

Ecological Gifts Program

Donor Profile



Conservation Easement Agreement Donation within the UNESCO Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

“There is a mysterious feeling you get here that is hard to put into words,” says the owner of Estelle’s Reserve, who wishes to remain anonymous. After 62 years of walking the same paths, greeting the same trees, and watching the seasons come and go, she is filled with a sense of relief that this beloved land will remain in its natural state forever.

“The Ecological Gifts Program made it possible for me to guarantee permanent protection for this land while still enjoying it with my family,” she says.

Motivated by an urgent desire to safeguard the land from development and to act on climate change, the landowner worked with the Georgian Bay Land Trust, an environmental charity committed to ecological preservation on the world’s largest freshwater archipelago, to establish a conservation easement agreement in 2018. She and her family still own the land and the cottage there, but like all future owners, they are bound to the terms of the conservation easement agreement registered on the property’s title.

The landowner worked closely with the land trust to develop an agreement that made sense for both parties, and that met the ecological criteria required by the Ecological Gifts Program. For example, she wanted her children and grandchildren to have the opportunity to tap maple trees for sap, as she had done for countless years. Family access to the land for sap collection is forever secured in the conservation easement agreement.

“I have immense gratitude for the federal government that allows flexibility in agreements, and for the land trust that guided me through the conservation easement creation process with skill and patience.”

An increasing number of conservation-minded landowners in Canada take part in the Ecological Gifts Program every year. Each donation, no matter how small, makes a substantial contribution to the creation of a network of protected areas reaching across virtually every habitat and region in Canada.



According to the Georgian Bay Land Trust, this reserve contributes greatly to the protection of nature in the area. Estelle's Reserve is within the UNESCO Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and is near three other land trust properties. These properties create a valuable wildlife corridor and contribute to a protected areas network.

Covering more than 54 hectares, the property contains extensive mixed forests that support breeding bird species that require interior forest habitat, including the red-shouldered hawk. It also contains large expanses of treed rock barrens and wetlands supporting numerous snake and turtle species.

Blackstone Lake borders the eastern part of Estelle's Reserve. Besides providing an ideal swimming experience, this cold inland body of water supports an abundance of lake trout. The conservation easement agreement prohibits new buildings and shoreline destruction of any kind, thereby protecting both swimming and fish-spawning habitat.

**Do you own land that contains natural habitat, such as a forest, prairie, wetland or shoreline?
Would you like to see it protected for future generations?**

Through the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, landowners can donate their land, or a partial interest such as a conservation easement agreement, to an eligible recipient organization that will care for it forever, such as a land trust, conservation organization, or government. In addition to the peace of mind that the land will be forever protected, donors can receive significant income tax benefits including elimination of any tax on the capital gain.

For more information, visit the Ecological Gifts Program website at:
www.canada.ca/ecological-gifts

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