



CONSERVATION EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP

Protected Properties are protected, forever.

The OLT Stewardship program, we meet our responsibility for each conservation easement by working with the donating landowners, property managers, and next generation landowners to protect that land and its conservation values in perpetuity.

Components of an Easement Stewardship Program

There are several specific components to the Open Land Trust's conservation easement stewardship program. These include:

- Creating the Baseline Documentation Report (at time of easement recording)
- Monitoring (once each year, at a minimum)
- Landowner relations (ongoing)
- Community relations (ongoing)
- Easement enforcement and defense (as needed, in perpetuity)

Working in Partnership

We cannot be successful without our partners - the landowners! Together we are dedicated to protecting their lands through conservation easements. To this goal we work in partnership with landowners—and the local communities in which our protected lands are located in a respectful and professional manner.



Voluntary Compliance vs. Legal Enforcement

The primary objective of our stewardship program is to preserve the conservation values of our protected landscapes. Ensuring compliance with the terms of each easement is critical to meeting this objective. The Open Land Trust is prepared to legally defend and enforce its easements when necessary. Legal enforcement, however, is a remedy of last resort - our stewardship goal is voluntary compliance. This begins with strong landowner relationships and consistent communication.

Record keeping

Our commitment to land protection cannot be met unless we also manage our paperwork! Stewardship includes:

- Prepare a Baseline Documentation Report to describe the property at the time of the easement closing
- Monitor the condition of the property annually
- Maintain accurate records regarding each conservation easement accepted by the Land Trust

Stewardship Funding

The donation of a conservation easement is an act of generosity by the landowner. To protect this donation over time, The Open Land Trust manages a dedicated Stewardship and Defense Fund to provide a long-term source of income to cover future costs associated with monitoring and managing our portfolio of conservation easements. The fund is also available to cover extraordinary expenses associated with managing, upholding or defending an easement should its terms or validity be violated or threatened. Contributions to the stewardship fund are pooled from a number of sources, including landowners, and are managed judiciously.

The Stewardship and Defense Fund is restricted solely to covering the costs of monitoring and defending our conservation easements. It enables us to make annual monitoring visits to each property and most importantly, it will insure our ability to take whatever actions are necessary to uphold the terms of every easement.

Each conservation easement donor is requested to consider a donation to the Stewardship Fund. The amount of the donation is determined by the donor, and the Land Trust will make a suggestion, based on the property attributes.