

B1 - Saving The Farm - Farmland Conservation & Mutual Benefits

Presentation title: Protecting Farmland for Farming: Using Conservation Tools to Protect BC's Farmland

Presenter:

Kathleen Sheppard – TLC The Land Conservancy of BC

Abstract

With the escalating price of land and increasing development pressures, fewer and fewer of BC's farmers are able to afford to make a capital investment in farmland. As the only provincial land trust in BC with a mandate to protect agriculture, The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) uses tools and models traditionally used to protect biodiversity and applies them to the protection of agricultural land. This presentation will focus on TLC's emerging role as BC's Farmland Trust and will provide insight into how tools and strategies such as conservation covenants, leases and land acquisition can be used to protect farmland and farming and the ways in which this differs or is similar to conserving land for biodiversity protection. As communities wrestle with food security and agricultural issues land trusts can play a role in responding to community priorities and protecting agricultural land in perpetuity. For land trusts or community groups interested in farmland protection, this presentation will also highlight some of the potential costs and benefits associated with protecting agricultural lands. Inherent in protecting agricultural land is the active management and production of that land, this presentation will feature legal mechanisms that land trusts can use to put lands into agricultural production. Protecting farmland for farming can come with complications that are not present when protecting land for biodiversity. However, by using the correct tools to negotiate these hurdles, land trusts such as TLC can play an important role in protecting our agricultural lands.

Speaker Biography

Kathleen Sheppard has been with TLC since 2001 and has been the Deputy Executive Director since November, 2007. Kathleen has worked extensively in the non-profit sector, including time with the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition and the Cows and Fish Program. From 1997-2001, she worked as a Research Assistant with the Medicine River Wildlife Centre (near Red Deer, Alberta). Kathleen has a B.Sc in Geography and Biology from the University of Victoria. She lives in Duncan, BC with her partner Rob. Ramona Scott has 40 years' combined work experience in park planning and management; eco-tourism; nature conservation; natural foods retail; producer co-ops; native plant landscaping; and agriculture. She has a BA in Geography; graduate studies in Forestry and Outdoor Recreation Resource Studies, and an MA in Culture and Geo-Justice. She is a certified BC Environmental Farm Planning Advisor. As Manager of Agricultural Programs with TLC The Land Conservancy of BC she feels very fortunate to be able to apply a combination of all her work experiences into one job: - wildlife and farmland conservation, agri-ecology, agri-tourism, promotion and public education.

Presentation # 2 title: Conserving Farmlands & Wildlife - Values and Conservation Tools

Presenter:

Dan Buffett - Ducks Unlimited Canada

Abstract

Farmland provides important habitat for many migrating birds such as waterfowl, raptors and shorebirds. However, farmland continues to be lost each year in BC due to changes in land use and development. There are a number of agencies that protect and enhance farmland in different parts of the province. The presentation identifies a number of issues associated with farmland and wildlife, along with several examples of the diversity of conservation tools employed by several conservation organizations. Ducks Unlimited Canada is a not for profit conservation organization that works with over 800 farmers, ranchers and landowners in BC who know what it takes to be successful at conservation. The land provides the soil to grow your crops, grass and water for livestock and a future for everyone. Some of the key aspects of DUC's program include a) Restoring wetlands through cost-share approach with a landowner to construct fencing and/or stockwatering to manage cattle access to wetlands, riparian areas and pasture

or range areas around wetlands, b) securing or restoring drained wetlands through construction of dams and dikes that improve water management for landowners, c) Conserving habitat through covenants, donations and purchases and planning for the future via biodiversity planning, Green Bylaws Toolkit, and Best Management Practices document. The Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust (DF&WT) is a non-profit organization that is committed to developing and financing innovative and cooperative solutions to farmland and wildlife management issues on the Fraser River delta. The Trust values the farm as a basic unit of conservation and works with farmers to maximize yield potential and enhance wildlife habitat on local farms. Management of farmland is controlled and constrained by ecological, socio-economic and political factors, often within short time horizons. Under these conditions it is difficult to ensure that agricultural resources are conserved in a manner consistent with long term sustainable agricultural and maintenance of wildlife habitat capacity. DF&WT supports land stewardship practices that contribute to long-term agricultural sustainability and enhancement of wildlife habitat. The Trust does this by: 1) identifying appropriate farm management practices that will benefit soil and/or wildlife habitat conservation through review of local and international research programs, 2) providing information to local farmers with respect to the benefits and operational requirements of these practices, 3) raising funds to cost share the wide-scale implementation of these programs with local farmers, and 4) evaluating the programs to ensure that they are effective. This approach has allowed farmers and conservationists to come together as "Partners in Stewardship." Since 1997, The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC) has been working with members of the agricultural community to promote agriculture as an environmentally compatible industry. With the escalating price of land and increasing development pressures, fewer and fewer of BC's farmers are able to afford to make a capital investment in farmland. As the only provincial land trust in BC with a mandate to protect agriculture, The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC) uses tools and models traditionally used to protect biodiversity and applies them to the protection of agricultural land. This presentation will focus on TLC's emerging role as BC's Farmland Trust and will provide insight into how tools and strategies such as conservation covenants, leases and land acquisition can be used to protect farmland and farming and the ways in which this differs or is similar to conserving land for biodiversity protection. Inherent in protecting agricultural land is the active management and production of that land, this presentation will feature legal mechanisms that land trusts can use to put lands into agricultural production. Besides the 2 presenters (Dan Buffett, Kathleen Sheppard), other contributors to the presentation include David Bradbeer (DF&WT), Andrea Barnett (DUC), and Ramona Scott (TLC).

Speaker Biography

Dan Buffett is the regional biologist for the BC Coast Office of Ducks Unlimited Canada and is responsible for conservation planning and research. He works with both government and non-government organizations as well as landowners to protect and restore estuarine and farmland habitat along the BC Coast. Dan has worked with Ducks Unlimited Canada since 1993, and completed his Masters in Resource and Environmental Management from Simon Fraser University in 2006. Kathleen Sheppard has been with TLC since 2001 and has been the Deputy Executive Director since November, 2007. Kathleen has worked extensively in the non-profit sector, including time with the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition and the Cows and Fish Program. From 1997-2001, she worked as a Research Assistant with the Medicine River Wildlife Centre (near Red Deer, Alberta). Kathleen has a B.Sc in Geography and Biology from the University of Victoria. She lives in Duncan, BC with her partner Rob.