

Our Story Part 1: A Land Trust In Lake County is Possible!

Despite being told that Lake County could not support a land trust, Roberta Lyons and Susanne Scholz were inspired to conserve land and started one anyway along with a team of friends. After attending the 1991 National Audubon Conference and learning about different agencies that could conserve land, they tried to get local agencies involved in protecting endangered lands but found that zoning laws and conflicting interests made land conservation with a public agency nearly impossible. They realized a better way to protect Lake County's important natural habitats was to buy the land with a 'land trust'.

Ignoring the downer advice that a land trust would not be successful in Lake County due to 50 percent of its land mass in state or federal hands and the low income and population, Roberta and Susanne moved forward. They gathered a group of interested friends and started holding planning meetings. Roberta sought advice from the Trust for Public Lands. Then one of those interested friends, Mary Benson, filed the paperwork for the land trust to officially become a non-profit charitable corporation named LAKE COUNTY LAND TRUST in 1993. And over the years, the Lake County Land Trust and the residents of Lake County have proven that the initial "advice," has not been true.

Lake County can, and does support a land trust and has for the last 30 years. Happy Anniversary Lake County Land Trust!

Learn about the Land Trust's first acquisition in next month's News & Views.