

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

FALL 2017 LECTURE SERIES

FRIDAYS, 12 – 1:15 PM
208 OLD MUSIC HALL

More information on the DPLA Lecture Series can be found at:
dpla.wisc.edu/researchandoutreach/lectures,
including a paper for this presentation



DECEMBER 08

DOMINIC PARKER, ASSIST. PROF., AGR. & APPL. ECONOMICS

Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements and Their Effects

Tax incentives promote voluntary, permanent restrictions on private land use through conservation easements. Originating in the US but expanding internationally, easements are a leading example of decentralized conservation. In the US, easements represent the largest charitable gift on a per-donation basis, but skeptics wonder if their tax preference merely subsidizes wealthy landowners rather than inducing conservation. An analysis is presented that incorporates federal and state income tax codes into a calculator to quantify the after-tax donation price and demonstrate its sensitivity to landowner income and state and federal policies. Using a 1987-2012 panel, we demonstrate that tax incentives induce conservation and do not merely subsidize it. There is no evidence that generous tax benefits have caused less strategic patterns of land conservation.