

Fostering Networks on Conservation and Affordable Housing

Policies affecting the use, regulation, and taxation of land in the United States are promulgated and applied primarily by states and local governments, and real estate markets are largely local and not national in scope. However, national policies including those on taxation, property rights, and mortgage financing have a significant impact on local land and housing policies and their outcomes. Accordingly, it often makes sense for local policy makers and activists to combine forces so they can learn from each others' experiences and ensure that their viewpoints are present in national land policy debates. The Lincoln Institute has played, and continues to play, an important role in sponsoring research and fostering training, communication, and organizational activities that promote land policies consistent with the its mission.

One example is the Lincoln Institute's role in helping to establish the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), the national network of nonprofit conservation organizations that protect natural resources such as farmland, forests, and wilderness areas. The Lincoln Institute in 1981 provided a fellowship to Kingsbury Browne, a Boston-based conservationist and lawyer, to visit land trust leaders throughout the country. He discovered that they had no organized means to communicate and learn from each others' experience. His work and counsel led the Lincoln Institute to carry out a national survey of the 400 known local and regional land conservation organizations at the time and to sponsor a national meeting for 40 representatives in October 1981. As a result of that meeting, the Land Trust Exchange was incorporated and initiated activity in July 1982. This year, as the Land Trust Alliance, the organization is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

LTA has become a major presence in the conservation community, and the Lincoln Institute continues to support its networking goals. For example, the Lincoln Institute sponsors the annual Kingsbury Browne Fellowship, which supports research, writing, and mentoring by outstanding individuals whose vision and creativity have contributed to land conservation and the land trust community. The Lincoln Institute also participates in LTA's annual Rally and has supported selected projects, such as the *2010 National Land Trust Census Report* that summarizes the land conservation



Gregory K. Ingram

and organizational activities of the 1,760 known land trusts at the time of the survey.

The Lincoln Institute has also played a key role over the past few years in developing a practitioners' network on large landscape conservation, bringing together those working on projects at a regional scale, such as the Crown of the Continent, an 18-million-acre area spanning the US–Canadian border including portions of Montana, Alberta, and British Columbia. Still in its formative stages, this international network provides a semiannual forum to exchange information and best practices, examine emerging policy initiatives, and advance the theory and practice of large landscape conservation.

In a similar initiative, the Lincoln Institute supports the National Community Land Trust Network, formally organized in 2006. Community land trusts (CLTs) are local nonprofit organizations that own land and provide housing whose affordability is preserved permanently. While CLTs have existed for more than 30 years, coordination and communication among them was limited until the national network was established. With about 200 member CLTs in 2012, the network provides training, supports research, and disseminates guidelines and good practice to its members.

The Lincoln Institute maintains a role in the network's training program, the Community Land Trust Academy, which offers courses, conferences, and other activities ranging from a general introduction for new residents and staff members to sessions on standard legal documents, financing, and city-CLT partnerships. The Lincoln Institute published *The Community Land Trust Reader* (2010), a compendium of articles on the historical background and current practices of the international CLT movement, edited by John Emmeus Davis, former dean of the Academy. In addition, the Lincoln Institute sponsors research disseminated in working papers and analytic work, including a 2007 survey of CLTs in the United States.

Information about these conservation and community land trust networks and their related programs and publications is available on the Lincoln Institute website at www.lincolinst.edu. 