



Land Stewardship Fund Policy

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Effective date:	Immediate	Last revised:	April 26, 2017
Replaces:	N/A	Approved by Executive	April 12, 2017
Next Review:	April 2020	Approved by Board	April 26, 2017

Purpose of this Policy:

The Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) has established a Land Stewardship Fund in order to ensure we meet our commitments and obligations in OFT Conservation Easement Agreements for protecting farmland forever. These funds are intended to generate enough revenue to support stewardship monitoring and related costs for Conservation Easement Agreements managed by OFT in perpetuity in the event that annual operating revenues fall below resources needed to support stewardship obligations.

Annual Stewardship Costs:

The annual cost for property stewardship and monitoring is to ensure that original donors and future owners are maintaining properties in accord with the requirements of the conservation easement agreement. Annual monitoring will be undertaken by an OFT staff person, with the support of available and trained stewardship volunteers. OFT does have defined program management costs for organizing, implementing, supervising and documenting the annual property monitoring work.

Our range of estimated costs includes about 6 to 11 hours of staff time per year for each conservation agreement. Whenever possible, annual costs are reduced by multiple visits per day. Other potential costs include legal fees, if a conservation agreement property is not being maintained according to the agreement. Most problems in stewardship are resolved in good landowner relations.

Stewardship costs can be substantially more in terms of both money and time, depending upon what is required of each property in a particular year. There may be a need for OFT authorization of activities proposed by landowners on conservation agreement lands, which could also include communication with the staff of the EcoGifts program and the Ministry of Natural Resources. There could also be more extensive costs for enforcement related inspections or court proceedings. While these are difficult to quantify in advance, they point to the need for a robust stewardship fund to ensure properties can be cared for in perpetuity. Volunteers assist but OFT staff maintain professional control.

By making contributions to the OFT Land Stewardship Fund, landowners donating easements and other funders help the OFT ensure that gifts of farmland easements are protected forever. Based on current estimates, the Fund needs at least \$15,000 per easement (\$180,000 for 12 properties).

Stewardship Cost Breakdown:

Staff time in advance of visit (includes getting in touch with the landowner and reviewing monitoring history)	1 - 2 hours	\$50 - 100
Staff monitoring travel time	1 – 3 hours	\$50 - 150
Staff time monitoring visit	3 - 4hours	\$150 - 200
Mileage (one visit per year)	100 to 300 km	\$50 - 150
Staff time writing report (most of recording done on site during monitoring visit with a standard template)	1 – 2hours	\$50 - 100
TOTAL	6 – 11 hours	\$350 - 700

Stewardship Fund investment using a 3.5% interest for annual OFT revenue gain to offset stewardship monitoring costs will require \$10,000 to \$20,000 or an average of \$15,000 per property. This should ensure at least \$525 is generated annually by the Fund for each property to support stewardship. For a land portfolio of 12 easements, OFT could set a goal of \$180,000 for the Stewardship Fund.