

# Community Land Trusts

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a form of common land ownership with a charter based on the principles of sustainable and ecologically-sound stewardship and use. The land in a CLT is held in trust by a democratically-governed non-profit corporation. Through an inheritable and renewable long-term lease, the trust removes land from the speculative market and facilitates multiple uses such as affordable housing, village improvement, commercial space, agriculture, recreation, and open space preservation. Individual leaseholders own the buildings and other improvements on the land created by their labor and investment, but do not own the land itself. Resale agreements on the buildings ensure that the land value of a site is not included in future sales, but rather held in perpetuity on behalf of the regional community.

The first community land trust was formed in 1967 in Georgia by New Economics Institute founder [Robert Swann](#) and Slater King, who sought to achieve secure access to land for African American farmers. The movement has grown to include over 200 community land trusts throughout the US and is widely understood as the best model for developing permanently affordable homeownership opportunities in regions of escalating land prices. A new [National Community Land Trust Network](#) has formed to respond to the growing needs of its member organizations.

## Projects:

- [Indian Line Farm](#)  
The first Community Supported Agriculture farm in North America and a model for farmland preservation and conservation through a unique partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, and farmers Elizabeth Keen and Alex Thorp, the Berkshire.
- [Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires](#)  
New Economics Institute has provided technical assistance to the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, which owns three tracts of land, including the site of the New Economics Library. The Land Trust also holds [Forest Row](#), a residential neighborhood of permanently affordable housing, and [Indian Line Farm](#), the first Community Supported Agriculture farm in North America and a model for farmland preservation and conservation. The Institute has developed a [Community Land Trust Online Handbook](#) that includes the organizational documents and lease agreements of the Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires.
- [International Work: Lake Baikal Project](#)  
Director Susan Witt and several staff members went to Olkhon Raion in the summer of 1995 as part of a larger USAID funded project to develop local institutions, land trusts, ecologically sound agricultural production, and economic self-sufficiency among the Buryat people.

\*\*\*\*\*