

Conservation Easements 101

This presentation will provide a brief history of conservation easements in the U.S. as a tool for permanently conserving natural resources on both privately owned and publicly owned lands. It will try to answer some basic questions: What is a conservation easement and how does it work? Who can hold conservation easements and how are they created or acquired? What does such an easement require or prohibit of the landowner and successor landowners? What does it require of the conservation entity that holds it and successor holders? Are all conservation easements equal? What state and federal laws enable the use of this tool? What economic incentives are available to induce willing private landowners to encumber their lands in this way? What standards must an easement meet in order to qualify for such incentives? How is a conservation easement monitored and enforced? What happens if a conservation easement is violated? Can a conservation easement be amended or terminated? And if so, how?

Asha Rehnberg, Executive Director, Bainbridge Island Land Trust.

Asha Rehnberg is the Executive Director of the Bainbridge Island Land Trust, a nonprofit founded in 1989 to preserve and steward the diverse natural resources of Bainbridge Island for the benefit of all. To date, B.I. Land Trust has helped to protect over 1,100 acres of Bainbridge Island's scenic vistas, wetlands, open spaces, tidelands, forests, unique plant and animal habitats and stream and wildlife corridors. B.I. Land Trust holds conservation easements on almost 700 acres of private and public lands, owns 41 acres in fee, and has also worked with a variety of partners to acquire land for parks, trails and public use. Asha is a conservation professional with a solid background in real estate law. In the 1990s she was a paralegal in the Real Estate Dept. of Gray Plant Mooty, one of the oldest and most prestigious law firms in Minneapolis. From 2002-2006 Asha was Conservation Director for the Inland Northwest Land Trust in Spokane, a nonprofit that has helped to permanently protect over 8,500 acres of eastern Washington and northern Idaho. From Fall 2006-Spring 2008 Asha enjoyed the drippy beauty of British Columbia, where she served on the board of the Bowen Island Conservancy before moving to Bainbridge in May 2008.