

# Stages of Land Conservation

## Pre-planning

At this stage you are interested in land conservation strategies (e.g., acquisition, conservation easements, deed restrictions) as a tool to support your drinking water protection goals but haven't started taking concrete steps towards this goal.

## Planning

At this stage you are developing a land conservation strategy and preparing to implement that strategy. This phase could involve articulating community goals, completing community outreach, identifying the area you want to protect, selecting the land conservation tools that would work best for the project, building relationships with land owners, developing readiness of the community to complete a transaction (i.e. completing rate studies and updating audits), bringing on partners, and developing funding strategies.

## Implementation

At this stage you are implementing your land conservation strategy. This phase may involve steps around acquiring the property interest including completing appraisals and due diligence, working with bridge buyers, drafting conservation easements or deed restrictions, and applying for funding. Note: Due diligence refers to investigating any legal barriers, unknown risks or encumbrances (e.g. liens), land use restrictions, or other legal/ regulatory restrictions that could interfere with intended conservation methods (acquisition, easements, deed restrictions).

## Post-acquisition

This stage occurs after you have acquired the property interest. The actions taken at this stage will vary based on the type of property interest, the community goals, and specific property, but may include developing or updating a forest or watershed management plan, implementing restoration or stewardship strategies to improve or maintain watershed health, managing public access, maintaining roads or other infrastructure, implementing revenue raising activities, or monitoring compliance with conservation easement terms.