



THE  
**LAND TRUST**  
FOR  
**TENNESSEE**

## CONSERVING YOUR LAND

Frequently Asked Questions About Our Work



### What types of land does The Land Trust for Tennessee conserve?

We protect many types of land, including farms, forests, open spaces in urban and rural areas, historic landscapes, and public parks. Landowners work with us to conserve their:

- Fields for growing crops and pastures for livestock and horses
- Woods where plants and animals live and thrive
- Scenic views and historic places that add beauty and a sense of place
- Open spaces for communities to play, learn, and experience the outdoors
- Land along rivers and streams

### How does The Land Trust for Tennessee conserve these places?

In most cases, The Land Trust and landowner work together to draft a personalized, voluntary legal agreement. This agreement is known as a conservation easement.

This agreement permanently limits how the land can be developed and subdivided in order to protect its conservation values. The Land Trust's role is to ensure that the agreement is upheld forever.

### Do I still continue to own my land?

Yes. A conservation easement does not transfer ownership of a property. The landowner still owns the land and can use it, sell it, or leave it to heirs, but the easement stays with the land permanently.

### Does the agreement ever end?

No. Conservation easements are written to be upheld in perpetuity. In other words, there is no end date or expiration to these agreements.

### What happens if I want to sell or transfer the land?

The conservation easement will still be in effect and the terms of the agreement apply to all future owners of the property. An easement 'runs with the land.'

### What are the benefits of donating a conservation easement?

Donating a conservation easement provides landowners with peace of mind that their land will be conserved for future generations. Landowners may also be eligible for tax benefits.

### Our Work at the Ground Level:

#### We are not a government agency.

The Land Trust for Tennessee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land conservation organization.

#### We work across the state of Tennessee.

Our work currently spans 70+ counties, including a limited number of counties directly across the state line in Kentucky.

#### You continue to own and manage your land when you protect it with a conservation easement.

You continue to make day-to-day management decisions. We work together to make sure the agreement is upheld.

#### You can still use your land after you finalize your conservation easement.

Landowners can continue to farm, fish, hunt, and even build additional structures or homes based on the rights they reserve in their conservation easement.

*All photos: Stephen Alvarez*



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## LAND TRUSTS 101

How Land Trusts Conserve Land



### What is a land trust?

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that conserves land by working with landowners to achieve their goals for their property. In many cases, land trusts protect land by using a legal agreement called a *conservation easement*.

### Why are land trusts becoming more popular?

Land trusts are resources for both individuals and communities that can act quickly to protect open space for future generations. In a time of increasing development pressure and sprawl, land trusts provide a personal service tailored to the landowner's needs in the present moment to protect land for the future.

### How many land trusts are there?

More than 1,700 land trusts exist across the country. Some are big; some are small; a few work statewide, like The Land Trust for Tennessee, while others protect specific counties, watersheds, or village squares.

### What can't a land trust do?

A land trust cannot provide legal or financial advice or guarantee that a particular conservation plan is best for your personal or financial circumstances. It is important for landowners to seek independent advice from qualified advisors.

### What are property rights?

When you own land, you also own many rights associated with it. These might include rights to harvest timber, build structures, mine resources, grow crops, and so on (subject to zoning and other restrictions). When you grant a conservation easement to a land trust, you permanently limit some of those rights.



*"My sister or I will be the last of my line to live on this place, and I am grateful to The Land Trust for Tennessee for helping keep it forever intact." - Hal Manier, Marshall County*

### The Land Trust for Tennessee at the Ground Level:

#### **We do not have minimum acreage requirements.**

The Land Trust for Tennessee looks at each individual property and analyzes its conservation characteristics before agreeing to protect it.

#### **We also work with communities and local and state governments.**

In some cases, we protect public parks and other public land. In other cases, we raise funds to help save land. We also partner with qualified entities to acquire and transfer land for public benefit.

#### **We cannot prevent or stop condemnation.**

However, The Land Trust will work with you to try and minimize or mitigate the impact if at all possible.

