



Technical Bulletin What is a Conservation Easement?

Many lands are best protected if landowners are motivated to pursue economically viable alternatives to development. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a non-profit land trust which permanently restricts use of the land for agricultural production, wildlife habitat or open space.

Placing private land in a conservation easement:

- Keeps land in private ownership and available for agriculture, habitat preservation and limited residential use. An agricultural conservation easement puts farm use as primary objective.
- Permanently alters the property deed to prevent or minimize subdivision, and limits construction to agricultural and limited residential building as negotiated with the owner.
- May include specific protections for important environmental, scenic or historic resources.
- May qualify the owner for significant income and inheritance tax savings.
- May be purchased with Land Trust conservation grants (although at this time funding for such purchases is extremely limited).
- Does not create any new government regulation, or require public access
- Requires the Land Trust to monitor and enforce the easement in perpetuity, including legal action if necessary