

Bequest for Conservation

One of the many options associated with owning land is the right to pass the land by bequest in a will. Finding the right heir, possibly a conservation organization or agency whose mission matches your philosophy of stewardship, can provide great peace of mind.

A bequest arrangement offers these advantages:

- The bequest does not affect your use of the land during your lifetime. The land is completely yours.
- A bequest can be changed if you find an heir you would trust more to protect your land.
- If you die without a will, state law will dictate what happens to your assets. A bequest enables you to decide what will happen to your land.

A bequest does not offer you financial advantages during your lifetime. But, if you have a large estate, a bequest to a conservation organization might reduce your estate taxes.

If desired, your bequest may include deed restrictions that spell out how you want your land to be used or not used in the future.

In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.

-John Sawbill

You may wish to name an alternate conservation organization or agency in your will, in case your first choice of heirs is unable to accept the land with your restrictions at the time of your death.

Some landowners choose to combine a bequest with another protection method. For example, you might donate a conservation easement on your property during your lifetime to a conservation organization, then bequeath the land to someone else for conservation purposes. The easement could provide some tax benefits during your lifetime, and the easement holder would further ensure that your heir is doing what you want with the land.

