



# BAYFIELD REGIONAL CONSERVANCY

## Land Protection Options

### Why Protect Your Land?

*Within the next 20-30 years, it is estimated that many undeveloped private lake front and river front properties in the Northwoods will be split up and sold for development. Fortunately, there is something you can do. The Bayfield Regional Conservancy, a non-profit, non-governmental land trust that serves Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, and Sawyer counties, is working with private landowners to conserve their lands now for future generations. How do you conserve your land? Here are some options!*

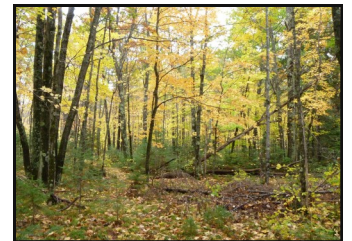


A variety of voluntary conservation options give private landowners the opportunity to leave a legacy of unspoiled land and water resources.

### Conservation Easement

These voluntary land protection agreements **permanently protect land by limiting property uses to protect the property's conservation values**. This conservation tool lets a landowner continue to own and use their property, and to sell it or pass it on to family. A conservation easement is an agreement between a landowner and the land trust and runs with the deed to the property. The agreement is designed to make sure that protection of the land is compatible with the financial and personal needs of the landowner. Many landowners who have a love of the land and an interest in protecting it forever have used this conservation tool. **It is one of the most flexible conservation tools available**. The land trust holds the easement, and is responsible for annually monitoring and enforcing the terms of the easement. Landowners are asked to donate to a Stewardship Endowment Fund to help cover the costs of this work.

- ⇒ Donated conservation easements that meet Internal Revenue Service tax requirements **can provide significant tax advantages**. BRC has tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization so contributions are fully tax deductible. The value of the gift is determined by a qualified land appraiser.
- ⇒ Limited development - Some parcels of land can be divided with a portion being protected by a conservation easement, and the remaining land can be used, sold or developed as circumstances require.



### Donating Land

The Bayfield Regional Conservancy accepts donated land with ecological values, and lands with little or no conservation values. A landowner may wish to donate land because they cannot or do not wish to pass the land on to family; have no further use for a piece of property; have high valued property; want to reduce estate tax burdens; or wish to be relieved of the management of the land but still want to see it protected for conservation. The Conservancy may accept the land as a donation and place a

conservation easement on it before reselling it and using the proceeds for other projects.

⇒ Gifts of land can result in a **charitable tax deduction** as well as capital gains benefits for the landowner. The IRS requires an independent qualified appraisal for this deduction. Landowners who donate land to a land trust can receive an income tax deduction for the full, fair-market value of the land. The donation may reduce federal estate tax liabilities and will eliminate the responsibility for future property taxes.



Lands can be donated a variety of ways, including through a Bequest (transfers ownership through your will) or a Reserved Life Estate (allows you to use your property through your lifetime).



### Land Purchase

While the Conservancy has limited funding to purchase land, the Conservancy is sometimes able to fundraise or access state or federal grant programs to assist with purchasing land that has exceptional natural resource values and is highly threatened. Often, these properties are protected and then made available for non-motorized public recreation.

### Bargain Sale

For a landowner interested in conservation who cannot afford an outright donation of land or a conservation easement, a bargain sale of the property to the land trust ensures the land will be protected. With this option, the land trust purchases the property at less than full market value. A landowner may claim the difference between the sale price and full market value as a tax-deductible donation.

## Other Stewardship Options

In addition to land protection options, there are many programs that can help you practice good management on your land, and some programs provide cost-share funding.

- US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Wisconsin Managed Forest Law
- Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program
- Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Department

### **Our Story**

To date, we have successfully conserved more than 4,450 acres of land through conservation easements and acquisitions. Some public properties that we have helped protect include Cornucopia Beach, Frog Bay Tribal National Park, Houghton Falls Nature Preserve, Lincoln Community Forest, Lost Creek Bog, and North Pikes Creek Wetlands Community Forest.

**Contact Us to Learn More!**

**715-779-5263 or [brc@brcland.org](mailto:brc@brcland.org)**