

Land Conservation in a Changing World

by

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Chapters 1 – 3

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Chapters 4 – 8

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Dedication

To my former colleagues and mentors
at
The Trustees of Reservations in Massachusetts,
partners too numerous to count
in successful projects
and friends in conservation and preservation groups
and public agencies around the country
who have dedicated their lives and talents
to the land conservation and heritage preservation movements;
and to the landowners, advocates, supporters, and generous donors
at all levels
who have made the work of conservation and preservation possible.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Brian Donahue, legendary founder of Land's Sake, a pioneering land stewardship organizations, in Weston, Massachusetts and Professor of Environmental History at Brandeis University who, following my retirement from The Trustees of Reservations, encouraged me to prepare the course syllabus on which this work is based and approved the course proposal under the name *Land Conservation in a Crowded World*; Frank Lowenstein, Deputy Director of the New England Forestry Foundation, who partnered with me in teaching the course in the spring semester of 2015; and David W. Foster, Director of the Harvard Forest in Petersham, Massachusetts who has encouraged me to keep pushing this work to its completion I also wish to thank The Trustees' archivist, Alison Bassett, who has encouraged this effort and directed me to the invaluable organizational archives that have been heroically archived and cataloged by Alison and her dedicated staff; David W. Foster, Director of the Harvard Forest, Petersham, Massachusetts, who has cleared the way for me to obtain remote access to the Forest's remarkable library and to keep in touch with that vibrant research community; and Sy Adler, Associate Dean of the Toulon School of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at Portland State University, who has enabled me to access the PSU Library's journals and e-books via my home computer. My editor, Chris B. Fryefield, J.D., deserves many, many thanks. Without her sharp eyes for accuracy, fitness of phrase, and sense of flow and organization this work would not have reached this stage. Errors that remain are entirely on me. Finally, I want to acknowledge with love and gratitude the support of my wife, Wenda Tai, and my son and daughter, Carrington R. Ward and Andrienne Tai-Ward without whose support, encouragement, and timely critique, this work would not have progressed beyond the early glimmers of an idea..

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Note:

To make these postings easier to handle, each chapter and its set of appendices are numbered independently and posted separately.

Personal Foreword

I'm writing this book for people from all backgrounds who have an interest in the work of land conservation, its origins in human psychology and pre-historic groups and civilizations, its various expressions through history, its 21st-century practice, and its future in a world that today is changing rapidly in many fundamental ways.

Origins of this project

In 2014 I retired from an oddly-named but well-regarded statewide conservation and historic preservation group after many years. I began as member of a two-person conservation staff and eventually became director of its conservation team and program. I may have entered semi-retirement with a slightly exalted idea of what my experience in the conservation world would offer to college students – those exploring the study of environmental history and the fields of conservation, environmental management, and policy. My idea for a survey course on land conservation origins and practice met with encouragement from Brian Donahue, Professor of Environmental History at Brandeis University, and founder of the pioneering community-centered land stewardship group, Land Sakes, in Weston, Massachusetts.

At his suggestion, I asked Frank Lowenstein (Deputy Director of the New England Forestry Foundation and, earlier, a conservation manager for The Nature Conservancy), who was teaching courses on climate change in the Brandeis environmental studies program, to work with me on a syllabus. We collaborated well and team-taught the course we developed, with good results, if not a knock-their-socks-off winner, to a group of undergraduate and graduate students in the winter semester of 2015. The long, multi-source reading list for the course proved to be a burden for all involved. Let's just say that not every student was as passionate about the readings and papers as we were. Many relevant sources were and are available, but none of them had the breadth and depth that we wanted in lieu of the usual textbook.

I can still remember Frank's skeptical twinge when, in my first lectures to the puzzled class, I endeavored to fuse prehistoric cave paintings and burial practices to biophilia as part of the psycho-social origins of land conservation. If you dip into the Introduction, you'll see that I'll try that bit of speculation on you as well. With some changes, our syllabus morphed into a

chapter outline for this work. I had hoped that Frank, who is a brilliant thinker and teacher, would join me as co-author, but he could not pile this onto his leaning tower of already demanding commitments, so I forged on alone.

Professor Donahue had suggested, “One of the best things about developing and teaching a course is that it’s a good way to start a book.” What he didn’t say was that writing a book is like running (or maybe limping in) a slow marathon with a constantly receding finish line, long after the water, oranges, and cheering throngs have disappeared.

A work in progress: current publication mode and plans for distribution

This book has been, and will continue to be, an ambitious undertaking. As an independent scholar, I have no research assistants and little personal access to other researchers and writers in this and related fields. Thanks to Portland State University’s policy of extending library privileges to any resident of my city, I do have free access to its solid collection, including academic journals. In addition, thanks to Sy Adler, Associate Dean of the Toulan School of Planning and Urban Affairs at PSU, I now have at-home access to e-books and journals online – a great time-saver. Similarly, David R. Foster, Director of the Harvard Forest in Massachusetts and Lecturer in Biology at the Cambridge campus, has appointed me a Visitor to the Harvard Forest, which enables me to access its specialized library as well as the vast resources of the University’s Cambridge libraries.

But my outline for this work is beyond ambitious, time is short, my budget is limited, and the pace of change and the mountain of reading in this and related fields bulges by the day like an impending volcano. That image occurs to us often here, a two-hour drive from Mt. St Helens. I write too slowly; our garden demands persistent pulling of invasive plants; our 1925 gambrel-roofed house calls for frequent DIY fix-its and contractor management; and my bi-coastal family deserves closer attention than I’ve been giving them since moving cross-country. I’ve had little patience for seeking out a publisher, though with nearly nine chapters finished, I am now undertaking to find publisher who will give this work the visibility and distribution that I’ve come to believe it deserves. I hope you enjoy this exploration as much as I’ve enjoyed its research and writing. If you would like to join my review team so that you can share your ideas, suggestions, large and small insights, bits of knowledge, your stories and your critique of this

always-evolving work, please contact me at wesleytward@comcast.net and I'll grant you access to the password-protected chapters.

Note that I'm still working on Chapter 9, which will bring Part One to a close. This will take a few more months, because it requires coming to terms with the monumental conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt in contrast to his contradictory legacy as a passionate trophy-hunter, social Darwinist, imperialist, and racist. Yes, I understand that he was a quintessential man of his time and place; but what can we learn from his contradictions as well as his conservation triumphs? Don't be surprised if it takes me another three months to finish Part One.

Thank you for joining me in this exploration.



Wes Ward

December 8, 2018

Brooklyn neighborhood of Southeast Portland, Oregon
Half-mile east of the Willamette River,
Twenty-six miles from Vista Point at the Columbia Gorge

PROSPECTIVE CHAPTER SUMMARY

Introduction

What is “land conservation” and why is it important? Why has land conservation appeared as a concept and spread to nearly every nation today? What is it a defense against? What are the differences between exploitation, sustainable practices, conservation, preservation? Examination of the range of conservation practice in today’s world weighed against the challenges conservation attempts to address. What are the limits of conservation? Are soil conservation, dams, reservoirs and irrigation, forms of conservation or more ingenious and elegant forms of exploitation? Is our world changing in ways that may be game-changing for the conservation movement as we know it?

Part One

1. **Environmental Awareness as the necessary context for conservation.** Is conservation in our DNA as humans? Prehistoric and indigenous examples of sustainable practices; ancient examples of environmental protection. Is there an intellectual foundation for conservation in the ancient world? Early examples of intentional conservation: sacred groves and royal forests.
2. **European and English Context of Conservation.** Royal forests and parks of privilege. The notion of a “commons” – does a “commons” necessarily end in tragedy? Enclosure and defense of the commons. Notions of property, public and private. Property as a bundle of separable rights. Common law: usufruct and easements. The Lockean idea of liberty as applied to private property in service of economic growth and the reciprocal rights of landowners. Ideas of perpetuity and legacy and the legitimacy of a trust.
3. **Nineteenth Century Crucible of Conservation: Romanticism, Revolution, Reverie, and Railways.** The context for historic and scenic preservation in England and America. Romanticism, transcendentalism, the idea of landscape.
4. **From the Nineteenth Century Crucible: Milestones of 19th-Century Conservation.** Thomas Jefferson’s unconsummated reverie. English railways breach castle walls. Defense of English commons, footpaths, and open spaces. Story of Berkhamsted Commons and its dawn rescue. Octavia Hill, open space crusader for the working class.

5. More 19th-Century Milestones: Commons, City Parks, and National Parks

Early American town commons and forests. De Tocqueville's associations. Laurel Hill Association and village improvement societies. Urban parks in England and America; Olmsted/Vaux's transformative parks. Protection of large landscapes: Yosemite, Niagara Falls, Yellowstone, Adirondacks and the Catskills.

6. Massachusetts Conservation and Preservation Precedents. Mount Auburn Cemetery, Boston's Public Garden, Old South Meeting House and the Old State House. Mount Greylock.

7. Tale of Two Foundings. The Trustees of Public Reservations and the English National Trust and their founders.

8. The Two Trusts: Early Properties, Activities and Influences. Each trust's first baker's dozen of properties compared and described. Their influences and advocacy.

9. U.S. and U.K. Public Land Conservation, 1900 - 1941

Part Two

The Land Trust Movement and Conservation Practice

10. 20th – 21st Century Evolution of the Land Trust Movement. Acceptance of gifts of land and the purchase of land as core techniques of private and public conservation. Volunteer and staff leadership and stewardship. The trend toward professionalism. The Land Trust Alliance and other leadership organizations. Public land conservation agencies, municipal, state, federal. Public-private partnerships for land conservation.

11. Land Trust Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Development. Challenges and best practices. [Proposed contributor: Marc Smiley, President, Solid Ground Consulting]

12. Conservation Toolkit. Geographic analysis, planning, and portrayal. Visioning, regulation, eminent domain – their uses, strengths, weaknesses, and trends.

13. Conservation Easements: Having cake and eating it too? How conservation easements transformed American land trusts into national movement. Conservation easements as a technique and practice: a critical assessment. The concept of perpetuity as an ideal and a reality. The two sides of intergenerational equity. The belt-and-suspenders approach to perpetual conservation: Necessary or redundant?

14. Cultural Heritage Conservation. Archaeological and historic preservation in a conservation context. Who determines what is culturally important to conserve? Leading heritage organizations

and their relationship to land conservation. Toward a unified vision of natural and cultural heritage conservation.

15. **Wildness and Wilderness, Ecology, Biodiversity, Sustainability.** Public agencies and land trusts in the West (with an emphasis on the Pacific Northwest). The Endangered Species Act and the continuing “wise use” backlash. How climate change is changing conservation priorities and practice.
16. **Large Landscapes and Conservation Partnerships.** Vision, organization, funding, and execution of multi-party collaborations to achieve landscape-scale conservation across multiple jurisdictions. {Proposed contributor: Bill Labich}
17. **Parkways, Greenbelts, Rivers, Greenways, Trails.** Linearity, connectivity and conservation.
18. **Conservation of Working Land, Recreation Land, and Religious and Institutional Lands.** Farmland, rangeland, forests and working land easements. Reducing impacts on conservation values. Special opportunities and challenges of religious and institutional lands.
19. **Environmental justice and the conservation movement.** Urban land trusts and community land trusts (emphasizing housing preservation in a conservation context). Achieving inclusion and diversity. Equity, restorative justice, and intergenerational justice. Leadership, governance, consciousness raising. To what extent could demographic and generational transitions strengthen the movement, or fragment and weaken it? [Proposed contributor: to be determined]
20. **Current Trends in land conservation.** Community conservation. Sustainability and resilience as climate change proceeds. Conservation and renewable energy.
21. **International Conservation.** The mixed colonial legacy. The work of UNESCO – IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). Environmental impacts of Third World infrastructure projects funded by developed economies and international organizations. Landscape-scale conservation sponsored by large NGOs in partnership with governments. Self-directed conservation in the Third World. [Proposed contributor: to be determined]
22. **Indigenous Conservation and Activism.** Conservation as survival and defiance.
 - A. Examples within the developed world: including Great Bear Lake, Northwest Territories, first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve led by an indigenous community; indigenous activism in the U.S., Indigenous activism in India and China.
 - B. Examples within the developing world: Asia, Africa, and South and Central America.
 [Proposed contributor: to be determined]

Conclusion

Perpetuity in a changing world – what do people want it to mean and what does it mean in practice; can and should it be achieved? Major challenges and the future of land conservation, global and local, ecological and cultural.

Timelines

Conservation People

Selected thinkers, leaders, and actors, with dates, and brief identifications.

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