

Regional economic



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Submitted] Economic Implication of Open Spaces The purchase of open spaces and conversion to natural area systems was a response to the growing infringement of suburban development and ranch conversion of landscapes that are causing losses in biological diversity and agricultural production. While the purpose of such purchases is recommendable, there is much to be resolved regarding the wisdom of conserving against the opportunity of gaining profits from converting the property into prime lots. Environmental science would tell us that making use of the lands for industrial purposes leads to ecological alterations that are irreversible. Not only does it result to the loss of wildlife habitat, it also presents dangers to the integrity of the ecosystem. The economic implications should be apparent. Protection of these spaces leads to the conservation of scenic landscapes ideal for outdoor recreation especially in this period where people are finding ways to escape the city life. The presence of wildlife presents a more interesting experience for the individual and may make him willing to pay a fee for access to such open spaces. Open spaces then presents an opportunity to gain revenue thru small fees charged from campers and hikers.

One might argue that open spaces would generate little revenue which does not justify the amount used to purchase. Ranches and lands for suburban developments do not come cheap. While it is recognized that the amount of purchase can indeed be large, it should also be noted that revenue generation of open spaces is not confined to access fees and the like. Open and natural areas can have multiple uses-benefits. While providing scenic views, the area can have some of its portions available for sustainable livestock foraging. Revenue can be generated by renting pasture for

livestock grazing and presents opportunity for livestock producers who have little capital to own ranches for themselves. Additionally, locally raised 'conservation meats' could profit from the increasing preference for healthy foods as they are deemed free from genetically altered feedstock.

With regards to the funding issue, the purchasing of open spaces can be quite an issue especially if we take into consideration a Wyoming study stating that ranches having wildlife habitat and scenic vistas commanding higher prices per acre than those which primarily possess agricultural production capacity, even though the latter may be closer to town. However, there are mechanisms to produce the money needed without putting the strain in the local government's coffers. They can avail of the proceeds from the state lottery like what the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund is doing. The local government can also partner with institutions such as Bureau of Land Management to make purchasing easier as they can classify the land as necessary for conservation. With regards to maintenance, local governments can make use of the revenues generated to form a revolving fund that can cover the expenses of maintaining the property or they can make use of the method employed by the City of Fort Collins. By providing summer pasture for the livestock owned by the grazing association, the City of Fort Collins effectively preserved an additional 15,385 acres of open space by helping to keep the land owned and leased by Folsom members in agriculture. (Society for Range Management 2006, p. 3-4)

Who losses from the purchasing and maintenance of open spaces Ranchers cannot be said to be particularly affected because they are still able to have their livestock graze though only to a limited degree. They can even benefit

from the preservation of ecological integrity because the land is managed to prevent excessive grazing. The people can be said to be losing an opportunity to own an affordable suburban home but then again the open space offers them the opportunity to have a place they can enjoy close to their community. The local government benefits from positive public perception and revenues from this endeavour. It would seem that the creation of open spaces presents a win-win situation. This is only possible, however, with the proper management and know-how not only of conservation principles but also of business efficiency and profitability concepts.

Reference:

Society for Range Management (2006). Open Spaces, Working Places.

Retrieved Dec. 12, 2007

from http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_other/rmrs_2006_resnik_j001.pdf