

Maureen Heffring, Board Chair of the Foothills Land Trust started by telling participants about how the Foothills Land Trust got started. They started because of a potential conservation project that local community people were interested in seeing conserved. Maureen mentioned that the Foothills Land Trust has a multi-generational board and that they created an “enjoy the land committee”. They also “Park” all non land conservation issues at the front door so that they can focus on what is important. Maureen commented that Foothills Land Trust feels that there is “nothing like finding out like doing” and it is “really important who we get on the bus”.

One of the fireside chat participants, Ralph Smith, a landowner from north of Grande Prairie spoke about the challenges he is experiencing in getting his land conserved. He is truly one of those landowners who is “falling through the cracks”. Participants listened to Ralph’s story and offered several suggestions to try to help him to conserve his land. Suggestions included working with his municipality and also thinking of conservation offsets as a conservation tool.

The participants talked about what is needed to start a local land trust and all felt that community involvement and support was necessary in order to make this happen.

In addition the participants spoke about agricultural easements. One participant, Lucille Gleddy, is a landowner who is looking to conserve her agricultural land near Red Deer, AB. Fireside chat participants chatted about the current conservation easement legislation not being an appropriate tool to conserve agricultural land. If the Conservation Easement legislation was changed to include agricultural CE’s, then who would do them was asked? One suggestion was for the Agricultural Services Board to look at this. Another suggestion was to put pressure on the Federal and Provincial Governments regarding inclusion of agricultural conservation; one potential is through the Land Stewardship Act of the Land Use Framework.

Two books were cited by participants:

- 1) Tempered Raticals
- 2) Good to Great-written by Jim Collins