



# 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 option 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 Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System partners are interested in identifying and protecting important ecological features in the area for nature and for future generations. We are talking with landowners about the options available to them for permanent protection of natural lands, and the tax and other financial benefits of conservation.

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.



The 37 acre (15 hectare) Eileen and John Holland Nature Sanctuary was generously donated to the City of Burlington by the Holland family and is a symbol of rising community support for the new Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System. Mr. Holland (right) is pictured here with City of Burlington Mayor Goldring.

### 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 by other means according to your wishes. A tax receipt is issued for the value of the land and there may be significant tax benefits 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 tool. 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.



## Other Conservation Options

### ECOGIFTS

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.

### SALE AT MARKET VALUE OR SPLIT RECEIPT

In some cases you can sell your land to a conservation body at fair market value. Another option is to sell your land at below market value and then receive a charitable donation receipt for the difference between market value and the sale price. Both of these options can be used if the conservation body has, or can raise funds for the 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 can potentially receive significant tax savings. Conservation easements are legal documents that allow you to place restrictions on the types of activities that can occur and where those activities can occur on the property. You can put an easement on all of your property, or just part of it. The restrictions are developed with the conservation organization who will hold and enforce the easement. 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 remain protected.



The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System comprises almost 1,900 hectares (4,700 acres) of natural lands and open space between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise/Hamilton Harbour from Dundas to Brant Street in Burlington. These lands are one of Canada's biodiversity hotspots, home to more than 1,500 species of plants and animals including more than 50 species at risk. The local government and non-profit organizations that own these lands have come together to protect, connect and restore their lands under the framework of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System. The regional community, including private landowners, are important to the success of this initiative to create a lasting natural legacy in the Hamilton-Burlington region.

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