

NORTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT

After more than a decade, North Carolina has revived a powerful way for landowners to protect critical lands in the state and receive compensation for doing so.

WHAT IS THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT?

Since 2025, the **North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit** rewards landowners who choose to preserve farmland, forestland, wildlife habitat, and other valuable landscapes. The program provides a state income tax credit of up to 25% of the fair market value of donated land or permanent conservation easements. That means landowners can receive a tax break worth up to \$250,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for C Corporations when they permanently donate qualifying property. This credit can be used over the course of five years.

For thirty years, from 1983 to 2013, this program helped protect over 262,000 acres across our state. It was a smart investment, too: for every dollar in tax credit issued, at least six dollars' worth of critical land in North Carolina was conserved. The Credit returned in 2025 and it has already helped conserve 4,128 acres across 25 counties in North Carolina. Out of the acres conserved in 2025, 3,318 acres are forestland and farmland preservation, 801 acres are for fish and wildlife conservation, and 9 acres are preserved for historical landscape conservation.

PUBLIC BENEFITS ACCEPTED FOR THE TAX CREDIT



Forest & farmland preservation



Public trails & access



Fish & wildlife conservation



Land buffer for military activity



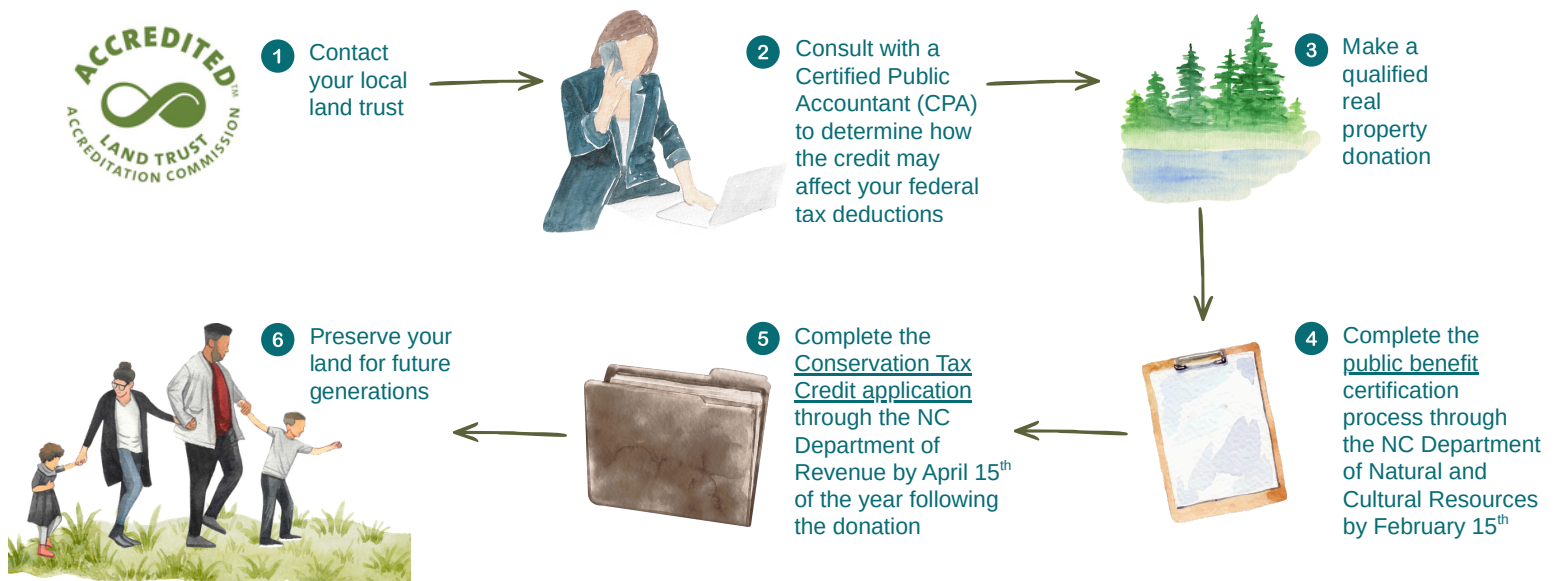
Historic landscape conservation



Floodplain protection [in certain areas](#)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A landowner interested in the tax credit begins by contacting a local land trust that's qualified to accept land donations and can assist them with the process. Land must be certified by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) that it provides a public benefit before the NC Department of Revenue (NCDOR) can approve a tax credit. Once this certification is complete, a landowner must submit the required documentation to the NCDOR by April 15 the year following the donation to receive the credit.



IMPORTANT NOTES

All approved applications from the same year are reviewed at the same time — so it's not first come, first serve. However, if the total amount of tax credits requested that year exceeds \$5 million — the maximum amount the government can provide credit for — each person will receive a smaller share based on how much they requested. Donations of farmland and forestland are given priority for the first \$3.25 million in tax credits each year.

It's essential to note that while the program **cannot** guarantee the exact percentage of tax credit a landowner will receive, since this depends on the number of applicants, every certified donation will be awarded some level of credit. **Protecting land is a reward in itself.** You're preserving something real, lasting, and beneficial to your community and our state for generations to come.

The Conservation Tax Credit is a chance to do something big — for your land, for your family, and for North Carolina. Let's make the most of it.