

THE OREGON WOMEN'S LAND TRUST

"The Oregon Women's Land Trust is a unique organization with little precedent...We believe the land exists by her own right; we claim no ownership; our purpose is to be sensitive to the land's needs, to carry out a long range program to protect, revitalize, and restore land in the name of nature and ecology." (Guthrie and Roz, *WomanSpirit* 11, Spring 1977)

"OWL, Oregon Women's Land, was bought in 1976. Its stated purpose is to provide access to women on land, especially to those women who would otherwise be denied access....OWL Farm has been the home for many women on a long-term basis; a place of rest, recreation and retreat for other women; as well as a night's shelter for women who travel. [It is a place] where women have come together to share skills and labor; where women have come to heal and grow; where women have come to be at one with Mother Earth...OWL Farm is a special place given by women, to women, for women." (From Maize #7, Winter 1986)

ORIGINAL ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION:

- 1) *To acquire, administer, and hold in perpetuity land and other assets in trust for the benefit of women who would otherwise be denied such access.*
- 2) *To promote, explore, develop and maintain the spiritual, physical, and cultural well being of women by:*
 - a) *providing women access to land,*
 - b) *encouraging self-sufficiency and the means to attain it,*
 - c) *fostering and exploring new patterns of human relations, and*
 - d) *providing other experiences to promote the well-being of women.*
- 3) *To encourage thereby the development of harmonious and ecologically sound land-based communities.*
- 4) *To preserve land and protect it from speculation and over-development, and to foster the recognition of land as a sacred heritage and resource belonging to all.*
- 5) *To serve as a resource for individuals and groups of women with interests in any of the above.*

June 1975, Murphy, Oregon. Three day meeting at WomanShare on "Money, Class, and Power." Commitment by each woman present to donate ten percent of her money toward getting an Oregon Women's Land Trust started. Out of this money, Spes, Guthrie, and Mary Lois were to be paid to do research.

As a group, the women made a commitment "to help get land for women other than just those who could afford to buy it." (Sierra, A Herstory..., *WomanSpirit* 11, Spring 1977)

July 1975. Workshop on land trusts at the WomanSpirit Festival.

October 1975, Vida, Oregon. First formal land trust meeting of the Oregon Women's Land Trust attended by seventy women. Reports on research, discussion of legal practicalities, vote on articles of incorporation, discussions of tensions about non-lesbians and men. Visions and ideas. Dancing, singing, massage, meditation. \$4,000 in unnamed pledges received at meeting.

March 1976, Grays Creek. Second meeting of the Oregon Women's Land Trust. Discussion of agreements and principles of unity. discussion of tensions, differences, boy children. Some women volunteered to look for land.

May, 1976, Estacada, Who Farm. Third meeting of the Oregon Women's Land Trust. Discussion of 147 acre piece of land in Days Creek (included photos and slides) available for \$65,000 plus interest of 7-1/2 to 9% to be paid over 15 years: large log house, hay barn, chicken barn. Discussion of legal research. A small amount of earnest money had been given to the realtor to hold the land until after the meeting. A conditional decision to buy the land was made.

Conditions

1) that the land trust would come up with specific ways to reach out to third world and working class women

2) that 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 establishment of a matriarchal village.

3) that the Land Trust would research problems concerning BLM and the Days Creek land and deal with the problems.