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## Kammerzell easement sale involves land east of Colfax

Sale of a conservation easement from Tom Kammerzell to the Palouse Conservation Trust involves 509 acres of land east of Colfax. The land extends from the Spring Flat Creek area along the east side of Highway 195 in the S-curves south of Colfax and extends north over the hill to the bluffs along the South Fork Palouse River.

According to Nick Norton, interim director of the Palouse Land Trust Inc., based in Moscow, the conservation easement restricts use of the land to its present ag uses in perpetuity. The restrictions prevent the land from being converted to other uses.

Norton explained conservation easements involve land which is considered under a threat to being converted to another use.

The land adjoins the real estate atop the Thorn Street hill which developed into Valleyview and Southview.

Among the elements in qualifying the land for easement is its scenic and natural attractions.

The acreage involved includes the scenic property along Highway 195 and the views from the South Fork of the Palouse River and the value of the property for wildlife.

Approximately 400 acres involves cropland which is

leased.

The easement agreement evolved from a process which extended over several years. Norton explained the process involves a valuation of the property by an independent appraiser.

The value of the easement derives from a "before and after" comparison which involves what the appraised value of the property before restrictions of the easement are applied and the value after the restrictions would be in place. The difference in the values essentially determines the cost of the easement, Norton explained.

Funds for the easement derive from the federal Agriculture Conservation Easement Program of the NRCS and Wildlife and Recreation Program of the state Recreation and Conservation program.

He noted after the value was determined, the Kammerzells agreed to donate 39 percent of the value.

The \$1,633,000 price of the easement sale recorded in the real estate affidavit filed May 15 in the treasurer's office reflects the total value of the easement, and the actual funds received by the Kammerzells amounted to 39 percent off that sum.

Norton pointed out the conservation easements are negotiated for properties which face being converted to other uses. Land parcels which are not threatened generally would not qualify for an easement.

Kammerzell told the Gazette Wednesday his main aim was to keep the land in agricultural production. He noted that was the request made by Harold Meyer, one of five heirs of a family which owned the land for 105 years, before Kammerzell purchased it in 2007.

Meyers was a grandson of Joseph Meyers who filed claim on the land. He actually died before he could prove up on the land and his widow moved the family here.

All the time the Meyers family owned the land they leased it to tenants.

Kammerzell said the conservation easement is not related to the conservation wetlands easement which was developed by along the South Fork of the Palouse River, but the trust easement at one point adjoins the wetlands property. It was purchased three years ago and developed along the river to mitigate for wetlands property consumed by the expansion project of the Pullman-Moscow Airport.

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