



## Land Conservation Options



**Greenbelt**  
Essex County's Land Trust

*Helping you conserve your land  
for future generations.*

*Greenbelt's experienced conservation staff works with Essex County landowners to develop conservation plans that address both their financial and conservation goals. If you are considering selling or conserving your land, Greenbelt can help by familiarizing you, your family and your advisors with the conservation real estate options available to help you meet your vision for your land. Included in this overview are three stories about how we helped local landowners conserve their property.*

## Options for Conserving your Land

### Gift of Land

- The most straightforward way to protect your land.
- Maximizes your tax benefits.
- You have the security of knowing your land will be sustainably managed by Greenbelt's professional stewardship staff.

### Conservation Restriction (CR)

- You retain ownership, and a permanent deed restriction extinguishes some or all of the development rights on your land while allowing you and all future owners to continue traditional uses, such as farming, forestry, recreation, and other uses consistent with conservation.
- Tailored to your individual & family needs and to your unique property.
- Greenbelt ensures your CR is upheld forever.

### Charitable Sale of CR or Land

- Sell your land or a CR to Greenbelt at a price lower than its market value.
- The difference between the market value and sale price is considered a charitable contribution.

### Fair Market Value Sale

- For high-priority parcels it is sometimes possible for Greenbelt and our conservation partners to purchase land and conservation restrictions at their full fair market value.

## Tax Benefits

These conservation options may offer you significant tax benefits, including: federal income tax deduction, a refundable state tax credit, property tax relief, and reduced capital gains & estate taxes.



### FARM FIELDS, SALT MARSH, WOODLANDS

## Protecting Cherished Land

When Nathaniel and Hester Clapp of Ipswich began thinking about downsizing from the gracious turn-of-the-century colonial they had purchased from Hester's parents, their goal was to remain on the property, but move to a smaller home to be constructed elsewhere on the 21-acre parcel. While the Clapps hoped a family member would move into the original home, there was no guarantee the time and location would be right for anyone in the family. That led them to think about conserving the property, in the event they decided to sell the original house, and much of the land.

Greenbelt's staff worked with Nat, Hester and a local land planner to craft a conservation plan that defined an area for the new home, maintained the setting and views from the original dwelling, and protected the integrity of the farm fields, salt marsh and woodlands.

The land planning process concluded that if developed to its maximum extent, the property could support a total of four building lots. By donating a conservation restriction (CR) that eliminated two lots, the Clapps generated a significant federal income tax deduction, and were eligible for a state tax credit, as well.

At the completion of the project, the family was comfortable in the knowledge that not only had the property been protected in a way that honored their family's history on the land, but that they had done so in a way that gave them flexibility for the future, whether the original home stays in the family, or if it is sold.

#### GOALS

Protect Land in Anticipation of Sale  
Estate Planning  
Retain Building Lot for Future Use

#### TOOLS

Conservation Restriction (CR)  
Donation

#### LANDOWNER BENEFITS

Federal Income Tax Deduction  
State Tax Credit



Conservation Plan

*"We were very pleased at how hard Greenbelt worked with us to preserve the fields, woods and marsh that our family loves and still give us flexibility to address our needs as they change over time."*

**Nathaniel and Hester Clapp**  
Landowners





## Wheeler Brook Farm | GEORGETOWN

### FARMLAND, WOODLANDS, STREAM

## Preserving the Family Farm

Bob and Barbara Morehouse spent more than 40 years growing Wheeler Brook Farm into a favorite destination where locals could pick berries and buy vegetables from the honor-system farm stand. Declining health meant the Morehouses could no longer run the farm, prompting them to meet with Greenbelt to explore conservation options. They wanted to make sure it stayed a farm, but they also needed retirement income and to leave their children a meaningful inheritance. Despite offers from developers, they held firm to the hope that they could find a way to keep their land a working farm.

An appraisal determined that the farm could be subdivided into four house lots. Bob and Barb did not want that to happen, but they needed some compensation for giving up these development rights. Greenbelt suggested that the Morehouses grant a CR that would eliminate non-agricultural development rights, but include the flexibility for the farm to expand and prosper into the future. Greenbelt would buy the CR for less than its fair market value, a “charitable sale”, allowing the Morehouses to qualify for federal and state tax benefits in addition to income from the sale. In the end, the Morehouses were able to remove a significant amount of value from their estate, which helps their heirs avoid estate taxes. Further, with the development rights removed, the land will be more affordable for a future farmer to buy.

#### GOALS

Estate Planning  
Balance Farm Preservation  
and Financial Considerations

#### TOOL

Conservation Restriction (CR)  
Charitable Sale

#### LANDOWNER BENEFITS

Federal Income Tax Deduction  
State Tax Credit  
Income from Sale

*“To preserve the land  
we love as a farm...  
that is the legacy we  
want to leave to the  
next generation.”*

**Bob Morehouse** *Farm owner*



Farm photo: Kelly Chadwick  
kellychadwickphotography.com  
Landowner & farm stand photo  
courtesy of Beth Glasmann  
marybethglasmann.com



### SCENIC WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Creating a Family Legacy

When John Morris purchased his 25-acre Newbury property, his intent was to restore the farmhouse, and perhaps create a place where his sons could build houses for themselves. Over the span of more than 20 years, John did a masterful job on the farmhouse, eliminated virtually all trace of the mink farm that had previously occupied the property, and created a lovely landscape of open fields and woodlands. Over time it became clear that his children’s plans did not include the land in Newbury, and it was then that John connected with Greenbelt, and began to think about a conservation sale.

A major consideration for John was his desire to dispose of the property in one transaction, rather than separating the house from the balance of the land. Greenbelt agreed to purchase the entire property, with the intent of selling the house privately while retaining some 18 acres as a Greenbelt reservation. Partial funding was secured from the state, as the property abutted a major state conservation area. Greenbelt found a buyer for the house, and raised the balance of the required funds from private sources. A key component of the project was John’s willingness to accept less than the full fair market value for the property, bringing the project within Greenbelt’s financial capacity.

At the dedication, the property was named the Hans Morris Reservation, for one of John’s grandsons. John and Hans had spent many hours walking the property, observing the birds and other species that made it their home. The knowledge that it was now permanently protected and open to other kids and their grandparents was very gratifying to John.

#### GOALS

Sale of Land and House  
Balance Conservation and  
Financial Considerations

#### TOOLS

Charitable Sale

#### LANDOWNER BENEFITS

Federal Income Tax Deduction  
Income from Sale



*“When I walked the new  
trail that had been blazed,  
and saw the wildlife and  
the flowers that were in  
the preserved property,  
I was very satisfied with  
what I had done...”*

**John Morris** *Landowner*

*Bobolink photo courtesy of Craig Gibson*



## Hans Morris Reservation | NEWBURY

## FIND OUT MORE!

### Greenbelt Provides:

- Free, confidential, independent advice.
- Expert knowledge of the technical aspects of land conservation, including tax & financial benefits.
- Multi-faceted solutions tailored to your unique situation and to your land.



#### CONTACT US

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*Since 1961, Greenbelt has been working to protect farmland, wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes for the benefit of all who live, work and enjoy the resources in Essex County. Our work helps to maintain clean air and water, preserve the fragile ecosystems that support our native wildlife and plants, sustain farmland to assure a safe, local food supply, and protect vulnerable scenic views and open space that contribute to our region's unique quality of life.*



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Conserving local farmland, wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes.