

LEGACY GUIDE



Why make a gift in your will to the Rainforest Foundation UK

We believe that the best way to keep forests standing is to let the indigenous people who have inhabited the areas for centuries control and manage the land.

Since it was founded in 1989 the Rainforest Foundation has protected over 100,000 square kilometres of rainforest and in the next 20 years we aim to protect 1,000,000 more square kilometres of forest by securing land rights for indigenous forest peoples.

The Rainforest Foundation UK is a relatively small organisation with a large network of local country partners that have valuable knowledge and experience of the rainforests and communities we work with.

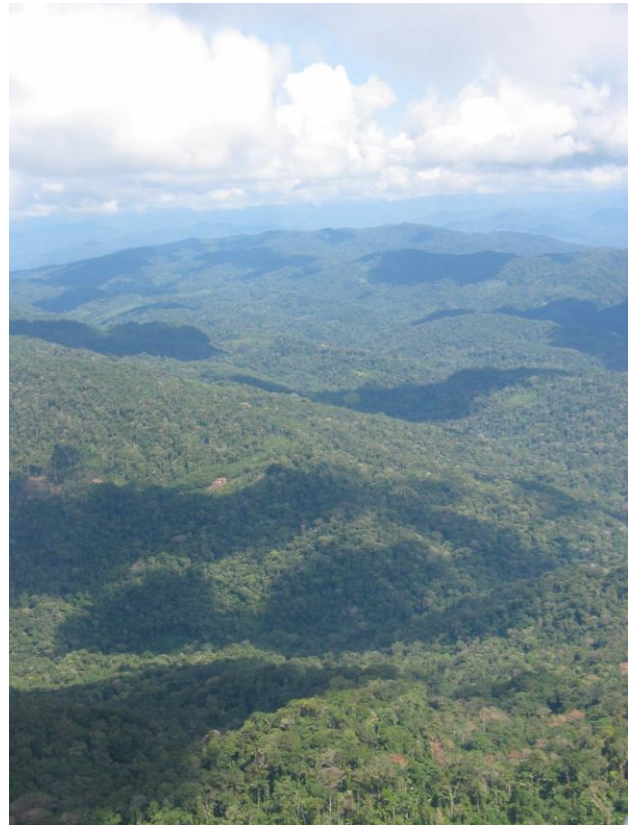
Much of our work with partner organisations involves building their capacity to enable them to work more efficiently and effectively in the future. This might be through training or the purchasing of vital equipment but either way the impact of your gift will be felt long after our projects have finished.

What difference can my gift make?

Current statistics tell us that when asked, 35% of people say they'd happily leave a gift in their will once family and friends had been provided for.

The problem is only 7% actually do. Just think what a huge difference it could make if that figure increased?

That's why we ask our supporters to consider leaving a gift in their will however small.





Types of gifts in your will

There are three types of gift you can leave in a will:

Residuary bequests - this means that once family and loved ones have been provided for, the remainder or a proportion of the deceased's estate is pledged to one or more charities.

Pecuniary bequests - this means that the deceased pledges a specific sum of money to a particular charity.

Specific bequest - The gift of a particular item or items such as jewellery, furniture, a painting, stocks and shares or a house is known as a specific legacy.

What are the benefits?

A bequest to The Rainforest Foundation UK enables you to make a planned gift to a charity you care about, whilst ensuring dependants are provided for. Charitable legacies are paid before tax is deducted, reducing the total amount of inheritance tax due from your estate.

How do they work?

You simply name The Rainforest Foundation UK as a beneficiary charity in your will or leave a sum of money to the executors with instructions as to how and to whom the sum is to be distributed. If you have a lawyer or solicitor, they should be able to provide you with information as to how charitable legacies can be incorporated within your will.

Why should I make a will?

Making a will is the only way you can be sure that your wishes will be followed after you die.

If you don't make one, part or all of your estate may go to people who you never intended to benefit. Not only that, Inheritance Tax legislation means that, if you don't prepare properly, a substantial part of what you leave behind may go to the state.





How should I go about getting a will?

Thankfully it is easy and inexpensive to have a will drafted by a properly qualified professional.

You should check that the professional you choose has:

- been trained and is qualified in making wills
- undertaken ongoing training
- professional indemnity insurance of at least £2 million
- an independent complaints procedure.

Solicitors who are members of The Law Society and will writers who are members of The Institute of Professional Will Writers meet these requirements.

What about home-made wills?


Home-made wills can be disastrous. You may omit particularly important details, such as what you wish to happen if the main beneficiary does not survive. It's always worth talking to a professional to make sure everything you need to cover is included.

What should I consider when writing a will?

Wills aren't solely about passing on your assets. You can also include specific funeral arrangements: for instance, burial, cremation or the use of your body for medical research. You may also want to appoint legal guardians to care for your children if you and your partner should die before they are 18.

In your will you can make provision for the age at which young beneficiaries receive their gift or share of the estate. You can also effectively provide for any beneficiaries with particular needs or special needs and for beneficiaries with means tested health provision or care provision.

One other important consideration is the appointment of your Executors – the people who will deal with your estate in the event of your death. Ideally, these should be business-minded family or friends or professional advisers. Three is an ideal number- for instance, two family members and a professional.

A low-angle photograph of a dense forest. Sunlight streams through the thick canopy of green leaves, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow. The sun is positioned in the upper center, with rays of light fanning out across the scene. The trees are tall and their branches are intricate, filling the frame with a sense of depth and natural beauty.

Can I leave money to my favourite charity or cause in my will?

Yes. In fact, many people who give to charity choose to leave something in their will to their favourite cause or causes after they have made provision for their family and loved ones. Not only does this create a fitting legacy, it also passes on some excellent tax advantages to the charity receiving it. Indeed, legacies from supporters make up a very important income stream for many charities. If you do want to leave something to a charity, the donation can be as small or large as you like. However much you decide to give, you can rest assured that UK registered charities are exempt from the 40% UK Inheritance Tax.

If you would like to leave a charitable gift in your will, your will provider will be able to advise you on the tax implications and what exactly is best suited to your circumstances.

What are the tax advantages in writing a will

Inheritance Tax is the tax that is paid on your estate when you die, as well as on some assets that you may have given away during your lifetime. Under current legislation, if the estate you leave behind is less than the 'nil-rate' band (£325,000 up until 5th April 2010) your beneficiaries will not have to pay Inheritance Tax. However, if your estate is worth more than this threshold, they will have to pay Inheritance Tax on anything beyond the nil-rate band. Further details of the current tax threshold are available on the Inland Revenue website

www.hmrc.gov.uk/inheritancetax.

Since October 2007, any unused Inheritance Tax threshold from a late spouse or civil partner can be transferred to their surviving spouse or civil partner when they die. In effect, this increases the Inheritance Tax threshold for the surviving partner.

Inheritance Tax is a complex subject, and if you have a potentially large estate you should seek professional advice.

What happens if my circumstances change?

It's important to review your will regularly - at least once every five years. After all, life never stands still. Your family circumstances may change, as may the relevant taxation laws.

The simplest way to make relatively minor alterations or additions is by making a codicil. This is an instruction that is kept with your existing will and which your solicitor will help you draw up.

Should I let you know?

It is really helpful if you can let us know that you have included us in your will - this information will always be treated in complete confidence. There's no need to tell us the value of your gift (unless you want to); just knowing we have a source of future income helps us to plan our work ahead.





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