



National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

National Park Legacies

Gift and Financial Planning Information

Summer 2011

A Stitch in Time

We are all familiar with the old adage, “A stitch in time saves nine.” There are many areas of life where considerable time and expense can be saved when important issues are addressed in a timely fashion.

This is particularly true with regard to long-range financial and estate planning. It is not unusual for people to spend the better part of a lifetime accumulating a nest egg, then fail to ensure these assets are well-managed and ultimately distributed as they desire.

Believe it or not, studies reveal that approximately fifty percent of Americans do not even have a valid will, much less have other plans that help guide the management and distribution of their assets.

Why wait?

It is easy to understand why many choose to procrastinate planning for the future. The process inevitably involves consideration of our mortality, acknowledging differences in the circumstances of loved ones, the need for spouses to jointly consider their wishes, and other factors.

There are, however, certain costs associated with the failure to plan. Without adequate plans in place, state and federal laws will be applied, which involve all-purpose

plans with no consideration of minimizing expenses. It will be pure coincidence if these plans actually reflect your wishes in the end.

Start with a will

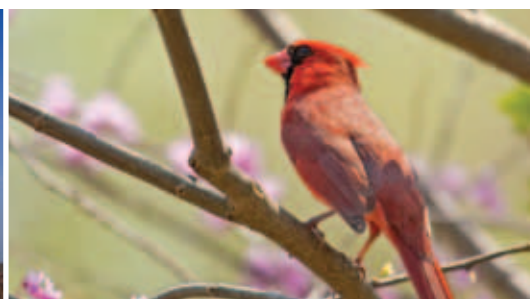
Creating a will allows you to plan for the future well-being of your loved ones. In your will, you can make provisions for a spouse, child, grandchild or other loved ones and friends. You can also include gifts to organizations that share your wishes to help and protect the parks for future generations, such as National Parks Conservation Association.

Plan now

There is no time like the present when it comes to creating or updating your estate plans. Experience the peace of mind that can come from taking control of the future in ways that will benefit you, your loved ones and charitable organizations you wish to support now and in the future.

In this issue of *National Park Legacies* we offer some steps that can help you take control of the planning process. We hope you find this information helpful as you plan for your future well-being and that of your loved ones.

Above: Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming © David Sucsy/ISTOCKPHOTO. Below left: Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina © William Britten/ISTOCKPHOTO. Below right: Northern Cardinal © BIGSTOCKPHOTO



Inside:

Make your wishes known

Mather Legacy Society
members: Donald Gelfand and
Katharine Messenger

Take These Steps

Think of your estate plan as an instruction manual for those who will one day distribute your assets. To be effective, your wishes should be expressed clearly and concisely, leaving no room for confusion. A poorly designed or ambiguous plan can result in unnecessary costs and delays.

Here are a few ways to help accelerate the distribution of property while minimizing expenses associated with the probate process.

1. List the people you wish to remember.
2. Decide how you want your property distributed among them.
3. Appoint a guardian for any minor children.
4. Name an executor (or personal representative) to handle the settlement of your estate.
5. Consider a living trust.
6. Make an appointment with your attorney.
7. Have a valid and up-to-date will prepared.
8. Plan for incapacity.
9. Review beneficiary designations of life insurance policies and retirement plans.
10. After providing for loved ones, remember charitable organizations you care about.



Start today

The relatively small investment of time needed to create an estate plan seems even smaller when you consider the benefits.

Pausing now and taking the time to look ahead can help prevent confusion concerning your intentions as well as unnecessary delays in implementing them. Please let us know if we can help you and your advisors as you consider the charitable dimensions of your plans.

Above: Bull Moose, © Paul Tessier/ISTOCKPHOTO. Below: Trunk Bay, Virgin Islands National Park © Lit Liu/BIGSTOCKPHOTO.



Add a Charitable Dimension

There are many ways to include charitable gifts as part of your estate plans. Here are examples of the various forms a charitable gift can take:

Fixed amount. A specific dollar amount may be given. This can be useful when you wish to fund a particular need.

Percentage. Providing that a certain percentage of your estate be used for charitable purposes allows your gift to remain in proportion to the size of your estate.

Specific property. It can be smart tax planning to leave certain properties of value to charitable recipients.

Contingent. This gift only occurs under certain circumstances, such as the prior death of a loved one. NPCA is often named as a contingent beneficiary to receive property when heirs are not there to do so.

Residue. This is a gift of what remains in an estate after all other distributions have been fulfilled.

Whatever form you prefer for your gifts, make certain the correct legal names of the intended recipients are used in order to avoid confusion and delay.

The purpose of this publication is to provide general gift, estate, and financial planning information. It is not intended as legal, accounting, or other professional advice. For assistance in planning charitable gifts with tax and other financial implications, the services of appropriate advisors should be obtained. Consult an attorney for advice if your plans require revision of a will or other legal document. Tax deductions vary based on applicable federal discount rates, which can change on a monthly basis. Some opportunities may not be available in all states. ©MMXI RFSCO, Inc. All Rights Reserved. NFAXX-11



Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado
© Keith Kiska/ISTOCKPHOTO

Gift Planning Pointers

- If you don't have a will, no cause or organization can receive any property you may have intended for charitable use.
- Careful planning can help you make charitable gifts without sacrificing the future security of your loved ones.
- Charitable gifts can serve to eliminate tax on a portion of your income.
- Gifts of securities and other appropriate property that has increased in value can eliminate capital gains tax.
- Special benefits can result from gifts of retirement plan assets.
- Memorial gifts to honor persons special to you can be set up in a will or living trust.
- Redirecting life insurance proceeds for charitable purposes can be a convenient way to make a generous, cost-effective gift.

Couple's Support Starts Small, Grows to Gift of a Lifetime



**Donald Gelfand
and Katharine
Messenger**

The desire to support National Parks Conservation Association started early for Donald Gelfand and Katharine Messenger.

While they were dating, the couple went cross-country skiing in Durango, Colo., and took a side trip to Mesa Verde National Park. At the Spruce Tree House ruin, where they were among very few visitors that day, the park ranger treated them to a private tour and talk.

The two were sold on the importance of NPCA. After they were married, a road trip from Detroit to Phoenix—with stops at every national park along the way—convinced them that their support was important to the preservation of our national parks.

“We were impressed by the diversity of the parks, the enthusiasm and helpfulness of the staff and the stunning beauty of these places,” said Don.

“We started putting some money in the contribution boxes in the visitor centers, and thought there must be a better way to support the national park system. We then found out about NPCA and have been enthusiastic supporters since that time.” They recently established a charitable gift annuity with

NPCA which provides them with a supplement to their income each year.

Don and Kathy have decided to continue their support of NPCA with a gift from their estate. “We both have small families,” said Kathy, “and when thinking about what to do with our estate, decided that we wanted to make bequests to effective organizations whose goals and activities we strongly support. One of those is NPCA.”

Of their membership in the Mather Legacy Society, Don said, “We are glad to be a part of a group that understands how important NPCA is, and we have enjoyed the events to which we have been invited.”

“I think it’s important during the current anti-government trend that NPCA exists outside of Washington with field offices in different areas of the country, and takes a boots-on-the-ground approach,” said Kathy. “Advocacy positions are well supported by research and have been effective in reducing threats to National Park sites such as in Manassas, Va. with development, Yellowstone and the winter snow mobile noise, and the Grand Canyon with flight noise and mining.”

Kathy and Don believe it’s important for others to know that NPCA is a long-standing organization that takes an active role in advocating for the parks.



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NPCA's Recommended Bequest Language

Including NPCA in your will is among the easiest ways to offer support of NPCA's work for years to come. NPCA's Board of Directors has suggested the following language to include NPCA as a beneficiary of a will or trust: “I give _____ (specific amount, percentage, or residuary share) to the National Parks Conservation Association, having its principal offices at 777 6th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-3723. (Federal Tax Identification Number 53-0225165).” If you already have a will, you can have your attorney add a codicil to include NPCA.

Below: Olympic National Park, Washington State
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