

BY Kendall Slee

Keep on Rolling!

Board to Meet at Rally on Defense Insurance

Momentum for the proposed conservation defense insurance program continues to build, with 425 land trusts from 47 states committing 17,194 conservation easements and fee-

All of the program information is at www.lta.org/cdinsurance.

This summer Land Trust Alliance staff prepared the business plan for the program to help the Alliance board gauge what level of funding is required and determine if sufficient precautions are in place

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owned parcels at press time. You can join them! The Prudence Conservancy in Rhode Island did: “We are a small but hard working and dedicated land trust that has done quite a bit on what I consider a shoestring budget,” says Treasurer Don Friswell, “so having this added leverage will be a huge benefit to us. Thanks for offering this program to land trusts.”

to give all of us confidence in the sustainability and success of this program.

At the Alliance board meeting at Rally in Hartford, Connecticut, the board will evaluate a full business plan, a risk assessment, an updated 10-year proposed budget and a fundraising plan.

QUESTIONS? NEED A PRESENTATION? E-MAIL LESLIE RATLEY-BEACH AT LRBEACH@LTA.ORG OR CALL HER AT 802-262-6051.

Do you have news land trusts can use? Send it to savingland@lta.org so we can spread the word to your peers.



WEEKS BAY FOUNDATION

Barges and booms block the mouth of Weeks Bay, Alabama. The blockade was a locally devised plan to prevent oil from entering.

Toxic Waters

Gulf Coast Disaster Hits Home for Land Trusts

When untold tens of thousands of barrels of oil gushed into the ocean for three months, threatening to cover the shorelines, bays and marshes that conservationists have worked over many years to protect, “worried” doesn’t begin to describe the mood.

“We’re just floored by this,” said Albert Joerger, founder and president of the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. “We expect a full recovery sometime in my seven-year-old’s lifetime.”

All the same, the Conservation Foundation was taking every measure it could to address the situation, starting by flying over the four coastal Florida counties it serves with a high-tech “Gyrocam” to document their conditions before any oil hit. They also measured the linear feet of beaches and islands in case products need to be purchased to protect and restore them.

On the policy front, the organization has lobbied the Florida legislature to loosen restrictions on allowing

Lending an Ear

Land Trusts Attend America's Great Outdoors Sessions

The Obama Administration held a series of listening sessions throughout the country this summer to gather ideas for its America's Great Outdoors Initiative, which seeks to "develop a conservation agenda worthy of the 21st century, and to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors." Land Trust Alliance President Rand Wentworth sees the initiative as "a key opportunity to place private land conservation and land trusts at the center of the federal government's vision for the future of conservation."

At the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors in April, Alliance Western Policy Manager Lynne Sherrod emphasized that "agricultural landowners need to be compensated for the environmental benefits their lands provide for the public. There needs to be greater federal funding available for private land conservation."

Listening sessions in over a dozen states gave land trusts and landowners the opportunity to share their views with senior federal officials including Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. At four June listening sessions in Montana "the message that private land conservation is important

to the America's Great Outdoors Initiative was delivered clearly," noted Glenn Marx, executive director of the Montana Association of Land Trusts, who helped the state's land trusts organize their participation in the events.

Darla Guenzler of the California Council of Land Trusts attended the Davis, California listening session, hosted by Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA). "Many land trusts and landowners in attendance had the opportunity to publicly thank the Congressman for championing legislation to make the enhanced easement incentive permanent," she said.

Many representatives of Maryland's 52 land trusts attended a listening session in Annapolis. Liz Buxton, executive director of Maryland Environmental Trust said she enjoyed seeing many young people at the listening session and hearing different perspectives. "What I liked about this whole process is that the administration is out there conducting these listening and learning sessions and we're all able to participate and learn from each other. It's engaging a lot of people, which I think is important." The effort will culminate in a report of recommendations to the President in November. Find out how you can get involved at www.lta.org/greatoutdoors.

hazardous material-trained volunteers to help with cleanup.

The Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain was monitoring 13 of its protected freshwater and brackish marshes. As of mid-summer, although oil had entered the Mississippi Sound, state-placed booms were keeping the pollution from making its way upriver to their conservation lands.

"We don't anticipate that the booms will keep the oil away in perpetuity," said Laura Bowie, a consultant and volunteer for the land trust. "There are several innovative techniques that are being showcased by different companies to protect marshes, but unfortunately, we don't have the resources to purchase or install extra protection on our properties, so we feel rather helpless right now—just watching and waiting."

The Weeks Bay Foundation (WBF) in Alabama was working with local officials and the fire department to keep oil from entering Weeks Bay with blockage barges and booms. WBF purchased and stored an extra boom,



This fuel can covered in oil washed up near The Nature Conservancy's oyster restoration project in Mobile Bay, AL.

and established an oil spill recovery fund for the bay and beyond.

As of July they were renting an oil/water monitoring instrument to measure the water quality in the bay. And WBF staff, like many in the region, carefully followed forecasts of where the oil would flow on any given day.

"This oil spill is like watching someone play roulette," said Executive Director Walter C. Ernest, IV. "The oil spill is the

ball and the numbers on the roulette wheel are the coastal states of Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Texas and Louisiana. The ball could land on any state any day or it could land on a combination number that included all or several of the states' coastlines."

In addition to being involved in the recovery effort, land trusts need to be actively engaged in the long-term restoration planning, said Ernest. Judy Haner, marine program director for The Nature Conservancy in Alabama agreed: "Why go back to restoring things to how they were a decade ago, if we can go back 20 years and reset the clock? We can use this tragedy as an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the restoration of these habitats," she said.

The Land Trust Alliance held a meeting in August of Gulf-area land trusts to collaborate on oil spill efforts and explore strategies to ensure land trusts have access to mitigation and adaptation funding when it becomes available.



WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION

landowners plan and fund forest management adaptations.

How can foresters and landowners prepare forests for climate change? The first step is to protect healthy forests from being converted to other uses, says Diane Denenberg, communications director of the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, a partnership between the Council of Western State Foresters and U.S. Forest Service.

Other practices include

reforesting degraded areas, thinning and other management techniques to protect healthy trees, she notes.

The report discusses a potential cap and trade system and other mitigation strategies, and how best to assure that forest-related carbon offsets are credible and verifiable. It recommends that early developers and adopters of practices that emphasize carbon sequestration should earn at least some credit in future cap and trade systems or mitigation.

“Many forest landowners have already started practices that would qualify as carbon benefiting activities in anticipation of expected regulatory programs and formal compliance carbon markets,” Denenberg says. These early adopters should be encouraged and rewarded once financial incentives for carbon management are in place, she adds.

TO VIEW THE APRIL 26 REPORT GO TO WWW.WFLCCENTER.ORG/NEWS_PDF/363_PDF.PDF.

Complex Carbon Sinks

Western Forests in the Climate Change Balance

Western forests can play a significant role in sequestering carbon and reducing the United States’ carbon emissions, but protecting them and managing them for carbon sequestration is key, according to a recent report by the Council of Western State Foresters. The council’s “Recommendations and Guidance for Addressing Climate Change” notes many of the complexities of managing forests for carbon emissions, adding that wildfires, pests and other large-scale disturbances can shift forests from net sinks to net carbon emitters in any given year.

While pests and wildfires have increased in recent years, human-caused forest destruction is still the greatest risk to these carbon sinks, with an average of 1.5 million acres of private forestland lost annually across the nation.

Foresters face the challenge of managing forests to best withstand climate change and to minimize overall carbon emissions, and the council recommends adapting federal programs to recognize this need. It proposes that programs like the Forest Legacy Program, State Fire Assistance Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Urban and Community Forestry Program should be expanded to help

Blending Generations

Land Trust Camp Brings Young and Old Together

In 1997 Frances Burton had a plan for the land she donated to the Nevada County Land Trust (CA): “I envision these 38 acres as a learning place for children, and I don’t want to wait until I die to get started—start right now!” she told then-executive director Cheryl Belcher.

And Frances did get to enjoy the Nevada County Land Trust Summer Day Camp programs before she died in 2003. But for the first time this year the camp is connecting generations for community sustainability, bringing together children, community grandparents and local teens.

The camp runs three one-week, half-day sessions: Native American Camp and Nature Camp for 7- to 12-year-olds, and Kinder Camp for 4- to 6-year-olds. The children learn a great deal about the environment, setting the foundation for a lifelong love of nature and the desire later in life to protect the places in which they had so much fun.

Working with camp counselors are 15 Junior Stewards. These 13- to 17-year-olds develop leadership, team building and outdoor education skills while getting credit for community service. “We hope one day these teens and children will become the conservation leaders in our community,” says Marty Coleman-Hunt, executive director of the land trust.

Local grandparents volunteer to participate in activities ranging from snack preparation to storytelling under the great “Grandmother Oak.” “They are vital to our camp community,” current camp director Stacy Prater-Vigil emphasizes.



CONNIE WRIGHT



GARY SWENOR

During the first week at Native American Camp the children learn about the local Tsi-Akim Maidu tribe while gathering for stories in traditional bark houses. Tribal members also show campers the importance of being respectful to the animals and plants by teaching

stations” and visit with Tahoe National Forest Park Rangers, who promote outdoor stewardship.

In Kinder Camp, the youngest campers go on a “Nature Scavenger Hunt” with a local science teacher and learn beginning bird-watching skills. The grandparents and Junior Stewards

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songs and dances around “Grandmother Drum.” By including Native American culture in its camp program, Nevada County Land Trust instills in future conservationists the importance of reaching out to the local community.

During Nature Camp, campers participate in many “science

are especially important here, since this is often the first camp experience for these little ones.

The Nevada County Land Trust Summer Camp Program connects generations with the natural world, making for an unforgettable summer and planting the seeds of conservation for the future. 