



Leave a Conservation Legacy



**A Landowner's Guide to Conservation with the
Edmonton and Area Land Trust**

Leave a Conservation Legacy

As a landowner who has practiced good stewardship by conserving your land, you want to make sure that it stays protected forever. The Edmonton and Area Land Trust (EALT) can ensure that the ecological values of your land are maintained in perpetuity.

There are several options for landowners who wish to conserve their lands, and EALT can help in selecting the right one. The two main categories of options are:

Donate Land Title

Donation variations include transferring the land title to EALT right away or through a future bequest, or retaining a life interest in land.

Donations include significant tax benefits. While you will not get the cash which a sale would provide, you do have the lifelong assurance that your land will be taken care of in perpetuity by EALT, in the way you want.



Conservation Easement (CE)

Conservation easements are a tool to allow you to permanently protect natural and cultural features of private land, without giving up ownership or use, or the ability to sell your land. There are mutually agreed restrictions attached to the property title in perpetuity, to conserve those aspects you value, with all future landowners being bound to conservation terms.

Advantages of this option include the ability to retain ownership of the land and sell the land in the future while still ensuring that it will be conserved. You will still be responsible for looking after your land. Tax benefits are also available through this option. EALT is legally obligated to monitor that our mutual conservation values are maintained, in perpetuity.

For You to Consider

EALT highly recommends prospective land donors (of Title or CE) consult with family and a financial advisor when considering donating land or undertaking a conservation easement.

- Consider your financial needs, especially with respect to taxes.
- Consider your desires for the land – what do you want to see happen or not happen to the land?
- Consider a financial donation to help cover EALT's costs, or create an endowment fund for your lands – EALT can only conserve land when we know we have perpetual funding for stewardship.

For EALT to Consider

EALT takes several factors into consideration when contemplating a land securement. Considerations may include questions of location, adjacent threats or opportunities, conservation, and cost.

Land conservation has significant costs, even when the land itself is donated. Approximately \$20,000 - \$25,000 is required just to accept a donated parcel of land. This helps cover legal fees, appraisals, staff time to assess and inventory the land, and reporting requirements of a land trust. After securing a parcel of land, there are ongoing stewardship costs in perpetuity in order to care for the land.

Some of the questions that EALT may consider include:

Location

- Is the land a high priority area located within EALT's Regional Conservation Plan? This plan was created by gathering ecological and wildlife data from several sources to determine what lands have the highest conservation values. If the land is not within our plan, are there other compelling reasons for EALT to take on the conservation of this land?
- Is the land close to other natural areas?
- Can the land be easily accessed by road?

Conservation Value

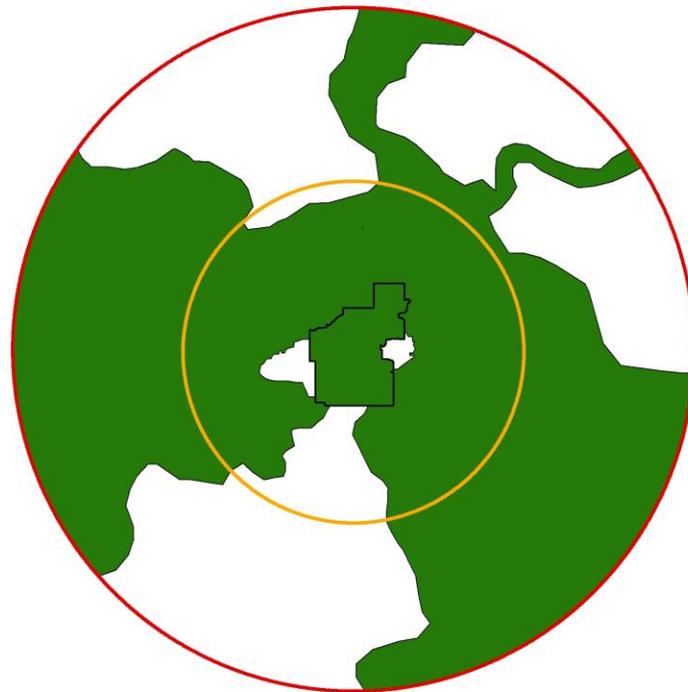
- Does the land have high conservation value, ecological sensitivity, or restoration potential?
- Does the land have large forested areas, wetlands, creeks, native grasslands or other important habitat features?
- What wildlife are found on the land? Are there any Species at Risk?

Cost

- Is funding available to EALT for the costs of securing and stewarding the land? Funds may come from a variety of sources, including grant programs, endowment funds, or financial gifts from the land donor or family.



Edmonton and Area Land Trust Regional Conservation Plan



Legend

- Edmonton and Area Land Trust Regional Conservation Plan
- City of Edmonton Boundary
- 50 KM
- 100 KM



0 25 50 100 Kilometers

Data Sources: Edmonton and Area Land Trust, Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, Alberta Environment and Parks, Beaver County, Camrose County, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Northern Chapter, City of Edmonton, ESRI, Lac St. Anne County, Leduc County, Parkland County, Strathcona County, Sturgeon County

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Ecological Gifts Program and Your Tax Benefits

Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program (Ecogifts) provides a way for Canadians with ecologically sensitive land to protect nature and leave a legacy for future generations. Through the program, landowners can ensure the land's biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity.

Significant tax benefits are available to landowners who donate ecologically sensitive land through this program. This includes the provision of a tax credit or deduction to donors, and a reduction in the taxable capital gain realized on the disposition of the property. Ecogifts receive tax treatment that is superior to most other charitable gifts, and their benefits can be carried forward for 10 years.

For more information, see our Ecogifts brochure, or visit the Ecological Gifts Program website (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/pde-egp/>).

How Does it Work

The process for donating land to the Edmonton and Area Land Trust takes time, from about six months to several years. There are several general steps that take place, in roughly this order, though some steps will occur simultaneously.



Talk

- Talk to your family and financial advisor.

Contact

- Contact EALT to discuss your land and conservation goals.

Assess

- EALT assesses your property, which includes an initial site visit during the spring, summer or fall. A determination is made whether the property fits EALT's criteria, by comparing the location with a more detailed map of our EALT Regional Conservation Plan.
- The potential conservation area will be presented to EALT's Board of Directors, who will decide whether or not to proceed with a land securement.
- If the landowner wishes to donate through the Ecological Gifts program, EALT makes initial contact with Environment and Climate Change Canada staff. Their staff will visit the land closer to the time at which the property Title will be transferred or placed under Conservation Easement.

Fund

- EALT considers how the land securement and ongoing stewardship will be funded.
- EALT will apply to the Government of Alberta's Land Trust Grant Program, which can provide funds to assist with securement costs incurred by EALT, such as legal fees and appraisal costs. The deadline for this grant program is in September, and notification is usually received by the following March. An independent Fair Market Value appraisal is required for this grant application.
- If applicable, additional grant applications are submitted by EALT.
- You may wish to consider setting up an endowment fund to assist with costs associated with land donation and future stewardship.

Process

- A Donation Agreement is developed, indicating that the landowner wishes to donate the land to EALT. This is a document commissioned by EALT, and prepared by a lawyer.
- If applicable, a Conservation Easement is developed, outlining the allowed activities and restrictions to be placed on the land, as agreed between EALT and the landowner. This is a document commissioned by EALT, and prepared by a lawyer.
- The landowner, assisted by EALT, applies for and receives Ecological Gift Certification for the land, which includes a visit by federal biodiversity experts to the property.

Transfer

- The land Title is transferred to EALT on an established closing date.
- For a donation, the lawyer registers Title of the property to EALT at Land Titles.
- For a Conservation Easement, the lawyer registers the restrictions on the Title of the land.
- EALT issues the donor a tax receipt for the full value of the land or Conservation Easement.

Conserve

- Land is conserved and long term stewardship begins.

For more information, or to begin the process of conserving your land with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, contact:

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