

LEAVING A NATURAL LEGACY

How to protect your land forever

Many landowners feel a special connection to their property. Land is often very much a part of our home and full of family memories. You may enjoy the beautiful scenery or outdoor activities. Your property may be a source of income for retirement or a gift to pass on to your children. Whatever your reasons for owning the land, there are also good reasons, both financial and environmental, to think about protecting its natural features.

Fortunately, there are many options available for you to take positive steps to conserve your property. The conservation options you choose will depend on the natural features on your land, your vision for the property, and your family's financial situation. These options are designed to be flexible, and can be combined to meet your individual needs and the interests of your family, while providing a legacy for the entire community.

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC), Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) and their charitable partner, the Hamilton Conservation Foundation (FDN) are interested in identifying and protecting important ecological features in the area, both for nature and for future generations. We are partnering to talk with landowners about the options available to them for permanent protection of natural lands, as well as the relative tax and other financial benefits of conservation. You have the choice of which conservation organization you would like to work with regarding the permanent care of your property.



If you are interested in learning about the conservation options available to landowners, please contact us.

There are many ways that landowners can conserve land forever - and the following are a few general examples. An ultimate solution can be custom made to best suit your needs.

Land Donation

This option lets you donate your property to the charitable conservation organization of your choice.



The organization is then responsible for protecting your donated property forever. We would be pleased to recognize your generous gift through property naming, trail signage or through other means that meet your wishes. A tax receipt is issued for the value of the land. Tax benefits may be significant through

government tax programs, such as Ecogifts. You can donate land outright, through your will, or through a reserved life estate where you can continue to use and enjoy the land.



Life Interest

If you're interested in donating your property, but want to continue living on it or using it in some way, we can work with you to set up a "Life Interest" or "Life Estate" agreement. The agreement can be for your lifetime, or for a specified term. If you wish the conservation organization can be responsible for management, maintenance and taxes during the life interest.



Bequest

Making a gift of land or a conservation easement through one's will can be a powerful conservation option. To ensure that the bequest will be accepted it is important to work with the recipient conservation organization prior to finalizing one's will. If you are considering a bequest we would be happy to work with you and your lawyer.



Split Receipt

In some cases you can sell your land at below market value, and then receive a charitable donation receipt for the difference between market value and the sale price. This option can be used if the HNC, HCA or FDN has, or can, raise funds to put towards a partial purchase.



Conservation Easement

This is a popular option if you want to keep ownership and rights to use the property. With a conservation easement, you are able to protect the natural features on your property, and potentially receive significant property and capital tax savings. Conservation easements are legal documents that allow you to place restrictions on both the types of activities that can occur on the property, and where those activities can occur. You can put an easement on all of your property, or just part of it. The restrictions are developed with the conservation organization which will hold and enforce the easement, such as HNC or HCA. The easement runs on title and is tailored to fit your interests, and the natural features being protected. This enables you to sell the property, confident that its natural features will always remain protected.

Donating land or conservation easements through Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program provides enhanced tax savings that can be used against 100% of your total annual income over five years, plus the year of the donation. A third party, unbiased appraiser determines the value of the donation, and the conservation organization issues a charitable receipt. The Hamilton Naturalists' Club and Hamilton Conservation Authority are both certified ecological gift recipient organizations.

For more information please contact:

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Hamilton Naturalists' Club is a volunteer-based, charitable organization with almost 700 members that has been protecting nature and promoting public awareness and appreciation of the natural environment since 1919. For more information visit www.hamiltonnature.org.



Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) has a 54-year reputation as a proven ecology-based environmental agency that specializes in watershed management and is dedicated to the conservation, stewardship and enjoyment of lands and water resources within its jurisdiction. For more information visit: www.conservationhamilton.ca.



The Hamilton Conservation Foundation is a registered charity dedicated to raising resources and support for the HCA for the protection of natural lands and their cultural heritage. For more information please visit www.YourNatureYourLegacy.ca.

