



Planning Your Legacy

with



**Woodwell Climate
Research Center**





Dear friends,

Woodwell Climate Research Center was founded on the bold belief that a healthy environment is the birthright of every human being. For more than 40 years, that vision has guided our work at the intersection of climate, people, and nature. I am deeply grateful for the community of supporters who make Woodwell's work possible. Together, we advance the science the world needs to understand a changing planet and to build a safer, more hopeful future.

As climate challenges grow ever more urgent, so does our responsibility to ensure that our work continues well into the future. Legacy gifts are a powerful way to do just that. Directed to Woodwell's endowment, these gifts help secure the future of our work, nurture the next generation of climate leaders, and ensure that today's commitment becomes tomorrow's progress.

By including Woodwell Climate in your estate plans, you create a legacy of hope—a gift that believes in science, invests in people, and helps protect our shared home. Together, we can leave a legacy that safeguards both our planet and future generations.

With gratitude,

Max Holmes

R. Max Holmes
President and CEO
George Perkins Marsh Society Member



After living in Woods Hole as a child and being enriched by this scientific community, I returned to the area five years ago—a move that fostered my reconnection to science and to Woodwell. It seemed only natural to create a legacy gift and join the George Perkins Marsh Society to help continue George Woodwell’s lifelong commitment to the protection of the Earth. I also knew that my gift would go to the Center’s endowment and permanently support climate science. This is especially important since I have spent so much of my life educating children about climate change and resilience. They deserve the best future we can give them.

— Genie Stevens
Falmouth, MA



Known as America’s first environmentalist, George Perkins Marsh was a 19th-century scholar, diplomat, and naturalist whose vision continues to inspire. His groundbreaking book, *Man and Nature*, helped lay the foundation for forest reserves and the national forest system, and it remains a cornerstone in the history of the conservation and environmental movements. Woodwell Climate gratefully recognizes those who make a legacy gift by offering lifetime membership in the George Perkins Marsh Society.

Benefits and privileges of membership

As a member of the George Perkins Marsh Society, you play a vital role in ensuring Woodwell’s climate science continues to protect our planet for generations to come. All legacy gifts are directed to the Center’s endowment, providing permanent support for essential climate research. Membership includes these benefits:

- Member recognition in the annual Impact Report
- Periodic special communications from Woodwell
- Invitations to private events
- A dedicated staff liaison to assist you when needed

For many types of gifts, we require only a simple written statement of your commitment to initiate your George Perkins Marsh Society membership. (See end of this brochure.)

If you have already included Woodwell in your estate plan, please let us know so we may offer you membership in the George Perkins Marsh Society.

Examples of the most popular legacy gifts are described in the following pages. Many people make these to honor a loved one and to show what's important to them.

Bequests

A bequest is a gift made by naming Woodwell Climate Research Center a beneficiary in your will. This is a simple and popular method of partnering in the Center's future. If you already have a valid, up-to-date will, your attorney can add Woodwell Climate as a beneficiary through a simple amendment to your will called a codicil. For a straightforward bequest, we suggest the following language: "I give and bequeath ___% of my estate" [or, "the sum of ___ dollars"] to Woodwell Climate Research Center, Inc., a nonprofit corporation located in Falmouth, Massachusetts, for its endowment." Bequests of any size are deeply appreciated.

Why give in your will?

- Continue to use assets or property during your lifetime
- Potentially reduce your estate tax burden
- Leave a lasting legacy to Woodwell Climate

Common gifted assets in wills and trusts

- Financial accounts
- Real estate
- Vehicles
- Brokerage accounts
- Crypto and NFTs
- Personal property

Don't have a will?

You don't need to be wealthy to leave a bequest, but you do need a will. Woodwell Climate partners with FreeWill to offer an online estate planning tool that makes it easy and 100% free to make your plan. In as little as 20 minutes, you can help support our mission for years to come. Visit www.freewill.com/woodwellclimate to learn more.

Revocable Living Trusts

A revocable living trust is an estate planning tool that can be used to distribute your possessions to people and organizations when you pass. To take full advantage of your revocable living trust, you need to transfer your assets and property to the trust during your lifetime. Including Woodwell Climate in a revocable living trust works in much the same manner as a bequest. An attorney can assist you in tailoring the language to your needs and wishes. We also offer the ability to create a free revocable living trust online with FreeWill. To begin, visit www.freewill.com/trust/woodwellclimate.

Why create a revocable living trust?

- **To avoid probate**
Avoid costly fees and delays by allowing your assets to be distributed without going through probate.
- **To protect your privacy**
Leave your assets to your heirs without subjecting them to public proceedings.
- **To make a plan together**
Create a trust with your spouse or partner so you can protect each other, as well as your children and other beneficiaries.

How is a revocable living trust different from a will?

A revocable living trust and a last will & testament are similar in some ways, but they have important differences.

	Last will & testament	Revocable living trust
Distributes assets after a person passes	yes	yes
Avoids probate	no	yes
Private record	no	yes
Requires little maintenance	yes	no
Appoint guardians for children and pets	yes	yes
Specify funeral instructions	yes	yes

Beneficiary Designations: QCDs, DAFs, Life Insurance, and more

Did you know?

- Having a valid will in place isn't enough.
- Assets not included in your will are called non-probate assets. They include IRAs, 401(k)s, donor-advised funds, pensions, life insurance policies, and certain bank and brokerage accounts.
- If beneficiaries are properly set for these non-probate assets, ownership can transfer faster than your assets that must go through probate.

Why beneficiary designations are so powerful

Designating Woodwell Climate a beneficiary may avoid unwanted taxes for your heirs while creating a significant charitable impact. You can designate Woodwell Climate as a beneficiary for a percentage or a specific dollar amount.

Charitable benefits

- Receive an estate tax charitable deduction
- Reduce the burden of taxes on your family
- Continue to use assets or property during your lifetime
- Create a legacy of perpetual support for climate science with Woodwell Climate

Common gifted assets for beneficiaries

- IRA
- 401(k)
- Life insurance
- Joint real estate
- Joint bank accounts
- Joint property ownership

Life Insurance

When the original purpose for a life insurance policy no longer applies—such as providing for children who are now grown or providing financial security for a spouse—your policy can become a powerful and simple way to support Woodwell Climate. There are three ways to give life insurance to Woodwell:

- Name Woodwell Climate a beneficiary of the policy. This gift is as simple as updating your beneficiary designation form with the policy holder.

- Donate a paid-up life insurance policy to Woodwell Climate, naming Woodwell both irrevocable owner and beneficiary. When Woodwell is named the owner and beneficiary of an existing policy, you are generally able to deduct an amount approximately equal to the current cash value of the policy for income tax purposes in the year ownership is transferred.
- Purchase a new paid-up life insurance policy and name Woodwell Climate as irrevocable owner and beneficiary.

Charitable Gift Annuities

If you're looking for a way to maintain your current lifestyle, increase your financial security, and lower your taxes, consider creating a charitable gift annuity. Support our cause while receiving fixed payments for as long as you live.

Benefits

- Receive an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of your gift.
- Annuity payments are guaranteed for life, backed by a reserve and the assets of our organization
- Annuity payments are partially tax free, making them more valuable than fully taxable income of the same size

How it works

1. Set up an annuity contract with our organization and transfer cash or securities as outlined in the agreement. Woodwell's minimum level for this type of gift is \$25,000.
2. We invest the assets and pay you a fixed income for life, with the amount depending on the size of the transfer and the age of the annuitant(s).
3. The remaining funds pass to Woodwell when the contract ends. These funds are designated for our endowment, creating your legacy of perpetual support for climate science.

Charitable Remainder Trusts

A charitable remainder trust is a planned giving option that allows donors to make a significant charitable impact while also providing financial benefits to themselves or their beneficiaries.

This type of trust is an irrevocable arrangement in which a donor transfers assets into a trust that is managed and invested by a trustee. The trust pays income to designated beneficiaries for a set number of years or for their lifetime, after which the remaining assets are distributed to charity.

Benefits

- Reduce or eliminate capital gains taxes
- Retain an income stream for yourself or beneficiaries
- Create a lasting legacy that supports our mission

How it works

1. Transfer assets (such as cash, securities, or real estate) into a trust, which is managed by a trustee.
2. The trust pays income to designated beneficiaries (such as you, your spouse, or other individuals) for a set number of years or for their lifetime.
3. At the end of the trust term, the remaining assets are distributed to one or more charitable organizations.
4. Receive an income tax deduction for the present value of the charitable remainder interest in the trust.
5. Potentially avoid or reduce capital gains taxes on appreciated assets that are transferred into the trust.

What is the double tax advantage?

- When you leave your IRA to a qualified charity like Woodwell, the charity receives the full value of the IRA without paying income tax.
- In addition, the IRA's value is removed from your taxable estate, potentially reducing or eliminating estate taxes.

This combination of avoiding both income tax and estate tax is often referred to as the “double tax advantage” of naming a charitable organization the beneficiary of your IRA.

Charitable Lead Trusts

A charitable lead trust is a type of trust that allows you to make a charitable gift while retaining some control over the assets during your lifetime.

This type of trust makes annual payments to a charity for a set number of years, after which the remaining assets are distributed to non-charitable beneficiaries that you choose (many people choose their family members).

Benefits

- Receive an immediate income tax deduction for the value of your contributions
- Retain some control over the assets donated
- Provide for your family's financial security
- Create a lasting legacy that supports our mission

How it works

1. Create a trust and fund it with assets, such as cash, securities, or real estate.
2. The trust makes annual payments to Woodwell for a set number of years, based on a predetermined formula or percentage of the trust assets.
3. At the end of the charitable period, the remaining assets are distributed to non-charitable beneficiaries, chosen by you, such as your family members.
4. Receive an immediate tax deduction for the present value of the charitable payments made by the trust.

Example: Assume you have an IRA and a savings account each valued at \$10,000. If you leave the \$10K savings account to an individual beneficiary such as your child and the \$10K IRA to Woodwell, each will receive the full \$10K. However, if you instead leave the \$10K savings account to Woodwell and the \$10K IRA to an individual beneficiary such as your child, your child will end up with less than \$10K since income tax must be paid on IRA distributions received by an individual beneficiary. A qualified charity would receive 100% of your IRA distribution tax-free.

Real Estate

Making a gift of real estate to charity may be an appealing option for property owners with appreciated value, as it helps avoid capital gains tax liabilities. Additionally, it benefits individuals seeking to simplify estate planning, reduce estate tax liability, and relieve themselves from ownership expenses and maintenance burdens. Contact us to discuss your interest in donating real estate.

Remainder Interests in Property

Remainder interests in property are a type of legacy giving arrangement that allow an individual to donate their home or other real property to a charitable organization while retaining the right to live in the property for the rest of their life. It is ideal for homeowners who wish to make a significant charitable gift while still enjoying the property's use and avoiding the complexities and costs associated with transferring ownership during their lifetime.

Please refer to Woodwell Climate's Gift Acceptance Policy for additional details at woodwellclimate.org/give/gift-acceptance-policy.

We're here to help you meet your goals!

Like any financial decision, a legacy gift must be chosen and shaped with care. Our team would be happy to speak with you in confidence about your giving goals, with no obligation.

Contact

Beth Bagley
Senior Director of Legacy Giving
bbagley@woodwellclimate.org
508-444-1517

This brochure provides information of a general nature only and is not intended as legal or financial advice. The services of a financial adviser, attorney, or other estate planning professional should be obtained when considering any type of legacy gift.

Johnny with his daughters Calais (left) and Land (right)



As a Board member of Woodwell Climate and the founder of Fishpond, a world-leading outdoor products brand, I have become deeply focused on our planet's urgent need to slow and reverse warming trends that are affecting global communities—and the species that depend on the rich biodiversity of the places we call home. Making a legacy gift to Woodwell on behalf of my family is our way of investing in the long-term health of ecosystems, not only in our own backyards, but around the world. Through the George Perkins Marsh Society, Woodwell offers a meaningful and lasting way to incorporate climate action into estate planning, and I hope our commitment encourages others to join in supporting a healthier future for our planet.

— Johnny Le Coq
Silverthorne, CO

Is my estate big enough to leave a gift?

Yes! Gifts of any size are deeply appreciated. Many people choose to leave a percentage of their estate, which scales up or down with your estate size.

How will my gift be used?

We encourage you to direct bequests or beneficiary designations to Woodwell Climate’s Endowment Fund to ensure your gift will perpetually support climate science.

Does it cost anything to make a will?

We’ve partnered with FreeWill to help you make a will at no cost to you. You can use this to complete your plans, or you may choose to use the same tools to get your affairs in order before visiting an attorney (who is likely to have a fee associated with finalizing your plans).

How do I select an executor or personal representative?

An executor or personal representative is the person who will manage and distribute your estate in accordance with your will. An executor’s work will be monitored by the Probate Court. An executor does not need to be an expert in finances, probate law or taxes (they should hire experts in those fields to assist them). Most people will name an adult child, another close heir, or a financial advisor. If possible, name someone who lives nearby and who is familiar with your financial matters. That will make it easier to do chores like collecting mail, selling assets and finding important records and papers.

Can my gift remain anonymous?

Yes. However, knowing in advance about your intentions is very helpful to our staff. Sharing information with us about your gift also provides you with a deeper connection to Woodwell and the benefits of membership in the George Perkins Marsh Society.



George Perkins Marsh Society Membership Form

The George Perkins Marsh Society is an opportunity to join others who have made a charitable contribution to Woodwell Climate Research Center through a bequest or estate plan. Remembering the Center through a legacy gift ensures that our climate science research will remain viable for years to come while advancing your own financial plan. Our work, and the lives you touch, can be your legacy.

If you have made a commitment, please fill out the following information so we may honor your gift.

May we list you as a George Perkins Marsh Society member in our publications? (magazine and website)

- Yes, I/we would like to be listed. **Please list as:** _____
- I/we wish to remain anonymous.

Type of legacy gift (optional)

- Will Charitable Remainder Trust Charitable Gift Annuity
- Retirement Plan/IRA Living Trust Other
- Life Insurance Beneficiary Other Trust

Please add any other details you wish to share: _____

I/we anticipate our future gift will be valued at approximately (optional): _____

Name and phone/email of Financial Advisor or Executor: _____

Your information will be kept strictly confidential and used for planning purposes only.

This form is non-binding and does not constitute a legal promise of any future donation. We understand your estate plans may change.

Purpose of the legacy gift to the Center

Your gift will be directed to the Center’s endowment to keep climate science strong in perpetuity, unless indicated below.

- I have a specific purpose in mind that I would like to discuss with you. Please contact me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Email: _____

Please detach, seal, and mail this form when completed. Thank you.

Contact Beth Bagley at 508-444-1517 or bbagley@woodwellclimate.org for more information.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



149 Woods Hole Road
Falmouth, MA, 02540-1644

Attn: Beth Bagley

Woodwell Climate Research Center conducts science for solutions at the nexus of climate, people, and nature—solutions that are urgently needed to propel us toward a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable world. For more than 40 years, Woodwell has partnered with a global network of communities and leaders, working to turn knowledge into action for just, meaningful impact to address the climate crisis.

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