

WORKING LANDS EASEMENT CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

Group 1: Landowner Questions:

Many landowners hesitate to consider donating conservation easements on their land because of concern regarding potential impacts on their private property rights. Many of these concerns are valid and conservation easements are not the ideal solution for everyone. How could each of these questions be answered?

1. How would the value of a conservation easement on Big Diamond Ranch be determined?
2. What are potential income, property and estate tax benefits?
3. What are the costs associated with granting a conservation easement?
4. Will a conservation easement reduce the value of my land?
5. Will a conservation easement tie the hands of my heirs?
6. Will a conservation easement open my land to the public and increase my liability risk?
7. How do monitoring visits work?

Group 2: Conservation Easement Drafting – Assume you are drafting a conservation easement for Big Diamond Ranch.

1. What are some of the identifiable conservation values of Big Diamond Ranch?
2. What are the threats to these values?
3. How could an easement be drafted to protect the identified conservation values?
4. What are permitted uses and restrictions?
5. Could these restrictions be monitored and enforced?
6. How would the Kittridge's water rights be treated in this conservation easement? Are the water rights necessary to the conservation values to be protected?

Group 3: Organizational Capacity, Partnerships and Funding

1. An organization should not accept an easement unless the particular easement furthers the organization's purposes and strategic plan. What purposes would an easement on Big Diamond Ranch serve?
2. What resources/capacity must the easement holder have to monitor and enforce the easement?
3. What agencies and/or organizations are potential partners in developing the easement, funding its acquisition or providing funds or services for stewardship?