

Conservation easements in Tennessee



The Myricks' easement protects 80 acres in Shady Valley ©Byron Jorjorian

Shady Valley, East Tennessee

PUBLIC BENEFITS

- Conserves wildlife habitat
- Preserves open space
- Prevents subdivision
- Preserves farmland and area economy
- Maintains character of rural community
- Buffers John R. Dickey Birch Branch Sanctuary and Cherokee National Forest

LANDOWNER BENEFITS

- Maintains farming tradition
- Keeps farm intact
- Expands farming operations
- Preserves options for children and grandchildren to farm

In 2004, Tim and Teresa Myrick of Oak Ridge purchased 80 acres in Shady Valley in East Tennessee and pledged a perpetual conservation easement on the ecologically significant tract of land. Shady Valley shelters the last of Tennessee's mountain bogs, and The Nature Conservancy owns 16.8 acres of ridge top here next to the John R. Dickey Birch Branch Sanctuary and the Myricks' land. Their conservation easement will not only protect the entire Birch Branch watershed but will also provide a place for regional troops of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America to use for camping and conservation projects.

“Having a tool like a **conservation easement** allows us to still be able to **use and enjoy our property**, allow **worthwhile public use** of those lands, while at the same time ensuring its **long-term protection for generations to come.**”

– Tim Myrick, landowner

TENNESSEE AT A GLANCE

13,177	acres under conservation easement across the state
38	Tennessee landowners who have placed conservation easements on their land
17,800	acres of farmland lost to development between 1992 and 1997

ABOUT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are one of the most powerful, effective tools available for the conservation of private lands. Their use has successfully protected millions of acres of wildlife habitat and open space, and hundreds of miles of rivers, all while keeping property in private hands and generating significant public benefits.

Often, some of the most ecologically significant lands and waters in the country are those found in rural and agricultural landscapes. Easements have been instrumental in preserving these landscapes, from family farms to working ranches and timberlands. Between 1992 and 1997, more than 11 million acres of rural land in the United States were converted to developed use – an area five times the size of Yellowstone National Park. As people struggle to keep family farms and ranches together in the face of steep taxes and unpredictable markets, conservation easements are often the tool of choice.

In Tennessee, easements have helped preserve family farms and protected forested areas from development.

Public benefits of conservation easements

- Protect water quality
- Conserve wildlife habitat
- Preserve open space
- Preserve farmland, ranchland, timberland
- Maintain character of rural communities
- Buffer public lands
- Maintain landscapes for tourism
- Require less in public services, generate more in local revenues