

DONATING

YOUR PROPERTY

ABOUT THE WLAC

We work to **preserve and protect Walloon Lake** and its watershed for current and future generations.

For decades, we have been entrusted to conserve this cherished lake and land through ongoing **conservation and stewardship programs**.

We manage **50 nature preserves** and hold **20 conservation easements** within the Walloon Lake watershed.

We operate independently as a 501(c)3 **nonprofit organization** and are primarily supported financially by the generosity of private donors as well as local, state, and national foundations.

If you are interested in donating a property, included is a bit more info.



WALLOON
LAKE
ASSOCIATION AND
CONSERVANCY

OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE, CARE FOR AND ENHANCE THE CONNECTION OF PEOPLE TO WALLOON LAKE AND ITS WATERSHED, NOW AND FOREVER.

DONATION FAQs

CAN I DONATE MY PROPERTY TO THE WLAC?

If you own property, you have the right to donate, sell, bequeath, or otherwise transfer ownership at any time. We accept gifts of land that have ecological, scenic, or recreational characteristics that will help us meet our mission of preserving and protecting Walloon Lake and its watershed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO DONATING PROPERTY?

Donating property is a relatively simple transaction and it releases you from the responsibility of managing the property. An outright donation may benefit you in the following ways if:

- You wish to leave a legacy by preserving your property for future generations
- You want to protect the special qualities of Walloon Lake and its watershed
- Your property has significant conservation values
- You do not have heirs interested in inheriting your property
- You own property (such as a vacation home or farm) no longer in use
- You own highly appreciated property - the sale of which would result in large capital gains taxes
- You have substantial real estate holdings and wish to reduce estate tax burdens
- You would like to be relieved of the financial burden of owning property while ensuring it will continue to be cherished

Most importantly, when land is donated it will be permanently protected.

HOW WILL THE WLAC USE MY PROPERTY?

Donated property is most often managed by the WLAC as a permanent nature preserve, open to the public for outdoor activities like hiking, birdwatching, or cross-country skiing. If your property is adjacent to an existing nature area, the WLAC may decide to add acreage making a larger preserve.

Not all donated property will be made open to the public. The WLAC takes into account its organizational mission, its legal responsibilities as a tax-exempt nonprofit, and the characteristics of the property to guide acceptance and use of land donations.

The WLAC is also happy to name a nature preserve resulting from a donation of property in your honor or in the memory of a loved one.

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO PROTECT MY LAND?

Yes! Conservation easements are a great way to maintain ownership of your property but make sure it is protected forever. Conservation easements are voluntary, legally binding agreements between you and the WLAC. Although they restrict some of the property rights as an owner, they ensure that the property is kept in a state of conservation that adds to the overall benefit of the watershed and also provides a tax benefit to the donor.

They can be used to protect many different types of lands, including farms and forests, that safeguard everything from water quality to scenic views. In most circumstances conservation easements are donated but in certain instances the WLAC may decide to purchase a conservation easement as well.

IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT RIGHT FOR ME?

Conservation easements can be drafted to ensure the desires of the land owners are being met as well as keeping the conservation values of the property intact. For example easements can be written to allow growing crops or harvesting timber but restricting the right to build additional structures. These agreed to rights and restrictions carry on in perpetuity so any subsequent landowners will be subject to the same restrictions.

Giving up these property rights may devalue your property, so you then would be able to take a tax deduction for the amount of the devaluation. For example: if your land is valued at \$1,000,000 and is subsequently valued at \$700,000 after the conservation easement restriction, then you would be able to claim a \$300,000 charitable tax deduction.

WILL MY PROPERTY BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WITH A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

It is commonly thought that if you enter into a conservation easement that it then opens your property up to public use, but this is not the case - **it is up to you!** The property remains private unless you would like public access and it is only subject to a yearly monitoring visit from the WLAC staff.

As a conservation easement holder, you retain ownership of the property and can live on, sell, or pass the property on to your heirs. The easement will continue on with the property into perpetuity so you will have the peace of mind knowing the land will be protected forever.

If you have questions or are interested in donating property, please don't hesitate to reach out to:

Connor Dennis, Director of Conservation Programs
connor@walloon.org | (231) 535.6112

