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owners, family farmers and ranchers," said Dan Danner, vice president of the National Federation of Independent Business.

The idea faces an uncertain future because it costs some \$50 billion and is opposed by many Democrats, who contend it primarily benefits the wealthy who leave huge estates.

Yet proponents have an unusual ally in some environmental groups who see repealing the tax as a way of protecting open space and wildlife habitat.

Michael Bean, a

wildlife specialist at the Environmental Defense Fund, said in a recent magazine article that the estate tax is "highly regressive in the sense that it encourages the destruction of ecologically important land in private ownership."

Bernard Yokel, president emeritus of the Florida Audubon Society, put it this way: "Wildlife is clearly an asset. But the farmer, and businessman, will not put himself out of business to protect that."

Short of estate tax repeal, Cosgrove of

American Farmland Trust said Congress could protect farmland with other tax changes:
 4Reduce or defer capital gains taxes on transfers of land that will stay in agricultural production.
 4Provide estate tax relief or increase other tax incentives if land remains a farm through the generations.



A Message from Bayard Catron

Since last February, citizens of Rappahannock County have been working toward establishing a new organization dedicated to conserving land and maintaining the scenic, rural character of the county.

An active group of twenty to twenty-five, assisted by a similar number of people playing smaller roles, has been meeting regularly as a steering group. I have been gratified by their energy and dedication, and encouraged to think that the community as a whole will actively support this organization.

With the election of a Board of Directors, RCCA enters a new phase. I hope

that, working cooperatively with other related local and regional organizations, the Board will mobilize a proactive effort to protect particularly sensitive lands in the county from inappropriate development. It will have available to it the use of all available land protection tools to accomplish its mission.

We stand on the shoulders of those who

have gone before. Because of visionary leadership over the past generation and more, Rappahannock County is blessed with an inspiring, conservation-minded Comprehensive Plan, and effective zoning and subdivision ordinances. RCCA provides one additional resource to ensure vigilant stewardship of our scenic,

We do not inherit this land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.
 —Haida Indian



rural county for the next generation.

Tax Repeal May Protect Farmers

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1999 (AP)—It's often said that farmers are land rich but cash poor, which is why so many want Congress to repeal the tax on inheritances—and why environmentalists say repeal could help slow suburban sprawl.

Even though the tax code has generous exemptions and special ways of valuing farmland, many farmers and ranchers are reluctant to spend a lot of money on lawyers and accountants for estate planning. This ends up costing them in the end.

Most farm value is tied up in land and buildings. When a principal owner dies, some families must sell off part of their operations to pay federal estate taxes. If that land is close enough to a city, it can be subdivided into house lots or used commercially. Either contributes to suburban sprawl.

"It can be a very disastrous problem," said

Jerry Cosgrove, director of the northeast office of American Farmland Trust. "If there hasn't been estate planning, the tax bill is unexpected because the land values have skyrocketed over the years."

Inheritance taxes range from 18 percent to 55 percent on estates up to \$10 million, with everything above that taxed at 55 percent. The first \$650,000 is exempt,

Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

doubling to \$1.3 million if both husband and wife claim it for the same estate.

That seems like a lot, but Dale Moore of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association said even a small ranch easily

can be worth \$2 million or more. While estate planning offers protection, Moore said some cattle producers spend up to 10 percent of their gross income a year in lawyer or accountant fees and to pay for insurance policies.

"Guys are not only hit with the tax when it occurs, but they're also hit with the year-in, year-out planning in order to protect against it," Moore said. "For the most part, they need that money to put into working the operation and making it grow."

Republicans in Congress are proposing a gradual phaseout of the estate tax that would lead to repeal in 10 years. Farm groups and small business owners are leading the charge for repeal of what they call the "death tax."

"The fear of having to sell off a lifetime's work to satisfy this ghoulish tax is very real among Main Street business

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community's character, such as historic or scenic landscapes.

Once priority lands are targeted for preservation, TPL will help communities implement their greenprint by providing protection and acquisition strategies. By acquiring land or easements that limit development, communities guide growth into desired areas.

Raise Billions for Land

TPL will help raise as much as \$20 billion in state and local funds to protect lands threatened by sprawl over the next five years. TPL's Public Finance program helps communities mount campaigns to raise funds for parks and open space through bonds or taxes.

In recent years TPL has helped design and pass major funding measures in dozens of sprawl-threatened communities, including Tucson, Arizona; Ocean County, New Jersey; Forsyth County, Georgia; and Routt County, Colorado.

TPL will highlight "best practices" among communities employing conservation strategies to guide growth, relieve sprawl, and sustain a healthy economy and high quality of life. In November 1999 TPL will present its "Greenprint for Growth" awards for innovative and effective land conservation programs that model rational growth strategies as an alternative to sprawl.

Best Practices

Awards might be given to communities or programs that:

- ▲ Create parks to spark revitalization or encourage new development where growth should take place.
- ▲ Create parks, greenways, and trail systems that give people a safe and convenient alternative to traveling by car.
- ▲ Acquire land and conservation easements to protect water quality.
- ▲ Acquire land and conservation easements

to limit development in flood-prone areas.

- ▲ Purchase development rights over prime farmland, ranches and working forests.
- ▲ Use land conservation to contain and shape metropolitan growth patterns.

Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land specializes in conservation real estate, applying its expertise in negotiations, public finance, and law to protect land for people to enjoy as parks, urban gardens and playgrounds, recreational areas, and wilderness. Across the nation, TPL has worked in more than 1,000 communities and has helped protect more than one million acres of land, valued at \$1.7 billion.

I am I plus my surroundings and if I do not preserve the latter, I do not preserve myself.

—José Ortega y Gasset, Spanish essayist, philosopher

Trust for Public Land Launches Greenprint for Growth Initiative



The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a leading national land conservation organization, has announced a major initiative aimed at communities threatened by urban sprawl. Responding to a groundswell of public concern over the loss of open space and the damaging effects of sprawl on American communities, TPL has launched a three-point program to help communities preserve land and guide growth. The initiative focuses on establishing and implementing community "greenprints" for growth, on raising funds to conserve

land threatened by sprawl, and on highlighting the "best practices" of states, agencies, nonprofits and communities in using land conservation to drive smarter growth.

"There's growing evidence that communities that invest in open space have lower taxes, stronger economies, and a healthier environment," says Will Rogers, president of TPL. "It's no surprise that these are the places where people want to live and work. In the face of growth, we need to protect the best lands as parks and open space, not

settle for the leftovers of runaway sprawl."

TPL urges communities to create a "greenprint" for growth by protecting the best of their lands and landscapes.

A greenprint serves the same function for a community that a good blueprint serves for a home: it lays out an environment that meets residents' needs for space, comfort, character, and livability.

Greenprints for Growth

A greenprint seeks to identify desirable lands for conservation, such as sites for parks and recreation; farms, ranches and working forests; important wildlife habitat, watersheds, and flood-prone areas; and those places that define a

Voting Green



Over the last decade, demand for new parks and open space has far outstripped federal funding for land protection. As a result, more and more states and communities have leaped to fill the funding gap by approving new taxes and bond measures for park and open space acquisition.

Last November, voters continued this trend by approving eight state initiatives and dozens of local measures. TPL worked closely with government and citizen groups to help pass a dozen of these measures, which generated \$2.6 billion in new funding.

Two states — Minnesota and Oregon — earmarked state lottery funds for open space. By a whopping 76 percent majority, Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment to increase that state's open space bonding authority. The

biggest open space victory came in New Jersey, where voters amended the state constitution to set aside

up to \$98 million a year in sales tax revenue to finance up to \$1 billion in open space acquisition bonds.

In several cases, county and local voters took advantage of newly granted authority to tax or bond for open space protection. On Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 15 communities voted to levy a 3 percent property tax surcharge to fund a land bank recently authorized by the state legislature. And in New Mexico, Santa Fe and Bernalillo counties acted on a 1996 constitutional amendment allowing counties to raise money for open space acquisition.

Another first came in Park City, Utah, a major site of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. With the upcoming games boosting land prices,

voters approved a \$10 million bond to acquire open space for public use. Other communities to pass open space measures with TPL's help last November include Austin, Texas; Lake Oswego, Oregon; and Medina County, Ohio.

From On The Land regional newsletter, Winter/Spring, 1999

Name This Newsletter!

Terra Cognita! You got to be kidding!! OK, OK, we are. But we couldn't figure out what this newsletter should be named, so we're gonna leave it up to you.

Submit your entry for the newsletter name by August 20, 1999, to RCCA Newsletter, PO Box 150, Sperryville, 22747, or by e-mail to glox@mnsinc.com.

If your name is selected you'll receive a free subscription to this free newsletter AND you'll see your name in lights (or at least in the article about the newsletter name).

Good Luck!

Conservation and Commerce “Inextricably Linked,” Says International Panel of Experts

According to a report highlighting private conservation efforts worldwide, “individuals and communities around the world, given the right institutional arrangements, have been able to use the value of wildlife to improve conditions for both people and animals.” The roundtable discussion titled “Conservation Through Commerce,” released by the Center for Private Conservation (CPC), is the transcript of comments made by a forum of international

Fortunately, when those people closest to resources are also the owners of the resource, they will be the most “interested in managing and utilizing their own natural

conservation experts. Each group member highlighted his or her

involvement in successful private conservation programs that, according to the report, have “helped change attitudes toward conservation and commerce throughout the international environmental community.”

The experts taking part in the forum included Dr. Steve Edwards from The World Conservation Union in Washington, D.C., Clive Stockil, Chairman of the Savé Valley Conservancy in Zimbabwe, and Dr. Grahame Webb, Director of Wildlife Management International in Australia. The panel was moderated by Ike Sugg, an adjunct scholar at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.

Edwards describes his own experiences around the world and “what works” in developing community-based management

programs. He says it is the people within those communities that will determine the success or

“If you want to sustain a conservation project, you have to look at the economic side, you have to look at the cultural side, you have to look at the social side.”

failure of a conservation program. Fortunately, when those people closest to resources are also the owners of the resource, they will be the most “interested in managing and utilizing their own natural resources in a sustainable manner . . . for an economic benefit.”

Stockil discusses the development of the Savé conservancy in Zimbabwe, a remarkably successful effort to convert rangeland into almost a million acres of wildlife habitat. For example, because they have

been transplanted on to private conservancies, the numbers of the endangered black rhino are increasing in Zimbabwe for the first time in decades.

According to Stockil, the success of his program depended on several critical issues: “going back to natural systems, putting a value back on wildlife, and involving the communities.” Also, as much as this endeavor benefits conservation, it was only possible because the creation of the conservancy was also a sound economic decision for those ranchers.

Webb talks about the

program he established to bring back the salt-water crocodiles in the Northern Territories of Australia. People, he states, have to become involved. “If you want to sustain a conservation project, you have to look at the economic side, you have to look at the cultural side, you have to look at the social side. Making the crocodiles valuable encouraged people to look after them.”

Created in 1995, the CPC

researches, documents and promotes the public benefits of private conservation and private stewardship. Visit CPC’s web site at www.cei.org/cpc/index.html.



Reserve Enhancement Program New in Virginia

Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Recreation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have a new program entitled Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which is intended to help landowners who want to establish hardwood forests along streams and wetlands and to preserve these lands through conservation easements.

Land must be either pastureland or cropland to qualify. Landowners can be paid up to \$600 per acre for establishing a permanent “open-space” easement on their property. If desired, property owners can simultaneously agree to restore wetlands or create buffers such as trees, grass buffers and fencing, along streambanks in order to control erosion and help improve water quality. CREP pays 100 percent of the costs of restoration. Used in combination, property owners could earn from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for each acre included in the program.