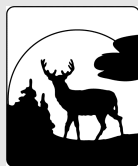


DOOR COUNTY LAND TRUST



How to
Protect
your Door County
Property

A GUIDE TO LAND PROTECTION STRATEGIES



Door County Land Trust

Dedicated to Protecting the Lands We Love

The Door County Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1986 to accomplish a single mission: to protect the scenic beauty, rural character and ecological integrity of lands in Door County. The Door County Land Trust accomplishes its mission by entering into conservation easement agreements with private property owners, accepting donations of property, and by purchasing land.

The Door County Land Trust's expertise and years of experience in working with property owners and families in Door County is making a significant difference. Hundreds of acres of farms, orchards, fields, forest, wetlands, and shoreline are now permanently protected thanks to the partnership forged between the Door County Land Trust and dozens of landowners. From Washington Island to Southern Door, the Door County Land Trust is leaving a legacy of protected lands to succeeding generations.

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with some text excerpted from Land Trust Alliance's
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“Conservation must not fail, for too much of our native landscape has already been thought-lessly destroyed. Far too much has already been taken by us from those who are to follow. It is our sacred duty to preserve what is left for unborn generations.”

- Jens Jensen, founder of The Clearing



Introduction

As a Door County property owner, you know that your land is special. Whether farm or forest, wetland or meadow, lakeshore or bluff, the lands that grace Door County are like no other in the Midwest.

Like many landowners, you are probably concerned about your land's future. With development pressures spreading throughout the county, many property owners are asking themselves: "What will happen to my land in the future? Will future owners care about the property the way I do? Can my children and grandchildren afford to keep the property?"

The reality is that unless positive action is taken to protect land, your piece of Door County paradise may be lost to future, inappropriate development and subdivision.

But there's good news: ***Landowners have it within their power to protect forever the conservation and scenic values of the lands they love.*** What Door County will look like a generation from now is being decided day-by-day, parcel-by-parcel, by landowners like you.

The ***Door County Land Trust*** is a local non-profit organization dedicated to assisting Door County property owners in protecting the scenic, rural, and ecological integrity of their lands. Since 1986, the Door County Land Trust has helped over 50 landowners throughout the county protect their properties from inappropriate development and would be honored to assist you and your family in planning for your land's future.

Take a few moments to read through this important booklet. Consider the ideas and concepts presented, and let us help you put them to work for your land, your family, and your neighborhood.

CHAPTER ONE

Getting Started with the Door County Land Trust

Owning land is one of the most important responsibilities and privileges you will have in your lifetime. It can also be one of the most rewarding experiences. Whether you depend on your land for your livelihood or simply for a peaceful and beautiful place to call home, the role you play in determining your property's future can not be underestimated.

Failure to consider and plan for your property's future may lead to unintended and undesirable consequences in the future. Too often, land is simply viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold where maximizing profits is attained at the expense of the land's beauty and integrity. But as a property owner, you have the opportunity to insure that your land will not be mistreated by future owners.

This Guide will introduce you to several easy and flexible land protection strategies including conservation easement agreements, land donations, and the sale and purchase of land with conservation in mind. These land protection strategies have been used for over 100 years, by thousands of landowners, to protect millions of acres across this country. Throughout the Guide we will introduce you to several Door County landowners who have used these land protection strategies to determine the fate of their lands.

This Guide will also explain how permanently protecting all or a portion of your property makes good financial sense for you and your family by potentially providing significant income, estate, and property tax benefits. How does the Door County Land Trust help landowners protect their lands?

- We listen to landowners' goals and vision for their land and help match these with the most appropriate land protection strategy.
- We write conservation easement agreements or facilitate land donations that protect the property's conservation and scenic values while accommodating the needs of the landowner.
- We conduct biological inventories for landowners to identify and document the variety of plants and animals present on their land.
- Through our membership program we provide the financial resources needed to offer land protection assistance to landowners.
- We are stewards of the conservation easement agreements and lands we accept and have the perpetual responsibility of protecting the scenic, rural, and ecological values of these properties.



Landowners Paul and Fran Burton, with Land Trust representatives Mary Standish and Bob Yeomans. The Burton's Highway 42 property in Ephraim is under a conservation easement with the Land Trust.

Tread Lightly on the Earth

John and Janice Stiefel's story

Janice Stiefel said she was “born in a swamp” and was drawn to this forty-acre property adjoining the Mud Lake State Wildlife Area when looking for a place to call home in Door County. No one visiting the property today would know how mistreated this property had been before the Stiefels made the decision to buy it. The land had been dredged and drained for a peat mining operation in the early 1990’s that quickly failed. In addition, years of clear-cut logging had eroded the integrity of the woodlands.

“For many years this nation has been taking more and more from the land and it is showing. We need to realize that there is a limited amount of land and we need to respect it and tread lightly on it,” states John Stiefel.

After seven years of labor, love and vision, the Stiefels have made a good start toward restoring the ecological integrity of their property and have carefully located a home that relies on a solar electric system to operate fully “off-the-grid,” composting toilets, and a unique indoor wetland wastewater treatment system.

Of utmost concern to the Stiefel's is how little of our landscape is being left in its natural state. To address this concern, they began looking for a method that would ensure that the majority of their property would remain in its natural state (regardless of ownership) into perpetuity.

They explored a number of options, like donating their land to a university, the State, or other national conservation organizations, but none of these methods met all their objectives. “Many of these organizations can trade lands, lease lands, log or mine lands, or make a decision to sell lands if the political climate of their agencies changes,” states John. They had even considered putting their own deed restrictions on the land, but knew they would not be around to enforce these restrictions.

The concept of placing a conservation easement with the Door County Land Trust appealed to them. The land can be protected while remaining in private ownership and thus, passed on to their children. The Door County Land Trust conducts annual monitoring of lands under conservation easement agreements to ensure protection into perpetuity. “I can highly recommend the Door County Land Trust to everybody,” says John. “It feels good to give something away. We have left something for the next generations. There will be a myriad of plants for them to enjoy, like Showy and Yellow Lady’s Slippers, Gaywings, Coralroot Orchids, Purple Gerardias, Twinflowers, Pyrolas, and Rattlesnake Ferns, along with many varieties of mosses, liverworts, lichens, and fungi.”

“My husband and I feel so privileged to be able to preserve a wild corner of the world to be held forever for future generations to observe, study, hike, and just enjoy. The trees, plants, animals, insects, and the soil will flourish long after we are gone. The Door County Land Trust is an endowment for future generations. The land we put into trust today will be held in perpetuity. Think of that! Long after we are gone, the land will remain what it was when we departed. What a legacy to leave for those who will follow in our footsteps,” exclaims Janice.



CHAPTER TWO

Conservation Easements

Conservation Easements are legal agreements between the property owner and the Door County Land Trust. These agreements permanently restrict the type and amount of future development and activities permitted on a property in order to protect the land's scenic and conservation values.

Conservation easements offer many advantages:

- Landowners retain title to their property and may continue to live on it, sell it, or pass it on to heirs, knowing that it will always be protected.
- Conservation easements can result in significant income, estate and property tax benefits for the landowner.
- They are flexible and are written to meet the particular needs of the landowner.
- They are permanent, remaining in force even when the land changes ownership. The Door County Land Trust ensures that all future owners honor the terms of the conservation easement.
- They are expertly written by the Door County Land Trust staff and legal team, thus saving the landowner the expense of drafting these easements themselves.
- They are used to protect a wide variety of land, including farms, fields, forests, lakeshore, wetlands and scenic views, as well as green space in and around our villages.
- By providing a “framework” for how the land can be used in the future, conservation easements can reduce the potential for disagreement when lands are passed on to heirs.

Here's How Conservation Easements Work

When owning land, a person also “owns” many rights associated with land ownership, such as the right to build residences and buildings, place structures such as billboards and communication towers, subdivide the land, clear the forest, and so on, subject to local zoning ordinances. A property owner that enters into a conservation easement with the Door County Land Trust permanently restricts some of these activities in order to protect the scenic and conservation values of the land.

Conservation easements permanently protect land while leaving the property in private ownership. Landowners can continue to live on the land, are free to sell their land or pass it on to heirs, and can use the property in any manner as long as the terms of the conservation easement are adhered to.

Because every property is different, as are the needs of every property owner, no two conservation easements are alike. The easements are written to meet the needs and desires of the individual landowner while protecting the scenic and ecological integrity of the property. The specific activities the conservation easement prohibits are mutually determined by the landowner and the Door County Land Trust.



A summer outing at the James and Phyllis Ingwersen property, 100 acres under a conservation easement.

Jackie Au Frere's conservation easement

A neglected farm brought back to life

Jackie worked in Chicago as a nurse for 25 years, and was ready to move to a quieter, safer place. In the 70's Jackie camped in her Volkswagon camper in Door County, where the stress of the emergency room was left far behind. Her annual trips to Door County gave her something to look forward to when times were hard. It was Jackie's dream to make Door County her permanent home.

"I was immediately drawn to the stone house on the property" states Jackie "which reminded me of the house I was raised in as a child in France". In 1983, Jackie bought this 40-acre farmstead located on County Hwy E, between Baileys Harbor and Egg Harbor. A nineteenth century log cabin on the property was the home of one of the first European families to settle the Door Peninsula. The land was cleared and farmed in the late 1800's, but due to poor soils and farming practices had become barren and abandoned in the 1940's. "It was my vision to restore the land back to a fertile, operating sheep farm. It took me 20 years in Chicago to get my place the way I wanted it, and it will take me 20 years to get this one the way I want", states Jackie.

Since 1983, Jackie has planted hundreds of trees and shrubs, and nourished the barren land back to fertile soils with the manure of her sheep. "It is very nurturing in the spring to see the new lambs as well as new growth coming from the land," exclaims Jackie. In addition to the cultural and agricultural values of Jackie's property, Hibbards Creek, northern Door County's longest stream, flows along her property's western boundary. The forests, fields and wetlands embracing this stretch of Hibbards Creek help cleanse the surface waters that drain into the creek.

One of Jackie's greatest concerns with respect to the future of her land, was how to ensure that her niece, who would inherit the land, would not be pressured to divide and sell off the land. Jackie wanted to see it stay intact with all the wildflowers and trees. "Wildflowers take you away from your worries - looking at them is seeing the world smile," says Jackie.

One of Jackie's patients encouraged her to contact the Door County Land Trust to discuss her land protection goals. Jackie kept pushing off contacting the trust, but was motivated to move forward after talking with a number of other landowners who had worked with the Door County Land Trust.

In 1999, a conservation easement agreement was written for Jackie's farm that limits the development on the property to the one single-family residence and associated farm buildings and ensures that the land will never be subdivided. In addition, the cultural features of Jackie's farmstead will be protected. Agricultural activities are permitted on the property but the forest bordering Hibbards Creek will remain forever in it's natural state. Thanks to Jackie's commitment and vision, a beautiful piece of Door County will remain protected forever.



A landowner may wish to enter into a conservation easement that prohibits all activities that “interfere” with the natural state of the land. Other easements may only prohibit a few activities. For example, conservation easements for property hosting critical habitat for rare plants and animals might limit most, if not all, development activities. On the other hand, conservation easements for farms and less ecologically sensitive properties allow for agricultural and forestry activities, and the placement of buildings and residences (see Turner map on page 11).

Most conservation easements apply to the entire property but easements can also be written to apply to only a portion of the property. ***In addition, conservation easements do not allow for public access onto the property.***

How Are Conservation Easements Enforced?

Conservation easements remain in force even when the property is sold or changes hands. Therefore, the Door County Land Trust has the perpetual responsibility of monitoring and enforcing the terms of the easements.

If a future landowner or someone else violates the easement, for example by subdividing the property if the easement prohibits its subdivision, the Door County Land Trust must see to it that the violation is corrected, even if that means taking legal action.



Land Trust representatives walk with landowners during an annual monitoring visit.

To greatly reduce the risk of an easement violation from ever occurring, the Door County Land Trust monitors and visits its easement properties at least once a year and maintains close communication with every landowner. Touching base with the property owner and answering questions they may have about the conservation easement is the best way to prevent conflicts and violations.

What are the Economic Incentives for Donating Conservation Easements?

Income tax benefits

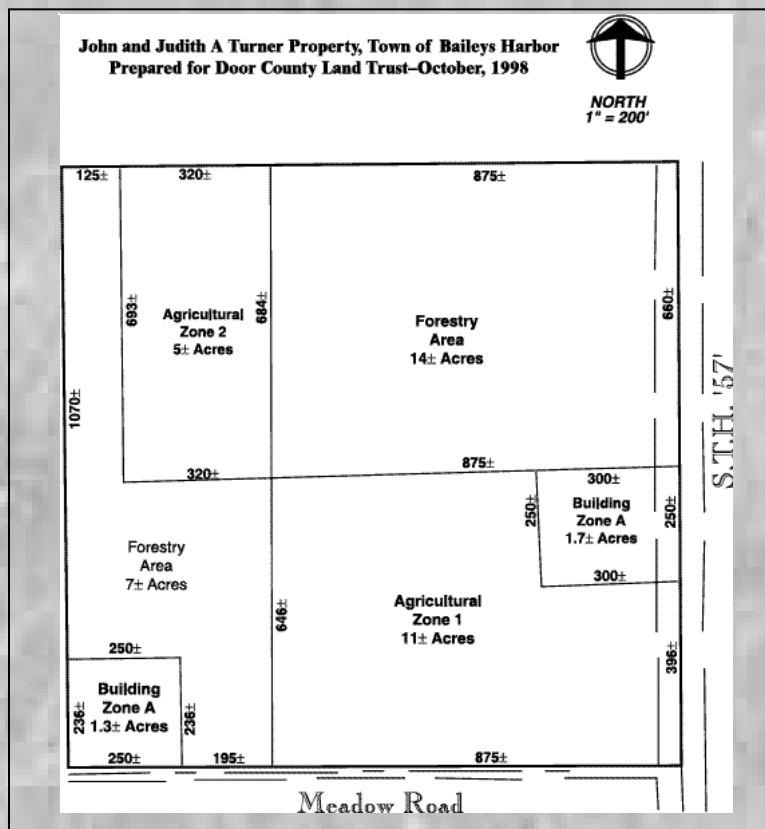
The donation of a conservation easement to the Door County Land Trust can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable gift. For Federal income tax purposes, the value of the conservation easement donation is the difference between the value of the land with the conservation easement and its value without the easement. A certified appraiser determines these values.

For example, suppose a property is appraised at \$200,000 without any restrictions, prior to the conservation easement being placed on the property. The landowner then donates a conservation easement to the Door County Land Trust limiting the amount of development that can take place. The appraised value of the property when considering the development restrictions contained within the conservation

John and Judith Turner Property

This illustration shows how flexible conservation easements can be in accommodating the goals and needs of a landowner. In this example, the property owner had several goals in mind including forestry, agricultural and limited residential uses. All of these are addressed by the conservation easement.

- The Conservation Easement created “Forestry Areas” on the property where forest management activities are encouraged.
- The Conservation Easement created two “Agricultural Zones” where future agricultural activities are permitted.
- Two “Building Zones” were created in order to accommodate a future single-family residence and other associated residential or farm buildings.
- The conservation easement protects the scenic values of this Highway 57 property by keeping all buildings and structures within the Building Zones. Thus, 37 of the 40-acres will remain undeveloped.



easement lowers the property value to \$125,000. The difference between these two appraisal values, \$75,000, is the value of the tax-deductible charitable gift.

As a rule of thumb, the more restrictive the conservation easement, the larger the charitable gift. A conservation easement that allows subdivision and additional development will most likely result in a lower charitable gift.

Property tax savings

Placing a conservation easement on your property may result in property tax savings. The property tax assessment of a conservation easement-restricted property logically should reflect the land's lowered value after the placement of development restrictions. However, Wisconsin law states that local assessors only have to "consider" the effect a conservation easement has on the property's value. Since local assessment practices vary, a property tax reduction may or may not result.

Estate tax benefit

Conservation easements can also help families pass lands on to the next generation by reducing estate taxes. Because conservation easements may lower the fair market value of the property, the value of the estate being passed on to heirs may be reduced. Therefore, estate taxes – based on the value of the property – are reduced. This can make a critical difference in the heir's ability to keep the land intact.

Donating an Easement by Will

A conservation easement can also be donated by will. With this option, you won't receive Federal income or property tax benefits, but your estate taxes can be reduced. Like a conservation easement donated during life, a conservation easement to be donated by will should be negotiated between you and the Door County Land Trust. Because a gift of an easement can take time to negotiate, you may want to add a codicil to your will stating your intentions to grant the easement. In the event of your death before the conservation easement's completion, the executor is instructed to complete the easement.

Conservation Easements are our most popular land protection tool

Conservation easement agreements donated to the Door County Land Trust have helped dozens of Door County property owners protect over a thousand acres of land throughout the county. As development pressures continue to increase, and as more landowners realize that they have the ability to permanently protect the lands they love, conservation easements will continue to rise in popularity.

The Forsberg's conservation easement

Creating a neighborhood corridor of protected lands

In developing a conservation strategy for their property, Bob and Darlene Forsberg had two specific goals to consider; the conservation values of their specific site, and the site's relationship to the larger surrounding area. The Forsbergs recognize their property as part of a wildlife corridor running between the thousand-acre Mud Lake State Wildlife Area and the Ephraim Cedar Swamp. It is Bob and Darlene's desire to keep their land as an intact wildlife habitat into perpetuity, and to prevent it from being further developed after they are gone. They were looking for a tool to give them that control.

The Forsbergs read about conservation easements as a land protection tool in the magazine "Wisconsin Trails". After studying all aspects of this land protection method, Bob and Darlene discussed it with their four adult children and found them all strongly supportive.

It is highly unlikely that any of their kids will live in Door County in the future, so a permanent tool that would protect their land after it was sold, outside the family, was desired by the Forsberg family.

In 1995, Bob and Darlene began the process of working with the Door County Land Trust to place a conservation easement on their land. "It was a relatively straightforward and easily understood process. We had our attorney review the easement and were told it was a very tight document", states Darlene.

As retired Door County Land Trust Board members, Bob and Darlene know from experience that land protection is a very individual matter, and everyone needs to make their own decisions. "Because every property is different, as are the needs of every property owner, no two conservation easement agreements are alike. The agreements are tailored to meet the needs and desires of the individual landowner while protecting the scenic and ecological integrity of the property," states Darlene.

Thanks to the broad vision of the Forsbergs, to create a corridor of protected lands between North Bay and Mud Lake, south to Baileys Harbor and west to Ephraim, six landowners in this area have now placed easements on their land with the Door County Land Trust protecting a total of 550 acres into perpetuity. Neighborhood gatherings in the area have resulted in a number of new landowners who are interested in working with the Door County Land Trust and may result in many more acres protected in the near future.



CHAPTER THREE

Land Donations

It may be surprising to learn that land donations to the Door County Land Trust are becoming a common way for landowners to permanently protect their land. Donating land is one of the finest legacies a person or family can leave to future generations and offers landowners many advantages.

Donating land may be an especially attractive option for landowners who:

- Want to continue to own, live on, and manage a portion of their property but desire to have their remaining property protected in its natural state;
- Would like to be relieved of the responsibility of managing and paying property tax on lands that they otherwise value;
- Could take advantage of a substantial Federal income tax deduction;
- Own land that has significant scenic and conservation values and who do not have heirs, or whose heirs cannot or will not protect it;
- Own property that they no longer use;
- Own highly appreciated property the sale of which would result in a large capital gains tax; or
- Have substantial real estate holdings and wish to reduce estate tax burdens.

How Does a Land Donation Work?

Donating land is a relatively simple transaction. The Door County Land Trust often assists landowners in preparing and recording the necessary title work, arranging for surveying that may be needed, and helping the landowner reach decisions on important issues regarding the property.

Considerations when donating land may include:

- Whether to donate all or just a portion of the property;
- Whether to maintain any future rights to the donated parcel, such as the right to hike and ski on the parcel, or gather firewood; and
- How the Door County Land Trust intends to use and manage the property in the future.

However, before any steps are taken towards a possible land donation, it is important that landowners first contact the Door County Land Trust to determine its interest in receiving ownership of the property. Although the Door County Land Trust will usually welcome a land donation, in some cases it may be unable to accept it.



A "Summer Outing" on the Door County Land Trust's Hibbards Creek Preserve which was donated by Neil J. & Pat McCarty.

Does a Land Donation Make Economic Sense?

Donating land is a very generous act. By ensuring the permanent protection of your property you are leaving a legacy of land for all future generations. But donat-

Donation of Land – Neil J. and Pat McCarty *Leaving a Legacy of Protected Land*

In 1969 Neil and Pat McCarty started looking for a vacation home in Door County. In October 1970, they found the perfect house for their large family: a four-bedroom farmhouse with a big barn, machine shed and woodshed. Best of all, it was located on 120 acres through which Hibbards Creek flows. There is also a two-acre spring-fed pond and 15 acres of hardwoods on a bluff that rises to an elevation of 60 feet above the creek providing magnificent views of the Hibbards Creek Valley. They bought it! Twenty years later they were able to purchase another 40 acres of adjoining wetland.

In 1984, Neil and Pat became full-time residents of Door County. They became involved in environmental issues and organizations. Neil served on the board of the Door Property Owners Association and on the Town of Jacksonport Planning Committee. Pat serves as the Door County League of Women Voters' county board observer and is active with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association.

Over the years the McCarty's learned first-hand the significant ecological value of their land. "Hibbards Creek is a valuable resource for Door County," states Pat. "It's the longest and cleanest creek in northern Door County and its banks and associated wetlands are almost entirely in private ownership." Both Neil and Pat felt the need to make sure the 80-acre portion of their land through which the creek flows remains protected forever.

"We considered placing private deed restrictions on the property and letting title to the land pass to our children at our deaths", said Neil, "but that would place the burden of enforcing those deed restrictions on our nine children, none of whom live in Door County and some of whom live in distant states."

The McCarty's decided that the Door County Land Trust fit in beautifully with their plans and hopes for the future of their land. First they considered donating a conservation easement to the Land Trust, retaining title to the land but placing restrictions on development, which the Land Trust would enforce.

After careful study, Neil and Pat decided to go the route of donating the fee-simple title to the land to the Door County Land Trust. This shifts all of the rights of ownership to the Land Trust, and simplifies the appraisal of the fair market value of the gift. It also maximizes the value of the gift for income tax purposes.

The McCarty children are in full agreement that donating title to the 80 acres to the Land Trust was the best option. "We feel great peace about our decision to make this lifetime gift of land to the Door County Land Trust, a well-managed Door County non-profit corporation with an excellent professional staff," state Neil and Pat. " We are satisfied that the Land Trust will protect this gifted land in perpetuity. We also know that the Land Trust will be a good neighbor to the adjoining acreage we still hold".



ing land may not be as large a financial sacrifice as you would expect, especially if the land has appreciated a great deal since you acquired it.

Income tax deduction

If you donate property to the Door County Land Trust you can claim an income tax deduction equal to the land's current fair market value (within limitations allowed by the tax code). If you sell the land, you may incur capital gains tax on the appreciation. Your profit may be further reduced by a realtor's commission and other expenses associated with the sale.

Property and Estate tax relief

Donating land will also remove its value from your estate, reducing future estate taxes. *And, of course, you won't have to pay property taxes on it anymore.*

Donating Land by Will

Some landowners prefer to continue to own and control their land during their lifetimes, and instead transfer the land to the Land Trust by will at the time of their death. This kind of donation is called a donation by devise.

Before writing the devise into your will, you should make sure the Door County Land Trust is willing and able to receive the gift. Placing the donation in your will rather than donating the land during your lifetime means that you receive no income tax benefits from your gift and you will continue to be liable for property taxes. However, removing the value of the property from your estate could significantly reduce estate taxes.

Donating A Remainder Interest in Land

If donating land to the Door County Land Trust is a desirable concept, but you still wish to live on the property or use the land, you may want to consider donating for conservation purposes a "*remainder interest*" in the property and retaining a "reserved life estate." The way this works is that you donate the property during your lifetime, but reserve the right for you and any other named persons to continue to live on and use the property during their lifetimes. You have donated to the Land Trust a remainder interest in the property. When you or those you've specified die or release their life interests, the Land Trust will have full title and control over the property.

Donating a remainder interest provides the property owner the opportunity to continue to enjoy the land, but because the property's deed is transferred during their lifetime, the landowner has the peace of mind knowing that the organization of their choice has accepted the property for protection. A gift of a remainder interest may also entitle the owner to a potentially significant income tax deduction when the gift is made.

CHAPTER FOUR

Buying and Selling Land with Conservation in mind

Did you know that on average a landowner in Door County has owned their property for less than ten years? In this century alone, a Door County property will likely have ten or more different owners. Most land transfers involve a sale of the property. If you are faced with the prospects of selling land that you otherwise treasure there are a few options to consider.

Entering into a Conservation Easement prior to the sale

If the sale of your property is inevitable, you may want to work with the Door County Land Trust in placing a conservation easement on your property prior to its sale. By permanently limiting the type and amount of development and subdivision that can take place, you will have the peace of mind in knowing that the land you have cared for will continue to be treated with respect even though you will no longer be its owner. (See Chapter 2 on conservation easements.)

Bargain Sales

On a very select basis, the Door County Land Trust purchases property. However, the Door County Land Trust has limited funds for land purchases and generally reserves fair market purchases for highly scenic properties under imminent threat of development or property providing critical wildlife habitat.

But, if selling the land is your only option and if the property is of a particular interest to the Door County Land Trust, then a **bargain sale** to the Land Trust may be a win-win strategy. A bargain sale takes place when the land is sold to the Door County Land Trust for less than its fair market (appraised) value.

In a bargain sale the landowner realizes the actual revenue from the sale price as well as a tax-deductible charitable gift. The difference between the land's fair market value and its actual bargain sale price is considered a charitable donation and can be claimed as an income tax deduction. For example, if a property appraised at \$100,000 is sold to the Door County Land Trust for \$50,000 the landowner realizes \$50,000 from the purchase price as well as a \$50,000 charitable gift that can be claimed as an income tax deduction.

A bargain sale may be an affordable option for landowners when considering the capital gains tax, realtor's commission, and other sales-related expenses that would accrue from a fair market value sale. And, of course, bargain sales help make land



Property along the Niagara Escarpment purchased by the Door County Land Trust

more affordable for the Door County Land Trust.

An outright donation of property that is subject to a mortgage is also considered a bargain sale. It is treated, for income tax purposes, as though the amount still owed on the mortgage at the time of the land donation, were paid by the Door County Land Trust to the landowner.

What is a Conservation Buyer?

There are many people who have an interest in buying and preserving land in Door County. These individuals are referred to as "conservation buyers." Recently, the Door County Land Trust began an effort to link landowners intending to sell property they deeply care about with buyers interested in purchasing property and then permanently protecting it by entering into a conservation easement with the Door County Land Trust.

If you are selling property and interested in locating a conservation buyer or if you are seeking to buy and preserve land, contact the Door County Land Trust for more information about our Conservation Buyer Program.



Door County Land Trust's Bay Shore Blufflands Preserve

Conservation Buyers use Conservation Easement to Save Imperiled Forest

The area above and below the wooded bluffs of the Niagara Escarpment near Carlsville is one of the most biologically diverse and important regions in Door County. The escarpment as well as abundant wetland and dense forest host several rare plants and animals including ram's-head lady's-slipper orchids, hookers orchids, red shouldered hawks, and federally-endangered land snails. But construction of a large-scale subdivision on 60-acres in the heart of this wildlife area threatened the ecological integrity of this place.

At the time of construction the chances of protecting this forest seemed slim. A quarter mile road was already carved through the woods to service the planned 27 homesites and the Door County Land Trust could not afford the developer's purchase price. The only chance of saving this land was to find someone interested in owning and protecting this unique forest community. With this last hope in mind, the quest to locate a conservation buyer began. To everyone's surprise the quest did not take long.

The conservation buyers turned out to be Dan Collins and Nancy Aten, two Door County Land Trust members who had a particular interest in owning and saving imperiled forestland. After touring the property and learning of its ecological significance, Dan and Nancy eagerly agreed to work with the Door County Land Trust in negotiating a purchase with the developer. After much negotiation, Dan and Nancy purchased the property.

Soon after their purchase, Dan and Nancy asked the Door County Land Trust to write a conservation easement agreement that would permanently protect this special place. Conservation easements often accommodate a landowner's need for limited development, but Dan and Nancy's desire was to leave nature in charge of this particular property. Therefore, their conservation easement prohibits the placement of any buildings or structures and ensures that this forest will remain a healthy, vibrant place in the future.

Protecting lands along the Niagara Escarpment is no easy task. Soaring property values, especially on top of the bluffs, are making it very difficult to buy and preserve land here. In today's real estate climate, it often takes a partnership between landowners like Dan and Nancy and the Door County Land Trust to protect some of Door County's most important places.



CHAPTER FIVE

The Next Step

Decisions to protect land require consideration of your land conservation goals, your financial situation, your family's future needs and wishes and the special features of your property. After having read through this Guide, you may now have more questions than answers. Do not be deterred though, you have begun a very important process, and help is available right here in Door County.

Property owners are very fortunate to have a local organization like the Door County Land Trust that is dedicated to helping landowners plan for the future protection of their property. The Door County Land Trust would be honored to talk with you about the vision you may have for your property and to discuss in more detail the land protection strategies outlined in this Guide and how these strategies may be applied to your particular situation.

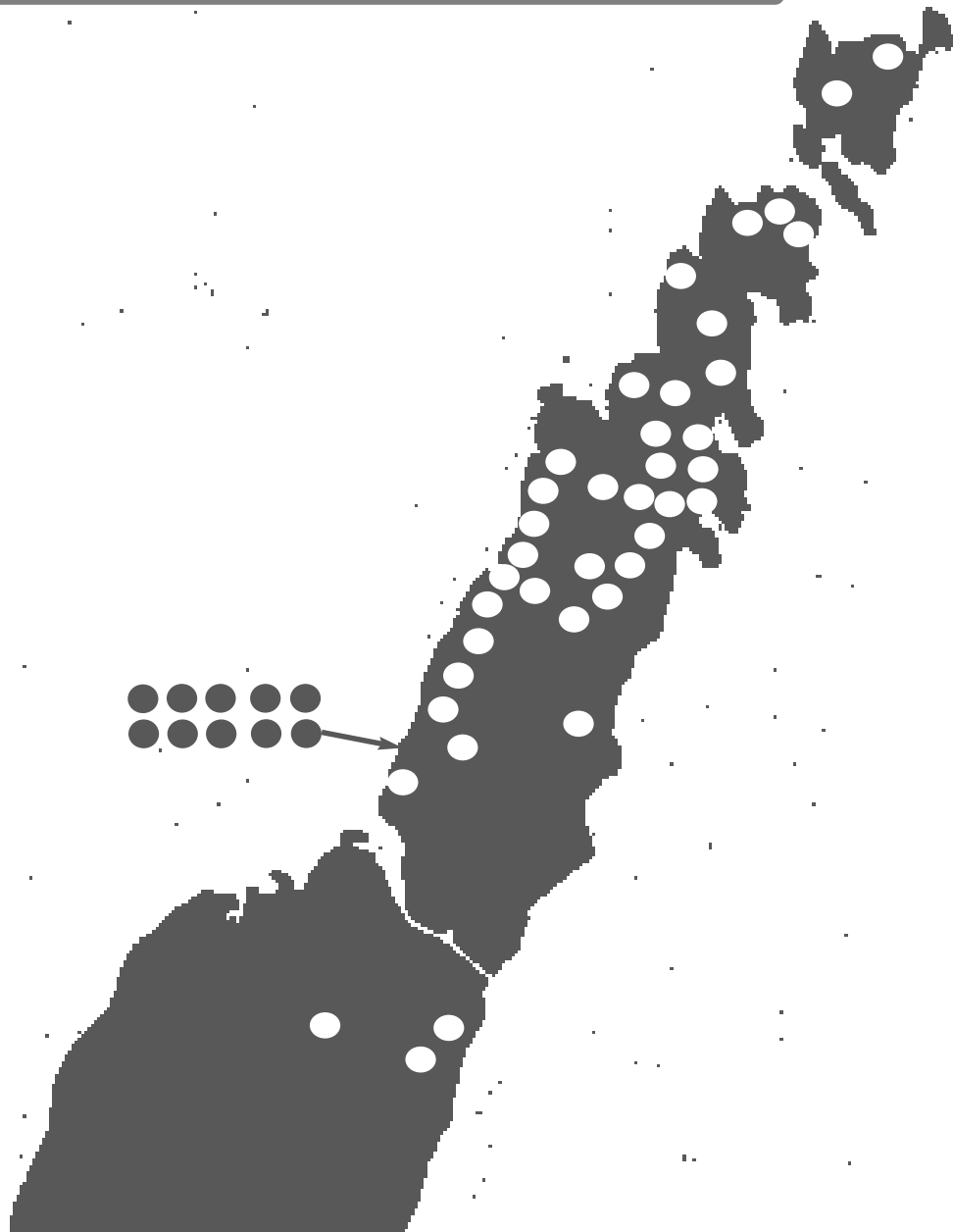
Which strategy is best for protecting your land becomes clearer after considering the following questions:

- What is it about your land that makes it special to you?
- Do you want to continue to own the land and pass it on to someone in your family?
- Do you want to continue living on the land or plan on living there in the future?
- Do you need the option to build additional residences or structures on the property; or to sell portions of the land?
- Are you interested in the benefits derived by donating all or portions of the land?
- Could you take advantage of a significant income tax deduction?
- Is property tax relief a major consideration?
- Has your land appreciated in value significantly since you have owned it?
- Do you need to receive some cash for your property in the near future?

Arriving at the land protection strategy that is right for your particular situation takes thought and deliberation. The Door County Land Trust has the experience, expertise, and commitment to provide landowners with sound information and assurance of long-term protection for their property. The board members and staff of the Door County Land Trust share your concern for land and for the future of Door County. *We are here, ready to help.*

*Please call or write us at:
Door County Land Trust, P.O. Box 345, Ephraim, WI 54211
(920) 839-9990*

*Properties permanently
protected by the
Door County Land Trust.
(as of July 2001)*



Appendix

Other Local Land Conservation Organizations and Agencies

Wildlife/Habitat Conservation Programs

Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife Biologist
110 S. Neenah Ave.
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2860
Wildlife Biologist (920) 755-4983

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service
925 Marquette St.
Kewaunee, WI 54216
(920) 388-2792

US Fish and Wildlife Service

1015 Challenger Dr.
Green Bay, WI 54311
(920) 433-3803

Forestry Management Programs

Department of Natural Resources Forester

110 S. Neenah Ave.
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2880

Door County Soil and Water Conservation Dept.

Door County Courthouse
421 Nebraska St.
P.O. Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2214

Farmland Preservation Program

Door County Soil and Water Conservation Dept.

Door County Courthouse
421 Nebraska St.
P.O. Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2214

Information on County Zoning Ordinances

Door County Planning Department

Door County Courthouse
P.O. Box 670
421 Nebraska St.
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2323

Plat Books available through:

UW-Extension Door County

Door County Courthouse
421 Nebraska St.
P.O. Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2260

Other resource guides

The Door County Land Guide

published by the County of Door and UW
Extension, can be found on line at
www.co.door.wi.us./land/guidebook.html

Tax parcel information and maps

Door County Real Properties Listing

Door County Courthouse
421 Nebraska St.
P.O. Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2287

Deeds

Door County Register of Deeds

Door County Courthouse
421 Nebraska St.
P.O. Box 670
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 746-2270

Other Local Conservation and Environmental Organizations

Door County Environmental Council

P.O. Box 114
Fish Creek, WI 54212
(920) 743-6003

Door Property Owners

5689 Gordon Rd.
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 743-3020
1-800-207-1957

League of Women Voters

Directory of Door County
Environmental Organizations
P.O. Box 306
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

The Nature Conservancy

306 S. 3rd Ave., Ste. C
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
(920) 743-8695

The Ridges Sanctuary

P.O. Box 152
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202
(920) 839-2802