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Study about Climate Change Adaptation Practices of Land Trusts

Organizers:

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To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is written on behalf of Dr. Michael Drescher at the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo, located in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada in regards to conducting a study on land trusts in Ontario. The importance of land trusts is understood: they protect vital natural lands which would be in danger of degradation or loss otherwise. Therefore, it is essential that the conservation practices implemented by land trusts are successful. The purpose of the current research study is to take one factor, climate change, and examine how land trusts are adapting their current conservation practices to this factor. Land trusts in Ontario and other Canadian provinces are being contacted to voluntarily contribute information about their climate change adaptation efforts. Currently, there is a lack of information about climate change adaptation and protected land conservation, thus this research is essential for furthering knowledge about these subjects. By investigating operations and strategies of land trusts, the research team hopes to understand the different types of conservation methods utilized and their relation to climate change adaptation. The end goal is to determine the current level of climate change adaptation of Canadian land trusts to help improve practices for protecting land holdings for future generations.

The questionnaire examines land trusts as a whole, ranging from administrative information to specifics about acre amount. However, the main focus is understanding climate change awareness, perception, and adaptation of each land trust. We encourage land trust representatives to complete this questionnaire in groups, not individually, with a time commitment of about one hour.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Confidentiality is guaranteed and all collected data will be de-identified. The questionnaire is available through an editable Portable Document Format (PDF), a hard copy which can be printed and returned to the researchers via email or mail, or an online survey. The online survey is available here: <http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/3008409/Land-Trust-Questionnaire>. Please be mindful of your internet security whilst filling out the online survey. When information is transmitted over the internet, privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). University of Waterloo researchers will not collect or use internet protocol (IP) addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic device without first informing you.

According to University of Waterloo policy, the data gathered will be retained at the School of Planning in a secure location for ten years, after which the data will be destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this questionnaire. In order to indicate your consent in this survey, please sign and return the form on the next page. However, participants have the right to withdraw consent to participate at any time without fear of reprisal and may decline answering any questions they prefer not to answer. If there are questions, desire for more information, or inquiries about hard copies, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Michael Drescher through email at mdresche@uwaterloo.ca or by telephone at 1 - (519) 888 – 4567, extension 38795. Please return the completed questionnaire to Dr. Michael Drescher by email to mdresche@uwaterloo.ca or by mail to Dr. Michael Drescher, School of Planning, Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo, 200 University Ave West, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1, Canada by **April 28 2017**.

This research project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 21760). However, the final decision to participate is yours. If there are any concerns or questions for the committee, please contact the Chief Ethics Officer at the Office of Research Ethics at 1 - (519) – 888 – 4567 extension 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca. For all other questions, please contact Michael Drescher through email at mdresche@uwaterloo.ca or by telephone at 1- (519) 888 – 4567.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this study!

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Michael Drescher
Nadya Mrochkovskaia