



Conservation Easement Basics

*We cannot afford to lose our farms, ranches and open space.
What happens to our land directly affects our water supply, wildlife habitats,
Local food supply, and the vitality and heritage of our urban and rural communities.*

What is a Conservation Easement?

- A Conservation Easement (CE) is a **voluntary, legally binding agreement** between a landowner and a qualified land trust created to limit development and protect the conservation values of the property in perpetuity.
- An easement for conservation or preservation purposes involves the voluntary donation of the landowner's rights to develop or modify his property and the buildings on it. The relinquishment of these rights are **according to the specific restrictions created by the landowner in partnership with a land trust**, and monitored in perpetuity by the land trust that is "holding" the easement.

Why do landowners place a Conservation Easement on their land?

A Conservation Easement allows the landowner to:

- Keep the ranch or farm in the family and maintain agricultural production.
- Preserve the land and water for future generations.
- Protect and enhance stewardship of the natural resources on their land.
- Preserve open space and the cultural heritage tied to the land.
- Reduce estate taxes.
- Receive tax benefits for the charitable donation of the development rights.

Conservation Easements Key Points

- Voluntary
- Flexible
- Protect private property rights
- Keeps land in private ownership
- Provides legal means to protect and preserve land for agriculture, ranching, open space, and wildlife habitat.
- Offers financial advantages (tax benefits)
- Helps "Land-Rich, Cash-Poor" heirs keep the land in the family.