

How it all began: **Trust Montana**

The Discussion about a Statewide Community Land Trust

The [O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundation](#) awarded [NeighborWorks Montana](#) a grant to study the feasibility of establishing a **centrally administered, statewide, Montana Community Land Trust (CLT)** which would serve rural communities currently outside the established service areas of the existing CLT organizations in Montana. Part of the feasibility study, being conducted by the [North Missoula Community Development Corporation](#), included a survey asking housing professionals across the state about their familiarity with the land trust concept and about their interest in learning more.

The survey asked general questions about housing and land use needs in their part of the state. The resulting Community Land Trust Webinar, held on January 13th, allowed a continuation of the community land trust discussion based on the summary of the questions, thoughts and concerns of those who participate in the webinar. During the webinar an agenda for a general meeting on February 26th in Great Falls was begun. Sheila Rice will accept additional agenda suggestions that are emailed to her.

A bit of background info: The North-Missoula Community Development Corporation founded its Community Land Trust (CLT) in 2000. Since that time, the NMCDC has developed and owns the land under 47 homeownership units, which are lease-restricted for perpetual affordability on resale.

The quest is to determine if there is a need for a statewide or for a coalition of regional Community Land Trusts in Montana. The assumption is that many parts of Montana don't have the capacity or the resources required to initiate a land trust program for their community, even though that is the only way they will be able to provide lowincome and workforce housing in their area due to high land prices. Historically, CLT's nationwide have been used in both rural and urban settings and in both disinvested low-income communities and extreme high cost areas. We are learning more about the variety of Montana communities' housing needs through this needs assessment process and we all can explore what interest there may be in an umbrella organization with the ability to share information and CLT administrative responsibilities.