

## **THE LAND TRUST FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

### **Land and Conservation Easement Project**

#### **Selection Criteria and Checklists**

*(Approved by the Board of Trustees May 12, 2003)*

#### **Articles of Incorporation**

The specific and primary purpose is the preservation and conservation of agricultural and open space lands within Santa Barbara County.

#### **Additional Purposes**

- To assist in the acquisition, preservation, management and restoration of lands within Santa Barbara County.
- To promote the orderly and ecologically sound development of the County by incorporating buffers surrounding sensitive open space lands.
- To retain for the benefit of the citizens of Santa Barbara County lands which have special agricultural, historical, recreational, scenic or other environmental values.
- To encourage sound public and private conservation and land use planning policies and practices in Santa Barbara County.

#### **Mission Statement** *(Updated March 12, 2007)*

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County protects natural resources, agricultural land and open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.

#### **The Board's Discretionary Role**

The following criteria are intended to guide rather than limit the actions of the Land Trust. The Board of Trustees retains discretion over acquisition or disposition of land and conservation easements, and will evaluate each project and proposal on its own merits after careful investigation of the property, its resources and its public benefits.

### **I. GOALS AND PURPOSES CHECKLIST**

*To qualify for selection property must meet ALL of these criteria:*

1. The property is located within Santa Barbara County.
2. The property protects natural resources, agricultural or scenic open space land of importance to the people of the county and in support of established public conservation policies.
3. The property is in a relatively undisturbed natural, scenic or historic condition and has significant natural resource or compatible recreational value; or the property is in an area of importance to productive agriculture and is in active agricultural use or provides a buffer to significant, adjacent agricultural lands.
4. The property is of sufficient size or importance or uniqueness that its conservation resources are likely to remain intact.
5. Protection of this property aids sound land use planning, promotes land conservation, and encourages good stewardship of land and water resources.

6. The Land Trust, the landowner or other parties have identified a financial mechanism or plan that is adequate to ensure proper long-term management of land to be acquired, or adequate monitoring and enforcement of the proposed conservation easement.

## **II. PUBLIC BENEFIT CHECKLIST**

*To qualify for selection a property must meet one or more of these criteria. Projects meeting multiple criteria will have a higher priority in the allocation of limited Land Trust staff time and funding for new projects.*

1. Protects agricultural land under existing or foreseeable threat from development trends within the County.
2. Is in active agricultural use or provides a significant example of historic agricultural use.
3. Contains endangered, threatened or rare species.
4. Contains significant and relatively undisturbed wildlife habitat, watershed or natural features.
5. Contains or has potential to contain natural features or unique landforms of educational, scenic or scientific value.
6. Buffers agricultural land, wetlands, wildlife habitat or other sensitive areas.
7. Provides a buffer for or is close or contiguous to existing conservation easement, park, preserve or other protected land.
8. Protects scenic views from public roadways, waterways or recreation areas.
9. Provides for appropriate public access for education or recreation activities.
10. Sets an important precedent for resource or open space protection in a targeted area.
11. Has historic or archaeological value, or is adjacent to and buffers such lands.
12. Offers significant relief from urban closeness and/or helps define community boundaries.

## **III. FEASIBILITY CHECKLIST**

*A property may meet the selection criteria favoring a land protection proposal but still may not be accepted if one or more of the following considerations apply:*

1. There is no threat or likelihood of the property being developed or disturbed in a way that would compromise its conservation values.
2. The property's values are primarily scenic, but are not readily visible or accessible to the general public.
3. The property is small and there is little likelihood of adjacent properties being protected.
4. The proposed open space is part of a development proposal which, overall, is likely to have significant adverse impacts on conservation resources
5. Adjacent properties are being, or are likely to be, developed in a manner that would significantly diminish the conservation values of the property in question.
6. There is reason to believe that the land/easement would be unusually difficult to manage/enforce; for example, because of multiple or fractured ownership, difficulty of access, frequent incidence of destructive trespassing, landowner or other restrictions, irregular configuration, etc.

7. The landowner is not sufficiently committed to land conservation or insists on provisions in a conservation easement that the Land Trust believes would seriously diminish the property's primary conservation values or the ability to enforce the easement.
8. The property cannot be acquired by the Land Trust with reasonable effort in relation to the property's conservation value.
9. The property is found to be irreparably contaminated.
10. The property is not large enough to be significant for its conservation purpose.
11. Ethical or public image problems exist in association with the Land Trust's involvement with the project.
12. For proposals to purchase land or an easement, it is unlikely that sufficient private or public funding can be raised by the Land Trust and/or project partners to develop, manage and complete the project, including funding for Land Trust administrative costs, in the timeframe proposed for the acquisition.
13. For land proposed to be acquired, there is not a public agency willing to accept transfer of the property from the Land Trust, and the Land Trust does not have the desire or financial resources to own and manage the property itself.
14. For conservation easement proposals, the landowner or other project supporters are unwilling or unable to make an adequate donation toward the Stewardship Fund to sustain long-term monitoring and enforcement of the easement.