

A Resolution

To create the Trout Unlimited Land Conservancy to promote collaboration among TU at the national and grassroots level with the land trust community and government agencies to conserve and restore coldwater resources and to protect and increase stream access.

Background: At the 2006 Annual meeting, a Land Conservation Work Group was created by the NLC to work with TU staff and the Land Trust Alliance to develop a proposal to fund and carry out land conservation projects to benefit coldwater fisheries and their habitats and to develop the capacity of TU at the chapter, state council and national levels to assist with this effort.

The Proposal

Overview:

- (1) A TU Coldwater Land Conservancy (TUCLC) would be created in the bylaws as a committee of TU, administered by national TU staff. Grassroots, conservation and development staff would work together to raise the finances for staff support, and other revenues needed to support the program. Without securing new sources of funding the TUCLC cannot succeed.
- (2) A TUCLC Council would be established to advise the program. The Council could include: three members of the national TU staff as appointed by the president; three members of the Board of Trustees as appointed by the Chair; three members of the NLC as appointed by the NLC Chair; and three members of the Land Trust Alliance as appointed by the LTA. A model for this Council is the TU Embrace a Stream committee.
- (3) The TUCLC would solicit donations to create a separate Coldwater Land Conservation Fund to provide matching grants to TU chapters and state councils, local and regional land trusts and public agencies to support selected coldwater conservation easement and land acquisition projects involving willing landowners.
- (4) The TUCLC Council would develop a competitive RFP process and ranking criteria, review all project applications and select successful grant recipients.
- (5) TU state councils and chapters would identify potential projects in collaboration with local and regional land trusts and public agencies, provide assistance in writing grant applications and offer technical assistance in evaluating potential projects through the Conservation Success Index (CSI).
- (6) State councils and chapters would provide volunteer support and expertise for habitat restoration and improvement projects on protected projects.
- (7) State councils and chapters would collaborate with land trusts and public agencies in negotiating conservation easements with landowners to ensure appropriate public access for fishing, monitoring and potential stream improvement projects.
- (8) TU state councils and chapters would not hold conservation easements but would provide technical assistance to land trusts or public agencies to ensure easement or deed terms are compatible with long term habitat protection, restoration, and management.

Governing Principles

- (1) The TUCLC is intended to serve as a matching funding source for use by state councils and chapters to support coldwater conservation projects in collaboration with land trusts and public agencies. It would be complementary to the EAS program. It is designed to take advantage of the expertise demonstrated by the Land Trust Alliance and its members across the country.
- (2) Trout Unlimited will not acquire land or land interests through this program. Local land trusts or public agencies will hold all interests in land. However, TUCLC will require that certain restrictions be placed on all lands to assure permanent protection of, and access to, lands as appropriate [for example, in some places where there are Threatened or Endangered Species issues, we may not want fishing access]. TU would become the go-to organization for restoration of acquired lands.
- (3) Public access, where appropriate, must be provided either as part of the overall conservation easement held by the local land trust or public agency or as part of a separate access agreement that may be held by the chapter or state council.
- (4) Grants will be awarded through an open, competitive process. TU staff and the TUCLC shall adopt a clear set of criteria to rank grant applications. Primary consideration shall be given to protection of native salmonids in their native ranges. Other criterion shall include: CSI ranking, previous TU investment in the watershed; potential for habitat improvement projects within protected area; documented ability of local land trust to complete project, provide long term protection and collaborate with TU to accomplish project goals; and, documented willingness of landowner to participate in project.
- (5) Grantees must provide at least 50% match. Match can be in the form of cash, grants from other funds, foundations, public agencies or bargain sales by landowners. TUCLC funds may only be used for the capital cost of the purchase of land and conservation easements, including direct transaction expenses including surveys, legal review, title review, appraisals and easement endowment fees. TUCLC funds may not be used to cover staff salaries or expenses of land trust or TU staff. Participating land trusts must be 501(c)(3) organizations and members of the Land Trust Alliance.

Respectfully submitted by:

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