

Guidelines and Considerations for
Acceptance of Land Gifts and Conservation Restrictions
Grafton Land Trust (original March 1993)

Our mission is to preserve open space, not necessarily to hold land. With that in mind, acceptance should be selective and consistent with measurement against significant criteria.

- A. If other potential recipients such as the Town, Conservation Commission, a homeowners' association or the developer can receive/hold open space and/or a gifted CR, then the Land Trust should seek to hold the gift in its name only if:
- a. The land is contiguous to and enhances existing holdings.
 - b. We can manage the gift more effectively, e.g. a sensitive habitat.
 - c. If the gift is a unique piece, compatible with Trust goals, e.g. a piece which could be held for the Heritage Corridor.

Certainly if land is wet, and already protected by the Hatch Act from development, we would need very special reasons to consider accepting ownership. Similarly, when another recipient can hold CR's or land, we should not seek ownership unless our ownership has a unique effect on the piece in question or on other holdings we may have or seek to acquire.

- B. When land is not potentially held by other recipients, the acceptance of the gift (or acquisition by the Trust) should be based on the goals and objectives of the Trust. Simply to accept a gift to afford the donor a tax benefit, meet the flexible development by-law, or memorial to his/her family, is not in itself sufficient reason for the Trust to accept a gift and the perpetual responsibility that goes with ownership.

Selective, consistent, and objective criteria will result in the most desirable holdings with the obligations of ownership offset by the desirability of the holding to the maximum extent.

A list of guidelines and considerations:

- Meet mission and goals of Trust – Exhibit A to Articles of Amendment.
- Location in town, or out of town
- Proximity to existing GLT land.
- Size of property
- Quality of habitat – trees, meadows, etc.
- Soil quality
- Suitability for public use
- Deed restrictions
- Clear title and free of environmental liabilities
- Quantity and quality of maintenance required – cost in time and money.
- Public liability
- Cost to GLT – how much \$
- Endowment or fund for maintenance
- Accessibility
- Possible expansion of holding
- Use as leverage for future acquisitions
- Suitable for Stewardship Program
- Are there other potential recipients?