

Natural Legacies:

Your Educational Guide to Conservation in BC



Ecological Gifts Program

The Ecological Gifts Program is administered by Environment Canada in cooperation with numerous partners. Since 1995, 1,110 ecological gifts valued at over \$716 million have been donated across Canada, protecting over 166,000 hectares of wildlife habitat. Almost 67,000 hectares of land have been donated in British Columbia.

Ecological Gifts:

An Ecological Gift or “Eco-gift” is a gift of ecologically sensitive land, made by an individual or a corporation to an eligible recipient. The gift—a donation of land or partial interest in land—can be made to a government, land trust or other qualified organization. The recipient ensures that the land’s biodiversity and ecological heritage are protected in perpetuity. For a summary of Ecological Gifting, see Environment Canada’s [Program Donor Brochure](#).

Lands that qualify for Ecological Gifts are:

- Important for the conservation of Canada’s biodiversity and environmental heritage, and
- In a relatively natural state with high biodiversity values.

A wide range of lands qualify as ecologically sensitive—from cliffs and forests to shorelines, wetlands and grasslands. Environment Canada must certify the land as “ecologically sensitive” according to specific national and provincial criteria before it can be included under the Ecological Gifts Program. Your local land trust or other recipient organization can help you to determine if your land is likely to qualify as ecologically sensitive.

ECOLOGICAL GIFTS PROGRAM



Natural Legacies is a project of the Land Trust Alliance of BC with the financial support of The Real Estate Foundation of BC The Vancouver Foundation The Law Foundation of BC The Victoria Foundation The Province of BC Environment Canada TIDES Canada

Land Trust Alliance of BC LTABC

201-569 Johnson St
VICTORIA BC V8W 1M2
250-590-1921 www.ltabc.ca

Financial and other benefits:

If you are a donor landowner, you get a donation receipt (tax credit) for the full value of your Ecological Gift and this can be applied against 100% of your net annual income. Any unused portion of the receipt may be carried forward for up to ten years, and there is no taxable capital gain. Corporations can also qualify for Ecological Gifts—the amount is deducted directly from taxes. For more detailed information, see Environment Canada's [Donations and Income Tax Scenarios](#).

Ecological Gifts benefit landowners by:

- Providing significant tax benefits for donations;
- Ensuring that the property's ecological values are protected in perpetuity;
- Providing flexible options, including the ability to sell only part of the land, or a partial interest in the land, or to remain living on the land for your (or your heir's) lifetime.

Examples of ecological gifts include the following.

1. A straightforward "fee simple" donation of land to a qualified recipient, transferring the property ownership to the recipient organization. The tax receipt is based on the fair market value of the land.
2. Donation of a partial interest in the property through a legal agreement, such as a conservation covenant or easement, that ensures that the land's ecological values are maintained. The landowner continues to own the property and can sell or pass it on to their heirs. The tax receipt reflects the reduced sale value of the land.
3. A "life estate" is a donation of land to a qualified recipient, with a clause that allows the landowner to live on that land for their lifetime. Tax benefits based on the fair market value are received at the time of donation.
4. Donation of land by a "[split receipt](#)": the donor can receive a payment of up to 80% of the financial value of the transferred property, and donate the remainder. Tax benefits are assigned accordingly.
For more information on options for land donation, see Environment Canada's [Donation and Income Tax Scenarios](#).

Steps to donating your land and obtaining an eco-gift receipt:

If you are interested in donating your land (or an interest in your land) as an Ecological Gift:

1. [Learn more](#) about the Ecological Gifts Program at the Environment Canada website <http://www.ec.gc.ca/pde-egp/>. Read the [program handbook](#) for more information.
2. Talk to your local [land trust organization](#) or staff at the Ecological Gifts program. Talk about what your goals are, and what you are looking to achieve by participating in the program. Find out if the land you are offering might qualify for an Ecological Gift tax credit.
 - For a list of [local land trust organizations](#), see the [Land Trust Alliance](#) of BC.
 - Contact Environment Canada's BC/Yukon Regional Coordinator at pde-egp@ec.gc.ca or call 604-350-1987.
3. Talk to a [financial advisor](#) who knows about Ecological Gifts. Every situation is different; get tax advice specific for your own circumstances, so you can maximize the tax benefits of your donation.
4. Make sure you understand the [costs involved](#). You will need to get legal and tax advice, an [appraisal](#) of your land, and there will be costs for land transfer and registry fees.
5. [Decide](#) who you want to donate your land to, and in what way. Make sure you are comfortable with all of the conditions of the donation before making any final decisions, and be sure to get independent legal and tax advice.

6. Work with your recipient to get the necessary paperwork. You will need to get a *Certificate of Ecologically Sensitive Land* and a *Statement of Determination of Fair Market Value from Environment Canada*.
7. Work with your recipient to get a donation receipt. Submit your tax return with the necessary paperwork.

Resources:

Contact the BC/Yukon Ecological Gifts Program (EGP) Coordinator:

Environment Canada
5421 Robertson Road, RR1
Delta BC V4K 3N2
Telephone: 604-350-1987
Email: pde-egp@ec.gc.ca