The Commission is managed by a professional staff operating from a central office in Saratoga Springs, NY, and field offices in Washington and Massachusetts. Land Trusts are encouraged to contact the Help Desk with questions about the program.

Melissa Kalvestrand, Executive Director

Melissa joined the Commission in November 2009. As executive director she oversees the accreditation review process, works closely with the Commission to review and update the Requirements Manual, and has reviewed more than 70 accreditation applications to date. Previously, she worked at The Nature Conservancy to develop key ecological indicators for the Hudson River adaptive management plan and to collect data to assess the success of invasive species reduction programs. Melissa has a master’s degree in biodiversity, conservation and policy from the University at Albany and a bachelor’s degree in biology from Cornell University.

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Jennifer Brady-Connor, Associate Program Director

Jennifer has worked with the Commission since March 2008 on almost every aspect of the accreditation program. As Associate Program Director, Jennifer manages the application deadline and review schedule in addition to reviewing applications. Jennifer previously worked for the Land Trust Alliance, helping develop the 2004 revised Land Trust Standards and Practices and the land trust accreditation program in addition to providing technical assistance to land trusts. Jennifer worked many years for a local land trust and other nonprofits to address wetland and water quality issues, she has served on a number of nonprofit boards, and she has owned and operated two small businesses. In addition to earning a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University at Albany, she has a certificate in project management from Empire State College’s School of Graduate Studies.

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Greg Good, Senior Review Specialist
Greg joined the Commission in 2012. As the former executive director of North Olympic Land Trust in Washington, he became familiar with accreditation while leading that organization through the process. He began his land conservation career in 2005 as a Colorado Conservation Fellow, and has education and experience in the fields of environmental science, regional planning, natural resources management, and finance.

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Stacy Girmindl, Program Coordinator

Stacy joined the Commission in March 2015. As program associate she is responsible for office management, assisting in applicant tracking and correspondence along with coordinating Commission meetings. Prior to joining the Commission, she has worked in both the non-profit and corporate sectors as a marketing associate, event planner and executive coordinator. Stacy holds a bachelor’s degree in communications from the College of Saint Rose.

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Valerie Roof, Senior Review Specialist

Valerie joined the Commission in 2012. She previously served as executive director of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy in Michigan where she managed $4 million dollars in grant funding to purchase conservation easements. Prior to that she served in various roles with the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, Alliance for Bay County Schools, United Way, and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). Valerie also served as a consultant and facilitator with Crystal Planning Solutions, and was on the boards of several nonprofits and a private foundation. Her educational background includes a master’s degree in quality management.

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Jessica Whittaker, Senior Review Specialist

Jessica is a licensed attorney, who practiced in primarily the areas of real estate and estate planning law. Prior to entering into private practice, she was the executive director of the Sippican Lands Trust, Inc. (SLT), where she successfully guided staff through the accreditation process during the pilot program. Jessica also worked in land protection for both SLT and the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Inc. She has served on several nonprofit boards and committees, and served as Commissioner from 2009 to 2012.

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