

Seventh Symposium on Advanced Legal Topics in Land Conservation

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FACULTY BIOS



Tracy Collins joined Waller Smith & Palmer over 25 years ago, and has focused her practice on all aspects of civil litigation including personal injury; land use disputes, including conservation restriction enforcement; and probate disputes, including will contests and conservatorship actions. Tracy is also a member of Waller Smith & Palmer's Municipal Law practice, providing legal counsel to southeastern Connecticut municipalities. She tries cases in state and federal court in Connecticut and is often appointed by southeastern Connecticut probate courts to serve as temporary administrator of estates when family disputes arise and as conservator of individuals who are unable to manage their own affairs. Tracy and her family live in East Lyme. She is proud of her commitment to local community service including serving as counsel to the Lyme Land Conservation Trust.



Catherine DelCastillo Howell is a senior attorney for The Nature Conservancy (TX), and has been with the global conservation organization since 1999. Catherine provides general legal and real estate services to the Conservancy, and also provides guidance on oil and gas matters, serving as chair of the organization's Energy and Minerals legal practice team and the North America Energy Pipeline Team. She is a frequent presenter on conservation easements, oil and gas issues on conservation lands, mitigation, government grants, and land acquisition. Catherine is a graduate of The University of Texas School of Law. She began her legal career in private practice specializing in real estate and corporate matters, after which she became an internal auditor for an international relief and development organization. She was also the executive director of a small nonprofit organization providing free legal services to low-income Texans before joining The Nature Conservancy in 1999.



Tamara Galanter joined Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger LLP in 1989 and is a partner with the firm. She counsels and litigates on behalf of land trusts, public entities, community groups and environmental organizations concerning environmental and land use matters, including conservation easements, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), subdivision and general plan law, public agency administration and real estate transactions. Tamara serves as general and outside counsel to many land trusts, including the The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Tri-Valley Conservancy, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sonoma Land Trust, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, Land Trust of Napa County and Eastern Sierra Land Trust. Tamara received her law degree from Yale Law School and graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree from the University of California at Berkeley. She is a member of the Bars of the State of California and several federal courts, helps organize and chairs the Conservation Law Forum of the California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT), and is an advisor to the CCLT Policy Committee.



Rachel Hampton is a senior attorney with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). She provides legal services to TNC's Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois Chapters, as well as its national fire program. Rachel also serves as TNC's legal advisor on the Americans With Disabilities Act. Before joining TNC in 2002, Rachel practiced real estate and environmental law at Faegre Baker Daniels LLP (formerly Faegre and Benson LLP) in Minneapolis. Rachel received a law degree from Yale Law School in 1999, a master's degree in environmental studies from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 1999, and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Minnesota in 1994.



Larry Kueter is an attorney in Denver, Colorado. Since 2011, his law practice has been limited to land conservation, and since 1990, he has been involved in over 500 conservation transactions conserving over a million acres of land. For 30 years he was with the law firm of Isaacson and Rosenbaum, a firm nationally known for its conservation practice. He has been legal counsel to the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust since its creation in 1995. With his involvement with CCALT and the Partnership of Rangeland Trusts, he has been at the center of the movement in the Rocky Mountain West to create land trusts that are affiliated with statewide cattlemen's and stock growers associations. In 2004 and 2005, he co-chaired the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices Program Design Steering Committee and he was a board member of the Land Trust Alliance from 2006 through 2015. He was the founding chair of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and served in that role from 2006 through 2014. In 2013 he was awarded the Kingsbury Browne Conservation Leadership Award by the Land Trust Alliance and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.



Rob Levin is an attorney at the Law Office of Robert H. Levin (ME). Rob has managed a solo law practice specializing in land conservation and nonprofit organizations since 2002. He has consulted for the Land Trust Alliance and has advised land trusts in several states. Rob has spoken at many conferences, including the Land Trust Alliance Rally and the Maine Land Trust Network Conference, and has written several papers on conservation issues in Tax Notes, the Land Trust Alliance's Saving Land, and NYU's Environmental Law Journal. Rob has served as co-counsel and principal amicus brief drafter on precedent setting cases in Massachusetts and Maine. Rob graduated from Haverford College in 1996 and from New York University Law School in 2001. After law school, he served for one year as a judicial clerk to Magistrate Judge John Facciola at the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Rob and his wife Sarah walked to Maine from Maryland in the fall of 2002 for their honeymoon. In 2016, Rob, Sarah and their nine-year-old

daughter bicycled 3,932 miles over six months Delaware across America to Seattle, Washington – coast to coast. Rob serves as a volunteer board member of Portland Trails, is active in his local Quaker Meeting, and is a founding member of the Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Defense Advisory Council.



Ray Lyons, a conservation attorney based in Harvard, MA, represents landowners, the New England Forestry Foundation, the Northeast Wilderness Trust, and works with many conservation organizations to protect important open spaces throughout New England. He is an active member of the Land Trust Alliance's Learning Council and the Massachusetts Easement Defense Subcommittee (MEDS), and is an emeritus member of the Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Defense Advisory Council. He is a frequent speaker at Rally and the Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference on issues ranging from property tax exemptions to welcoming people with disabilities onto conservation properties. He is a former trustee of the Groton Conservation Trust. A longtime musician (saxophone and flute), he enjoys making music with others. (Including you!)



Catherine Marrion has been a charitable organization attorney for 30 years, and has been a member at the Waller Smith & Palmer land conservation department for four years. She negotiates and prepares conservation easement for numerous Connecticut land trusts and conservation organizations as well as eastern Connecticut farmers, and works closely with state and federal organizations to obtain funding for easements. She also has represented conservation organizations in actions before the Connecticut courts to implement needed deviations from easements, to allow for better protection of important land including crucial waterways.



Hanni Muerdter has been Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy's Stewardship and Conservation Planning Director for the past ten years. She oversees the organization's program of monitoring and managing conservation easements and fee land properties, focusing on compliance and efficiencies. She was awarded North Carolina Land Trust Council's Rising Leader of the Year in 2016. Hanni co-chairs Blue Ridge Forever's Conservation Committee, which facilitates knowledge sharing between western NC land trust staff.



Pat Pregmon understands conservation transactions from all points of view, having represented land trusts, owners and government agencies in hundreds of transactions. She brings to conservation the experience gained in planning and implementing sophisticated real estate and finance transactions as a partner with a large, national law firm. In 1998 she formed Pregmon Law Offices. She has authored numerous model documents and guides. She is a member of the Alliance's Conservation Defense Advisory Council.



Leslie Ratley-Beach joined The Land Trust Alliance as its first conservation defense director in August 2007. She led the effort that created the first ever national conservation defense liability insurance program (Terraforma Risk Retention Group LLC), a unique in the world nonprofit charitable risk pool. She continues to coordinate the delivery of services to Terraforma. She also led the team that instituted the Alliance's national conservation defense initiative and directs the Conservation Defense Network of leading conservation experts. She has authored articles, national newsletters, numerous case studies and fact sheets and an Alliance curriculum and has peer reviewed numerous conservation publications. Leslie speaks on conservation nationally, leading symposia, webinars, workshops and seminars. Previously, Leslie worked with the Vermont Land Trust for almost 13 years. She was stewardship director

leading the department responsible for more than 1430 conservation easements on over 470,000 acres of land with more 1,200 landowners and a staff of nine. Prior to that, she was project counsel with Vermont Land Trust where she closed, drafted and helped negotiate more than 600 conservation easements. Leslie has a law degree from Boston University and practiced real estate law for nine years in Boston before joining the Vermont Land Trust in 1994. Leslie has bachelor's degrees from University of Oregon in journalism and political science and is a native of the Cascade Mountain region of California.



Michael Rubin, retired as Assistant Attorney General, and chief of the Rhode Island Attorney General's Environmental Unit, after 31 years of distinguished public service. He also served as the Rhode Island Environmental Advocate. Mr. Rubin has held this position (or antecedent positions at the Rhode Island Attorney General's office) since 1987. As Chief of the Environmental Unit, Mr. Rubin supervises three other attorneys and figuratively covers the waterfront of pro-environmental litigation, lobbying and public education in pursuit of a safe, clean and recreationally-available environment. In addition to defending the noted coastal pond preservation case of Palazzolo v. RI Coastal Council, before the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Rubin also engages in independent pro-active advocacy on behalf of the public such as in the successful

Newport Realty appeal in which Mr. Rubin had the court uphold a colonial-era right-of-way to the historic Newport waterfront. Mr. Rubin is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Rutgers Law School and is a member of the R.I., Massachusetts and Vermont bars.



Sarah Sigman is a partner at Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP, where she represents land trusts, public agencies, and community groups in environmental and land use matters. Her work includes both litigation and negotiations to protect and restore conservation lands. She recently obtained a successful judgement for the Sonoma Land Trust that fully enforced a conservation easement, funded the entire cost of restoration, and reimbursed enforcement costs. Sarah also represents public agencies involved in transit and infill projects in San Francisco and assists community groups challenging inappropriate development projects throughout California.



Bill Silberstein is an attorney for Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell LLP (CO). Bill has built a land conservation practice that has a national reputation for excellence in his 30 years of experience and is recognized as one of the nation's preeminent experts on conservation easements. He has represented landowners and conservation organizations in hundreds of conservation easement transactions and in over 30 IRS audits of conservation easements. Bill helped the Forbes family create a conservation easement for its ranch in the San Luis Valley. Over 80,000 acres were included in the easement, the largest in Colorado. Bill also represents clients in a wide variety of real estate developments, purchases, sales, leasing and financing transactions for ski resorts, office buildings, hotel properties, retail shopping centers, ranches and rural recreational

properties throughout the Rocky Mountain states. He has served as developers' counsel for many brownfield developments and transit oriented developments. The breadth of his practice allows Bill to assist property owners who are pursuing either development or preservation objectives. He helps clients achieve an appropriate balance between development and conservation that is sensitive to economic development in the region and quality of life that is so important to the regional economy. Bill has served on the board of the Land Trust Alliance



Carl Silverstein has served as executive director of the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) since 2000. Based in Asheville NC, SAHC has protected more than 70,000 acres in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee to achieve landscape scale conservation of the Highlands of Roan, Appalachian Trail countryside, Black Mountains crest, Balsam Mountains, and Smoky Mountains. Carl serves on the claims committee of TerraFirma Risk Retention Group, a charitable risk pool created by the national Land Trust Alliance to insure its members against the legal costs of defending conservation interests. Prior to joining SAHC, Carl was an attorney with the Seattle law firm of Riddell, Williams, and Bullitt & Walkinshaw where he focused on a general civil practice. He clerked for U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein in the Western District of Washington, Seattle WA and also U.S. Appellate Judge Jerome Farris, U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, Seattle WA. He and co-presenter Hanni Muerdter have led

SAHC's enforcement of SAHC's conservation interests, including a successful 2-year lawsuit to defend a conservation easement adjoining the nationally significant Shining Rock Wilderness. Additionally, Carl has led SAHC in strategic planning, risk management, building a multi-million dollar endowment for long-term sustainability, and other organizational development initiatives for a successful accredited land trust.



Steve Swartz spent 19 years as the general counsel of The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, a national land trust based in Washington, D.C., before stepping down in 2017. He remains a senior attorney for the Trust's parent organization, now concentrating on broader risk management and litigation issues. Before joining the land trust in 1999, he was in private practice for nearly 20 years concentrating in the areas of real estate law and governmental regulation with particular emphasis on litigation, arbitration, dispute resolution and loss prevention. In the past, he has presented programs on various aspects of real estate and construction law and litigation avoidance for business and non-profit audiences, including at Rally. He is admitted to practice in both Maryland and the District of Columbia and is an alumnus of both the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and the Alliance's Conservation Defense Advisory Council.