**Conservation Easement Workshop**

**September 22nd, 2012**

**Texas Tech-Junction**

Local landowners will soon have an opportunity to learn how voluntary conservation easements can provide a means to offset some of the impacts of fragmentation and the loss of agricultural lands.

“For every thousand people who move to this state, we lose on average, depending on what part of the state you’re in, about 200 acres,” Blair Fitzsimons executive director of the Texas Agricultural Land Trust (TALT) told the Texas Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in July.

Organizations such as TALT, Texas Land Conservancy, Hill Country Land Trust, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) work with landowners to protect privately owned lands through the use of voluntary conservation easements.

Under a conservation easement, a landowner agrees to limit certain types of uses or developments in exchange for certain tax benefits. The landowner retains the property and the right to live on and use the land.

However, landowners have many questions and concerns regarding conservation easements: What rights am I giving up? How will this affect my family land? How much does it cost?

To help answer these questions, the South Llano Watershed Alliance is sponsoring a workshop on Conservation Easements in Junction on Saturday, September 22nd. This free workshop will be held at the Texas Tech University-Junction campus from 9:30 am until 12:30 pm. Refreshments will be served beginning at 9:00.

Speakers at the workshop will include: Blair Fitzsimons (TALT); Mark Steinbach, Executive Director of Texas Land Conservancy; Dandy Kothmann, District Conservationist with NRCS in Junction; and a representative of the Hill Country Land Trust. In addition, Cassie Gresham of Braun & Gresham law firm will discuss the legal and financial issues related to conservation easements. Ruthie Russell, a local landowner, will discuss her experiences with conservation easements.

A panel discussion following the presentations will provide workshop attendees opportunity to ask specific questions of the speakers. For more information on the agenda, visit the South Llano Watershed Alliance website, [www.southllano.org](http://www.southllano.org)

The South Llano Watershed Alliance is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization of landowners and interested stakeholders whose mission is to preserve and enhance the South Llano River and adjoining watersheds by encouraging land and water stewardship through collaboration, education, and community participation.