

Most landowners want to do the right things to steward their lands. Many are seeking ways to maintain their stewardship values and conservation investments when it comes time to transfer their lands to family or others. It is often helpful to contact local stewardship groups, land trusts, conservation authorities and sometimes professional advisors in order to obtain detailed advice on which options and programs might be appropriate to an individual situation. The following provides an outline of the options that might be considered in order to achieve personal, financial and conservation goals.

**To foster conservation, a landowner who wants to retain land ownership can:**

- gather stewardship information and materials
- learn more about conservation practices
- make and carry out a conservation plan
- obtain support funding from diverse programs
- seek assistance with stewardship activities
- receive recognition for good stewardship
- apply for property tax and other incentives
- put conservation terms into a lease or management agreement
- enter into a long-term conservation agreement to guide future uses
- grant an agricultural or conservation agreement through a will
- inform conservation organizations of future plans.

**To foster conservation, a landowner who wants to transfer land ownership can:**

- grant a right of first refusal or option to purchase to a conservation group
- sell to a "conservation buyer" who will properly steward the property
- donate all or part of the land for conservation, with important tax benefits
- donate the land, but reserve the right to live on it and/or use it ("life estate")
- sell land at a discount and get a tax receipt for the difference in price
- enter into an agricultural or conservation agreement before the transfer occurs
  - these agreements have negotiable terms, tax benefits and bind future owners
- transfer the land subject to certain conditions
- put conservation terms into a mortgage
- carry out a land exchange for mutual benefit
- consider co-ownership options, such as with a conservation group
- combine several options together
- plan for optimum income and other tax benefits:
  - Ecological Gift exemptions from capital gains and related options
  - tax credits/deductions for donations of land, agreements, funds etc.
  - valuation certainty and accelerated ability to claim tax benefits
  - opportunities for U.S. residents to apply U.S. tax benefits
  - property, transfer, probate, GST and other tax saving options.

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*Conserving Today's Heritage for Tomorrow's Legacy*