



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

The Commission awards the accreditation seal to land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

2009 Accreditation Registration System

Details for land trusts interested in applying next year

Automated Registration System

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission launched an automated system for interested land trusts to register to apply for accreditation in 2009. The registration system became available on the Commission's website at **12:00pm EDT on August 11** and allows land trusts to register for a specific 2009 application due date ("application round").

2009 Application Rounds

There will be three application rounds in 2009, with complete applications due on the following dates:

Application Round 1:

March 26, 2009 (*pre-application due January 15*)

Application Round 2:

July 16, 2009 (*pre-application due May 7*)

Application Round 3:

November 12, 2009 (*pre-application due September 3*)

When an application round is fully subscribed, a limited waiting list option will become available. The Commission anticipates accepting 102 registrations for the 2009 accreditation year.

Things to Know about Registering!

The registration process will take about 15-30 minutes to complete, including payment of registration fees. Registration must be completed in one session and will not be complete until the registration form is submitted electronically with payment.

The \$750 registration fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable. Submitting a registration commits an organization to a specific pre-application and application due date in 2009. Failure to submit the pre-application on the due date a land trust registered for will result in the forfeiture of the registration fee. A land trust may not transfer its registration fee to a different round.

The registration fee is a portion of the full accreditation fee that is due at the time the complete application is submitted. Read the complete fee schedule online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/downloads/AccreditationFees2009.doc>.

To complete the registration form you must:

- ✓ Know the date your land trust adopted the revised *Land Trust Standards and Practices*;
- ✓ Know the date of completion (or anticipated completion) of your land trust's most recent assessment against the full *Land Trust Standards and Practices*;
- ✓ Commit to the pre-application and application due dates for the round you select;
- ✓ Have credit card or Paypal account information ready for registration fee payment (see more on page 3);
- ✓ Be ready to answer 'yes' to all the questions on the registration form (see more on next page).

What information will be requested as part of the registration form?

The registration form will have five sections: eligibility, readiness, organization information, application round selection, and payment information. Each section and the corresponding information requested is outlined below.

1) Eligibility

Your land trust must be able to answer yes to all of the following questions in order to be eligible to apply for accreditation. *For more information please read the Are You Ready? fact sheet available at: <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/downloads/AreYouReady.pdf>.*

- ❓ Are you a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt or quasi-governmental organization (or will you be at the time of pre-application)?
- ❓ Have you been incorporated for at least two years (or will you have been at the time of pre-application)?
- ❓ Are you focused on acquiring and/or stewarding conservation land or conservation easements?
- ❓ Have you completed at least two direct land or easement acquisition projects (or will you have done so at the time of pre-application)?
- ❓ Have you adopted *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (2004)?
- ❓ Have you conducted an assessment against the full *Land Trust Standards and Practices*?

Land trusts considering registering for a 2009 application round should read the application for accreditation and the *Applicant Handbook* thoroughly to see if – or when – the organization will be ready to submit a complete application in 2009. Read this information before selecting an application round! Both publications are available at: <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/application>.

2) Readiness

Your land trust must consider whether it will be ready to apply for accreditation by the application due date by being able to answer yes to all of the following questions. *For more information about each question, please read the Are You Ready? fact sheet available at: <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/downloads/AreYouReady.pdf>.*

- ❓ Are you implementing the accreditation indicator practices?
- ❓ Do you have the necessary documentation to demonstrate your implementation efforts?
- ❓ Can you show how your organization reviews and approves land transactions?
- ❓ Do you have a written records policy and are duplicate copies of essential records stored in a separate location?
- ❓ Can you demonstrate how you will pay for long-term stewardship and defense costs?
- ❓ If you hold conservation easements, do you have baseline documentation (or current condition) reports for each one and do you have documentation that you monitor each one annually?
- ❓ If you own land in fee, do you have management plans or summaries for each property and records demonstrating that you inspect each property regularly?

3) Organization Information

Your land trust will enter or confirm its contact information here.

4) Application Round Selection

When completing the registration form, your organization will select the application round it would like to participate in for 2009. If an application round is fully subscribed, a limited number of waiting list spaces will become available. See more on the waiting list on the next page.

5) Payment Information

Your organization will complete its registration by entering billing information and a credit card or PayPal account payment for the nonrefundable, nontransferable \$750 registration fee. Your organization must be prepared to pay the balance of the accreditation fee at the time of application. See <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/downloads/AccreditationFees2009.doc> for the 2009 fee schedule. You must have a credit card or electronic check routing information to be able to register.

Payments will be processed by PayPal, a secure online payment system. Registrants may pay the \$750 registration fee as a PayPal guest (i.e. no PayPal account is required) via credit or debit card. To pay by electronic check using a checking account, registrants will be required to have a verified PayPal account with a confirmed bank account. Please note that setting up a verified PayPal account takes several days. For more information about establishing a PayPal account please visit <http://www.PayPal.com>.

Important Information about the Waiting List

The waiting list feature offers land trusts a fair and consistent method of being added to an application round in the event an applicant does not or cannot meet its application deadline. It also allows the Commission to manage a steady flow of applications by offering a limited number of waiting list spaces to organizations that are willing to commit to completing a timely pre-application and fully participating in the application round if space becomes available.

A land trust on the waiting list will proceed on a parallel track with those officially in the application round: it must prepare a pre-application, Land Conservation Project List and other supporting pre-application material and submit them on the pre-application due date. Land trusts on the waiting list must be prepared to submit a complete application on the application due date for the round.

? *I want to register my land trust as soon as possible for the 2009 accreditation cycle but my board has not had a chance to discuss these details yet. If my land trust board later decides that another round would be more suitable, can we change our application round?*

Land trusts are not able to change their application round once their registration form and payment is submitted. We strongly encourage all land trusts interested in applying in 2009 to thoroughly discuss the details of the registration and application process before registering.

If at any point the waitlisted land trust does not meet a deadline, it will lose its waitlisted status and forfeit its fees as would any land trust in the application round. In addition, if the land trust submits a pre-application that is not acceptable it will lose its waitlisted status and forfeit its fees as would any land trust in the application round.

The invitation for a waitlisted organization to submit a complete application becomes available when a regular applicant in the round drops out, is not eligible or ready to proceed to the full application stage or misses a deadline. If space(s) becomes available, waitlisted land trusts will be invited to submit a complete application in the order in which they were waitlisted, provided they have met all other deadlines for their round. Waitlisted organizations will know within 5 weeks of the complete application due date if they must submit a complete application.

Waitlisted land trusts that are invited to submit a complete application must do so or forfeit all fees and the opportunity to apply in 2009. Any land trust on the waiting list that did meet all the pre-application requirements but that did not get invited to submit a complete application, will be guaranteed an opportunity to apply in 2010; the nonrefundable registration fee will be applied accordingly.

Frequently Asked Questions

? *What if my land trust registers and later decides not to submit a pre-application or application?*

All fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable. Applicants that are not able to submit documents on the dates they registered for will forfeit the registration fee and their slot in the application round will be granted to an organization on the waiting list.

? *What if my land trust would like to register for more than one application round?*

A land trust may only register for one round or one waiting list. (For example, you may not register for the round 1 waiting list and also register for round 2.) If a land trust does submit registration information for more than one round, either as a regular registrant or on the waiting list, the registration that was submitted first will be the one accepted by the Commission.

? *How does this compare to last year's lottery?*

This system replaces the Intent to Apply and lottery process that was used to select applicants for 2008. The new registration system allows organizations to choose the application round that works best for them – on a first-come, first-served basis.

? *What if all the slots are full by the time my land trust is ready to register?*

The registration system is a first-come, first-served system. Land trusts that are not able to register for 2009 should consider registering for 2010 and taking the additional time to continue efforts to implement *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. Registration information for 2010 will be available by mid-2009 after the Commission has had an opportunity to evaluate how well the 2009 system worked.

The Commission expects that the number of accredited land trusts will grow steadily over time as it accommodates all eligible and interested organizations and as land trusts make the significant commitment necessary to prepare and apply for accreditation. The Commission is committed to accepting as many applications as it can responsibly review each year. It is continually evaluating its program and capacity, and if interest in the program exceeds capacity the Commission will consider ways that it can increase the number of applications accepted each year.

For more information

For more information on the benefits of accreditation to your land trust, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org/downloads/BenefitsofAccreditation.pdf.

For more information on the accreditation program or registering for 2009, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, email info@landtrustaccreditation.org or call 518-587-3143.

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