

# ABOUT US

Landowners in Illinois' Southern Driftless region share a deep connection to their land. Their land is special for many reasons – it filters both ground and surface water, absorbs carbon and releases the clean air we breathe, it provides fresh food for people and vital habitat for wildlife – and its beauty is unparalleled.

But how do we safeguard these places we love from future development? How do we make certain that our land legacy stands the test of time? Since 1993, the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation (JDCF), a local conservation land trust, has been dedicated to working with landowners to permanently protect land in Illinois' Southern Driftless region.

From productive farmland, forests, hilltop prairies, and wetlands, JDCF partners with landowners to establish permanent land protection measures. In doing so, we conserve native habitats, ensure working farmland protection, and steward land and water for the lasting well-being of all people and wildlife.

## LAND CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP



## ABOUT JDCF

The Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation is a local, member supported non-profit whose mission is to preserve and steward land and water for the lasting well-being of all people and wildlife.

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## PROTECTING YOUR LAND LEGACY

Permanent Land Protection Options  
for Area Landowners



[www.jdcf.org](http://www.jdcf.org)

## Here are some examples of how we protect land in perpetuity:

### Conservation Easements: A partnership for the future

A conservation easement is considered the nation's highest form of legal protection to permanently conserve land and natural resources. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust, such as JDCF. The easement limits future uses of a property to prevent activities like residential development, subdivision, and mining while allowing for traditional uses such as wildlife habitat, forest management, or agriculture.

Easements are flexible and no two conservation easements are alike; each one is tailored to a specific property. The landowner and land trust work together to identify land conservation goals and priorities.

Conservation easements are permanent and are recorded at the County Register of Deeds once they are finalized and signed by the landowner and the JDCF. From that point forward, the land:

- Remains in private ownership
- Can be sold or passed on to heirs at the discretion of the landowner
- Is not required to be open to public access
- May continue to be utilized for habitat management, farmland, forestry, or other purposes

All future owners of the land are bound by the terms of the conservation easement; it is a way to guarantee that a future owner cannot undo the habitat and/or farmland improvements a landowner has spent a lifetime establishing. JDCF is responsible for upholding the easement's conservation purpose by monitoring the land annually.

Conservation easements may have impacts on both income and estate taxes. Please reach out to JDCF at [info@jdcf.org](mailto:info@jdcf.org) or **815-858-9100** for more information.

The success of JDCF's conservation easement protections depends on the ability to monitor and enforce the terms of all conservation easements, in perpetuity. To accomplish this, JDCF has a designated and restricted Conservation Easement Stewardship and Defense Fund that is supplemented with the acceptance of every conservation easement.



## Land Purchase, Donation or Bequest

We work with willing landowners who are interested in selling, donating, or bequeathing their land to become nature reserves. These sites provide habitat for wildlife and are available for school groups for environmental education, researchers, and nature-enthusiasts. The majority of our nature reserves are available for hiking, fishing, bird-watching, snow-shoeing, and other nature-based outdoor recreation.

Gifting your property to JDCF is the simplest method of protecting your land. This method offers long-term protection for the land while relieving you of all responsibilities of ownership, including property taxes and management. In return, you gain peace of mind that good stewardship of the land will continue forever. In some cases, with the consent of the donor, lands given to the JDCF may have restrictions added to the deed to ensure protection of conservation features and resold to raise money for additional land conservation projects.

If you decide to make a gift by will, you may continue to own, manage and enjoy your land during your lifetime, while ensuring the conservation of the property thereafter. We strongly recommend that you discuss a potential gift with JDCF before including it in your will - this helps ensure that the JDCF will be able to fulfill your expectations about future use of your land.

If you are interested in selling, donating, or bequeathing your land to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, please contact JDCF Director of Land Conservation at [info@jdcf.org](mailto:info@jdcf.org) or **815-858-9100** so that we may begin charting a course toward permanently protecting the place that you love.