



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

Introduction to Land Trust Accreditation



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www.landtrustaccreditation.org

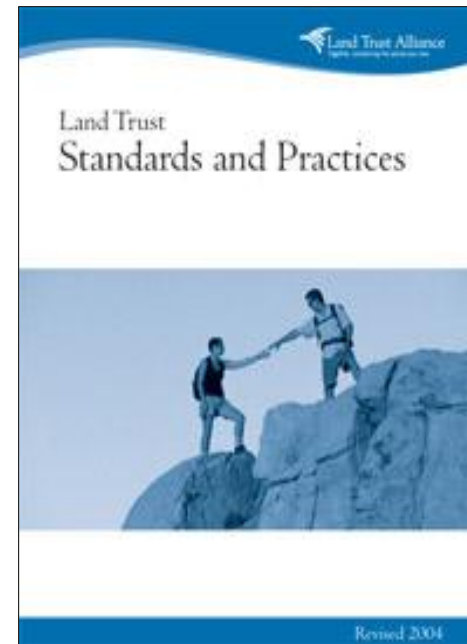
Land Trust 
Accreditation Commission
An Independent program of the Land Trust Alliance

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**
- **Additional public comment**

History & Milestones

- **2 rounds of pilots in 2007**
- **Program launched in early 2008**
- **Inaugural awards in September 2008**
- **January 2010 program revisions**
- **Today – 106 accredited land trusts**



Goals of the Accreditation Program



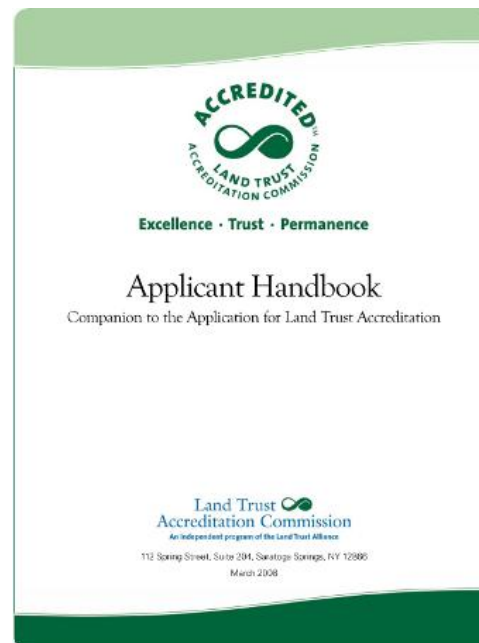
- **Excellence**
- **Trust**
- **Permanence**

Land Trust Accreditation Commission

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

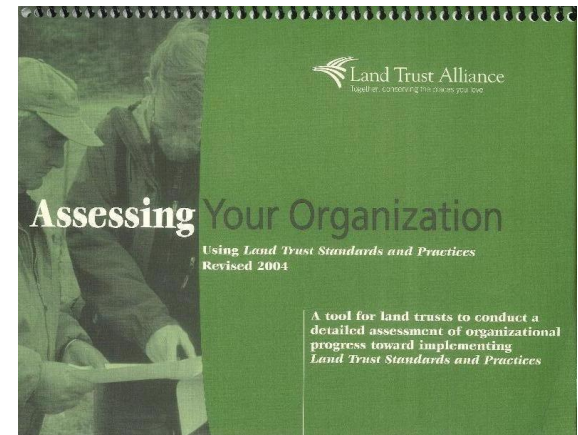


The Accreditation Process

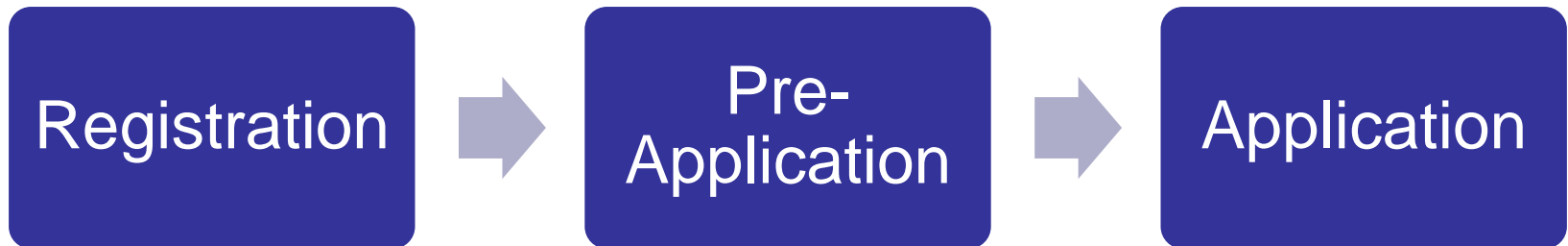


Eligibility

- 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



Application Process



Registration

- **Complete online form**
 - **Answer questions about eligibility**
 - **Provide organizational information**
 - **Provide information about specific policies/procedures**
- **Pay nonrefundable, nontransferable fee of \$750**
- **Commits you to an application round**
- **Registration open for 2011 rounds 1 and 2**

Pre-Application

- Pre-application questionnaire
- Land conservation project lists
- Statement of Dedicated and Restricted Funds
- Once accepted, public notice begins

PART I: PRE-APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE
See the January 2010 edition of the Applicant Handbook for instructions.

Please provide the following required attachments and a completed Pre-Application Questionnaire for each organization seeking accreditation.

Required Attachments

- PreApp1 Most recent Form 990 (or Form 990-EZ) with all completed schedules and statements and, if applicable, most recent Form 990T
- PreApp2 Board resolution adopting the 2004 version of *Land Trust Standards and Practices*
- PreApp3 Evidence of the completion of an assessment against the full *Land Trust Standards and Practices* within the last three years
- PreApp4 Land Conservation Project List(s)
- PreApp5 Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds
- PreApp6 Map
- PreApp7 Accreditation Agreement
- PreApp8 Articles of Incorporation
- PreApp9 Certificate of Good Standing
- PreApp10 Final tax determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service

ⓘ Your organization must be familiar with the requirements for accreditation, the Applicant Handbook and the Commission Guidance Documents before submitting in pre-application. If your organization does not meet the requirements, in pre-application will not be accepted. If your organization cannot provide the necessary documentation at the time of application, it is not ready to apply for accreditation at this time.

1. Organization Name and Contact Information

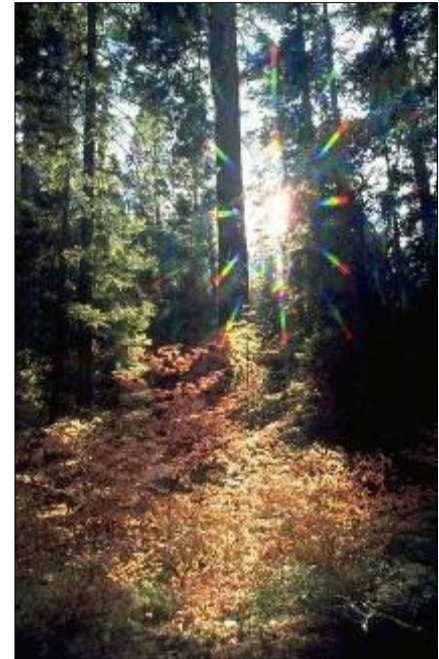
A. Organization Name: []
Any "doing business as" (dba) or alternative name used by the organization: []
Organization Website: http:// []
Name of Board Chair (or equivalent position): []
Official Title: []
Phone: []
E-mail: []

Name of Executive Director (or equivalent position, if applicable): []
Official Title: []

Accreditation Primary Contact Name: []
Official Title: []
Address: []
City, State, Zip: []
Phone: []
Fax: []
E-mail: []

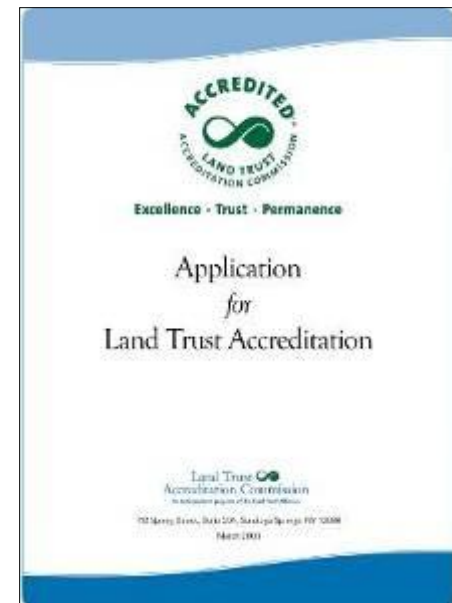
Project Documentation

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

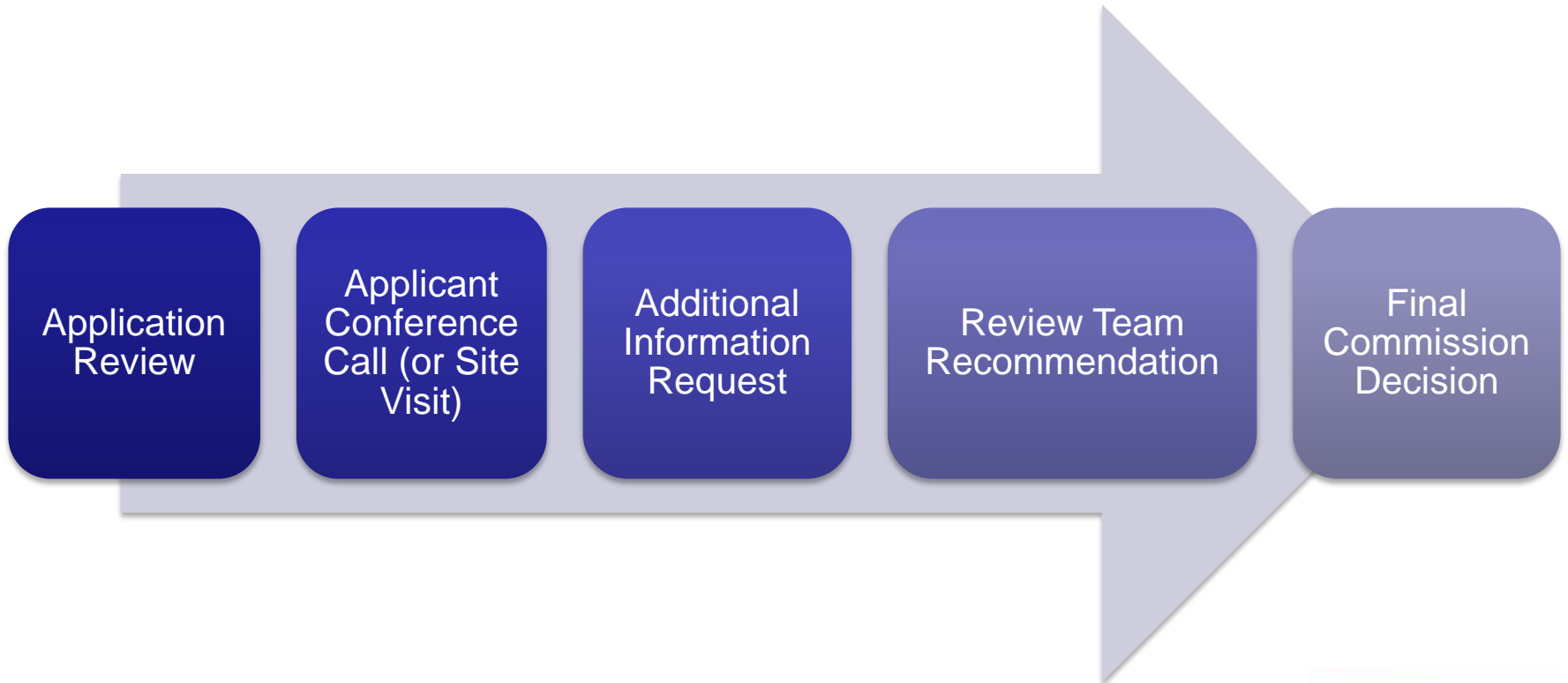


Application

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



Review Process

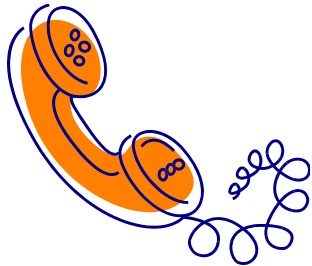


Application Review

- Review team (staff and commissioners) evaluates compliance with all indicator practices by considering:
 - Application
 - Supporting documents
 - Project documentation
 - Public comments
 - Research



Applicant Conference Call*



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

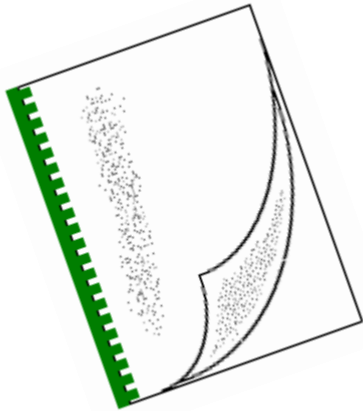
Additional Information Request

- **Follow-up letter with questions, document requests, or limited 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**
 - 5 year period
 - Commendations
 - Expectations for Improvement

- **Table**

- **Deny**

**** Required Withdrawal Possible
at any Time**



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**



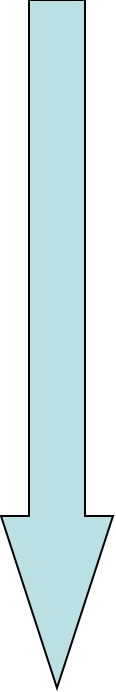
Getting Ready

Stage 1:
Assessment

Stage 2:
Evaluate
Readiness

Stage 3:
Final
Review

Stage 1: Assessment

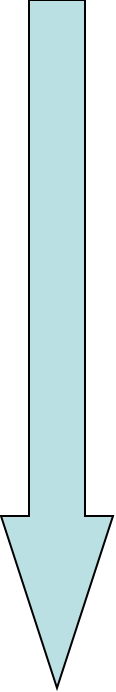

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- Complete assessment against full *Land Trust Standards and Practices*
 - Identify areas for improvement
 - Work on high priority areas (indicator practices and others)
 - Develop and adopt necessary policies and procedures

Stage 2: Evaluate Readiness

- 
- 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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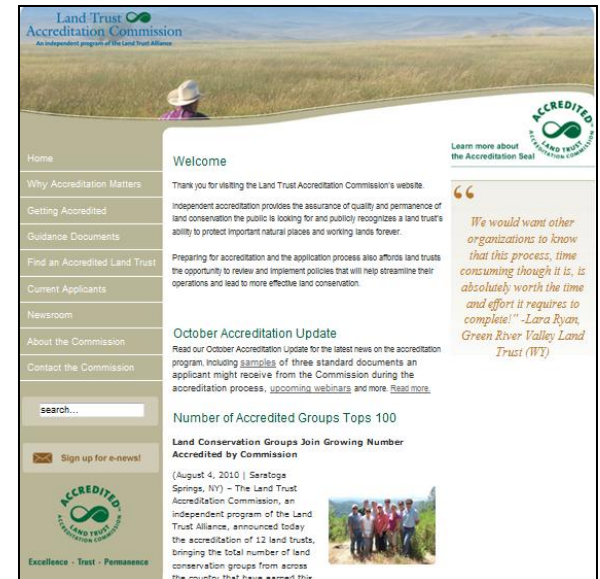
Land Trust Alliance Tools

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



Commission Resources

- **Website:**
www.landtrustaccreditation.org
- ***Applicant Handbook***
- **Fact sheets**
- ***Guidance Documents***
- **Webinars**
- **Commission staff**



Questions?





Thank you!

