

Next Steps



Mountain Bogs, Bog Turtles, & Conservation Easements

LANDOWNER FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS

If you have a wetland or suspect bog turtles are present,
contact a land trust listed below to:

- Ask questions.
- Learn about options.
- Decide what works for your land and family.

Who to Contact

Local land trusts in the mountains:

- **Virginia** - Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Blue Ridge Land Conservancy; The Nature Conservancy-VA
- **North Carolina** - Conserving Carolina; Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy; Blue Ridge Conservancy
- **Georgia** - Georgia Land Trust; The Nature Conservancy-GA
- **South Carolina** - Upstate Forever; Naturaland Trust
- **Tennessee** - The Land Trust for Tennessee; Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy; The Nature Conservancy-TN

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - county office

State Wildlife Agencies

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) - Ecological Services field office

What Other Species Will Benefit?



Monarch
Butterfly



Woodcock



Golden-winged
Warbler



Bog Lemming



Red
Salamander



Gray's Lily



ARC
Amphibian and Reptile
Conservancy



Find out more
ARCProtects.org/bogturtles

Working lands can work for bog turtles, too

Conservation easements can help protect your land, your livelihood and mountain bog habitat for future generations.

What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that:

- Permanently limits certain types of development on private land.
- Protects wetlands, streams and wildlife habitat.
- Allows land to remain privately owned and managed.

Easements are tailored to each property and landowner.

How do conservation easements benefit landowners?

Landowners who place conservation easements may receive:

- Financial compensation or cost-share support.
- Tax benefits (depending on situation).
- Longterm certainty about land use rules.
- Help with wetland and pasture improvements.

Participation is voluntary.

Easements do not:

- Give the government ownership of your land.
- Require public access.
- End farming, grazing or forestry.

Landowners continue to own, use, sell or pass on their property.

Why do conservation easements matter for bog turtles?

- Bog turtles need long-term protection of wetlands.
- Conservation easements keep these areas healthy and productive over time.
- Easements conserve bog turtle habitat while keeping land in private ownership.

Thank you for helping bog turtles!



Easements and the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Conservation easements can provide regulatory certainty if bog turtles are present.
- Many easements are paired with voluntary agreements that clarify what landowners can continue to do.
- Working with conservation partners early can make things simpler, not harder.

Summary

- **Conservation easements are voluntary.**
- **They keep land private, productive and protected.**
- **They are a powerful tool for conserving bog turtles while supporting landowners.**

This brochure lists examples of partners and is not exhaustive. It is for general information only and is not legal or tax advice.

How do easements work with working lands?

Many bog turtle easements:

- Allow continued grazing, haying and pasture use.
- Support wetland-friendly practices like fencing, off-stream water or invasive plant control.
- Are designed to fit existing land use, not replace it.

In many cases, good farming practices and bog turtle conservation go hand in hand.

Is an easement the right choice for every property?

Not always.

- Easements work best where landowners want to keep land undeveloped long-term.
- Each site is evaluated based on habitat, land use and landowner goals.
- There is no obligation to enroll.

A conversation does not commit you to anything.

Who typically holds easements?

- Land trusts
- State wildlife agencies
- USDA conservation programs

These groups work with landowners, not over them.

What do land trusts do?

Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that help landowners protect land while keeping it in private ownership.

They typically:

- Work with landowners to explore conservation options.
- Help design and hold conservation easements tailored to your goals.
- Coordinate with Natural Resources Conservation Service, wildlife agencies and other partners.
- Provide or connect landowners to funding, tax information and technical help.
- Conduct periodic visits to ensure easement terms and conditions are being met.

Land trusts do not regulate land, enforce the ESA or tell you how to farm. Their role is to support landowners who choose conservation.

Please contact biologists at your state wildlife management agency if you think you have seen a bog turtle, own a wetland that you think may have bog turtles or are interested in restoring or protecting a wetland on your property. Supporting groups that protect bog turtles like Defenders of Wildlife is another way to help!