



International Dark-Sky Association
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Leave a Nighttime Environmental Legacy

Your thoughtfully planned estate gift can help in a variety of ways to make a lasting contribution toward building awareness of the adverse problems and environmental impacts that have the potential to destroy our nighttime view of the universe in which we live. The effect of your gift will go to ensure this nightscape is protected for generations to come. Doing some good for a great cause is personal, planned and purposeful. Making a long-term investment while leaving a legacy is an opportunity to embark on a personal journey that passes on your values to future generations.

What is Planned Giving?

Gift Planning is an exciting way to fulfill philanthropic goals, because planning a gift through your estate provides not only a legacy of support for IDA but also multiple financial and tax benefits to you and your family. Many people consider naming the International Dark-Sky Association in a charitable bequest, or will. Others consider investment strategies that provide income and tax benefits during their lifetimes. We have an increasing number of members and friends who have decided to create a permanent legacy that creates a lasting impact on all who carry forth the vision and the IDA mission. They now are benefiting from life income gifts, gift annuities and other plans, which provide wonderful benefits from increased income to generous tax savings. These caring benefactors also have the satisfaction of knowing that they have helped secure a nighttime future for generations.

Planned Giving is making a gift or donation of estate assets to a charitable, non-profit organization, such as IDA. It can and should be part of the donor's overall estate plan.

What are the benefits to the Donor?

- The satisfaction of truly making a difference by supporting IDA in its work.
- It makes possible a more significant gift than might otherwise be possible.
- It establishes a living memorial for you or for someone special.
- It can reduce federal estate taxes and probate expenses.
- It can shelter current income through substantial tax deductions.
- It may provide retirement income.

What are the benefits to IDA?

- It helps greatly in meeting IDA's funding needs to meet its goals.
- It helps in planning for the future of the organization.
- It helps build IDA's endowment fund to insure fund growth and expansion.
- It helps greatly in IDA's effort to preserve dark skies, and to insure better vision at night, and in preserving and sustaining a viable nighttime environment for all.

Types of Gifts

- A cash or asset donation of any size, at any time.
- A Bequest, usually a provision in one's will.
- Life Insurance. You may wish to name IDA as a beneficiary of an existing or new life insurance policy.
- Appreciated Property. This can be securities, real property, or personal property, which has been owned for at least one year and which has increased in value since it was acquired. It can be given outright or as the funding method for a lifetime income plan.
- Charitable Trust. This is a trust that could provide income to the donor for a period of time. After this period of time, the trust matures and the remaining assets go to IDA, the beneficiary.
- Gift Annuity. This is a lifetime contract between the donor and IDA, one that is relatively easy to understand and establish. It is an irrevocable transfer of cash or assets to IDA and in return the donor receives a guaranteed lifetime income of a fixed amount per year.

Some definitions and a few details:

Asset - Anything of value that you own, cash, bank accounts, securities, personal property, real estate, literally nearly anything of value.

Estate - All property, real or personal, that you own; often used to denote that property at the time of death.

Will - This is a legal document that expresses one's will or intent for the distribution of one's estate, property, and assets after one's death. A Will is one of the most

important documents you should have. It provides for the disposition of all of your assets accumulated during your lifetime. It contributes to the financial security of your beneficiaries. It can benefit the causes you believe in and can make a significant difference in assuring that you have helped.

Bequest - This is a gift made through a Will. Bequests can be of many forms. They can be designated for special purposes or a general bequest. Your legal or financial advisors can help you decide on the best routes to meet your desires and needs.

How to make a bequest to IDA: Simply include a provision in your Will specifying the type and amount you would like to give. It can include nearly anything: money, bank accounts, securities, real estate, or personal property of any kind. While a Will can be quite simple, it is a legal document and it is important to have the help of your attorney in preparing it.

Life Insurance - Two of the main reasons for this approach are first; to make a substantial gift, and second, to find a new use of an existing policy that now longer is serving its original purpose. Such gifts are an increasingly popular form of gift for those wanting to make a meaningful difference, whether it is an existing policy or a new one created for just this purpose.

You can make IDA the owner of the policy, allowing an immediate tax deduction, or you can make IDA the beneficiary of the policy (you get no immediate tax deduction, but will qualify later for such a charitable deduction). Some have made a life insurance donation in honor of or in memory of a loved one. Since the deferred gift is large in comparison to the premiums made, it can be a viable alternative to an outright gift.

Gifts of Appreciated Property - This is donating possessions that have increased in value over the years, two principal ones being real estate and securities. Tax laws offer special incentives for such gifts. In general, you can receive an income tax deduction for the full market value of the asset as of the date of the transfer, you pay no capital gains tax on the appreciation of the asset, and you do not need to use cash in order to make a significant donation. In the case of real estate, it is possible to while still retaining the right to reside in and use the property for your lifetime.

A second good reason for this type of gift is that it is a way of donating relatively large assets to IDA, larger than the usual cash donation. Any such gift should be well planned in consultation with your tax advisor, of course.

Charitable Trust - Many donors are considering the use of a Charitable Trust. It is a tax-wise way to increase one's current income while still providing a generous gift. In short, here is how it works:

The donor transfers money or any other assets to a trustee. The trustee then pays the donor (or whoever is designated) an income either for life or for a pre-determined number of years.

After all of the payments have been made, the trustee transfers the amount left in the fund to IDA for the purpose that was designated in the trust. If it is an Annuity Trust, the beneficiary receives a specific sum of money each year. If it is a Unitrust, the beneficiary receives a percentage of the total value of the assets remaining in the trust each year. If it is a Lead Trust, it is set up for a limited amount of time during which the income from the trust is transferred to IDA. On its term completion, the principal is returned to the donor.

The choice of which type trust to use depends on many factors and should be discussed with a professional who is familiar with estate planning, taxes, and investments. IDA is happy to work closely with you and your advisors to help create a trust tailored to your specific needs and interests.

The Benefits of the Trust to the Donor. In many cases, a higher rate of return of income than the asset is currently returning. A federal tax deduction upon the creation of the trust. No capital gain tax liability is incurred on the transfer of the appreciated property to fund the trust. A trust reduces the property that must be administered in the donor's estate, and this will likely result in a favorable tax benefit.

The Benefits of the Trust to IDA: IDA becomes the owner of the gift's principle amount in return for IDA's promise to pay income to the Donor (or designates) for the term of the trust.

An important decision to make is do you want to create a gift *during* your lifetime or *after* your lifetime?

Once you have thought about these issues, you can begin to peruse the wide range of giving options and vehicles to establish a charitable fund that meets your personal as well as philanthropic goals.

Regardless of amount, any gift of any sort by any means helps IDA achieve its goals. Larger gifts can contribute to the Endowment Fund and will last indefinitely, memorializing the donor as an expression of their personal values and their lives.

All gifts are valued and acknowledged. They help IDA greatly in leveraging its efforts to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies for all future generations.

For more information on planned giving, contact Carol Freeman, cfreeman@darksky.org.