

Protecting the Land You Love

There are many uncertainties in the future.
What happens to your land doesn't have to be one of them.

Land can feel like part of the family. It may be where you raised your kids, or had countless adventures. It may have provided for your family. You may have invested a great deal of resources to make it beautiful and support wildlife.

With a voluntary conservation agreement, you can make sure the land you love isn't split up and developed. You can create a place for wildlife, help protect streams and farmland, and ensure your kids have a place to call home.

Conservation agreements (also called easements):

- ◆ **Are voluntary**, legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust that limit uses of land in order to protect its conservation values, such as open space, agriculture use, water quality, or wildlife habitat.
- ◆ **Are flexible**: Driftless Area Land Conservancy will work in partnership with you to write an agreement that reflects your wishes and vision for your property, while protecting its conservation values. Different parts of your property can have different restrictions, such as designating zones for agriculture, natural areas, forestry, or residential use.
- ◆ **Are permanent**: Conservation agreements are recorded with the deed of the property and apply to all future owners. The Conservancy visits each conservation property every year to touch base with landowners and ensure the agreement is being followed. If a landowner down the line decides not to follow it, the Conservancy has the right and obligation to defend the agreement, using legal means if necessary. We have an insurance policy in the event we need legal representation. We also maintain a stewardship fund to ensure we can cover insurance costs and staff time to monitor the properties and maintain good landowner relationships.
- ◆ **Are tax deductible**: Putting a conservation agreement into place may lower the market value of your property, but that amount can be deducted as a charitable donation. Landowners who donate a qualified agreement can deduct at least 50% of their Adjusted Gross Income, and spread that deduction over 15 years (or until the value is used up).
- ◆ **Maintain private control**: You continue to own the land, control access, pay property taxes, and can sell, lease, bequeath, or transfer it as you see fit.

“If you care about your land, a conservation easement is *the best tool* you have for protecting that land and preserving it, regardless of the tax rules.” -Steve Small, national expert on private land protection



Driftless Area Land Conservancy

The Land Trust for Southwest Wisconsin

We'd be happy to talk with you confidentially about how conservation might help achieve your goals. Please feel free to contact us at (608)930-3252 or email Jennifer Filipiak, executive director, at jennifer@driftlessconservancy.org.
www.driftlessconservancy.org