

Teacher's Guide for The Oregon Story: Land Trusts

Introduction

In the most basic sense, land trusts are nonprofit organizations that acquire land to preserve the natural resources. All land trusts are similar in that they have specific missions. Land trusts work to preserve open spaces in small local partnerships with many different constituencies. Most importantly, they look at individual situations and respond accordingly. Land trusts are primarily made up of volunteers from local communities interested in balancing development with preservation. Without dedicated citizens, land trusts would not work.

Beyond that, describing and defining land trusts can be a difficult business. No two land trusts are alike. Their missions vary from preserving farm or rangeland to community building. Each Oregon land trust has been created with local needs in mind. Individual land trusts may use a variety of methods of land acquisition depending on the involved parties.

To understand land trusts, classrooms must look at three critical elements – the value of existing natural resources, using a nonprofit to meet local needs, and the incredible partnerships that make land trust properties successful.

Each of the following units will deal with one of the above elements. Unit activities are designed to work in sequential order to complete a citizen cycle of examining current conditions, completing an investigation, analyzing the data and sharing the information with the community. In each lesson plan, Activity 1 serves as an orientation to the issue and can be used independently. Activities 2 and 3 take students through an activity that simulates the unit theme in a context that directly relates to students. Ideally, Activities 2 and 3 work in conjunction with each other. Throughout these lesson plans, the most important message is that land trusts allow ordinary citizens, including students, to make incredible contributions to their communities.

In addition, many of Oregon's land trusts have education programs that provide wonderful opportunities for classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to contact their local land trust (see the Contacts list at www.opb.org/programs/oregonstory/land_trusts/resources/page_2.html) to find out about programs available in their area.

***Note to Teachers:** Portions of these lesson plans refer to clips from the Oregon Story: Land Trusts video. For information on purchasing a copy of the video, call 503-293-1982 or 888-293-1982 (outside Portland).*

Lesson 1: The Value of Natural Resources

Grade Level: 6-12

Background Information:

As development begins to encroach upon rural areas, the question of land value arises. Throughout Oregon, landscapes of farmland and forest have been taken over by development that brings new housing, new businesses and possible economic stimulation. Is there any value to leaving open spaces? Oregon land trusts address the balance of development and preservation on a daily basis. They find a variety of ways to balance human use with habitat preservation, so that the open spaces in their care remain sustainable resources. In this lesson students will use *The Oregon Story: Land Trusts* video to examine uses and values of open spaces and then conduct a resource assessment in their own school.

Content Standards:

This lesson addresses the following Oregon State Content Standards:

Social Science

- Geography: Understand and use geographic skills and concepts to interpret contemporary and historical issues.
- Social Science Analysis: Design and implement strategies to analyze issues, explain perspectives, and resolve issues using the social sciences.

Extension Web Sites from PBS:

- **Alan Alda: Wild Places**
Alan Alda learns that sometimes saving endangered species requires restoring whole ecosystems.
<http://www.pbs.org/saf/1106/>
- **Bill Moyers: Earth On Edge**
Every day brings news of human beings' impact on the life-support system known as Earth. But what is the truth behind the headlines?
<http://www.pbs.org/earthonedge/>
- **Bill Moyers: Earth On Edge: What are Ecosystems?**
<http://www.pbs.org/earthonedge/ecosystems/index.html>
- **American Field Guide**
Tap into the sights and sounds from a wide variety of environments throughout America with over 1,400 video clips.
<http://www.pbs.org/americanfieldguide/>

Activity 1 – What is the Value of Property?

Time Allotted: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Butcher Paper

Objectives:

- Students will consider the pros and cons of development.
- Students will gain an understanding of the various types of natural resources and functions of open space.
- Students will compare the value of property as land for development and/or the value of property as open space.

Teaching Instructions:

- Have students discuss some of the land/sites that have been under development in the last few months. Make a list of examples.
- Based on the examples, ask the following questions:
 1. In most cases, was the development built on open space or an already developed site?
 2. Are there any commonalities among the developments: stores, housing, etc.?
 3. How did the new developments benefit the community?
 4. Is there always benefit in building on an open space?

Watch the First Video Clip on the Greenbelt Land Trust

Start: approx 13:10 – Narrator: “For as long as anyone alive can remember ... ”

End: approx 15:10 – Narrator: “The city, the nearby hospital, and the land trust would buy the property and would protect it from development permanently.”

Discussion Questions Based on the Video Clip:

- What would have been the value of developing housing on the Owens site?
- Why would the city refuse to supply the land with utilities?
- How did the land trust help the Owens family?
- What resources does the site provide as an open space?

Watch the Second Video Clip on the Greenbelt Land Trust

Ask students to identify resources provided by the open spaces while watching the video clip.

Start: approx 16:30 Steve Smith from Oregon Fish and Wildlife starts speaking – his name is highlighted.

End: approx 21:20 Speaker says something approximating: “If it wasn’t going to be used as a ballfield or an active recreation facility, then what was the point?”

Discussion Questions Based on the Video Clip:

- What natural resources were preserved in this open space?
- If the Greenbelt Land Trust was preserving the open space partially as wildlife habitat, why did they build a boardwalk or sidewalk through it?
- How can people benefit from open space?
- What is the point of having open space rather than an athletic field or a playground?
- Which do you think is more important: development or open space? Why? Do you believe they are mutually exclusive?

Activity 2 – Local Site Assessment

Time Allotted:

- 45 minutes classtime and 1 week of study depending on the depth of the investigation

Materials:

- Resource Sheets for each student (page 15). If necessary, adjust the sheets to fit your school's resources.
- Various local bird and vegetation identification books
- A simple map of the school and surrounding property for each student. (This is not necessary, but very useful. If you do not provide a map, have one group create a map as their project; then have students in other groups do rough sketches and transfer the information to copies of the “official” map once you return to the classroom.)
- Clipboards for each group (also not necessary, but VERY useful if available)
- Small shovel for the group assigned to complete an “Animal Inventory”

Objectives:

- Students will examine and record natural, educational and recreational resources on school property.
- Students will practice mapping skills.
- Students will discuss the natural resources of their school.

Teaching Instructions:

In this activity, students will conduct a site assessment similar to those performed by land trusts. Students will examine a variety of resources and processes existing on school property. This lesson can be done quickly as a broad survey, or as a more in-depth investigation, depending on time constraints.

When land trusts examine property for acquisition, they go through a series of steps to determine the acceptability of the property. The steps include a basic site inspection, identifying conservation resources, looking for hazardous materials, determining the property boundaries, and assessing existing or potential problems (see the Land Trust Alliance’s Web site at www.lta.org/resources/standards.html for more information on these steps). Activities 2 and 3 work together to take students through all of the steps.

Although school property will most likely never be considered by a land trust for acquisition, it is still important to understand the value and function of the resources in your area. By examining their surroundings, students will better understand the considerations land trusts must make when inspecting land. They will also gain an understanding of their surroundings that creates a foundation on which to scaffold further investigations or projects.

In urban areas, the focus of investigation should be educational and recreational resources, water flow and pollutants. This might make an interesting comparison with a rural sister school.

- Have students make written predictions for the following questions:
 1. How many different kinds of animals exist on school property?
 2. How many different kinds of plants grow on school property?
 3. Where does the water flow on school property?
 4. Is there anything toxic on school property?
 5. What are the resources available on school property?
- Divide the class into small groups of three or four and assign them a topic from the Resource Sheet. Give them Resource Sheets and an identification book if appropriate.
- Discuss any protocols necessary for exiting the building, staying on school property, safety, etc.
- Choose an appropriate starting and ending site for the class, and the time available, and have groups begin their investigations.

- When the groups convene in the classroom, have each group share their findings with the rest of the class.
- If you choose, more analysis and communication of the data can be done in Activity 3.

Activity 3 – Site Analysis

Time Allotted:

45 minutes (students may need more time)

Materials:

Butcher paper

Markers

Various resource books

Objectives:

- Students will analyze the school's natural resources for health and safety.
- Students will identify areas for school improvement.
- Students will share their findings with the community.

Teaching Instructions:

This activity is meant to work in conjunction with Activity 2, the investigation. By analyzing the data and sharing information, students complete a citizen cycle of orientation, investigation and presentation.

- Divide students into their groups from Activity 2. Based on their investigations, have them answer the following questions:
 1. What were the main resources or hazards you saw?
 2. If you were asked to give the school a grade in the “subject” you examined, how would you rate it? What works well? What needs improvement?
- Write the following categories on the board/overhead:
 1. Available Resources
 2. Benefits
 3. Deficits
- Discuss with the class the resources the school has to offer, the things that work well and the things that need improvement.
- Brainstorm ideas for improvement of the “deficits.”
- Have students incorporate the information on the board into letters to the school board, the principal or the local city council. The letters should include a description of the project, the findings and the recommendations. These letters should be edited and mailed. It is important that the letters are mailed so that students understand that this project has purpose and is intended to benefit the community.

Lesson 2 – Land Trusts: Nonprofit Organizations

Grade Level: 6-12

Background Information:

Nonprofit organizations work to fill the void of community needs not provided by the government. Land trusts fill a niche in land acquisition and preservation. Federal and state governments make a commendable effort to cover a variety of land use, education and preservation issues, but they are often slow to act and can miss time-sensitive purchases. The government deals on a large scale, with county, state and federal parks, but land trusts can acquire sensitive land quickly and on a small scale that is difficult for the government to address. Each trust is different depending on the needs of the local community and works on a scale that reflects the commitment of the people involved. In this lesson, students will examine the various elements of a hypothetical land trust, compare it to a local land trust and finally create their own land trust and address a land acquisition issue.

Content Standards:

This lesson addresses the following Oregon State Content Standards:

Social Science

- Social Science Analysis: Design and implement strategies to analyze issues, explain perspectives, and resolve issues using the social sciences.
- Civics and Government: Understand and apply knowledge about government and political systems and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Extension Web Sites from PBS:

- **Faith, Hope and Capital: Community Land Trusts**
<http://www.pbs.org/capital/cdfi/land-trusts.html>
- **Faith, Hope and Capital: CDFI Loans**
<http://www.pbs.org/capital/cdfi/loans.html>
- **PBS - THE WEST - Events From 1890 to 1900**
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/1890_1900.htm

Activity 1 – How Does a Land Trust Operate?

Time Allotted: 30 minutes

Materials:

1 copy of the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout for each student and a teacher copy (**page 16**)
Butcher paper
Markers

Objectives:

- Students will understand how a land trust works.
- Students will discuss the natural and economic benefits of a land trust purchase.
- Students will consider the rights and responsibilities of private citizens.

Teaching Instructions:

- Have students read the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout.
- Divide students into five groups. Assign each group one question from the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout. Have students brainstorm answers to their assigned questions on butcher paper.

Questions:

1. Partnerships – What parties are involved in this transaction? What parties are invested in the outcome of this deal?
 2. Economics – What economic benefits will Mr. Bigg receive? What about the city and state?
 1. Natural Resources – How could this benefit the natural surroundings? Think about water, land and habitat.
 2. Government vs. Land Trust – Why wouldn't the city or state buy this land?
 3. Community – How does this purchase enhance the community?
- Have each group present its ideas to the class and support its reasoning using the text.
 - Have students respond in writing to the following questions:
 1. What should the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust do with the land that has been purchased? (Consider the discussion we have had and the purpose of a land trust.)
 2. Can you think of any disputes in your area where a land trust might be able to intervene? Describe the situation.

Activity 2 – Local Land Trust

Time Allotted:

30- 60 minutes for presentation

20 minutes for follow-up discussion

Materials:

Information on local land trust

1 copy of the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout for each student

Objectives:

- Students will understand the basic workings of a local land trust.
- Students will compare their local land trust with the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust (see handout, **page 17**).

Teaching Instructions:

Ask a representative from a local land trust to come speak to your class. Ask him/her to address the following topics:

- Partnerships – Which organizations do they work with and rely on? How do those organizations participate in the land trust?
- Economics – Who saves money and how?
- Natural Resources on Their Site/s – What criteria does their land trust use to purchase land? Do they take on reconstruction as well as conservation projects?
- Government vs. Land Trust – What is their land trust's relationship with the government? Are there instances where they were able to purchase land that the local or state government could not?
- Community – In what ways has their land trust brought benefits to the community (including recreation , education, etc.)?
- Encourage him/her to bring any information, maps, photos or videos that the students might find interesting.

- Allow time for the land trust speaker to make his/her presentation, and for students to ask questions. This may take an entire class period.
- Give students a copy of the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout and have them read the case study (if they have done Activity 1, have them briefly review their conclusions about each of the five categories).
- Divide students into five groups and ask them to compare your local land trust with the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust in one of the following categories:
 1. Partnerships – With which organizations do they work? Who is involved in the purchase?
 2. Economics – What economic benefits can be gained through land trust purchases?
 3. Natural Resources – What natural resources exist on the properties under consideration?
 4. Government vs. Land Trust – How does the land trust work in ways that the government cannot?
 5. Community – Are there benefits to the community?
- Ask the class the following questions:
 1. Which helped you to better understand the concept of a land trust – the land trust speaker or the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Handout? Why?
 2. Which of the five categories examined is most essential to land trusts? Are there any categories that are not essential? Why?
 3. Do you think land trusts are a valuable part of the community? Why or why not?
 4. Do you think you understand land trusts enough to create your own hypothetical land trust and deal with a land purchase issue?
- If your students are ready and you are willing, continue to Activity 3.

Activity 3 – Create Your Own Land Trust

This activity should be used with Activity 2.

Time Allotted:

45 minutes

Materials:

- Access to the Internet for further study of land trust specifics (Recommended site: The Land Trust Alliance at www.lta.org)
- 1 copy for each student of the Oregon Land Trust Mission Statements Handout (**page 19**)
- 1 copy for each group of The Problem Handout (**page 20**)

Objectives:

- Students will understand land trust acquisition procedures.
- Students will use their knowledge of land trusts to create a mission statement and solve a land trust acquisition problem.
- Students will understand there are multiple approaches to a problem.

Teaching Instructions:

- Explain to students that mission statements guide all decisions made by an organization. They are based on the values of the organization and serve as guidelines for land purchases, community interaction and land development. Give students the Oregon Land Trust Mission Statements Handout to read.
- Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Ask each group to create a group name and mission statement.
- Once they have established a mission statement, give groups The Problem Handout. Remind students that their decisions must align with their mission statement. There is no “right” answer to this problem.

- When all groups have completed The Problem Handout and created a course of action, have them share their solutions with the class.

Lesson 3 – Partnerships

Grade Level: 6-12

Background Information:

Land trusts could not work without commitment from a variety of citizens and organizations both on the local and national level. First and foremost, committed citizens form land trusts. To sell to a land trust, property owners must designate their lands to be open spaces in perpetuity and many owners continue to live on part of the land. Local schools often provide critical research for the land trust. Various government agencies, including the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, often provide support for land trusts, which work in conjunction with state and local governments. Often the federal government provides tax incentives for owners to sell their property to land trusts. Many land trusts have community needs incorporated into their mission statements. In this lesson, students will examine the kinds of partnerships created in community organizations and the reasons all are important. They will examine the partnerships and relationships commonly used in running their school to further understand the complex relationships used in a functioning land trust.

Content Standards:

This lesson addresses the following Oregon State Content Standards:

Social Science

- Social Science Analysis: Design and implement strategies to analyze issues, explain perspectives, and resolve issues using the social sciences.
- Civics and Government: Understand and apply knowledge about government and political systems and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Extension Web Sites from PBS:

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- **PBS - THE WEST - Events From 1890 to 1900**
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/events/1890_1900.htm

Activity 1 – Land Trusts – The Players

Time Allotted:

30 minutes

Materials:

Butcher paper

Objectives:

- Students will examine the partnerships involved in land trusts.
- Students will discuss the reasons for such partnerships.
- Students will understand the nature of relationships in various organizations.

Teaching Instructions:

This particular activity primarily examines the partnership aspects of the Deschutes Basin Land Trust. More general information and background materials on this trust are provided on *The Oregon Story: Land Trusts* Web site under “Tale of Two Trusts” at www.opb.org/programs/oregonstory/land_trusts/tales/index.html.

- Have students write a detailed estimate of the number of organizations they rely on in one day.
- Discuss their findings. How many were there? What kinds of organizations did students list?
- Explain to students that all organizations work in conjunction with and rely on a series of other organizations. Many organizations could not operate without significant contributions of various kinds. Land trusts are created by community members with the understanding that many parts of the community must be involved.

Show Video Clip 1 From the Deschutes Basin Land Trust

Start: approx 28:00 Narrator: “But Brad Chalfont had his eye on the land ...”

End: approx 31:37 Chalfont: “It’s really a matter of building mutual trust.”

Discussion Questions Based on the Video Clip:

- What organizations did you see or hear about in the video clip?
- What kind of support did the local community provide?
- Chalfont talked about planting, monitoring the water, putting in hatchboxes, and bringing crookedness back into the creek. What local organizations could he partner with to achieve these goals? Will he need more help than that? (Remember, land trusts usually have a board and only a few employees).
- If you were a land owner, would you think about donating your land to a land trust? Why or why not? Would you participate in a land trust? Why or why not?

Show Video Clip 2 From the Deschutes Basin Land Trust

Start: approx 32:30 Narrator “... very little private land on the Metolius.”

End: approx: 35:30 Chalfont: “It’s about putting the community back into the landscape.”

Discussion Questions Based on the Video Clip:

- Discuss why Willamette Industries would agree to sell the land. How do people benefit from participating in a land trust? How would a land trust help local people develop a sense of place?
- Have students write answers to the following questions: With a better understanding of the multitude of parties involved in land trusts, do you think they are effective in getting the job done? Do you think it is better for many people to contribute in little ways or for one group to take care of everything. Think about

your day and the number of organizations and people on whom you rely. Is your day mostly supported by one or by many groups?

Activity 2 – Local Partnerships

Time Allotted:

45 minutes

Materials:

Butcher paper

Markers

Any program fliers, school information, etc. that might help the investigation

Objectives:

- Students will examine the partnerships involved in running a school.
- Students will discuss how people and organizations rely on each other.
- Students will understand that there are many different forms of organizational relationships.

Teaching Instructions:

Land trusts rely on both individual and organizational participation to work effectively. By understanding the resources a school requires, students will better understand the complexity of land trust relationships. In Activities 2 and 3, students will learn about partnerships and commercial relationships as they examine the organizations required to run their school.

- Have students predict the number of organizations involved in running their school. Mark the predictions on the board.
- Break students into the following groups and have each group investigate one of the following areas. Encourage the students to think of whom they could ask to answer their question. Will they need to speak with more than one person?
 1. **Sports and other after-school activities** – Are there parent support groups? Do local volunteers donate items? Where do you get equipment? Do individuals volunteer to coach sports or are they paid?
 2. **Administration** – What companies provide the school with supplies? Who fixes the copiers? Do any volunteers help in the office? Does an outside company do payroll?
 3. **Programs (Depending on the size of your school, this can be divided into two groups)** – Does your school have any special educational programs run by Job Corps? Does your school partner with any organizations for service learning? Does the local college offer any classes at your high school? Do you have swimming classes or other classes at a local organization that are part of the school curriculum? Does your school offer internships at various local businesses? Are you a “green school”?
 4. **Cafeteria** – Where does the cafeteria buy its food? What vendors does it use?
 5. **Janitorial** – Where are supplies purchased? Does your school contract outside help?
 6. **Construction** – Is there any construction happening on campus? What company is performing the construction?
 7. **Library** – Where does the library purchase its books? Do people donate books or time in the library? How does your school acquire media materials such as computers, projectors or cameras?
 8. **Support Organizations** – Does your school have a Parent Teacher Organization? Are there other organizations directly dedicated to helping your school in some way?

- Have students discuss their findings. What kind of relationships are present in their school? Are there many volunteers in your school community? Are there partnerships with many organizations or mostly just commercial relationships?
- Create a web using the information collected. As you build the web, focus on relationships – who relies on whom?
- Discuss which organizations are absolutely essential (example: the supply company that provides toilet paper), which are not essential but add dramatically to the school community, and which, if any, are not necessary.
- Discuss how the findings met with student predictions.

Activity 3 – Effective Use of Partnerships

Time Allotted:

45 minutes – although students will need more time to complete the directory

Materials:

Phone books

Graph paper

Access to computer spreadsheet (not necessary, but helpful if available)

Web from Activity 2

Objectives:

- Students will discuss the relationships between organizations.
- Students will examine the effectiveness of communication between various organizations.
- Students will share their information with the school community.

Teaching Instructions:

This activity builds on the investigation in Activity 2. Land trusts must work effectively and efficiently with partner organizations. To do this, they must first understand the available resources, create working relationships with the players and then create strategies for ongoing success. Activity 2 examined the resources required to run a school; in this activity, students will examine the effectiveness of relationships and determine strategies to improve communication.

- Using the web from Activity 2, discuss the organizations needed to run your school. Ask the following questions:
 1. Do we know what all of these organizations do for the school? Do we know what the organization does in general? (The answers may be different.)
 2. Was there any overlap? Are there organizations that support multiple areas of the school?
 3. Do any of these organizations rely on each other? (An example would be a booster club renting from the local soda distributor).
 4. Do any of you participate in any programs that rely on these organizations? How does the organization affect the program?
 5. Are your parents a part of any of these organizations? How do they participate?
 6. Does a list detailing all of the organizations our school uses exist? Should it? How would it be beneficial to the school community?
 7. Do you think other students in the school know all of the partnerships this school relies on? Is that important?
- Discuss contact information. Often in large organizations like a school, there are certain people who are responsible for contacting vendors or organizations. If everyone worked individually, too many supplies

might be ordered or the same person might be contacted multiple times. For example, if the cafeteria runs out of soap, do they contact the janitor or the distributor? Is there a specific teacher who contacts the volunteers for a specific program? Create a diagram that shows this hierarchy (this may have been done in the web from Activity 2).

- Have students create a contact list of all of the organizations upon which the school relies. Have students include address, phone number, contact information and services provided to the school. Determine a way to show the contact hierarchies discussed.
- Decide with students which people or organizations should receive the list.
- Have the students compose a letter that describes the investigation, how the list can be used and how recipients of the list were chosen.
- Have students send the list and letter to appropriate parties.

Use With: Lesson 1 / Activity 2 – Site Assessment

Student Handout Resource Sheet

To determine the value of any site, a number of resources must be considered. Each group will focus on one of the following topics to determine the overall health of your property. To be able to share your information with other groups, please do the following:

- **Create a list of resources you find on school property.** (More specific information is given under your specific topic)
- **Place your items on the map.** If no map is provided, draw a rough sketch of school property and place your items there with the understanding that one of your groups is creating an “official” map on which you will place your information later.

Site Inspection

1. **Educational Resources** – Examine your school property for things or areas that could be teaching tools. Be creative. Do you have a school mural? Could you do science projects outside? Could you research the trees in your area? Hold a pinewood derby to understand friction? Have you done any educational projects on your school site? Create a list of the possibilities and mark the sites where this educational research could take place on your map.
2. **Recreational Resources** – Look for resources that are available for recreation around your school. Include playground equipment if available, but also benches, athletic fields and courts, walking trails, anything that is available for recreation or relaxation, etc. Draw these on your map of the school.
3. **Water: Where does it go?** – Determine which are pervious and impervious surfaces on your school site. Where does the water go when it falls on the pavement or parking lot? Down the drain? Through some outflow area? In an ideal world, water soaks into the ground. Where does that happen on your school property? Your group does not need to make a list. Instead, mark the impervious and pervious surfaces on your map. Then draw arrows indicating where the water flows if it does not soak in. Draw all drains, gutters, etc.

Conservation Resources (This may be limited in urban settings.)

4. **Plant Inventory** – Conduct a quick survey of the different types of plants on the school grounds. Using an identification book as a guide, identify at least five of the most common plants. How much of the school property do these plants cover? Draw areas covered by these five plants on the map. Are there more than five dominant species? If so, would you say that your school has diverse vegetation or not? Do the plants look healthy?
5. **Animal Inventory** - There are more animals on your school property than you might expect. First, listen and look for birds and squirrels. You may hear different birdcalls coming from different areas. Look for other signs of vertebrates including tracks, leftover ripped up pinecones, etc. Mark where you heard or saw these animals on the map. Dig a small 1-foot-by-1-foot hole in the ground (someplace appropriate – not in a landscaped area) and examine the invertebrates (bugs and worms) that you find there. How many different kinds do you find?

Hazardous Materials

6. **Environmental Hazards** – Look for contaminants on the school grounds. Consider things like oil that builds up on the pavement in the parking lot. There should not be very many, but ask your teacher or janitor about asbestos in the school and other things that might damage the health of the habitat or people who use the school.
7. **Safety Hazards** – Examine your playground equipment, athletic field, parking lot, etc. for possible safety hazards. Consider handicapped accessibility, street crossing signs, lighting (for those early dark mornings) and accessibility of the property to the public. Mark sites on your map that might be dangerous.

Property Boundaries

8. **Create a Map** – Create an “official” map of school property. Make it as close to scale as possible. Include enough detail to determine where things are, but keep it simple enough that other groups can record information on it. Include all major buildings, paved areas, athletic fields etc. If you are not sure about the property boundaries, have your teacher help you.

Use With Lesson 2 / Activities 1 & 2

Student Handout

Oregon Theoretical Land Trust Sheet

Note: This information is also available in the “About Land Trusts” section of *The Oregon Story: Land Trusts* Web site (http://www.opb.org/programs/oregonstory/land_trusts/about_trusts/index.html).

The land trust movement has been picking up steam because the pressures on undeveloped land are constantly increasing. Every day, America loses nearly 14 square miles of open space. Land-use conflicts have become common. For example, developers and conservationists often fight fiercely over the future of an undeveloped property. In some cases, private landowners don't want their property to be developed, but they can't afford to keep it.

To see how land trusts are uniquely qualified to help resolve these various conflicts, consider an imaginary story about the Oregon Theoretical Land Trust (OTLT):

The Story

Max Bigg, owner of the Bigg Shipping Company, wants to build a dock on some undeveloped riverfront property he owns, where several species of endangered birds build their nests. A few concerned citizens tried lobbying the city council to block the dock project, but the city didn't want to get involved. Construction is scheduled to start in six months. How can the OTLT help?

Responsiveness

Because the OTLT is an independent organization, it can act more quickly than the city council or other government bodies. The actual process of transferring the land will be long and complex. But the OTLT is able to open an immediate, credible dialogue with Max Bigg before the conflict escalates.

Flexibility

The city council could pass a regulation to block construction of the dock, but Mr. Bigg would fight the restriction, and the case would probably end up in court. In contrast, land trusts resolve conflicts by working *with* landowners. Every trust agreement is unique and highly responsive to the landowner's needs.

Financial Benefits

The land is actually owned by the Bigg family, not by the shipping company. If Max decides to sell his land, and buy a different piece of property to develop, he might have to pay \$50,000 in personal taxes on the sale. But if Max sells the land to a trust, he will get a federal tax credit for putting his land into conservation. In this way, Max could save up to 50% on taxes.

Control

Max thinks he should be allowed to develop his property any way he chooses. But he also has some sentimental feelings for the land, which has been in his family for over 100 years. After a few meetings with the land trust, Max starts to consider the non-financial benefits of keeping the site as a natural place – but transferring the property to the OTLT wouldn't solve his problems with docking space.

Small Is Okay

The city doesn't want to buy the land directly, because the property is “too small to be important.” But that's not a problem for the OTLT. The trust knows that even small spaces can have enormous conservation value.

(Meanwhile, the city has another problem to worry about – their old power plant site is leaching industrial pollutants into the river.)

Conservation

The last great advantage working on behalf of the OTLT is that their conservation work is highly appealing to many different stakeholders, for many different reasons. So it's relatively easy to involve other people in special OTLT projects.

The Solution

The OTLT successfully negotiates a one-of-a-kind trust agreement that allows everyone to get what they want:

- Max sells his land to the trust and enjoys a big tax break.
- The city leases the old power plant site to Bigg Shipping for \$1 a year. The cost is so low that Max can afford to have the pollution removed and then build his dock.
- The trust becomes the steward of the land, now a designated urban bird sanctuary. (When approached by the OTLT, the Oregon Audubon Society and the Department of Fish and Wildlife readily agreed to cooperate on sanctuary management.)
- The people of Oregon City get to keep an open space on the river and salvage a polluted site at the same time.

Use With Lesson 2 / Activity 3 – Create Your Own Land Trust

Student Handout

Oregon Land Trust Mission Statements

Note: This information is also available in the Oregon Land Trust Map section of *The Oregon Story: Land Trusts* Web site (www.opb.org/programs/oregonstory/land_trusts/map/index.html).

Columbia Land Trust

Conserving signature landscapes and vital habitat in partnership with the communities of the Columbia River region.

Deschutes Basin Land Trust

Conservation and restoration of open spaces and native fish habitat within the Deschutes River drainage system.

Greenbelt Land Trust

The mission of the Greenbelt Land Trust is to secure and protect, in perpetuity, open space that preserves natural beauty and provides a connection to the natural world.

McKenzie River Land Trust

To provide for the care of the waters, wetlands, habitat, scenic and recreational values, and agricultural lands of the river basins for the benefit of the general public and the ecological sustainability of our vital watersheds.

North Coast Land Conservancy

To serve as a resource for northwest Oregon coastal communities and landowners, to conserve and protect the land in perpetuity for its ecological, passive recreational and cultural values.

Three Rivers Land Conservancy

To preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic and recreational areas and historic lands in metropolitan Portland.

The Wetlands Conservancy

Promoting and supporting the conservation of Oregon's wetlands.

Use With Lesson 2 / Activity 3 – Create Your Own Land Trust

Student Handout

The Problem

Land trusts strive to take on as many land protection projects as possible. But land acquisition must align with the land trust's mission statement. No land trust wants to purchase land that is too costly to manage, is not in the community's interests or is inappropriate in other ways.

Your land trust is currently considering purchasing two properties. Both have houses on them and owners living on-site.

The first property is located in the wetlands along a stream that has had spawning salmon in past years. A series of dikes have kept tidal water from flowing through the wetlands and creating tidal marshes, an important part of the ecosystem. To restore this system, your land trust will have to open the dikes and allow salt water to flow into the areas populated with freshwater vegetation. In the short run, it will kill all of the plants. In the long run, it will create much more estuary marshland, but you are concerned about the land trust's public image in the meantime. Local landowners may see the dead plants and feel the land trust is ruining the property. Because of the tides, this land will be wet year-round and will not be as accessible to the public as your other sites unless you build some sort of walkway system through it. The owner is interested in preserving his land but wants to continue living on the property. His house is on a hill and will not be disturbed by the tides, but he is not sure about public access to the property.

The second property is adjoining an old mill pond. Research has shown that the pond is healthy if left undisturbed, but holds various toxins in the mud on the pond floor. The vegetation is diverse and healthy on this property, and, excluding the house, it remains an open space. The pond and its surrounding land serve as a stopping point for winter bird migration. The owner wants to build housing along the water, but the city owns half of the pond and is concerned about the disruption to the soil and pond. To acquire this land, the owner must be convinced that it would benefit him to sell to the land trust.

Discussion Questions

- Would you purchase either site? Which one? How would you deal with the owner? How would you raise funding?
- What would be your plan for this site? Consider the categories: partnerships, economics, natural resources, government ties, community, etc.
- Do you plan to have education programs on this site?
- Would you develop any part of the property – maybe a museum or an education facility?
- What sort of conservation plans would you undertake?
- Do you plan any restoration?
- What sort of public access would you plan?
- How do you plan to balance the natural resources with public access?