

Ecological Gifts Program

Donor Profile



Photo: Nature Conservancy of Canada

A Conservation Legacy Through Restoration in Southeastern British Columbia

“When we mentioned using heavy machinery to dig out the field, the Latters were understandably concerned and very anxious,” recalls biologist Richard Klafki, the Canadian Rocky Mountains Program Director for the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

Although Carol and Walter Latter no longer own Cherry Meadows - an ecological gift property in southeastern British Columbia - their connection to the land runs deep, dating back to 1992. The long-term conservation of these 70 hectares has always been their priority.

“It [the land] had been drained by farmers long before we acquired it,” Carol explains. Once used as pasture for horses and cattle, the land bore the scars of overgrazing. The Latters devoted themselves to its restoration, working tirelessly to bring the landscape back to life.



Photo: Walter Latter

“We wanted to make sure that the stewardship of the land would be turned over to an organization that could take care of it and protect it,” Carol explains. In 2014, the NCC became that organization. Through the Ecological Gifts Program, the Latters ensured Cherry Meadows would be safeguarded forever. While ownership was transferred to the NCC, Carol and Walter retained their right to continue living on the land – maintaining their deep connection to the place they’ve nurtured for decades.



Photo: Walter Latter

The Ecological Gifts Program helps landowners protect ecologically sensitive areas while offering financial benefits, subject to three requirements:

1. The land must be certified as ecologically sensitive;
2. The fair market value of the ecological gift must be determined; and
3. The gift must be donated to a qualified recipient (such as a land trust, or a municipal, provincial or federal government) that will ensure that the land’s biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity.



“Cherry Meadows is a beautiful property,” says Richard Klafki. A creek winds through the valley, while ponderosa pine and western larch thrive in surrounding grasslands and open forest. The Latters’ charming house overlooks it all.

After the ecological gift was finalized, the NCC began the work of restoring the valley to its natural state. With the help of excavators and bulldozers, environmental specialists carefully set out to heal the land.

“We were able to create 13 little pocket wetlands all through the flood plain where the old pasture was,” Richard explains. **“And we’ve left it to sit for the last seven or eight years. The waiting period has given the land time to heal and regenerate.”**

From their home on the hill, the Latters have witnessed Cherry Meadows’ remarkable transformation firsthand.

“The vegetation is coming back and we’re seeing more birds and other wildlife,” marvels Carol. **“It made a big difference,”** Walter agrees. **“There are more elk and deer grazing on the bottomland now.”**

The land’s recovery has been profound. **“It’s an incredibly diverse property,”** adds Richard. **“It supports waterfowl, American badgers and rare grassland plant communities. And yes - grizzly bears roam here too. Even though it’s small, it has a big footprint.”**



Photo: Carol Latter

The restoration of Cherry Meadows stands as a powerful example of how an ecological gift can lead to lasting conservation success. And these benefits extend beyond the property’s boundaries. **“These properties filter and store water. They provide habitat where species at risk can thrive, and they can form part of a larger ecological corridor. Even small areas, when connected, can have a significant benefit,”** says Richard.

For Carol and Walter, donating Cherry Meadows through the Ecological Gifts Program was a deeply meaningful decision. **“It feels really good. We know the land is protected for posterity and that it’s under the care of the NCC.”**

**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

Photo: Richard Klafki



Cat. No.: En14-563/6-2025E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-79147-0

His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the
Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, 2026

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