

# Western Sky Land Trust puts conservation on horizon



**DAVID  
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**W**estern Sky Land Trust was formally launched earlier this week, but it has been in the works for at least three years — and **Tracy Tarves** has been front and centre from the beginning.

She is executive director of the organization that was created in response to community and landowner requests in a Breaking Ground conference held in Calgary to discuss green infrastructure. A group of citizens who felt there was a need to conserve open space of a special value within our community established a steering committee of representatives from the **Parks Foundation Calgary, City of Calgary, the municipal districts of Rocky View and Foothills, and Ducks Unlimited.**

At the time, Tarves had been working with Parks Foundation Calgary for three years as program manager. Quite the change from her previous volunteer job with the Australia Antarctic Division researching elephant seal behaviour on Macquarie Island, about halfway between Australia and Antarctica.

A percentage of her time was given over to helping establish Western Sky Land Trust, and a board was in place a year ago chaired by **Gordon Brown**, a retired partner of law firm **Bennett Jones**, with **Jerry Brunen**, Ducks Unlimited Canada's education officer for Alberta acting as its secretary.

They have had dozens of meetings with numerous organizations, individuals, town councillors and provincial politicians and received positive support, as well as from other conservation organizations that felt there was a clear role Western Sky could play beyond their mandates.

The vision is to conserve open or natural areas principally within the boundaries of



Lorraine Hjalte, Calgary Herald

**Tracy Tarves, executive director of Western Sky Land Trust, hopes to conserve natural areas in and around Calgary.**

the Rocky View and Foothills districts and Calgary, with an emphasis on agricultural, heritage, scenic and recreational values. The group also seeks the integration of open spaces, including those associated with rivers, creeks, wetlands and other environmentally significant areas.

Tarves says it will rely upon generous landowners, whether they are ranchers, farmers or developers, who wish their land, or some part of it, to be conserved. They do this by donating land outright, or perhaps granting a conservation easement in which the donor agrees that the land will be maintained in a certain fashion.

The budget to run Western Sky is provided by individual donors, membership sales, corporations and foundation and government grants.

Our landscape is changing rapidly; good to see people striving to conserve some of the region's open spaces.

The historic Royal Bank Building on the corner of Centre Street and Stephen Avenue Walk has been sold to **Balboa Land Investments**. The company already owns the Hyatt Regency Calgary and the Catch restaurant across the street, so I would expect it to take great care of its new heritage property.

Balboa bought the building through **Jason Cottle**, managing director of **RBC Capital Investments**. The immediate use will be as office space.

**Rosemary Bruus**, broker/partner at **Keystone Commercial**, has success-

fully completed negotiations with **ITRA Realty Group**, a Chicago-based real estate conglomerate with more than 30 offices on four continents. She is excited to be able to have feet on the street if a client's needs stretch to London or Beijing or Panama City.

Locally, Bruus has just completed a 23,000-square-foot lease for **Olympic Seismic**, which will move into the top two floors of Canada Place on the corner of 4th Avenue and 2nd Street S.W.

I've had a number of calls regarding the status of the former **Zellers** property at the junction of Centre Street and 4th Street N.W. There will indeed be a Real Canadian Superstore built on the land, but it is a project for next year.

Plans are for an 180,000-square-foot, two-level store similar to the latest two built near Westwinds Business Park in Castleridge and in Coventry Hills.

People in the media circuit are going to miss **Ted Bauer**, who was chief assignment editor at **A Channel** for the past seven years. A bright and fun guy, he has accepted the same position with **Global Edmonton** and will be moving up north to start his new duties the first week in October. Bauer returned to Canada from Atlanta where he worked for **CBS** affiliate **WGNX**.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND SATURDAY. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA.