



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

# Introduction to Land Trust Accreditation



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

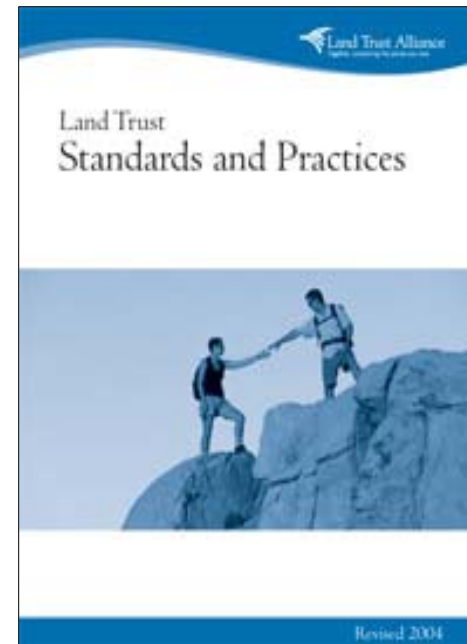
Land Trust   
Accreditation Commission  
An Independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

# Webinar Outline

- ✓ **Accreditation Background & Overview**
- ✓ **The Commission**
- ✓ **Requirements & Process Overview**
- ✓ **Benefits & Results**
- ✓ **Getting Ready**
- ✓ **Questions**

# What is Accreditation?

- Based on *Land Trust Standards and Practices*
- Independent verification of 26 indicator practices
- Voluntary



# History & Milestones

- **Talked about since 1989**
- **2004-2005 – Land Trust Alliance-convened Steering Committee**
- **3 phases of public comment**
- **Fall 2005 – General design approved**
- **April 2006 – Commission established**

# History & Milestones

- **Additional public comment**
- **2 rounds of pilots in 2007**
- **Program launched in early 2008**
- **Inaugural awards in September 2008**
- **Today – 93 accredited land trusts**



# Program Evaluation & Improvements



- **January 2010 - Land Trust Alliance adjusted indicator practices**
- **Reduced redundancy**
- **Commission revised application materials**

# Goals of the Accreditation Program



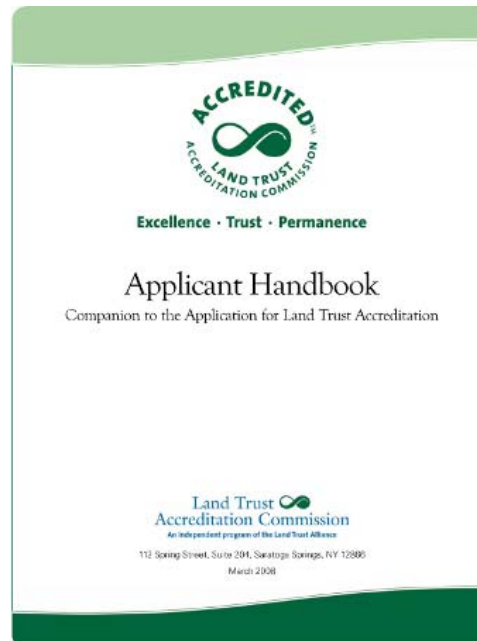
- **Excellence**
- **Trust**
- **Permanence**

# Land Trust Accreditation Commission

- Independent program of the Land Trust Alliance
- 15 diverse volunteer commissioners
- 5 staff

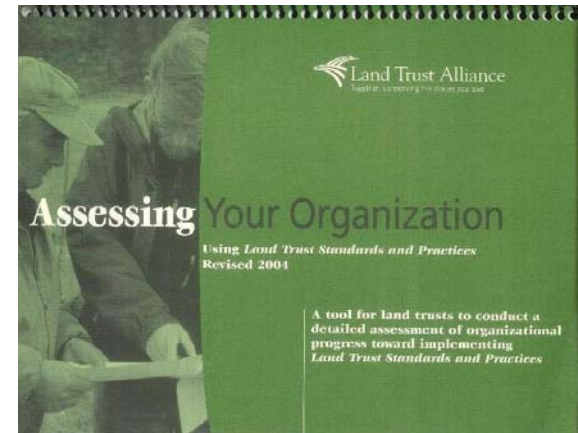


# The Accreditation Process



# Eligibility

- 501(c)(3) or quasi-governmental
- Land conservation mission
- 2 years
- 2 projects
- Adopted *Land Trust Standards and Practices*
- Self-assessment within last 3 years

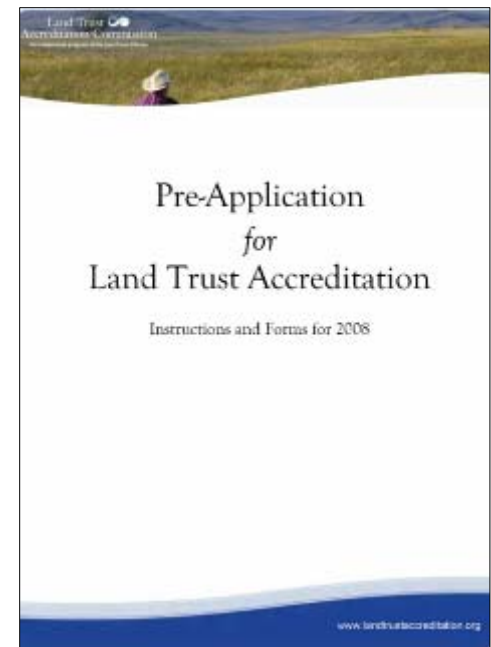


# Registration

- **First step in the accreditation process**
- **Complete online form**
  - **Answer questions about eligibility**
  - **Provide organizational information**
  - **Provide information about specific policies/procedures**
- **Pay nonrefundable, nontransferable fee of \$750**
- **Registration open for 2010 rounds 2 and 3**

# Pre-Application

- **Pre-application questionnaire**
- **Land conservation project lists**
- **Statement of Dedicated and Restricted Funds**
- **Public notice begins**



# Project Documentation

- **2-6 projects selected**
- **Project Documentation Checklist**
- **Newer projects, current practice**
- **Older projects, stewardship focus**



# Application

- Application Questionnaire
- Attachments
  - Statements
  - Practice documentation
  - Project documentation
  - Public notice
- Pay fee, based on land trust budget size

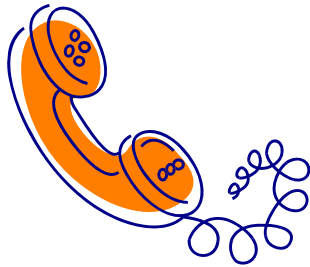


# Application Review

- **Review team (staff and commissioners) evaluates compliance with all indicator practices by considering:**
  - **Application**
  - **Supporting documents**
  - **Project documentation**
  - **Public comments**
  - **Research**
  - **Conversations with applicant representatives and or site visit reports**



# Applicant Conference Call\*



- **Additional information**
  - **Clarification**
  - **Detailed agenda in advance**
  - **Lasts about 2 hours**
- \* **Alternatively, review team may make site visit**

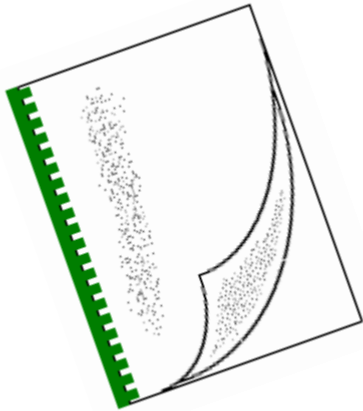
# Additional Information Request

- **Follow-up letter with questions, document requests or corrective action**



# Review Team Recommendation

- **All practices, however, review considers:**
  - **Current practice: variation between older and newer projects**
  - **Flexible: range of approaches**
  - **Practical: fosters continuous improvement**



# Full Commission Decision

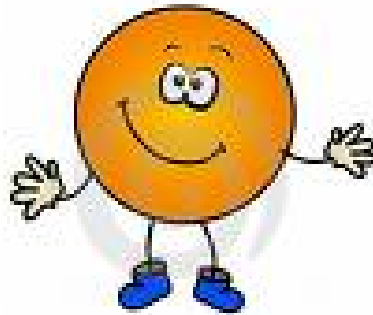
- **Accredit**
  - Commendations
  - Expectations for Improvement
- **Table**
- **Deny**



**Questions?**



**Is it Working? You Bet!**



# Encourage Excellence

- “We would want other organizations to know that this process – time consuming though it is – is absolutely worth the time and effort to complete!”
- “2-legged stool (fundraising and transactions), now 3-legged (with standards)”
- “Board now asks is this consistent with *Land Trust Standards and Practices*”
- “Can raise more money and save more land”

# Foster Public Trust

- **Funders**
- **Agencies**
- **Congress**



# Help Ensure Permanence



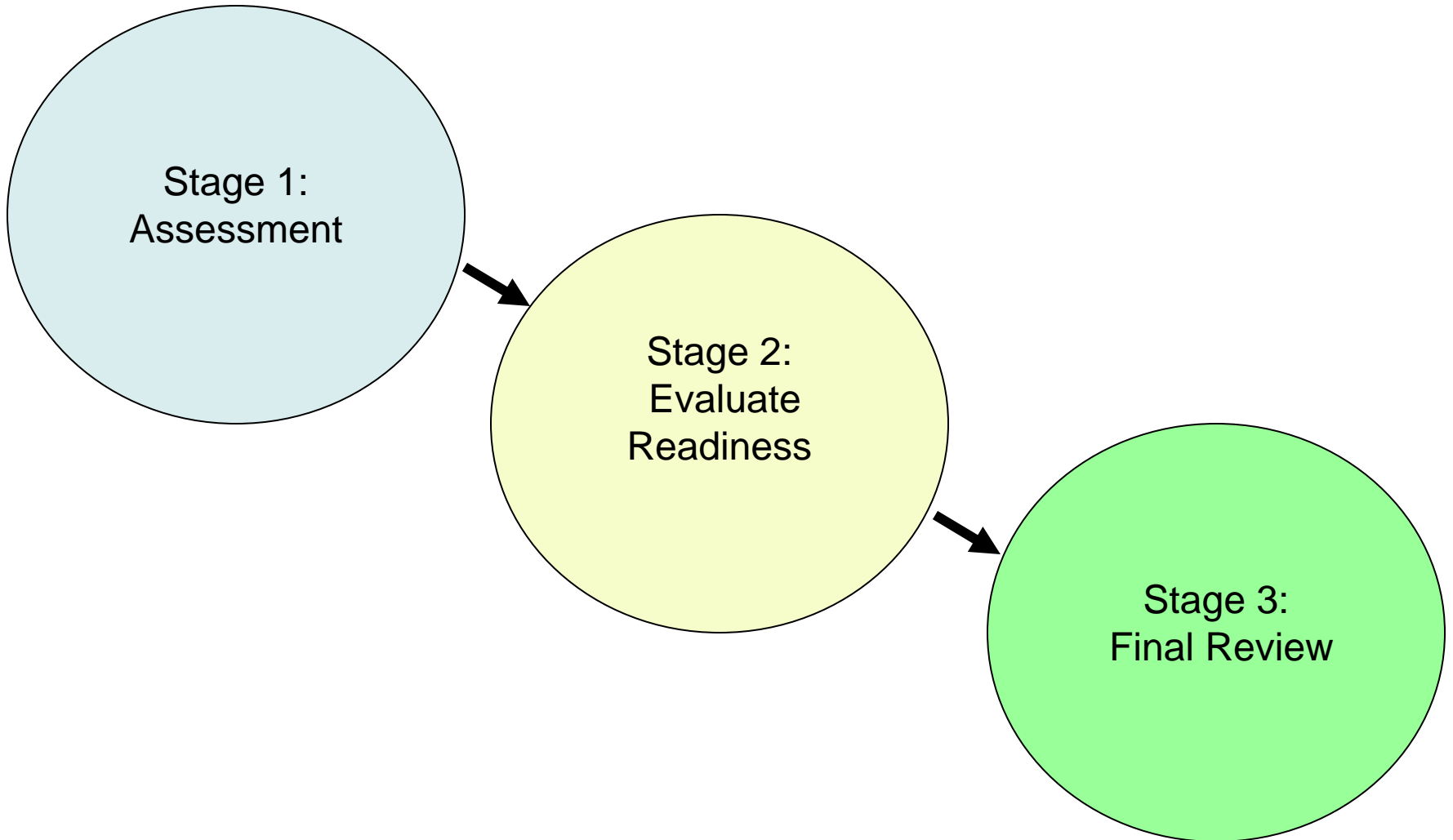
- **More money dedicated to stewardship and defense**
- **Baselines**
- **Management plans**
- **Monitoring**
- **Due diligence**

# Results

- **Accredited land trusts:**
  - **Are more prepared to defend conservation land**
  - **Have better systems for making and documenting decisions**
  - **Have proven they meet national quality standards**

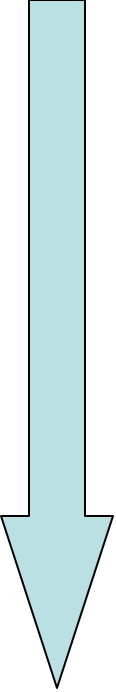



# Getting Ready





# Stage 1: Assessment

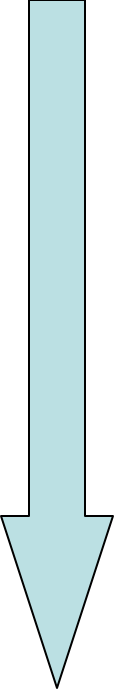

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- **Complete assessment against full *Land Trust Standards and Practices***
  - **Identify areas for improvement**
  - **Work on high priority areas (indicator practices and others)**
  - **Develop and adopt necessary policies and procedures**
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## Stage 2: Evaluate Readiness

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- Read the application, *Applicant Handbook* and *Guidance Documents*
  - Read the requirements
  - Work through the Master Attachment Checklist
    - Do you have the documents?
    - Do they meet the practices?
  - Create an accreditation plan



## **Stage 3: Final Review**

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- **Assemble your accreditation team**
  - **Gather and review documents, policies and procedures**
  - **Edit final documents**
  - **Register to apply!**
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# Land Trust Alliance Tools

- **The Learning Center:**  
<http://learningcenter.lta.org>
- ***Standards and Practices Guidebook***
- **Standards and Practices Curriculum**
- **Training, conferences, online learning and webinars**
- **Coming soon: Pathways to Accreditation**



# Commission Resources

- **Website:**  
[www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org)
- ***Applicant Handbook***
- **Fact sheets**
- ***Guidance Documents***
- **Webinars**
- **Commission staff**



Questions?





**Thank you!**

