



A History of the Oregon Women's Land Trust

In 1975 the southern Oregon Women's community consisted of Cabbage Lane, Root Works, Womanshare and two other places in Wolf Creek. There was a need for understanding and communication with each other about money, business and class. A meeting was held at womanshare in June 1975. Each woman talked about her background and attitudes about money, where she got her money and what she spent it on. There were exchanges and barter made. There were discussions on open land and land trusts. Each woman committed ten percent of her money to the beginning of the land trust idea. Spes, MaryLois and Guthrie were to be paid with this money to do research. Out of that meeting came a commitment from women to help get land for women other than just those who could afford to buy it.

At the WomanSpirit festival in July 1975, there was a workshop on land trusts.

The first formal land trust meeting was held in Vida in October 1975. Reports were given on the research that had been done. The legal practicalities were discussed, the articles of incorporation voted on. Women talked about tensions concerning non-lesbians and men. In small groups and workshops women talked about their visions and ideas, the by-laws and how to raise money. There was \$4,000 pledged in unnamed pledges from the women at this meeting.

The second meeting of the Oregon Women's Land Trust was held in Grays Creek in March 1976. Some women volunteered to look for land. Agreements and principles of unity were discussed. Tensions, differences and agreements about boy children were heard. In small groups landed women met to talk about their relationships to the Land Trust, what they had to offer the Land Trust and what the Land Trust had to offer them. Landless women talked about their needs and how to raise

The third meeting of the Land Trust was held at Who Farm in Estacada in May, 1976. By this time there was a lot of energy going toward getting a piece of land. A lot of women from southern Oregon had seen some land in Days Creek. They came with excitement and information about buying this piece of land. Different women had done legal research, talked with the realtor and taken photos and slides of this 147 acre piece with a 10 house on it. A small amount of earnest money had been given to the realtor so the land could be held until this meeting. A decision had to be made.

There was a lot of excitement about the Days Creek land. Reports and research had been done, and there was much discussion of the pros and cons. We went around the circle many times, each woman saying her feelings about the land, the needs of the Land Trust and if this piece would meet these needs. We went around the circle again to see who wanted the land and who didn't. The majority of women wanted it. We went around again to the women who felt strongly against it and those women said they didn't feel strongly enough to stop the group decision. The decision to buy the land was made on three conditions. 1) that the land trust would come up with specific ways to reach out to third world and working class women, 2) the efforts would be made to acquire the next piece of land near a city and that efforts would be made to look for a large piece of land for the matriarchal village idea. 3) that the Land Trust would research problem concerning BLM and the Days Creek land and fight them if necessary. Ten thousand dollars was given at this meeting and enough pledged to pay \$250 a month for six months and a figure less than that for one year. There were four small groups who discussed women who wanted to live on Days Creek land, the