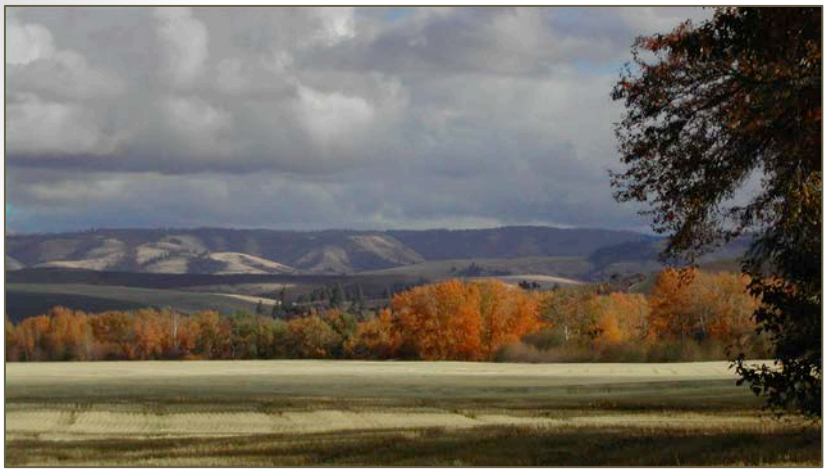


Conservation easement held by the Blue Mountain Land Trust

COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

Together. For Oregon's Land.

Conservation Easements in Oregon

Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

Mike Running – Communications Manager

October 15, 2014

Today's (short) presentation

- Introduction to COLT and Oregon's land trusts
- Conservation easements 101
- Easements in nationally, and in Oregon
- Challenges and opportunities
  - Agriculture and forest producers

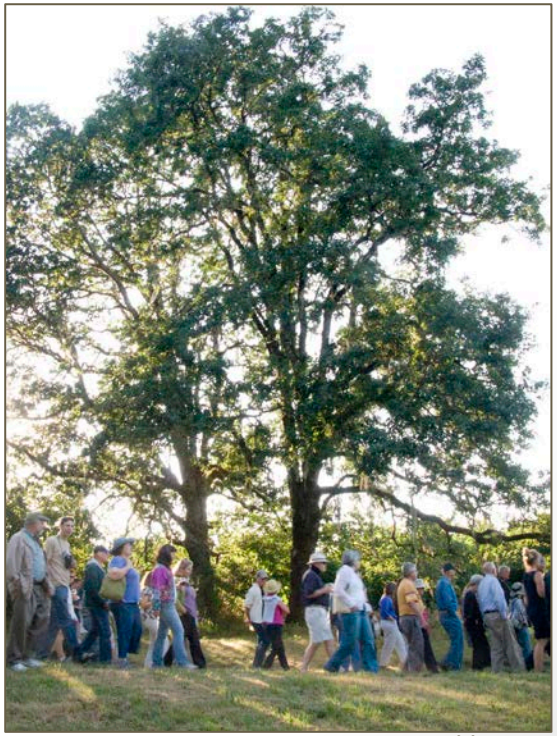
Sprague River Valley near Klamath Lake

Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

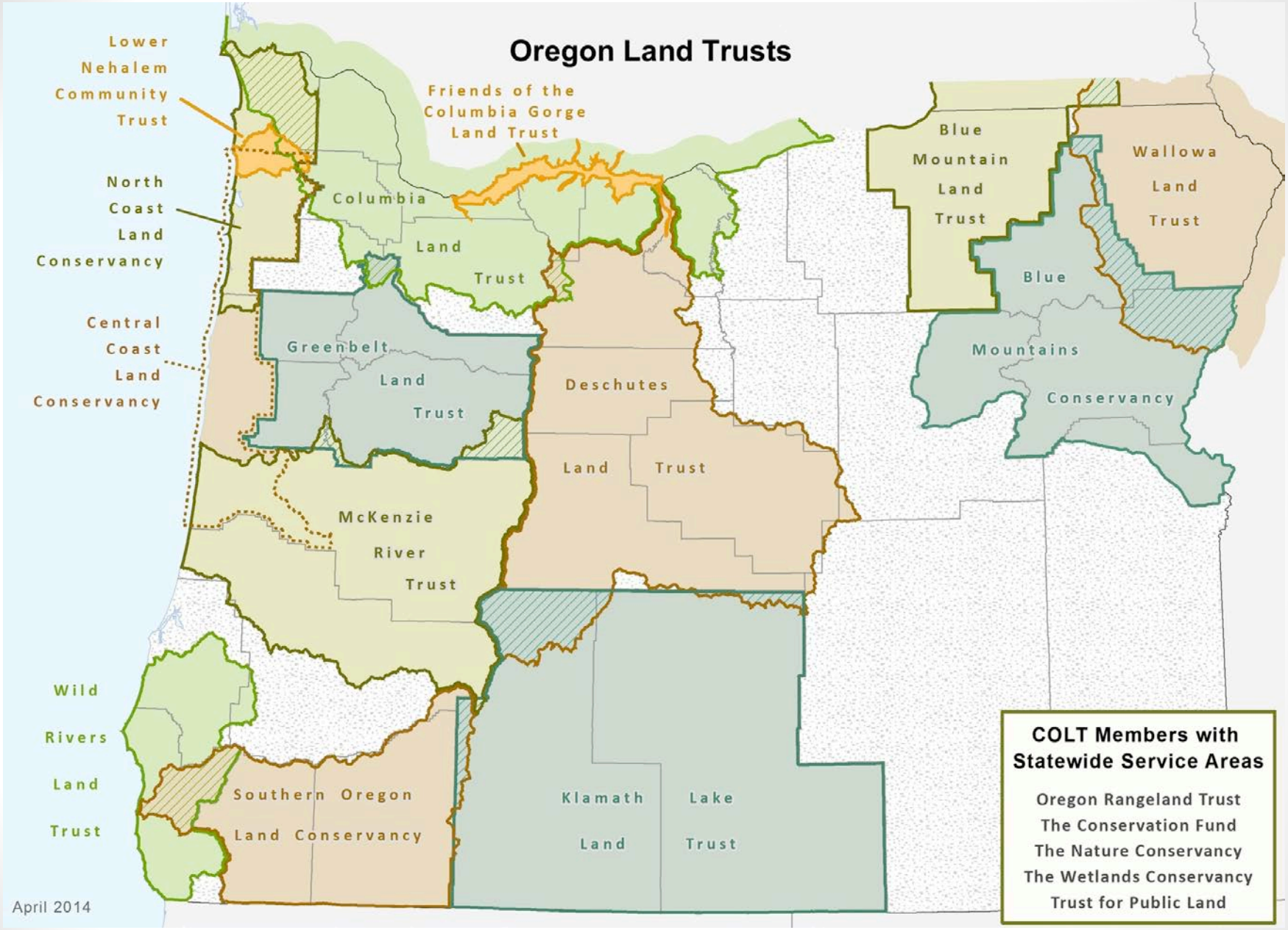
- Serve and strengthen the land trust community.
- State association
- 19 member land trusts
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Work with willing landowners to conserve Oregon's unique and natural character
- Conservation easements
  - Fee title acquisition
- Collective impact
  - 300,000 acres conserved
  - 5,000 volunteers
  - 36,000 supporters

COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

Together. For Oregon's Land.



Tour on a property protected by Greenbelt Land Trust


Oregon Land Trusts
Lower Nehalem Community Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy
Central Coast Land Conservancy
Wild Rivers Land Trust
Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Columbia Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust
McKenzie River Trust
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
Deschutes Land Trust
Klamath Lake Land Trust
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Wallowa Land Trust
Blue Mountains Conservancy
April 2014
COLT Members with Statewide Service Areas
Oregon Rangeland Trust
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Wetlands Conservancy
Trust for Public Land

Conservation Easements 101

- A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a qualified “holder” that allows a landowner to limit the type of uses on their property while retaining private ownership of the land.
  - The landowner retires some of the bundle of rights with an easement
- Granted in perpetuity
  - *Seriously a long time…*
- State statute, and in common law
- Most holders are a government agency or land trust
- Donated or purchased
  - Federal and state tax benefits

The Hagen family on their land, conserved with an easement held by the McKenzie River Trust

Conservation Easements 101

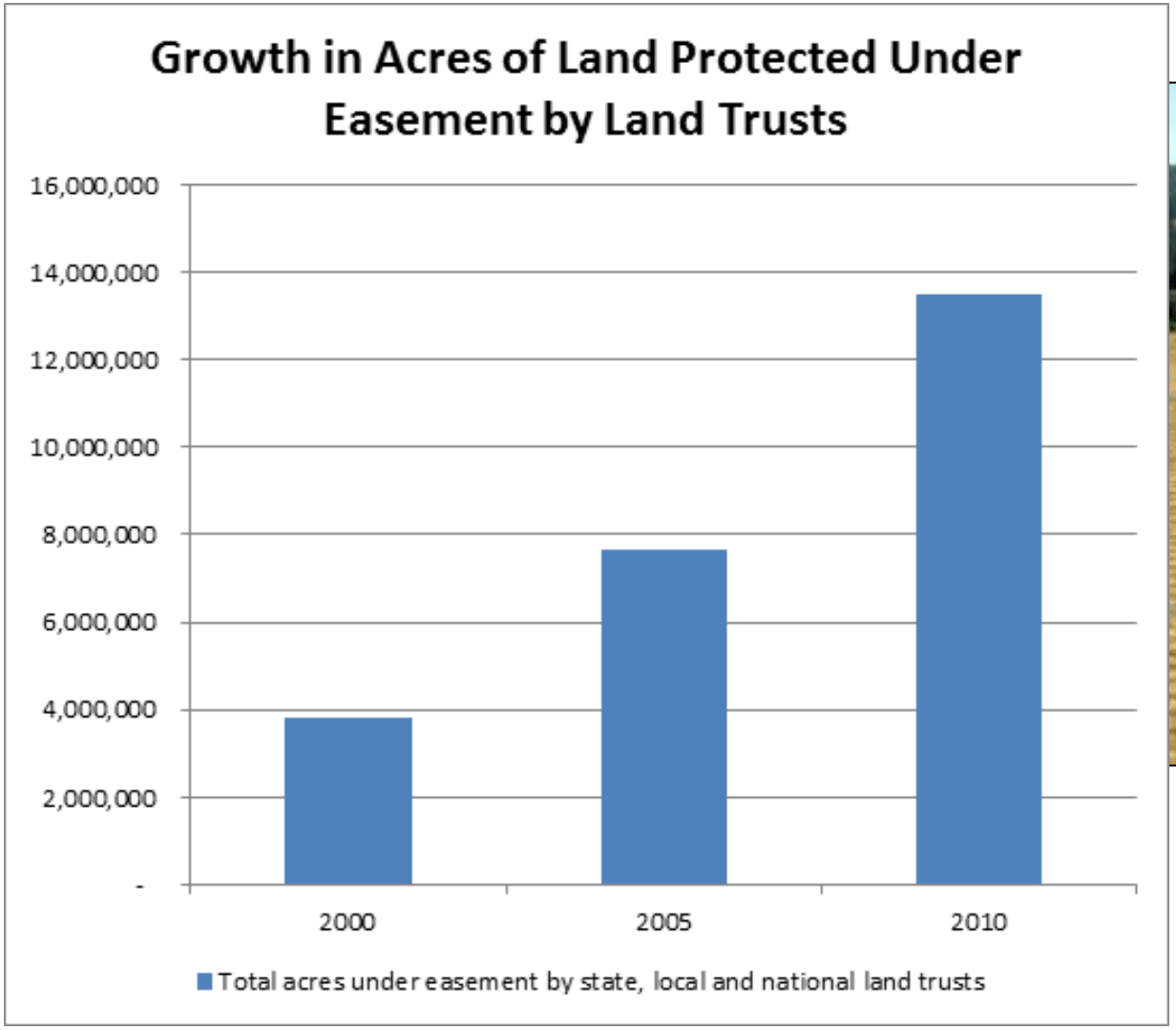
- Perpetuity is a very long time
- Long-term stewardship and monitoring
  - An easement is only as good as it is enforceable
- Considerations
  - Organizational capacity
  - Conservation goals
  - Landowner's goals
  - Funding and feasibility
  - Stewardship capacity
- Very effective tools available to landowners and organizations
  - Variety of uses: open space, habitat, agriculture, forestry, recreation, wetlands, etc.

Owners of the Lone Star Ranch protected with a conservation easement by Greenbelt Land Trust

Easements Nationally

http://www.conservationeasement.us/

Easements Nationally



2014:

105,000 easements

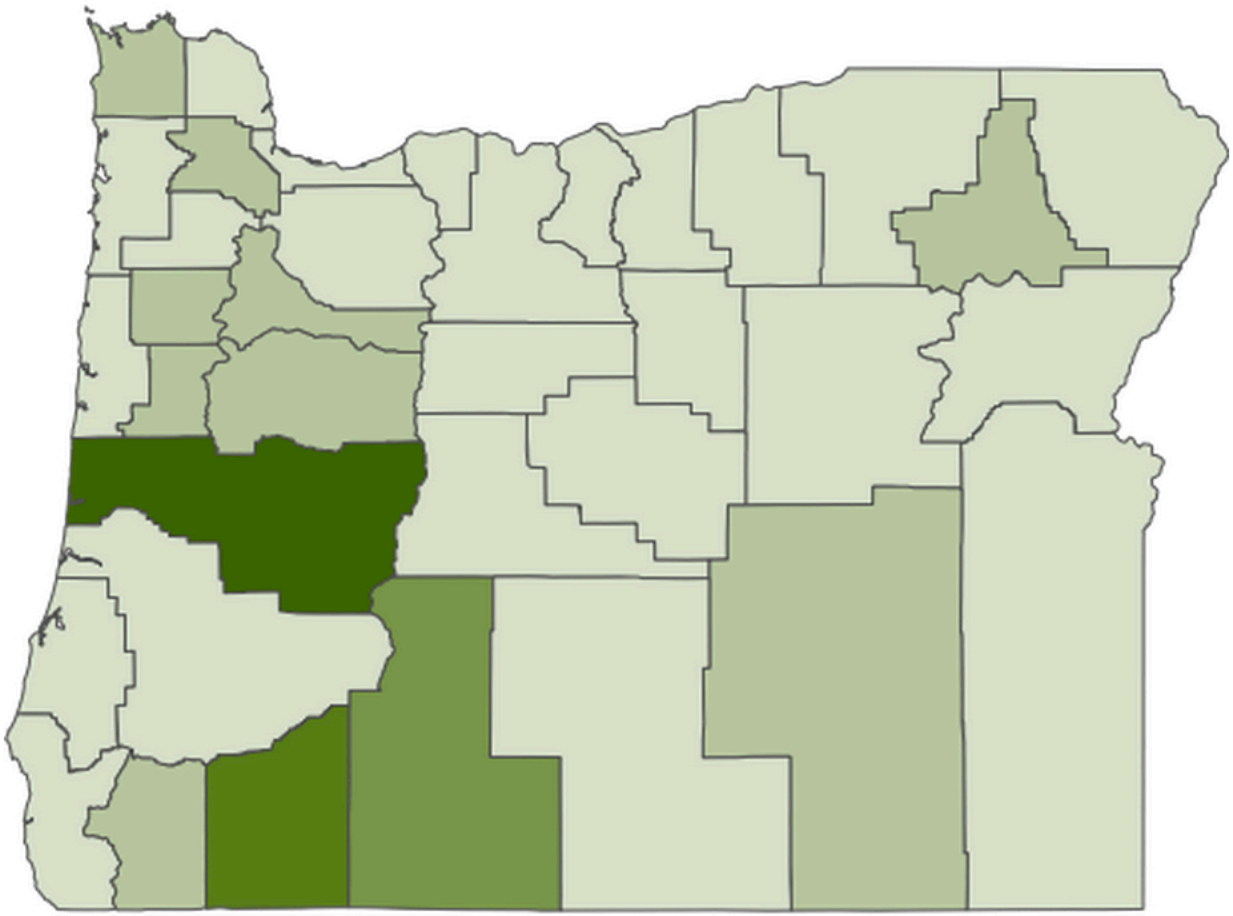
22,000,000 acres

Easements in Oregon

- **460 conservation easements** in Oregon (rough number)
- **Protecting 156,500 acres**
- Non-profit orgs (land trusts) hold 189 easements
- Federal government holds 252 easements
  - Mostly through NRCS's WRE program
- Some organizations / agencies not included in data
  - E.g. TNC (7,315a) and ORT (11,800a) not included on right

Easement Holder	Count	Acres
Bonneville Power Administration	3	208
Central Coast Land Conservancy	4	220
City of Eugene	2	5
City of Portland	1	41
Deschutes Land Trust	8	4,996
Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (Wetlands America Trust)	5	559
Klamath Lake Land Trust	1	15
McKenzie River Trust	26	1,392
Metro Portland	12	316
North Coast Land Conservancy	16	897
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	1	100
Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department	1	5
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	3	1,232
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	13	29,435
Southern Oregon Land Conservancy	74	3,148
The Trust for Public Land	1	29
The Wetlands Conservancy	6	230
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	9	268
U.S. Farm Service Agency	2	196
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	71	1,301
U.S. Forest Service	15	22,195
U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service	156	61,697
Unknown	2	598
Wallowa Land Trust	1	226

Easements in Oregon



Number of easements

- 0
- 1 – 14
- 15 – 28
- 29 – 42
- 43 – 56
- 57 – 71

Easements in Oregon compared with other states

- **460 conservation easements**
- **Protecting 156,500 acres**
- **Washington State**
  - 3,500 easements
  - Protecting 322,800 acres
- **California**
  - 2,661 easements
  - 1.3 million acres
- **Maryland**
  - 4,402 easements
  - 400,000 acres
    - *5% of the state*

160 acres of farmland protected by the Maryland Environmental Trust along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway

Why the limited use of easements in Oregon?

- **SB 100** Comprehensive land use program
  - 16.3 million acres in zoned for farm use – *55% of private land*
  - 10.5 million acres in forest or farm/forest zone
  - *27 million acres "protected" from subdivision, development, etc.*
- Easement valuation is limited here in Oregon
  - Before and after appraisals
- Tax benefits limited
- Challenges for agriculture and forest producers

1,600 C-2 Cattle Ranch in Southern Oregon protected with an easement with the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy

Opportunities and the future of easements

- **Oregon Conservation Easement Assessment Project**
  - Looking at ways to incentivize easements
- **Conservation Districts**
  - Developing easement programs
  - Strong relationship with the ag community
- **Farm Bill programs**
  - Agriculture and Conservation Easement Program
  - ALE, WRE, etc.
- **OWEB and other funding sources**
- **More attention on protecting working landscapes**
  - 3 million more people in next 50 years; 850,000 acres developed
  - The Trust for Public Land's Working Lands Databank project

197-acre Woody Wolfe Ranch in Wallowa County, protected with an easement by Wallowa Land Trust

Thank you….

Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

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