

# Roth: A focus on conservation, climate science

By [Jim Roth](#), Director and Chair of the Firm's Clean Energy Practice Group. This column was [originally published in The Journal Record](#) on October 23, 2017.

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## A focus on conservation, climate science

Once a year, I like to spread the word about an organization that is not only near and dear to me, but plays a vital role in shepherding and improving the environment in our great state and beyond.

The Nature Conservancy's work focuses on land, water, and ocean conservation, and climate science. Formed in 1951, TNC works in 72 countries with a dedicated staff that includes

more than 600 scientists.

In its earliest days, TNC accomplished its mission by acquiring land that was ecologically valuable in order to protect it. The organization also received conservation easements and held partnerships with the Bureau of Land Management. Conservation easements, somewhat analogous to the premise of historic preservation guidelines in which the landowner retains title, permits TNC the right to enforce restrictions on certain types of harmful activities. Today, 3.2 million acres are held under conservation easement.

TNC's work has always been grounded in science, long before science was so controversial. The national organization has an annual program called the Science Impact Project that brings together exceptional and pioneering scientists from a multitude of fields who apply with a submission of a unique project. The program provides a unique way to foster collaboration and innovation to promote conservation efforts while preparing scientists to be multifaceted leaders.

Thanks to TNC, right here in Oklahoma, we have the largest protected remnant of tallgrass prairie on earth at the Joseph H. Williams Preserve. In fact, some of Oklahoma's favorite in-state getaway areas benefit from our local TNC, such as Black Mesa Preserve, Keystone Ancient Forest Preserve and the J.T. Nickel Preserve in Cherokee County. These are all open to the public.

While Oklahoma has more preserves that are more limited to the public, all can be visited on what is referred to as a field trip, where the organization holds events in these great spaces. Please check out the [website](#) for these details. Many resources can be found on the website, including one called "Plant this, not that," which offers a guide for planting native plant species rather than non-native invasive ones (read: redbuds in lieu of Bradford pears, please).

There are numerous ways to get involved with the Nature Conservancy. You can volunteer, visit a preserve, use their carbon calculator to assist you in reducing your footprint in your day-to-day life, and for a worthwhile interruption, take a virtual tour with phenomenal 360-degree videos that will remind you just how spectacular Planet Earth is. They also provide internships for both high school and undergraduate students.

I would be remiss if I did not suggest (nudge): If you have an interest in making an investment that will join with others to create a meaningful and large-scale impact for good, I suggest financially supporting the Nature Conservancy. The organization is efficient, transparent, and effective, and is ranked among the most respected nonprofits. It has met the BBB Wise Giving Alliance standards and has been recognized by Charity Navigator for its track record on accountability. I hope to see you in the great outdoors. Thanks, TNC, for all you continue to do for Oklahoma and beyond.

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