

# S A V I N G land

learn . inspire . act

FALL 2016

[www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org) VOL.35 NO.4

## GETTING HEARD IN THE *Digital Age*

 Land Trust Alliance  
Together, conserving the places you love

**Tax Troubles**  
**Accreditation Their Way**  
**What is Heirs' Property?**

# SAVING land

FALL 2016  
www.landtrustalliance.org VOL. 35 NO. 4



Bethany Keene of the accredited Delaware Highlands Conservancy (PA) got a great response on Facebook with this photo of red efts taken by a volunteer.

NATASZA FONTAINE

## 14 COVER STORY

### Getting Heard in the Digital Age

By Hillary Truslow

With time in short supply at most land trusts, your best bet is to identify where the bulk of your audience is online and focus on those outlets, using an integrated strategy to maximize your messages.

#### ON THE COVER:

Northern Minnesota's Martin Woods was donated to the accredited Minnesota Land Trust by supporter Jerry Martin. It's the headwaters for the Rice River, one of the most scenic rivers in the state.

HANSI JOHNSON

**OUR MISSION** ▶ To save the places people love  
by strengthening land conservation  
across America.

THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE REPRESENTS MORE THAN 1,700 LAND TRUSTS AND PROMOTES VOLUNTARY LAND CONSERVATION TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES THROUGH CLEAN AIR AND WATER, FRESH LOCAL FOOD, NATURAL HABITATS AND PLACES TO REFRESH OUR MINDS AND BODIES.

 **Land Trust Alliance**  
Together, conserving the places you love



◀ FEATURE **18**

### Is the IRS Protecting Taxpayer Dollars?

By Russ Shay and Leslie Ratley-Beach  
The answer is no, and the IRS' actions regarding land conservation pose a serious threat to the work of the land trust community. On behalf of all land trusts, the Alliance is proposing legislation that will strengthen the case for land conservation.



HANSI JOHNSON

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### Promoting Conservation Through Outdoor Recreation

In honor of Rally 2016 in Minneapolis we feature the accredited Minnesota Land Trust's work to connect people to conservation through its recreational lands program.



CATHERINE MASUD/COURTESY OF SALEM LAND TRUST

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### They Did It Their Way

By Kirsten Ferguson  
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CHPP

◀ FEATURE **26**

### Addressing Heirs' Property

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation and its partners provide services to Southern African American landowners to help them with title and keeping the land in the family.

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# PROTECTING INTEGRITY

With your help the Land Trust Alliance can preserve the integrity of and public trust in conservation easements and their tax benefits and improve how the IRS handles conservation easement donations. Together, we can ensure the land conservation movement continues to thrive and grow across the country.

## EVERY GIFT MATTERS

Your gift today to the Land Trust Alliance will give weight to our important policy work and send a message to Congress and the IRS that the integrity of the enhanced conservation easement tax incentive is important.

To make your gift to the Land Trust Alliance visit [donate.lta.org](http://donate.lta.org) or contact us at [donate@lta.org](mailto:donate@lta.org).

An envelope is enclosed in this magazine for your convenience.

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# Addressing Threats to Conservation

**A**mong its many roles, the Land Trust Alliance works with land trusts to address threats to our community. It is my belief we are facing a serious and urgent threat we all need to work to thwart: promoters using hyperinflated conservation donations as a tool for selling tax deductions to wealthy investors. These transactions could turn all the goodwill we have generated with the public and public officials into scorn and sanctions that could substantially undermine our ability to conserve land.

In these transactions, for-profit partnerships attract investors, buy parcels of land, draft easements and claim federal charitable tax deductions on those easements within a very short time span (usually just a couple of years). The claimed easement values are often three to 10 times the land's purchase price. Whatever this might be, it isn't charity, and the IRS, Congress and the public will find it abhorrent.

I strongly believe tax shelters used in conservation transactions risk undermining public confidence in our work, and could easily result in a sharp and poorly targeted response from the IRS or Congress that could harm us all. Importantly, this reputational risk exists regardless of whatever arguments are made by the proponents of these transactions about their legality or the accuracy of their appraisals.

It may well be that people eventually will attempt to abuse almost any provision in the tax code. We cannot afford to have that happen with federal tax deductions for conservation donations. The Alliance is taking action to stop this, which you can read about in "Is the IRS Protecting Taxpayer Dollars?" on page 18. You can read much more about tax shelters on our website at [www.lta.org/taxshelters](http://www.lta.org/taxshelters).

As I learn more about this evolving situation, I will update you. But know that I am resolved that we cannot allow the actions of a few land trusts who knowingly or unknowingly engage in these transactions to put at risk the reputation and the important conservation work of our entire community.



**Andrew Bowman**



DI GLISSON, II

BY Rose Jenkins



Sunset at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland.

## New Model Land and Water Initiative Launches

**T**he Land Trust Alliance recently launched the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative (the Initiative) to deploy an integrated and innovative approach to permanent land protection, stewardship, community engagement, partners and public policy that will preserve or enhance water quality across the 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The vision for the Initiative is a healthy watershed that uses permanent land protection and stewardship to ensure clean water for future generations. Land trusts and their partners across the watershed have the opportunity to play a leadership role in protecting and improving water quality in their communities, and while many are already doing so, more could be accomplished if opportunities exist to grow their partnerships, skills and capacity.

*The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Land Trust Assessment: Accelerating Land Conservation to Protect and Improve Water Quality*, a study

commissioned by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and conducted by the Alliance with Long Haul Conservation Advisors, identified opportunities for water quality improvements through permanent land conservation programs. Based on the findings, the Initiative calls for building robust and effective partnerships—with land trusts, watershed groups, state land trust associations and other conservation and civic partners—to support and expand high-leverage, innovative programs and projects.

The Initiative will also grow the clout of the land conservation movement in the Chesapeake Bay policy arena, notably within the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Alliance has hired Jennifer Miller Herzog, former Maryland grassroots manager for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, to manage the program. See [www.lta.org/chesapeake-bay](http://www.lta.org/chesapeake-bay). •

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## Big Push for a Healthy Delaware River

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**C**onservationists are thinking big to restore the Delaware River watershed. The William Penn Foundation is catalyzing the Delaware River Watershed Initiative with the goal of improving the health of the 13,500-square-mile watershed across four states. It has already awarded more than \$40 million of funding to nearly 50 nonprofit partners.

The Delaware River watershed is an ecologically diverse natural system that includes the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi. It provides drinking water for more than 15 million people—more than 5% of the U.S. population—including residents of Philadelphia, Wilmington, Trenton and New York. However, the watershed is struggling with multiple issues, including deforestation, agricultural runoff, stormwater runoff and aquifer depletion.

Land trusts are serving as key partners in this ambitious initiative. The accredited Brandywine Conservancy is coordinating a six-member team that focuses on the Brandywine-Christina sub-watershed. These partners are working to conserve farmland, promote agricultural best management practices and increase forested riparian buffers. David Shields, associate director of the Brandywine Conservancy, says, “Our goal is to provide clean and plentiful water across the entire Brandywine-Christina watershed for healthy ecosystems and human communities.” •

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## How Much for Those Trees?

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**T**he U.S. Forest Service is offering a free app, called i-Tree, that measures forest cover and quantifies the services that trees provide. For example, an analysis of urban forests in Austin, Texas, using i-Tree, found that the city has a 31% forest canopy. It also calculated the value of services provided by those forests each year—including reducing household energy costs (\$19 million), preventing air pollution (\$3 million), and storing and removing carbon (\$256 million.) Overall, the analysis found that Austin’s trees are worth about \$16 billion.

U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell says in an online audio clip, “When a city council and a mayor are looking at hard economic data [showing that] by investing in forests we can actually save money, if we can show that we can reduce people’s bills, if we can show they can increase the revenue off of their land, it’s pretty easy to get folks interested in conservation.”

Download the app at [www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org). •



The Rogue River in Oregon.

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## “Dallas” Star Helping to Save the Heart of the Rogue

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**W**hile much of Oregon’s Rogue River basin has been cleared for pastures or home sites, one special place remains nearly untouched. It’s a natural oasis of oak savannas, vernal pools, meadows, woodlands and chaparral, with a mile and a half of river frontage. The gem of the property is its floodplain forest—one of the largest stretches of riparian forests along the Rogue. One naturalist says, “It’s like walking into a shaded, green cathedral.” For the accredited Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC), it’s a conservation dream—and the group has a chance to protect it.

The landowners have offered SOLC the 352-acre parcel at well below market value, but it will still take \$3.5 million to realize the land trust’s vision of the Rogue River Preserve. The land trust has until December 31 to raise the money. So it’s turning to the community, including one famous resident, to help make it happen.

Patrick Duffy, who played Bobby Ewing in the TV show “Dallas,” and his wife, Carlyn, live just across the river from the property and they’ve stepped up to help protect it. Duffy serves as the chair of the “Heart of the Rogue” campaign. He told the local *Mail Tribune*, “Our opportunity to preserve this comes once in a lifetime. I’m near the end of my lifetime, so I decided to become involved. We need to save this.” •

## National Parks Celebrating 100 Years

**A**merica's National Park System turns 100 this year—and it's time to connect more Americans with our public lands. Surveys show that park visitors are disproportionately white. The most recent survey by the National Park Service, in 2011, found that just 22% of park visitors are minorities, although minorities make up 37% of the U.S. population.

Audrey Peterman has made it her life's work to engage people of color with America's great outdoors, inspired by her own experiences. The first park she discovered was Acadia. "Standing on the top of Cadillac Mountain and looking out over all that untouched natural beauty, I felt that I was in the presence of something so big and I was so infinitesimal, and yet I knew that I was an essential part of it," she says. "In the national parks, I find my sense of oneness, of being part of something sacred."

Exploring national parks also helps people of all backgrounds connect to American history—for example, by learning about the African American, Hispanic and Native American soldiers at Valley Forge with George Washington. "When I discovered that my black ancestors were there, I was like, 'Hey, this country belongs to me!'" says Peterman.

She believes that the most effective way to connect more people with national parks is to work with leaders within communities. Her



Audrey and Frank Peterman in Denali National Park and Preserve.

COURTESY OF AUDREY PETERMAN

company, Earthwise Productions, provides consulting and training to engage people of color in outdoor experiences and conservation. It includes the Diverse Environmental Leaders Speakers Bureau, which features diverse expert speakers on environmental topics. •

## Pipeline Loses, Conservation Wins

**A** proposed 420-mile natural gas pipeline through upstate New York and Massachusetts would have cut through more than 110 conservation properties in Massachusetts alone, carrying natural gas from the fracking fields of Pennsylvania. But the proposal met with intense opposition—and it was withdrawn in May.

The accredited Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust first heard about the pipeline from landowners, who were told that it could cross their property, regardless of conservation easements. "For us, it was a land stewardship issue," says Executive Director Leigh Youngblood.

The pipeline would have increased the region's disproportionate dependence on natural gas, while damaging natural habitats and posing the risk of leaks and explosions. It would have crossed state parks, wildlife reserves, conservation lands, farmland and the Connecticut River.

The energy company Kinder Morgan unexpectedly withdrew the proposal in May, citing a lack of commitments to use the fuel. Youngblood attributes the pipeline victory to over two years of a "multipronged challenge that was just relentless from all sides." Farmers, municipalities, legislators, energy analysts, legal experts, conservation organizations and grassroots groups all took a stand against the pipeline.

When it was withdrawn, Jack Clarke of the accredited Mass Audubon, told MassLive.com, "This pipeline was the wrong infrastructure, carrying the wrong fuel, through the wrong state, at the wrong time. The days of dependence on fossil fuels are closing as Massachusetts turns its attention to clean renewable sources of energy, such as wind, hydro and solar." •

## A Hub for the Agricultural Community

Not too long ago, you might have driven through Chimacum—a crossroads in farm country on Washington’s Olympic Peninsula—without noticing it. Then the community started taking an interest in local food. The accredited Jefferson Land Trust and its partners in the Jefferson Land Works Collaborative stepped up to preserve working lands and support local farms. As momentum grew, entrepreneurs took notice. A local-food grocery store and a cider tasting room opened at the crossroads. Now both are thriving businesses and popular gathering places.

That got community partners thinking about the future of Chimacum. It’s right on a main road where it could attract strip malls and chain stores. Or it could grow in a different way. Sarah Spaeth, with Jefferson Land Trust, asks, “How do we continue to grow Chimacum in a way that is appropriate for the landscape and for the community, that helps brand us as a wonderful, agricultural, sustainable place?”

To explore that question, the trust collaborated on a vision for Chimacum Crossroads as a hub for the agricultural community—including local food- and farm-centered businesses, farm worker housing and trails that link to the high school. This spring, four partners—Jefferson Land Trust, Chimacum Corner Farmstand, Finnriver Farm and Cidery and the North Olympic Peninsula Resources Conservation and Development Council—were awarded a Futurewise 2016 Livable Communities Award for this vision.

Jefferson Land Trust has worked in the landscape surrounding Chimacum to conserve habitat and working lands, restore salmon streams, protect a community forest and grow the local food and local wood movements. Spaeth says, “We see a big picture with this vibrant little community that’s built around the natural resources of the place.” •



Sarah Spaeth holds a representation of the vision for the Chimacum Crossroads.

## Temperature Trading—A Novel Solution

Discharges from factories or wastewater treatment plants can contribute to warmer temperatures in rivers, which hurt fish. But cooling water is expensive. It can also require large amounts of energy and massive “gray infrastructure.” In Oregon, the Freshwater Trust is pioneering a novel solution—water temperature credits. Essentially, if you’re making a river warmer, you can comply with the law by getting someone else to make it cooler.

In Medford, Oregon, the wastewater treatment plant discharges 17 million gallons per day into the Rogue River. The water is clean—but it’s warm. To fix the problem, the city had some options, including chilling the water, holding it in storage lagoons or reusing it elsewhere. Those options would have cost between \$15 million and \$40 million. Instead, the city purchased temperature credits from landowners who allow the Freshwater Trust and its partners to plant trees by the river. The cost? \$6.5 million.

This project will restore approximately 100 acres of streamside forest. The Freshwater Trust points out that this “green infrastructure” will do much more than cool the river. The trees also filter out pollutants, absorb carbon and provide wildlife habitat. Communications Director Haley Walker says, “We’re trying to offer a novel solution to ensure that every dollar spent for compliance is applied to the places where they will have the greatest benefit for the environment as a whole.”

BY Sean Robertson and Catherine Ward

# Election Year OPPORTUNITIES



COURTESY OF TWWASHINGTON PUBLIC AFFAIRS NETWORK

// Election season is prime time for land trusts to reach out, educate and advocate because public officials are back home and looking for opportunities to connect with their constituents and talk about issues that matter to the community.” —Andy McLeod, Advocacy Director, during the Land Trust Alliance’s June 2016 webinar

Being a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focused on protecting a community’s special places doesn’t mean a land trust has to stay silent while campaigns are going on. In fact, our June webinar featured land trusts that have discovered election season is a great time to cement relationships and raise their profiles.

It is important, of course, that land trusts heed the bright line prohibition on candidate endorsements. At the same time, the law allows land trusts to advance their missions as campaigns occur and to highlight issues of importance to the public.

During the webinar, Rich Cochran of Western Reserve Land Conservancy in Ohio shared a story from when he was a volunteer for a small local land trust 20 years ago. “We reached out to our state representatives, Sherrod Brown and Steve LaTourette, and invited them on a canoe ride. They liked the idea so much that they brought their daughters with them, and we had a family day at the lake and got to know them quite well.”

The fact that these local representatives went on to be a senator on the short list for vice president and a powerful friend of House Speaker

John Boehner on the Appropriations Committee drives home the importance of engaging at all levels of government.

In the years that followed, Cochran and many of the conservancy’s board members became politically active as individuals, contributing to campaigns and hosting fundraisers while studiously avoiding use of the organization’s name or resources. He found that “if you’re giving \$1,000 to \$5,000, you are a major player in the campaign and you are going to get face time with the senator.”

Limiting political activity to personal time did work for many years, but eventually the conservancy decided to establish a 501(c)(4) organization—the Western Reserve Conservation Education Fund—and a related political action committee. Cochran believes their \$75,000 in PAC contributions played a significant role in securing more than \$500 million in public funding for their priorities. Their elected officials have also been eager to cohost fundraisers for the conservancy.

Debates are another great way to broaden awareness and support for your priorities. The Washington Association of Land Trusts recently partnered with the League of Women Voters and others to host a forum for state commissioner of public lands candidates (pictured above).

“This is a very important elected office for Washington state, yet many people have never heard of it,” said the association’s executive director,

Hannah Clark. “It was incredible that we were able to get over 200 people out to hear the candidates’ approach to helping communities protect the forests that they rely on for clean water, jobs, habitat and recreation. I was able to emphasize the necessity of partnerships between Department of Natural Resources and land trusts and our supporters got to speak one-on-one with the candidates afterward.”

The accredited Land Trust for Tennessee and its partners teamed up to host a mayoral forum in Nashville. “The forum was helpful for a number of reasons,” said President and CEO Liz McLaurin. “We asked whether the candidates would address the need for a park in southeast Nashville. It was amazing to get all the candidates on record one-upping each other in support of the park and the Nashville Open Space Plan. One candidate even said it was his top priority.”

The land trust was mindful that, as a tax-exempt nonprofit, a failure to be even-handed could threaten its tax status and reputation. It invited all nine candidates, asked nonpartisan questions, gave equal time and met with each candidate beforehand. The result was a bipartisan event that, without alienating anyone, put conservation at the forefront and educated both candidates and constituents on issues affecting the conservation community.

Advocacy is a crucial part of a land trust’s role in the community and there’s no need to stop lobbying as the election approaches. You can still honor or criticize incumbents for specific official actions and invite them to your events in their capacity as a public official, but you should avoid mentioning their candidacy and provide written guidelines to discourage them from straying into a partisan stump speech. And if just one candidate shows up to a public event, giving them time at the podium or quoting them in your press release would be a mistake.

It’s also critical to maintain the distinction between your land trust and the personal opinions of its leaders, especially with the ubiquity of social media. Your employees have every right to be politically active, but emailing a campaign from your office computer or wearing a campaign T-shirt to a land trust event could be seen as an endorsement. Even the split-second decision to share or retweet a partisan post could be problematic for an executive director who posts on behalf of the organization.

These rules are important, but don’t let them scare you away from a great opportunity to spread your message and promote the great conservation work you are doing. We look forward to sharing your stories from this election season! 🌱

## “So Much Power”



DI GLUSON, II

Mary McFadden in the new ballot video.

“There’s so much power in asking voters to vote ‘yes’ for conservation,” says The Trust for Public Land’s Will Abberger in the new video on ballot measure campaigns from the Alliance and TPL.

While land trusts cannot support candidates, ballot measure campaigns are fair game! When the electorate takes on a legislative role, it’s permissible for nonprofits to lobby voters to the same extent they can lobby any other legislative body.

Since 2014, a partnership between the Alliance and The Trust for Public Land has invested more than \$100,000 in grants to help land trusts across the country advance conservation funding measures that go directly before voters for their approval. This investment helped to enact more than \$11.4 billion in conservation funding.

The video tells the story of five successful measures, and there are more on the ballot this November.

See the video and learn more at [www.lta.org/creating-new-funding](http://www.lta.org/creating-new-funding).

## SEE THE WEBINAR

<http://landtrustalliance.adobeconnect.com/p5we2nfl8yj>

## LEARN THE RULES

[www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)  
[www.bolderadvocacy.org](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org)

# NASHVILLE MAYORAL FORUM *on* LAND & WATER CONSERVATION

*Wednesday, April 22 from 8 to 9:30am*

The Cumberland River Compact, The Land Trust for Tennessee, Greenways for Nashville and The Nature Conservancy are sponsoring a Davidson County Mayoral Candidate Forum on Land and Water Conservation **AT THE RIVER CENTER** in the Bridge Building. The **Q & A WILL BE MODERATED BY WPLN'S BLAKE FARMER** which includes all eight of the candidates running in the 2015 race for the mayor's seat. Selected questions will be posed to address the candidate's views on the future of conservation in Nashville.

HOW WILL THE "IT CITY"—THE BOOMING ENTREPRENEURIAL, TOURISM & MUSIC HUB THAT IS NASHVILLE—CONTINUE ITS ASTONISHING GROWTH AND YET NOT LOSE ITS LEAFY GREEN SOUL IN THE PROCESS?

Please **RSVP**: [WWW.CUMBERLANDRIVERCOMPACT.ORG](http://WWW.CUMBERLANDRIVERCOMPACT.ORG) [OPEN TO THE PUBLIC with limited seating + Free parking.]



Rebecca Washburn takes a breather during a busy day of meeting with land trusts.

DJ GLISSON, II

## ON THE ROAD FOR THE ALLIANCE

**6** a.m. | I can never sleep in. My two black Labradors, Marabou and Olson, make sure of that. But it's OK because I wake up each day to a job I love. I get to work with some of the nicest people I've ever known: land trust volunteers and staff.

7 a.m. | After breakfast and walking the dogs, I get on my computer to check email and plan my day. Living in Vermont and working as the Land Trust Alliance's New England program manager since 2014, I'm able to provide assistance and resources to the roughly 500 land trusts in New England. More than half of those land trusts are all-volunteer organizations, and a large focus of my work is listening to their needs and designing programs to build their strength and sustainability.

8 a.m. | I'm on my way to my first meeting of the day with the accredited Stowe Land Trust to discuss its participation in the Alliance's National Excellence Program. There are 70 land trusts all across America in the program and I work with 15 from Maine to Connecticut. Some land trusts pursue new initiatives while others build on solid organizational footing. It feels like such a gift to roll up my sleeves and work side by side with board members and staff to help them achieve their vision.

10 a.m. | I grab an early lunch on the road and head to Connecticut to teach a workshop on management planning.

In partnership with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, the Alliance is developing management planning tools and resources for land trusts in the lower Connecticut River region and New London County. Maintaining a strong stewardship program is a common area where all-volunteer land trusts look to us for guidance.

2 p.m. | After the workshop I spend some time with Andy George from the recently accredited Colchester Land Trust. This all-volunteer land trust participated in the Alliance's first circuit rider program to help prepare for accreditation.

3 p.m. | Before leaving for home, I check my email, a vital link to the land trusts in my region. Being accessible to them, by phone, email or in person, is key to maintaining solid relationships. Each spring, when I hit the road to take part in state land conservation conferences around New England, I enjoy seeing old friends and making new ones.

6 p.m. | On the way home I stop to take in the fresh air and view after a full day of visits with land trusts. Being outside is second nature to me. My early life was spent camping on islands off the Maine coast with my family, where I spent my days fishing, swimming and collecting shells. I wouldn't be where I am today without the conservation ethic my parents taught me. The land trust people I work with share that strong ethic. I finish the work day knowing that in the morning I'll get up again energized by their commitment to saving special places for all of us. 🌿

**REBECCA "BECCA" WASHBURN** IS THE NEW ENGLAND PROGRAM MANAGER FOR THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE. SEE THE FULL LIST OF ALLIANCE REGIONAL STAFF AT [WWW.LTA.ORG/WHAT-WE-DO](http://WWW.LTA.ORG/WHAT-WE-DO). COMING SOON: WATCH THE VIDEO OF BECCA'S DAY AT [WWW.LTA.ORG/ON-THE-ROAD](http://WWW.LTA.ORG/ON-THE-ROAD).



# RISKS CHANGE

and now your plan can too!

## Our New Risk Management Tool Lets You Easily Customize a Plan for Your Land Trust.

Keep your risk management plan in the right proportions and be ready for new land trust opportunities with the free risk management course on The Learning Center.\* It features a fun-to-use interactive tool to design your plan, which can then be updated and shared any time!

This easy-to-use tool walked us through the process of assessing our overall risk. We developed an effective plan that's been invaluable to my organization.

—Erin Knight, Upstate Forever (SC)

Take the course at: <http://tlc.lta.org/riskmanagement>



**IT'S ENTERTAINING**—a quick video provides orientation to the benefits of risk management



**IT'S FLEXIBLE**—take the course at your pace, whenever you want, wherever you want



**IT'S FUN**—play with the risk sliders to test your tolerance for common land trust risks



**IT'S A BONUS**—earn a \$1 discount off each easement and fee preserve insured with TerraFirma when your written plan is completed

We also offer complimentary webinars about the course as well as on other advanced risk management topics. Check [www.lta.org/webinars](http://www.lta.org/webinars) for upcoming dates.

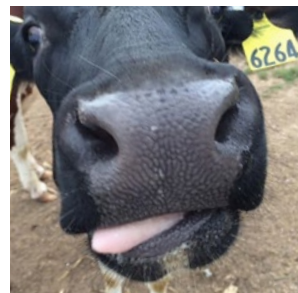
\*The Learning Center is a service offered to Alliance member land trusts and affiliates, and to individual supporters at the \$250 level and above.

# GETTING HEARD in the Digital Age

BY Hillary Truslow



@GENESEELANDTRUST  
FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM





Kevin Farrell, land stewardship director of the accredited Genesee Land Trust in New York, says about the land trust's Instagram page, "I started using Canva this past year and have loved how easy it is to use and how it makes things look more professional." Of course, it helps to have lots of fun photos, too.



Every minute of every day, Instagram users “like” 2.4 million posts, YouTube users share 400 hours of new video and Twitter users send 9,678 emoji-filled tweets. For the past four years, these stats and more are front and center in American software company DOMO’s Data Never Sleeps infographic.

Well, data may not sleep, but land trust staff do. And when we’re not sleeping, we’re conducting site visits, reaching out to landowners, completing baseline documentation and removing invasive plants. So how do we make the most of our digital presence, given the endless amount of data produced every minute of every day?

Focus. In a perfect world, there would be enough time in the day for you to master Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and whatever else comes down the road. But there isn’t enough time in the day, and your best bet is to identify where the bulk of your audience is online and focus on those outlets. Whatever media you choose, maximize your message by having an integrated strategy.

### The Hub-and-Spoke Strategy

More often than not, groups will share one message via email, another on Facebook and yet a third on their website. They fear sounding repetitive. However, here’s the thing: Repetition is good. There is a tried and true marketing adage that something needs to be heard/seen at least three times before it sticks.

Not only that, but not everyone sees your Facebook post, nor do they always open your email (more on that later). So by sharing a message only once, you’re missing out on a huge chunk

of potential supporters. Not to mention the amount of additional work it takes to come up with an endless stream of unique content.

Rather than segment your message, integrate all forms of communications. One way to approach it is using the hub-and-spoke strategy. The hub is your website; the spokes include social media and email. All content should live on your website. When you create new web content on your hub, you then push that message out through your spokes.

### Hub: Website

Monthly website traffic for nonprofits grew by 10% in 2015, according to the 2016 M+R Nonprofit Benchmark Report. Your website should be the home for all the content you link to from social media and email.

People find your content directly or through referrals (i.e., other websites). One big referrer is Google, and Google loves fresh content. One way to keep content fresh is to have a blog.

Network for Good and Sea Change Strategies’ *Homer Simpson for Nonprofits* highlights a study that found “people are twice as likely to give a charitable gift when presented with an emotion-inducing personal story of one victim that focuses exclusively on his or her plight—rather than a group of ‘unnamed statistical victims.’”

No longer can we communicate just the facts. Rather, we need to tug on our supporters’ emotional heartstrings. And a blog, which can be more personal than your organization’s website, is the perfect venue for telling emotion-rich stories.

Before you think “a blog is way too much work,” know that a blog doesn’t have to feature long narratives and you don’t need to reinvent the wheel. Look at the work you are already doing. Identify:

- Success/progress stories (people want to know how/where their money will be spent)

## COMMUNICATING FOR GREATER CONSERVATION IMPACT

By Bob Wilber, Director of Land Conservation, Mass Audubon

With ever-increasing competition for the limited bandwidth of donors, members and the general public, communications have become a critically important activity for land trusts. Remaining relevant and gaining greater traction in a world evolving so quickly is a challenge.

If you are seeking a better return on time you invest in communications, consider the following general tips, as they have proven quite helpful to me:

- **Push yourself to use more accessible language:**

With demographics shifting dramatically, and with the overarching imperative for the land trust community of vastly greater diversity—both in terms of composition and representation—the words we choose to use have added importance. Instead of using overly technical jargon, consider using more accessible language with greater relevance to all people. For example, instead of such statements as “suites of endangered species extant in unfragmented landscapes,” demystify your work and help more people understand how land conservation generates important and numerous mental, physical and spiritual health benefits.

- **Make it personal:** Harness the power of stories to make the outcomes you are striving to achieve resonate with more people on an individual level. What has been accomplished and why should it matter to the reader? Particularly as told from the landowner or community perspective, stories can adeptly convey the strong values and powerful human emotions connected with conserving a special place. Often, it is the personal, heartfelt testimony from someone outside our organizations that has greatest impact.

- **Be purveyors of optimism and hope:** In the increasingly stressful world in which we live, many people are yearning to connect to something tangible, lasting and offering hope for a brighter future. Land conservation offers all of that. It is one of the few activities assured of generating benefits of ever-increasing value to every inhabitant of this planet. We now know that land conservation will play a critically important role in helping humans survive climate change. Land conservation is also grounded in the concept of forever. Embrace the benefits of land conservation, and spread the message far and wide.

- People stories (inspire others to get involved)
- Stories that answer common questions (a Google favorite)
- Photo stories (try to avoid stock photography)

So you have a perfect story for the web, now what? First, know that people don't necessarily read the web; they scan it. They're looking for answers to questions and more and more they are doing it on mobile devices.

An eye-tracking heat-map study done by the Nielson Norman Group showed that web users often read in an F-shaped pattern. The most-read section was the first paragraph and the upper left-hand side of a page that features bullets.

What this means is we need to write for scanning, putting the most important information first, including clear headings to break up the content and writing in short paragraphs made up of simple sentences that speak to everyone (keep the jargon for formal reports).

### Spoke 1: Social Media

We are a very social culture. According to the Pew Research Center's Social Media Update, published in January 2015, multiplatform use is on the rise: 52% of online adults now use two or more social media sites, a significant increase from 2013, when it stood at 42%.

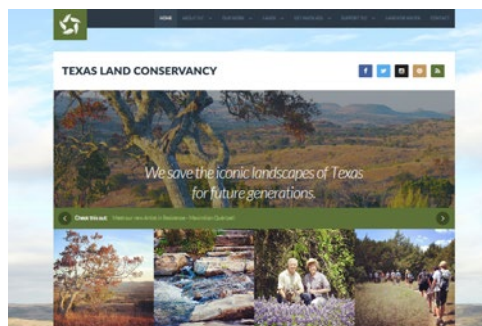
What platforms are they using? Of all adult internet users, 71% use Facebook, 28% use LinkedIn, 28% use Pinterest, 26% use Instagram and 23% use Twitter.

Let's take a basic look at the three social channels currently advantageous to land trusts.

### Facebook

The good news: Facebook is a great way to have a two-way conversation with people who “like” you. The bad news: On average, only 6–16% of those people see your content.

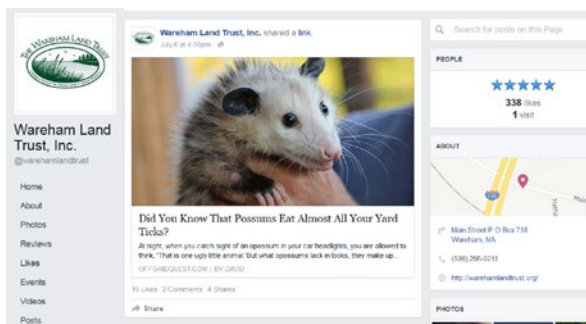
Why? Facebook uses an ever-changing algorithm that decides who sees what content. While the exact science is a mystery, we do know that when a Facebook user takes an action on a post, such as liking,



“The accredited Texas Land Conservancy is working on a strategy of engagement, steadily growing its online presence using humor and promoting land in general, as well as the lands it conserves,” says Community Consultants’ Judy Anderson.

**Left:** Carleen Loper of Wareham Land Trust (accredited) in Massachusetts says, "We are a small volunteer land trust with only about 300 followers, but this recent post stirred up so much interest: 700 people viewed it, there were comments, there were shares. It was one of those things that you don't realize will have an impact and then are just so happy to see it does."

**Right:** Mae Axelrod of Natural Lands Trust (accredited) in Pennsylvania says, "We've had a lot of success using collaboration, credit and beautiful imagery to get engagement on our Twitter posts. In this one, we shared our success story with our partners. People like getting kudos on social media!"



commenting, sharing, viewing a video, etc., it sends a message to Facebook that they want more from that particular person or page.

Here are just a few suggestions to help you be seen and compel users to action:

- Be sure to post as often as you can. You may have to start with a post once a week, then build from there to once a day. If you can manage it, two to three times a day is ideal.
- Ask a question: Have you seen any blue jays this winter? When you are on a hike, are you looking up or down?
- This may seem obvious, but ask for a like or a share: Like this post if you have visited this trail; share this photo to spread the word.
- Post good photos. Facebook is a visual medium and people connect to photos. In turn, photos tend to get higher engagement. Just don't feel the need to share every photo in one post.
- Share current events that are related, if not directly connected, to what you do. A potential Northern Lights sighting is always a winner.
- Share other people's relevant Facebook posts.
- See what works and what doesn't by reviewing Facebook's Insights for Your Page (link is at the top of your page).

## Twitter

The good news is that Twitter doesn't hold back any content—instead it posts everything as it comes in. The bad news is that it doesn't hold back any content, which means to stay relevant on Twitter, you need to post regularly throughout the day.

It's understandable if you don't have the time for Twitter, but if you want to give it a shot, first you will want to brush up on internet slang (IMHO #googleit). Then, use Twitter to:

- Share news and updates.
- Post photos that capture a moment in time.
- Retweet (i.e., share) other tweets about or related to your land trust.
- Respond to other people's tweets (comments or questions) about your land trust.
- Promote upcoming events and programs.
- Thank your supporters using their Twitter handles, if known.

## Instagram

The good news: easy way to share everyday photos. The bad news: Unless you pay for a "sponsored post," you can't link off the platform beyond one link in your profile.

This very visual, smart phone-based app is a super way to feature all of the lovely landscapes you're working so hard to protect. Be sure to use hashtags and add the location of your photo.

If the public can visit your open spaces, don't be afraid to search your locations via the app to see what other people are posting and like/comment when appropriate.

## SOURCE LINKS

[www.domo.com](http://www.domo.com)  
[mrbenchmarks.com](http://mrbenchmarks.com)  
[www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/homer-simpson-nonprofits-truth-about-how-people-really-think-and-what-it-means/](http://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/homer-simpson-nonprofits-truth-about-how-people-really-think-and-what-it-means/)  
[www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content](http://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content)  
[www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014)  
[blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-declining-organic-reach](http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-declining-organic-reach)

Instagram and Twitter speak more of the same language, so sharing from one to the other is an easy way to do two things at once.

## Spoke 2: Enews and Email Appeals

**Question:** What's the first thing you do when you open email in the morning? If you answered delete any unnecessary email, you're not alone. According to the 2016 M+R Nonprofit Benchmark Report, email open rates across all sectors is 16% (down 5% from the previous year). But email list size and revenue continue to grow, which means email is still a powerful tool.

The biggest mistake most people make when it comes to email is sending long, wordy text that "lives" in the email and nowhere else.

A 2005 report showed people only spent 15–20 seconds reading an email, and that was 11 years ago! Short attention spans aside, if your content only lives in an email, and only an average of 16% of people open your email, you're missing out on a huge audience. Rather, your email should include a compelling content teaser with a clear call-to-action that links back to your website for more information.

What good is well-crafted concise email if people aren't opening it? Boost open rates by experimenting with the "sender" and the subject line. See if an email does better if it comes from a person or your organization. And try different subject line techniques—catchy, time-sensitive, straight-forward. Every audience is different, and the only way to know what works for yours is to test.

You have so many stories to tell. Think ahead to the next six months about what is happening with your conservation work. Don't just think about promoting your own organization; promote your partners, promote interesting content, think about what your readers would want to see. Plot out a bunch of ideas. Assign them to different staff. Get them online. And start getting heard. 🌿

HILLARY TRUSLOW IS DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR MASS AUDUBON (ACCREDITED).

# Is the IRS Protecting **TAXPAYER DOLLARS?**

**BY** Russ Shay and Leslie Ratley-Beach

**G**iven the millions of federal tax dollars linked to deductions for donations of conservation easements, the Internal Revenue Service pays attention to easement donors and the land trusts that hold easements. But does the IRS understand what land trusts do, especially transactions that involve conservation easements? Is it doing all it can to further Congress' intent to encourage land conservation, as evidenced by the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations? And is it using its enforcement authority to maintain the public's trust in individuals and organizations involved in land conservation transactions? The Land Trust Alliance answers "no" to these questions, and believes that the IRS' attitude and actions regarding land conservation pose a serious threat to the work of the land trust community.

## **The Problems**

**Tax shelters** – We all need to work to thwart the serious and urgent threat of promoters using hyperinflated conservation donations as a tool for selling federal tax deductions to wealthy investors. "Scams that abused Colorado's easement tax credit are still causing legitimate land trusts huge problems a decade later," says Larry Kueter, a Colorado attorney and longtime conservation easement expert. "There's even more at stake now with these federal tax shelter schemes." These transactions, in which investors give a sum of money to a for-profit entity and immediately receive a charitable deduction that is multiples of that sum, could turn all the goodwill we have generated with the public and public officials into scorn and sanctions that could substantially undermine our ability to conserve land. See [www.lta.org/taxshelters](http://www.lta.org/taxshelters) for detailed information.

**IRS technical "gotcha" attacks on good easements** – In a recent tax court

case, *Douglas G. Carroll III et ux. v. Commissioner*, the court denied a deduction for a conservation easement donation because the proceeds clause did not conform exactly to Treasury Regulations. This technicality resulted in a harsh legal judgment for the well-intentioned donors, also affecting two respected conservation organizations, the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) and the Land Preservation Trust. Bill Leahy, executive director of MET, says, "For something like this to happen to a conservation-minded donor—it's a shame! Cases like this may have the effect of discouraging land conservation, and that's not what Congress intended." In similar cases, the IRS is denying otherwise solid conservation due merely to a technical issue, akin to "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." Recently, the IRS has begun to assert that an amendment clause is sufficient grounds for disqualifying a conservation easement for a tax deduction—contradicting common practice

## What the Numbers Say

Except where noted, the estimates are from the Land Trust Alliance.



**1,000–2,000**

Estimated number of conservation easement donations a year



**\$1–2 billion**

Value of federal deductions for easement donations per year per the IRS



**\$400 million**

IRS estimate for the *value* of claimed deductions in 2014 for possible easement tax shelter deals

in the land trust community and the long-standing advice of the Alliance. This would disqualify most of the easements used today.

**An awful audit process** – No one disputes that the IRS has every right and good reason to audit valuable easement donations. But the current process is adversarial, lengthy and expensive—even when it concludes in the donor's favor. Many audits begin with the IRS accusing a donor of fraud; a donor who has just made the largest charitable contribution of his or her life. And then the process can go on for a decade or more.

### A Menu of Solutions

**Cut off tax shelters** – Given that the IRS is not using its existing enforcement authority, the Alliance is seeking a legislative ban on these types of transactions to make it clear that they are not allowed.

**Go to the courts** – The Alliance will actively work to get conservationists' point of view in front of the judges hearing tax cases involving conservation easements. Through "friend of the court" briefs and other litigation methods, we will double down on our efforts to assert practical, pro-conservation interpretations of the tax law, so that the courts understand the consequences of taking a too-narrow view of what a donor and donee must do to get a deduction.

**Legislate new guidelines** – The Alliance is drafting legislation to change the law of conservation easement donations to counter the IRS' actions to narrow the scope of IRC Section 170(h). The final bill may explicitly allow easement amendments that do not diminish conservation; give donors the opportunity to correct unintentional errors;

and create an alternative way to verify the valuation of an easement donation.

**Legislate additional conservation incentives** – The Alliance is exploring legislative provisions to create additional conservation incentives. Among those we are considering:

- Halving capital gains taxes when land is sold to a land trust;
- Applying the enhanced easement incentive to conservation donations in fee; and
- Providing a larger exclusion from estate taxes for conserved lands.

### Working in the Interest of All Land Trusts

By proposing legislation that will strengthen the case for land conservation and going to the courts to argue for interpretations of the law that facilitate land conservation, the Alliance is working in the interest of all land trusts. Simultaneously, we aim to strengthen *Land Trust Standards and Practices* so our community can show the public that we are taking every step we can to operate in a legal and ethical manner. And we will continue to press the IRS to focus its efforts on egregious transactions rather than on technical missteps by well-intentioned individuals donating an easement on land they own and love. We hope that you'll join us in these efforts by being vigilant in avoiding tax shelter transactions, supporting our legislative agenda and participating in the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* revision process by sending comments and feedback to [SandP@lta.org](mailto:SandP@lta.org).

**RUSS SHAY** IS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY FOR THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE AND **LESLIE RATLEY-BEACH** IS THE ALLIANCE'S CONSERVATION DEFENSE DIRECTOR.

**100**

Estimated audits of conservation easement donors a year ♦



**20**

Number of years back the IRS asserts it can initiate an audit after an easement has been donated



**25–30**

Estimated number of companies originating tax shelter deals involving conservation donations each year, according to a recent law review article

♦ Note that because tax records are sealed until or unless a case is filed in court, it is difficult to get a clear sense of the total number of easement audits.





# PROMOTING CONSERVATION THROUGH Outdoor Recreation

Understanding the power of how outdoor recreation and open space conservation are linked, and how the two can truly improve the quality of life in communities, the accredited Minnesota Land Trust created a recreational lands program in June 2014 and hired Hansi Johnson—who has a background working for such organizations as the International Mountain Bicycling Association, Patagonia and Wenonah Canoe—as director of recreational lands.

Johnson focuses on assisting the City of Duluth in promoting its nature-based recreational assets and expanding this work with other staff to more communities in Minnesota.

“The more people care and advocate for these resources, the greater the chance they’re going to survive into the future,” says Executive Director Kris Larson.

Minnesota Land Trust has also identified barriers that are keeping many youth and disadvantaged residents from getting the full benefit of Duluth’s great outdoors, looking for solutions such as connecting programs for at-risk youth with outdoor adventure guides. 🍃



# *They Did It* **THEIR WAY**

All-volunteer land trusts take unique pathways to accreditation, using their distinctive perspectives and talents to get there. **BY** Kirsten Ferguson

A landscape of bluebonnets in Texas Hill Country, the stunning region targeted for protection by Hill Country Land Trust.



Conservation-minded volunteers formed Hill Country Land Trust (TX) in the late 1990s, concerned about the ongoing development and fragmentation of the Texas Hill Country, a stunning, ecologically sensitive and culturally rich area of central Texas.

The all-volunteer land trust grew slowly at first and struggled to get its bearings, says board member and current Vice President Katherine Peake, who dropped off the board for a while, frustrated by the lack of organization.

Then fellow board member Bill Lindemann, a retired geologist and avid birder, convinced Peake to come back to shepherd the group through the land trust accreditation process. "The board realized if the land trust was going to be viable and real, we needed to be accredited," she says.

At the time, the group had no office, and records were scattered among various board members' houses. "The structure of accreditation helped guide us in what we needed to be doing," she says.

Peake took on the job of stewarding the group through accreditation, treating the process like a full-time job for close to two years. "It was incredibly hard," she says. Now semiretired, Peake spent most of her career as the Fredericksburg Municipal Judge. "I'm a very organized person. I had a lot of experience in setting up files and policies and procedures."

Peake delegated, breaking the application into parts and assigning each standard of *Land Trust Standards and Practices* to the board members with interest and experience in that area. "We would set up committees and ask board members to go to the Land Trust Alliance online library [the Learning Center] to look at other land trust policies and modify them to fit our needs," she says. "It was a slow process of education."

## RESOURCES

[www.lta.org/accreditation](http://www.lta.org/accreditation)  
[www.landtrustaccreditation.org/first-time-accreditation](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/first-time-accreditation)  
<http://learningcenter.lta.org/pathways>

MELISSA MIAL

# They Did It THEIR WAY

From left to right: Connie Manes, a Land Trust Alliance circuit rider in Connecticut, says that all-volunteer land trusts are no less motivated to apply for accreditation than staffed land trusts; The 2011 ribbon-cutting at the opening of Westmoreland Conservancy's Don Harrison Community Trail; Balancing Rock at Salem Land Trust's Smuggler's Rock Preserve.



GREENBOMB STUDIOS

Thanks to the work of Peake and her fellow board members—and a consultant who created a timeline—Hill Country Land Trust achieved first-time accreditation in 2012.

Going through the process transformed the group, Peake says. “Once you become accredited, everything starts coming together. Your budget, fundraising and stewardship become tighter. Volunteers understand what they’re looking at when they’re out monitoring. Everything just starts to gel, so it feeds on itself and you become stronger.”

The land trust’s evolution since receiving accreditation has been dramatic. The organization first hired a part-time executive director, and then Jennifer Lorenz—former executive director of the Bayou Land Conservancy—took over full-time in August. “Accreditation put us in a great position to transition to bigger things,” says Peake.

**“If you meet the criteria for accreditation, then you know you’ve done your best to make sure the land you are protecting will be protected in perpetuity.”**

## Willing and Able

Both staffed and all-volunteer land trusts point to capacity as a challenge during the application process for accreditation, but all-volunteer land trusts can be especially daunted by the amount of time and effort it takes to complete the process when they don’t have paid staff to help get it done.

But that doesn’t mean all-volunteer land trusts are any less motivated to undertake the process, says Connie Manes, a Land Trust Alliance circuit rider who travels around Connecticut, working with all-volunteer land trusts on accreditation and other organization-building tasks.

Manes, who is also the executive director of the accredited Kent Land Trust (CT), cites a national assessment undertaken by the Alliance in 2012 to study the challenges and needs of all-volunteer land trusts. It found that all-volunteer land trusts are just as serious about

adhering to *Land Trust Standards and Practices* as staffed land trusts, but they have a need for different types of training and outreach. It also identified that 45% of the 257 all-volunteer land trusts who responded were either “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to pursue accreditation.

The growing interest in accreditation and requests for assistance led to the Alliance’s Circuit Rider Program, available in certain regions to help all-volunteer land trusts navigate the challenging terrain of accreditation and organizational growth.

“My experience working with all-volunteer land trusts has confirmed what the report found—that the people in them are very professional, highly skilled and very dedicated,” says Manes. “They come to work with a true commitment to the mission of a land trust. Accreditation helps provide the ‘carrot’—the impetus for keeping up with best practices and implementing them.”

## Learning and Growing

Shelly Tichy, president of Westmoreland Conservancy (PA), says her all-volunteer land trust found renewed focus after successfully achieving first-time accreditation in 2012. It wasn’t always easy—the land trust faced resistance from board members who weren’t ready to do things a different way.

But since achieving accreditation, the group has been better equipped to deal with a few encroachment issues on their fee-acquired properties. They also received a generous donation that came about in part because the donor felt positive about the land trust’s accredited status. “It’s nice to have that logo by our name—to be able to say we’re accredited,” Tichy says. “I think it has given us a tremendous amount of legitimacy in the eyes of our community.”

Accreditation also helped in recruiting new people to the conservancy’s board, educating them and setting expectations for board participation. “The most important thing is that everybody now knows what they’re getting into,” Tichy says. “There’s been a lot of growth and learning. Coming from a family of teachers, I think learning is paramount. The all-volunteer groups should be held to the same standards as other land trusts.”

The requirements for accreditation, Manes points out, are rooted in regulatory and legal compliance and risk reduction, and thus should be paramount to all land trusts. To get started learning more about accreditation, she recommends that land trusts head to the Alliance’s online Learning Center (see Resources box on page 23).

“The Standards section of the library contains resource documents that provide detailed information for each practice, including accreditation ‘indicator practices’ and, in many cases, templates that help the land trust meet the practice,” she says.

For all-volunteer land trusts, getting records and paperwork in order may be one of the biggest challenges, says Manes, who suggests groups look for grants that could help pay for help with records and filing. She also suggests contacting other land trusts that have gone through

## WHY DO ALL-VOLUNTEER LAND TRUSTS PURSUE ACCREDITATION?

Circuit rider Connie Manes reports having heard these reasons why all-volunteer land trusts seek accreditation:

- Codifies institutional memory
- Creates/improves processes to ensure work gets done—now and in the future
- Keeps you better informed
- Improves teamwork
- Makes you feel part of something bigger



WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY



TONY GRIGGS

the accreditation process—in many cases they will be willing to share policies and lessons they have learned.

“Talk to other land trusts. Bounce ideas off them,” Manes says. “Spend time looking at the resources. Accreditation is worth the investment, and you’ll emerge much stronger and better coordinated with a framework that can stay in place for the long-term sustainability of your land trust.”

### On the Right Track

Salem Land Trust was the first accredited land trust in Connecticut, and only the second all-volunteer land trust nationwide to become accredited. When the land trust started in 1996, founder Dr. David

Bingham got the group on the right track from the very beginning, says board President Linda Schroeder.

“It was very clear to him that it’s much easier for a land trust to start right out and follow the Standards,” she says. That helped when it came time to apply for accreditation, as did having several members on the board who had dealt with accreditation during their careers—one through work with hospitals and another as a physician.

“You have to have a group of people who are ready and willing to do this job [of accreditation], Schroeder says. But the work pays off, she adds. “If you meet the criteria for accreditation, then you know you’ve done your best to make sure the land you are protecting will be protected in perpetuity.”

## PROFILES OF THREE LAND TRUSTS WHO DID IT THEIR WAY

### Hill Country Land Trust

Fredericksburg, Texas  
[www.hillcountrylandtrust.org](http://www.hillcountrylandtrust.org)

**Target area:** The Texas Hill Country, a central Texas region featuring rugged hills, limestone-bedded rivers and many endangered species and migratory birds. The region is threatened by rapid population growth and the fragmentation of farm, ranch and open space land.

**Year of accreditation:** First time in 2012, applying for renewal in 2017 [Note: the land trust was all-volunteer at the time of its first accreditation but has since hired staff.]

**Biggest challenge with accreditation:** “One of the hardest things was getting the board to realize we had these policies we now had to follow—taking accreditation from policies on paper to action.”—Board Vice President Katherine Peake

**Biggest benefit from accreditation:** The formerly all-volunteer land trust was able to hire a part-time executive director and then a full-time ED. “Accreditation put us in a great position to transition to bigger things.”—K.P.

**Accreditation advice for other land trusts:** “They need to find a person who’s going to be the major driver and have board members going into it in total support.”—K.P.

**A special quality about your land trust:** “Everyone brings a unique talent to the board. We all really love being on the land and working with the landowners.”—K.P.

### Salem Land Trust

Salem, Connecticut  
[www.salemlandtrust.org](http://www.salemlandtrust.org)

**Target area:** The southern Connecticut town of Salem—including waterways, swamps, meadows and woodlands teeming with plant and animal life, as well as scenic, natural and historic sites.

**Year of accreditation:** First time in 2009; renewed in 2015

**Biggest challenge with accreditation:** “Overall the recordkeeping is probably the hardest. Also getting the money required for the stewardship defense fund.”—Board President Linda Schroeder

**Biggest benefit from accreditation:** “When we write out grants and say we’re accredited, foundations understand it means something—that’s really important.”—L.S.

**Accreditation advice for other land trusts:** “It helps to have people on your board who have dealt with accreditation boards in their professional lives [for instance, medical accreditation].”—L.S.

**A special quality about your land trust:** “We’ve attracted to the board a number of people who are really good naturalists—birders, butterfly experts, forest owners. You have to have people who are interested in protecting not just the land but what’s on the land.”—L.S.

### Westmoreland Conservancy

Murrysville, Pennsylvania  
[www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)

**Target area:** Murrysville in western Pennsylvania, roughly 20 miles east of Pittsburgh, in an area under a lot of development pressure—with a focus on special features (scenic, biological or endangered and rare species) and land that connects reserves and “green” corridors.

**Year of accreditation:** First time in 2013, applying for renewal in 2018

**Biggest challenge with accreditation:** “We had push-back from members of our board. But we were able to become much stronger from accreditation.”—Board President Shelly Tichy

**Biggest benefit from accreditation:** “I think it gave us the tools to recognize what works and what doesn’t, and how to go about changing things.”—S.T.

**Accreditation advice for other land trusts:** “Keep in mind one of the best things anybody can learn is there’s always another way. You can never assume your way is the only way to do something.”—S.T.

**A special quality about your land trust:** “We have what is truly a community trail [Don Harrison Community Trail]. It took 17 years and was a big accomplishment for a group like ours.”—S.T.

# Addressing HEIRS' PROPERTY:

HELP FOR AFRICAN  
AMERICAN LANDOWNERS  
THROUGH COLLABORATIONS

BY Danyelle O'Hara

**V**ander Green was at his wit's end. He owed money on the mortgage for 42 acres he had inherited from his father, who had bought it in 1940. His monthly income had changed since his sister had passed away. Green figured he had to sell 21 acres to make enough to pay his debt. There didn't seem to be another way out, until his neighbor saw his "For Sale" sign and connected him to Sam Cook, then-director of the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program of the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the USDA Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Van and I ended up walking his land together," Cook says. "Right away, I could see there was enough fiber on the land to give him some income." Green received multiple quotes for purchasing the wood on 38 acres. He picked the best price and logging began. Cook even got Green an advance on his timber. "That's when I knew he was for real," says Green.

After the harvest, Green took down the "For Sale" sign. He'd made not only enough money to meet his mortgage payments but to make a profit and to save every inch of his land. He's proud of what he's done and has many ideas about what he hopes to do. "I'm number one in the forestry program now," he says with a wink. His enthusiasm has infected others.

—*Vander Green's story by Tish Lynn, excerpted from the Spring 2014 issue of the Center for Heirs' Property newsletter, HP Matters*

## The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation (CHPP) in South Carolina's Lowcountry began in 2002 at the Coastal Community Foundation as the Heirs' Property Preservation Project, providing legal education and direct legal services to low-income heirs' property owners to help them obtain clear title and preserve family land. In 2005 CHPP became an independent organization.

CHPP describes heirs' property as land owned "in common" by all heirs, regardless of whether they live on the land or pay the taxes. Throughout the Southeast, heirs' property is mostly rural land owned by African

Americans who purchased or were deeded it after the Civil War. Historically, African Americans were routinely denied access to the legal system and much of their land was passed through generations without a written will, thus becoming heirs' property. Without clear title to the land, many obstacles arise.

CHPP's focus expanded over time to include helping low-income landowners identify and pursue sustainable land use options that could increase income. CHPP launched the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program in 2013 to provide African American landowners with education and technical assistance to develop and implement sustainable forest management



plans. The program helps landowners understand and leverage the relationship between forestry, economic benefit, land retention and family legacy.

## Removing Barriers and Building Bridges

Although conservation easements could help CHPP's landowners, hardly anyone has heard of them. Sam Cook explains, "Our landowners have never needed to understand easements because they're trying to hold on to their land. With a new generation of landowners, this could be a tool that can help them and their families retain their land in the long term. In addition to education, there's got to be a lot of trust-building involved in helping people understand that they're not signing their land away—they get the benefits; they're just giving up development rights."

Conservation easements are also not an area of CHPP expertise. "Land trusts are the experts on them—they know the technical ins and outs and where the money and resources are," says Cook. To bridge these gaps, CHPP has developed partnerships that build on land trusts' technical capacity and resources, and on CHPP's relationships with a population land trusts have not historically reached out to.

Even after landowners clear the hurdles of understanding conservation easements



## On the Brink of Collaboration

In their recent study “Accounting for Heirs’ Property in Private Land Conservation Planning: A Case Study in Rural Georgia” authors Bryn Elise Murphy, Cassandra Johnson Gaither, J. Scott Pippin and Shana Jones put forth that “an appreciable portion of natural lands may be held as heirs’ property in rural communities in the South.” As land trusts and others seek to expand their engagement with low-wealth, minority and other historically underserved communities, the authors suggest that land trusts could adapt strategies to better serve heirs’ property landowners, such as partnering with public interest law centers. See the study at [www.slideshare.net/BrynEliseMurphy/accounting-for-heirs-property-in-private-land-conservation-planning-64408898](http://www.slideshare.net/BrynEliseMurphy/accounting-for-heirs-property-in-private-land-conservation-planning-64408898).

and can embrace their benefits, other challenges remain. For example, many of CHPP’s landowners own 40 or fewer acres, and it can be difficult to find a partner organization willing to take on the project costs for a relatively small property. CHPP landowners with larger properties often lack access to funds required to cover transaction costs.

To lower these barriers, CHPP, Lowcountry Land Trust (accredited) and other South Carolina land trusts are helping African American landowners on John’s Island create a timber cooperative. The project will enable smaller landowners to include their land in a master management plan with larger landowners so that they can all access the same services. It will also allow landowners to continue revenue-generating sustainable forestry. CHPP is working with conservation and community development partners to create a grant program that would provide support for transaction costs if and when the cooperative chooses to place a conservation easement on the land.

“Working intentionally with traditionally disenfranchised communities is vital for our communities and for our survival,” says Ashley Demosthenes, executive director of Lowcountry Land Trust.

CHPP also connects landowners to conservation resources through its partnership with the Sewee Longleaf Conservation Cooperative, led by The Nature Conservancy (accredited). SLCC focuses on the Conservancy’s priority to restore longleaf pine forests, a threatened native ecosystem in the South.

Through the cooperative, CHPP helps African American landowners in and around Francis Marion National Forest access technical assistance, advice and funding from a range of state and federal agencies to restore and ensure management of their longleaf pine forests. Mark Robertson, executive director of the Conservancy’s South Carolina Chapter, says, “While our objectives are still ecologically driven, it’s meaningful to us to help ensure that minority landowners have access to the resources and knowledge that other landowners have access to.”

Although CHPP undertakes conservation activities with its landowners, it is always with an eye toward furthering the financial benefit of the land. As Executive Director Jennie Stephens puts it, “Land is the asset that we are working with, but our emphasis is on the people and preserving their culture and heritage.”

**DANYELLE O’HARA** IS AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT BASED IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

① Vander Green delightedly removes the “For Sale” sign on his property. CHPP ② Former Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation forester Sam Cook shows longleaf pines on forestland owned by an African American family. SARAH HITCHER ③ Participants at the S.C. Rural and Limited Resource Landowner Symposium held at Voorhees College this past June. CHPP organized the two-day event, which was sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. JERRY HALMON, THE ADVERTIZER HERALD

## Resources

**Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation**  
[www.heirspreservation.org](http://www.heirspreservation.org)

**Black Family Land Trust**  
[www.bflt.org](http://www.bflt.org)

Operating primarily in the Southeast and focusing on Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, Black Family Land Trust works with black landowners and farmers to preserve their land assets through education and technical and financial support.

For an excellent article on heirs’ property see the February 2016 issue of “Leaves of Change,” a bulletin of the U.S. Forest Service’s Urban Forestry South: [http://interfacesouth.org/LeavesOfChange\\_i20](http://interfacesouth.org/LeavesOfChange_i20).

# *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and Accreditation Requirements

How They Work Together to Strengthen Land Trusts

**A**s the revision process of *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (the Standards) moves forward with feedback from the land conservation community, the Land Trust Alliance has been fielding questions about how the standards, practices, elements, accreditation indicators and accreditation requirements all fit together to build strong land trusts. Here is a guide for land trust board members and staff that describes both textually and visually the relationship of these pieces.

## **A Little Background First**

The Alliance first developed *Land Trust Standards and Practices* in 1989 at the urging of land trust practitioners who believed that a strong land trust community depended on the credibility and effectiveness of all its members and who understood that employing best practices would be the surest way to lasting conservation. The Alliance led revision processes to the Standards in 1993, 2001 and 2004 to reflect changes in land trust practices and regulations governing nonprofit organizations. Since that time, the land trust community has made great strides securing public confidence in its work. Land trusts are stronger, better managed and more effective than ever. More than 1,100 land trusts have adopted the Standards, reflecting an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement across the community.

In early 2016, the Alliance launched a collaborative process to revise the Standards to reflect changes in the legal and operational environment of the land trust community over the past 10 years and to provide overall alignment with the land trust accreditation program, TerraFirma and the wide array of resources and documents supporting best practices for land trusts. By engaging the entire land trust community, the revision process will also strive to build greater awareness and support for the Standards and to encourage all land trusts to implement them.

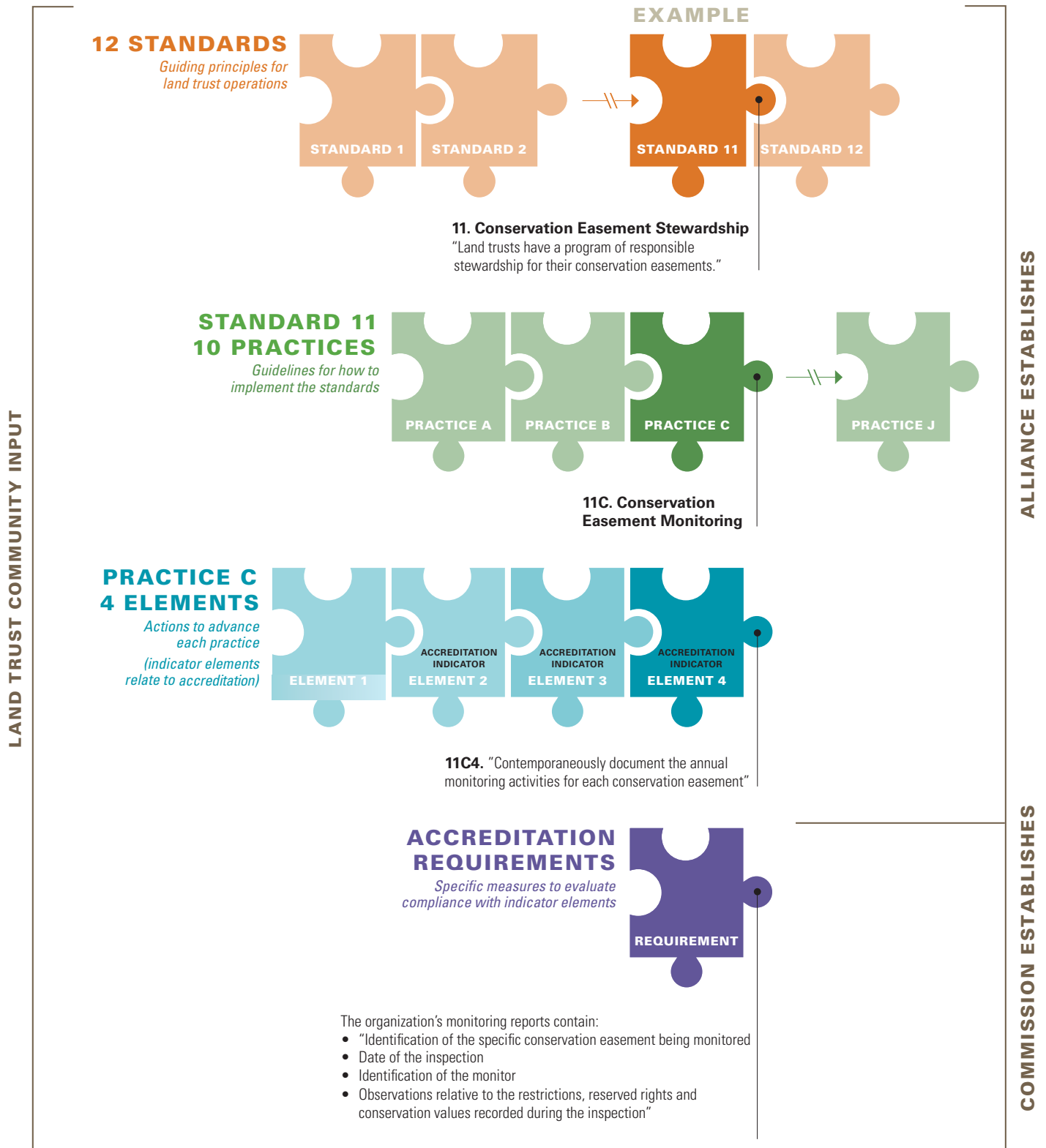
## **Adoption of the Standards**

The current Standards consist of 12 standards with a varying number of related practices, from a low of three (Standard 4: Conflicts of Interest) to a high of 13 (Standard 8: Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects). Many of the current practices encapsulate several separate ideas in a single practice paragraph. The proposed revisions break down these ideas into separate practice elements, providing a more accessible framework. While the number of practices and practice elements will change during the revision process, the overall number of standards will likely remain at 12.

Each standard describes a guiding principle for land trust operations, its practices provide guidelines for how to implement that standard and the practice elements describe specific actions. For instance, in the proposed revisions, Standard 11: Conservation Easement Stewardship reads “Land trusts have a program of responsible stewardship for their conservation easements.” Its third practice, C, is Conservation Easement Monitoring. This practice is made up of four practice elements. The fourth practice element

# The Relationship

Your guide to how standards, practices, elements, accreditation indicators (established by the Alliance) and accreditation requirements (established by the Commission) fit together to build strong land trusts.



For more information about *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, visit [www.lta.org/topics/standards-and-practices](http://www.lta.org/topics/standards-and-practices).

For more information about accreditation requirements, visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/requirements-manual](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/requirements-manual).

is “Contemporaneously document the annual monitoring activities for each conservation easement” (see the infographic on page 29).

The Land Trust Alliance requires its member land trusts to adopt the Standards and to follow them in their operations. Adoption means that the land trust has read the Standards, accepts them as the guiding principles for land trust operation and commits to making continual progress toward their implementation. Some land trust boards have come up with clever methods for ensuring that those responsible for running the land trust understand the Standards, such as assigning one or two standards to each board member to ensure that he or she gets to know the standard thoroughly and can oversee the land trust’s compliance.

## **The Standards and Accreditation**

Launched in 2006, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Alliance, confirms a land trust’s compliance with the Standards through a third-party verification system. The Commission currently requires that a land trust demonstrate compliance with 26 indicator practices derived from the Standards. (Following the revision process, these indicators will be known as “indicator elements,” consistent with the new framework.) With 357 land trusts having achieved accreditation already, and more joining the ranks each year, many land trusts view accreditation as an important goal, bestowing numerous benefits such as greater public trust, stronger community support (in increased visibility, increased membership and monetary support) and increased confidence of easement and land donors.

While the Alliance selects the accreditation indicator practices, the Commission is responsible for developing the accreditation requirements to ensure that each applicant is evaluated fairly and consistently. The accreditation requirements are outlined in a manual that can be downloaded from the accreditation program website ([www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org)) and is updated annually after a public comment period. The requirements let land trusts know how the Commission will evaluate compliance with each indicator practice and what information to provide in the application. While each applicant

must comply with each requirement, how the land trust demonstrates compliance varies greatly.

Five criteria guide the Commission’s development of each requirement. They must be:

- Consistent with the language of the indicator practice (element) or other practices in *Land Trust Standards and Practices*
- Consistent with Alliance materials, published law, other published sources and/or other professional advice (e.g., accountants, appraisers, etc.)
- Essential to land trusts and the land trust community (high risk)
- Equitable, fair and feasible for all land trusts
- Verifiable at a reasonable cost

Each accredited land trust must show how it meets each indicator practice (element); however, “one size does not fit all” in land conservation. The Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.lta.org>) has many examples of how land trusts of all sizes and scope implement the practices. In addition, some of the requirements have “such as” lists showing the variety of ways the requirement can be met. (See the Accreditation Corner on this topic on page 31.)

## **Better and Better**

It has taken years to develop *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and the accreditation requirements, and we’re not done yet. These “living” documents require ongoing revisions to stay relevant as the land conservation community matures, and input from the community is essential to shaping them.

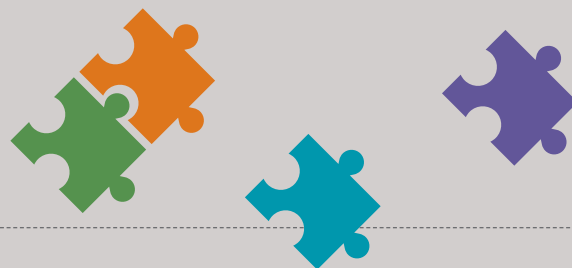
Land trusts share a commitment to these best practices because we know that for land conservation to succeed over the long term, we need to secure the public’s confidence and support. All land trusts must demonstrate effectiveness and credibility—otherwise, the ones that fall short could undermine the whole conservation movement.

The Alliance and the Commission thank all the people who have taken the time to give feedback to either the Standards, the Requirements Manual or both. 🍷

**SYLVIA BATES** IS DIRECTOR OF STANDARDS AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AT THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE.

LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION  
COMMISSION   
An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

# Putting the Pieces Together



**L**and Trust Accreditation Commission staff often get questions like “How do *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (the Standards) and the accreditation requirements fit together?” And “How flexible is accreditation for land trusts of different sizes?”

These questions are easily answered with examples of two representative land trusts. Let’s say Bob is a board member of the fictional all-volunteer Green Land Trust and Sue is the conservation committee chair for the fictional staffed Blue Land Trust.

Bob and Sue each wonder if the accreditation requirements are flexible enough to accommodate the differences in how their boards review and approve land transactions. Simply put: Yes! But first let’s explore how the Standards shape accreditation requirements.


## How Standards and Requirements Fit Together

The Standards currently have 88 practices; 26 of which are indicator practices for accreditation. These 26 are often multifaceted and complex. Fortunately for land trusts, the revised Standards will break each practice into easily understandable “elements.” Indicator elements will replace indicator practices.


Once the Standards are revised, the Commission will craft corresponding accreditation requirements for new elements. Requirements add specificity for accreditation and enable the Commission to fairly and consistently evaluate applicants. See page 29 for a detailed infographic about this relationship.

Now let’s see how the Standards and requirements work together with respect to Bob and Sue’s question about board review and approval of land transactions.

The example is taken from the draft revised Standards.

 **STANDARD 3:** Board Accountability

 **PRACTICE D:** Board Approval of Transactions

 **ELEMENT 1:** The board reviews and approves every land and easement transaction.

 **REQUIREMENTS:**

- The organization documents
- That each project is **evaluated** to determine whether it meets the organization’s criteria and advances the organization’s mission.
- The board has **reviewed** the land transaction.
- The board’s **approval** of the land transaction.

## Fair and Flexible Requirements


Green Land Trust and Blue Land Trust are quite different. While both follow the Standards, they worry the accreditation requirements do not accommodate their differences. Not to fear, the accreditation application review team takes characteristics of each land trust into account during the review.

When the reviewers look at Green Land Trust’s application, they see it is all-volunteer, serving one town and having a board that meets monthly. Board members live locally and most attend a site visit to a potential project. For this land trust, the following documents would meet the requirements.

- **Project Evaluation:** Board meeting minutes reporting on the site visit and confirming the project meets the land protection criteria.
- **Board Review:** Board meeting minutes from several meetings showing discussion of the project.
- **Board Approval:** Minutes recording the board’s vote to approve the project.

In contrast, a review team for Blue Land Trust would have different expectations for documentation. The land trust has three staff members, serves several counties and has a board that meets four times a year. Board members are scattered throughout the state and rely on staff to complete a site inspection and a conservation committee to make recommendations to the board. What Green Land Trust provides would likely not be appropriate for this board, but the following would meet the requirements.

- **Project Evaluation:** Conservation committee meeting materials, including a map, criteria evaluation form and summary of the easement terms.
- **Board Review:** Conservation committee minutes.
- **Board Approval:** Minutes recording the board’s vote to approve the project.

By viewing the application materials through the lens of the characteristics of the land trust, Commission review teams ensure that the accreditation requirements are applied in a way that is fair yet flexible and that respects land trust differences. 

**TAMMARA VAN RYN** IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION.

# How Are We Doing?

A look at one land trust's member recruitment and retention strategy

**"H**ow are we doing?" It's a common question for nonprofits to ask themselves. One of the comparisons we tend to look at to help us get a sense of how we're doing relates to how many members we have. How many members do other land trusts that look like us have? How many members *could* we have, given our local population?

For perspective, I turned to a land trust that has a high ratio of members to population. The Bolton Land Trust (BLT), in Bolton, Connecticut, is an all-volunteer land trust that serves just this single town. It attracts just under 300 members each year and that membership has remained stable for many years. In 2015, 253 of its members lived within the town limits of Bolton. Bolton has 2,191 addresses, and the Bolton Land Trust should know—it mails to every one of them every year.

Its ratio is therefore  $253/2,191 = 11.5\%$ , and is five times more than what I have come to consider "normal."

What is the land trust doing right, and what can we learn from its success? Here's what I learned from Board President Gwen Marrion.

1

## TECHNIQUE: BLT recruits and renews members all together, once a year.

*"Our membership appeal goes out to everyone in mid-June," explains Marrion. "We follow that with a reminder to current members in mid-October and a second reminder in mid-November. By the November letter, we're down to just 80 renewals or so, and we include a stamped envelope. That seems to help. We also talk at our board meetings about who's left, to see if we can help bring the last few renewals in."*

The initial appeal is mailed to every address in the town, including businesses and P.O. boxes. The same letter is used for new members and renewal members. And each year BLT loses only 30 members or so and recruits about 30 new members to replace them.

Some land trusts might dismiss a "mail-to-everyone" strategy due to issues of scale. Bolton is a relatively small

geography. However, even large, urban land trusts could mail to everyone in a concentrated area within their service territory, for example, into the zip codes or carrier routes where there already exists a concentration of support or immediately surrounding a specific project or preserve.

Also, importantly, BLT's appeal doesn't focus on what the land trust has done as much as it focuses on what it believes.

*"We appeal to the heart," says Marrion. "We talk about stone walls and rural landscapes. We share personal experiences about the outdoors, such as eating summer strawberries and seeing snowy owls. We talk about our responsibility to protect our rural character for future generations."*

We can all learn from this. Here's an excerpt from BLT's letter last year:

More than a half-century ago, on a somber November day threatening snow, my brother and I saw a Snowy Owl atop our barn. After a long and magical moment, the owl departed in soundless majesty. Neither of us has seen a Snowy Owl since. Nor has the memory ever left us. Perhaps you also have had a memorable experience that calls you to help preserve special places.

Members don't give every year because they understand or appreciate what you've accomplished, though that also might be true. They give because they believe what you believe. BLT reminds members of what they believe each year in the renewal appeal.

2

## HEART: BLT works hard to get members out on the land.

This is the heart of BLT's approach to member recruitment and retention. BLT hosts five or six public events



BOLTON LAND TRUST

The Bolton Land Trust's Strawberries at Sunset event, held at the Pesce Farm in Bolton, Connecticut, features strawberry picking to live music. Afterward, land trust board members serve attendees ice cream topped with strawberry sauce made from Pesce berries.

each year that encourage members to enjoy the land. Board member Richard Treat describes the purpose of the events in his "Guide for Hosting a BLT Event":

The purpose of these events is to create and plan public gatherings that will attract our members, new members and the community in order to inform them of the mission and progress of the Bolton Land Trust.

The events are varied and well-branded with catchy names: **Strawberries at Sunset**, **Bogsucker Slog**, **Sunset Yoga**, **Walk of Thanksgiving**, and so on.

"Different activities appeal to different people," explains Marrion. "So we try to bring in new events every year to keep it interesting."

A "Save the Dates" letter is sent to all members in January, and reminder postcards are mailed just before each event. Some of the events are so popular they are repeated year after year; others are hosted just once or twice. This year, BLT introduced the **Family Fitness Hike** to encourage families to participate together.

Each event is organized from start to finish by one of the board members or by an outside volunteer. Using Treat's guide, each volunteer organizer:

- conceives of the event;
- "sells" it to the board for review and approval;

- secures dates, venues and all logistics as appropriate;
- interacts with any landowners involved;
- prepares reminder mailings to the members;
- organizes the after-event cleanup; and
- formally prepares a historic record of the event for the permanent files.

3

#### PERSONAL COMMITMENT: The BLT Board of Directors works hard to get to know every member.

A major benefit of the events is that they give board members a chance to meet land trust members. Board members are clearly identified, they address the assembled group and they introduce other board members to people they meet.

Board members are also involved in the acknowledgment process.

"I write personal thank-you notes to anyone who makes a gift of \$100 or more," explains Marrion. "And I assign batches of donors' names as they come in to board members who are responsible for personalizing, signing and mailing preprinted thank you cards. They also write little notes by hand to people they know."

Land trusts who enjoy strong personal connections with their members have

above-average renewal rates, and BLT does exceptionally well in this regard.

4

#### BRANDING: Marrion's "Musings" are emailed to members a dozen times a year.

"Musings" are a form of email

newsletter, but rather than reporting on anything related to the land trust, they are simply from the land trust. The newsletters are well-researched, philosophical reflections on local nature and conservation topics generally. They are "branding" in a pure sense. They work because they serve to reinforce the messages about belief and generate a positive feeling toward the land trust.

"I don't have any tangible way to know whether my 'Musings' attract or keep members," says Marrion. "But people write to me about them and mention them in passing, so they make an impression. They are one of the ways that BLT 'touches' members during the year, and I put a lot of effort into them so I hope they do keep people connected to the land trust."

To see some of Bolton Land Trust's great materials, go to <http://tlc.lta.org/bolton>.

DAVID ALLEN, PRINCIPAL OF DEVELOPMENT FOR CONSERVATION, IS A FUNDRAISING AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT WHO WORKS WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION BOARDS AND STAFF TO HELP THEM BECOME BETTER LEADERS, ADVOCATES AND FUNDRAISERS.

# Birds of a Feather Save Land Together



Fledgling northern saw-whet owls.

**T**he Cornell Lab of Ornithology in New York has partnered with the Land Trust Alliance to bring you the new Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative website: [www.BirdTrust.org](http://www.BirdTrust.org).

The reciprocal benefits of birds and bird watchers to land conservation are many, including:

- Saving more land: Use birds to strengthen easements and protect threatened habitats.
- Protecting key species and habitats: Work with partners to build capacity and protect birds dependent on private land.
- Increasing community support: Engage bird watchers as members and advocates for land protection.
- Fundraising for land protection and management: Learn about bird-specific funding sources and tips for success.
- Doing strategic conservation: Access bird conservation tools and resources to prioritize, acquire and manage important lands. •

## Researching Health and Nature

**WHAT IF WE'RE MISSING** an important ingredient in a healthy human habitat?" asks Dr. Ming Kuo in the opening of her TEDxDirigo talk, "Vitamin N," on YouTube. The missing ingredient? Nature. She asks, "Does the CDC have a minimum daily requirement of nature?" It doesn't, but research strongly suggests it should.

Dr. Kuo, a scientist in the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences department of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has conducted extensive research on the impacts of urban environments on human health. Not surprisingly, her results show that spending time in nature has profoundly positive and long-lasting effects on our psychological, physical and social health.

Her YouTube introduction notes that she has documented the impacts of green spaces on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and examined the ties between greener schoolyards and academic achievement. Her work has linked healthy urban ecosystems to stronger, safer neighborhoods and was the basis of a \$10 million tree-planting initiative in Chicago. She has also helped shape federal landscaping guidelines.

Watch the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGh8CqS4HLk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGh8CqS4HLk). •

## New on The Learning Center: Health & Nature Collection

**AS NOTED ABOVE**, health benefits and nature have been frequently featured in the media as of late, and the Alliance is hosting a workshop on the topic at Rally: "Are You Feeling Tired and Stressed? Ask Your Doctor about Prescription-Strength Nature."

Katie Chang, educational services manager at the Alliance, has centralized many great resources for easy reference in the new "health" collection on The Learning Center.



Check out the page and let us know if you have additional links or resources to share with land trusts: <http://tlc.lta.org/library/collections/1600>. •

## New Overtime Rules

**PART OF EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT** is planning ahead to make sure you'll be able to cover all of your expenses—legal and organizational. That's why everyone should learn about the new overtime rules that will go into effect on December 1, 2016.

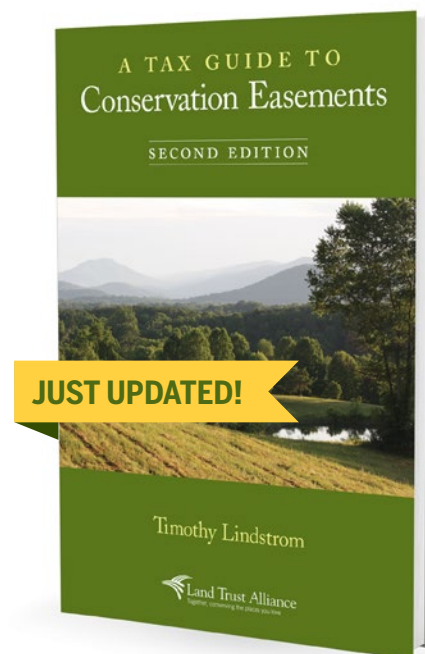
Most employees earning under \$47,500 will be entitled to overtime compensation. See the Department of Labor's special overview ([www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/overtime-nonprofit.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/overtime-nonprofit.pdf)) and guidance ([www.dol.gov/whd/overtime/final2016/nonprofit-guidance.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime/final2016/nonprofit-guidance.pdf)) for nonprofit organizations. The National Council of Nonprofits also published special guidance: "Overtime Regulations and the Impact on Nonprofits" ([www.councilofnonprofits.org/trends-policy-issues/overtime-regulations-and-the-impact-nonprofits](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/trends-policy-issues/overtime-regulations-and-the-impact-nonprofits)). Most experts assess that nonprofits don't have much to fret about (<https://morningconsult.com/opinions/nonprofits-shouldnt-fret-new-overtime-rule>) but if you do fundraising across state lines pay extra attention as this may apply to you. •

## 36 Useful Apps and Online Tools for Nonprofits

**KERRI SORRELL, A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNICATORS' NETWORK ON THE LEARNING CENTER**, passed along this great tidbit from the Nonprofit Tech For Good website:

The number of low-cost or free apps and online tools available to nonprofits today is astounding. Provided you set aside the time to explore and experiment, your nonprofit can use the apps and tools listed on this website to significantly improve your web, email, social media and visual content. See [www.nptechforgood.com/2016/02/28/36-useful-apps-online-tools-for-nonprofits](http://www.nptechforgood.com/2016/02/28/36-useful-apps-online-tools-for-nonprofits). •

## Easily stay up-to-date on conservation easement tax law



**WITH THE NEWLY PERMANENT EASEMENT TAX INCENTIVE** and nearly 75 court decisions dealing with easements since 2008, you can now stay current on tax law with our **newly updated** *Tax Guide to Conservation Easements*.

Written for a general conservation audience, author Timothy Lindstrom clearly covers basic legal concepts underpinning easements, requirements for tax benefits, appraisals and more—a "must-have" desk reference on the complex world of tax law.

Order your copy today!  
[lta.org/publications](http://lta.org/publications)

 **Land Trust Alliance**  
Together, conserving the places you love

# Welcome Wendy Jackson, Our New EVP

“**W**hen I set out to hire the Land Trust Alliance’s next executive vice president, my priority was to find a recognized leader from within the land trust community,” says Alliance President Andrew Bowman. “I wanted a bold, visionary thinker who could advocate effectively for the land trust community, expand the Alliance’s community conservation offerings and guide our efforts to deliver tailored services to land trusts across the country. I found all of these capabilities and much more in Wendy Jackson.”



KATHERINE S. BERDY PHOTOGRAPHY

Wendy Jackson

## ENTER OUR NATIONAL VIDEO CONTEST

Want to receive \$10,000? Ask your members to submit a video and vote in the Land Trust Alliance’s new national video contest, “*Land is my \_\_\_\_\_*”. Top three videos receive cash awards, plus the top vote-getter will choose which land trust gets \$10,000. See [www.LandIsMy.org](http://www.LandIsMy.org) for details and tips for encouraging your members to participate and name you as their land trust of choice.

Wendy, formerly the executive director of Freshwater Land Trust\* in Alabama, brings with her the strategic thinking she has consistently demonstrated throughout her career. For the past 15 years she has worked to grow Freshwater Land Trust from an unknown entity with zero assets to an award-winning nonprofit holding cash and land assets totaling more than \$40 million. She fondly recalls how the Alliance supported her throughout that journey, and how she’s eager now to give back and assist all land trusts.

As executive vice president, Wendy will manage teams that deliver essential services to land trusts. She will create strategies to best deploy the Alliance’s policy, advocacy, community conservation and regional programs to serve the needs of land trusts and increase their effectiveness, all while helping the Alliance cultivate new donors and partnerships.

“I know Wendy will accomplish this and more,” says Andrew. “She will help the Alliance and the land trust community achieve great things as we keep working to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America.” •

## Forging the Future

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1777, having just endured defeat by the British at the Battle of Brandywine, General George Washington marched his troops west to Warwick Furnace deep in the valley of the French Creek in northern Chester County, Pennsylvania. His men were exhausted and much of their weaponry damaged and depleted. Washington took a moment to reflect. What better place to rest, resupply and repair weapons than this sturdy, warm furnace? He sent his soldiers to nearby villages to acquire clock weights and other lead products to be melted down and forged into bullets in the very same furnace in which they had been created. Then, following the much-needed rest, Washington and his troops headed back east toward Philadelphia as they prepared for the harsh winter to come at Valley Forge.

Two hundred thirty-nine years later, the staff of the French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust\* took a hike to the remains of the furnace, located on



An aerial view of Warwick Furnace Farm and the French Creek valley.

the South Branch of the French Creek, containing some of the cleanest waters in the entire watershed. The stacked fieldstones formed a hollow pyramidal structure. The staff stood for a moment in the hush of the icy beauty, taking in the crumbling behemoth on the hill, and felt a collective joy knowing that they were a part of its permanent protection.

This past December, after a year of planning, fundraising and extensive collaboration at the local, state and national levels, French & Pickering closed on the Warwick Furnace Farm project. A neighboring landowner purchased 381 acres, of which 371 were placed under a new conservation easement, and French & Pickering purchased the remaining 171 acres. The project plans include reforestation, historic preservation and compatible public uses.

French & Pickering completed the project with a loan from The Conservation Fund, grants from the Open Space Institute, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Chester County, Warwick and East Nantmeal Townships and individual donations. •

STORY BY **PATRICK GARDNER** AND **SARA PAINTER**, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM **EMILY SCHEIVERT**, **KAREN MARSHALL** AND **CHARLES JACOB**, FROM *LAND MATTERS*, SPRING 2016



Eloise Miller and Murray White, when she received the Murray B. White Preservationist of the Year Award in April.

## Honoring Her Ancestors' Wishes

**IN THE 1870S AND 1880S**, emancipated slave Ned Miller started to acquire land in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He later split the family farm between his two sons, William and John. This year John's 95-year-old daughter, Eloise Miller, signed a conservation easement on 53 of the remaining acres, protecting the land with the Nation Ford Land Trust and honoring the wishes of her father and grandfather to keep the land as it is and in the hands of the family.

The outcome was a long time coming. Murray B. White Jr., previous chair of the land trust, explained how the easement has been in the works since the early 1990s.

The land trust partnered with the South Carolina Conservation Bank, funded by the state legislature, to help fund approximately 30% of the easement value, and with the York County Forever Commission, which provided legal and appraisal fees.

White was quoted in *The Herald* as saying the property is in one of the fastest growing areas in York County. "But we know now that 50 years from now, 100 years, 200 years, there's still going to be 50 acres of farmland that a freed slave bought at the end of the Civil War. That's amazing to me," White said. •

## Ear to the Ground

Two of the oldest conservation organizations in the country, both in Massachusetts, are celebrating anniversaries this year. **The Trustees of Reservations\*** turns 125 and **Mass Audubon\*** turns 100, having already celebrated its anniversary on April 9, the 100th day of the year.

The board of the Land Trust for Tennessee\* has appointed **Liz Edsall McLaurin** as CEO, adding to her current role as president, an office she has held for more than a year.

American Farmland Trust announced that **John Piotti**, former president and CEO of Maine Farmland Trust, took the helm as its new president in July.

In June the National Park Foundation welcomed **Lise Aangeenbrug**, a Land Trust Alliance board member, as executive vice president.

**Mark Weston**, an appraiser with over 30 years' experience in appraising conservation easements, was recently appointed director of the tax credit program in Colorado.

Legacy Land Conservancy\* in Michigan recently announced **Douglas ("Doug") Koop**, former executive director of Little Forks Conservancy in Midland for 18 years, as its new executive director. 🌱

\*Accredited land trust



MARK CLUNEY FOR BIGLIFE MAGAZINE

## Women Who Inspire

**B**igLife Magazine, a quarterly that describes itself as “a must-read for anyone who lives in, visits or dreams about the Mountain West,” featured four women from the land trust community in its summer issue in an article called “Ladies of the Land.”

Writer Jennifer Walton describes the career and life pathways of Joselin Matkins, executive director of the Teton Regional Land Trust; Wendy Fisher, executive director of Utah Open Lands; Laurie Andrews, executive director of Jackson Hole Land Trust (all accredited) and board member of the Land Trust Alliance; and Wendy Ninteman, western director of the Alliance (pictured above).

“At the trailhead of each of their lives was a sign. And, it came from nature,” writes Walton. “Because of their uncanny listening skills, deeply held beliefs and a drive to combine passion and career, they serve up the sky and land with motivation and purpose. For each, their relationship to nature determines and enhances their ability to communicate to farmers and ranchers, urbanites and the power players in Congress.”

Walton points out that “studies in sustainability leadership illustrate that the two most important indicators of environmental commitment are experiences of natural areas and family influences.”

Matkins is a case in point as she tells Walton: “My parents didn’t see nature as something special to be treasured. It was just what they experienced every day living off the land. And today it’s absolutely vital to my physical and mental health.”

Ninteman describes her perfect summer day to Walton, revealing a conservation twist at the end: “[I would be] in the high country, in a cirque basin where the snowmelt is feeding wet meadows full of glacier lilies that serve as the headwaters for everything below. I’m lying on my back looking up at the clouds. My friends are there. Our dogs are there. The ground is soft on our backs. I can rest assured knowing that as the water moves down through the bench land and then the valley bottoms, there is a land trust down there working hard to conserve this magical place we are lucky enough to call home.”

SEE THE ARTICLE AT [WWW.BIGLIFEMAG.COM/LADIES-OF-THE-LAND](http://WWW.BIGLIFEMAG.COM/LADIES-OF-THE-LAND).

# Accredited Land Trusts



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING LAND CONSERVATION GROUPS

from around the country for achieving accreditation and demonstrating they meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement.

### NATIONAL

- Ducks Unlimited and its affiliate, Wetlands America Trust ♦
- The Conservation Fund and its affiliate, Sustainable Conservation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wilderness Land Trust ♦

### ALABAMA

- Freshwater Land Trust ♦
- Georgia-Alabama Land Trust
- Land Trust of North Alabama
- Weeks Bay Foundation ♦

### ALASKA

- Great Land Trust
- Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
- Southeast Alaska Land Trust

### ARIZONA

- Arizona Land and Water Trust
- Central Arizona Land Trust \*
- Desert Foothills Land Trust ♦

### ARKANSAS

- Northwest Arkansas Land Trust

### CALIFORNIA

- Bear Yuba Land Trust ♦
- Big Sur Land Trust
- California Rangeland Trust ♦
- Center for Natural Lands Management ♦
- Central Valley Farmland Trust ♦
- Eastern Sierra Land Trust ♦
- Elkhorn Slough Foundation
- Feather River Land Trust
- John Muir Land Trust \*
- Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
- Land Trust for Santa Barbara County ♦
- Land Trust of Napa County
- Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
- Marin Agricultural Land Trust ♦
- Northcoast Regional Land Trust

- Northern California Regional Land Trust ♦
- Ojai Valley Land Conservancy \*
- Pacific Forest Trust ♦
- Peninsula Open Space Trust ♦
- Placer Land Trust ♦
- Riverside Land Conservancy
- Sacramento Valley Conservancy ♦
- San Diego Habitat Conservancy
- San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust
- Save Mount Diablo
- Save the Redwoods League
- Sempervirens Fund ♦
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Shasta Land Trust ♦
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- Silicon Valley Land Conservancy
- Solano Land Trust
- Sonoma Land Trust
- Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust \*
- Tejon Ranch Conservancy
- Tri-Valley Conservancy ♦
- Truckee Donner Land Trust
- Wildlife Heritage Foundation ♦

### COLORADO

- Access Fund
- Aspen Valley Land Trust ♦
- Black Canyon Regional Land Trust ♦
- Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust ♦
- Colorado Headwaters Land Trust
- Colorado Open Lands ♦
- Crested Butte Land Trust
- Douglas Land Conservancy
- Eagle Valley Land Trust ♦
- Estes Valley Land Trust ♦
- La Plata Open Space Conservancy ♦
- Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas
- Mesa Land Trust ♦
- Montezuma Land Conservancy ♦
- Mountain Area Land Trust
- Palmer Land Trust ♦
- Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust ♦
- San Isabel Land Protection Trust ♦

### CONNECTICUT

- Candlewood Valley Regional Land Trust \*
- Colchester Land Trust
- Connecticut Farmland Trust
- Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust \*
- Granby Land Trust
- Greenwich Land Trust
- Housatonic Valley Association
- Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust ♦
- Kent Land Trust ♦
- Lyme Land Conservation Trust
- Norfolk Land Trust
- Redding Land Trust ♦
- Roxbury Land Trust
- Salem Land Trust ♦
- Sharon Land Trust
- The Cornwall Conservation Trust \*
- Warren Land Trust
- Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

### FLORIDA

- Alachua Conservation Trust ♦
- Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast ♦
- Conservation Trust for Florida
- Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy ♦

### GEORGIA

- Athens Land Trust ♦
- Central Savannah River Land Trust ♦
- Chattahoochee Valley Land Trust
- Georgia Piedmont Land Trust
- Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia ♦
- Oconee River Land Trust ♦
- Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land
- Southern Conservation Trust
- St. Simons Land Trust

### HAWAII

- Hawaiian Islands Land Trust ♦

The mission of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission is to inspire excellence, promote public trust and ensure permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing land trust organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and that strive for continuous improvement.

For information on the land trust accreditation program: **LANDTRUSTACCREDITATION.ORG**

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## IDAHO

- Kaniksu Land Trust
- Lemhi Regional Land Trust
- Palouse Land Trust
- Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust
- Teton Regional Land Trust ♦
- Wood River Land Trust ♦

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## ILLINOIS

- Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
- Lake Forest Open Lands Association and its affiliate, Lake Forest Land Foundation ♦
- Openlands

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## INDIANA

- Central Indiana Land Trust

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## IOWA

- Bur Oak Land Trust
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation ♦

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## KANSAS

- Kansas Land Trust

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## KENTUCKY

- Bluegrass Conservancy
- Kentucky Natural Lands Trust
- Louisville & Jefferson County Environmental Trust
- River Fields \*

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## LOUISIANA

- Land Trust for Louisiana

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## MAINE

- Androscoggin Land Trust
- Bangor Land Trust
- Blue Hill Heritage Trust
- Boothbay Region Land Trust
- Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust
- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust
- Chebeague & Cumberland Land Trust
- Coastal Mountains Land Trust ♦
- Damariscotta River Association
- Forest Society of Maine ♦
- Frenchman Bay Conservancy
- Georges River Land Trust
- Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust
- Harpswell Heritage Land Trust
- Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
- Mahoosuc Land Trust
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust ♦
- Medomak Valley Land Trust
- Midcoast Conservancy

- Oceanside Conservation Trust of Casco Bay
- Orono Land Trust
- Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
- Three Rivers Land Trust \*
- Vinalhaven Land Trust

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## MARYLAND

- American Chestnut Land Trust
- Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- Potomac Conservancy ♦

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## MASSACHUSETTS

- Ashby Land Trust
- Buzzards Bay Coalition and its affiliate, Acushnet River Reserve
- Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust
- Groton Conservation Trust
- Kestrel Land Trust
- Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
- Massachusetts Audubon Society
- Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
- Sheriff's Meadow Foundation
- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- The Trustees of Reservations and its affiliates, Boston Natural Areas Network, Hilltown Land Trust and Massachusetts Land Conservation Trust ♦
- Wareham Land Trust
- White Oak Land Conservation Society

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## MICHIGAN

- Chikaming Open Lands ♦
- Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy ♦
- Land Conservancy of West Michigan
- Leelanau Conservancy ♦
- Legacy Land Conservancy ♦
- Little Forks Conservancy ♦
- Michigan Nature Association
- North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy
- Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
- Six Rivers Land Conservancy
- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy

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## MINNESOTA

- Minnesota Land Trust ♦

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## MISSISSIPPI

- Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain ♦

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## MONTANA

- Bitter Root Land Trust
- Five Valleys Land Trust ♦

- Flathead Land Trust
- Gallatin Valley Land Trust ♦
- Montana Land Reliance ♦
- Prickly Pear Land Trust
- Vital Ground Foundation

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## NEBRASKA

- Nebraska Land Trust

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## NEVADA

- Nevada Land Trust

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

- Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust
- Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust ♦
- Monadnock Conservancy ♦
- Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
- Squam Lakes Conservation Society
- Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
- Upper Valley Land Trust

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## NEW JERSEY

- D&R Greenway Land Trust
- Harding Land Trust
- Hunterdon Land Trust
- Monmouth Conservation Foundation
- New Jersey Conservation Foundation
- Ridge and Valley Conservancy
- The Land Conservancy of New Jersey ♦

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## NEW MEXICO

- New Mexico Land Conservancy
- Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust
- Santa Fe Conservation Trust
- Taos Land Trust

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## NEW YORK

- Agricultural Stewardship Association
- Champlain Area Trails
- Columbia Land Conservancy
- Dutchess Land Conservancy ♦
- Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Genesee Land Trust
- Genesee Valley Conservancy
- Greene Land Trust
- Hudson Highlands Land Trust ♦
- Lake George Land Conservancy
- Mianus River Gorge ♦
- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
- Mohonk Preserve
- North Salem Open Land Foundation
- North Shore Land Alliance
- Oblong Land Conservancy

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- Open Space Institute and its affiliate, Open Space Institute Land Trust ♦
- Orange County Land Trust
- Otsego Land Trust
- Rensselaer Land Trust ♦
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- Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust ♦
- Wallkill Valley Land Trust
- Westchester Land Trust ♦
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## NORTH CAROLINA

- Blue Ridge Conservancy
- Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy ♦
- Catawba Lands Conservancy ♦
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina ♦
- Eno River Association ♦
- Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina ♦
- Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
- LandTrust for Central North Carolina
- Mainspring Conservation Trust ♦
- New River Conservancy ♦
- North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- Piedmont Land Conservancy ♦
- RiverLink
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy ♦
- Tar River Land Conservancy
- Triangle Land Conservancy \*

## OHIO

- Black Swamp Conservancy \*
- Gates Mills Land Conservancy
- Licking Land Trust
- Tecumseh Land Trust ♦
- Three Valley Conservation Trust

## OREGON

- Deschutes Land Trust ♦
- Greenbelt Land Trust ♦
- McKenzie River Trust ♦
- North Coast Land Conservancy \*
- Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
- The Wetlands Conservancy
- Wallowa Land Trust
- Western Rivers Conservancy

## PENNSYLVANIA

- Allegheny Land Trust ♦
- Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy ♦
- Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art ♦
- Chestnut Hill Historical Society
- ClearWater Conservancy
- Countryside Conservancy ♦
- Delaware Highlands Conservancy
- Edward L. Rose Conservancy
- French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
- French Creek Valley Conservancy

- Heritage Conservancy ♦
- Lancaster County Conservancy ♦
- Lancaster Farmland Trust ♦
- Land Conservancy of Adams County
- Natural Lands Trust and its affiliate, Montgomery County Lands Trust ♦
- North Branch Land Trust ♦
- The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County ♦
- Tinicum Conservancy ♦
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Westmoreland Conservancy
- Willistown Conservation Trust ♦

## PUERTO RICO

- Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico

## RHODE ISLAND

- Aquidneck Land Trust ♦
- Block Island Conservancy
- Sakonnet Preservation Association ♦
- South Kingstown Land Trust
- Tiverton Land Trust

## SOUTH CAROLINA

- Aiken Land Conservancy \*
- Beaufort County Open Land Trust
- Congaree Land Trust
- Edisto Island Open Land Trust ♦
- Lowcountry Land Trust
- Pee Dee Land Trust
- Spartanburg Area Conservancy
- Upstate Forever ♦

## TENNESSEE

- Land Trust for Tennessee ♦
- Lookout Mountain Conservancy
- Tennessee Parks & Greenways Foundation ♦
- Wolf River Conservancy

## TEXAS

- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas
- Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Hill Country Land Trust
- Katy Prairie Conservancy \*
- Pines and Prairies Land Trust
- Texas Agricultural Land Trust
- Texas Land Conservancy ♦

## UTAH

- Summit Land Conservancy
- Utah Open Lands

## VERMONT

- Greensboro Land Trust ♦
- Lake Champlain Land Trust ♦
- Northeast Wilderness Trust ♦
- Stowe Land Trust ♦
- Vermont Land Trust

## VIRGINIA

- Blue Ridge Land Conservancy ♦
- Historic Virginia Land Conservancy
- Land Trust of Virginia ♦
- New River Land Trust
- Northern Neck Land Conservancy
- Northern Virginia Conservation Trust ♦
- Piedmont Environmental Council and its affiliate, Piedmont Foundation ♦
- Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust ♦

## WASHINGTON

- Bainbridge Island Land Trust
- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Capitol Land Trust
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- Forterra ♦
- Great Peninsula Conservancy
- Jefferson Land Trust ♦
- Lummi Island Heritage Trust
- Methow Conservancy
- Nisqually Land Trust
- North Olympic Land Trust
- PCC Farmland Trust
- San Juan Preservation Trust
- Skagit Land Trust ♦
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust

## WEST VIRGINIA

- Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust
- West Virginia Land Trust \*

## WISCONSIN

- Bayfield Regional Conservancy
- Caledonia Conservancy
- Door County Land Trust \*
- Ice Age Trail Alliance
- Kettle Moraine Land Trust
- Kinnickinnic River Land Trust ♦
- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- Natural Heritage Land Trust
- Northwoods Land Trust
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
- Tall Pines Conservancy
- West Wisconsin Land Trust

## WYOMING

- Jackson Hole Land Trust ♦
- Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust

As of August 17, 2016

\* Indicates Newly Accredited

♦ Indicates Newly Renewed

◆ Indicates Previously Renewed

## LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

An independent program of the Land Trust Alliance



1660 L Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20036

[www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org)

A photograph showing several hands of different ages and skin tones reaching down to touch the soil and green grass. The hands are arranged in a circle, symbolizing community and shared effort in conservation.

# TOGETHER, conserving the places you love

## AS A LAND TRUST OR CONSERVANCY,

you provide your community clean water, clean air, fresh local food, wildlife habitats and a chance to connect with the land.

**Become a member of the Land Trust Alliance and together we'll all succeed.**

## Strengthen your land trust with these member benefits:

- Eligibility for the Conserv-a-Nation® Group liability insurance program
- Access to The Learning Center, with online courses, discussion groups and our renowned digital library of conservation resources
- Discounts on Rally and other training events
- A year's worth of *Saving Land* (four issues) and member discounts on books, publications and DVDs
- Regular email updates, including eNews and public policy alerts

**Join the Land Trust Alliance today!** Visit [www.lta.org/join](http://www.lta.org/join) for details or contact [membership@lta.org](mailto:membership@lta.org) or (202) 638-4725.

