Oral Presentation – Mark Davidson - Conservation Easements
  
  I was asked to speak specifically about tools used up here and the importance of conservation easements.
  Jen Smith did a good job talking about how the tool works in a practical way.
  I want to talk about the social context of conservation easements in this basin (Lemhi Basin).
  There are things that easements are and are not.
    ▪ They are voluntary agreements.
    ▪ They keep land in production.
    ▪ May restrict use of land but does not take land out of production.
      • If it does take out of production, there are incentives to do it.
      ▪ The lands stay on the tax roll and continue to be valued as ag lands.
  Conservation easements were not originally thought of as a tool for salmon and steelhead recovery.
    ▪ Landowners noticed changes in the basin and landowners are a community that work together to solve problems.
  Back in early 2000s there were several conservations easements.
    ▪ A few things were happening at that time.
      • Partnerships were starting to grow.
      • Landowners in the basin started working together and changed the dynamic of the basin
  The community here is like salmon, they are very resilient.
  I’m in awe of what both can do to survive.
  Landowners are willing to work for it and put in their own blood, sweat, and tears.
  How conservation easements came about.
    ▪ Value of land is wrapped up in a variety of things from development potential to agricultural production.
      • Early landowners saw the changes in the community and recognized the pressures of skyrocketing land prices.
      ▪ Landowners in the basin decided on their own that something needed to be done and they were the ones that started the momentum of easements being used as a conservation tool.
  Landowners want to figure out how to keep kids and grandkids on the land.
    ▪ Want to protect these places and keep them as ranches.
  Had meeting in 2004 and had 94 ranchers show up to participate.
  Knew that there was money out there and that there was a desire to protect the land and habitat and that’s how that relationship grew.
  Started by protecting spawning habitat and eventually relationships evolved into what they are today.
  Easements provide mechanisms for us to get where we want to go.
We try to structure our agreements to meet the needs of the fishery in conjunction with what works for the community.
- Not something that we force, it is all voluntary.
- Conservation easements provided a mechanism to talk to landowners about fish habitat and restoration.

Conservation easements are adaptable and can change focus, i.e. spawning to rearing habitat.