



Donating undeveloped land to Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC) is a straightforward way to permanently protect the property for conservation. Gifts of land can result in significant income tax benefits and estate tax savings for the donor. TRLC accepts gifts of property to help protect the land's important natural features and assets from future development or land uses changes.

Here are the general steps to donate conservation land to TRLC:

- 1. Initial Contact and Meeting.** TRLC and the landowner meet to discuss the property. TRLC provides an overview of its mission and available conservation tools. TRLC and the landowner discuss the potential financial benefits associated with donating the property to TRLC and the federal and state requirements that must be met for the landowner to be eligible for tax benefits.
- 2. Property Visit and Data Gathering.** TRLC staff visit the property, often with the landowner and family members, to assess the land's conservation values and natural features, such as forest, wetlands, open land, and streams. The landowner shares copies of deeds, surveys, maps, and land management plans related to the property with TRLC. TRLC reviews data available from other sources, including county soil surveys and inventories of natural and cultural resources completed by partner agencies.
- 3. Project Proposal.** TRLC staff prepares a land protection proposal for the landowner to review and approve. The proposal summarizes the conservation values of the property and the general financial implications of the project for TRLC and the landowner. The proposal includes a summary of any costs that TRLC might need the landowner to cover as part of the project. The landowner reviews the proposal and shares it with family members and his/her financial and legal advisors. The landowner signs the proposal signifying his/her intention to donate the land to TRLC.
- 4. TRLC Board Review.** TRLC staff asks the TRLC Board of Directors to review and approve the proposed land donation. The Board evaluates the proposed donation to ensure that it is consistent with TRLC's mission and policies and that TRLC has or can secure the financial resources to complete the transaction as envisioned. The Board passes a resolution that authorizes the TRLC staff to accept the land donation.
- 5. Project Fundraising.** Once the landowner and the TRLC Board approve the project, the TRLC staff work to secure the funds needed to cover anticipated costs associated with the land transaction. These costs could include a boundary survey, closing attorney fees, and deposits into TRLC's Stewardship Endowment and Conservation Lands Defense Fund. In many cases, a landowner is asked to help cover a portion or all of the project costs. If a landowner is unable to help cover these costs, TRLC must raise the necessary funding through grants and donor contributions. Contributions to the Stewardship Endowment and Defense Fund ensure that TRLC has the resources to monitor, manage, and protect the property in perpetuity.

6. **Boundary Survey.** If the property has not recently been surveyed by a licensed professional land surveyor, TRLC arranges for one to be completed. The boundary and corners of the property are marked in the field to aid in monitoring and management. Any boundary discrepancies with neighbors are resolved. The surveyor records a plat with the county Register of Deeds so that the plat may be referenced in the Deed of Gift from the landowner to TRLC.

7. **Closing.** After a boundary survey has been completed, a “closing” is scheduled at a local’s attorney’s office. The landowner signs the Deed of Gift transferring title to the property to TRLC.

8. **Appraisal & Tax Forms.** The landowner hires a qualified land appraiser to determine the “value” of the property for income tax benefits. The landowner shares copies of the appraisal report with his/her accountant and with TRLC. To claim federal tax deductions for the gift, the landowner’s accountant prepares an IRS Form 8283, which is signed by the appraiser and then TRLC. If TRLC has significant concern about the tax deductibility of the transaction or that the project could threaten its own tax exempt status, it must decline to participate in the project.

9. **Celebrating the Partnership.** Once the donation of the land has occurred, TRLC may wish to share the news of the landowner’s commitment to conservation by issuing a press release to local news outlets. TRLC may also highlight the project on its website and in its membership newsletter.

10. **Stewardship.** The donation of the land to TRLC is just the beginning of TRLC's work to ensure that it remains protected in perpetuity. TRLC prepares a detailed management plan for the property after cataloguing the important natural features of the site. TRLC staff and volunteers visit the property regularly to monitor changes to the land. Depending on the natural and cultural resources found on the property, TRLC may make the property available for scientific study. TRLC may undertake projects on the property to improve its habitat or to allow limited public access on trails or through guided tours.

For more information about donating land to Tar River Land Conservancy, please contact us at (919) 496-5902 or info@tarriver.org. Thank you!