oak woodland/savannah conservation area located in western Benton County as identified in the Oregon Biodiversity Project and also in the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- **Washington:** Nisqually Land Trust in Yelm. The \$4,800 grant will be used to involve the local community in developing a habitat management plan for 400 acres

Continued from page 2

of old growth forest owned by the land trust near Mount Rainier National Park. Defenders supported this project to promote community involvement in protecting the property as well as the planned restoration of biodiversity values on the property. In the long-term, the project will serve as buffer lands for national and state forest land, as well as dispersal habitat for the marbled murrelet and spotted owl.

"Defenders' Living Lands project is committed to helping the land trust community enhance its ability to conserve wildlife and biodiversity, and we are excited to be able to partner with these forward-looking land trusts on such worthy conservation projects," concluded Schlickeisen.

The land trusts have two years in which to use their grant money and they must provide an annual report on their progress. Defenders will highlight these projects and their progress on the Living Lands website, www.defenders.org/livinglands

Presented at LTA Regional Conferences

This spring, the Living Lands team was actively spreading the word about the program and strategic conservation at three of the LTA regional conferences.

Northeast Conference

At the Northeast Conference in April, in the seminar titled, "Planning Tools for Biodiversity Conservation," the audience learned about the importance of conservation planning and some of the tools that can aid in planning, including a review of the state wildlife action plans by Defenders' Jeff Lerner and a special section on NatureServe by Don Faber-Langendoen, which included a description of the biodiversity information NatureServe has to offer land trusts through the state natural heritage programs. These concepts were highlighted through two case studies. Crista Collins from Sudbury Valley Trustees in MA and Heather Bruce from Coastal Mountains Land Trust in ME explained how each has successfully used conservation planning tools to protect land in their service areas.

Midwest Conference

The following week at the Midwest Conference in Indianapolis, at a breakfast session titled, "Creating an Ecologically Functional Landscape in the Upper Mississippi Valley," Defenders' Jeff Lerner discussed conservation planning and important tools like the new state wildlife action plans. For a real-life example of how these ideas work, Rick Gauger, Director of the West Wisconsin Land Trust and a member of the Blufflands Alliance, described the work in the Blufflands and how they are now working with the state wildlife action plans to better protect biodiversity in this important landscape along the Upper Mississippi River.

Northwest Conference

At the Northwest conference in Missoula, Defenders' Bruce Taylor lead the session titled, "Protecting and Restoring High Priority Habitats." The session focused heavily on case studies to teach the audience about strategic habitat conservation planning and how land trusts have approached and implemented complex habitat restoration and management on at-risk habitats in the Northwest. Rob Cavallaro from the Teton Regional Land Trust explained how they strategically choose their projects. Lindsay Cornelius from the Columbia Land Trust talked about their complex restoration of oak woodlands. Joe Moll from the McKenzie River Trust discussed the planning and restoration components of their Green Island Project.

Through these conferences, the Living Lands project is working to highlight the work of land trusts working on

Presented at California Council of Land Trusts Annual Conference

Kim Delfino, from the Defenders California office, was invited to speak at the annual conference of the California Council of Land Trusts, which represents over 200 land trusts, about how land trusts can work with the California Wildlife Action Plan and how to incorporate wildlife needs more into planning and management. To an audience of over 150 people, Delfino highlighted the importance of strategic conservation planning and site selection, the importance of restoration and conserving ranch and agricultural lands. In addition, she discussed, in detail, California's Wildlife Action Plan and sources of funding for land trusts.

A copy of the presentation is available online: <http://www.defenders.org/livinglands/>

Continued from page 3

biodiversity conservation and providing a forum for land trusts to share their experiences with their peers. Land trusts working on biodiversity conservation are encouraged to contact us about pairing up to present at future conferences and workshops.

If you are interested, all the presentations from the regional conferences are available online: <http://www.defenders.org/livinglands/>



Biodiversity Track at Rally

Defenders of Wildlife will be sponsoring the Biodiversity Track at Rally again this year. The Biodiversity Track will have six courses run by the Living Lands team, as well as four classes run by other organizations.

The six classes coordinated by the Living Lands team are:

A01 User-Friendly Tools for Strategic Biodiversity Planning. Speakers: Rob Riordan, Pat Comer, Gina LaRocco, Larry Orman.

B01 Using State Wildlife Action Plans: Case Studies in Strategic Conservation. Speakers: Jeff Lerner, Mike Whitfield and Mark Shaffer.

C01 Habitat Restoration: Site Planning & Implementation. Speakers: Hugh Brown and Nate Fuller.

D01 Down on the Farm: Native Bees Help Ecology and Economy. Speakers: Mace Vaughan, Jo Ann Baumgartner.

E01 Funding for Habitat Purchase and Restoration. Speakers: Derek Johnson, Frank Casey, Bruce Taylor.

F01 Pilot Projects for Biodiversity Conservation. Speakers: Heather Rorer, Ernie Atencio, Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Joe Kane, Karlene McCabe, Mark Patrick, Tamara Sperber.

To learn more about these course offerings and Rally, visit the Rally web site: <http://lta.org/training/rally.htm>

Oregon Easements to Get Property Tax Break

In a hard fought victory for conservation in Oregon, this June the Oregon Legislature established a new special assessment for property taxes on lands subject to conservation easements in Oregon.

This new law is especially important for landowners who previously already paid reduced tax rates for commercial farm and forest lands. In thinking about the long-term conservation of their properties, some of these landowners had been hesitant to place an easement on their property for fear of losing the agriculture/forest tax break and then getting hit with big penalties for back taxes as well. The bill that passed will allow these landowners to move into the new conservation easement special assessment with no change in tax rate.

Defenders took the lead in getting this bill passed, with strong support from Oregon land trusts. Similar proposals failed in 2003 and 2005. The 2007 measure, Senate Bill 514, passed the Senate 27-0 but again ran into opposition from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, the Oregon Farm Bureau and some local officials in the House. House Republicans' proposal to let rural counties opt out of the conservation easement special assessment failed on a party-line 29-31 vote before the House approved the bill 37-22. Living Lands' team member Bruce Taylor and former Defenders staffer Cheryl Hummon worked with Defenders' contract lobbyist to shepherd the bill through the legislature.

Defenders Looks to Hire New Leader for Living Lands Project

Defenders seeks new leader for Living Lands project.

Title: Living Lands Project Manager.

Location: National Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Job Description: The Living Lands Project Manager serves as Defenders' main representative for Defenders' ongoing biodiversity conservation project entitled "Living Lands." The project is designed to increase the capacity of local land trusts to protect, enhance and restore native wildlife habitat and biodiversity. The Living Lands project assists local land trusts in making strategic decisions about "where to work" to conserve high priority native habitats and species and "how to work" to use effective land stewardship to restore and manage native habitats for their long-term benefits.

The Project Manager will coordinate an integrated team within Conservation Programs at Defenders of Wildlife, oversee the project activities, serve as primary liaison with the land trust community, gauge progress in meeting project goals, deliver presentations, manage demonstration pilot projects and engage in fundraising activities. The Project Manager will work under the supervision of the Director of Conservation Planning and will work closely with Defenders staff experts in Land Conservation, Conservation Economics, Conservation Planning and Field Programs.

Duties:

1. Oversee project administration and project meetings, including reports on project progress, implementation and budget to Defenders staff and project donors.
2. Lead the Living Lands Team in communicating and marketing the project to a diverse audience including land trusts, other conservation organizations, agency decision and policy makers, funding organizations and the general public with respect to the goals and accomplishments of the project.
3. Work to maintain a constructive partnership with the Land Trust Alliance and integrate biodiversity conservation into land trust training activity.
4. Work with Defenders' Farm Bill Team, Defenders' Conservation Economics program, US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Interior or other relevant federal agencies to apply funding from federal agricultural conservation programs to restore and conserve biodiversity on pilot project land trust properties.
5. Identify and initiate field level demonstration pilot projects in key states and regions to demonstrate a model for land trust biodiversity conservation.
6. Represent Living Lands on behalf of Defenders and promote the ideas associated with biodiversity conservation on private lands in a variety of forums involving land

Continued on page 6



*Buffer zone between agricultural land and habitat.
Photo by Dot Paul, U.S.D.A. Forest Service.*

Continued from page 5

trusts at the national, regional and state level.

7. Lead the development of written publications, workshops and multi-media presentations (including the Living Lands website) on various aspects of the Living Lands project. Present research findings and training materials to workshops, conferences, and briefing sessions.

8. Engage in grant writing and solicitation of support for the Living Lands project, including but not limited to grants, contracts, in-kind assistance and political support.

Qualifications:

1. Advanced degree(s) in conservation biology, ecology, environmental policy and/or other relevant field preferred, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary coursework and integrative subject matter.
2. At least three years experience in working with natural resource issues and land trusts in the public or private sector.
3. Familiarity with the land trust community, funding options and economic incentives for land conservation.
4. Understanding of the principles of conservation biology, habitat conservation and restoration.

5. Working knowledge of computers and internet applications.
6. Excellent written and oral communications skills.
7. Demonstrated ability to work in a multi-disciplinary team environment with diverse interests on complex natural resource issues.
8. Willingness and ability to travel in connection with work.
9. Self-starter with ability to seek direction when needed.
10. A flexible nature and good sense of humor.

How to Apply:

Interested applicants, please reference Living Lands Project Manager and send resume, cover letter and salary history (must be included to be considered) to HR@Defenders.org.

NEWSLETTER / August 2007

Living Lands — Helping Land Trusts Conserve Biodiversity

Living Lands is a Defenders of Wildlife project which works to increase the capacity of local land trusts to protect, enhance and restore native wildlife habitat and biodiversity. The Living Lands project assists local land trusts in making strategic decisions about “where to work” to conserve high priority native habitats and species and “how to work” to use effective land stewardship to restore and manage native habitats for their long-term benefits.



Defenders of Wildlife is working in collaboration with the Land Trust Alliance to assist local land trusts through a variety of approaches, including technical and financial assistance.

The Living Lands project also involves individual land trusts, state and federal agencies, conservation groups and other groups and individuals that support land trusts in their habitat conservation efforts.

Vision: A network of land trusts, working with private and public partners, to protect, restore and manage our living lands for biodiversity.

Mission: To support and increase the capacity of the land trust community to conserve biodiversity on private lands through financial and technical assistance.

Telephone:
202-682-9400 x126

E-mail:
livinglands@defenders.org

Web site:
www.defenders.org/livinglands

If you would like to be removed from our e-mail list, please send an e-mail to livinglands@defenders.org.