

March 12, 2008

Free workshop explains how conservation easements save land and taxes

Sarasota County is partnering with Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice and the Sarasota Conservation Foundation to present a free workshop by leading tax attorney Stephen J. Small on how conservation easements can benefit estate and tax planning while preserving wildlife habitat and open spaces. The presentation will take place from 8 a.m.-noon, Thursday, March 27, in the Great Room by the Bay at Marie Selby Gardens, 811 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota, and includes a continental breakfast.

Mr. Small is the author of "The Federal Tax Law of Conservation Easements and Preserving Family Lands" books I, II and III. Small wrote the Federal Income Tax Regulations on conservation easements while serving as an advisor in the Office of Chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service. Forbes Magazine has called Small "the nation's top authority on saving land and money with conservation easements."

Conservation easements protect land by allowing private owners to continue ownership, while restricting real estate, commercial and industrial development. Landowners who donate the easements are often eligible for significant federal tax incentives.

"They are an invaluable tool for people who want to make informed decisions that affect the quality of life today and for future generations," said Albert Joerger, Founder/President of Sarasota Conservation Foundation. "This seminar will help people understand the importance and advantages of conservation easements."

The presentation is open to the public, but Teri A. Hansen, President/CEO Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, feels it would be of particular interest to attorneys, accountants, financial planners and other professional landowner advisors.

"It's hard to overestimate the importance of federal income tax regulations on conservation easements," said Hansen. "We want our advisors and supporters to know how conservation easements can benefit their estate and tax planning."

The workshop is seeking continuing legal education credit. Admission is free, but seating is limited and registration is required.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about the conservation easement event.