

TEXAS FARM & RANCH

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*Three Creek Preserve - 197 acres -
Washington County*

Saving Land & Saving Taxes

TEXAS LAND TRUSTS CAN HELP YOU PRESERVE YOUR LAND
WHILE PROVIDING INCOME AND ESTATE TAX SAVINGS

Q: What is a Land Trust and how can they help my family preserve our land?

A: Land Trusts are non-profit conservation organizations that assist private landowners in their desire to protect the natural features of their property.

Q: What tool does a Land Trust use to assist private landowners?

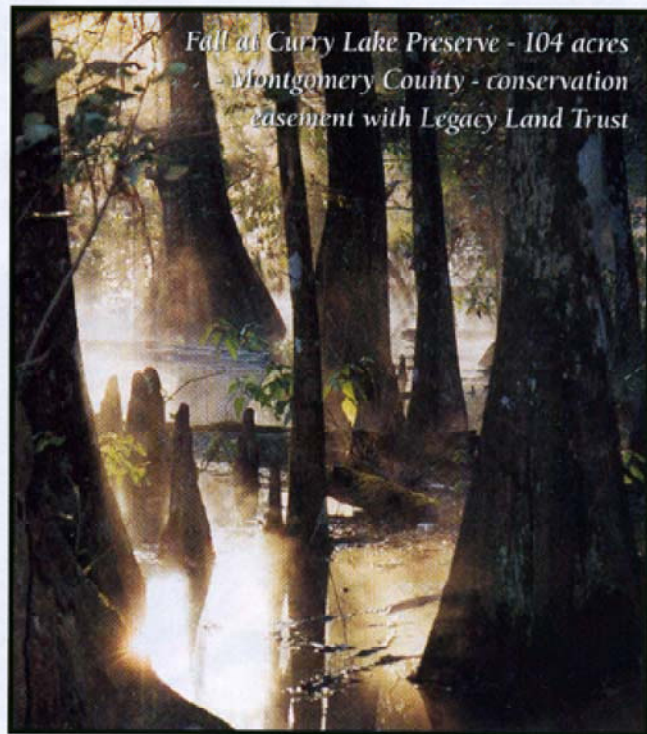
A: Land Trusts (not just any 501(c)3 organization) can be a part of a legal agreement called a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a Land Trust that permanently limits certain uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. You continue to own and use your land and have the ability to sell it or pass it on to heirs.



*Live Oaks Ranch Preserve -
479 acres - conservation easement
with Legacy Land Trust*

Q: When I consider a conservation easement with a Land Trust, am I going to have to give up all of the rights associated with the land?

A: No, you definitely do not give away all your rights! Want to still hunt on your land? Great! Want to still graze cattle? No problem! Depending on the size of your tract, you may even want to build additional structures and grow crops...all of these can be permissible activities that are worked out between the landowner and the Land Trust, depending on the size of the tract and the landowner's wishes.



Q: But aren't land trusts just like the government? Does this mean I have to open my land to the public?

A: NO! Land Trusts are locally based organizations, with local people that work in specific geographic areas and are NOT connected with any form of federal, state or local government. Almost all conservation easements are done with private landowners, and there is absolutely no stipulation that would require you to open your land to the public. Future owners will be bound by the easement's terms and the Land Trust's role is to be responsible for making sure the easement's terms are followed.

Q: I'm interested! What are the positive income tax ramifications?

A: Conservation easements are a donation; the donation benefits the public by permanently protecting important conservation resources, and if it meets other federal tax code requirements, it can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation. The amount of the donation is the difference between the land's value with the easement and its value without the easement.

Q: Can placing a conservation easement on my property also result in other tax savings?

A: By removing the land's commercial development potential, the easement lowers its market value, which can assist with a lowered property tax valuation. The reduction in market value will also reduce the value of the land in the owner's estate, which can help lower or eliminate federal estate tax for their heirs. Whether the easement is donated during life or by will, it can make a critical difference in the heirs' ability to keep the land intact.

Q: How can I find a Land Trust working in the county in which I own my land?

A: Turn to the Texas Land Trust Council (512 389-4779), which can inform of you the local Land Trust organizations ready to assist you.



Bexar Land Trust, Inc.

