

Ecological Gifts Program

Donor Profile



Photo: Glen Goodwin

A Family Legacy Turned Ecological Gift in Alberta's Prairie Foothills

"It was all about keeping the land in the family," reveals Rob Goodwin, casting a loving glance at his father, Glen. **"It was a way to protect it, so nobody could develop it; so it could stay natural."**

Rob cherishes these 130 hectares deeply, just as his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather did before him. Over the last century, this rich piece of southwestern Alberta has been part of the Goodwin family's story. Now, thanks to their Ecological Gifts Program donation, it's protected forever.



Photo: Sasha Harriot, SALTS

"If you're driving west toward the Rockies, we're between the last set of foothills and the Livingstone Range," says Glen. Highway 3 cuts through this transitional region between high peaks and endless prairie. The property is a blend of grassland and wetland, with trees scattered throughout. **"I was first down there when I was six months old. I've been going every year since, and there have always been cattle."**

"A lot of private land has extremely high ecological value in southern Alberta," notes Justin Thompson, Executive Director of the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS). **"Most of it is working landscape – farming, ranching. You have the cattle on the land alongside grizzly bears, elk, moose, and grassland bird species at risk."**

The Goodwin property lies within an important ecological corridor where SALTS has been protecting lands over the last decade. **"In Alberta, we have a unique scenario where you simply can't achieve effective conservation – in terms of species, connectivity, and watershed health – without including these working landscapes,"** he adds.



Photo: Glen Goodwin

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.



SALTS is the recipient organization of the Goodwins' ecological gift: a conservation easement that protects the land in perpetuity. Rob Goodwin retains title to the property, while the easement restricts its use to farming and grazing. This protection will remain in place regardless of future ownership.

The Southern Alberta Land Trust Society protects over 70,000 acres (28,300 hectares) of land in southern Alberta through conservation easements. The vast majority of these (73 of 75 properties) were donated through the Ecological Gifts Program, ensuring their long-term protection.

“We wouldn’t have been able to hang on to the land without some help along the way,” Glen admits. The tax incentives offered through the Ecological Gifts Program played a key role in the family’s estate planning.

“We don’t live on the land,” Rob says. **“So if my father were to pass away unexpectedly... inheriting the land, I probably would have had to sell part of it just to cover the tax bill.”**

The Goodwins are grateful to SALTS. **“They guided us through the whole process,”** Rob notes appreciatively. **“We talk to them every year, and they offer invaluable advice on conservation and how to steward the property.”**

According to Justin Thompson, **“So many people we work with, like the Goodwins, have this real commitment to the land. For many of them, permanent conservation is the only option they can imagine.”**

Through the Ecological Gifts Program, the Goodwins have secured their family legacy while advancing SALTS’ priority: keeping prairie landscapes whole and intact. Their property is a living grassland refuge, shielded from fragmentation and human disturbance, where biodiversity and cattle coexist in a landscape that endures.

**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: Glen Goodwin



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