



Voters Invest in Parks and Open Space

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VOTERS INVEST IN OPEN SPACE: 1998 REFERENDA RESULTS

Andrew Zepp



The Big Sur Land Trust has used a variety of public funding sources to protect areas along California's Pacific Coast.

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) is the umbrella organization for local and regional land trusts—nonprofit organizations that work with private landowners to protect open space, primarily by purchasing or accepting donations of land or conservation easements. LTA provides information, training and resources that help land trusts conserve land.

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Back cover photo of Kenai Peninsula courtesy of Andrew Zepp.

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Governor Christine Todd Whitman

PROTECTING OUR LEGACY

by Christine Todd Whitman, Governor of New Jersey

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cross the nation, voters are expressing their strong support for the dedication of tax revenues to preserve open space, farmland and historic sites as a means of protecting state and local environments, as well as state and local economies. The elections of last November were an affirmation of what is fast becoming a national movement to assure the quality of life in rural, suburban, and urban areas for today's voters and for future generations. The result: some 124 state and local open space ballot questions were approved, most by substantial majorities.

Dwight Hiscano

Few of our actions will affect future generations as much as the preservation of land today. Open spaces, including forests and farmland, help to purify the water we drink and the air we breathe. Open spaces provide habitat for wildlife, and a place for human recreation and refuge in a hectic world.

It is equally clear that preserving our natural and historic legacy makes good economic sense. Many of our state and local economies depend heavily on tourism, and agriculture continues to be a major part of our economic base. Many communities have learned that investing in open space and farmland can help stabilize local tax rates by lowering the demand for expensive expansions of local government services. And natural, scenic, and historic preservation also helps these same communities compete in a global economy where corporate managers increasingly consider quality of life issues for their officers and employees when they make decisions about locating, expanding, or maintaining job-creating facilities.



Ocean County, NJ, voters approved an open space levy that will raise \$4 million annually to help offset watershed development pressures. As a result, the Trust for Public Land was able to convey the 354-acre Good Luck Point to Ocean County in December 1998.

Dwight Hiscano



Funding from New Jersey's Green Acres Program enabled The Nature Conservancy to acquire the 3,503-acre Manumuskin River Preserve in Cumberland County.

Recognizing the critical need to act now in order to preserve enough open space for our children and grandchildren, in January of 1998 I called for the preservation of an additional one million acres over the next 10 years in New Jersey, the most densely populated state in our nation. When added to the acres we have already protected, achieving this million acre goal will bring the total percentage of protected acres in the Garden State to over 40 percent of our total land area. With the support of a broad coalition of conservation, business, farming, historic preservation, and community organizations, my proposal received overwhelming legislative and voter support.

But Garden State voters supported more than just my statewide proposal on the New Jersey ballot last fall. They also supported 45 local ballot questions to dedicate local taxes for open space preservation. As a result, 16 of the 21 counties in New Jersey now have voter-approved open space funds, as well as 92 of our municipalities. Together, these local dedicated funds will generate an estimated \$100 million per year, matching the \$98 million in annual state funding included in my proposal. Complemented by the strong private efforts of our nonprofit land trust community, New Jersey now possesses both dedicated funding and a potent partnership of private and public entities which have already demonstrated the ability to work effectively to protect open space—and to provide taxpayers with excellent leverage of the dedicated revenues they have approved.

David Moore



Obviously, voters in New Jersey and across America have sent a clear message with their support of these ballot measures. In state after state, they are registering their ardent support for the urgent need to protect our open spaces, before it is too late.

I congratulate those of you who have already approved dedicated funding for open space protection on your vision and success. For those of you who have not yet taken that step, I invite you to consider joining the communities listed in this publication as you seek a way to ensure the continued quality of life in your own community, both now, and for future generations.

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation, combining private and public funding sources, has been working in Hunterdon County to protect the farmland that gave the Garden State its name.

MEASURING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

by *Russell Shay*

Director of Public Policy, Land Trust Alliance

The chart that follows shows the results of 148 November 1998 elections to create funding for the acquisition of parks or open space. Of these, 124 passed (84 percent). Many of the winning referenda were explicit tax increases.

These measures passed at the state, county and local government levels. A small sampling of the successful referenda are described in this publication by public officials and nonprofit leaders who supported them.

Roughly \$5.28 billion in funding was approved, even without counting many ballot measures for which we were unable to confirm funding totals. Nor does the \$5.28 billion figure include a measure passed in Florida that gives the state legislature *carte blanche* to authorize bonds for land acquisition. Governor Jeb Bush and several legislative leaders have suggested that the new program should be similar in size to its \$3 billion predecessor. If the legislature passes that level of funding, the total funding approved by voters in November's elections would exceed \$8 billion.

The following chart was compiled from reports by local and regional land trusts, open space advocacy groups, and our own research. Information was verified by government election officials. We believe it is the most comprehensive list available of state, county and municipal referenda that funded land acquisition or the acquisition of conservation easements from landowners.

Land trusts—conservation nonprofits that protect open space through purchase or by acquiring conservation easements—played a key role in many of these measures. In Stow, Massachusetts, a partnership of a local land trust and a regional trust identified the opportunity for acquiring open space, worked with the landowners to negotiate a deal, and then worked with the town government to seek approval from the voters to use the town's bonding authority to finance the purchase. National organizations such as the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy helped bring land protection issues to the attention of public officials in a number of these elections, and sometimes played a major role in framing the public debate over the resulting referenda.

Tim Wirth



Volunteers help to maintain a trail in Austin's (TX) Colorado River Park. The Trust for Public Land was able to transfer the area to the citizens of Austin because of funding made available through a voter-approved open space bond.

The number of bond, tax and lottery referenda approved to fund land acquisition has been growing over the years. The same concerns that have caused a 63 percent increase in the number of land trusts and a doubling of the acreage those land trusts have protected in the past 10 years, are also being expressed at the ballot box.

The measures we tracked were not the only expression of public interest in protecting open space, providing recreational opportunities, and combating sprawl this November. There were many bond issues to construct park facilities. There were also a variety of regulatory referenda aimed at controlling sprawl, including urban growth boundaries and measures that restricted a local government's power to allow rezoning of agricultural land for development without a vote of the people. A recent paper published by the Brookings Institute put the total number of 1998 referenda on all of these issues at 240. Sprawl was also a major issue in many elections for political offices.

The public commitment to these issues is unlikely to fade. A few days after the Nov. 3, 1998, elections, Ohio Governor-elect Robert Taft proposed a \$200 million fund for open space and farmland protection. On Nov. 11, 1998, the *Tucson Citizen* reported that the Tucson City Council would discuss putting a measure on the ballot in the spring or fall to levy a half-cent sales tax to support open space protection. Sarasota and Palm Beach County, Florida are planning votes on tax increases to fund land protection efforts on March 9, 1999. Similar issues are under discussion around the country, at all levels of government.

In 1963, the report of the Congressionally-mandated Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission recommended that the federal government establish a program to fund the conservation of resources for outdoor recreation—a recommendation that led to the enactment of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Chairman of that Commission, appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, was Laurance S. Rockefeller.

As we were putting this report together, Mr. Rockefeller wrote us that, "The willingness of the voters to continue to support bond issues and other conservation initiatives at the polls and with their pocketbooks is most encouraging. My brother, Nelson, pioneered in taking conservation to a vote of the people when he was governor of New York, including park bond issues in 1962 and 1964. He found that it engendered enormous support. I am delighted to see that support reaffirmed so vigorously."

And so are we.

Chris Hamilton



The Maine Coast Heritage Trust has tapped into a variety of public funding sources to protect Maine's stunning coastline.

NOVEMBER 1998 OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION BALLOT MEASURES

148 Referenda; 124 winning measures (84%); 24 losing measures (16%)

STATEWIDE ISSUES

State	Yes	No	Explanation	Funds Committed
AL	74%	26%	Constitutional amendment authorizing \$110 million in general obligation bonds to acquire, renovate and maintain state parks and historical sites	\$110,000,000
AZ	53%	47%	Authorizes \$20 million annually to purchase state trust lands for conservation	\$220,000,000
GA	47%	53%	Would double real estate transfer tax and dedicate it to land protection	
FL	76%	24%	Extends indefinitely state's authority to sell bonds for land conservation	
MI	61%	39%	Dedicates \$50 million of much larger bond issue to local parks and recreation	\$50,000,000
MN	77%	23%	Extends 40% of lottery funds directed to ENR Trust Fund to year 2025	\$700,000,000 ¹
NJ	66%	34%	Dedicates \$98 million annually from state sales tax for 30 years for open space acquisitions	\$2,948,000,000 ²
NM	49%	51%	Would dedicate \$620,000 to buy "ecologically-sensitive" lands	
OR	65%	35%	Dedicate 15% of lottery funds to parks, open space, and watershed protection	\$700,000,000
RI	68%	32%	Authorizes bonds for acquisition of greenways	\$15,000,000

COUNTY GOVERNMENT ISSUES

State	County	Yes	No	Explanation	Funds Committed
CO	Douglas	54%	46% *	15 year extension of 1/6 of a cent sales tax; allows county to use \$25 million in bonding authority	\$25,000,000
CO	Jefferson	71%	29%	Authorizes \$160 million in bonding authority for open space acquisition	\$160,000,000
FL	St. Johns	44%	56%	1/2 cent sales tax to buy land for preservation	
KS	Johnson	69%	31%	\$6 million general obligation bond for park acquisition	\$6,000,000
MD	Baltimore	74%	26%	Question F: borrow for parks, preservation, greenways	\$3,088,000
MD	Baltimore	71%	29%	Question I: borrow for land preservation projects	\$3,000,000
MI	Washtenaw	43%	57%	Would raise property taxes 4/10 mill for 10 years for open space acquisition (50% farmland; 25% natural areas)	
NJ	Bergen	63%	37% *	Dedicates \$.005 per \$100 assessed property value; \$20 million in bonding authority	\$20,000,000
NJ	Burlington	59%	41% *	Doubles existing tax to \$.04 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Camden	67%	33% *	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value for farmland preservation	
NJ	Essex	63%	37% *	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mercer	61%	39% *	Doubles existing tax to \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Morris	56%	44% *	Increase existing tax to \$.03 per \$100 of assessed property value to acquire farmland and recreation land	
NJ	Morris	64%	36% *	Dedicates \$.0025 per \$100 assessed property value to establish fund for park development	
NJ	Warren	42%	58%	Would double existing open space tax to \$.04 per \$100 assessed property value	
NM	Bernalillo	59%	41% *	1/2 mill property tax levy for open space	\$7,000,000
NM	Santa Fe	71%	29%	\$12 million bond issue for wildlife, trails, and historic preservation	\$12,000,000
NY	Suffolk	66%	34%	Authorizes \$62 million in bonds for "Community Greenways Fund" for recreation, parks, habitat, farmland preservation	\$62,000,000
OH	Medina	60%	40% *	1/2 mill property tax levy for 10 years	
OH	Summit	60%	40% *	.85 mill property tax levy for 5 years	\$40,000,000
VA	Arlington	72%	28%	\$8.5 million issue bond for land and facility acquisition	\$8,500,000
VA	Fairfax	71%	29%	Allocates \$20 million for land acquisition from \$87 million bond for park activities	\$20,000,000
VA	Prince William	61%	39%	Allocates \$750,000 of \$8 million bond for acquisition	\$750,000
WA	Mason	46%	54%	0.25% excise tax on sale of real property	
WA	Snohomish	26%	74%	Implement 10 year 0.41% excise tax on sale of real property, paid for by purchaser	

¹ These revenues will go into a trust fund, the interest on which is spent on land acquisition and other items. Currently the interest is \$24 million a year: with these additions it may eventually be five times that.

² These revenues will be available to service bonds for land acquisition. The face value of the bonds will depend on when bonds are issued and what interest rates are. It is likely to be between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion.

* Indicates explicit tax allocation for open space protection

TOWN AND CITY GOVERNMENT

State	City/Town	Yes	No	Explanation	Funds Committed	
AZ	Scottsdale	69%	31%	*	Authorizes continued use of 2% sales tax revenue for expansion of City's McDowell Sonoran Preserve	
CA	Moorpark	33%	67%		Special property tax increase for open space acquisition	
CA	Santa Cruz	76%	24%		\$2.7 million of \$7 million general obligation bond for acquisition of 246-acre parcel	\$2,700,000
CO	Breckenridge	37%	63%		Would increase taxes for open space conservation	
CO	Greeley	43%	57%		Would dedicate a 1/20th cent sales tax for 10 years for land conservation; expected to raise \$5 million	
CO	Lafayette	49%	51%		Would increase taxes for open space conservation	
CO	Silverthorne	69%	31%	*	Tax increase for parks and open space	
CO	Snowmass	64%	36%		Up to \$7 million in bond authority to acquire specific parcel; bonds to be repaid with property taxes	\$7,000,000
CT	Bethany	56%	44%		Recommendation on open space spending	\$500,000
CT	Cheshire	60%	40%		\$1 million bond issue	\$1,000,000
CT	Orange	61%	39%		\$2.39 million bond issue	\$2,390,000
FL	Davie	67%	33%		Acquisition portion of \$12 million park bond	\$2,000,000
FL	Wilton Manors	63%	37%		\$3 million general obligation bond for park acquisition	\$3,000,000
IL	Clarendon Twp.	45%	55%		\$4.9 million bond to purchase town park land	
IL	Glen Ellyn Twp.	40%	60%		\$0.20 cent corporate tax increase for land acquisition	
IL	Homer Twp.	60%	40%		\$8 million general obligation bond for open space acquisition	\$8,000,000
MA	Barnstable	54%	46%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	\$15,000,000 ³
MA	Bourne	52%	48%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Brewster	66%	34%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Chatham	66%	34%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Dennis	64%	36%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Eastham	61%	39%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Falmouth	59%	41%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Gloucester	62%	38%		\$1.9 million for purchase of 70 acres	\$1,900,000
MA	Harwich	66%	34%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Mashpee	51%	49%		Authorizes town to exceed spending limit by \$2.5 million to acquire 200 acres	\$2,500,000
MA	Mashpee	52%	48%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Orleans	70%	30%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Provincetown	66%	34%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Sandwich	57%	43%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Stow	79%	21%		Authorizes town to exceed spending limit by \$3 million to acquire 250 acres	\$3,000,000
MA	Truro	59%	41%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Wellfleet	61%	39%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MA	Yarmouth	53%	47%	*	3% surcharge on property tax bills; creates regional land bank	
MI	Northville Twp.	52%	48%	*	75 mills property tax levy for 4 years	
NJ	Bernardsville	63%	37%	*	Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Blairstown	42%	58%		Would dedicate \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Branchburg	63%	38%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Bridgewater	51%	49%	*	Dedicates \$.04 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Cedar Grove	57%	43%	*	Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Closter	53%	47%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Colts Neck	69%	31%	*	Increases existing tax to \$.025 per \$100 assessed property value for open space acquisition	
NJ	Deiran	37%	63%		Would dedicate \$.038 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	East Amwell	61%	39%	*	Increases tax to \$.04 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	East Greenwich	65%	35%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Eastampton	76%	24%	*	Dedicates \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Edison	55%	45%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value for 15 years	
NJ	Essex Falls	60%	40%	*	Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Evesham	59%	41%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Frankford	60%	40%	*	Dedicates \$.01 to \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Franklin (Somerset Co.)	58%	42%	*	Dedicates \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Franklin (Warren Co.)	55%	45%	*	Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Hamilton	40%	60%		Would dedicate \$.05 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Hampton	54%	46%	*	Dedicates \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Hardwick	63%	37%	*	Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Harmony	64%	36%	*	Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Hazlet	49%	51%		Would dedicate \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value for open space	

³ This figure is a total for all 15 townships in Cape Cod's regional land bank.

TOWN AND CITY GOVERNMENT (CONTINUED)

State	City/Town	Yes	No	Explanation	Funds Committed
NJ	Hillsborough	54%	46%	* Doubles existing tax to \$.04 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Holmdel	59%	41%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Hopatcong	43%	57%	Would dedicate \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value for open space	
NJ	Hopewell	66%	34%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value for open space, recreation, and farmland acquisition	
NJ	Independence	52%	48%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Jefferson	63%	37%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Liberty	50%	50%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mahwah	69%	31%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Manalapan	49%	51%	Would dedicate \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Medford	57%	43%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mendham Boro	74%	26%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mendham Twp.	60%	40%	* Increases existing tax to \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Middletown	55%	45%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Millstone	52%	48%	Nonbinding referendum giving town authority to buy recreation land	
NJ	Moorestown	73%	27%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mt. Laurel	72%	28%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Mt. Olive	54%	46%	* Increases existing tax to \$.03 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	North Hanover	47%	53%	Would increase tax to \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Old Bridge	49%	51%	Would dedicate \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value for next 10 years	
NJ	Peapack	69%	31%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Pennington	77%	23%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Plumstead	71%	29%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Rivervale	79%	21%	* New property tax of \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value for open space acquisition	
NJ	Stafford	43%	57%	Would dedicate \$.012 per \$100 assessed property value for open space and recreation	
NJ	Tinton Falls	59%	41%	* Dedicates \$.015 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Union	70%	30%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Voorhees	61%	39%	\$10 million in bonds over 20 years	\$10,000,000
NJ	Washington	71%	29%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Watchung	51%	49%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	West Windsor	74%	26%	* Increases property tax from \$.02 to \$.07 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	Wharton	73%	27%	* Dedicates \$.01 per \$100 assessed property value	
NJ	White	62%	38%	* Dedicates \$.02 per \$100 assessed property value	
NY	East Hampton	66%	34%	* Creates land bank to be funded by 2% buyers real estate transfer tax	
NY	Huntington	70%	30%	\$10 million bonding authority for open space	\$10,000,000
NY	Riverhead	60%	40%	* Creates land bank to be funded by 2% buyers real estate transfer tax	
NY	Shelter Island	72%	28%	* Creates land bank to be funded by 2% buyers real estate transfer tax	
NY	Southampton	60%	40%	* Creates land bank to be funded by 2% buyers real estate transfer tax	
NY	Southold	66%	34%	\$2 million bond act for open space protection	\$2,000,000
NY	Southold	60%	40%	* Creates land bank to be funded by 2% buyers real estate transfer tax	
NC	Wake Forest	68%	32%	Authorizes \$3.2 million bond issue for parks and recreation, including land acquisition	\$3,200,000
OR	Lake Oswego	65%	35%	Authorizes \$6 million bond issue for open space acquisition	\$6,000,000
OR	Eugene	67%	33%	Authorizes \$25 million bond issue; \$9.4 million for land acquisition	\$9,400,000
OR	Portland	49%	51%	\$65 million bond for parkland acquisition, park renovation, and construction	
OR	Sandy	46%	48%	\$1.5 million bond for parkland purchase and facility development	
OR	West Linn	48%	45%	\$8 million bond for parkland acquisition	\$8,000,000
PA	East Bradford Twp.	68%	32%	* Increase income tax by 0.125% to acquire conservation easements	
PA	Lower Makefield Twp.	71%	29%	\$7.5 million bond issue for open space preservation	\$7,500,000
RI	Warwick	69%	31%	Authorizes \$3 million open space and recreation bond issue	\$3,000,000
RI	Bristol	83%	17%	Authorizes \$1.5 million bond issue for farmland preservation	\$1,500,000
RI	South Kingston	77%	23%	\$1.1 million bond issue for open space	\$1,100,000
RI	East Greenwich	71%	29%	\$1 million bond issue for open space	\$1,000,000
SC	Hilton Head	79%	21%	\$12 million general obligation bond for land acquisition	\$12,000,000
TX	Austin	60%	40%	Proposition 2: authorizes \$35 million bond for open space acquisition	\$35,000,000
TX	Austin	57%	43%	Proposition 8: authorizes \$9 million bond for land acquisition to protect drinking water	\$9,000,000
TX	College Station	65%	35%	Authorizes \$3.6 million bond for open space	\$3,600,000
UT	Park City	77%	23%	Authorizes \$10 million bond for open space	\$10,000,000

Total state, county and city

(Figure does not include measures with no specified total.)

\$5,283,628,000

SANTA FE COUNTY PROTECTS MOUNTAINS, TRAILS AND HISTORIC PLACES

*by Javier Gonzales
Commissioner
Santa Fe County, New Mexico*

O

ver the past decade, concern has been growing in Santa Fe County, New Mexico, over the loss of natural areas as well as the need for recreation areas and trails. Yet the open space issue had also become entangled in property rights and regulatory discussions.

Our county has an extremely diverse population and landscape. In the north, the population is primarily long-established Hispanic families living in traditional communities and surrounded by pueblo and federal land. In the central area is the City of Santa Fe with a diverse population, economically and ethnically. The city is surrounded by federal land and by several large new subdivisions. In the south, irrigated farms and ranches were the traditional way of life, but that is rapidly yielding to the expanding suburbs of Albuquerque.

McDowell Sonoran Land Trust



The City of Scottsdale, AZ, is working with the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust to acquire thousands of acres of threatened desert land using funds from a voter-approved sales tax.

Early in 1998 I asked the Trust for Public Land to conduct a poll to determine if voters would approve a bond to acquire open space. The July 1998 poll of 495 registered voters showed that 92 percent agreed that “we need to protect Santa Fe’s river parkways, mountain vistas and natural areas.” Sixty-six percent were willing to pay more in local taxes to support such a program.

The poll persuaded the Board of County Commissioners to place the \$12 million “Wildlife, Mountains, Trails and Historic Places Program” general obligation bond on the ballot.

A volunteer citizens’ group formed, called “Save Our Landscapes.” On a very tight budget, they held a workshop, posted fliers and did a last-minute direct mailing to 10,000 voters. All the local newspapers, including the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, the *Albuquerque Journal North*, the *Rio Grande Sun* and the *East Mountain Telegraph*, endorsed the bond.

On Nov. 3, 1998, voters overwhelmingly passed the bond, with 74 percent in favor. I was both delighted and surprised. Apparently the voters are willing to pay a little to protect their high quality of life and to benefit future generations.

FLORIDA TOWN PITCHES IN FOR PARKS

*by Sharon Kent
Community Services Director
Town Of Davie, Florida*

The town of Davie, in southeast Florida, has seen tremendous growth over the past 20 years, surging from a population of 20,000 in 1980 to 70,000 today. The need for protecting the quality of life within the town has been a major concern ever since that development began. In the late 1980s there was a \$3 million bond for parks and recreation and a \$10 million bond for open space.

Despite those investments, the rapid growth and the transformation of our community from a largely agricultural area to a residential one has left our parks and community centers overflowing. We put together a \$12 million bond issue to support new ball fields, a new multipurpose community center with a dedicated senior wing, and land acquisition—this time not for open space, but for parks for our children in neighborhoods that were built without any.

A citizens' action committee formed to support passage of the bond. Members of the Friends of Davie Parks and Recreation walked door to door handing out pamphlets about the bond. They educated parents as they were watching their kids play baseball, and they raised over \$5,000 from the community and local businesses for their efforts. The Police Chief, among others, became a very active supporter of the bond. Reporters from local media were given tours of existing parks, so they could see our problems. The *Miami Herald* and the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* editorial boards both endorsed the bond.

The poll we did at the start of our campaign showed lukewarm support. But when the votes were counted, the bond passed by a 2-to-1 margin. It won in 25 of the Town's 26 precincts.

Gathering Waters



Gathering Waters, Inc. is working with other land trusts in Wisconsin and the State Department of Natural Resources to protect the natural heritage of the Badger State for future generations.

KEEPING OPEN SPACE IN THE "HOLE OF THE DONUT"

by Dr. Ronald Svara
Homer Township, Illinois

H

omer Township, Illinois, is sometimes called the “hole of the donut” because it is a largely unincorporated township of 26,000 surrounded on four sides by rapidly growing incorporated municipalities. But like many communities in the area, our township 30 miles southwest of Chicago has seen an influx of suburban development over the past 10 years.

As a result of land use planning discussions, the Homer Township board and 40 volunteers launched an effort to purchase some 250 acres of open space in the township to protect as natural areas, agricultural land, parks, recreation fields and a bike path. Within 10 days, volunteers had collected more than 1,100 signatures to place an \$8 million bond issue proposal on the November 1998 ballot, and launched a campaign to *Save Our Open Space*.

Richard Sennott, Star-Tribune



The measure passed with 60 percent approval. Not only did voters wish to protect the open lands they value, they also hoped to ease the pressure on highways and schools by controlling development and slowing population growth.

While this was an important victory for open space within our township, more needs to be done. This open space issue must also be addressed at the county and state level. Other states are moving ahead with open space programs, and we intend to carry this issue to our county and state representatives. It's a cause whose time has come.

The Nature Conservancy of Minnesota, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Reinvest in Minnesota/Critical Habitat Matching Fund, was able to preserve 3,380 acres of aquatic habitat and forest for public benefit and use along the Swamp River in northeastern Minnesota.

IN OREGON, A VOTE FOR FOR PARKS AND SALMON

by Russ Hoeflich
The Nature Conservancy of Oregon

The 1998 elections changed the face of conservation in Oregon. The passage of Ballot Measure 66—the Campaign for Parks and Salmon—opens a new era for our state's tremendous diversity of fish and wildlife habitats, watersheds, rivers, beaches and outstanding state parks.

The campaign co-chairs, retired Republican Senator Mark Hatfield and former Democratic Governor Neil Goldschmidt, led a broad coalition of conservation, business and natural resource groups, plus thousands of volunteers, to successfully pass Measure 66 by a resounding 67 percent of the statewide vote.

Oregon has a history of bold action to save our natural heritage. But it had been almost 30 years—an entire generation—since we opened a significant new state park or a single new campground.

The backlog of needed repairs and maintenance in our heavily visited state parks had swelled to \$110 million, and 65 parks were in danger of being closed.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department



Riders, skiers, and hikers are all able to enjoy the Canyon Loop Trail in Betasso Preserve thanks to public money used to acquire this natural area west of Boulder, Colorado.

During this 30-year period, Oregon's population grew by more than a million, a 50 percent increase. By 2010, we will add an estimated 700,000. The Campaign for Measure 66 asked Oregonians to think about what our state will look like then. Where will our children and grandchildren camp, hike, fish or watch wildlife, if we don't invest in our parks and natural resources now?

Local watershed councils, wildlife agencies, conservation groups, private landowners and others have begun to identify many on-the-ground projects to implement the Oregon salmon plan and to conserve and restore endangered wildlife habitats statewide.

Measure 66 will provide much needed funding for such projects by dedicating 15 percent of the state's lottery funds to parks and salmon. Its overwhelming adoption by the voters demonstrates a strong commitment by Oregonians to the long-term protection of our state's extraordinary natural heritage.

AUSTIN RESIDENTS ADVOCATE PARKS AND TRAILS FOR ALL

*by Linda Reid & Anjali Kaul
Trust for Public Land*

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here's nothing new about Austin's love affair with parks and open space. The city is one of the nation's richest in parkland. Beginning in the early 1970s, some farsighted city leaders, with the inspiration of Lady Bird Johnson, initiated a very aggressive greenspace acquisition program. Since then, the city has acquired thousands of acres in some of the most sensitive and beautiful areas in and around Austin, including land along Barton and Bull Creeks.

What was different about the 1998 bond campaign was its focus on local equity issues. Approximately two-thirds of the new bond money is earmarked for parks and trails east of Interstate 35, where many of Austin's low-income and minority citizens live.

Eric Swanson



Voter approval of a \$20 million open space bond measure made it possible for the Trust for Public Land to transfer 953 acres to the city of Austin, TX, for the creation of Barton Creek Wilderness Park, a major new recreation area.

The foundation for the campaign was laid in 1995, when a local greenways advocacy group, Austin Metro Trails and Greenways, published a report on existing and potential greenways in the city. The report showed how much work needed to be done east of the Interstate. The greenways group, with help from the Texas Field Office of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national land conservation organization, developed a coalition which worked for three years to develop grassroots support for a network of greenways connecting neighborhoods, schools, parks and people.

In 1998, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce produced a report entitled "Next Century Economics." The study touted Austin's natural beauty as its "unique selling proposition."

The report helped focus the business community on the greenways issue and forged an unlikely partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and environmental advocates.

In early 1998, the Austin City Council appointed a Citizens' Bond Advisory Committee, to review proposed capital projects from all the City departments, including Parks and Recreation. A coalition of 41 groups—business and professional, environmental, parks and open space, neighborhood, and community groups— went to the Advisory Committee and the city council, to advocate a bond issue for parks. It was their voices and their participation that got the measure on the ballot. In November voters approved \$75.9 million for parks, including \$35.5 million for new open space acquisitions.

"The Parks and Recreation proposition on the November ballot won by almost 60 percent, proving that if the citizens tell you what they want and you do it, they will vote for it," said City Council Member Beverly Griffith.



Walker Ranch is available for public enjoyment thanks to funds from the Boulder County (CO) Parks and Open Space Department.

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